From English to Indonesia: Translation Problems and Strategies of EFL Student Teachers–ALiterature Review

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Abstract

This research articulates problems and strategies in translating text from English as the source text to Indonesia language as the target text. By reviewing and analysing critically mélange of concepts, examples and findings explained in some collected references, it is known that problems in translation mostly are around lexical, grammatical and semantic elements. In the other hand, the strategies used to produce acceptable translation result regarding to the readers' of target text understanding have to consider aspects such as cultural content, the availability of equivalencies, and the ability to use the monolingual dictionary. This research also try to emphasize and to convince why finding problems and strategies of EFL student teachers in translating text is very prominent to help the mapping of which elements in English language that are still hard to be transmitted back to Indonesia language and how to overcome that problems.

Subject Areas

Translation

Keywords

Translation, Translation Problems, Translation Strategies, EFL Student Teachers

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, translation still take part in the English teaching and learning activity in the class since the portion of reading and writing activities is quite dominating due to students' preparation of examination.

In order to comprehend information written in English, one of students' strategies mostly is to translate it, as found in Karimian and Talebinejad (2013) research, and translation even plays a positive role in EFL classes. Generally EFL student teachers will face teaching train-ing at school for several months where they have to teach and prepare teaching tools to support their teaching activity in the class. Tabakowska (1998) stated that translation must be considered one of the basic devices for all those who plan language courses or write language textbooks. The fact that student teachers are still in the learning process of becoming teacher in the future, measuring their English competence is prominent, one among other ways to accomplish that purpose is through translation.

Finding EFL student teachers' problems in translation can benefit them in term of realizing what they have missed in understanding text in English. As an English teacher in the future, student teachers themselves have to master on English translation since their students may not aware of some aspects that can lead them to understand the text inaccurately, such as, there are some words in English which have multiple meanings and the time information contained in the sentence according to the tenses used in the sentence itself (Sudirman, 2013). Various researches had been done to identify problems in translation usually in specific cases, but very rare conducted purposively for EFL student teachers.

Beside problems, finding students' strategies in translating text can also give such advantages, not only for them but also for the lecturer of translation class about whether their strategies help them to correctly transfer the meaning from English to Indonesia language because if they do not, this information can help the lecturer to conduct teaching planning on how to translate the text appropriately with strategies EFL student teachers can apply. In the other hand, if the strategies are proven helpful to produce acceptable translation result, it can show students' English proficiency level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation Problems and Strategies

The main points of discussion in this research will be highlighted and referenced theoretically about problems and strategies in text translation, then, describing problems and strategies in translation based on recent studies, and the last, providing critical analysis on some works.

Problems in TextTranslation

First, Even though some methods and strategies of translation were already defined by some experts to assist in translating text, some problems in translation still exist. Arnold (2008) stated that there are three major problems in translating text; the ambiguity, structural and lexical differences between languages such as idioms and collocation and the attempt to find equivalencies.

Ambiguity appears when one cannot decide which meaning that should be chosen. This case called lexical ambiguity according to Cecilia (2003) in Hamlaoui (2010), but if the ambiguity appears in the sentence, then it is called structural ambiguity. Nakhallah (2009) give more emphasize of this case by stating that "words which are really hard to translate are frequently the small, common words whose precise meaning depends heavily on context". In ambiguity, the problem is sometimes, words in English have multiple meanings and functions whether it is a noun, a verb or even adjective. The term used for this case is polysemy. For example, should the word 'use' is translated into '*menggunakan*' or '*kegunaan*' in Indonesian language? The answer is both are possible to become the meaning of the word 'use' in Indonesian based on its context in English, after understanding the context, it can be decided which one is the most appropriate to be the meaning of the word 'use'. It must be translated into '*menggunakan*' if the word 'use' in the sentence is functioned as verb, meanwhile, *'kegunaan'* is used when it is functioned as a noun.

In structural and lexical differences, the problems among others that often arise are, first, the existence of dummy do in English that is not common in Indonesia language (Kurniawan, 2007), the time information attached in the tenses used in the sentences (Sudirman, 2016), the plural noun (Noverino, 2013) and the pronoun in English (see Morin, 2005). Look at the example below about dummy do in English:

Source Text: I - never - not - listen - to the music
Target Text:
(1) *Saya – tidak pernah - tidak - mendengarkan – music*
(2) *Saya - selalu - mendengarkan - musik*

Even though two translation results provided are understandable in Indonesian language, but it is very rare in the culture of Indonesian language to use dummy do as shown in the first translation result. Next, talking about the time information that usually failed to be translated, it become a special case and challenge to be able to put time information in the translation result, as the example provided in Sudirman (2016, p.1690):

