

THE USE OF GERMAN PREPOSITIONS: A MYSTERY OF ITS OWN

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Abstract

Dalam bahasa Jerman terdapat sejumlah preposisi yang dikuasai oleh verba. Bagaimana pembelajar Indonesia menguasai hal tersebut? Dan bagaimana kesalahan penggunaan preposisi tersebut dapat dijelaskan? Inilah fokus permasalahan dalam penelitian ini.

Data-data dikumpulkan melalui ujian akhir (tes tulis) dari mata kuliah *Literatur* (sastra Jerman) tahun 2004, kemudian dideskripsikan dan dianalisis dengan program CLAN (MacWhinney 2000).

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan, bahwa ada persamaan dan perbedaan dalam penggunaan preposisi yang dikuasai oleh verba dalam bahasa Jerman dan bahasa Indonesia. Jika ada kesamaan penggunaan preposisi dalam bahasa Jerman dan bahasa Indonesia maka pembelajar jarang mengalami kesulitan. Sebaliknya jika terdapat perbedaan penggunaan preposisi dalam bahasa Jerman dan bahasa Indonesia maka pembelajar cenderung membuat kesalahan. Oleh sebab itu, para guru bahasa Jerman bagi pembelajar Indonesia sebaiknya memberi kesadaran kepada para pembelajar bahwa cara menggunakan preposisi dalam bahasa Jerman benar-benar bisa berbeda dari bahasa Indonesia.

Kata kunci: bahasa Jerman sebagai bahasa asing, preposisi

A. Introduction

1. Background of the Problem

Learning a foreign language is not always easy, especially if the particular language differs greatly from the mother tongue. There may be similarities, but also many differences between these two languages. Unfortunately not every grammatical construction which is used in one language is also valid in the next language as there are many different grammatical systems in the languages of the world. This problem can be extended to lexical constructions which may seem to be similar but which have in fact a very different meaning (see Kuhberg (1987), Uhlisch (1995)). Prepositions are a grammatical structure which can be found in Bahasa Indonesia as well as in German. They

are used in constructions which appear to be quite similar in both languages. Students are bound to search for similarities which make it easier for them to understand and learn the new language. They transfer the structure of their L1¹ to the new language, i.e. in this case German. This may result in phrases which are incorrect in German, because the prepositions appear to be German but are used differently in the learner's language (these constructions are called *false friends*). It will be shown that some of the mistakes Indonesian

¹ L1 = first language, here: Bahasa Indonesia, the language students use in their university. I am well aware of the fact that most students in my classes do not have Bahasa Indonesia as their first language, but a regional language like Bahasa Jawa, Bahasa Sunda or the like as mother tongue.

students make when writing German can be attributed to an incorrect transfer of the prepositions and the constructions used in their native language.

2. Focus of research

This article deals with the ways in which Indonesian students, who are studying German as a foreign language in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, use prepositions which are connected to verbs when they are writing a text in German. German is a language which uses a 4-case-system (nominative, genitive, dative and accusative). Each case has its own function, which will be briefly described here. The nominative case is used to express the subject of a sentence; the genitive case indicates a possessor relationship. A location is indicated by using the dative case, whereas the accusative case expresses a direction (for a complete overview of the case system see Eisenberg (1986), Duden (1998) or Engel (1988)). If a preposition, which always requires a certain case, is used it will govern the constituents of the following clause, which normally consists of either only one word (i.e. a noun, pronoun or alike) or a complex phrase. This means the constituents in the clause which are dependent on the preposition have to be marked according to the case the preposition requires. Let us now take a look at the role of prepositions in German.

