

# INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSLATING INDONESIAN TEXT INTO ENGLISH IN THE FIFTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM OF MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF PURWOREJO IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2013 / 2014

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## Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyolediki kesulitan-kesulitan yang dialami mahasiswa semester lima Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo dalam menerjemahkan teks berbahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif karena peneliti akan menjelaskan fenomena kesulitan-kesulitan yang dihadapi mahasiswa semester lima pendidikan bahasa Inggris di kelas English-Indonesian Translation. Melalui penelitian ini telah ditemukan bahwa dalam menerjemahkan bahasa Indonesia ke dalam bahasa Inggris para mahasiswa masih menemui kesulitan khususnya dalam menentukan pilihan kata yang tepat dan dalam menggunakan kompetensi gramatika mereka. Kesulitan-kesulitan tersebut dialami karena para mahasiswa masih sangat terpengaruh oleh bahasa pertama mereka, bahasa ibu mereka (bahasa Indonesia). Kesadaran linguistik para mahasiswa masih rendah. Mereka tidak menyadari bahwa bahasa Inggris sangat berbeda dengan bahasa Indonesia. Selain itu, melihat hasil terjemahan siswa, para mahasiswa masih gagal dalam melalui ketiga proses penerjemahan yang diajukan oleh Larson. Para mahasiswa masih belum bisa mempelajari dengan baik kata-kata dalam bahasa sumber, struktur gramatika bahasa sumber dan konteks dari bahasa sumber. Dengan demikian mereka tidak bisa menentukan arti dari pesan yang disampaikan dalam bahasa sumber. Lebih lanjut lagi mereka tidak bisa merekonstruksi pesan yang sama dengan menggunakan kata-kata dan struktur gramatika dan konteks budaya bahasa sasaran. Singkatnya, terjemahan mereka menjadi tidak natural dan tidak berterima. Terakhir, meskipun mereka telah berhasil lulus dalam beberapa mata kuliah dasar bahasa Inggris yang logikanya bisa membuat bahasa Inggris mereka lebih baik, kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka masih buruk. Karena masih banyak kesalahan-kesalahan sepele dalam menerjemahkan bahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Inggris yang para mahasiswa buat di level semester lima ini maka kemampuan berbahasa Inggris mereka masih dipertanyakan.

**Kata kunci:** pesan, terjemahan, kesulitan

## INTRODUCTION

Translation is considered as the fifth skill in learning the foreign language besides the other four language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Mastering translation is important for the students of English Education Program since they learn the foreign language – English.

In Muhammadiyah University of Purworejo (UMP) the translation subject is offered twice as the compulsory subject; they are Indonesian – English Translation and English – Indonesian Translation. Each has two credit semester (SKS) in each semester. The both translation subjects are offered in the fourth and fifth semesters of course after the students previously passed several basic courses in advanced – grammar; writing; reading. Logically, their capability must get some improvement after taking some of the English basic courses. In fact, most of the students produce unacceptable English when they translate any Indonesian text into English. They still make many mistakes in comprehending the meaning of the ST and in reconstructing it in the form of TT.

Translating involve several processes and considerations in producing the good translation. However, it seems that the students of English Education Program of Muhammadiyah University of Purworejo do not realize about this. They do not really understand that translation is the really complex activity. They may think that translating is simply only the process of changing the SL word into TL word. That is why they make their translation simply by bringing their Indonesian thinking into English. The grammatical system they used is sometimes unacceptable, and their lexical choices are also only from finding the meaning in such a bilingual dictionary without considering the use of the words. Consequently, their translation sometimes is not acceptable even it sounds too Indonesian.

Therefore, through this research the researcher would like to find out the answer for the following research question – *What are the difficulties faced by the English students in translating Indonesian text into English?* Further it is expected that there will be some solutions concerning to resolve the difficulties experienced by the students especially in translating Indonesian text into English.

*The Nature of Translation*, Newmark in Budianto and Fardhani (2010: 2) defines translation as a craft consisting in attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language. In his definition, he emphasizes that the essential thing in translation is the

message. The translation should convey the same message as the message of the source language (SL) presented.

