

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS AND TRANSLATION QUALITY OF THE ENGLISH VERSION OF JAKARTA NATIONAL MUSEUM WEBSITE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the grammatical errors and the resulting translation quality of the English version of the Jakarta National Museum official website. As a primary digital gateway for international tourists, the linguistic accuracy of the website is paramount to maintaining institutional credibility. Using a qualitative descriptive approach anchored in Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's Surface Strategy Taxonomy and Nababan's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model, this research analyzed 45 textual data points extracted from the website. The findings revealed that misinformation was the most dominant error type (42.2%), followed by omission (28.9%), addition (15.6%), and misordering (13.3%). Consequently, the translation quality scores suffered significantly, particularly in terms of acceptability and readability, driven largely by literal translation methods and L1 interference (interlingual transfer). This study provides constructive insights for public institutions regarding the critical need for professional proofreading in digital public diplomacy.

Keywords: Error Analysis, Translation Quality, Public Website, Surface Strategy Taxonomy, National Museum.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era of globalized digital communication, official websites function as the virtual storefronts for public institutions, particularly those tasked with cultural tourism and heritage preservation. When international visitors seek historical context or logistical information regarding a nation's heritage, they rely heavily on the localized English versions of these digital portals. Consequently, the linguistic precision and naturalness of the translated text extend beyond mere communication mechanics; they serve as a direct reflection of institutional professionalism, operational credibility, and, by extension, the cultural reputation of the host nation (Sulaiman, 2016). Inaccurate or unidiomatic translations on public sectors not only hinder information dissemination but also trigger cognitive friction among foreign audiences, potentially diminishing the perceived value of the tourism destination itself.

The Jakarta National Museum (Museum Nasional Indonesia), colloquially referred to as Gedung Gajah, stands as one of the most comprehensive and prestigious cultural repositories in Southeast Asia, housing invaluable artifacts that chart the Indonesian archipelago's history. Despite its institutional stature, a preliminary observation of its English-language portal reveals persistent linguistic anomalies. Awkward phrasing, structural grammatical errors, and mechanical inconsistencies frequently disrupt the narrative flow of the historical descriptions presented. In translation studies, such structural inaccuracies are rarely isolated mechanical blunders; rather, they systematically undermine translation quality, leading to semantic ambiguity, severe loss of stylistic nuances, and poor readability for native English target readers (Newmark, 1988).

While a vast body of literature has extensively documented grammatical error analysis within academic writing and student essays (James, 2013), empirical scrutiny targeting the intersection of structural errors and translation quality in state-backed tourism platforms remains surprisingly sparse. Previous research on localized websites has often focused solely on cross-cultural design or usability, frequently overlooking the grammatical integrity of the linguistic content itself. For instance, studies examining local government tourism portals often reveal that localized texts suffer from heavy L1 interference, yet few have systematically correlated these surface errors with standardized translation quality metrics like accuracy, acceptability, and readability (Munday, 2016).

This study addresses this empirical gap. By synthesizing the Surface Strategy Taxonomy outlined by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) with Nababan, Nuraeni, and Sumardiono's (2012) Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) framework, this paper systematically maps the structural linguistic flaws found on the museum's website and critically evaluates how these discrepancies impede effective global message delivery. Ultimately, this research aims to provide a diagnostic evaluation of current digital public diplomacy efforts through the lens of translation studies.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to scrutinize the textual data compiled from the English version of the Jakarta National Museum's official website. Data collection was carried out through purposive sampling techniques, which involved capturing screenshots and transcribing localized English texts across four primary navigational sections: "About Us", "History", "Exhibitions", and "Visitor Information". Through this process, a corpus of 45 sentences exhibiting structural and translational anomalies was gathered for closer analysis during the first quarter of 2026.

The analytical procedure was operationalized through a two-tiered framework to bridge the linguistic and translational dimensions of the data:

1. Grammatical Error Identification: The localized texts were classified using Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) Surface Strategy Taxonomy. This allowed the systematic sorting of errors into four distinct mechanics: Omission, Addition, Misinformation, and Misordering.
2. Translation Quality Assessment: The communicative impact of these errors was measured using Nababan's (2012) TQA model. This framework utilizes a 1-to-3 Likert scale to evaluate three qualitative dimensions: Accuracy(the fidelity of the source message), Acceptability (adherence to the stylistic and grammatical norms of the target language), and Readability (the ease of comprehension for the target audience). The scoring was conducted by involving expert raters to ensure objectivity and inter-rater reliability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Frequency of Grammatical Errors

The quantitative distribution of the 45 identified data points reveals a clear hierarchy in the types of linguistic errors committed on the website. Table 1 outlines the frequency and percentage of each error category based on the surface structure taxonomy.

