

Analysis of the Use of Translation as a Learning Strategy in English

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Abstract: *This study looked at how students used translation-related strategies to learn English and their attitudes on the subject. Five English education majors were involved in this qualitative case study. The results showed that students thought of translation as a helpful part of their English language learning process. They also mentioned a range of translation-based learning exercises that fall under different learning approaches. It is anticipated that the study's conclusions will highlight and advise against the efficient use of translation in English language instruction for the benefit of pupils.*

Keywords: *translation, english learning, learningstrategy*

INTRODUCTION

For decades, translation has been ignored in the language learning process, despite the fact that its use may aid learners in understanding a new language. Many language researchers and teachers regard translation as an improper association in the classroom, and it is regarded as the primary source of students' difficulties in learning a new language (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). The rationale for this is that it is recommended that target language teaching and learning, such as English, focus only on the target language, avoiding participation of learners' native languages. According to much research, providing as much exposure to English as possible while avoiding any use of the first language is the key to successful English acquisition (Almoayed, 2018). Concerns about translation encouraging impractical and superfluous language contents (e.g., remembering useless vocabulary and grammar) may lead to such beliefs, which may limit learners' ability to completely embrace the target language and induce cognitive overload (Liu & Shi, 2007). However, language learners have a natural tendency to understand the unknown, such as foreign languages, by first connecting them to the familiar, such as their own languages (Cook, 2007). Adult learners, for example, tend to use their original language as their primary tool for learning a new language. Furthermore, by using their first language, novice or lower-level students can learn the language in a more comfortable and safe manner (Pan & Pan, 2012; Mutlu, Bayram, and Demirbüken, 2015;

Putrawan, 2019). Dulay et al. (1982) define such a habit as a cognitive element in adults in the form of conscious language learning. In this situation, adults frequently learn to develop a new language by combining their first language patterns with their knowledge of foreign language vocabulary words. This approach is consistent with the findings of Hidayati's (2012) study, which concluded that using Bahasa during English lessons for university students is advantageous not just for assisting grammar and vocabulary development, but also for providing students with encouragement and feedback. In her research, she also underlines the importance of minimizing the usage of Bahasa in order to maintain the quality of the English lesson. Furthermore, Harmer (2007) feels that translation is a natural method of learning a foreign language when students, particularly beginners such as many Indonesian adults, translate foreign language materials into their native language as their first language. This notion is supported by recent publications that acknowledge translation as a learning strategy (Aktekin & Gliniecki, 2015; Al-Musawi, 2014; Asgardian & Musayeva Vefali, 2015; Bagheri & Fazel, 2011; Calis & Dikilitas, 2012; Dagilien, 2012; Kuluşaklı, Boynukara, & Genç, 2018; Liao, 2006).

International Center for Language Learning and Translation Integration (ICLLTI) Translation has long been overlooked in the language learning process despite its potential to assist learners in comprehending a new language. Many language researchers and educators have traditionally viewed translation as inappropriate in the classroom, believing it hinders students' progress in acquiring a new language. This perspective is rooted in the notion that language instruction should focus solely on the target language, such as English, to facilitate successful language acquisition. Concerns about translation leading to the retention of irrelevant vocabulary and grammar, as well as cognitive overload, have contributed to the reluctance to incorporate translation into language learning pedagogy. Indonesian Institute for Language Learning and Translation Studies (IELTS) In Indonesia, the debate over the role of translation in language learning mirrors global discussions. While some educators advocate for the use of translation as a natural learning strategy, others emphasize the importance of minimizing its usage to maintain the quality of English instruction. Indonesian learners, particularly beginners, often rely on their native language, Bahasa, as a bridge to understanding English. This reliance on translation reflects a broader trend observed in language learning among Indonesian adults. Despite differing opinions, recent studies have recognized translation as a valid learning strategy, highlighting its potential benefits in enhancing grammar and vocabulary development. Understanding the term "translation" is critical in this subject to avoid confusion. According to Al-Musawi (2014), translation is a popular learning strategy used by

foreign language learners to “transmit the appropriate meaning of a word or a sentence linguistically, semantically, and pragmatically.” Translation is examined in this study as a language acquisition skill in which students transform words, sentences, texts, and speeches from English to Bahasa or vice versa (i.e., in both written and oral form). Unfortunately, in educational contexts such as Indonesia, translation is mostly known for its grammatical concentration, which contributes to negative impressions of translation, particularly as a learning approach in English education. Furthermore, the use of translation as a learning method by learners can be divided into six categories: cognitive, affective, social, compensatory, memory, and metacognitive strategies (Al-Musawi, 2014; Liao, 2002; Mollaei, Taghinezhad, & Sadighi, 2017).

