

Exploring Undergraduate Students Experience in Translation Activity in Poetry Class

Gina Larasaty¹, Afief Fakruddin²

¹Universitas Wiralodra, ² Universitas Majalengka

Email: ¹Gina_larasaty@unwir.ac.id, ²afiEFFakhruddin@unma.ac.id.

Abstract

Article History:

Received : 26/10/2023

Accepted : 01/01/2024

Published : 06/01/2024

Keywords:

*Students' Experience ,
Students' Difficulty ,
Poetry Translation*

Learning poetry is not easy, especially when it comes to understanding poetry. In understanding a poem, students usually do translating activities to help them obtain information and the main message. This study aims to discover the students' experience and difficulties in poetry translation in the poetry classroom. The Participants of this study were The Wiralodra University students who took Poetry Classes. The researcher used the qualitative method to analyze the data in this study. The results showed the students experience difficulty in poetry translation. The Students' responds find poetry translation difficult and never do it apart in a poetry class. Some problems that students face in poetry translation such as: finding equivalent words, translating culture, maintaining poetic structure, understanding metaphorical expressions, and maintaining melodic elements. Then, holding the melody element dominated the student's difficulty in poetry translation, followed by maintaining poetic structure and understanding metaphorical experience. As the solution that they preferred predominated ignored the problems and continued to overcome their challenges in translating poetry with ease. The suggestion for further research is to explore the reasons for their preferred solution to overcome the problem in poetry translation.

Kata Kunci:

*Pengalaman siswa,
Kesulitan siswa,
menterjemahkan Puisi.*

Abstrak

Mempelajari puisi memang tidak mudah, apalagi dalam memahami puisi. Dalam memahami sebuah puisi, siswa biasanya melakukan kegiatan menerjemahkan untuk membantu mereka memperoleh informasi dan pesan utama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan pengalaman dan kesulitan siswa dalam menerjemahkan puisi di kelas puisi. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa Universitas Wiralodra yang mengambil Kelas Puisi. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk menganalisis data dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan siswa mengalami kesulitan dalam menerjemahkan puisi. Responden siswa menganggap

penerjemahan puisi sulit dan tidak pernah melakukannya secara terpisah di kelas puisi. Kemudian beberapa masalah yang dihadapi siswa dalam penerjemahan puisi seperti: menemukan padanan kata, menerjemahkan budaya, mempertahankan struktur puisi, memahami ekspresi metafora, dan mempertahankan unsur-unsur melodi. Kemudian, menahan unsur melodi mendominasi kesulitan siswa dalam menerjemahkan puisi, diikuti dengan mempertahankan struktur puisi dan memahami pengalaman metaforis. Kemudian solusi yang mereka sukai mengabaikan masalah dan terus mengatasi tantangan mereka dalam menerjemahkan puisi dengan mudah. Saran untuk penelitian selanjutnya adalah untuk mengeksplorasi alasan solusi yang mereka pilih untuk mengatasi masalah dalam penerjemahan puisi.

INTRODUCTION

Translating literary works is undoubtedly quite a difficult translation, especially translating poetry. Many translators faced difficulties in translating poetry such as; linguistics, cultural and aesthetic problems (Zid & Belushi, 2016). According to Tisgam, Languages do not share the same linguistic features or terms, for example, English and Indonesia are different terms in linguistic aspects (Tisgam, 2014). Hariyanto stated that those linguistic aspects are collocation and Syntactic structure (Hariyanto, 2003). The translators should use equivalent collocation as well as the syntactic structure in the translation process. In other words, the translator must use the collocation or syntactic structure in the target language that is similar to or close to the source language. In finding similar collocations and syntactic, it is a very complicated process, considering that the two languages are different. (Tisgam, 2014) also argues that the word order between the source text and the target text is very important. The difference between the language and the word order is that the translator encounters obstacles in translating a poem by using the same order of words. Another problem that the translators faced is aesthetic. Language of literature is unique especially poetry with special features such as sound, imagery, rhythm, and rhyme. Those become one of the difficulties that a translator should face in poetic translation. The translator should pay attention to word choice, word order, and

