The grammar of Indonesian language: Case study of RBS students

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Abstract. Program Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) at Bina Nusantara University (Binus) is organized on the basis of Indonesian language's growth in the global era as Indonesia has a strategic location among ASEAN countries. This research objective is to describe to deviation forms done by six RBS students when they learnt Indonesian language. Qualitative research and purposive sampling technique are used. The results show that the diction and sentence deviations become major problem faced by the students. The deviations themselves occur because of language transfer from students’ first language to target language. The results of this study have implications in the materials development of BIPA program to assist the foreign students in learning Indonesian language.

1. Introduction

As a matter of fact, the Indonesian language is increasingly in demand of the citizens of the world. Indonesia's popularity on an international scale has been ranked third after Britain and Spain. Some overseas institutions have organized Indonesian language learning, training, and courses called Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (or BIPA). Not only abroad, some universities in Indonesia have also opened the learning program Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA), particularly Bina Nusantara (Binus) University.

The BIPA Binus program is organized on the basis of Indonesian language growth in the global era, especially as Indonesia has a strategic location among ASEAN countries, the potential of natural resources, and various unique cultures. Therefore, Indonesian language is expected to be a 'bridge' in enhancing the understanding of Indonesian nation and culture. To carry out this mission, Binus always cooperate with universities abroad. Currently there are 67 overseas universities who are partners of Binus in the program darmasiswa (Kompas, 2013). Here, every student will be equipped with learning Indonesian through the program. One of BIPA Binus programs opened every year is BIPA RBS, which is Indonesian language learning for Rotherdam Bussines School (RBS) students from the Netherlands. The learning of BIPA RBS was carried out by fourteen (14) meetings for each language skill and fourteen (14) special meetings for grammar.

Eventually Indonesian language has four functions: cognitive, instrumental, integrative, and
cultural [1]. The cognitive function relates to the learners' intellectual development, capacity to think rationally, and the medium of storing and retrieving knowledge. Next, the instrumental function expresses the fact that the language is used for material gains, i.e., to get a job, to engage oneself in business, to obtain scientific information and technological skills, and the like. The integrative function means that to make oneself accepted as a member of the group using the language as a symbol of identity, the language, therefore, is necessary. The cultural function expresses that the language enable oneself to gain a deep understanding and appreciation of the culture to which the language belongs.

Learning Indonesian as a second language for Dutch students cannot certainly be separated from deviations. They occur due to several factors, such as the influence of the mother tongue, the lack of understanding of the language user on the language it uses and the less than perfect language teaching [2]. Here, Indonesian language deviations by foreign students focus on open error. Open error is language deviation at the grammatical level in the sentences that a learner produces [3]. The deviations occur because the students do language transfer from their mother tongue to target language. They, therefore, produce unique language called interlanguage. A new construct “interlanguage” introduced by Selinker (1972), as cited in [4], is interpreted to be “the implicit systematic linguistic system that produces learner language”. Prof S.P. Corder, as cited in [4], calls it “transitional competence”. The central hypothesis of their works is that the learner language is an autonomous linguistic system that develops according to innate and probably universal processes.

2. Methods

This study with Bina Nusantara University as the setting of the research was conducted for four months, from March to June 2017. The research participants were six (6) BIPA RBS students of Bina Nusantara University. This research is a qualitative descriptive research with case study research type. Qualitative research is conducted to explore particular problem and develop deep understanding about central phenomenon [5]. This method was chosen to reveal the Indonesian grammar of foreign students (RBS students). Therefore, this research question is “What deviations forms are done by the RBS students when learning Indonesian language?” Data and data source used in this research are written reports and participants by using purposive sampling technique. Therefore, the data collected by reviewing documents in the form of RBS students' reports.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the research data, it is found that grammatical problems in the papers made by BIPA students lie in the diction and the sentence ineffectiveness. The diction and sentence deviations can be explained as follows.

3.1. Diction Deviations

Diction deviations in Indonesian language can be caused by various causes, such as mistakes in using synonym, word meaning, pronoun, preposition, common word, special word, abstract word, concrete word, and so forth. However, in the error research data found is first, the error in using synonym as in the following data:

(1) Masing-masing produk ini memiliki warna bermacam-macam.

The word masing-masing should be replaced with the word tiap-tiap. Words masing-masing, tiap-tiap, and setiap are synonymous words. However, for the word masing-masing is more precisely followed by object, not subject. Thus, the above sentence should be changed to:

Tiap-tiap produk ini memiliki warna bermacam-macam.