The majority of prepositions that exist in German use the dative or the accusative case. Some prepositions even amalgamate with the respective case form, i.e. *am* (= *an dem*², at) or *zu* (= *zu dem*, to) Therefore one has to

keep in mind that by choosing a certain preposition, it is not only necessary to get the correct lexical meaning, but also to use the correct case this preposition requires. One special difficulty for Indonesian learners of German is the fact that there are several German prepositions which govern not just one case, but two. They can state a location on the one hand (using a dative case in the respective prepositional phrase (PP)) and a direction on the other hand (using an accusative case in the respective PP). Consider the following examples 1 and 2 where the preposition *auf* (on) is used and requires two different case markers corresponding to a change in meaning:

1. Das Glas steht *auf dem* Tisch.

The glass is on the table. (using dative case (*dem*) in German)

2. Ich stelle das Glas *auf den* Tisch.

I put the glass on the table. (using accusative case (*den*) in German)

The preposition *auf* (on) can be used to explain the position of the glass (example 1) as well as the direction where the glass will be put (example 2), both involving the table as the place of focus where the glass is at the moment or will be shortly. There are several prepositions which can be used both in a locative as well as in a directive construction and therefore require either a dative or an accusative construction. These are the following: *an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen* (at, on, behind, in, beside, above, under, in front of, in between).

Prepositions can be found in different kind of attributes. As there is no rigid word order in German, the prepositional phrases can often occur in different positions according to their

² *Dem* is a definite article in dative case (masculine or neuter in gender).

status in the sentence. See examples 3 and 4 below to explain this:

3. *Am Morgen* geht Gunter einkaufen.
In the morning Gunter goes shopping.
4. Gunter geht *am Morgen* einkaufen.
Gunter goes shopping in the morning.

To make matters worse, the problem not only lies with prepositions which govern a certain case, but with German verbs as well. Verbs, being the main constituent of a sentence (see Engel (1988)), govern the whole sentence, the subject as well as the object. They occur in different forms. The unmarked verb form is that of a transitive verb. A transitive verb requires a subject in nominative case and a direct object in accusative case. When turned into a passive sentence, the accusative object of the active sentence becomes the nominative subject of the passive sentence. A preposition cannot be used. To illustrate this point see examples 5 and 6 below:

5. Ich *esse* Reis und Hühnchen. (*essen* = transitive verb)
I eat rice and chicken.
(as passive sentence: Reis und Hühnchen werden von mir *gegessen*.
Rice and chicken are eaten by me.)
6. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe *liebte* Christiane Vulpius. (*lieben* = transitive verb)
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe loved Christiane Vulpius.
(as passive sentence: Christiane Vulpius wurde von J.W. Goethe *geliebt*.
Christiane Vulpius was loved by J.W. Goethe.)

An intransitive verb on the other hand is a verb which cannot take an object

directly but requires the use of a preposition. These prepositions cannot be chosen randomly but are lexically connected to the verb, see examples 7 and 8:

7. Susanne *tanzt mit* Klaus. (*mit jemandem* (DAT) *tanzen*)
Susanne dances with Klaus. (to dance with (DAT) somebody)
8. Ina *schläft in* ihrem Bett. (*in etwas* (DAT) *schlafen*)
Ina sleeps in her bed. (to sleep in (DAT) something)

Some verbs can take more than one preposition according to the lexical meaning, for example the verb *springen* (to jump) in sentences 9 and 10:

9. Die Katze *springt auf* den Tisch. (*auf etwas* (ACC) *springen*)
The cat jumps on the table. (to jump on (ACC) something)
10. Das Pferd *springt über* den Baumstamm. (*über etwas* (ACC) *springen*)
The horse jumps over the tree trunk. (to jump over (ACC) something)

As can be seen above, when using a preposition one has to differentiate between different usages of prepositions. First, there are prepositions which occur in locative or time expressions (for expressions of time see examples 3 and 4 above); the same explanation holds for locative expressions like *hinter dem Baum* (behind the tree) or alike. They govern a certain case but are not dependent on other constituents of the sentence. Second, there are prepositions which are governed by a verb as in examples 7 and 8.

Therefore a learner of German as a Foreign Language has to face different problems. First of all he has to learn to distinguish the role of the preposition. If the preposition is bound

to occur in the object position, he first has to examine if a verb requires a preposition or not (not all verbs do need a preposition, as has already been mentioned in connection with transitive verbs). If so, he has to choose the preposition according to the verb, then he has to know which case form a certain preposition conjures. In this article it will be shown how Indonesian students deal with the problem of prepositions.

3. Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is to show a) how Indonesian students use prepositions which are governed by verbs when writing a text in German, and b) which transfer problems can arise in the transfer of Indonesian prepositional phrases to German. In the conclusion I will then briefly try to explain how these mistakes can be prevented.

4. Theoretical Background

It is a common phenomenon for teachers of a foreign language to be faced with certain grammatical structures which appear to be quite difficult to learn by their students. The teachers will find that the learners ignore these structures at first (see Wegener (1995), Bast (2003)) because they have difficulties making out the use of these constructions, especially if they are not used in the native language (L1). If these structures exist in L1, students are likely to transfer them to L2. Interference between L1 and L2³ is a well known problem in second language acquisition.

³ Interference is also possible between L1 and L3, L2 and L3 and alike. This difference will be ignored as it is of no theoretical value here.

There have been several approaches to explaining transfer phenomena (for an overview see Uhlisch (1995)). Structures which have been learned in L1 can be learned easily in L2 (this is called *positive transfer*), they can also lead to interference (*negative transfer*) or they can have no impact at all on L2 (*zero transfer*). One has to keep in mind that it is not necessarily a well known structure which is learned easily in L2. Structures which differ greatly from L1 on the other hand may not pose a problem for the learner because the difference is very obvious. Sometimes the learner looks for differences between the two languages and therefore ignores similarities (see Uhlisch (1995)).

Concerning the learning process, it is also a question of how a student approaches a different language. Is he aware that there are no languages which are similar in all aspects of grammar, but only differ in vocabulary? If not, he may have many problems understanding how to express a structure in an unfamiliar way. It will be much easier for him to learn a foreign language if he has the awareness that structures differ from language to language.

Tutored language learning is a conscious process.⁴ The learner is confronted with many different grammatical rules and grammatical constructions. He will never start from

⁴ One has to keep in mind that there are differences between tutored language acquisition and untutored language acquisition. Especially if the person who is learning a new language without instruction is still very young we will find many more imitative utterances than utterances which occur because of a transfer process (see Bast (2003)).

scratch and be fluent the next day, but he will develop several *learner languages* or *interlanguages* (see Vogel (1990), Klein & Perdue (1997)). This means he will build up several hypotheses about the new language and then test and alter these hypotheses again and again during the course of time until he reaches his final stage in the acquisition of the new language.

Teachers of foreign languages will have to find a method to continually increase their students' knowledge and to develop their learner languages so that they can reach a high level of language competence in the language to be learnt. To be able to do this, it is not only the student, but also the teacher who has to be aware of the different interlanguages used by the student. The teacher has to analyse in detail the progress his or her student makes and as a consequence draw conclusions on how to help their students when learning the language.

B. Method

The data used for this research was taken from class tests written in the class *Literatur 1 (literature 1)* during the academic year 2003/04. 21 students of German as a foreign language at the German department of FBS UNY (regular class) and 26 students from the nonregular class, then being in their 5th semester, had to rewrite a German fairytale from their memory. They chose the following fairytales: *Rotkäppchen* (26 students), *Rumpelstilzchen* (12 students), *Hänsel und Gretel* (7 students) and *Frau Holle* (2 students) (all originally taken from Grimm (1980)). The contents of these fairytales are of no importance for this article.

Each fairytale was transcribed according to the convention of the CHILDES programmes (see MacWhinney (2000), Stephany & Bast (2001)). Whenever there are citations from the corpus in the paper, the original form has been retained, including the transcription conventions. The data was analysed with the CLAN tools (see MacWhinney (2000)), mainly using the programs *FREQ* and *KWAL*. The students' texts were coded. *S is used for the students of the regular class, *T for students of the nonregular class. The number is given in sequence. *T19 would therefore indicate that an example has been taken from the text of a student from the nonregular class, being the 19th text which was coded.

The students used 24 different prepositions⁵ in 661 instances. The prepositions are as follows:

As can be seen by regarding the Indonesian equivalent to the German prepositions in Table 1 there are many prepositions which do not have a one – to – one correspondence. Therefore the students have to learn to distinguish the different meanings.

