Students' Strategies In Overcoming Translating Barrier

Bimo Jatikusumo, Agus Rofi'i*, Rahma Ilyas

Universitas Majalengka, Indonesia

*Coresponding Author: agusrafii@unma.ac.id

Abstract

The process of translation is not as easy as it seems. It is much more complicated. The translation result must fulfill specific criteria: accuracy, acceptability, and readability. During the translation process, the translator surely encounters some difficulties or barriers. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the students' strategies for overcoming the translation difficulties. The method of the research was a descriptive case study. The research subject was ten English Education Department students at Universitas Majalengka. The data was collected from the translation test, questionnaire, and interview. Most of the data analysis of this research was conveyed in a non-statistical study. However, the researcher provided data to see the percentage and frequencies to support the research. The results showed that the students encounter difficulties in 1) translating words that are not in the dictionary; 2) translating ambiguous words; 3) translating long sentences; 4) translating phrases; 5) translating complex sentences; and 6) translating idioms. In translating idioms, 50% used literal translation, 30% used discursive creation, and 20% used established equivalence. In translating ambiguous words, 90% used modulation, and 10 % used literal translation. In translating phrases, 40% used reduction, 20% used discursive creation, 10% used established equivalence, and 30% used generalization.

Keywords: *Translation difficulties, Translation strategies, Translation theory.*

INTRODUCTION

Translating is transferring a text from the source language to the target language without changing the meaning of the text. Supported Hoed in 2006, stated: "translating is a transfer activity in writing messages from the text of one language into another language text" (Hoed, 2006). In addition, Bassnet (2002) stated that "translation involves the rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language." Nida and Taber defined that translation consists of reproducing one language to the closest natural equivalent of the first language message, both in term of meaning and in term of style (Raena, 2010). Translating becomes an additional skill that must be acquired, especially for students majoring in English. Not only because translation becomes one of the subjects in the English major, but also it becomes one of the soft skills that will grant more value to the students who master it. Translation study is a field of study that deals with the theory, description, and application of translation. The study examines translation as an Interlingua transfer and intercultural communication. The study can also be described as an inter-discipline while touching on other diverse fields of knowledge, including comparative literature, cultural studies, gender studies, computer science, history, linguistics, philosophy, rhetoric, and semiotics. The meaning, which is different from equivalent erroneous placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance, the use of the incorrect form of a morpheme or structure, the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance, the presence of an item that must not appear in a well-formed utterance, etc. (Nur asik, 2012). There are several examples of how translation has become the only medium through which people come to know different works to expand their knowledge, such as Arabic translators that keep the ideas of ancient Greek philosophers alive throughout the Middle Ages, the translated Bible that has been translated into at least 531 languages, open translation project in TED that allow people around the world to understand their talks, offering non-English speakers to learn from some of the best educators in the world. The given examples are of some importance for translation studies in the spread of information and ideas. Furthermore,

translating activities continue to be an essential practice for developing knowledge and international exchange of culture as today's multicultural and multilingual society demands effective, efficient, and empathetic communication between languages and cultures. Translation enables effective communication between people worldwide; it is a courier for transmitting knowledge, a protector of cultural heritage, and essential to developing a global economy.

The classical taxonomy of translation techniques, strategies, and procedures dates back to 1958 and are the work of J. P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet. It consists of seven categories: borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Years later, Molina and Albir (2002) developed their theory of translation strategies based on Vinay. Darbelnet's theories included amplification, compensation, description, discursive creation, established equivalence, generalization, linguistics compression, particularization, reduction, substitution, and variation. The students need to know and recognize the kinds and purpose of the translation to determine the proper technique (Muhammad, Zaim, & Syafe'I, 2017).

The process of translation also comes with difficulties. Benfoughal (2010), in his research, categorize the translation difficulties into grammatical, lexical, stylistic, and cultural. Grammatical challenges related to the language structure, such as sentence positioning and subject positioning. Linguistic problems include difficulties translating idioms, proverbs, metaphors, ambiguous words, etc. The lack of knowledge and vocabulary mainly causes it. Stylistic difficulties refer to how the translated text is formed and molded. It relates to the personal style of the writer. Lastly, cultural challenges are associated with the cultural difference between the two languages and how the text's expression is specific only to the language, not the other language.

