

TERTIARY EFL LEARNERS' BARRIERS IN TRANSLATING INDONESIAN NEWS ITEM TEXT INTO ENGLISH AND VICE VERSA

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ABSTRACT

One of the major topics to be investigated in this study is translation. This is not particularly new and has been studied for many years. However, The proficiency of English as a foreign language is reflected by the quality of translation. Despite this, learners still claim that translating is a rigid activity to do, even if they had learned the four English skills and vocabulary. Therefore, it is exciting to be investigated. The present study tries to discover what aspects become the most barrier for learners when translating. 25 learners who took translation classes were involved in this study. The primary data was obtained through closed-ended questionnaire, Thus this study was descriptive quantitative. The result now provides three major causes; first, the inability of students to decide which sentence must translate literally and which sentence must not translate literally. Second, the inability of students to construct perfect grammatical sentences from both two languages, Indonesia and English, and the third was aggravated by the learner's inability to find the most equivalence words or phrases from Indonesia to English and vice versa, including collocation and idioms.

Keywords: *Learners' Barrier, News Item Text, Translation Barrier.*

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INTRODUCTION

Translation plays a pivotal role in bridging effective communication among languages all over the world. In the increasingly global world, the ability to translate accurately enables people to acquire, organize, and classify the varicosity of information, ideas, and knowledge for many purposes.(Nord, 2005) Translation expands the advancement of many aspects of life such as the exchange of scientific research, technological development, and cultural artifacts, and promotes international collaboration and innovation. In the social aspect, translating texts, speeches, and media content accurately can assist people in being aware and learning the multicultural and cultural issues. These abilities lead people to have a good understanding of and respect different cultures.(Kabaday1, 2021) in short, Cross-cultural communication is essential in various fields such as diplomacy, business, and education.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners must possess advanced translation skills, including grammar, vocabulary, idiomatic expression, and cultural nuances.(Sundari & Febriyanti, 2017) These skills bridge the gap

between language learning and practical application, opening opportunities in professional disciplines like international business, diplomacy, tourism, and media. Translation also enhances critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills by accurately navigating linguistic and cultural issues.(Kabadayı, 2021) Moreover, Tertiary EFL learners require strong translation abilities to navigate complex academic topics. They learn to understand subject-specific terminology, engage in academic discussions, and organize scientific papers, preparing them for postgraduate studies and real-world work.

Excellent translation skills prepare learners for professional jobs, multilingualism, and international collaboration. They enhance attention to detail, linguistic components, and cultures, making translation a crucial tertiary education for EFL learners, as it facilitates communication and collaboration with diverse people.(Salam et al., 2017) Thus, various types of texts are highly required in translating activities. including narrative, informative, and persuasive texts. Informative texts are crucial in EFL learning as they provide ideas, thoughts, and information, enabling readers to acquire new knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. They help learners build and maintain the integrity and credibility of their academic work, ensuring the relevance of news with daily life issues.(Kindall et al., 2013)

In tertiary EFL classes, using informative text in translation classes enhances critical thinking and language proficiency. News item text, which is relevant to students' real-life experiences, exposes them to contemporary vocabularies and diverse grammatical structures. This practice helps students produce accurate and precise translations, preparing them for professional work requiring accuracy and cultural sensitivity.(Moghimi et al., 2013)

Most early studies as well as current work focus on translation skills, Wu (2017) revealed that headline news showed a communicative translation and probed into the significant part in various language proficiency.(Yonghong, 2017) In a similar vein, Dewi (2021) investigated students' translation products of lifestyle magazines which were interfered with by machine translation, and pointed out that Google Translate is used in 75% of students' translation products.(Putri & Dewi, 2021). Another related study was carried out by Indarti (2021) who found out that there were five strategies implied by students when they were translating manual books of home appliances; amplification, reduction, borrowing, and literal translation.(Indarti, 2021) Also, Sriyono revealed in his study which investigated how Maduresse idiomatic and daily expressions were being translated into English by university students who were not able to convey the original meaning from the first language. It happened because they were lack of English vocabulary.(Sriyono, 2021)

The present study creates a gap in identifying the specific barriers that learners encounter while translating Indonesian news item text into English and vice versa. Linguistic issues, cultural complexities, contextual awareness, and the capacity to effectively transmit the message are all potential hindrances. This research provides deep explanations of translation challenges, providing insights into the factors of make them barriers, and discover advanced view of pedagogical approaches in translation education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation In ELT Studies