One cannot draw conclusions from the correct use of prepositions because one is not able to tell whether the students have learnt the respective constructions by heart, have mastered the problem or are transferring a structure from their native language. It is only possible to gain insight into the question of how they choose a preposition by looking at the instances which are used in an incorrect way (see

⁵ Prepositions which occur in a special case form like *zum* (dative form of *zu*) have been counted separately from their nominative form (if occurring).

Instances	PREP	Indon. Translation	English Translation
101	Zu	kepada / ke	to
97	In	di dalam, ke dalam	in
86	Mit	dengan	with
61	Von	dari	by
52	Im	di dalam	in (dative)
47	Nach	setelah, sudah, lewat, ke	after / to
31	Am	waktu, pada, di	at (dative)
31	Zum	kepada / ke	to (dative)
29	Für	untuk, demi, bagi, buat	for
19	Zur	kepada / ke	to (dative)
17	Auf	di atas	on
15	Über	di atas	above
12	Ins	ke dalam	in (accus.)
12	Als	ketika, waktu	when
10	Vom	dari	from (dative)
9	Durch	melalui, terus, oleh	through
7	Aus	dari	out of
7	Vor	di depan, sebelumnya, terhadap, akan	in front of / before
5	An	dekat, kepada, pada, sampai	at
5	Bei	kepada, dekat, dengan	at
5	Bis	sampai, hingga	until
1	Neben	di depan	at the side of
1	Um	sekeliling, sekitar	to
1	Unter	di bawah	under

Table 1: Prepositions occurring in the data

Bast (2003) for a discussion on this problem).

Therefore only the instances in which a preposition is not used according to the grammatical rule are taken from the above mentioned sample. This reduces the number of prepositions to 18 types and the token size to 145 instances. These instances are further divided into five different sections:

- 1) prepositions used with verbs that can take two objects⁶,

⁶ These verbs are called *dreiwertige Verben*. They include three participants in a

- 2) incorrect choice of preposition,
- 3) prepositions used with transitive verbs,
- 4) prepositions used in expressions of time and location,
- 5) usage of simple instead of amalgamated forms of

sentence. An example is the verb *geben* (to give): *Ich gebe dir ein Buch*. (I give you a book.). *Geben* uses a subject and both an indirect as well as a direct object. Most of the German verbs which take three participants also take three participants in Indonesian.

prepositions (i.e. *in* instead of *im*) as well as forms which are incorrectly marked for case

As there are no case markers in Indonesian, Section no. 5) will be omitted. Consequently only prepositions which occur in constructions that exist in Indonesian and are known to Indonesian students will be considered for the purpose of this paper. As the focus of this paper is on the use of prepositions which are governed by verbs, section 4) will also be omitted as expressions of time and location can often be independent from verbs.

C. Result and Discussion

Let us now look at how the Indonesian students of German as a foreign language used prepositions in their renarration of German fairy tales. To start this chapter the different instances of incorrectly used prepositions will be described. As the possibility of transfer from the L1 will be of importance, the Indonesian translation of the sentences will also be given.⁷ The discussion will follow the description.

1. Prepositions used with verbs that can take two objects

There are 35 instances in which the verb used can take two objects. The

⁷ The translations follow a certain convention: The English translations (especially the prepositions which were used) follow the German original to enable a non-German speaker to understand the problem. The Indonesian translations on the other hand are given according to the standard translation of the original so as to be able to compare the grammatical structures during the analysing process.

verbs used are *bringen*, *geben*, *fragen* and *erzählen* (to bring, to give, to ask, to tell). Except for *fragen* where a preposition has to be used (*jemanden nach etwas fragen*, to ask somebody for something), the other verbs must not use a preposition with their objects. The verb *bringen* (to bring) is used 15 times, either with the preposition *für* or the preposition *zu*.

