

DELVING INTO EFL STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSLATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AT BORNEO TARAKAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research was to analyze translation errors and difficulties based on the implementation methods used by the students. This research applied a type of qualitative research with a case study model. The sample of the research consisted of six interviewees, consisting of three students from class A1 and three others from class A2 of the sixth semester at the Department of English Education, Borneo University Tarakan. The instruments were the interview guide and documentation (students' academic reports). In the process of analyzing the translation, the researcher used the translation method based on Newmark's theory. The results showed that the students only used two methods to translate the text the word-for-word translation method and the free translation method. The research results indicated that the students who used the free translation method produced different translation results due to their creativity and understanding of similar contexts. Students also had difficulty with the use of free translation in determining the correct grammar and context for the sentence. On the contrary, the users of the word-for-word translation method have similar translation results among students who refer to the literal word translation method, most of them also have translation results that are out of the context of the sentence in terms of the literal meaning of the source language to the target language. Students also expressed difficulties with word-for-word translation, with students struggling to find the context of the sentence and the correct use of grammar for their translations.

Keywords: Case Study, Translation, Translation Method

INTRODUCTION

English is regarded as a foreign language in Indonesia. As a result, it is difficult for kids to grasp and master a foreign language (Sulistiyo, 2016; Susanty et al, 2021; Masduqi et al.,2021). Several points are causing Indonesian people to need help learning English; for instance, the composition and structure of the written form presented in Indonesian will differ when it is translated into English. Therefore, EFL users need the ability to translate words or sentences into good ones in the form of text and spoken videos or the like available in English. Dealing with the

mentioned statement, to understand the material in academic context optimally, EFL students must accurately translate the content of the material being studied in their department. Thus, the ability to translate text is highly required (Huffmaster & Kramersch, 2019) to gain and proceed with the information for academic purposes. Moreover, having good translation skills can provide personal and professional benefits. Translation skills enable translators to communicate with people who speak different languages (Oliver et al., 2021).

Regarding the research focussing on translation, many studies have investigated that EFL students need assistance in translating the source language into the target language. The result show that students needed more alternatives to support translating English words with multiple meanings or applying them in different contexts (Towairesh et al., 2021).

Next, based on preliminary research from the observation by the researcher in English-Indonesian Translation class, sixth-semester students of English Department at Borneo Tarakan University. The researcher focused on the activities carried out by the lecturer during the course. Students translate a topic regarding language application in products and are expected to explain why they applied specific terms to the connected topic. This activity should improve students' understanding of translating some English words into Indonesian. Students need help translating the English language to Indonesian since their translating skills are lacking, which brings more obstacles for them in translating longer English text to Indonesian. Moreover, students need clues about choosing the best translation strategies to be applied to their translation activities, which makes their translation results harder and less accurate.

The translation process focused on natural, word-to-word, and sentence translation during teaching and learning activities. In addition, after the researcher finished observing the classroom activities, the researcher is supposed to ask several students about their challenges in translating English into Indonesian. Some common mistakes include inappropriate sentence structure, inappropriate word translation, a problem with English idioms and phrases, and a lack of vocabulary. Based on this initial observation, the students in English-Indonesian Translation are pretty active and still need a lot of practice and understanding in translating words. However, it is necessary to take a diverse and individualized approach to ensure their development in English Translation.

METHOD

This research applied a type of qualitative research with a case study model. According to Yin (2015), a case study was an empiric inquiry investigating fading barriers between phenomena to clarify them by utilizing several authentic pieces of evidence as the source. This research also conducted an explanatory case study

This research centralized the students' English education major, which belongs to the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Universitas Borneo Tarakan. The research process was held in one of the classrooms in the English major class in December 2023. there were six interviewees, which consisted of three students from class A1 and three students from class A2 of sixth-semester students in the English Education Department Borneo Tarakan University. The respondents were students who had taken a translation course. The researcher conducted purposive sampling to select the respondents. The researcher selected the interviewees based on the fact that these students were involved in a translation class and also had a mid-average level of knowledge of translation in the English–Indonesian translation class. This research also selected the participants by convenience sampling, which involved the motivational feelings of the researcher and the participants

In its application there are two instruments were used to take the data, those were interview and documentation. The researcher was supposed to interview to ask the research participants questions about the research problems. Furthermore, (Creswell, 2012) stated that an interview was a process of asking one or more participant's questions, which involved throwing questions to the participants and recording participants' answers. The type of interview applied in this study was a structured interview. The interview process involved six interviewees, three of whom were students from class A1 and three from class A2, who were students in translation classes at the Universitas Borneo Tarakan. The table below shows the participants of this research interview.