The Grammar translation method is the gate to open translation studies. The application of this method which required the learners to translate well in the target language became the main idea of translation. (Larsen-freeman, n.d.) In its early appearance, this method was widely used in teaching English in Europe. It utilized students' grammar mastery and vocabulary knowledge to produce a good translation. On the contrary, this method gained criticism from the reformist. The reformist claimed that teaching language using the grammar-translation method reduced students' ability to grasp the spoken language, created many false in-word equivalences, and isolated the meaning of the sentence. (Catford, 1965)

As the shortcoming above, translation was banned in English language teaching for quite a while. The translation was claimed as a classic genre. That was because this method was teacher-centered, in which the teacher runs the class dominantly without engaging students in the teaching-learning process. This method focused on memorization of vocabulary, and grammatical rules, which aimed to translate the target language well. For centuries this method was used. The use of language is isolated. It was adopted as a chief means of teaching a foreign language.

Ironically, this method is valiantly used in teaching foreign languages among competitive methodologies nowadays. History said that this method appears to disfavor school learners. They thought that they had to memorize unusable vocabulary and grammar to produce a good translation. Moreover, this method the test of the Grammar translation method, is manageable to construct. It did not require fluent knowledge of the target language by the test designer or teacher. (Toro, 2008)

Educators also gave their criticism of the grammar-translation method. Educators thought that teaching translation is not communicative. It did not lead students to use language communicatively. They believed that translating only involved one skill, which was reading. Translation fosters students to use the excess of their mother tongue, there were no other three language skills taught. The translation was taught in monotone ways and the same techniques for all meetings. Thus, the direct method appeared to displace the shortcoming of the grammar-translation method.

Nevertheless, as the knowledge developed recent studies discovered that translation has myriad benefits for language teaching. Newmark pointed out that translation can not be ignored in language teaching and learning. Translation can be reflected in students' competence in viewing their foreign language capability. To be specific when learners translate their native language into English or vice versa they surely consider the grammar, the writing mechanics, and the word choice. This activity raised them to be more aware of the differences between the two languages. In the middle of these two notions, appears a question do learners need translation? The answer to this question is positive. (Randaccio, 2012) Learners undoubtedly need a translation. For example, in daily life-learners receive and read messages and emails from their friends, read notices, and read articles in the newspaper. In the classroom, learners translate teachers' instruction and grasp the information from slides, books, and journals. The translation is a real communication that cannot be ignored. Then, translation

helps learners to promote their language learning, ultimately and proficiency with the empirical findings from O'Malley and Chamot cited by Popovic asserted that 30 students of Spanish and Russian found the effortless rendering of the meaning from their native language into English by understanding the grammatical rules of English.(Popovic, n.d.)

Integrating translation into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is critical and provides several benefits to both students and teachers.(Olohan, 2021) One key advantage is that translation bridges the gap between the students' native language and the target language, allowing for a more in-depth comprehension of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Translating activity allows learners to identify parallels between languages, improving understanding and retention. This strategy promotes cognitive development by encouraging critical thinking and problem solving as students search for the most accurate and contextually suitable translations.(Kuşçu & Ünlü, 2015) Furthermore, translation tasks can raise cultural awareness, allowing students to comprehend the complexities and subtleties of both their own and the target language cultures. The significant advantage of using translation in the EFL classroom is that it caters to a variety of learning styles. While some students goes forward on immersion and direct instruction, others may benefit from the more controlled method that translation offers.(Carl & Schaeffer, 2017) It enables students to utilise their first language as a scaffold to better understand complicated English concepts, so lowering fear and increasing confidence. Furthermore, translation activities can be adapted to different competency levels, making them an adaptable tool for individualised education. Translation activities allow students to practise all four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—providing a comprehensive approach to language acquisition.(Randaccio, 2012)

News Item Text

This present study utilized informative text as the text to be translated. As has been noted that informative text has a function to state facts, someone's ideas, and thoughts. For translation purposes, typical informative texts focus on the topic of knowledge and literary subjects as the content is conveying the readers about the structured judgment. The format of this text is usually standard such as a textbook, a technical report, an article in a newspaper, and a thesis. Narrowing the varicosity of informative text, a News item is chosen. The consideration in choosing this type of informative text is the imminence to students' real-world life. Everyday nature and social phenomena happen and are reported as news either spoken which is broadcasted on television or radio or written which is available in newspapers and digital newspapers.

