

TEACHER'S USE OF TRANSLATION AS INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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Abstract

The teacher often uses translation or mother tongue (L1) during the instructional process in EFL classroom. However, the use of translation is still going debated. In order to make the best use of translation in instructional process, it is necessary to know when and why the teacher uses it. Related to this present study, there were two aims of the study, namely to find out in what situations do the teacher use translation and to find out the teachers' reasons for using translation in relating to the situation of classroom instructional process. This study followed qualitative interactive descriptive approach. There were three English teachers at the 7th grade classes at SMP Negeri 4 and SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja as the subjects of the study. The data was collected through observations and interviews. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively. The results of study showed that the teachers used translation (L1) in such situation, namely: (i) giving instruction, (ii) presentation, (iii) checking comprehension, (iv) language testing/language assessment, and (v) eliciting language. In addition, there were two reasons of using translation by the teachers namely, the students did not understand many vocabularies, sentences, and material given in English and the students felt uncomfortable if the teacher used English only in the classroom.

Keywords: *translation, instructional strategy, teaching English*

INTRODUCTION

Translation is a natural and useful activity in language classroom (Raju, 2016:186). It is one of the most common characteristics in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom (Booth, Azman, & Ismail, 2014:78). Translation is an activity that has a function to facilitate the communication process by interpreting the information received in one language (L1) into another language (FL) and vice versa (Al-Musawi, 2014:1). It is necessary to use translation in order to form the learners' way of thinking and to extent the use of target language by the learners (Duff, as cited in Mart, 2013:10). Mallol (as cited in Zhao, 2015:41) supports that translating the meanings of the target language into the native language is a good way to help the learners better understand about the target language and to help the learners grasp the knowledge of the target language easily. It is supported by Raju (2016:190), he states that teacher cannot stop students translating in any circumstance because it is such a fundamental basis for language learning.

Translation gives many benefits to the EFL learners. Schaffner (as cited in Dagiliene, 2012:124) claims that the translation and related exercises could be beneficial to target language learning: (1) To improve verbal agility; (2) To expand students' vocabulary in target language; (3) To develop their learning style; (4) To improve their understanding of how languages work; (5) To consolidate target language structures for active use; and (6) To monitor and improve the comprehension of target language. Mart (2013:10) also supports that the use of translation give two benefits for language learners. The first, it has been reported to bring up participation and to be the chosen strategy by language learners and the second, by using the learners' native language (L1) in the classroom, their level of anxiety in the

early stages of learning may be reduced (Vermes, as cited in Aguando and Becerra, 2013:42). Translation is more frequently evaluated as a positive form to enrich learners' knowledge and skills (Leonardi, as cited in Afzal, 2013:1847) such as translation promotes learners acquisition of difficult structures and element in the target language; translation facilitates learners' quicker comprehension of the target language; and translation provides an opportunity for learners to apply what they have learned by (Pan and Pan, 2012:5). According to those benefits, the use of translation will contribute to the use of the target language effectively (Mart, 2013:10) and it could enhance students' cognitive skills to recall the meanings on their mind (Calis & Dikilitas, 2012:5082).

Even though translation gives such benefits for the learners, many teachers assume that translation is an old language teaching method and it is still going debated among them (Raju, 2016:187). The reason why translation is still ignored by the teachers is because they often feel that translation is not a communicative activity, time-consuming, boring, and irrelevant (Afzal, 2013:1848). The arguments against the use of translation in EFL classroom have not provided enough evidence for avoiding and banning L1 because translation is one of the most common characteristics in the EFL classroom (Bhooth *et al*, 2014:78). Willis (as cited in Mart, 2013:10) states that the teacher should not ban the use of L1, but encourage attempts to use the target language. If the teacher insists on using only the target language (English) in instructional process and neglecting learners' background, the learners may feel to force to use target language, feel uncomfortable, and feel insecure. Moreover it makes the pace of the learners getting down to learn and use the language. So, it is important to consider to use the native language or

mother tongue (L1) in EFL classroom (Mahmutoglu and Kicir, 2013:50). Atkinson (as cited in Mahmutoglu and Kicir, 2013:55) supports that translation or mother tongue use is often encouraged as an efficient and time-saving techniques.

