

AN ANALYSIS ON STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSLATING BUSINESS TEXT

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Abstract

This research attempts to find out students' difficulties, their translation quality and the causes of such difficulties in translating business text. The type of this research is a descriptive research. The research data were obtained from translation test and the analysis of students' translations. The result showed that the students have difficulties in the level of lexical, grammatical, contextual, textual and cultural problems. It was employed two raters from English lecturers in order to assess the test and describe the students' translation quality objectively and two lecturers of Bahasa to validate the target language. The result also showed that the qualities of students' translation were classified into bad quality. The analysis of students' translation moreover showed that the causes of students' difficulties were lack of translation competencies; lack of language competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural competence and transfer competence. Dealing with text in certain discipline especially business text, it should be separately instructed in teaching learning process or the text should be analyzed and comprehended by students before going to transfer the whole message into target text. Also, translation process and strategies should be taught in the same time with the practice of translation.

Keywords: *Difficulties, translation quality, translation competencies, business text*

Translation needs students or translators to acquire other competencies not only a certain language and the translation itself but also some necessary competencies. Nida (2006:1) states that skilled translators must have a special capacity for sensing the closest natural equivalent of a text, whether oral or written. A translator needs to be good in analyzing the text such as the style, purpose and author strategies that the writer uses in delivering the ideas. Furthermore, Nida (2006:1) also noticed that translating is essentially a skill and depends largely on a series of disciplines, for example, linguistics, cultural anthropology, philology, psychology, and theories of communication. Also, Zainurrahman (2013:2), Sebokova, Stanislava (2010:6) and Neubert (2004:16-17) states that mastering the translation competencies enables a translator to do translation as well as expected. These competences are important factors that a translator must have in order to produce a good quality of translation. The competencies are grammatical competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural

competence and transfer competence. Thus, a translator will easily find the equivalence of all aspects of meaning as closest as possible to the target language by having these competencies.

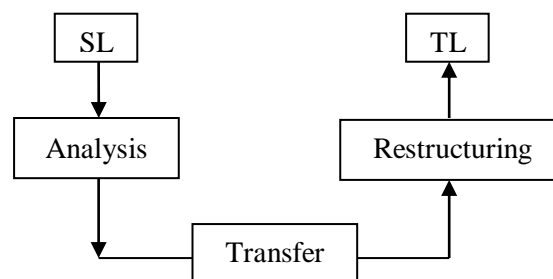
In fact, students who are learning to translate their first language to second language or foreign language face double difficulties. They are learning translation skills and learning the foreign language simultaneously. Baker (1992) presents translation problems arising from lack of equivalence at word level, above word level (collocation), grammatical level, and textual. She discusses the more common types of equivalence which may constitute difficulties for the translator. She also presents and provides them with various strategies to deal with such problems. Then, Nababan (2003) explained that translation problems are based on the level of meaning. Nababan states that the translation problems arising in the level of lexical, grammatical, contextual, textual and cultural problems.

In cases of translating business text, Newmark (1988:151) describes it as technical translation. Technical translation is one part of specialized translation; institutional translation, the area of politics, commerce, finance, government, etc is the others. Newmark presents the difficulties of technical translation into technical styles, terms and varieties of technical style. He also argues that the central difficulty in technical translation is the new terminology.

Some experts who worked in translation studies had defined many theories of translation. Richards, et al

(1992:389) define translation as the process of changing speech or writing from one language (the source language) into another (the target language), or the target-language version that results from this process. Moreover, Newmark (1988:5), translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. Also, Bell (1991:13) defines the concept of translation into three parts; (a) translating is the verb 'to translate' that is defined as a process of activities, not an object, (b) a translation is a product of translating process that is a translation text, (c) translation is an abstract concept that consists of process and product of translating process. As a process, translation is defined as some practical guides that must be followed and considered by a translator as important rules in order to get a good product of translation. Nida (1969) in Hatim (2004:161) stated that in the case of source and receptor languages having quite different grammatical and semantic structures, a translator is not going directly from one set of surface structure to another but he goes through seemingly roundabout process of analysis. The processes are as follow:

