

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLOCATIONAL AWARENESS TO LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN TRANSLATION

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Abstract

Translation is a bridge to connect two different cultures by the conversion of linguistic system, a medium that enables people to interact well with others coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To make a translated text more natural, acceptable, and readable, the awareness and mastery of collocations should be taken into account. A translator should understand that this word, for example, collocates with that word or that word always comes with this word. A student of English or a translator should be aware of this situation when translating, for example, from Indonesian into English or vice versa, that the translated text sounds natural to native speakers of English. Therefore, in translating a text, especially from Indonesian into English, collocations play an important role. If we do not increase our collocational awareness in English, it is quite hard to produce native-like expressions in the target language, English. The hardest part when we deal with translation is on how to make readers become unaware that they are reading a translated text.

Key words: English, collocations, translation, translated text

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that it is important for us to learn the language. Today, the world has become very global, so English is inevitably a must to learn and master. Although in Indonesia it is still considered as a foreign language, yet due to the advancement of today's age it does not feel really "foreign" since many kinds of books, as sources of knowledge, are written in English. That is why English is quite an interesting and promising field to study because whatever career, in the future, learners of English in particular choose to do, English cannot be avoided.

As learners of English, people will assume that they are good at using the language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, reading, and grammar. We will also assume the same thing to those studying mathematics or physics; we will consider them good at mathematics or physics.

In English learning, a teacher usually speaks bilingually, in Indonesian and English. Besides that, during the teaching and learning of the language, to make students understand and comprehend more about English sentences and/or

grammatical points for example, a teacher will translate them into English or Indonesian either in written or oral forms. However, we also need to keep in mind that learning a language means learning the culture of the language, how the language works naturally. As learners of English, based on the assumption above, in addition to speaking, writing, listening, reading, and grammar people will also consider that learners of English are good at translating Indonesian into English or vice versa. Therefore, we are sometimes faced with those asking for help in English-Indonesian or Indonesian-English translation.

Translation plays an important role in global communication. It involves at least two languages, source language and target language. Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another (Catford,1965:1). He further states that language is a patterned human behavior. It is a way, perhaps the most important way, in which human beings interact in social situations. Language-behavior is externalized or manifested in some kind of bodily activity on the part of a *performer*, and presupposes the existence of at least one other human participant in the situation, an *addressee*. The specific type of behavior in which language is manifested not only identifies the behavior as language-behavior but also defines the *medium* which the performer is using. The performer's activity most commonly takes the form of either vocal movements which generate sound-waves or hand movements which leave a visible trace. The first type of activity is a manifestation of language in the *spoken* medium – the performer is a speaker, and his addressee (s) is/are a hearer or hearers. The second type is a manifestation of language in the *written* medium – the performer is a writer, and his addressee (s) is/are a reader or readers.

Translation is a bridge to connect two different cultures by the conversion of linguistic system, a medium that enables people to interact well with others coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Vermeer (1986) (in Snell and Hornby,1988:46), has for many years vehemently opposed the view that translation is simply a matter of language: for him translation is primarily a cross-cultural transfer and in his view, the translator should be bicultural, if not multicultural, which naturally involves a command of various languages, as language is an intrinsic part of culture. He views translation as a cross-cultural event. He also states that the concept of culture as a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception is fundamental in our approach to translation. If language is an integral part of culture, the translator needs not only proficiency in two languages; he must also be at home in two cultures. In other words, he must be bilingual and bicultural.

To make a translated text more natural, acceptable, and readable, the awareness and mastery of collocations should be taken into account. A translator should understand that this word, for example, collocates with that word or that word always comes with this word. A collocation is a pair or group of words that

are often used together. These combinations sound natural to native speakers, but students of English have to make a special effort to learn them because they are often difficult to guess (Michael and O'Dell: p.6). A student of English or a translator should be aware of this situation when translating, for example, from Indonesian into English or vice versa, that the translated text sounds natural to native speakers of English. Have a look at the following examples:

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Minumlah obat ini dua kali sehari	Drink this medicine twice a day!	Take this medicine twice a day!
2) Mesin mobil ini sangat kuat.	This car has a very strong engine.	This car has a very powerful engine.

The pairs of words, *drink medicine* and *strong engine*, may not be absolutely wrong because native speakers of English will understand what those mean. They, however, sound awkward and may not be the natural collocations. Instead of saying *drink medicine* and *strong engine*, a fluent native speaker of English will say *take medicine* and *powerful engine*.