Source Text: He - didn't - get - the joke, <u>of course</u>
Target Text:

(1) <u>*Tentusaja*</u>, *dia - tidak – menangkap maksud – dari lelucon itu*

The tense used in the source text shows that the event happened in the past, but in the translation result, to show that information is quite confusing. Sudirman (2016) successfully carried out this example to show the translation problem related to tenses, but didn't mention the other alternative on how to overcome this problem. The adverb of time that shows past event is quite the same between English and Indonesia, such as, *'kemarin'* as the equivalency of 'yesterday' and *'yang lalu'* for 'ago', for example, 'two days ago' means '*duahari yang lalu*' in Indonesia language. In the case above, it didn't mention precisely in the translation result about the time when the event happened. In the culture of Indonesia language, to show past event with no specific time included, the phrase *'waktuitu'* or *'saatitu'* are often used. So here is the alternative for the problem related to time information in tenses that in this discussion is past tense.

(2) *Tentu saja, dia - tidak – menangkap maksud – dari lelucon waktu itu*

Through this translation result, there is no absent of time information as contained in the source text. It also give such a clue for the reader of target text that the event happened in the past. In Benfoughal (2010) there are variation of problems that still related to structural and lexical differences faced by each participant in his research. Some of them are similar and some don't. They are; complicated and ambiguous SL grammar, translating the nominal verb, have and do, collocation, idioms, proverbs and metaphors, parallelism and fronting, complex vs simple styles, phonological and cultural problems. The problems that successfully identified are quite a lot for the participants who are in the third year of their study in university, but in this case, other variable should be analysed, such as the cause of those problems. According to Newmark (1998), if a sentence syntactically ambiguous within its context, it must be poorly written. Then if it is poorly written, it must be quite difficult to translate it. That might be the reason why complicated and am-biguous SL grammar came up as the problem faced by participants.

Discussing further about idioms and collocation, Besnett (2005) stated that "the translation of idioms takes us a stage further in considering the question of meaning and translation, for idioms, like puns, are culture bound". Sudirman (2016) gave some examples such as 'a case in point' and 'on the other hand'. These idioms, if they are translated literally, might not transfer the source text message correctly, so Baker (1992) suggested that in translating idioms, they can be replaced with another word that is equal with its meaning in the source text, so understanding the intention of their using in the sentence is really necessary. 'A case in point' can be translated into '*contohnya*' or '*misalnya*' in Indonesia language, while 'on the other hand' can be translated into '*sebaliknya*'.

About the attempt to find equivalencies, Catford (1965) stated that lexically, equivalence occurs when the lexis of source text can be replaced by the lexis of the target text without the replacement of grammar. Sentences structure in English and Indonesian language are quite similar, where acceptable sentence should contain subject (noun) and predicate (verb). But the problem is, in a text there are various types of sentences, such as simple sentence, complex sentence and complex compound sentence. A sentence might contain preposition, articles, adverb, adverb of time and place and many more. The absence of the verb 'be' and articles to be translated come up as the problems as what Hendar (2012) found in his research. The problems may also come when someone who translate the text rely on what is served in the translation tool one used to find the meaning of the words without considering whether the result of translation will sound natural or not (Fraser & Marcu, 2004; Pado, et al. 2009).

Even though translation problems can be generalized into four types of problems which are ambiguity, lexical and structural differences, idioms and collocation and equivalencies, but specific problems may appear depend on the language involved in the translation, the type of the text to be translated, the language unit in fo-

cus, and many more. The problems may also not only appear in the text. External factors like the misinterpretation that may appear due to the use of translation tool also should be consider, for example, when students use translation result directly as served in the translation tool online, without analyse it further whether it is already accurate as the meaning and comprehend readership. For the EFL student teachers, they should have awareness about the different culture of delivering ideas through words between English and Indonesia, or whether a word in English may have more than one meaning in Indonesia language. To have this ability is very important for them who will become a teacher in the future so they will not misinterpret or mislead their students in understanding the text in English then transmit it into their mother tongue in this case Indonesia language. Analysing EFL student teachers' translation result can be one among other ways that can be done to find out about how far is their ability to understand the idea in the English text then to transmit it into Indonesia language so it can be understandable without violating the original idea itself. Other studies also mapped the problems and difficulties in translating text after analyzing the translation results from the participants of their research (Rini. 2007; Santoso&Asmarani. 2014; Nakhallah, 2009; Sudipa, 2012; Gorlewski, et al. 2012; Benfoughal.,2010; Hendar, n.d; Rini&Gunawan.,n.d).

