Analysis of Indonesian Students' Language Transfer of English Idiomatic Sentences

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ABSTRACT

The complexity of transferring language might mislead students as translators to mistranslate texts due to errors. Errors can be in the form of a message (meaning) or language, which also consists of grammar and lexicon. Transferring language also needs consideration of equivalent language transfer from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). The present research identifies the error types, the source of errors, and the types of idiomatic translation that were done by English Department students of University of Islam Malang. The subjects of the research were 77 of the fifth semester students who took Translation course. The core data of this research were the students' translation works from English to *bahasa* Indonesia and unstructured interviews. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design. The data of the research were obtained from the result of the students' translation during the course. The data obtained also showed that more students commit errors on language than errors on message. The errors of language exist in the form of lexical aspect; they are conjunction, verb, and noun. In addition, the source of errors tends to happen because of the interlingual factors than the intralingual factors. The idiomatic transfer from the source language to the target language was done by shifting the meaning of idiom, instead of through word to word translation.

Keywords: *intralingual; interlingual; idiomatic sentences; language transfer*

INTRODUCTION

Translation is a complex skill of transferring a language into another language (de Groot, 2000). Many factors cause the complexity, they are retaining meaning and messaging, considering culture involvement, and considering the source text field or the translation matters (Indelicato, 2017). Translation is needed if one is required to communicate with other people from other countries with different languages. Therefore, the act of translation happens almost every moment to disseminate knowledge and information in society. Translators are trained to be able to transform language from source texts to target texts.

Translation requires a mastery of two different languages. A translator must have adequate knowledge of the source language because, in order to translate a particular language into a certain language setting and situation, comprehending

information is a must. Therefore, the essential of translation is to make the translation results meet the readers' expectation (Zhang, 2016). (Munday, 2012) claimed that the process of shifting between two different written languages entails the translators transform an original written text (source language into different target written language. Meanwhile, (Catford, 1978) stated that translation is an activity changing language material to another language by finding the most equivalent meaning of words of the source language. So, the final result of the target language can be accepted as the source language. An act of transferring a language to another language is divided into two activities, translation and interpretation.

Translation is a written form of transforming source language to target language, while interpretation is a process of transferring spoken languages. (Musyoka & Karanja, 2014) said that an interpreter is not only transferring the meaning of a text but also interpret the meaning to meet the context of other languages. In order to reach the equivalent meaning, there are two certain aspects that need to be considered, linguistics aspects and culture. An inconsiderable use of those two aspects might cause mistranslation of source texts.L1 language components, such as grammar, semantic, and lexical, as well as culture, might interfere with the result of translation. Richards (1973) stated that the interference of L1 causes difficulties in acquiring a foreign language. Mother tongue can hardly be separated in learning a second or foreign language. It is because the mother tongue has been used and heard since the early development of speakers. L1 interference happens if there is a missing system in phonology, grammar, lexicon, or semantics. This phenomenon also happens to university students, including students who enroll in English Department of University of Islam Malang. Interference can also happen due to a lack of fluency in a language.

In English Department of University of Islam Malang, Translation is one of the elective courses that is offered for fifth-semester students who undertake language skills and language components courses before hands and considered good at language skills and components. In fact, the mastery of language skills and the component itself does not, to some extent, guarantee the students' ability to translate. In Translation course, the students are taught not only the theory and concept of translation but also practice to translate. However, many students feel difficult in finding the most equivalent words in the target language while translating texts.

There are many researches on translation recently. Fahrizky (2015) identified the idiomatic translation strategies in translating a novel. The data obtained were analyzed by comparing the idiomatic expression on both languages, English and Indonesian. The result showed that there are five translation strategies used to translate idiomatic expressions, namely: (1) Using idiom of similar meaning and form, (2) using idiom of similar meaning but Different Form, (3) paraphrase, (4) omission, and (5) literal translation.

