



## Students' Difficulties in Translating Texts from English to Indonesian and Their Causes

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### Abstract

This study aims to learn and understand the difficulties faced by Universitas Negeri Padang's sixth-semester students who are translating texts from English to Indonesian. The qualitative descriptive research design is used in this study. Guidelines for the test and interview were used to get the data. The participants in this study were chosen by the researcher using cluster random sampling. Participants in this study included 20 sixth-semester English Education students at Universitas Negeri Padang who had taken a translation course and were enrolled for the 2019–2020 academic year. This research result shows that the most common difficulties that faced by students is grammatical meaning with 44,5%. In linguistic factor, 80% or 8 of 10 students felt difficult in translating text. The struggles of the students were caused by a variety of circumstances. The significance of the source text was difficult for the students to comprehend. As a result, it is difficult for them to translate it into the intended text. The finding is that linguistic issues contributed more to the students' difficulties than non-linguistic ones.

### Keywords:

Translation, Difficulties, Linguistic factor, Non-linguistic factor, Recount Text

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## INTRODUCTION

An activity of translation is important on English subjects in education. For English college students, translation is one of the subjects studied on campus. Based on my experience, the translation course is studied in the third year. To know and understand the English text being studied students have to have the ability to translate the text, so it makes student understand with the meaning well. In doing translation there are several things that are faced by the college students, one of which is students have difficulty in translating text. Some people believe that when translating, you must grasp grammar, but a competent translation requires not only grammar, but also a large vocabulary and cultural knowledge from the source language to the target language. Translation makes people easily to get information without getting confused.

Larson (1984:3) defines translation as the process of transferring meaning from one language to another. Semantics is utilized to shift from one language's form to another. Meaning must be expressed and maintained. On the basis of that justification, it can be said that translation is a procedure that simply transfers the meaning of the original language without altering its conceptual structure. Sayogi (2009) adds that translation is an attempt to determine a text's comparable meanings in both the original language and the target language. In other words, the same meaning can be found in two different languages through translation.

Translators need deeper background knowledge because they cannot solely rely on the text and dictionaries when translating literature, especially literary works. While lately working on the translation itself, it was important to take into account the various cultural influences that go into the formation of works. Making decisions in choosing expressions that are equivalent to use in translated text can cause various problems, such as loss and acquisition of meaning. Additionally, there are some factors that can affect how well a translation from English to Indonesian is produced.

Firstly, Some students find it challenging to translate while going from the source language to the target language. Students frequently have trouble translating from the source language into the target language, according to Soemantri (2011: 104). This is particularly true for those for whom English is not their first language, such as college students.

Secondly, Usually students have difficulty in translating the text presented in the translation course because of several factors such as text that is too long, grammatical errors, lack of English vocabulary. According to Napu (2019), the translation problems involved several linguistic aspects. the linguistic elements, such as grammatical issues, lexical decisions, rhetorical issues, and pragmatic issues. In addition to these things, there are also other factors that cause students difficulty in translating English texts, namely linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

Several studies related to translation, such as Astria Syonia and Rusdi Noor Rosa. (2020). *An Analysis of Translation Problems Faced by the Third Year English Department Students of UNP in Translating Historical Recount Text*. This study have reported that the problem in translating recount text and the strategy to solve the problem. Suksaeresup and ThepAckrapong (2009) have reported problems reading the source text and misinterpret the vocabulary faced by the translators. This research was translated from English to Thai by Thai students. Subsequently, Sukmana (2000) wrote in her study that the most of sixth semester students in an English degree program at Bengkulu University performed poorly, and none performed well in translating idiomatic expression. Further research was also conducted by A Zu'bi (2018), who claimed that master degree students participating in translation program at Yarmouk and Middle East University struggled with translation. This was because they were unfamiliar with political statement and relied on literal translation.

Additionally, Ibrahim (2017) conducted a survey of translation problem faced by Sudanese students at Dongola University. The research goal is to know translation difficulties for students, to present their difficulties in specific, and to get the solution of the problem. The data were got from Dongola University, which consist of 30 students. He used a questionnaire to collect the survey data and reported that his

second semester students at the University of Sudan's faculty of education struggled with translation due to differences in grammatical category, lexical elements, and source and target languages.