McCarthy, Michael and Felicity O'Dell: p.6 further say that it is important to learn collocations because they can: 1) give us the most natural way to say something, e.g. *smoking is strictly forbidden* is more natural than *smoking is strongly forbidden*; 2) give us alternative ways of saying something, which may be more colorful/expressive or more precise, e.g. instead of repeating *it was very cold and very dark*, we can say *it was bitterly cold and pitch dark*; 3) improve our style in writing, e.g. instead of saying *poverty causes crime* we can say *poverty breeds crime*, instead of saying *a big meal* we can say *a substantial meal*. We may not need or want to use these in informal conversations, but in writing they can give our text more variety and make it read better.

DISCUSSION

Definition of Collocation

A collocation is a predictable combination of words: *get lost*, *speak your mind*. Some combinations may be very highly predictable from one of the component words – *mineral water*, *spring to mind*. Some 'strong' collocations have the status of idioms – *shrug your shoulders* – they are not guessable. Some may be so common that they hardly seem worth remarking upon – *a big flat*, *a nice car*, *have lunch* (Lewis, 2000:51). However, a pair of words that seems unremarkable to native speakers might be sometimes a problem to a learner of English as a foreign language or translator. Because of their first language, some learners of English or translators may find *follow an exam* or *eat lunch* a more obvious choice than *take an exam* or *have lunch*.

Types of Collocations

Some common collocations a learner of English or a translator should comprehend include the following kinds: verb + noun, verb + adverb, verb + preposition, noun + noun, noun + verb, noun + preposition, adjective + preposition, adjective + noun, preposition + noun, adverb + adjective.

Verb + Noun

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Melakukan perjalanan	Do a trip	Make a trip
2) Melakukan usaha	Do an effort	Make an effort
3) Menghasilkan uang	Generate money	Make money
4) Menciptakan perdamaian	Create peace	Make peace
5) Melakukan kesalahan	Do a mistake	Make a mistake/an error

Verb + Adverb

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Hidup berbahaya	Live hazardously	Live dangerously
2) Tersenyum sopan	Smile courteously	Smile politely
3) Menutup secara perlahan/secara hati-hati	Close carefully	Close gently
4) Meningkatkan tajam	Increase sharply	Increase significantly/dramatically
5) Menurun drastik	Decrease drastically	Decrease sharply

Verb + Preposition

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Berbeda dengan	Differ with	Differ from
2) Bergantung dengan	Depend with	Depend on
3) Terdiri atas	Consist on	Consist of
4) Meminta maaf atas	Apologize on	Apologize for
5) Bicara dengan	Talk with	Talk to

Noun + Noun

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Pencipta perdamaian	Peace creator	Peace maker
2) Pecahnya perang	Break of war	Outbreak of war
3) Penyakit mental	Mental disease	Mental illness
4) Dampak rumah kaca	The greenhouse impact	The greenhouse effect
5) Perjanjian gencatan senjata	Weapon cessation agreement	Ceasefire agreement

Noun + Verb

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Dua perusahaan itu bergabung menjadi satu	The two companies join into one	The two companies merge
2) Perusahaan itu mengeluarkan produk	The company issued a product	The company launched a product
3) Pihak sekolah mengeluarkan pernyataan	The school released a statement	The school issued a statement
4) Singa meraung	Lions moan	Lions roar
5) Bomb meledak	Bomb bursts	Bomb explodes/goes off

Noun + Preposition

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Keyakinan terhadap	Belief to	Belief in
2) Takut dengan	Fear with	Fear of
3) Minat terhadap	Interest to	Interest in
4) Kecanduan pada	Addiction on	Addiction to
5) Hubungan dengan	Relevance with	Relevance to

Adjective + Preposition

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Takut dengan	Afraid with	Afraid of
2) Tertarik dengan	Interested with	Interested in
3) Marah dengan/kepada	Angry to	Angry at/with

4) Penuh dengan buku	Full with books	Full of books
5) Mirip dengan	Similar with	Similar to