The news item is written systematically and chronologically.(Junining & Kusuma, 2020) The generic structure of news item text is different from other text types. News item text has its own structure; main event or newsworthy event, elaboration or background event, and source or resource of information. It has been known that people gain information either from written or spoken language and news item is written information. In English language teaching, news item text used is written in English. So, students must be able to translate well to grasp the information. Teachers also ask students to re-tell what information that students get from news item text which is written in the

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Indonesian language into English with their language. Thus, a good translating ability is a must-have for ELT students.

Research that brought newspaper in translation research is derived from Ismail and Hartono (2016) which analyze students' errors in translating news items using Google Translate. They found that grammatical errors, terminology errors, and omissions errors are the most contribute to students' errors. (Made et al., 2016) Muryanti also exploited news item text in her research. She developed news items to be students' frames in developing their argumentative writing. (Muryati, 2013).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach. Quantitative research aims to test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. Moreover, a descriptive quantitative design was performed for this research. A descriptive quantitative study is designed to obtain the current status of phenomena and is directed toward determining the nature of the situation as it exists at that time of the study. It is worth saying that descriptive research is conducted to give information and an obvious illustration of the social situation with the objective of the research. This research investigated what aspects of English mostly became barriers for learners in translating. (Suharno & Setyarini, 2021).

This research is conducted during a translation class in the faculty of Tarbiyah of the English Education study program of the University of Kiai Abdullah Faqih. 25 students took part in this research. They were translation class students. They were in their fourth year or last year of study and had passed all English skills courses. A questionnaire is the main tool for obtaining the data in this research. A questionnaire is not merely a list of questions. The questions are formulated and listed to achieve certain purposes. To gain accurate data. A questionnaire in research on language learning is utilized to probe people's attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. In this research, the researcher invented the questionnaire to gather learners' barriers to translating. The questionnaire has three categories, and each category consists of several questions related to the translation process. The first part inquires about students concerned with translation knowledge. It covers their knowledge of translation theories, translation techniques, and their use, translation strategy, and their awareness of literal and not literal sentences. The second part explores students' competence in the patterns of language including parts of speech, tenses, pronouns, and prepositions both in Indonesia and English, also their competence in constructing perfect grammar sentences both in Indonesia and English. The third part probes students' competency in Equivalence. It consists of vocabulary knowledge related to the text that was being translated, collocation, and idioms knowledge. The questionnaire required students to choose either 4, 3, 2, or 1. They must choose only a number. 4 means strongly agree, 3 means disagree, 2 means disagree and 1 means strongly disagree. The more they agree with the statement, the higher the score. All the items question has reached the reliability. They can be seen as follows;

Table 1. Reliability Test

Reliability Test	
Cronbach Alpha	N of items
.945	17

Data Collection Technique

Before answering the questionnaire. Students were asked to translate news items into Indonesian and English. Two kinds of news item text were used in this research. The first text was Indonesian news item text. As the Indonesian language is the student's native language, the researcher assigned them to choose freely as their interests. Thus, the topic is various. Meanwhile, they were assigned to take news item text from the same platform; Jakarta Post. Second was the English text which the text is chosen by the researcher, students were not allowed to choose the text. Both of the texts are being translated by students without any use of a translation machine. After finishing the test of translating text, students were asked to answer the questionnaire based on their experience in translating.

Data Analysis Technique

Likert scale was utilized to measure the data. It is computed by using descriptive analysis in SPSS which afterward. The mean of the result was interpreted by using the criteria as follows;

The obtained data was calculated using descriptive statistics which seeks for the frequency and the percentage. The categorizations are as follows: Excellent (76-100%), Good (51-75%), Poor (26-50%), and Very Poor (0-25%).(Sugiyono, 2013)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings were based on the result of a questionnaire that had been answered by 25 students of the translation class. The table explains the frequency of each statement from part of the questionnaires.

Table 2. Translation Knowledge

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I know well that translating is a complex activity	16	9	0	0
2	I know well the theories of translation	19	6	0	0
3	I know well the strategy for translating	0	13	12	0
4	I know well kinds of translation techniques and their use	3	9	13	0
5	I know the technique to translate the specific cultural terms	0	11	13	1
6	I know which sentence must be translated literally	0	0	14	11
7	I know which sentence must not be translated literally	0	3	16	6

SA= Strongly Agree A=Agree D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

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Students understand well the statements translating is a complex activity. It can be seen from the result of the first statement of translation theory knowledge. All of them pick the SA and A options. Students who choose SA are 64% and 36% for A. Also, the second statement is that they have a good understanding of translation theories. All students pick SA and A options. 76% of students choose SA options and 24% for A options. Nevertheless, they claimed that they have a poor understanding of the translation strategy 52% of students pick the A option and 48% for D option, techniques of translation which the highest percentage is 52% for SD option, and the lowest percentage was 12% for SA option. The fifth category which queries students about their knowledge of techniques for translating specific cultural terms gained 52% as the highest for D option and 4% as the lowest for SD option. The sixth statement earned 56% for D option and 44% for SD option. The last statement has 64% as the highest for D option and 12% as the lowest for A option.