However, translating is not easy work. Students face difficulties or barriers in mastering translation skills like other language skills. A good translation has to fulfill some criteria such as accuracy, readability, and acceptability (Nababan, 2012). Shankar defined barriers or obstacles as the means which check the free flow of communication that may be general or technical, and there are also some reasons why barriers can be generated (Dhruv Shankar, 2014). The requirements cover the idea that good translation should completely convey the information contained in the source text. Firstly, accuracy relates to the precise understanding of the source language message and the transfer of the message as accurately as possible into the target language (Larson, 1984). Secondly, the translated text is considered acceptable if it accomplishes the natural expression of the target language. Since the formal founding of the profession in the nineteenth century, when Florence Nightingale was providing care for soldiers from all across Europe during the Crimean War, language hurdles have been an element of nursing practice. Language boundaries provide numerous difficulties for the delivery of health services in the twenty-first century, when worldwide migration rates are at record highs (Bloemraad & Sheares, 2017; Czaika & de Haas, 2013). It is achieved by assessing what is culturally appropriate for the target audience and conveying that in the translation while maintaining the original text's tone, context, and meaning. Thirdly, the text could be considered readable if the words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, and sentences of the text are easily understood by the reader of the target language. Those three processes are the process that the translator must exceed and fulfill to do a good translation.

Therefore, this study aimed to find out the students' translation quality assessment level, the difficulties that the students encounter, and the strategies that the students employ in overcoming the challenges.

METHODS

The method of this research was a descriptive case study. A case study is a research methodology that contains an in-depth understanding of an individual, process, or situation. A case study research is the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in real-life settings and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon (Gall, 2007). This research aimed to describe the students' strategies in translating and overcoming the barriers they faced. The participants are ten students of third and fourth-year students at the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Majalengka.

The data was collected from three research instruments, a test, a questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to analyze the difficulties that the students encountered in the process of translating. At the same time, the test was used to understand the students' translation quality assessment level and the strategies they use while facing translation difficulties. The questionnaire was adopted from Hadrus (2017). The questionnaire consisted of 10 items focusing on linguistic problems such as difficulties in translating ambiguous words, idioms, complex sentences, etc. The questionnaire used four scales of assessment. The result is then provided using percentages. On the other hand, the test was adopted from Jakarta Globe, which is the story excerpt of Sangkuriang, a folktale in West Java, and five idioms formulated by the researcher. The test and the questionnaire were submitted from Google Form as there was no face-to-face allowed during the time of the pandemic.

In addition, the data were triangulated from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The triangulation will provide rich data and cross-check similarities and differences across methods and data sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study discovered several findings about the students' translation results. The findings showed that the students faced some lexical and grammatical difficulties in translating. Hence, the students' mean score in accuracy is 1.4, acceptability 2, and readability 2.4. The finding also showed that 50% of the students used literal translation in translating idioms, 30% used discursive creation, and 20% used established equivalence. In translating ambiguous words, 90% used modulation, and 10 % used literal translation. In translating phrases, 40% used reduction, 20% used discursive creation, 10% used established equivalence, and 30% used generalization. The section below will provide the result of the students' translation accuracy, acceptability, and readability score.

a.   Accuracy

Table 1 Students' accuracy score

No.	Score	Frequency
1	1 (inaccurate)	6
2	2 (less accurate)	4
3	3 (accurate)	0
	Mean	1,4

The students achieved a score of 3, which means none of the translation results gives a fully accurate translation. On the other hand, 4 of the students completed a score of 2 (less correct), which means that some of the translations still have some accuracy and inaccuracy. Below is the example of accurate translation taken from S10 (Student number 10):

SL: He hunts with Tumang but does not know that the dog is his father.

TL: *Dia berburu dengan Tumang, tetapi tidak mengetahui bahwa anjing itu adalah ayahnya.*

While from the same student, the researcher found:

SL: The story's heroine is an exiled princess, Dayang Sumbi, who likes weaving to pass her time.