A good translation should sound like the original text. Budianto and Fardhani (2010:3) state that translation flows naturally as if it is originally written in the target language. The grammar and vocabulary used in the translation are not strange and awkward. Therefore, in doing the translation one should make sure that he or she has taken several considerations to make some adjustments in the context of the target language in order to result in good and natural translation.

#### *Translation Process*

Larson (1998: 3) states that translation process consists of the following processes: (1) Studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text; (2) Analyzing it in order to determine its meaning; and (3) Reconstructing this same meaning by using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context.

Viewing the definition and the process of translation above, the translator and/or the student should analyze the source text by studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source text in order to find the conveyed meaning/message in the text and then convey the same message in the target language in the lexicon and structure of the target language.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This is qualitative descriptive research. This research is conducted to give the verbal description of the students' difficulties in translation Indonesian text into bahasa Indonesia.

The object of this research is students' English translation work of an Indonesian text. This research deals with the fifth semester students taking Indonesian – English Translation Class in English Education Program of Muhammadiyah University of Purworejo.

In this research the researcher used documentation as the instrument of the research. Translation test is considered appropriate to find out the weaknesses and the students' difficulties in translating Indonesian text into English. In addition, considering that this is descriptive qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument of this research because he would analyze and describe the phenomena of students' difficulties in doing the translation from bahasa Indonesia into English.

*Research Procedures*, this research is conducted through several procedures. The following are the steps/procedures of this research: (1) Preparing the text to be translated by the students; (2) Having the students to translate the prepared text into English; (3) Analyzing and Correcting the students' works; (4) Giving the verbal description of the students' errors and mistakes to find out their difficulties in doing the translation.

In order to ease the researcher in doing the analysis, every sentence in the text were numbered. Then, the researcher displayed all the variations of students' translation for every sentence. After that, the researcher described the errors in the students' translation and explained the students' difficulties by seeing the occurred errors made by the students.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher visualized every original sentence and its translated version before giving the verbal description about the students' difficulties in doing the translation. The following are the findings and the description given by the researcher after analyzing the students' translation.

### 1) *Pilihan kata merupakan unsur yang penting dalam penerjemahan.*

Table 1. The Students' Translation of the First Sentence

<i>Students' translation</i>	<i>Comments</i>
• <i>Word choice is an important element in translation.</i>	<i>Correct</i>
• <i>Diction is an important element in translation.</i>	<i>Correct</i>
• <del>Word selection</del> <i>is important element in translation.</i>	<i>Not common</i>
• <i>Word choice is a main element in translation.</i>	<i>Wrong</i>

• The word choice is element <del>which important</del> in translation.	Wrong
• <del>Choosing word</del> is <del>one's</del> of <del>the element very important</del> in translation.	Wrong
• <del>Optional word</del> is an important part in translation.	Wrong
• <del>Choosing word</del> is an important <del>unsure</del> in translation.	Wrong
• <del>Checking word</del> is an important <del>unsure</del> in translation.	Wrong
• Word choice is <del>the most important element</del> in translation.	Wrong
• Diction is <del>importance unsure</del> in <del>interpretation</del> .	Wrong

In translating the first sentence the students make some errors. First, the phrase “*pilihan kata*” should be translated into “*word choice*” or “*diction*”. In fact, some students make the wrong translation into “*selection word*” which gives no meaning at all; “*choosing word*” which means “*memilih kata*”; “*checking word*” which is “*mengecek kata*”, and “*optional word*” which means “*kata pilihan*”. Those students’ translations give the different meaning. In addition, to translate “*pilihan kata*” into “*word selection*” and “*the choice of word*” is not common, so the translation became unnatural. In fact, there are some students do so. From these phenomena, it can be seen that it is still difficult for the students to find out the equivalence for the Indonesian phrase of “*pilihan kata*” in English.

Second, the phrase “*unsur yang penting*” should be translated into “*an important element*”. Meanwhile, there are some students translating it into “*element which important*”. That translation is grammatically incorrect. In English the word “*important*” is an adjective, so it is necessary to put the “*to be*” (is) before the word “*important*” in that clause to be grammatically correct. In the students’ translation, it can be seen that the student omits the “*is*” in that translation. In addition, actually translating “*unsur yang penting*” into “*element which is important*” is not common one. It will be more natural English if it is translated as the noun phrase “*the important element*”. It is simply done by combining the adjective “*important*” preceding the noun “*element*” as the headword.