Figure 2.1 *Translation Process*



Moreover, the process of translation should gain three indicators of a good quality of translation in order to have a

good product of translation. The following table is the criteria of a good product of translation according to Nida (1969:484), Nababan (2013), Karnedi (2005):

No.	Indicators	Criteria
1.	Accurate	Reproducing as exactly as possible the meaning of the source text.
2.	Clear/ Communicative	Expressing all aspects of the meaning in a way that is readily understandable to the intended audience.
3.	Natural	Using natural forms of the receptor language in a way that is appropriate to the kind of the text being translated.

Also, translation process is some steps of process which are not independent the one of the other in reproducing the source language into target language. There will be moving back and forth especially the work of analysis, transfer and initial drafting during translation following the steps in order to get a good quality of translation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is classified into a descriptive research because it is to determine and describe the way things are

(Gay and Airasian, 2000:275). It deals with the phenomena or difficulties that the students face in translating a business text and to obtain information about the quality and causes of such difficulties. This research was conducted at the fourth year students of English Department of STKIP Muhammadiyah Sungai Penuh who were registered in academic year 2015/2016. The number of students was 23 students. The data were collected from the translation test that assessed by two raters and the analysis of students' translations. According to Sudaryanto (1995:57), there are two techniques in presenting data analysis. These techniques are formal and informal method. Formal method demands a research to present and analyzed the data by using numerical and table statistics. Meanwhile, informal method demands a research to present the data analysis by having words for details explanation. In order to get a complete result of analysis, the analysis was presented by using formal and informal method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result of analysis, it was found that the students' difficulties in translating a business text were in the level of lexical, grammatical, contextual, textual and cultural.

Lexical Problem

There were many students got difficulties in rendering any words of the test. It was found that the students' translation were not accurate and acceptable for the target language as well as the message of source language. Lexical problems are the problem that the translator face when

sensing the closest meaning of any words that is available e.g. in a bilingual dictionary (Nababan, 2003: 48). It is in line with the accuracy and acceptability of the words that the students choose to be the equivalent target language as well as Nababan (2013:44) suggested that the accuracy is used to find out whether the product of translation is equivalent to source language or not. This research found that all of students for instance failed to translate the word ‘*opportunity*’ into an accurate and acceptable word of target language as shown in the following phrase:

SL: *Opportunity in the global financial crisis.*

TL: *Kesempatan di dalam krisis keuangan dunia.*

It was caused by the prior knowledge of the students that usually define the word “*opportunity*” as “*kesempatan*”. These problems were moreover caused by the lack of cultural competence. Those were due to the fact that most of the students worked to translate the words without considering the cultural aspect or the acceptability of the target language as well as what Nababan (2013:44) proposed that the acceptability is related to how the translation conveys the message in an appropriate ways, norms and culture. Other example was the students tend to translate the word “*in*” as “*di dalam*” which is also not accurate and acceptable for the target language. It was found that 16 of 23 students failed to translate that word. The target language should be “*Peluang dalam krisis keuangan global*” due to in the term of business the word “*Opportunity*” should be translated as “*Peluang*”. This research

also found that the students had difficulties to sense the equivalent word of “*as*” in following sentence:

Sentence (3):

(As the US, financial crisis has now spread to Europe, the oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Arab Emirate which have accumulated hundreds of billions of Dollars in their foreign reserve, are now reviewing their holding or investment vehicle).

This research found that the students failed translated it into an accurate target language. It was found that some students translated that word into “*selain*”, “*sebagai*”, “*di*”, and “*seperti*”. These problems lead the students face difficulties in rendering the most suitable target language. The word “*as*” in this sentence describes a similar existence situation in the previous sentence in which “*the US*” was in financial crisis. Furthermore, it was found similar difficulties that the students faced in translating the word “*diversified*” in the following sentence:

Sentence (4):

“They are looking for more diversified investment outside the US and Europe.”