Translating foreign language text or called source text to target language might be difficult for some people. It is because a translator might be interfered with by the use of mother tongue which is formerly used in daily activity. This also happens to English department students of Universitas Islam Malang in translating English text to

bahasa Indonesia. The lack of use of English in everyday communication affects the mastery of English language itself, either in spoken or written. Errors often happen when the students transform English to Indonesia, vice versa.

According to Terrell & Brown (1981), errors made by language learners come from several sources; they are interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, the context of learning, and communicative strategy. Out of all sources, intralingual transfer (errors within the language) is the main factor in learning a language. Intralingual transfer exists due to overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesize. Miscomprehending of the content of the language due to the complex structure contributes errors for language learners.

Furthermore, the context of learning also contributes to the existence of errors. The absence of a tutor in a learning process makes the language learners misinterpret the language. Errors can also happen due to inappropriate explanation of the rules of language, which is imitated by language learners.

By analyzing errors both in interlingual and intralingual language transfer help lecturers to decide the order of teaching material beginning from the easiest material to the most complex one. So that learner will construct their concept of leaning easily. Besides, by knowing the language problems that cause errors, the lecturer can prioritize the explanation of the material based on students' readiness. Here, lecturers have opportunities to explore various teaching strategies that are suitable for students. As the assessment, the lecturer can provide proper exercises in language learning based on the materials which have been delivered to students. The last, lecturers are able to construct and administered tests to see the progress made by students. Besides that, error analysis can help students to prevent themselves from making unnecessary errors in learning L2. While for lecturers, error analysis enables them to know types of errors made by students, identify the factors that cause errors, and prepare strategies to avoid other errors. Without analyzing and knowing the factors of errors, lecturers can hardly provide effective ways to teach.

Adelnia & Dastjerdi (2011) defined idiom as a set of words which has different meanings. Idiom contains connotation meaning, which is not depicted in the written expression. Therefore, an idiom cannot be transferred literally since the meaning cannot be predicted. Ferdowsi (2013) mentioned that idiom is a part of a sentence. It sometimes has variant elements. An idiom is not intended to teach anything that can be used in every type of text. An idiom is figurative extensions of word meaning. It is more common and frequent and it is sometimes used literally.

Furthermore, Hartono (2016) studied the types of errors in students'translation. It revealed that more students tend to make errors in the message of the source language to the target language. Another result showed that intralingual transfer or errors because of the language itself are significantly dominant compared to the interlingual transfer. This is in line with Terrell & Brown (1981) statement that the effect of intralingual transfer to create errors overshadow other factors. However, research by (Puspita, 2019) showed that errors performed by English learners. The result showed that interlanguage affects errors more than the intralanguage does. The

result of this research is similat to the result of this previous research. However, the present study identifies the errors made by English Department students of University of Islam Malang. Besides identifying the L1 interference of interlingual and intralingual transfer, this study also examines the students' translation of English texts which involve idiomatic expression in them.

Considering the different results of various researches and theory, hence, the present study is identifying and describing the result of students' translation in the form of (1) what factors do interfere with the students' translation result? Considering the sentences that contain idiomatic expressions, this study also identifies the types of idiomatic transfer in the form of (2) what types of idiomatic transfer by the students from English text to Indonesia text?

METHOD

Based on the research problems stated above, the present research employed qualitative design. According to (Creswell, 2012) qualitative research investigates social phenomena or human problems. In this qualitative research, the researcher will describe the complex condition of the students'works, analyze the students' works, and report the result using words and graphics without any numbers involved. The present research was conducted in University of Islam Malang. The subjects of the research were 77 of the fifth semester students who take Translation course. The core data of this research were the students' translation works from English to *bahasa* Indonesia and unstructured interviews. The obtained data were studied to examine the linguistics components that interfere with the students' works. The data obtained were analyzed through several stages: (1) identify the students' work, (2) select the types of errors made by the students, (3) classify the errors based on the types and source, and (4) describe and explain the errors based on the source and types. While for the idiomatic transfer, the data obtained were analyzed through (1) identify the idiomatic translation by the students, (2) decide the types of idiomatic transfer.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Many students tend to think that English texts can be translated word to word into *bahasa* Indonesia. It is because of the strong interference of the mother tongue to the learning of English as a foreign language. Whereas, the first thing to do in translating texts is to understand the total meaning of the source texts. After that, the translated expression must be similar or equivalent to the original texts. The following are sentences that were translated by the students.