The other, some of the students translated the phrase “*unsur yang penting*” into “*important substance*”; “*important unsure*”. To choose the word “*substance*” and “*unsure*” to change the word “*unsur*” in the context of that phrase is not suitable. *Unsure* and *substance* are not something to do with the topic being discussed in the text.

The worse thing happened; some students even added the unnecessary words in translating the phrase “*unsur yang penting*” into “~~one's~~ *of the element very important*”. Beside it is grammatically incorrect the meaning of that phrase is different given in the source text (ST). Moreover, there are several students translated that phrase into “~~a main~~ *element*”. That phrase also gives the different meaning that is “*unsur utama*” not “*unsur yang penting*”. That is why, to translate “*penting*” into “*main*” in English is not suitable. Further, the researcher also found that the students translate the phrase “*unsur yang penting*” into “~~the most~~ *important element*”. It is unnecessary to add “*the most*” because the message in Indonesian version does not give any meaning that indicates “*the most*” at all. By adding “*the most*” in that phrase the students have delivered the different meaning in English. Again, these errors also show that most of the students are still confused in finding out the equivalence for the Indonesian phrase in English.

2) *Salah memilih kata dalam penerjemahan akan mengakibatkan kesalahan pesan yang disampaikan kepada pembaca.*

*Correct translation: (1) Wrong diction in translation will transfer the incorrect message to the readers; (2) Wrong diction in translation may transfer different message to the readers; and (3) Poor diction in translation may transfer different message to the readers.*

Table 2. The Students’ Translation of the Second Sentence

<i>Students’ translation</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Wrong choice of word in translation will result in an error message that is conveyed to the reader.</i></li> </ul>	<i>Not common</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del><i>Word misselection</i></del> <i>in translating will cause misunderstanding message that delivered to the reader.</i></li> </ul>	<i>Wrong</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Wrong diction in translation will be effect misunderstanding of <del>message</del> to the reader.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The mistake of word choice will cause <del>misunderstanding meaning</del> to readers.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><del>Mistaken when choose word</del> in translation will make <del>a miss understanding</del> to the reader.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><del>Wrong choice of word in the translation will resulted message mistake</del> which to say to the reader.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><del>Incorrect choosing word in interpretation will cause make mistake message give</del> to the reader.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><del>One mistake in the translation of the word,</del> would result in error that is presented to the reader.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><del>Incorrect choosing words in translation will be giving incorrect message extend to</del> the reader.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><del>Being wrong in translation will effect missunderstanding point delivering</del> to the readers.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><del>Mistaken choose a word in translating will be caused a wrong message delivered to the riders.</del></i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The mistake of choosing words in translating will cause the wrong message <del>that delivered</del> to the reader.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong

From the *table 2* above, it can be seen that the students' translation is all unnatural and unacceptable. The Indonesian "*salah memilih kata*" actually can be translated naturally into "*wrong diction*" or "*poor diction*". However, most of the students translated it literally into "*Wrong choice of word*"; "*word miselection*"; "*incorrect choosing word*" which they are all incorrect translation. In the translation of the second sentence many students produce grammatically incorrect English (TL). We can see in the table above there are various grammatical error made by the students. There is also wrong translation of the phrase "*kesalahan pesan*" into "*mistake*"

message” and “misunderstanding meaning”. Those two translations are both awkward and have no meaning at all.

In addition, from the result of the students’ translation in the table above it can be seen that the students still do not really understand in deciding whether they construct active sentence, passive sentence, or past participial phrase as the modifier. Take for an example when they translate “*kesalahan pesan yang disampaikan kepada pembaca*”. Many students translate it into “*mistake message that deliver to the readers*”. The underlined words should be in the passive construction since the meaning in bahasa Indonesia is passive. In addition, some students translated into “*mistake message give to the reader*”. To be grammatically correct that underlined word should be changed into past participle “*given*” because in that second translation the students actually intended to write a noun which is modified by the participial phrase.