The students’ translation was not accurate and acceptable to the target language. The students translated it into “*banyak*”, “*berbagai*”, “*berbagai macam*”. That word should be translated within the phrase “*more diversified investment*”. On the other hand, the most acceptable translation of the phrase should be “*investasi yang lebih beragam*”. Also, this research found that the students failed to

translate the word “*improve*” in the sentence 7 into an appropriate word of target language. They tended to translated it into “*menetapkan, membuat and memperbaiki*”. Moreover, it was also found that the students failed to translate the word “*reform*” in the sentence 9. The students translated it into “*reformasi, memperbaiki and perbaikan*”.

Grammatical Problem

Grammatical problems are the problems that the translator faced in the level of grammar or the problems that the translators faced in the relationship of the parts of language in the wider units, as follow:

○ *Translating ‘Pronoun’*

The difficulties were found in translating pronoun ‘*they*’ for inanimate objects. It was found that all of the students (23 students) translated pronoun ‘*they*’ into ‘*mereka*’.

Sentence (4):

SL: “***They*** are looking for more diversified investment outside the US and Europe.”

TL: ***Mereka*** mencari lebih banyak investasi diluar Amerika dan Eropa.

This problem showed that the students faced difficulties in rendering pronoun ‘*they*’ into an appropriate target language since it will lead the readers to be confused since they will think that ‘*mereka*’ is all of mentioned countries instead of ‘*oil-rich countries*’. It showed that the students got difficulties in rendering the pronoun into an accurate and acceptable target language due

to lack of inter-language and cultural competence which also lead the difficulties in translating tenses. Furthermore, lack of transfer competence could lead the students’ to face difficulties in translating a demonstrative pronoun or the sentence that begin with pronoun “*that*” in the sentence “*That will be true if the conditions, legal and market infrastructure are conducive for Islamic financial instruments*”. This sentence should be translated using the strategies called transposition or shift and modulation as suggested by Vinay and Darbelnet in Venuti (2000:84) and Pinchuck in Rachmadie (1988:15).

○ *Translating ‘Phrases and Clauses’*

The students’ difficulties were also found in translating phrases and clauses.

Sentence (5):

SL: *Because of unfavorable political developments in Thailand and Malaysia over the past few months, **Indonesia which has largely Muslim population** could become one of these oil-rich countries favorite places for foreign direct investment.*

TL: ... *Indonesia yang memiliki penduduk yang sebagian besar muslim*

...

TL: ...*Indonesia yang mempunyai populasi muslim...*

It was found that 9 students translated the clause above into “*Indonesia yang memiliki penduduk yang sebagaian besar berpopulasi muslim*” and 10 students translated it into “*Indonesia yang mempunyai populasi muslim terbesar*”.

Moreover, it was found similar difficulties in other phrases of sentences.

○ *Translating 'Aspect of tense'*

The students' difficulties were also found in translating aspect of tense. It was found that 17 of 23 students were failed to translate present perfect in the sentence (3), 19 students were failed to translate present continuous in the sentence (4) and there were 16 students were failed to translate present perfect in the sentence (9).

Contextual Problem

Contextual problems can be found when translators failed to render a meaning that is correlated with the situation where the language is used. This research found that the students had difficulties in rendering the contextual meaning into an appropriate target language. The students tend to translate the words literally following the definition available on their dictionaries. It can be seen from the following example:

Sentence (5):

...Indonesia which has largely Muslim population could become one of these oil-rich countries favorite places for foreign direct investment.

It was found that 19 of 23 students were failed to translate the phrase 'favorite place' into appropriate contextual meaning of target language. The students tend to translate those words into "tempat favorit" and "negara favorit" rather than "tujuan investasi yang paling diminati". Furthermore, it was found that there were

some students faced similar difficulties in translating the word "grip", "serve" and "grab" in the sentence which is coded by number 9.