The preceding research, however, did not fully address the linguistic and non-linguistic factors that led to students' difficulties with translating English into Indonesian. As a result, the researcher is curious to find out what difficulties the sixth-semester Universitas Negeri Padang English Department students encounter when translating texts from English into Indonesian.

## METHOD

The data in this study were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative methodology. Twenty students from the English Department participated in this study as participants. The research's main tool is a translation work provided by Senorica Yulia Sari, S.Pd., M.TESOL. Following data analysis, one lecturer in the English education program rated the data. Using the percentage of text translation challenges, the researcher then calculated the problems encountered by pupils.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Research Findings

After compiling the test results, the researcher discovered that specific categories were to blame for the students' struggles with text translation from English to Bahasa Indonesia. Those are problem of ambiguity meaning, contextual/situational meaning, and grammatical meaning. The total difficulties are 197 times. There 33 items of problem of ambiguity, 66 items of contextual/situational meaning, and 80 items of grammatical meaning. The most common difficulties is grammatical meaning.

#### Percentage of difficulties in translation

| No. | Category of Difficulties | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1.  | Problem of ambiguity     | 33        | 18,5 %     |
| 3.  | Grammatical Meaning      | 80        | 44,5 %     |
|     | Total                    | 179       | 100 %      |

#### 1.1 Grammatical Meaning

One of the examples is provided in Extract 1

##### Extract 1

ST: No wonder, then, that his tomb was covered with the most ornately carved lid and he was buried wearing an elaborate jade death mask.

TT: Lalu, tidak heran kalau makam tersebut ditutupi dengan penutup ukiran yang paling indah dan dia dimakamkan mengenakan sebuah topeng kematian giok yang rumit.

The sentence above shows that the meaning of the text “No wonder, then, that his tomb was covered with the most ornately carved lid and he was buried wearing an elaborate jade death mask” should mean “Maka, tidak heran jika makamnya ditutupi dengan tutup ukiran yang paling indah dan dia dimakamkan dengan mengenakan/memakai sebuah topeng kematian giok yang rumit” but, it became different meaning because the student translated “was covered” into “menutupi”, because “ was covered” is a passive vice, so that made the meaning of the words are different and does not match with the text.

The next example in Extract 2

#### **Extract 2**

ST: **The lid** of Pakal's tomb led to Palenque playing an important role in New Age beliefs about the Maya calendar and the end of the world that was expected by many to occur on December 21, 2012.

TT: Tutupnya makam Pakal menyebabkan Palenque memainkan peran penting dalam kepercayaan Zaman Baru tentang kalender Maya dan akhir dunia yang diperkirakan banyak orang akan terjadi pada 21 Desember 2012.

The sentence above shows that the meaning of the text “The lid of Pakal's tomb led to Palenque playing an important role in New Age beliefs about the Maya calendar and the end of the world that was expected by many to occur on December 21, 2012” should mean “Tutup makam Pakal menyebabkan Palenque memainkan peran penting dalam kepercayaan Zaman Baru tentang kalender Maya dan akhir dunia yang diperkirakan oleh banyak orang terjadi pada tanggal 21 Desember 2012.” but, it became different meaning because the student add the apostrophe s in the word “the lid” for the target text. Even though, the apostrophe s is in the word “ pakal tomb's” which means “ makam pakal”.

Another example in the Extract 3

#### **Extract 3**

### Extract 3

ST: He went on to state that the ancient Maya were intergalactic beings to whom he had a direct link and from whom\*was receiving wisdom about the Maya calendar.

TT: Dia melanjutkan dengan menyatakan bahwa Maya kuno adalah makhluk intergalaksi yang memiliki hubungan langsung dengannya dan dari siapa

The data above shows that the meaning of the text “He went on to state that the ancient Maya were intergalactic beings to whom he had a direct link and from whom was receiving wisdom about the Maya calendar.” should mean “Dia melanjutkan dengan menyatakan bahwa Maya kuno adalah makhluk intergalaksi yang memiliki hubungan langsung dengannya dan menerima kebijaksanaan tentang kalender Maya” but, it became different meaning because the student translated “to whom he had a direct link and from whom was receiving wisdom” into “yang memiliki hubungan langsung dengannya dan dari siapa menerima kebijaksanaan”, so that made the meaning of the words are different and does not match with the text.