Table 1. Distribution of Grammatical Errors on the Museum's Website

No	Error Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Misinformation	19	42.2%
2	Omission	13	28.9%
3	Addition	7	15.6%
4	Misordering	6	13.3%
Total		45	100%

2. Linguistic Analysis and Reconstruction Matrix

A closer look at the corpus indicates that the errors are not random typographical slips but systematic reflections of grammatical misalignment between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL).

A. Misinformation (42.2%)

Representing the largest share of the corpus, misinformation involves the use of incorrect morphemic forms or structural choices. In the analyzed text, this issue heavily manifests as broken subject-verb agreement and tense inconsistencies. For instance, when

analyzing the source text "Museum Nasional menyimpan banyak benda-benda bersejarah," the website presents the target text as "The Museum National store many historical objects." This sentence suffers from a dual error; mechanically, the plural verb store is incorrectly paired with the singular subject noun The Museum, while from a phrasal perspective, the noun phrase structure rigidly follows the Indonesian modifier-noun pattern (Museum Nasional) instead of adapting to the English noun-adjunct structure. To rectify these layered structural flaws, the sentence must be reconstructed into "The National Museum stores numerous historical artifacts," which simultaneously fixes the grammatical agreement and elevates the lexical register appropriate for a museum context.

B. Omission (28.9%)

Omission errors are marked by the absence of obligatory linguistic elements required to form grammatically sound sentences. On this platform, omission primarily compromises passive voice constructions and determiner usage. A prominent example is found in the source phrase "Museum ini didirikan pada tahun 1778," which is rendered into English as "This museum founded in 1778." Here, the translator failed to supply the past tense auxiliary verb was, which is syntactically obligatory to establish a passive construction in English. Without this vital component, the predicate collapses into an ungrammatical participle fragment that disrupts the temporal framework of historical reporting. By restoring the omitted auxiliary element, the text is successfully rehabilitated into an accurate and acceptable passive construction: "This museum was founded in 1778."

C. Addition and Misordering (28.9% combined)

Addition introduces redundant elements that clutter sentence structures, while misordering disrupts the natural syntactic hierarchy of English sentences, and these two types often occur simultaneously due to literal translation habits. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated in the translation of the source text "Koleksi purbakala yang sangat unik," which was translated into the target text as "The collection archaeological very unique." Syntactic misordering occurs because the adjective archaeological is placed after the noun collection, explicitly mirroring the Indonesian noun-adjective syntax (koleksi purbakala). Furthermore, the copula is is omitted while the structural flow is cluttered by word-for-word calque mapping. By restructuring the phrasal configuration according to English syntactic constraints, the entry can be streamlined into a natural, native-like phrase: "The archaeological collection is highly unique."

3. The Impact on Translation Quality

The application of Nababan's TQA model demonstrates a direct correlation between high grammatical error frequency and a sharp decline in overall translation quality. The mean scores calculated across the three dimensions highlight this vulnerability:

- Accuracy Score: 2.4 / 3.0 (Moderately Accurate)
- Acceptability Score: 1.6 / 3.0 (Low Acceptability)
- Readability Score: 1.5 / 3.0 (Low Readability)

The relatively stable Accuracy score (2.4) suggests that the core informational data points—such as historical dates and physical descriptions—are preserved well enough for international readers to decipher basic facts. However, the transmission of this historical data is deeply hindered by the low Acceptability score (1.6). Because the text violates basic English syntactic norms and uses awkward word order, the prose feels foreign, forced, and unidiomatic to native speakers. Consequently, the Readability score drops to 1.5 because sentences are burdened with structural misordering and missing auxiliary components. International readers are forced to perform exhausting mental reconstructions of the text, reading sentences multiple times to parse the intended historical meanings,

which severely compromises the user experience on what should be a world-class digital gateway.

4. Causes of Errors: Interlingual Transfer

The underlying catalyst for these structural discrepancies is interlingual transfer, commonly referred to as mother-tongue (L1) interference (James, 2013). The translation profile suggests that the website content was processed via direct, word-for-word calque mapping from Indonesian into English. Because Indonesian grammar lacks morphological markers for subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective inversions, and past/present tense inflections, the translator—or an unedited machine translation engine—mechanically substituted vocabulary without adjusting for the structural demands of English syntax. This lack of syntactic shift transforms minor grammatical oversights into comprehensive communication barriers.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the grammatical errors present on the English version of the Jakarta National Museum official website severely impede its communicative value. Driven heavily by misinformation and omission, the website's localized content fails to meet acceptable standards of linguistic acceptability and readability. These findings strongly indicate a heavy reliance on unpolished machine translation or a lack of professional editorial oversight by qualified translation practitioners, which ultimately undermines the institution's digital public diplomacy goals.

Recommendations:

To optimize its role in digital public diplomacy and global tourism promotion, the Jakarta National Museum must prioritize institutional proofreading. Entrusting digital assets to professional translators or native-English editors is a necessary step to bridge these linguistic gaps, eliminate L1 interference, and elevate the global presentation of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

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