Textual Problem

Textual problems were problems related to the context of a text that the translator faced in order to translate common words in a certain subject into appropriate context of text. In translating business text, the students also had difficulties to translate some words related to context of text such as the word "contagion", "share" and "measures". The meaning of these words should be translated based on context of the text. These problems were caused by the fact that the students were lack of language and textual competence. It was difficult for them to render the source meaning into an equivalent target meaning. The word "contagion" for instance, it was found that 9 students translate this word into "penularannya" and 7 students translate it into "pengaruh buruknya" rather than translating it into "dampaknya". As we know that the word "contagion" is usually used in the biology terms to describe the bad effect of a disease. On the other hand, this word cannot be translated literally on the text that was translated by the students. This word should be translated based on the context of the text. Since this text is in the field of business, it should be translated into "dampaknya". Furthermore, it was also found that there were some students were failed to translate the word "share" and "measures" which were also translated literally by the students using dictionary and their prior knowledge.

Cultural Problem

This research also found that the students got difficulties in translating specific words or special terminology related to the subject being discussed as cultural problem which is closely related to the social situation, and cultural background of the language users. It was found that most of the students got difficulties in rendering the technical terms of business text. It was found that the students tend to translate the words or phrases literally by using their dictionaries without considering their cultural meaning. On the other hand, the specialized contents should be analyzed and understood before rendering them into target language. It was found that most of the students were failed to translate all of business terms or specific words containing in the text such as “*Foreign direct investment*” in sentence (2), “*holding*” and “*investment vehicle*” in the sentence (3), “*Islamic Financial Instruments*” in sentence (6) and “*legal framework*” and “*acumen*” in sentence (7). Having difficulties in understanding and rendering the specialized contents of this text will lead the translator to have changes of meaning or inaccurate meaning even lead the translator to have bad quality of target language as a product of translation. It is relatively in line with other research finding which was done by Olteanu (2012), she did a research entitled “Errors and Difficulties in Translating Economic Text” which found that the problems that a translator may encounter when dealing with a specialized writing (economic writing) was a difficulty in understanding the concepts and vocabulary, due to the long and complex sentences, and the fact that

there is no possibility of interpretation, requiring a general knowledge of the field. Also, it is closely related with the findings of the research done by Nakhallah (2010) who did a research to the English students of Al-Quds Open University during academic year 2010/2011, he found that the most difficulties in translating legal text from English to Arabic were special terminologies, headlines and proverbs. Moreover, he found that the students face the difficulties in the level of grammatical for instance in translating; aspect of tenses such as past perfect progressive and clauses of present perfect.

Translation Quality

A good product of translation according to Nida (1969:484), Karnedi (2005:67), Larson (1984:3) and Nababan (2013:44) who explain that a translation should cover three criteria. The criteria are accurate (accuracy), natural (acceptability), and clear (readability). The three indicators were used to find out the students’ translation quality. This research found that the students had bad quality of translation in translating business text. It was found that the quality of students’ translation were bad in each indicator. This research found that the accuracy of the students’ translation was classified into bad quality which was proved by the fact that there were 17 of 23 students (73.91%) assessed by the first rater and 14 students (60.87%) assessed by the second rater who had *bad quality*. The bad qualities of accuracy were influenced by the fact that their translation contained inaccurate rendition of meaning and the business terms or specialized contents were not appropriate to the target

language as well as discussed on the difficulties findings. The readability of students' translation in translating business text was rated as bad quality. It was proved by the fact that there were 17 of 23 students (73.91%) rated by both raters who had *bad quality*. The bad qualities of readability of their translation were influenced by the fact that their products were hard to understand, contains many ambiguous sentences, phrases, unclear meaning and contains some mechanical errors. Moreover, it was found that their translation did not accomplish the goal, function and cultural consideration of the text. This research also found that the acceptability of students' translation in translating business text was bad. It was found that there were 18 of 23 students (78.26%) rated by the first rater and 17 students (73.91%) rated by the second rater who had *bad quality*.