3) *Persoalan memilih kata sering dialami setiap penerjemah sekalipun sudah berpengalaman.*

*Correct translation: (1) The problem in choosing the word is often experienced by every translator even the experienced ones; (2) The problem in diction is often experienced by every translator even the experienced ones; and (3) Good diction is still a problem to the translators even to the experienced ones.*

Table 3. The Students’ Translation of the Third Sentence

<i>Students’ translation</i>	<i>Comments</i>
• <i>The matter of choosing the word is <del>common</del> to every <del>interpreter</del> even experienced.</i>	Wrong
• <i>The problem of choosing the word <del>often happens</del> to every translator even experienced.</i>	Wrong
• <i>Problem in diction often be found on translators even <del>he/she is experience</del> on translation.</i>	Wrong
• <i><del>The question</del> of choosing words often experienced every translator though <del>already experienced</del>.</i>	Wrong
• <i>The problem of choosing <del>undergo</del> the translator even <del>experienced</del>.</i>	Wrong



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>The problem of choosing word often happened in every translator although has been expert.</del></li> </ul>	Wrong
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From *table 3* which consists of the students' translation of the third sentence the researcher still found some errors made by the students in translating the third sentence. The table shows that the translation errors occur in *lexical choices* and *grammar*.

The word "*persoalan*" in the third sentence actually refers to "*the problem*". That is why it must be translated into "*the problem*" or "*the matter*", but not "*the question*". This lexical error is occurred maybe because the students do not really pay attention to the actual meaning conveyed by the Indonesian word "*persoalan*" in the context of the third sentence above.

In addition, it is suggested that the word "*penerjemah*" in the context of that third sentence is better to be translated into "*translator*" not "*interpreter*" for the text discussed about something to do with translation. Meanwhile, the Indonesian "*sekaliapun sudah berpengalaman*" is enough to be translated into "*the experienced ones*". It should not be literally translated into "*even experienced*" and/or "*though already experienced*" because both of them are wrong and not common in English. The first one, there should be the noun after the word "*experienced*", and the noun is "*ones*". Whilst, the latter "*though already experienced*" there is no subject exist, so it is grammatically incorrect. The correct one should be "*though he/she is already experienced*". However, although it is grammatically true, it is still unnatural one. In fact, we know that the translation should be produced as natural as possible in the target language.

4) *Kesulitan – kesulitan ini diantaranya penentuan kata dengan bobot dan konotasi yang tepat, penyerapan bahasa asing, atau pemilihan istilah atau ungkapan yang tidak ada padanannya dalam bahasa Indonesia.*

*Correct translation: These difficulties include the determination of words with the equivalent quality and connotation, the naturalization, as well as term and phrase selection that have no equivalence in Indonesian.*

Tabel 4. The Students' Translation of the Fourth Sentence

Students' translation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>These difficulties that include the determination of <del>weight of words</del> and connotation <del>that appropriate</del>, the <del>absorption of foreign language</del>, or the term or idiom that <del>have not</del> equivalent in Indonesia language.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>These difficulties that include the <del>determining</del> word <del>with weight</del> and <del>connotating</del> word <del>with appropriate</del>, the <del>absorpting of foreign language</del>, or selecting the term or idiom <del>no parable</del> in Indonesian.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The difficulties <del>are</del> include the determination of <del>weight</del> and the connotation of the right word, the <del>absorption of foreign language</del>, or <del>the choice</del> of the term and phrase that there is no equivalent in Indonesian.</i></li> </ul>	Wrong

The students also made error in translating the fourth sentence in the text. Again, the errors occur in the lexical choices and grammatical structure. First in translating the Indonesian “*Kesulitan – kesulitan ini diantaranya*” (part of the fourth sentence) should be “*These difficulties include...*” The clause should be the main clause. That is why the word “*that*” in “*The difficulties ~~that~~ include...*” is unnecessary because it indicates the subordinate clause – relative clause. Whilst “*are*” in “*These difficulties ~~are~~ include...*” should be omitted. There is no need to be two verbs in sequence like that. It is grammatically incorrect. The word “*include*” is already the “*verb*” of that sentence.