## 1.2 Contextual/Situational Meaning

One of the examples is provided in Extract 4

### Extract 4

ST: The lid of Pakal's tomb led to Palenque playing an important role in New Age beliefs about the Maya calendar and the end of the world that **was expected** by many to occur on December 21, 2012.

TT: Tutup makam Pakal membuat Palenque memainkan peran penting dalam kepercayaan Zaman Baru tentang kalender Maya dan akhir dunia yang diharapkan banyak orang terjadi pada tanggal 21 Desember 2012.

The data above shows that the sentence " The lid of Pakal's tomb led to Palenque playing an important role in New Age beliefs about the Maya calendar and the end of the world that was expected by many to occur on December 21, 2012." means " Tutup makam Pakal membuat Palenque memainkan peran penting dalam kepercayaan Zaman Baru tentang kalender Maya dan akhir dunia yang **diperkirakan** banyak orang terjadi pada tanggal 21 Desember 2012", but in the word "was expected" the students translate it into "diharapkan" so the meaning becomes slightly different. The word "was expected" is also correct if

translated as "diharapkan" however, it will be more appropriate to the context of the sentence and the situation in the text if "was expected" is translated to "diperkirakan".

The next example in Extract 5

#### Extract 5

ST: The Maya city of Palenque was once an important political center, which flourished between 226 and 799 CE and was later **abandoned** around 900 CE.

TT: Kota Maya Palenque pernah menjadi salah satu pusat politik penting, yang berkembang antara tahun 226 dan 799 M dan kemudian dibiarkan sekitar tahun 900 M.

The data above shows that the sentence "The Maya city of Palenque was once an important political center, which flourished between 226 and 799 CE and was later abandoned around 900 CE." means " Kota Maya Palenque pernah menjadi salah satu pusat politik penting, yang berkembang antara tahun 226 dan 799 M dan kemudian **ditinggalkan** sekitar tahun 900 M", but in the word "abandoned" the students translated it into "dibiarkan" so the meaning becomes slightly different. The word "abandoned" is also have closed meaning with "left" which means "dibiarkan" however, it will be more appropriate to the context of the sentence and the situation in the text if "abandoned" translated into ditinggalkan.

#### Other example in Extract 6

#### Extract 6

ST: While its Maya name was believed **to be** Lakamah, meaning big water.

TT: Sedangkan, nama Maya itu sendiri dipercaya untuk menjadi Lakamah, yaitu air besar.

In the data above, student also have difficulty to translate the text that fits the meaning with the context/situation of the text. The sentence "While its Maya name was believed **to be** Lakamah, meaning big water." means " Sedangkan, nama Mayanya dipercaya **sebagai** Lakamah, yaitu air besar", but in the words "to be" the students translated it into "untuk menjadi". That made the meaning of the sentence little different and not appropriate with the text. The words "to be" is also correct if translated "untuk menjadi" but, it will be more appropriate to the context of the sentence and the situation in the text if "to be" translated into **sebagai** in the sentence.

Another example can be seen in Extract 7

Another example can be seen in Extract 7

#### Extract 7

ST: Palenque was named **after** the neighboring Spanish town Santo Domingo Palenque, **founded** in the 16th century.

TT: Palanque dinamai setelah negara tetangga, Santo Domingo Palenque, kota di Spanyol ditemukam di abad ke 16.

The data above shows that the sentence "Palenque was named after the neighboring Spanish town Santo Domingo Palenque, founded in the 16th century." means "Palenque dinamai **dari** kota tetangganya di Spanyol, Santo Domingo Palenque, **yang didirikan** pada abad ke-16", but in the words "after" and "founded" the students translated "after into "setelah" and "founded" into "ditemukan" so the meaning becomes slightly different. The words after and founded are also correct if they translated in that way, but it will be more appropriate to the context of the sentence and the situation in the text if "after" translated into **dari**, and "founder" translated into **ditemukan**.

### 1.3 Problem of Ambiguity

One of the examples is provided in Extract 8

#### Extract 8

ST: No wonder, then, that his tomb was covered with the most ornately carved lid and he was buried wearing **an elaborate jade death mask**.

TT: Lalu, tidak heran kalau makam tersebut tertutupi dengan penutup yang penuh hiasan ukiran dan dia dimakamkan menggunakan sebuah topeng kematian perpaduan warna hijau.