Table 1. The Source Text has done by the Students

No.	Sentences
1	SL: He has taken more responsibilities as he couldn't say "no" to his boss. I think he has bitten more than he can chew, and he'll struggle to handle them all.
2	SL: I've more productive time in the day because I've developed this good habit of keeping

	video games at arm's length.
3	SL: The country decided to close the door on talks till other outstanding issues are resolved.
4	SL: The sales team blamed the engineers for the organization's failure to bag the mega deal, but they were barking up the wrong tree.
5	SL: The due date of the assignment is tomorrow. We need to burn the midnight oil now.
6	SL: I need to have an experience to get a job, but without a job, I can't have experience. It's a chicken and egg situation.
7	SL: You expect our plant to manufacture 40,000 parts in a week. You're trying to boil the ocean on this one.
8	SL: The client is hyper-sensitive. We need to handle him with kid gloves, or we risk losing the deal.
9	SL: More than 5,000 cars sold so far. The new model is selling like hotcakes.
10	SL: The heavy overnight rain spoilt our plan to play cricket the next morning.
11	SL: Max fell head over heels in love with her colleague and wants to marry her.
12	SL: It's not the management is not aware of few false bills here and there, but they don't call it because it would expose many and stir up a hornet's nest.
13	SL: The author tried to drive a hard bargain with the publisher on signing amount, but couldn't because he didn't have best sellers in his name.

The results of the students' translation are divided into transferring texts with error on message and transferring texts with error on language. Based on the data obtained, there is a total of 1001 translation made by the students. From that number of translation results, 27.5% of students' works comprises errors on message, while 39% of the students' work comprises errors on language.

Errors on message

Message is the content of source language that is contained in the body of the text to be delivered to readers. The following are given translation results of the students.

(a)   TL Sentence 1

Dia mengambil banyak pertanggungjawab yang tidak bisa berkata "tidak" kepada bosnya. Saya pikir dia memakan lebih banyak daripada yang bisa dia kunyah dan dia akan berusaha menangani semuanya.

(b) TL Sentence 1

Dia mengambil tanggung jawab yang banyak dan semuanya terselesaikan.

Based on that translation results, it can be seen that the students tried to change the language but also the message or the content of the sentence. Yet, the messages contrast with the source text (see text 1 in table 1). Based on the source of the error, the students did parallel translation to TL (a). Meanwhile, it reveals that the students who wrote TL (b) failed to apply the target language rules. By omitting the "as he couldn't say "no" to his boss".

By considering the message of sentence 1 in the source text, the following translation might be easier to understand and has equivalent meaning to the SL.

Laki-laki itu telah bertanggung jawab melebihi kapasitasnya karena dia tidak mampu menolak atasannya. Saya rasa tidak sudah melakukan hal diluar batas kemampuannya. Dia harus benar-benar berusaha keras untuk mengatasi masalah itu.

In the next sentence, there are two translation results of the students.

(c) TL Sentence 2

Aku harus lebih menghargai waktu, membiasakan melakukan kegiatan yang bermanfaat daripada bermain video game dalam jangka waktu yang lama.

(d) TL Sentence 2

Aku akan lebih produktif di siang hari karena saya telah berhasil mengembangkan kebiasaan baik untuk mengurangi video games.

Based on that translation results, it can be seen that the students tried to change the language but also the message or the content of the sentence. Yet, the messages contrast with the source text (see text 2 in table 1). Based on the source of the error, the students who wrote TL (c) omit the grammar of the SL. The SL was written in the simple present tense. Yet, the TL (c) consists of auxiliary "*harus*", which can be retranslated into "must".A similar case also happens in TL (d) in which the student applies simple future tense, which violates the original meaning of SL.