Strategies in TextTranslation

TheThere are some strategies in translating proposed by some experts. In words level, Hervey and Higgins (1986) stated that there are two strategies in translating proper names, first, it is written just the way it is written in the source text or it can be written just the way it is written in the target text in terms of arranging the letters. For example, in translating the word German to Indonesia language, it can be written just like that or the way it is written in the target text, which is *'Jerman'.* This is defined as transliteration (Hatim & Munday, 2004). The consideration to choose transliteration is due to the equivalency provided for the specific word in English by *Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa* (The Cen-

tre of Language Development and Evolvement) is unfamiliar. For example, instead of translate it into '*pancarona*', the word *'warna warni'* is more popular among Indonesian to express the word 'colorful' in English. It is not become a problem if the purpose of the translation itself is to provide the translation result that is understandable for the reader of target text.

Newmark (1988) defined that in translating sentences from source text to target text, one should consider transposition, which are, change the words from singular to plural or the opposite. In the case of translating English text into Indonesia language, most cases found are plural noun in English is translated into singular noun (Noverino, 2013). The term used for this strategy is called intra-system shift (Catford, 1965) If in English, the sentence is 'that light hurts my eyes' then in Indonesia, it should be translated as '*Cahaya itu menyakiti mataku*' not '*Cahaya itu menyakiti mata mata ku'.* In Indonesia language, to state that the word is plural, it is not as easy as adding 's' after the noun just like in English. It is usually written double by adding punctuation '-', or just written one only to represent all, or, for plural noun like 'doctors', in Indonesia language we can use the word '*para*' so the translation result can be *'paradokter'* or *'dokter-dokter'* to show that the doctor is more than one.

Next, the transposition of sentences in certain grammatical structure in the source which does not exist in the target text. As English learners in Indonesia might aware, there are types of tenses in English that regulate how to say things based on when they happen. One of them is present perfect tense. The purpose of this sentence is to show that an event is just happened. The specific characteristic of this tense is the use of word 'has or have' and followed by the third form of a verb. The word has or have themselves are included as polysemy since they have multiple meanings, beside *'sudah or telah',* they also mean *'punya, mempunyai or memiliki'* in Indonesia language. In Puri (2007), translating past tense sentence into perfect tense become one of students' strategy in translating past tense in English that has no specific time. The example is like the following:

Source Text   : I have done it (present perfect

tense)
Target Text   : *Saya sudah melakukannya*
Source Text   : I did it (past tense)
Target Text   : *Saya sudah melakukannya*

The classification of tenses are not exist in Indonesia language, as the result, there is no other way to differentiate and to deliver precisely the tenses in English into Indonesia. The next transposition is, when the word in the source text translated literally to target text is acceptable and understandable but sounds not natural in the target text. For example; the word 'belly button', if it is translated into '*tombolperut'* it is understandable but not natural, since Indonesian knows the thing that in English is named 'belly button' as *'pusar'* in Indonesia. It must be found often that translation result in the target text appears longer or shorter that in the original one in the source text. It may due to other type of transposition exist, where the complex sentence, after translation process, translated best into still complex sentence, or changed into compound sentence, into simple sentence or into complex compound sentence (Newmark, 1988). To accompany translation, the modulation strategy can be used to translate words in source text which has no equivalencies in the target text, firstly, one should understand the meaning of the word then try to serve the words by its meaning in the target text, in order to do that, the monolingual dictionary (English – English) can be used since it is proven as a helpful tool for the word in English which has no meaning after it is seek in the bilingual dictionary (English – Indonesia) (Adriani & Croft.1997; Sudirman, 2006).

CONCLUSION

Before Even though various research were already done toward translation. Translation studies is an area of research where any possibility is open due to its dynamic characteristic. The availability of sophisticated translation tools on-line open the way for students to translate a text easier, the media that exposed them with English such as the programs on television, the music, the commands in social media application and their gadget may add their knowledge on how to understand English text and be able to transform the information into Indonesia language.

But the problems may also arise from the tools and media that help them in understand English, like if the students accept the translation result just the way it is after they input the sentence in the source text, without considering polysemy, transliteration, and the culture of language use, idioms used and so on, the translation result might be unacceptable since it does not deliver the idea the author of the source text try to convey.

It is worth to find out in the further research about EFL students problems and strategies in translating text since making sure that they are aware of components to be considered in understanding a text and to be able to deliver what was written in English into Indonesian language means that they are ready to give that kind of understanding to their students too and it can help them to elevate their English proficiency level.

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