The verb *bringen* can either be used as a verb with a direct and an indirect object (*jemandem (DAT) etwas (ACC) bringen*, to bring somebody something). To a certain extent it is acceptable to express the indirect object with the help of the prepositions *zu* (or *zum* as amalgamated form) or *für* as can be seen in examples 11 and 12 below, although this may sound a bit unusual for a native speaker of German (a native speaker would in almost all instances use these verbs without a preposition):

11. *T01: sie *bringt* essen *für* [*]⁸ die großmutter .

she *brings* food for her grandmother.

dia *membawa* makanan untuk nenek.

12. *T05: die tochter *bringt* das geld *zum* [*] könig.

the daughter *brings* money to the king.

anak perempuan *menyerahkan* uang kepada raja.

Nevertheless it is interesting to note that there is not even one instance in the whole data corpus where the verb *bringen* is used with direct and indirect object and without preposition.

⁸ The sign [*] is used according to the CHILDES conventions (see MacWhinney (2000)) and follows the incorrect form.

The verb *geben* is used 9 times, in all instances together with the preposition *zu* (to), the verb *fragen* is used 8 times, 6 instances with the preposition *zu* (to), 2 instances with *über* (about). See examples 13 - 15 for an illustration on the use of *geben* (give) and *fragen* (ask).

13. *S06: aber die tochter müsste zu [*] ihm ihr halsband geben.
the daughter had to give her necklace to him
anak perempuan itu harus memberikan tali lehernya kepadanya

14. *S06: sie fragte zu [*] das männchen dritten [*] mal über sein [*] namen.
she asked to the dwarf three time about his name
dia bertanya tiga kali kepada kurcaci tentang namanya.

15. *T01: der wolf fragt zu [*] ihr [*].
the wolf asked to her.
serigala bertanya kepadanya.

The verb *erzählen* (tell) is used in three instances. Interestingly enough, there is one instance in which *erzählen* uses two prepositions, namely *für* (for) and *über* (about). *Für* expresses the indirect object whereas *über* states the direct object (example 16). In example 17 the verb is used with the preposition *mit* (with) and in example 18 with *über*:

16. *T08: dann erzählt er für [*] seine tochter über [*] die planung von ihre [*] mutter.
then he tells for his daughter about the plans of her mother
dia menceritakan rencana ibunya kepada anak perempuannya.

17. *T04: erzählen [*] sie alles mit [*] ihre [*] mutter.
she tells everything with her mother
dia menceritakan semuanya kepada ibunya.

18. *S09: dann erzählte sie ihm über [*] ihr problem.
then she tells him about her problem
kemudian dia menceritakan masalahnya kepadanya.

2. Incorrect choice of preposition

There are 46 instances⁹ in which an intransitive verb is used together with a preposition, mostly one or two instances for the same verb. In these instances this preposition was not chosen correctly. The most common verbs are *kommen*, *legen*, *bleiben* und *füllen* (come, lie, stay, fill). With the exception of *füllen* which was used with two different prepositions (*zum*, *auf*) the other verbs always govern the same prepositions in the data. To illustrate this, an example (and in case of *füllen* two examples) will be given for each of these verbs.

19. *S03: danach kommt sie nach [*] Frau Holle haus.
then she comes to the house of Frau Holle.
kemudian dia pergi ke rumah Frau Holle

20. *T13: er legt viele stein [*] zum [*] der [*] wolf bauch.

⁹ Please keep in mind that only those instances which have not been written according to standard German grammar are mentioned at all in this paper. There are, of course, many more instances of intransitive verbs which govern a preposition in the corpus, as the majority of all prepositions written were used correctly.

- he *put* many stones *to* the stomach of the wolf
dia *memasukkan* banyak batu *ke* perut serigala
21. *S13: sie *bleibt mit* [*] ihre [*] tochter .
she *stays with* her daughter dia *tinggal bersama* anak perempuannya
22. *S01: danach nahmen sie ein [*] stein und *füllten* es [*] *auf* [*] dem bauch des wolfes.
then they took a stone and *filled* it *on* the stomach of the wolf
kemudian mereka mengambil batu dan *memasukkannya ke dalam* perut serigala
23. *S13: sie *füllt* die steinen [*] *zu* [*] dem bauch des wolf [*] .
she *fills* the stones *to* the stomach of the wolf
dia *memasukkan* batu *ke* perut serigala
25. *S12: seine [*] mutter *lasst* [*] die Rotkäppchen *zur* [*] *nach* [*] grossmutter haus .
Her mother *made* Rotkäppchen *go to* grandmother's house.
Ibunya *menyuruh* Rotkäppchen *ke rumah* nenek.