Table 1. List of Participants

No	Participants Name	Gender	Semester	Class
1.	SM	Female	6 th	A2
2.	As	Male	6 th	A2
3.	MA	Female	6 th	A2
4.	NRS	Female	6 th	A1
5.	Ab	Male	6 th	A1
6.	MRS	Male	6 th	A2

Documentation was required to supplement and strengthen the interview data that the researcher had conducted in this study. These documents were students' assignment report analysis from students' tasks that were taken before the interview was conducted; the researcher collected the data from students' tasks by taking a sentence to be analyzed, then voice recording was applied during the interview held to support interview result to be more accurate, pictures are taken while the interview was running in order to serve evidence of doing the interview.

The technique data analysis employed in this study is components of the phenomenological interactive model were as follows: data reduction, data display, and verification and conclusions. Furthermore, the study was carried out by merging the interactive ways of the aforementioned key components. Technical data analysis was performed in this study at the time of data collection and after the data collection was completed within a particular time frame. The researcher would undertake an analysis of the interviewee's responses during the interview.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The findings were split into two sections; the first section elaborates on research findings. Subsequently, the researcher explains the error analysis of students' text translation results from Indonesian to English. Additionally, this section also highlights the results of students' interviews in order to address the first and second research questions. Next, the second section focuses on the discussion of the research findings.

The researcher has gathered information to be analyzed as a basis for addressing the first research question. The official documents were taken in the form of students' assignments, which were done in translation class in the sixth semester. The researcher revealed the findings about the students' difficulties and the benefits of using their particular translation method in the process of text translation. When the researcher asked the participants' opinion about the translation method they had used in translation class, 6 participants three chose word-for-word translation for their method, and the other 3 participants preferred to apply a free translation method. These participants selected the methods depending on their capability of analyzing the target language so as to help them have a good translation process; their reason for translation difficulties also have several similarities.

A. The Translation Error in English - Indonesian Translation Course

1. Free Translation Method

The translation aforementioned analyzed by the researcher then revealed that she used a free translation method. Additionally, there was an error made by the participant. Nevertheless, the mistake was not on the grammar rule of the sentence, but the mistake existed on the delivering information of the sentence. For example, the sentence of "*the outer layer and consists chiefly of dead, dry, flattened cells that rub off occasionally*" is meant to inform a fact that the outer layer has dead, dry, and flattened cells that rip off occasionally. In contrast, the translation

result of SM added the lesser information as follows: “*lapisan terluar dan terdapat sel kulit mati dan kering yang akan terkelupas di saat-saat tertentu*”. The previous translation showed that there was no information about “*flattened cells consisting of the outer layer*”. The result was identified as free translation since several words were not translated literally from the SL to TL dealing with the original context of the sentence. Thus, there were missing parts emerging in the translation result.

The translation result was made by MA. The researcher had identified the translation result was done by using a free translation method, there were words not translated literally to improve the context of the SL sentence to TL. For instance, a sentence wrote down “The dermis is the deeper layer and consists of living cells of connective tissue” which means “*bagian dermis adalah lapisan dalam dan terdiri dari sel-sel hidup yang membentuk jaringan penghubung*”. On the other hand, MA had translated the sentence into “Dermis adalah terdiri dari sel sel hidup yang terhubung jaringan “in which some conjunctions that were not translated literally such as “and” means “*dan*”, but MA translated the conjunction into “yang”. Those were changed by MA without changing the sentence’s context. The use of free translation in the sentence had brought mistakes to the TL. MA had made mistakes on a sentence “The dermis is the deeper layer and consists of living cells of connective tissue” which was translated to be “*Dermis adalah lapisan terdalam yang terdiri dari sel sel hidup yang terhubung jaringan*” the mistakes indicated by the researcher spotted on the words of “deeper layer” and “living cells of connective tissue”, these two words were supposed to be “*lapisan lebih dalam*” and “*sel-sel hidup dari jaringan ikat*”.

NSA used a free translation method due to the several words that did not literally translate which were replaced with other similar words in the same context, for instance “consists chiefly of dead, dry, flattened cells that rub off occasionally. More cells are produced” and “the lowest layer being the cells that contain stored fat” these sentences were translated by MA into “*terdiri dari sel sel mati, kering, dan sel yang kadang terkelupas. sel lainnya adalah sel yang di produksi*” and “*lapisan paling bawah dari sel terdiri dari lemak*”. After analyzing the sentences, it had number of mistakes with the application of free translation on its translation process, a sentence which was supposed to be translated into “*terdiri dari sel sel pipih yang telah kering dan mati, yang selalu mengelupas*”, the mistakes made by NSA after utilizing free translation on the sentence were delivering less information about the sentence and there was a misunderstanding toward the sentence meaning.