Mallol (as cited in Zhao, 2015:41) suggests that the use of L1 is a good way to help learners' better understanding the target language and to grasp the knowledge of the target language. This is true because learners really do not understand immediately. According to Shiyab (as cited in Alrefaai, 2013:14), he states that translation is useful because it expounds grammar and teaches vocabularies for beginner level. It is supported by Nation (as cited in Alrefaai, 2013:13), he provides three reasons for the use of L1 have been identified according to it can be seen as follows: (1) It is more natural to use L1 with others who have the same L1; (2) It is easier and more communicatively effective to use the L1; and (3) Using the L2 can be a source of embarrassment particularly for shy learners and those who feel they are not very proficient in the L2.

From those reasons it can be seen that the use of L1 in EFL classroom gives the opportunities for the learners to communicate effectively in their learning and to develop confidence in order to understand of the form of target language easily.

The use of L1 is a part of communicative methodology in which the use of L1 should be used at appropriate times and in appropriate way (Atkinson, as cited in Bhooth, Azman, & Ismail, 2014). If the teachers insist to use target language during the whole instructional process in EFL classroom, it may cause no interaction between the teacher and the students. In this regard, the mother tongue (L1) can be used when it is necessary. There are six situations of the use of

translation by the English teacher provided by Atkinson (as cited in Mahmutoglu & Kicir, 2013:52) namely: Eliciting Language, Checking Comprehension, Giving Instruction, Presentation, Checking for Sense, and Language Testing/Language Assessment. The followings are the explanation of each situation.

The first is eliciting language. Eliciting is used to ask learners to come up with vocabulary and language forms and rules, and to brainstorm a topic at the start of a skills lesson. The simple sentence such as "How do you say X in English?" that sentence is the example to elicit vocabulary. 'X' itself is the native language (L1), so, from the use of L1, the teacher can help the students to learn about English concept or English vocabulary easily.

The second is checking comprehension. Comprehension refers to an understanding of something. In order to check students' comprehension of the material given in the classroom instructional process, the teacher can stimulate the students by asking questions (Day & Park, 2005:65), such as (a) Yes/no question, (b) True/False question, and (c) Wh-question by using students native language (L1).

The third is giving instruction. According to Akdeniz (2016:58), instruction is a whole process includes facilitating the learning process and guiding the pupils. There are two instructions in teaching and learning process: (a) guiding the students to set up group pair or group work (Atkinson, as cited in Alrefaai, 2013:15) and (b) guiding for the task and classroom activities. Giving instruction gives a chance to practice the target language in the real communication.

The fourth is presentation. This point refers to the activities in learning process where the teacher explains about the concept of English and teaches vocabulary to the students. So,

in order to explain it precisely the translation into the mother tongue is almost inevitable. The presentation can be given in L2 at first and then translated into L1.

The fifth is checking for sense. It is the situation where the teacher explains the students' error. In such a case the best way how to explain their error is by translating an incorrect sentence they wrote into their native language for example.

The last is language testing/language assessment. It could be easier for the students if the teacher translate the question to students' native language. The test should be both in the target language and in the native language (Saricoban, 2012:2962). From this case, the teacher can translate the written test to the students directly or orally by interpreting the written test given in form of another language (e.g. English) into students' native language (Saricoban, 2012:2962). Translation activities in tests can probe effectively the learners' ability to communicate in target language in real situations.

Based on those situations, the teacher should pay attention on the students' needs during their learning process in order to help the students to reach their learning objective.

The purposes of this study are (1) to find out in what situations do the teacher use translation (from English into Bahasa Indonesia and vice versa) in the classroom instructional process and (2) to find out the teachers' reasons for using translation (from English into Bahasa Indonesia and vice versa) in relating to the situation of classroom instructional process. It is important to know the situations of using translation by the teacher in order to make the best use of translation in learning and teaching process. Teachers need to consider with the use of translation. It should not use if it is not necessary.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study followed qualitative interactive descriptive approach which was conducted at SMP N 4 and SMP N 5 Singaraja. The subjects of this study were three English teachers at the seventh grade classes. The objects of this study were the use of translation by the teacher in the process of classroom activities as well as their reasons of using it. The data was collected based on classroom observations and interview sessions. Then, it was transcribed and analyzed based on the theory of situation of using translation proposed by Atkinson (1987). To get the qualitative result, after the data were quantified, then the total numbers of each situation were calculated in the table of mean which the formula as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