In the corpus there are also two sentences which contain prepositions in a passive construction together with an intransitive verb. They differ from the above mentioned sentences insofar as a) the same structure is expressed both correctly and incorrectly (sentence 24), and b) two prepositions are used in a row (sentence 25). Take a look at examples 24 and 25:

24. *T09: sie verwirrt, denn die tür ist *von* [*] *ein* [*] bonbon, das fenster ist *aus* brot, und die decke *aus viele* [*] bonbon [*] und brot .

They are irritated because the door is *made from* candy, the window is *made of* bread and the ceiling is

As can be seen in example 24 there are three predicates mentioned, a) *von ein bonbon* (made from candy), b) *aus brot* (made of bread) and c) *aus viele bonbon und brot* (made of many candies and bread). Interestingly enough, the prepositions which were selected in this sentence are different although the grammatical structure is the same in all instances. The first predicate takes *von* (*von ein bonbon*), the preposition *von* normally being used to express a subject in a passive sentence, while the other instances take *aus* (*aus brot, aus viele bonbon und brot*) which is the suitable preposition in this construction because neither *brot* nor *bonbon* are the subjects of the sentences. German as well as English and Indonesian uses the same preposition in each of these instances. Therefore it is difficult to understand why two different prepositions were chosen here.

Another interesting use of prepositions can be found in the sentence mentioned in example 25. In this example two prepositions are used, the first one *zu* (to) already in the amalgamated form *zur* (*zu + der* (DAT))

followed by *nach* (to). In German, prepositions cannot be combined in one prepositional phrase (PP). Therefore it is impossible to have the preposition *zu* followed by *nach* in the same PP. Even if it were permitted, the amalgamated form *zur* could never be put in the first place, but only in the second place. Furthermore, as it indicates case, it is always governed by the verb (or in this case by another preposition) and as a consequence, has to follow the governing element. This differs greatly from Indonesian where it is quite common to combine prepositions as can be seen in the following example:

26. Dia meletakkan koran *ke atas* meja.
He puts the newspaper *on top of* the table.

3. Prepositions used with transitive verbs

In the corpus there are 42 instances in which a transitive verb which does not require a preposition is used together with one. Most verbs occur only once, except for the verbs *treffen* (meet, 12 tokens), *heiraten* and *besuchen* (marry, visit, both 8 tokens). All of them take the same preposition, namely *mit* (with) at all times. See examples 27 - 29 for an illustration.

27. *T04: dann treffen sie mit [*]
apfelbaum.¹⁰
then they *meet with* apple
tree.
kemudian mereka *bertemu*
dengan pohon apel.
28. *S21: der könig heiraten [*] mit
[*] dem mädchen.
the king *marries with* the
girl.

¹⁰ Please remember that the students are retelling a fairytale. Therefore it is no problem at all to talk to inanimate objects like an apple tree.

si raja menikah dengan gadis itu.

29. *T01: Rotkäppchen muss zu [*]
ihrer [*] großmutter besuchen.
Rotkäppchen has to *visit to*
her grandmother
Rotkäppchen harus
berkunjung ke neneknya.

4. Discussion

Let us now take a look at possible explanations concerning the above mentioned usage of prepositions. As can be seen from the examples, there are several different German prepositions which were used by the students to express a thought. When one looks at the Indonesian translation though, it is remarkable to note that there are some Indonesian prepositions which dominate the structures, namely *kepada* (to (for human)), *ke* (to (for inanimate or inhuman)), *untuk* (for), *dengan* (with), *dari* (from) and *tentang* (about).

As can be seen in table 1, there are various German prepositions which can be expressed by the same Indonesian preposition. It is therefore difficult for Indonesian students to choose the appropriate preposition. One has to keep in mind that although the translation may be the same, the usage may vary greatly. Most prepositions governed by the verbs are lexicalised and need to be learned by heart.