The result of students’ assignment report above is showing that students who are using free translation method to help them having a translation activity is mostly run the translation process by looking for more general view of the sentence from SL – TL, students are seemed to gain the whole context of a sentence rather than having the meaning of each word to translate as how word for word is running. The

way the students' translation results represent the TL were freely formed from their ideas nevertheless those are still in the same context and meaning of the sentence

2. Word for Word Method

Another translation method chosen by students is word for word translation method, based on their preferences on choosing this method is still related to the previous expert's statement about word for word method. There are several results which have been taken from students' assignments in translation class. These showed for being analyzed by researchers to have a clearance toward their translation method through a sentence.

The translation from As result analyzed by the researcher to find the mistakes of its result. Researcher found the translation method used was word for word, the application of literal meaning of words on most sentences were the evidence of the application of word for word. As sentence "the lowest layer being the cells that contain stored fat" was translated into "*lapisan terendah menjadi sel-sel yang mengandung lemak tersimpan*" this translation result was focusing on each word meaning to be translated, but the translation should be "*lapisan terdalam adalah sel-sel yang mengandung simpanan lemak*". The errors were not presented on small parts like conjunctions or any other words but the errors came from the grammar issues so that brought a miss perception toward the meaning, the translation result subsequently had errors in grammar.

The translation result from Ab indicated to use a word for word translation method, the researcher had analyzed several parts of the sentence to find the mistakes of using word for word as the method. There were two mistakes analyzed by the researcher, the wrong way of using chosen words and also there was missing information from the sentence. The transcript had shown a sentence "flattened cells that rub off occasionally" was translated by Ab into "*sel-sel rata yang kadang-kadang bergesekan*" which was supposed to be translated into "*sel-sel pipih yang telah kering dan mati, yang selalu mengelupas*". There were few differences in grammar and position on the result that were increasing the possibility of misunderstanding.

Translation result from MRS was translated by using a word for word translation method, there were not many mistakes on the result, but the chosen words were not academic to read and for grammar also had more mistakes on the result. A sentence "consists of living cells of connective tissue" the sentence translated MRS into "*sel-sel hidup dan jaringan ikat*", the mistakes had resulted from the missing understanding of words meaning and grammar rules, the translation result was supposed to be "*sel-sel hidup yang membentuk jaringan penghubung*" there was a big difference on the result above. The application of word for word that used in the sentence brought the result to be troubled on several

aspects.

The application of word for word translation method on the sentence above clearly happened to participants who also applied word for word. There are similarities on their translation result which were forming their translation process from SL – TL by finding the meaning of sentence through each word, this occasion is causing the translation result have more similarities rather than students who applied free translation with its pattern of prioritized sentence's context for translation which came with more variety result with the same meaning and context. Furthermore, the application of word for word produced translated sentences with less variety since it was focusing on the word translation rather than sentence's context.

3. Students' Difficulties in The English - Indonesian Translation Course

Based on the results of the interview, the researcher revealed the findings about the students' difficulties and the benefits of using their particular translation method in the process of text translation. When the researcher asked the participants' opinion about the translation method they had used in translation class, 6 participants three chose word-for-word translation for their method, and the other 3 participants preferred to apply a free translation method.

According to the interview, researcher had found information related to SM preferences in the translation process, ranging from the method, its advantages, its obstacles, and the way she had a translation. SM preferred to use free translation method since it is suite to her character of analyzing the text. she claimed that pretty hard to find the words with same meaning with the target language as same as her statement.

The researcher found NSA preferred to use free translation, NSA stated her habit to read the whole paragraph to understand the context is suite to the model application of free translation which helped her to have wider context to the target language. NSA's obstacle on the application of grammar for her translation process. A step to overcome NSA's issue was utilizing technology for instance google translate in order to increase the accuracy of translation results.

The researcher found MA was preferring to apply free translation for translating a text to the target language. MA felt the method helped her to put more creativity on the text and develop the context based on her ideas, the helps of google translate involved on her translation process to maximize the result to the target language. In the other hand, MA struggled a lot in putting correct grammar on the sentences for equal translation to target language.