The second diction deviation lies in the use of non-standard words in a sentence, like the following example:
(2) *Produk PT Consina kwalitas yang bagus.*
   The deviation lies in the use of the word *kwalitas.* Thus, it should be changed to *kualitas.*
   Thus, the correct sentence will become:
   *Produk PT Consina kualitas yang bagus.*

The third diction deviation appears in the use of a preposition word, like the use of words *di, ke, dari,* and so forth. Examples of sentences that do not use the preposition appropriately are as follows:

(3) *Informasi tersebut diberikan dari Bapak Herson selaku Manajer Marketing dan Bapak Paulus Tirta selaku Manajer Promosi PT Consina.*
   It should be:
   *Informasi tersebut diberikan oleh Bapak Herson selaku Manajer Marketing dan Bapak Paulus Tirta selaku Manajer Promosi PT Consina.*

(4) *Pemasaran dilakukan dengan cara social media, yaitu Twitter, Facebook, dan Instagram.*
   It should be:
   *Pemasaran dilakukan melalui social media, yaitu Twitter, Facebook, dan Instagram.*

(5) *Pemilik PT. Consina disebut Bapak Disyontobel, memiliki ide untuk memulai sebuah perusahaan dengan segmen hampir tidak dikenal di Indonesia, yaitu outdoor lifestyle.*
   It should be:
   *Pemilik PT. Consina ialah Bapak Disyontobel, memiliki ide untuk memulai sebuah perusahaan dengan segmen hampir tidak dikenal di Indonesia, yaitu outdoor lifestyle.*

From the explanation above, it can be explained that the diction deviations are the use of the prepositions *dari* that should be replaced by *oleh, dengan* with *melalui,* and *disebut* with *ialah.*

The next diction deviation is the use of pronouns, such as first person (*saya, aku*) and pronoun (*-nya*), as the following data:

*Berdasarkan informasi dia telah menulis laporan ini dengan caranya sendiri.*
   It should be:
   *Berdasarkan informasi, saya telah menulis laporan ini dengan cara saya sendiri.*

Based on the results the above, it can be summarized that the diction deviations in students' writing for BIPA lie in the misuse of synonymous words, standard words, prepositions, and pronouns in Indonesian language.

### 3.2. Sentence Deviations

In addition to the diction errors, the next grammatical deviations lie in the student's writing lies in sentence. The first sentence below is sentence that does not meet the subject, predicate, object, and adverb, as the following data:

(1) *Produk PT Consina kwalitas yang bagus.*
(2) *Produk Consina yang berwarna-warni membuat desain khas.*

Sentences number 1 and 2 above only meet the subject element. While a new sentence can be said to be effective, if at least meet the subject and predicate elements. They could be modified to:

*Produk PT Consina memiliki kualitas yang bagus.*
*Produk Consina membuat desain khas yang berwarna-warni*
Other data also show that several sentences violate the rules of cohesiveness, as in the following data:

3. Akhirnya, yang menghasilkan ratusan atau bahkan ribuan khusus merancang, dalam berbagai ukuran dan warna.

4. Untuk membuat produk yang digunakan beberapa mesin, tetapi untuk sebagian besar dibuat dengan tangan.

In sentences number 3 and 4, both sentences only fulfill the element of the adverbs. They have no subject and predicate so they are mentioned to be ineffective. To make both sentences effective, the two sentences can be changed to:

Akhirnya, PT Consina telah menghasilkan ratusan bahkan ribuan desain dalam berbagai ukuran dan warna.
Untuk membuat produk, sebagian menggunakan mesin dan sebagian lain dibuat dengan tangan.

The other deviations lie in the precision requirement because the sentences produced have multiple meanings, as in the following data:

5. PT Consina membedakan dari pesaing oleh memfokuskan pada traveler yang mempunyai anggaran terbatas, dan menawarkan produk outdoor berkualitas bagus dengan desain khas dan harga terjangkau.

The meanings of sentence (5) are first, they are PT Consina that focuses on the traveler with a limited budget, or competitors that focus on the traveler with a limited budget, or both PT Consina and competitors have limited budgets. To avoid multiple interpretations like this, the sentence should be modified to:

Letak perbedaan PT Consina dengan pesaing lain adalah PT Consina lebih memfokuskan produknya untuk traveler dengan anggaran terbatas. PT Consina juga menawarkan produk outdoor berkualitas bagus dengan desain khas dan harga terjangkau.

Next, the rules of logic is violated, such as following data:

6. Banyak konsumen tidak mampu merek mahal, seperti Northface dan Fjällräven.

To make the sentence above (12) to be a logical sentence, it is necessary to add the phrases membeli produk before the word mahal, as the following improvement:

Banyak konsumen tidak mampu membeli produk dengan harga mahal, seperti Northface dan Fjällräven.

Ilogical sentence can be also seen in following example:

7. Saya menemukan menulis laporan ini sangat edukatif.

Above sentence can be modified to:

Saya berharap laporan ini bersifat edukatif.

Based on the above results, it can be concluded that the sentences in the writing of students for BIPA lie the deviations caused by violating the rules of cohesiveness, precision, and logic.

4. Conclusion and suggestion

To sum up, this study shows that it is found, based on the research data, the diction and the sentence ineffectiveness turn to be grammatical problems in the written report produced by RBS students. Taylor (1975), as cited in [6], sees transfer as learning strategies which consist in relying on existing knowledge to make learning easier. He differentiates one strategy from the other. Transfer implies
relying on the L1 whereas overgeneralization affects the L2 exclusively and the mother tongue plays essential role in the second language learning process.

Based on this present study’s results, the diction and the sentence in Indonesian grammar become challenges for BIPA lecturers to improve the teaching and learning approach. Therefore, more investigations on BIPA are needed to be taken into consideration.

References
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