By considering the message of sentence 2 in the source text, the following translation might be easier to understand and has equivalent meaning to the SL.

Saya punya waktu produktif lebih banyak pada pagi hari karena saya sudah membangun kebiasaan baik, yaitu mengurangi kebiasaan main video game.

In the next sentence, there are two translation results of the students.

(e) TL Sentence 3

Sebuah negara memutuskan sesuatu pada pembicaraan sehingga isu luar biasa bisa terpecahkan.

(f) TL Sentence 3

Adanya isu yang beredar, Negara tidak ikut andil dalam hal tersebut.

The above translation does not send the message of the source language since the meaning of the target language different in terms of the lexical aspect. The SL uses a figurative language totum pro parte, in which the term "country" represents "government". Instead of using "*pemerintah*" the students translated "country" into "*rakyat*"and "*negara*". Moreover, the expression "close the door on talks", based on Cambridge dictionary, means an impossibility for a solution to a problem. Therefore, based on the original text, the following translation can be understood easily.

Based on that translation results, it can be seen that the students tried to change the language but also the message or the content of the sentence. Yet, the messages contrast with the source text (see text 3 in table 1). Based on the source of the error, the students who wrote TL (d) omit the figurative language in the SL. Thus, the student did not understand the meaning of the SL itself. While in TL (d), it can be seen that the result of TL is far from the SL. It is because the student did not follow the message in the SL.

By considering the message of sentence 3 in the source text, the following translation might be easier to understand and has equivalent meaning to the SL.

Pemerintah memutuskan untuk tetap diam hingga persoalan lain yang masih terbengkalai telah diselesaikan.

(g) TL Sentence 10
Tadi malam hujan sangat lebih, jadi kita tidak bisa bermain jangkrik besok pagi.

(h) TL Sentence 2
Hujan lebat telah mengacaukan rencana kita untuk bermain badminton besok pagi.

Based on that translation results, it can be seen that the students tried to change the language but also the message or the content of the sentence. Yet, the messages contrast with the source text (see text 2 in table 1). Based on the source of the error, the students who wrote TL (c) omit the grammar of the SL. The SL was written in the simple present tense. Yet, the TL (c) consists of auxiliary "*harus*", which can be retranslated into "must". A similar case also happens in TL (d) in which the student applies simple future tense, which violates the original meaning of SL.

By considering the message of sentence 2 in the source text, the following translation might be easier to understand and has equivalent meaning to the SL.

Hujan lebat sepanjang malam tadi mengacaukan rencana kita bermain bola kasti keesokan paginya.

Errors on language

(Nida & Taber, 2003) stated that translation consists of reproducing the target in the closest natural equivalence of the source language, both in meaning and style. In order to produce meaningful target language, a translator has to consider the linguistics aspects, they are lexical and grammatical. If one of the aspects is omitted, the result of translation might be far from the equivalence. Several errors in language appear in the translation results of the students.

Lexical aspect

Lexical aspect is an inherent (semantic) property of an eventuality. Lexical aspect is invariant. Lexical is divided into several word classes, such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, etc. Inappropriate word shifting might cause different meanings. In the data obtained, it is found some mistranslated words which are categorized as:

Conjunction

a) He has taken more responsibilities **as**….(SL)

 *Dia telah mengambil lebih banyak tanggung jawab**seperti** ….(TL)*

The target translation of "*seperti*" for "as" is not appropriate. *"as"* has many meanings;in this case, *"as"* refers toconjunction that showsthe reason for an act. The exact target meaning for "as" is "*karena"*.

Verb

b) … he couldn't **say "no"**(SL)
   … *dia tidak bisa* ***mengatakan "tidak"****(TL)*

In the above case, the translator did word to word translation. The target translation of "*tidak bisa mengatakan "tidak"* for "couldn't" say "no" is not correct. That expression should not be translated word to word since the term "no" refers to rejection. Hence, the correct target meaning should be *"tidak bisa menolak"*.

c) I've **developed** this good habit (SL)
   Saya telah berhasil **mengembangkan** kebiasaan baik (TL)

The target translation of "*mengembangkan*" for "developed" in this context is not appropriate. The term of"develop" refers to habit or *kebiasaan.* Thus the appropriate diction for *kebiasaan* is "*membangun".* Therefore, the target translation must be "*Saya telah berhasil membangun kebiasaan baik"*.