Preposition + Noun

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) (Jika kamu mau datang, kasi tahu saya) sebelumnya.	(If you're going to come, please let me know) before.	(If you're going to come, please let me know) in advance.
2) (Saya menghapus datanya) secara tidak sengaja.	(I deleted the data) on accident.	(I deleted the data) by accident.
3) Sesampainya (di kantor polisi, mereka diajak ke ruang wawancara)	At arrival (at the police station, they were taken to an interview room.	On arrival (at the police station, they were taken to an interview room.
4) (Kamu naik sepeda atau) jalan kaki?	(Are you going by bicycle or) by feet?	(Are you going by bicycle or) on foot?
5) (Festival film diadakan) pada bulan Juni.	(The film festival will be held) on June	(The film festival will be held) in June

Adjective + Noun

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Pria tinggi	High man	Tall man
2) Gunung tinggi	Tall mountain	High mountain
3) Hutan lebat	Heavy forest	Dense forest
4) Hujan lebat	Dense rain	Heavy/hard rain
5) Kemajuan cepat	Fast progress	Rapid progress

Adverb + Adjective

SL	TL	
	Translation Based on Literal Meaning	Translation Based on Collocation
1) Sangat direkomendasikan	Very recommended	Highly recommended
2) Sangat kecewa	Really disappointed	Bitterly disappointed
3) Dibayar tinggi	Very paid	Highly paid
4) Sangat berterima kasih	Really grateful	Deeply grateful
5) Sangat cocok	Very suited	Perfectly suited

How to Learn Collocations

There are some ways on how to learn collocations to produce natural English as follows:

- 1) Try to recognize collocations whenever we read or listen to anything in English. please have a look at the following example:

After **giving** Mark **a lift** to the airport, Cathy **made her way** home. What an exciting **life** he **led**. At times Cathy felt **desperately jealous** of him. She **spent her time** doing little more than **taking care of** him and the children. Now her sister was **getting divorced** and would doubtless be **making demands on** her too. Cathy had promised to **give** her sister **a call** as soon as she got home but she decided to **run** herself **a bath** first. She had a **sharp pain** in her side and hoped that a hot bath might **ease the pain**.

(Taken from *English Collocations in Use*, p. 8)

- 2) Treat collocations as single blocks of language e.g. *highly skilled, think about, long for, etc.*
- 3) Read as much as possible. Reading is a good way to learn vocabularies and collocations. By reading those vocabularies and collocations will be indirectly “absorbed into” the brain that whenever we need them we will quickly recall what we have read or listened.
- 4) Learn collocations based on topics e.g. *banking, family, money, etc.* or by a particular word e.g. *look for, look up, look around, look at, etc.*
- 5) Consult a learner’s dictionary to give more information on collocations. Sometimes the information is printed in bold. The examples provided in the dictionary are the most common collocations. We can also consult a collocations dictionary e.g. Oxford Collocations Dictionary, etc.

The screenshot shows the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary - 3rd Edition interface. The search term 'interest' is entered in the search bar. The results are displayed in two columns. The left column lists various forms and related terms of 'interest', such as 'interest n INVOLVEMENT', 'interest n ADVANTAGE', 'interest n MONEY', 'interest n LEGAL RIGHT', 'interest v', 'human interest n', 'interest group n', 'interest rate n', 'self-interest n', 'special interest group n', 'vested interest n', 'interest rate n, at lending rate (n)', 'interest sb in sth', 'catch someone's attention/imagination/interest, etc.', and 'be in the general interest of marginal interest'. The right column provides a detailed definition of 'interest' with two numbered entries. Entry 1 defines 'interest' as a feeling of wanting to give attention to something or of wanting to be involved with and to discover more about something, with examples like 'I've always had an interest in astronomy' and 'He never seems to show any interest in his children'. Entry 2 defines 'interest' as activities that you enjoy doing and the subjects that you like to spend time learning about, with the example 'On his form he lists his interests as cycling, the cinema and cooking'. The interface also includes navigation buttons like 'Word Building', 'Collocations', and 'Common Learner Errors', and a 'SMART thesaurus' button.

In the dictionary above, please have a look at the words printed in bold, it turns out that the noun *interest* collocates with *have, show, lose, take, and in*.

CONCLUSION

Learners of English, especially when translating from Indonesian into English, should be aware of collocations to produce natural and acceptable translations in the target language, English. By learning and paying attention to collocations, learners of English can improve their language use that they can produce native-like expressions that sound natural. Collocations can also improve our writing style that we can express our ideas with greater power. Therefore, in translating a text, especially from Indonesian into English, collocations play an important role. If we do not increase our collocational awareness in English, it is quite hard to produce native-like expressions in the target language, English. The hardest part when we deal with translation is on how to make readers become unaware that they are reading a translated text.

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