In which,

$$\bar{X} = \text{Mean}$$

$\sum x$ = Total of Frequency of situation appeared

N = Number of Cases (Total of Meetings / Total of Individual)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 The Frequency and Mean of Each Situation of Using Translation

No	Situations											
	GI		P		CC		LT		EL		CS	
	S.1	S.2	S.1	S.2	S.1	S.2	S.1	S.2	S.1	S.2	S.1	S.2
Frequency	84	23	19	48	7	4	11	0	0	5	0	0
Total	107		67		11		11		5		0	
Mean	53.50		33.50		5.50		5.50		2.50		0.00	

The following is the note of codes used in table 1

GI : Giving Instruction

P : Presentation

CC : Checking Comprehension

LT :Language Testing/Language Assessment

EL : Eliciting Language

CS : Checking for Sense

S.1 : School 1 (SMP N 5 Sgr)

S.2 : School 2 (SMP N 4 Sgr)

Table 1 and chart 1 showed that the most frequent situation when translation appeared was situation for giving instruction with the mean of 53.50. The second most frequent was the situation for presentation with the mean of 33.50. For the third, there were two situations which have the same mean of 5.50 those were the situation for checking comprehension and for language testing. The fourth was the situation for eliciting language with the mean of 2.50. The last situation which was never occurred at all schools was the situation for checking for sense with the mean on 0.00. The followings are the discussions for each situation when translation is used.

The first situation of using translation by the teacher was when giving instruction. The teacher used translation when giving instruction in order to make the students understand the instruction given and to make the students know what they should do during their learning. There was a similar study found about the use of translation by the teacher in the classroom, that study was conducted by Saricoban (2010, as cited in Mahmutoglu & Kicir, 2013). The result showed the percentage of 63.30% for the use of translation in giving instruction. It can be concluded that giving instruction by using translation (L1) made the students easier to understand the instruction given by the teacher in the classroom instructional process. It is easier and more communicatively effective to use students' native language.

The second situation of using translation by the teacher was when presenting the material (Presentation). The teacher used translation when presenting the material in order to make the students clearly understand about material given and to make the students understand the meaning of new vocabularies. So, the use of L1 is a good way to help learners understand better of the target language and to grasp the knowledge of the target language (Mallol, as cited in Zhao, 2015:41). There were two similar studies found about the use of translation by the teacher in the classroom. The first study was conducted by Saricoban (2010, as cited in Mahmutoglu & Kicir, 2013). The result showed that the percentage of 77.10% for the use of translation in explaining difficult concept and 70.90% for the use of translation in defining new words. The second study was conducted by Alrefaai (2013). The result indicated that the teacher used translation for explaining new words and phrases with the percentage of 84.21%. Moreover, the result study conducted by Pan & Pan (2012) showed that teachers use translation to consolidate what students have learnt about English language, such as vocabulary and sentence structure. Accordingly, translation is used to explain the English concept and vocabulary in order to expand students' vocabulary of target language and to and improve the comprehension of target language.

The third situation of using translation by the teacher was when checking comprehension.

The teacher used translation when checking comprehension in order to check whether the students understand or not about the answers given during the question and answer the task and in order to check the students' comprehension about the lesson given in the classroom. So, the use of translation can speed up the students' comprehension process (Shiyab and Abdullateef, as cited in Alrefaai, 2013:13). There were two similar studies found about the use of translation by the teacher in the classroom. The first study was conducted by Alrefaai (2013), the result showed that the teacher used translation for checking comprehension with the percentage of 47.36%. It is supported by the result of study conducted by Saricoban (2010, as cited in Mahmutoglu & Kicir, 2013) showed that the percentage 59.50% for checking students' comprehension. In summary, the use of translation can be used as a post procedure in learning process to check and evaluate students' comprehension.

The fourth situation of using translation by the teacher was when the teacher test/evaluate the students' language ability (language testing/language assessment). The teacher used translation when language testing/assessment in order to clarify the meaning of the test given and in order to direct the students to find the answers easily from the text. There were two similar studies found about the use of translation by the teacher in the classroom especially when language testing. The first study was conducted by Alrefaai (2013), the result showed that the teacher use translation for language testing with percentage 68.42%. It is supported by the result of study conducted by Saricoban (2010, as cited in Mahmutoglu & Kicir, 2013) showed that the percentage was 56.30% for testing. It can be concluded that the use of translation for language testing was effective for language learning process. From this case, the teacher translated the written test to the students directly or orally by interpreting the written test given in English into students' native language (Bahasa Indonesia).