Table 3. Grammar Competence

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I know part of speech in Indonesia and English	24	1	0	0
2	I know well English tenses	20	5	0	0
3	I know well the different pronouns in English and Indonesia	16	9	0	0
4	I know well preposition and its use in both Indonesia and English	8	5	11	1
5	I know how to construct phrases and sentences which has perfect grammar in both Indonesia and English	1	2	14	8

The first statement earned 96% for SA option as the highest score and 4% for A option as the lowest score. It indicated that only a student picks an A option. Almost all students have competent in understanding part of speech in English. The second statement earned 80% for SA option and 20% for A option. The third statement earned 64% for SA option and 36% for A option. While for the fourth statement gained 44% as the highest for D option and 4% as the lowest for SD option. The fifth statement gained 56% as the highest for D option and 4% as the lowest for SA option.

Table 4. Equivalence Competence

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I have sufficient vocabulary knowledge concerned with the topic of the text which is being translated.			13	12
2	I understand and can translate collocation			5	20
3	I understand and can translate idioms			16	9
4	I can distinguish both collocations and idioms.			6	19
5	I can find the most equivalence word to represent the closest meaning from Indonesia to English.			14	11

The first equivalence response statement asked about vocabulary size and vocabulary knowledge related to the text in which students were being translated

gained 52% response for D option and 48% for SD option. The second statement obtained 80% for SD option and 20% for D option. The third obtained 64% for D option and 36% for SD option. Similarly, the fourth statement obtained 76% for SD option and 24% for D option. The last was the fifth statement obtained 56% for D option and 44% for SD option.

The five statements of the third part of the questionnaire which explores students' competence of equivalence were in a very bad category as the result shows.

DISCUSSION

Translation Knowledge

The first part of the questionnaire probed students about their knowledge of translation theory. From the table, it can be allowed the conclusion that students have poor capability in deciding which sentences must translate literally and which sentences must not translate literally. This incapability was supported by their insufficient knowledge of translation strategy, techniques, and techniques in specific cultural terms. Even though, they have a good understanding of translation activity and translation theory.

Some previous studies have reported investigating EFL students' knowledge and their ability. Moghimi and Yousefi (2013) affirmed that students' emotional intelligence has correlated to students' translation ability. problem-solving, happiness, flexibility, and assertiveness affected how students yield good translations. (Moghimi et al., 2013) In line with this, Andriani (2020) confirmed that specific cultural terms of Indonesian became the most difficult aspect to be translated. She found several errors that students made when they were translating Indonesian stories into English and vice versa. the language opulence of Indonesia was the main difficulty factor. The translator did not come from the region where the authors of the story were written. Thus, Kardiansyah (2020) found that the language opulence of Indonesia led the translators are not able to distinguish which sentences must translate literally and which sentences must not. His findings also discovered that the translator did not have sufficient background knowledge of the story or the text that they were being translated. (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020)

Saud has elucidated that EFL learners' language skills and cognitive capacities improve greatly when they have knowledge of translation. Through translation activities, students gain a better understanding of vocabulary, syntax, and cultural subtleties in both their original language and English. This practice helps them recognise and use linguistic structures more precisely. Translation also helps pupils develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities as they manage linguistic gaps. The ability to properly translate enhances learners' confidence since it demonstrates a clear, practical application of their language skills. (Saud, 2020) Overall, translation expertise enhances the EFL learning experience, making it more complete and effective.

For this reason, the translator is highly encouraged to equip themselves with sufficient knowledge related to the Indonesian stories or text that they would be translating. It is important to produce good translation quality without diminishing the Indonesian text value.