Causes of Difficulties

Furthermore, this research found that there were five factors that influenced the students' difficulties in translating a business text. Those difficulties were caused by the lack of translation competencies. The competencies are language or grammatical competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural competence and transfer competence as suggested by Sebokova, Stanislava (2010:6), Neubert (2004:16) and Zainurrahman (2013:2). Lack of these competencies certainly affects students' difficulties in translating the text in all level of problems as discussed on findings. Lack of translation competencies also lead the students faced many difficulties in every level of problems such as lexical,

grammatical, contextual, textual and cultural problems. The knowledge of source language and target language, textual, subject, cultural and transfer competence were the causes of the students' difficulties in achieving the good quality of translation especially in translating business text.

Based on the data analysis, it was found that the students were lack of language competence. It was proved by the fact that there were many products of translation implied the students do not have any language competence which require the students to have better understanding toward language aspects of source and target language. It was also found that the students failed to translate phrase, clauses and aspect of tense into appropriate TL as grammatical aspect or the changes form between SL and TL. As one of language aspect, moreover, it was found that the students failed to translate some contextual meaning as discussed in the difficulties analysis. Having no knowledge about the regularities and convention of text, it makes the students facing some difficulties in transferring the source text into an equivalent target text. It was found that there were many translation produced by the students written in the bad form without considering the text type and the function of text. The products were also written without following the structure of the text which contained many ambiguous sentences. Those implied that the students worked to translate the words and ignored the text type and function. It was also found that there were many students failed to translate some words based on the context

of text since a text, as well as word, has its own context which needs to be considered in translation. Thus, it could be concluded that the students were lack of textual competence.

Furthermore, it was also found that there were many students failed to translate any words into appropriate target language. Based on the data analysis, the students translated the words, phrases and clauses literally without considering the cultural aspect. In fact, some of the expressions in source language and target language may have different way to express in target language, or even does not exist at all. Moreover, it was also found that there were many business terms were failed to be translated by the students which showed that the students do not have any prior knowledge related to what is being discussed in the SL text. Those failures showed that the students were lack of knowledge related to discipline which was being discussed in the text and lack of cultural competence.

Having difficulties in translation were also caused by the fact that the students were lack of transfer competence. It was found the students cannot apply or even do not have any knowledge related to translation strategies in translation process. As discussed on data analysis, the students tended to translate word literally by using dictionaries without following the process of translation such as analyzing the SL, transfer and restructuring the SL to the TL text. The data also showed that the students cannot apply or even do not know the strategies working with the unit of

translation in order to produce appropriate target language.

CONCLUSION

Based on findings, it can be concluded that the students had difficulties in translating business text. It was difficult for the students to sense the closest meaning available on dictionaries in the level of lexical, to translate the use of pronouns, phrases or clauses in the word order and tenses, to translate contextual and textual meaning. Moreover, the students' difficulties in translating business text were in translating specialized contents or special terminologies related to business matters. Those problems led the students to have bad quality of translation. The causes of students' difficulties in translating business text were the students did not have good understanding of language aspect of source language and target language, did not acquire the knowledge of regularities and convention of text such as text function, structure and interpreting words based on the context of text. Moreover, the students were lack of subject and cultural competence since the students failed to translate business terms or specialized contents, ignoring the cultural aspect and translating the words, phrases or clauses into unnatural meaning of TL. Furthermore, the students did not know how the translation processes should be and how to use available strategies to reach equivalence. Therefore, in dealing with business or economic text, all aspects of the text such as text type, function, structure, features and special terminology should be discussed separately before coming to translate the text. Also, the instructions of

translation theories should be taught in the same time with the practice of translation so that it will assist the students in order to implement the theories well in translation process.

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