Second, the word “*bobot*” refers to *quality*, so it *should not* be translated literally into “*weight*”. The word “*penyerapan*” refers to the “*naturalization*” of the language and should not be translated into the “*absorption*” which is usually used for biological term. It cannot be translated literally one to one relation like “*absorption*” for “*penyerapan*” and “*weight*” for “*bobot*”.

Third, there are some students wrote the conjunction “*or*” in sequence twice like in “*These difficulties that include the determining word with weight and connotating word with appropriate, the absorpting of foreign language, or selecting*”

the term or idiom...". It is unacceptable, so to produce a good translation it suggested that the students should do the grammatical and lexical adjustment in translating the fourth sentence above for example by translating the second "atau" into "as well as".

5) Untuk mengatasi kendala – kendala tersebut diperlukan kemampuan berbahasa Indonesia, salah satunya terampil memilih kata (diksi), sehingga terjemahannya dapat berterima.

Correct translation: (1) To overcome these constraints, translators are required to master in diction and bahasa Indonesia to produce natural translation and (2) To overcome these constraints, it is required for the translator to master in diction and bahasa Indonesia to produce natural translation.

Table 5. The Students' Translation of the Fifth Sentence

Students' translation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To overcome these constraints, <del>___</del>required the ability <del>to speak Indonesian</del>, one of them is skillfully selecting the acceptable translation.</li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To overcome that obstacles <del>___</del>needed <del>Indonesian ability</del>, one of them <del>are</del> competent in diction, until his <del>translation acceptable</del>.</li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To solve the constraint <del>___</del>needed Indonesian capability, one of them is <del>skilled choice word</del> (diction), until translation <del>can acceptable</del>.</li> </ul>	Wrong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need a ability <del>to speak Indonesian</del> to solve this problem <del>like able to choose word</del> (diction) so the translation is acceptable</li> </ul>	Wrong

It can be seen from table 5 that the first three English translations are grammatically incorrect. The students omitted the subject which should be put preceding the verb "required" and "needed". Whilst the correct one should be "To overcome these constraints, it is required for the translator to master in diction and bahasa Indonesia to produce natural translation." The students' translation shows that they forget the subject it which can be the anticipatory subject.

In addition, there is also lexical error made by the students in translating "kemampuan berbahasa Indonesia" in that last sentence. It should not be translated into "the ability to speak Indonesian" since it does not only refers to the ability to

speak but “*the ability to master bahasa Indonesia*”. We can also see the wrong translation of “*sehingga terjemahannya dapat berterima*” into “*until translation ~~can~~ acceptable*”. The word “*can*” is a *modal* which should be followed by the bare infinitive verb, and not directly the *adjective*. This shows that the students still have a lack of grammatical awareness.

## CONCLUSION

From all the analysis and the description above, the researcher can draw several inferences. First, in doing the translation from bahasa Indonesia into English, the students still make many errors, especially lexical and grammatical errors.

From the students’ translation the researcher also can see that the students still get much influence from their first language, their mother tongue – bahasa Indonesia. Consequently, though they made English translation, their translation still sounds too Indonesian. They bring their Indonesian grammatical system in constructing their English translation, so the translation is sometimes unnatural even unacceptable. Further, the goal of translating is not achieved yet because the translation is still considered as the unnatural/unacceptable translation.

It can be seen also that the students still make many basic mistakes especially in deciding the lexical choices; grammatical structures and make some other errors in the trivial items. Therefore, it can be concluded also that the students still have a lack of linguistic awareness. They do not really realize that English is so distinct to bahasa Indonesia that they cannot always translate every word literally into English or directly adopt the Indonesian grammatical system in their English construction. They should make grammatical adjustments based on the grammatical system and lexical adjustment of English as the target language.

Seeing the result of the students’ translation the students still experience the failure in all three processes of translation given by Larson. The students cannot study well the lexicon, grammatical structure, the context of the source language text. Consequently, they cannot analyze them well in order to determine the meaning. Further, they do not do well the process of reconstructing the same meaning by using

the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context.

They may have passed several basic courses like grammar, writing, and reading, which logically should train them to be better English learners. In fact, seeing the basic and trivial errors they made in doing their English translation, their capability in English is still questionable.

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