Noun

d) The sales team blamed the engineers for the **organization's** failure to **bag** the mega deal …(SL)
   Tim penjualan menyalahkan para insinyur untuk kegagalan ***organisasitas***…(TL)

Based on the context of the sentence, the target translation of "*organisasi*" for "organization" in this context is not suitable. In terms of literal meaning, the translation is correct, but in terms of contextual meaning, in which there is "mega deal" expression, we can assume that the context of the sentence is about business/company. Thus, the term "organization" should be translated into "perusahaan". Furthermore, "bag" functions as a verb instead of a noun. It cannot be translated into "tas"; it means"to get", so it must be translated into "mendapat".

e) You expect our **plant to manufacture** 40,000 **parts** (SL)
   pekerja-pekerja kami untuk pabrik sebanyak 40.000 **bagian** (TL)

The target translation of "*pekerja-pekerja*" for "plant"in this context is not correct. The term "plant" has various meanings for various contexts, they are living things, building/machine, and put secretly. As the context of the source text refers to manufacture, the best translation must be the second meaning,that is building or machine. Thus, the translation result "*pekerja-pekerja"* cannot be accepted. Moreover, the target translation "*pabrik*" for "manufacture" is also incorrect because based on Cambridge dictionary, manufacture has two context meanings, they are to produce and to invent. Considering the previous meaning of plant, which is building or

machine, the correct meaning of manufacture is *"memproduksi"*. Another mistranslation also happens in the word "parts". Since the two previous context talk about manufacturing, the best meaning for "part" is about quantity instead of division. It can be assumed that "parts" refers to "*buah" or "biji"*.

Grammatical aspect

a) More than five thousand cars sold so fast. … . (SL)
   Ada lima ribu mobil terjual sangat cepat. (TL)

      "Than" is usually used for comparing a subject to another subject, like the In this condition, the comparison function does not work. Instead, the word "*lebih dari"*is more suitable to the context of the text. The SL grammar cannot be applied in the TL to get the equivalent meaning of language.

b) The sales team blamed the engineers … . (SL)
   Tim penjualan menyalahkan para insinyur … . (TL)

      The suffix –s in engineers shows that the noun is plural. In *bahasa* Indonesia a translator can add "*beberapa*", "*para*", or "*banyak*" to show plurality. Hence, the language transfer of 'noun+s' becomes '*para*+noun'.

Idiomatic Transfer

      As idiom contains connotation meaning, which is not depicted in the written expression, idiom cannot be transferred literally. (Akbari, 2013) states that there are two possibilities in translating idiomatic expression. The first is translating the source language into the target language idiom. In other words, the translator has to find the equivalent idiom in the target language. The second is explaining the meaning. (Larson, 1998) stated that idiomatic translation uses meaning-based in the translating process.

      Each sentence in table 1 contains English idiom; they were all translated by the students who undertake Translation course. The following are the results of the students'idiomatic translation.

a) SL: The sales team blamed the engineers for the organization's failure to bag the mega deal, but **they were barking up the wrong tree.**
   TL: … *mereka salah sasaran.*

      Based on the above data, it is revealed that the student used the second way of idiomatic translation proposed by Larson. The idiom cannot be translated word by word since there is no original meaning. Literally, "bark" can mean the sound of a dog or the hard outer part of a tree. If word to word translation is employed to this idiom, people will not be able to accept the meaning within the context. Therefore, the exact translation is "*mereka salah sasaran*"

b) SL: The due date of the assignment is tomorrow. We need to **burn the midnight oil** now.
TL: … *lembur* ….