TL: *Tokoh utama wanita dalam cerita tersebut adalah seorang ratu yang diasingkan bernama Dayang Sumbi*

The student incorrectly translated the word "princess" into "ratu."

b.   Acceptability

Shows are that only two students achieved the acceptability level of 3 (acceptable). In comparison, six students achieved a score of 2 (less good), and two students achieved a score of 1 (unacceptable). Below is the example of natural translation taken from S10 (Student number 10):

SL: She makes a wish that she will marry whoever finds the needle for her.

TL: *Ia berjanji akan menikahi siapapun yang menemukan benang itu untuknya.*

Below is the example of an unnatural translation taken from S3.

SL: She makes a wish that she will marry whoever finds the needle for her.

TL: *Ia memberikan harapan kepada siapa saja yang dapat menemukan jarum itu akan aku nikahi ia.*

Table 2 Students' acceptability score

No.	Score	Frequency
1	1 (unacceptable)	2
2	2 (less acceptable)	6
3	3 (acceptable)	2
	Mean	2

The translation given by S10 sounds more natural. It does not feel like a translation, the language also not clumsy to be listened or to be read by the reader. While the poor grammatical structure of S3 shows unnaturalness of the translation, it sounds rough and does not belong to bahasa Indonesia.

c.   Readability

Table 3 Students' test readability score

No.	Score	Frequency
1	1 (unreadable)	1
2	2 (less readable)	4
3	3 (readable)	5
	Mean	2,4

Shows are that 5 students achieved the readability level of 3 (readable), while 4 students achieved the score 2 (less readable), and 1 students achieved the score 1 (unreadable). Below is the example of clear translation taken from S6.

Table 4 Students' difficulties

Questionnaire	Percentage (%) Option			
	1 Often	2 Sometimes	3 Seldom	4 Never
1. I have difficulty in adjusting sentence patterns that have been translated from English to Indonesian sentence patterns.	20% (2)	30% (3)	50% (5)	0%
2. I'm having trouble finding the meaning of a word that isn't in the dictionary.	10% (1)	60 % (6)	20% (2)	10% (1)
3. I find words that have multiple meanings making it difficult for me to determine which meaning is correct.	40% (4)	20% (2)	30% (3)	10% (1)
4. I have difficulty translating very long English sentences.	10% (1)	40% (4)	40% (4)	10% (1)
5. I'm having trouble translating phrases.	10% (1)	60% (6)	30% (3)	0
6. I have difficulty in assembling words in Indonesian, resulting in ambiguous sentences and difficult for readers to understand.	10% (1)	30% (3)	50% (5)	10% (1)
7. I found a convoluted pattern of English sentences that made it difficult for me to translate them into Indonesian.	10% (1)	50% (5)	40% (4)	0
8. I'm having trouble translating Idioms.	30% (3)	50% (3)	20% (2)	0
9. I found the difference between the structure of Indonesian and the structure of English, making it difficult for me to translate it.	30% (3)	20% (2)	40% (4)	10% (1)
10. I have difficulty interpreting whole sentences even though I know the meaning of each word	40% (4)	10% (1)	40% (4)	10% (1)

SL: Sangkuriang summons the spirits of his ancestors to help him finish the tasks

TL: *Ia memanggil para arwah leluhurnya untuk membantunya menyelesaikan tugas itu*

Below is the example of unclear translation taken from S3.

TL: *Sangkuriang sangat bersemangat dan meminta kepada leluhur untuk membantunya.*

The translation given by S3 is clear enough for the reader to convey that there will be some superstitious things going on in the story, while the sentence construction from S3 is less readable. The section below will provide the data from the questionnaire.

Based on table 4, the students are having difficulties in several aspects. Including; 1) searching for the meaning of words that are not in the dictionary; 2) searching for the meaning of the ambiguous word; 3) translating a long sentence; 4) translating phrases; 5) translating a complex sentence with confusing structure and pattern, and 6) translating idioms.

The difficulties that the students encounter are mostly lexical, which include collocations, idioms, proverbs, metaphors, parallelism and fronting, complex and simple styles, voicing and types of sentencing, and ambiguous word as stated by Benfoughal (2010), and Hadrus (2017).

The data also provided from the interview. According to the answers, according to the answers, the difficulties are English grammar, interpreting and translating English text when they find an unfamiliar English word, comprehending someone else's speech which is usually misheard by the student, combined with the lack of vocabulary.