Interestingly enough, there are only a few instances of *di* (on/at) in the corpus. In Indonesian many expressions of locations, for example, involve the prepositions *di*, *ke*, *dari* (on/at, to, from), which are then combined with other prepositions to state the concrete position in a more detailed way (see table 2 for an illustration). Table 2 exemplifies the

Indonesian	German	English
di dinding	<i>an der Mauer</i>	on the wall
di atas dinding	<i>auf der Mauer</i>	on top of the wall
di belakang dinding	<i>hinter der Mauer</i>	behind the wall
di dalam dinding	<i>in der Mauer</i>	in the wall
di sebelah dinding	<i>neben der Mauer</i>	at the side of the wall
di atas dinding	<i>über der Mauer</i>	above the wall
di bawah dinding	<i>unter der Mauer</i>	under the wall
di depan dinding	<i>vor der Mauer</i>	in front of the wall
di antara dinding dan xy	<i>zwischen der Mauer und xy</i>	between the wall and xy

Table 2: expression of location

use of the preposition *di* (on/at) in combination with another preposition. As can be seen, the German equivalents differ greatly, there is no instance in which a similar preposition or a combination of prepositions is used. The students who are studying German as a foreign language have a big learning task at their hands when they are confronted with the use of prepositions. It is notable that they made comparatively few mistakes here. This may be explained with the somewhat similar structure in both languages; both Indonesian and German require a certain preposition together with the verb.

The situation differs greatly when the structure in Indonesian differs from the German structure, i.e. when the Indonesian verb requires a preposition but in the German translation a transitive verb has to be used. Take for example the verbs *heiraten* (to marry) or *treffen* (to meet). In approximately 99 % of the instances where these verbs are used, both in classroom discussions or in written texts, the German sentence will inevitably be combined with the preposition *mit* (with) as is required in the Indonesian translation (*menikah dengan* (to marry with somebody) or

bertemu dengan (to meet with somebody)):

30. *Goethe *heiratet mit* Christiane Vulpius.
 *Goethe *marrys with* Christiane Vulpius.
 Goethe *menikah dengan* Christiane Vulpius
31. *Anne *trifft mit* Ben.
 *Anne *meets with* Ben.
 Anne *bertemu dengan* Ben.

This problem occurs very frequently and can be found in the expressions of nearly every student.

The same difficulty occurs with verbs that can use two objects, an indirect as well as a direct object. This is even more interesting as the Indonesian grammar also has this kind of verbs like *menyewakan* (to rent something to somebody), *meminjamkan* (to lend something to somebody), see examples 32a and 33a:

32. a) Pak Hari menyewakan saya rumahnya.
 Mr. Hari rents his house to me.
 b) Pak Hari menyewakan rumahnya kepada saya.
 Mr. Hari rents his house to me.
33. a) Sika meminjamkan adiknya jam tangan.

Sika lends her watch to her younger sibling.

b) Sika *meminjamkan* jam tangan kepada adiknya.

Sika lends her watch to her younger sibling.

Examples 32a and 33a can also be stated using a preposition as shown in examples 32b and 33b. It looks as if these are the preferred structures, the students seem to avoid two objects with one verb although grammatically the Indonesian sentence is structured perfectly. The problem that occurs here is that in German the structures involving the preposition are very uncommon. As a result, one regularly uses the verb form with both the direct and the indirect object attached without using a preposition.

D. Conclusion

It has been shown that Indonesian students are likely to transfer a grammatical structure they know from their own language, namely the use of prepositions, to the new language they are learning, in this case German. This poses few problems if the structures are similar in both languages. The picture changes if the structures are different. It seems to be very difficult for Indonesian students to leave their own language behind and to concentrate only on the target language. As a result of this research one can conclude that teachers of German as a foreign language have to build an awareness that grammatical structures not only *can*, but in fact *do* differ in both languages. They must put an emphasis on the fact that the usage of prepositions in German, especially those which are governed by a verb,

follow different rules from the Indonesian grammar.

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