Based on the above data, it is revealed that the student used the second way of idiomatic translation proposed by Larson. The idiom cannot be translated word by word since there is no original meaning. Literally, "burn" can mean an act of damaging something using fire or producing fire. If word to word translation is employed to this idiom, people will not be able to accept the meaning within the context. Besides, English monolingual dictionary provides the complete meaning of the idiom as "to work late into the night". Therefore, the exact translation in *bahasa* Indonesia is "*lembur*"**.**

c) SL: I need to have an experience to get a job, but without a job, I can't have experience. It's a **chicken and egg situation**.
TL: … *situasi yang membingungkan.*

Based on the above data, it is revealed that the student used the second way of idiomatic translation proposed by Larson. The idiom cannot be translated word by word since there is no original meaning. Literally, "chicken"is a kind of animal and "egg" means food produced by chicken or the way a chicken reproduces itself. If word to word translation is employed to this idiom, people will not be able to accept the meaning within the context. Besides, English monolingual dictionary provides the complete meaning of the idiom as "a situation in which it is impossible to say which of two things existed first and which caused the other one". Therefore, the exact translation in *bahasa* Indonesia is "*membingungkan*".

d) SL: You expect our plant to manufacture 40,000 parts in a week. You're trying to **boil the ocean** on this one.
TL: … *buang-buang tenaga* ….

Based on the above data, it is revealed that the student used the second way of idiomatic translation proposed by Larson. The idiom cannot be translated word by word since there is no original meaning. Literally, "boil" can mean an act of cooking using water. If word to word translation is employed to this idiom, people will not be able to accept the meaning within the context. Therefore, the exact translation is "*buang-buang tenaga*" because boiling an ocean is an impossible thing to do.

e) SL: The client is hypersensitive. We need to **handle him with kid gloves**, or we risk losing the deal.
TL: … *memperlakukannya dengan baik dan sopan* ….

Based on the above data, it is revealed that the student used the second way of idiomatic translation proposed by Larson. The idiom cannot be translated word by word since there is no original meaning. Literally, "handle" can mean an act of

touching or treating somebody. If word to word translation is employed to this idiom, people will not be able to accept the meaning within the context. Besides, English monolingual dictionary provides the complete meaning of the idiom as "to be very polite or kind to someone because you do not want to make them angry or upset". Therefore, the exact translation in *bahasa* Indonesia is "*memperlakukannya dengan baik dan sopan*".

Besides the above translation results, there was also an unstructured interview.The interview is not a prearranged interview, in which there was no organized time to conduct an interview session. The interview questions were given during the learning activities. The students answered several random questions about the difficulty of translation.

Q1: What makes you difficult to translate texts?
A1: Lack of vocabulary
A2: Do not know the meaning
A2: Confused to find meaning in the dictionary

Q2: Do you use your dictionary to translate texts?
A1: *Sometimes*
A2: *Yes, I open my dictionary*

Q3: What dictionary do you use?
A1: Printed dictionary
A2: Online dictionary
A3: Installed dictionary on laptop

Q4: do you know what an idiom is?
A1: I don't know
A2: It is peribahasa

Considering the answers of the students related to translation activity, it is revealed that the lack of vocabulary of the students is caused by their unwillingness or the lacking use of dictionary. That is why many students experienced interlanguage problems in translating English texts to *bahasa* Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Translation is an advanced skill where people who do this must master two languages, including the components of the language. It is needed because a translator has to find the closest and similar meaning between the source language and target language. Based on the result of the analysis data of the students' translation results and the results of the informal interview with the students, it can be seen that several

students could not translate English texts to *bahasa* Indonesia properly. It might be caused by the lack of vocabulary mastery and the lack of dictionary use.

Refer to the data obtained, it is revealed that more students commit errors on language rather than errors on message, though the result is not significant. The errors of language exist in the form of lexical aspect, they are conjunction, verb, and noun. In addition, the source of errors tends to happen because of the interlingual factors than the intralingual factors. The idiomatic transfer from the source language to the target language was done by shifting the meaning of idiom, instead of through word to word translation.

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