word sound during the translation. So that, during translation into the target language the result is an aesthetic value. In this process, sometimes the translator faces difficulty in preserving these elements in the target texts. The last, the greatest problem the translators faced in translating poetry is culture (Zhao Dan, 2021). Finding the cultural equivalent among languages is a hard task, because of sharply contrasting cultural differences, such as differences in local environments, social customs, cultural backgrounds, aesthetics, history, religion, etc. Thus translators are challenged to find proper equivalents of words or phrases that convey the cultural aspects of the source texts into the target texts (Jafari & Karimnia, 2015). in different nations. One of the examples to illustrate how cultural differences affect poetry translation is the “owls”. In China, people were called “birds of evil voices” because they chirped loudly at night. They make unpleasant sounds and it symbolizes bad luck. However, in Western The ‘Owls’ has completely different symbolic meaning. In Greek mythology “owls” are a symbol of Athena and wisdom. In the Western owl appears in fairy tales as a wise man and even in J.K. Rowling's magical Novel” Harry Potter” owls become the most important magician, One of the most popular pets. Based on these difficulties, you can say that poetry translation is kind of a complex translation process.

Considering, poetry translation is a complex process which are many problems or challenges and procedures, i.e. analysis of the source text, the transfer into the target language (s), and the text restructure to result in the intended quality translation products (Nida, E. A. & Taber, 1974). In addition, (Fadaee, 2011) also stated “translating literary text, particularly poetry is a difficult process as it includes different figures speech and literary devices and conveys metaphorical and figurative concepts beyond its literally meanings”.

In the process of teaching literary translation, especially poetry translation, practicing poetry translation can be a challenging activity for Students at university. This activity can allow the students to explore literary works' terms, the author’s emotion or expression, word choice, and aesthetics.

Translating poetry has been discussed in several previous studies. (Afriliani, 2022) discussed about the Students' Translation and Their difficulty in Poetry translation. She mentioned that the result of students' translation in the poem entitled "Air Mata Bunda" had variation in structure, translation procedure and ideology in of translation poetry from source language (SL) to target language (TL) and students face difficulty in lexical choices and cultural orientations. Another study by (Sukmaningrum et al., 2023) showed that the students' biggest problem in poetry translation is associated with the linguistic difference such as; grammatical differences (source language and target language), lexical choices and meaning ambiguity. Then, Factors related to the culture, the use of figurative language, and the different structure between original poem and the target language are considered as main hindrances in translating literary works. However, in this study, we would like to point out the novelty that this research wants to investigate: Students perception, Students' Difficulty and Students' preferences to overcome the difficulty in poetry translation.

From the explanation above, mention that Translation activity has many problems and challenges, as a result, the writer is interested in conducting research relate to the Poetry translation. The writer focused on the students' difficulty in translating poetry and students' preferred solution to solve the problem.

METHOD

This research explores undergraduate the students' experience and difficulties in poetry translation in the poetry classroom. The researchers implemented the qualitative method with case study a case study as a research design. The undergraduate students who took poetry classes were voluntarily recruited as participants in this research. There were 29 students to participate in this study, 19 females and six males from English Department at Wiralodra University (UNWIR). The instrument of this research was a questionnaire about the students' perspective about poetry translation, the students' difficulty and how to overcome the poetry translation difficulty. The questionnaire was adopted from

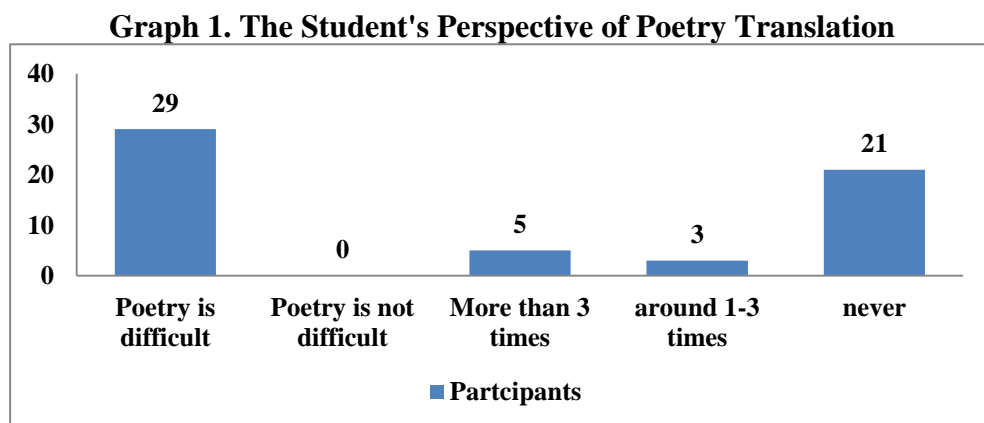
(Bui, 2019). This questionnaire consisted of 16 items, primarily closed-ended items alongside a small number of open-ended ones. To analyze the data, the writer used questionnaire was analyzed by calculating the total number of participants who responded, then after calculating, the writer is drawing conclusion. In this step, the writer gave conclusions and implication toward the result of analysis.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data collected from the questionnaire, three themes are explored. They are the students' perspective on poetry translation, the difficulty of poetry translation, and students' preferred solutions to overcome it.