The answers are provided in the following excerpt from the question "what are the difficulties in the process of translating?":

S1: "choosing the form; staying with the structure or improvising."

S2: "translating source language to target language while keeping an eye on grammatical and cultural factors, and also the wordings both languages used."

S3: "translating idioms from English to Indonesia or vice versa."

S4: "translating the ambiguous word."

Table 5 provide the data on the students' strategies.

Table 5 Strategies used in translation

Strategies	Student										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1. Borrowing	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	11
2. Calque	2	3		3	2	5		1			16
3. Literal Translation	2	9	15	19	23		25	25	19	23	160
4. Transposition	2	1									3
5. Modulation	6	11	9	6	2	20	1		9	9	73
6. Amplification	10	1	2	2	6	14	2	1			38
7. Compensation	1										
8. Description					1		1				2
9. Discursive Creation	1	1									2
10. Established Equivalence	4	1	1			1			1		8
11. Generalization	1										1
12. Linguistics Compression	1										1
13. Particularization						1				1	2
14. Reduction	9	3	13		6	2	2	4	1	1	41
15. Substitution/Adaptation		1	1	1	2		1	1	1	1	9
16. Variation											0

The most frequently used strategy of translation in narrative text and idiom is a literal translation by 160 times, followed by modulation, reduction, amplification, calque, borrowing, substitution/adaptation, established equivalence, transposition, particularization, discursive creation, description, generalization, linguistics compression, and variation. The strategies the students use to overcome translating difficulties will be discussed below.

a) Translating idiom

SL: **The early bird catches the worm**

TL: Siapa cepat dia dapat.

The idiom exists in both languages; furthermore, the proper strategy that should be used in this example is Equivalence/Reformulation/Established Equivalence. However, because of the lack of knowledge and lack of understanding of the students, 50% of the students used literal translation, and 30% used discursive creation. In comparison, 20% used the proper strategy, which is established equivalence.

b) Translating ambiguous word

SL: **The name is taken from a local legend similar to the classical Greek tragedy "Oedipus Rex."**

TL: Nama ini diambil dari cerita rakyat yang ceritanya mirip dengan tragedi klasik Yunani "Oedipus Rex"

The word 'bears' is ambiguous, 1) (of a person) carried; and 2) a large, heavy mammal. It is an easy-to-spot ambiguous word if we look at the context of the sentence. However, a person lacking knowledge and understanding used a literal translation strategy and translated the word 'bears' as an animal. In translating ambiguous words, 90% used modulation, and 10 % used literal translation.

c) Translating a phrase and an ambiguous word

SL: **The story's heroine is …**

TL: *Tokoh utama cerita ini adalah …*

The word 'heroine' is not only ambiguous but also confusing to people who do not know the equivalent in the target language. In translating the phrase, 40% of the students used reduction, which is removing the word 'heroine' from the target language, 20% used discursive creation, which replaces the word 'heroine' with 'tokoh Utama,' 10% used established equivalence which is 'Wanita hebat,' and 30% used generalization which generalized the word with 'tokoh utama perempuan.' The use of reduction and discursive creation makes the accuracy level of the translation less accurate but still readable.

The findings demonstrated that the students have trouble interpreting 1) terms that are not in dictionaries, 2) ambiguous words, 3) lengthy sentences, 4) phrases, 5) complex sentences, and 6) idioms. Among those who translated idioms, 50% employed literal translation, 30% discursive creativity, and 20% established equivalence. 90% of the time, modulation was employed when translating unclear terms, and 10% literal translation. 40 percent of the time when translating sentences, reduction was used, followed by discursive construction (20 percent), established equivalence (10 percent), and generalization (30 percent).

CONCLUSION

The research concluded that 50% of the students used literal translation in translating idioms, 30% used discursive creation, and 20% used established equivalence. In translating ambiguous words, 90% used modulation, and 10 % used literal translation. In translating phrases, 40% used reduction, 20% used discursive creation, 10% used established equivalence, and 30% used generalization. However, the students need to know and recognize the translation's kinds and purpose to determine the proper technique.

The findings of this research are expected to be helpful information for the teachers/lecturers involved in the teaching and learning process, especially the translation subject at the university level. Furthermore, this research also could become a reference for the lecturers to teach the students how to overcome the translation barrier using the strategies.

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