From the example above, the student made an ambiguity meaning of the words "an elaborate jade death mask" that should translated "sebuah topeng kematian giok yang rumit", but the student translated the words "elaborate jade" in TT is "perpaduan warna hijau" so, that made ambiguity meaning of the sentence.

The next example also can be seen in Extract 9

### Extract 9

ST: In December 2012, members of the Planet Art Network and many other people who believed that the world would end or transform in some way descended on Palenque.

TT: Pada Desember 2012, para anggota dari Planet Art Network dan banyak orang lainnya yang mempercayai bahwa dunia akan berakhir atau berubah akan dibangkitkan di Palenque.

The words "in some way descended on Palenque" in the sentence " In December 2012, members of the Planet Art Network and many other people who believed that the world would end or transform in some way descended on Palenque. " has the correct meaning "beberapa cara tertentu turun ke Palenque", but in TT students translate it into "beberapa cara akan dibangkitkan di Palenque" so that the meaning of the sentence becomes ambiguous and does not match the context.

Other example in Extract 10

### Extract 10

ST: The surrounding jungle overtook the city, which lay buried and hidden until the 1700s.

TT: Hutan di sekitarnya menguasai kota, yang terkubur dan tersembunyi sampai tahun 1700-an.

After the test, researcher did an interview to find out the factor causing difficulties in translating text. There are two factors:

#### 1. Linguistic factor

According to the study's overall findings, both linguistic and non-linguistic factors pose difficulties for the translation process. The linguistic factor is the main challenge that students encounter, as can be seen from the previous table comparing linguistic and non-linguistic factors. The higher percentage of the two components demonstrates it. In accordance with the aforementioned data, 80% or 8/10 students chose the option "yes" in response to the language difficulty element. This is a difficult factor for students with a high percentage. It is difficult for students to translate each sentence



verbatim and to translate the whole sentence of the text, and it is also difficult for students to understand verbatim sentences.

## 2. Non-linguistic Factor

The difficulty of pupils in translating words connected to uncommon vocabulary, in addition to the language aspect, was another finding made by the researcher. Because they hardly ever encounter language with an 80% usage rate, or 8 out of 10 pupils, students found it challenging to comprehend the meaning of sentences.

According to the aforementioned data, the non-linguistic factor had a lower percentage of students experiencing difficulties than the linguistic factor. The researcher came to the conclusion that linguistic factor were more significant than non-linguistic ones.

## 2. Discussion

Based on the findings above, the researcher found that difficulties in translating text could be encountered by students in 3 categories. They are problem of ambiguity, contextual/situational meaning, and grammatical meaning. In the result of the research, the most common category of difficulties occurs in grammatical meaning, which has the highest percentage with 44,5% of 20 students.

The study discovered two additional characteristics that affect the difficulties of translation in addition to the problems in translating a text. Both linguistic and non-linguistic factor are present here. The research's findings indicate that the linguistic factor is the one that affects students the most, with a lesser percentage of students having trouble with non-linguistic factors than the linguistic factor. The researcher thus comes to the conclusion that non-linguistic factors are less significant than linguistic factors in terms of students' difficulties.

The difficulties are the error, evaluation error, calculation error, and error that constitute a significant part of information collecting, according to Brown (2000: 216). When someone translates text from the source language (English) into the target language (Indonesian), they may run into problems since they do not know how to properly use adverbs, verbs, and nouns, which will result in a poorly translated sentence. Text is not error-free. This expert claims that when a translator translates from the source language to the target language without understanding the grammatical categories, problems can occur. Based on the above statement, the results of this search match.

The difficulty of students in translating words connected to uncommon vocabulary, in addition to the language aspect, was another finding made by the researcher. Because they hardly ever encounter language with an 80% usage rate, or 8 out of 10 students, students found it difficulties to comprehend the meaning of sentences. culties.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher discovered that students could experience difficulty with text translation in three categories based on the findings above. They are ambiguity issues, situational and contextual meaning, and grammatical meaning. According to the study's findings, grammatical meaning problems account for the biggest percentage of issues. The study discovered two additional factors that affect the difficulties of translation in addition to the problems in translating a text. Both linguistic and non-linguistic factors are present here. The research's findings indicate that students are most likely to encounter the linguistic factors, with non-linguistic factors having a lesser percentage of students experiencing difficulty. The researcher thus comes to the conclusion that students' linguistic issues are.

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