Grammar Competence

The second questionnaires examine students' competence related to grammar competence. The first until the third asked students' competency in basic grammar; part of speech, tenses, and pronouns. The findings indicated good results. On the contrary, the mean of the fourth and the fifth questions against the basic grammar competence result. It was found that students were not able to construct English sentences perfectly grammatically. Undeniably, grammar has a significant role in translating activities. Grammar elements became one of the considerations in deciding whether the quality of translation is good or not. Khavari and Ahamadian (2018) encapsulated that there was a positive relationship between grammatical competence and the translation ability of EFL Iranian students. They proved it by assigning them to translate English text into Farsi. The greater the grammar competence, the greater the translation ability. (Khavari & Ahamadian, 2018)

A similar finding was revealed by Khamesian (2016) who pointed out that the grammatical component is an indispensable part of translating scientific articles of Iranian university students. He claimed that grammatical components must be familiarized to avoid misinterpretations, incomprehensibility, and failure to state implicit meaning. (Khamesian, 2016) One of the solutions was being offered by Siregar (2018), to teach the grammar-translation method. The grammar translation method enables students to apply previously studied translation ideas into actual works. It is crucial to understand this translation theory during the fundamental of teaching translation. (Siregar, 2018)

Having sufficient grammatical skills is important during the translation process since it promotes accuracy and clarity in delivering the intended idea. Grammar is the structural foundation of every language, determining how words and phrases are appropriately combined to make logical sentences. When translating, a thorough awareness of grammatical rules in both the source and target languages is required to avoid misinterpretations and errors that may alter the original content.

Equivalence Competence

From the table 3 of equivalence competence, it can be concluded that students have poor competence in equivalence. No students pick SA and A option which indicated that they have good competence in equivalence. All students pick D and SD options. it was a crucial finding that must be considered in teaching translation, especially for university students. it was found that they do not have sufficient vocabulary knowledge related to the news item text that they were being translated. Poor knowledge of equivalence renders the lack of translation quality. (Ehara et al., 2016) The message or the real meaning of the text is inconvenient if the translators do not have adequate knowledge of equivalence to the text that they are being translated. (Yinhua, 2011)

Research has provided evidence for the importance of equivalence derived from Panou (2013) who unveiled that equivalence takes a pivotal role in translating all text genres. Equivalence represents the text's culture, the author's culture, and the people's culture mentioned either implicitly or explicitly. (Panou, 2013) In a similar sense, Ehara (2016) also uncovered that translation quality could be measured by the translators' vocabulary size, depth, and knowledge.

(Ehara et al., 2016) She cogently suggested to the translators to gain vocabulary and cultural context to the texts that they were going to be translating.

To be sure, based on Table 3, collocation and idioms are also major barriers in translating news item text. The shortfall of collocation and idioms knowledge contributed to the indigent translation quality. (Wu & Zhou, 2003) they adduced that translators must have particular strategies and techniques to find the closest meaning of collocation and idioms of the target language. They proposed monolingual and bilingual corpora as the techniques to translate collocation and idioms.

A more comprehensive description can be found in studies carried out by Lestiyawati (2014) who found that students' errors in translating news item text were caused by their unawareness related to the context and insufficient knowledge of the text. The students also claimed that they have a poor understanding related to translation theories. (Lestiyawati et al., 2014) Similarly with it, Windari and Hafiz (2021) exposed that students' errors in translating Indonesian youth pledge text were mostly influenced by some factors such as: students' English ability, lack of vocabulary, the interference of students' first language, grammatical structure, and lack of students' understanding of the context of the text. (Windari & Al Hafizh, 2021)

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The present study confirms the findings of the learners' barriers in translating Indonesian News Item text into English and vice versa. The finding is contrary with what students have already claimed. EFL learners who are in the last academic year and had completed their English skill and vocabulary class have a deficient capability in translating. Despite they have claimed that they have known well the translation theory and techniques, it is ironic knowing the fact that almost all students are not able to distinguish which sentence must translate literally and which sentence must not. Furthermore, it is quite upsetting knowing the fact that learners have understood the part of speech, English and Indonesian language tenses, and the preposition for both two languages, but they claimed that they could not construct sentences that have perfect grammar. The result of equivalence understanding is worse than translation knowledge and grammar competence All of the students confirmed that they did not have sufficient vocabulary knowledge, collocation, and idioms of sources language. Also, they were getting difficulties finding the closest words or phrases to represent the meaning of the two languages. The main conclusion of this research is the learners' barriers to translating Indonesian text into English and vice versa are learners could not distinguish which sentences must translate literally and which sentences must not, learners also could not construct the sentence which has perfectly grammatical and the incapability students in find the closest words or phrases which represent the meaning from both two languages.

Looking forward, further research attempts could prove quite beneficial to examine students' translation quality using a translation quality rubric. It is important to do to remedy the errors part of the translation.

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