Translation is frequently utilized as a cognitive method that involves pupils processing, receiving, and transmitting foreign language material in their first language. Students can use this method to analyze linguistic inputs such as new vocabulary in order to develop new knowledge in English. Students, for example, can translate difficult English terms into Bahasa Indonesia to better grasp an English book. Translation as an emotive method may alleviate students’ anxiety about learning a new language. When confronted with English as a foreign language, students with poor competency levels may use translation to reduce the danger of misunderstanding written or vocal languages. This option also encourages pupils to continue learning despite their limited mastery of English vocabulary and grammatical structures. For example, using an online dictionary like Google Translate to translate a challenging material can help a poor achiever student reduce anxiety while learning independently. Furthermore, when students collaborate in solving English assignments through translation, translation can be employed as a social approach. This method, according to Mollaei et al. (2017), covers scenarios in which students actively query their classmates about the meaning of English words or sentences. The inquiry is typically posed by low-proficiency students in order to obtain clarification, correction, or confirmation regarding their understanding of the high-proficiency pupils. In addition, when writing English materials, students frequently use translation as a compensatory method (Liao, 2006).

To compensate for their lack of English skills, students develop and organize ideas in Bahasa before translating them to English. In addition, the compensatory strategy also happens when students try to translate a text by guessing unknown words or sentences from linguistic clues available in the text. Translation may serve as a memory strategy when students create associations between first language translation and target language texts. For instance, students memorize the meaning of new English vocabulary by remembering the meaning in Bahasa

Indonesia. Lastly, metacognitive strategy is commonly used by students with high proficiency. Students utilize translation to evaluate or review their English. For instance, while creating a text or speech in English, students can try to translate their text to Bahasa to make sure that they have structures or parts of speeches in the correct arrangement. The resurrection of translation has sparked several studies that support its function in foreign language acquisition, particularly at the higher education level. First, Fernández-Guerra (2014) supports the use of translation in foreign language classes in her research. She claims that translating has a good impact and can be a useful ability in classroom activities. Translation, for example, can engage and assist students in comparing the linguistic systems of English and Bahasa Indonesia. Second, Dagilien (2012) and Al-Musawi (2014) demonstrate how translation can be used as a language learning approach for university students. They agree that translation is a useful technique for developing learners' communication competence because it promotes communication and understanding among learners through engagement and cooperation. Other empirical studies that support translation as a learning approach include Liao (2002), Bagheri and Fazel (2011), and Asgarian and Musayeva Vefal (2015). Previous research has found that most second and foreign language learners (i.e., students in higher education levels) have a positive attitude about the use of translation in their English study, even if their ability is low. For example, AlMusawi (2014) discovered that using translation can help less fluent Arab university students learn English vocabulary and lower their anxiety when studying a foreign language. None of the prior studies, however, did in-depth qualitative study on how adult students in higher education use translation to assist them learn English.

As a result, the researcher intends to perform qualitative case study research in an Indonesian EFL higher education context such as English for Special Purpose Program (ESP) in this study. She believes that investigating how adult students use translation-related learning strategies to learn English is critical in providing more insights on the development of translation as a learning method in recent years, particularly given the lack of in-depth research on translation in higher education settings in Indonesia. This research is important to be carried out internationally, such as research conducted in Iran by Zeinab Karimian in "2013" based on the results of her theory "revealed that language learners use various learning strategies regarding translation to understand, remember and produce English regardless of whether or not they were encouraged to do so by their teachers, This research is important to be carried out nationally, such as research conducted at an Islamic university in Indonesia by Alfira Dewi Edelia and Ista Maharsi in 2022 based on the results of their theory showing that the most frequently used translation strategy is the use of electronic machines and English-Indonesian

dictionaries and Indonesian English. Even though many have researched this journal, there are still few who have researched the use of translation as a greeting strategy for learning English. Based on the mentioned research, there are several research gaps that can be further explored. One of them is to delve deeper into the use of translation as a strategy for learning English in the context of greetings. Although many studies have been conducted in this area, few have focused on how translation is used in social interactions such as greetings in English language learning. Further research can identify the effectiveness of using translation in this social communication context, as well as show cultural and contextual factors influence its application. Additionally, comparisons between different cultural and educational contexts can provide deeper insights into the use of translation strategies in language learning.