The last situation of using translation by the teacher was when eliciting language. The teacher used translation when eliciting language

in order to stimulate the students to answer the questions from the teacher because students' native language or L1 provides an effective way to grips with the meaning and content of what needs to be used in the target language (Afzal, 2013:1846). There was a similar study found about the use of translation by the teacher in the classroom especially when eliciting language. The study was conducted by Alrefaai (2013), the result showed that the teacher always used translation for eliciting language with the percentage of 42.10%. It can be concluded that the use of translation for eliciting language was effective in the classroom instructional process. Nation (as cited in Alrefaai, 2013:14) supports the use of L1 or translation is one of the ways to convey the meaning of an unknown word. In terms of the accuracy of conveying the meaning, the use of L1 is better than any of the others.

Related to the situations of using translation appeared in this study, there were two reasons why the teachers used translation in the classroom instructional process, namely: the students did not understand many vocabularies or words, sentences, and material given in English and the students felt uncomfortable if the teacher used English only in the classroom instructional process.

The first reason was that the students did not understand many vocabularies or words and sentences in English. The effect from that case was the students just kept silent and they were not interested with the material given because they did not understand well what the teacher explained in English. In order to make the students understand about the vocabularies or the concepts of the material, the teacher can use L1 to make the explanation clear for the students. The use of translation could be beneficial to target language learning to improve extend students' vocabulary in target language (Schaffner, as cited in Dagiliene, 2012:124). According to Shiyab (as cited in Alrefaai, 2013:14), he states that translation is useful because it expounds grammar and teaches vocabularies for beginner level. The common role of L1 in language teaching was to provide an effective way to grips with the meaning and content of what needs to be used

in the target language (Afzal, 2013:1846). The influence of the mother tongue forms the thinking, and translation helps in better understanding (Raju, 2016:188). Moreover, there is a study conducted by Mollaei, Taghinezhad, & Sadighi (2017) which revealed the result of study that translation can be compensation strategy to facilitate students' development of vocabulary. So, in order to avoid misunderstanding of the meaning of the vocabularies, the teacher should provide clear explanation by using students' native language.

The second reason was that the students felt uncomfortable if the teacher used English only in the classroom instructional process. The students at the seventh grade were categorized as the early stage learners at junior high school. In teaching English for early stage learners (beginners), the use of L1 is important to assess them in feeling comfortable, to encourage them to take risks, and to motivate them in instructional process (Mahmoud, 2012:1734). It is important to the students to feel comfortable during their learning, because if they feel force to use English only, there will be no achievement that they will get. Nation (as cited in Alrefaai, 2013:13) states the reason for using L1 because it natural activity to use L1 with others who have the same L1. There are two previous studies that revealed the reason why the teacher should use translation or L1 in the classroom instructional process. The first study was conducted by Mollaei, Taghinezhad, & Sadighi (2017). The result showed that translation can reduce students' anxiety, while the second study conducted by Pan & Pan (2012) showed the result that translation could reduce insecurity that arise from limited language proficiency of the students. So, the use of L1 can bring a confident for the students in their learning. In summary, the use of L1 consciously could make a friendlier atmosphere in which the students get persuaded to learn and feel relaxed.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing data, it was found that there were five situations of using translation. Those were giving instruction, presentation,

checking comprehension, language testing, and eliciting language.

Regarding the reasons for using translation in relating to the situations appeared, there were two reasons given by the teachers in this study, namely: the students did not understand many vocabularies or words, sentences, and material given in English and the students felt uncomfortable if the teacher used English only in the classroom instructional process.

In connection with the conclusion stated previously, the researcher would like to propose suggestions, especially for the teachers and for other parties. For the teachers, they should use translation when it is necessary or when the students need clear clarification in their learning. The teachers should avoid the negative impacts of the overuse of using translation in the classroom. Therefore the teachers should improve the teaching strategy used so that the use of translation could be reduced. Then, for the other parties (the researcher or lecturers) who want to conduct the same study about the use of translation in EFL classroom are suggested to solve the weaknesses of this study by conducting similar research on wider and different subject and object of the study and in a longer period of time to conduct the study. It also suggested to develop the area of the study in order to broaden the knowledge about the use of translation in teaching English in EFL classroom.

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