The researcher to look for the information from interview with As and found that As prefers to apply word-for-word method since it is easy for him to create a sentence in target language by focusing on words. As explains this method is also

challenging since it's harder to find the equal meaning when translating a text word-for-word, especially for having a correct context from the same sentence.

Ab stated information based on the interview result related to Ab preference on having a translation process. Ab found it is easy to apply word for word method since the application is involving literal meaning between source language and the target language. This interview also revealed the obstacle of using word for word method is coming from his lack vocabulary understanding. This interview also revealed the obstacle of using word for word method is coming from his lack vocabulary understanding.

Last, as the sixth participant was named as MRS, the interview result indicated a preference for analyzing the most suitable method for translating each text. Word for word is the most used method by him because of its easiness application which helps him in having translation process. The challenge he found was only the result that he produces by using a word for word method that sometimes has the worst contextual meaning to the target language.

DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the participants' translation, it was found that the methods used by participants in translating based on Newmark's theory there were two methods that were used dominantly by participants in the translation process, as follows: word-for-word translation and free translation method. In word-for-word translation, three participants (As, Ab, MRS) translated into the target language by single word in most common meaning and did preliminary translation (pre-translation) word for word, then reconstructed into a translation of appropriate expression. On the other hand, there were three participants (SM, MA, NSA) who used free translation; it had a longer translation than the original text. They translated the text more clearly and paraphrased in order to deliver the message of the original text to target language accurately.

Additionally, the errors made by word-for-word users were grammar issues and vocabulary mastery, with misconceptions about the meaning of the words and wrong word placement when considering sentence structure and context. Furthermore, the participants determined that the words in English were accurately viewed from the use of academic terms. The mistakes made by participants in this present writing were similar to a finding which was conducted by Sipayung et al. (2022), who found the errors were eliminating a word or grammatical element, the errors in the use of grammatical forms into the form of other grammar. They claimed the challenges they faced in translating the English instructions into Indonesian sentences were that participants were faced with word meaning challenges, and many still lacked vocabulary and had to choose appropriate meanings for unknown words (Kusumayanthi et al., 2020).

According to the interview results, it was found that there were several reasons for the difficulties faced by participants in the translation process. The participants who applied the word-for-word translation method faced obstacles in grammar and finding the proper context for the sentence. Mistakes made by word-for-word users indicate that they were still deficient in determining correct English usage (word choice) and do not understand English grammar rules (Asipi. et al., 2023). After talking about the difficulties, the word-for-word users felt that using this method was able to increase their vocabulary bank, and it was easy to apply the method to the translation process. On the other hand, participants who applied the free translation method found the challenging part of using free translation is placing on finding equal words for TL and applying correct grammar. The difficulty in translating texts using free translations was that I had not yet mastered the vocabulary and was still lacking in translation activities (Sianturi et al., 2021).

As with word-for-word users, participants who were using free translation methods felt that the use of this method increased their creativity in developing a sentence and allowing for wider interpretation. Furthermore, Susilowati (2014) found that participants faced more difficulties in completing the grammar aspects of the translation process. Compared to Susilowati's research findings, the participants in the present research had constraints in selecting proper grammar to have correct translation results in TL. Both translation methods were used, ranging from word-for-word and free translation. Additionally, the aforementioned research and the present research have similar problems, specifically grammar aspects, vocabulary mastery, and terminologies.

Both translation methods that were used by the participants took on the most similar aspects to the previous research that was conducted. Mostly, the obstacles participants faced were always related to grammar, vocabulary knowledge, several idioms, and deciding a proper comprehension for the translation process. The result is similar to Muyassaroh (2022), who revealed students found that the primary challenges they encountered in their translation endeavors included technical obstacles, pragmatic hurdles, issues reliant on the translator, and difficulties specific to the text itself. These issues were classified as the issues of giving correct meaning to sentences, self-skills for translation, and understanding the text, which also occurred in the previous research. Particularly, the participants stated that the translation process was challenging to have a correct understanding of the sentence due to the available context. Moreover, participants found it quite difficult to get proper grammar and word meanings. Both of the dominant methods used by students in this research were word-for-word translation and the free translation method.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data collected that the users of the free translation method had different translation results for each translator due to their creativity, there are many different understandings of the translation results but still in the same context. On the other hand, the users of the word-for-word translation method had similar translation results, most of which were written a bit out of context. Students stated the difficulties of using word for word translation where to find proper context of the sentence and the using of grammar for their translation process, then the students were used to free translation though it was hard to apply grammar rules for better understanding to find the perfect equal words to TL.

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