METHOD

A qualitative case study was employed as the research methodology. This methodology is chosen because it emphasizes on exploring and describing a case to understand a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2003; Latief, 2012). Such definition and emphasis are in line with the goal of the study which aims to explore and describe an issue about translation use among Indonesian higher education students, especially in this era where the communicative approach to English learning and digital technology have become the norm.

Related to the data collection, the methodology in this research is categorized as exemplifying single case design. Exemplifying design allowed the researcher to describe individual experiences and social processes in the perspective of a larger setting (Bryman, 2016; Yin, 2018). In this situation, the researcher acquired data for the research questions through interviews. The data was then analyzed theoretically in order to gain a better understanding of ESP students' use of translation as a learning approach. Given the study's limited scope, the researcher interpreted the study's findings as an example rather than a representative of the environment or community. This concept corresponded to the researcher's use of single-case design; the study concentrated on a single scenario based on geographical setting (i.e., one faculty at a university). This single-case strategy enabled the researcher to narrow the focus and offer helpful information to existing knowledge for future inquiries into the larger context or entire field (Yin, 2018).

As a result, the case study included a complete and in-depth research of ESP students' perspectives and learning practices regarding translation in English learning generated from a specific university in Indonesia. The outcomes of this study cannot be generalized because the researcher's goal is to present current insights on the use of translation as a learning approach to learn English in a limited setting in an Indonesian higher education setting. Given

the scope of the study, the researcher enlisted the help of five students. They were picked using a snowball sampling technique modified from Best and Kahn (2006) and Bryman (2016) processes.

To discover the remaining five volunteers, the researcher sent an online questionnaire via the social media platform WhatsApp. The questionnaire inquired about students' current English ability (as measured by TOEFL scores offered by the university), their study habits, and their use of translation as a learning strategy. The five participants chosen had low or intermediate proficiency (two students with low proficiency, one with pre-intermediate proficiency, and two with intermediate proficiency), frequently learned English outside of classrooms, and frequently used translation during English learning. The researcher conducted a series of interviews with those students to learn how they felt about translation and their translation-related practices for improving their English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' perspectives on using translation as a learning approach for English

The positive perception of translation from the students suggested that translation is an efficient strategy to learn a new language. The participants, especially those low-achieving students, believed that they need translation because it is a quick and simple way to help them understand English material, such as by using Google Translate to translate difficult words from an English text. This is in line with the earlier studies done by Putrawan (2019) and Mutlu et al (2015) who also supported the assumption that poor achievers apply translation to acquire a second language since translation finally enables them to engage in the classroom activities. In addition, it can increase their reading proficiency by boosting their understanding of a text and enriching their vocabulary (Aktengin & Gliniecki, 2015; Liao, 2006).

Furthermore, both high achievers and low achievers feel that translation can help them study more effectively both inside and outside of the classroom. According to the statistics, high achiever pupils primarily employ translation outside of the classroom. For instance, Radit and Andi claimed that they improve their English abilities by viewing movies or videos on Youtube. In other words, kids were exposed to English content and occasionally attempted to locate Indonesian translations of English words they did not understand. This kind of action also indicates that the use of translation cannot be avoided especially by university students who desire to develop their English proficiency not only by attending classes but also practicing English outside the classroom.

This is also in line with the study done by Kuluşaklı et al. (2018) who mentioned that foreign language learners enhanced their knowledge on English content by viewing TV or movies in the target language inside or outside the classroom. Additionally, the students regard translation as a natural and inseparable aspect of English learning. According to Dulay et al. (1982), Cook (2007), and Pan & Pan (2012), learning a new language through the use of students' first language has become a habit and is a natural process. Students will utilize translation spontaneously, with or without their teacher's permission, because it is a beneficial resource for covering gaps in their foreign language acquisition. Moreover, when they cannot utter or produce the correct English sentence, they will naturally rely on their first language by comparing its closest equivalent to the target language material (Asgarian & Musayeva Vefalı, 2015). This also proves the importance and positive role of the first language that cannot be avoided (Kuluşaklı et al., 2018).

On the other hand, the participants, especially high proficiency students, indicated less positive views towards translation, especially when it is used as the major activity. For instance, Radit and Andi claimed that their teacher constantly asked them to translate English texts in every meeting. The use of translation as the primary activity will be strongly related with the classic Grammar Translation Method, in which the teacher takes complete control of the teaching-learning process by analyzing target language sentences using translation (Vermes, 2010). Although this type of exercise assists students to improve their reading comprehension of English texts (Usadiati, 2010), it was not well received by the students because their classroom activities are limited to reading and writing. This is consistent with the findings of Kuluşaklı et al. (2018), who discovered that students use their first language to comprehend a text and plan what they intend to write in the foreign language.

The use of translation may lead pupils to rely more on translation when learning English. The dependency is viewed negatively since students typically regard translation, in this case, online translation, as both a shortcut and the primary approach for completing English tasks. Because some of the participants translate practically all of the English texts (i.e., for reading) and outlines in Bahasa to English (i.e., for writing), online translation is employed to complete the majority of the reading and writing procedures. This strategy dilutes the importance of learning English. Meanwhile, Chandra and Yuyun (2018) argue that online translation should be used as a supplement to learning rather than as a substitute. Students may achieve more accurate English results in reading or writing assignments if they exclusively use translation as a complimentary or supporting technique. According to this study, low proficiency students have a tendency to use translation to do all of the work during learning

sessions, which may disguise their true competencies or even slow down their learning.

Finally, the study suggests that translation may increase incorrect learning among pupils. Despite the fact that translation is not thought to impair writing performance (Chandra & Yuyun, 2018), it can give inaccurate outcomes that impede students' learning. According to the statistics, more than half of the participants translate sentences or paragraphs using online translation. This is concerning since they may not fully comprehend the level of accuracy of the translation. According to Medvedev (2016), translation is an integral aspect of a bilingual classroom, but its use should be regularly supervised by the teacher to avoid pupils being lost in the translation, particularly when using online translation. According to the participants, their instructor chose the easy route and generally prohibited the use of translation in the classroom to avoid this disadvantage. Despite the ban, participants indicated that translation was required during classes due to a lack of expertise. As a result, this situation suggests that there has not been a satisfactory solution to this translation problem.

Tabel. 1 Characteristics of the Participants

| No | Name | TOEFL score (university) | Age | Semester |
|----|-------|-----------------------------|-----|----------|
| 1 | Tino | 400 | 20 | 3rd |
| 2 | Putri | 387 | 19 | 3rd |
| 3 | Radit | 490 | 19 | 3rd |
| 4 | Andi | 540 | 19 | 3rd |

The use of translation as a method to acquire English

According to the findings, the participants indicated a variety of translation-related tasks, particularly during English learning. To begin, during English learning, students cite numerous translation-related tasks that might be classified as cognitive strategies. According to the findings, activities that require converting foreign language material into students' first language include watching movies or videos with Indonesian subtitles and translating words or sentences from English texts using an online dictionary. This is consistent with Liao's (2002) contention that translation can be employed as a cognitive method when students compare and analyze first and foreign languages to determine whether or not their comprehension is accurate.

This method is very effective for students who want to expand their English vocabulary both inside and outside of the classroom. When students try to recall English words or phrases, they use translation as a memory method. The findings reveal that students' capacity to retain the meaning of English vocabulary is affected by the frequency with which they read English sentences, hear the terms from their teacher, or watch videos. High achievers can memorize

English vocabulary without using Indonesian translation if they are already familiar with the words or sentences, but low achievers utilize Indonesian translation to memorize English words or phrases.

The findings are comparable with those of Liao (2006) and Mollaei et al. (2017), who found that learners can memorize the meaning of English vocabulary and phrases by translating them. Furthermore, Calis and Dikilitas (2012) discovered that translation is an effective method for memorizing the vocabulary of the target language. As a compensatory tactic, the employment of translation might mask the participants' lack of understanding, particularly in English writing. The data suggest that the participants took some steps before writing the entire English text. Some of them are brainstorming ideas and arranging sentences in Indonesian. This finding is also similar with Bagheri and Fazel's (2011) study, which found that translation can assist language learners in creating and expressing ideas. Furthermore, Aktekin and Gliniecki (2015) proposed that learners would initially think in their first language before beginning to write. Translation as an affective approach plays an important part in controlling students' emotions while learning English. According to the findings, the participants, particularly the low achievers, say that employing translation motivates and comforts them to study English. High-achieving students believed that translation may assist them in explaining difficult English vocabulary to their friends without being concerned that their explanation would be incorrect. This finding is consistent with the findings of Al-Musawi (2014) and Mutlu et al. (2015), who discovered that using translation helps lower learners' anxiety and pressure when learning a foreign language, particularly when completing teacher assigned tasks.

Furthermore, using translation as a social method allows students to learn English collectively with their classmates. This technique places a greater emphasis on student engagement as they learn by sharing their knowledge of the target language, particularly English. Participants cited activities such as asking their classmates to explain the English content and working together to determine the English meaning and complete their English projects based on the results.

Karimian and Talebinejad (2013) & Al-Musawi (2014) asserted that collaborative activities involving translation among students enable them to learn a new language in a welcoming setting both inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, translation can assist pupils in developing more independent learning in which they can evaluate their work. According to Li (2013), metacognitive awareness and implementation are critical for students to recognize their learning potential, pace, and style in order to construct an effective learning process. The students in this study were observed to utilize translation as a metacognitive

approach with varying levels of awareness.

Students with higher proficiency are well aware that translation can help them examine and enhance their writing vocabulary and grammar. Students with poorer proficiency, on the other hand, perceive translation as a tool to check their grammar simply, not appreciating its potential in evaluating their compositions in other ways. According to Li's (2013) research, the metacognitive technique can generate more exciting learning activities by allowing students to direct their learning. In line with Li's findings, the findings of this study show that students who are more conscious of the translation metacognitive technique have more control over their learning and are more satisfied with the outcomes of their learning.

Meanwhile, even though they had not extensively investigated the use of translation as an evaluation tool for vocabulary selection, students with lesser awareness tended to be easily satisfied with the vocabularies in their writings. This could interfere with their learning, as Jamaris (2013) claims that many Indonesian students utilize translation as their primary strategy for vocabulary learning. Unawareness of the metacognitive benefits of translation in vocabulary development may encourage bad English learning. For example, if students simply utilize translation (i.e., translation apps like Google Translate) as grammar checking tools, they may ignore incorrect vocabulary selections and learn them as if they are correct. Long-term English learning is thought to be facilitated by such circumstances (Jamaris, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Previously, the employment of translation as a tactic was judged an ineffective instrument for assisting pupils in learning a new language. Its function in foreign language learning can spark disagreement among language academics and teachers, with some agreeing and others disagreeing on its importance during the learning process. Recent research (Al-Musawi, 2014; Asgardian & Musayeva Vefali, 2015; Dagilien, 2012; Liao, 2006; Mollaei et al., 2017; Pan & Pan, 2012; Putrawan, 2019) has reintroduced translation as a student approach for learning a foreign language. The purpose of this study was to learn about students' perspectives on translation as a language technique and how they use translation related strategies to learn English. The interview results revealed that translation plays an important role in the participants' English learning process. Translation is seen as an effective method and a natural component of their foreign language study. It is reflected in remarks such as translation allowing pupils to quickly understand English material and its significance in compensating for students' lack of understanding.

Aside from their good opinions on translation, the participants noted that it could be a detrimental alternative for learning a new language. Some of them believe that its participation can lead to negative reliance and poor learning habits. Furthermore, various activities relating to the use of translation as a learning approach were indicated by the participants. They believe it can help them understand difficult terms, reduce their worry about English learning, create English texts, expand their vocabulary, aid their peers in practicing English tasks, and evaluate their work. Translation is used as a cognitive, affective, compensatory, memory, social, and metacognitive technique by students in these activities. Overall, this study is classified as an example of a single-case design and is focused on summarizing the participants' experiences using translation as an English learning approach. The findings demonstrated both favorable and negative attitudes toward the use of translation and its application in English learning. When compared to other students, low achievers respond more well to translation as a learning approach.

They stressed the importance of translation in assisting them in learning a foreign language, particularly English. High achiever students, on the other hand, believe that translation can also contribute to English learning, but its involvement should be reduced to avoid future dependency because its nature is only beneficial in some aspects, such as adding new vocabulary and improving their understanding of English contents. According to the study's findings, translation is expected to provide useful information, particularly on its involvement in foreign language learning. Students with limited English competence nevertheless regard translation as a worthwhile and useful technique for learning English. Meanwhile, pupils with high proficiency used translation somewhat since they do not want to rely too heavily on it. Furthermore, as Ali (2012) suggests, professors should not completely prohibit their students from using translation, particularly at the higher education level, because certain students' competence levels are still considered low and they require translation to compensate for their lack of knowledge. Furthermore, rather than using translation as the primary classroom activity, teachers may use it as a medium to verify students' understanding during the teaching and learning process.

Because this study only focuses on students' perspectives and how they use it to help them learn English, there are various issues that can be examined further in future studies. To begin, teachers' perspectives on students' use of translation can be added because there may be differing perspectives on how much translation should be incorporated during foreign language learning. It is also important to observe how students use translation during English learning to increase the depth of the data. Furthermore, quantitative research may supplement

this current study by increasing the number of participants and providing more trustworthy data on students' usage of translation, particularly at the higher education level in Indonesia.

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