1. The students' perspective of poetry translation

The first section asked the participants about their perspectives on poetry translation. Based on the questionnaire, almost all students stated that poetry translation is difficult. All participants consisting of 29 students answered "Yes, I do "to the question "Do you think poetry translation is difficult? Then, the result from the questionnaire showed the participant's experience with their frequency did poetry translation outside poetry class; only five students attempted to translate poems more than three times, three students tried to solve a poem around 1-3 times, and the rest were never attempted to do poetry translation outside the poetry class. Therefore, almost all participants (21) had never done poetry translation outside poetry class; we believe poetry translation is difficult. The following is an explanation of the graph.

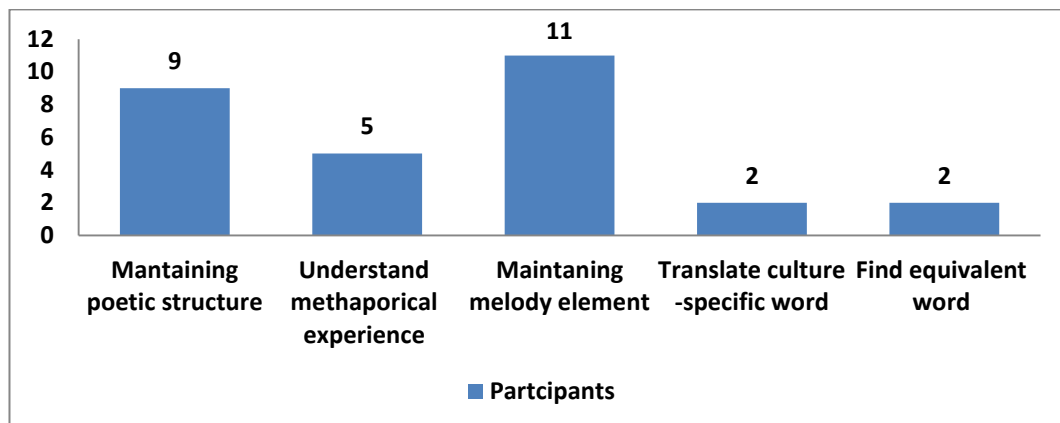


The above graph showed that the students thought that poetry translation is difficult, and no one said that poetry translation is easy. Then, almost of them never did poetry translation outside of poetry class. Relevant to (Manzoor et al., 2021) opinions also says that Translation poetry is one of the most difficult and task. Then, (Jamshidian & Mohammadi, 2012) also mention that the content of poetry possessing some components such as rhythm, rhyme, tone, etc. and the use highly language-bound makes the translation more difficult than other types of translation.

2. The difficulty of poetry translation

In section two of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to respond to the difficulty of poetry translation. Based on five categories of problems in poetry translation, the students were asked to rank them. The details information is as follows.

Graphs 2. The difficulty of Poetry Translation



The result showed that maintaining the melody element was the students' most challenging poetry translation. Holding melody elements here is related to the sound of poetry. The other concern of the difficulty in translation was maintaining poetic structure. Nine students claims that maintaining original structure of poetry is quite difficult, followed closely by the difficulty related to the metaphorical experience. Five students got stuck in poetic structure; they are hard to understand the meaning of metaphor. In line with (New Mark, 1981) stated that translating metaphor is not that easy, there are seven procedure to translate metaphor. The last the difficulties experienced by students were translate

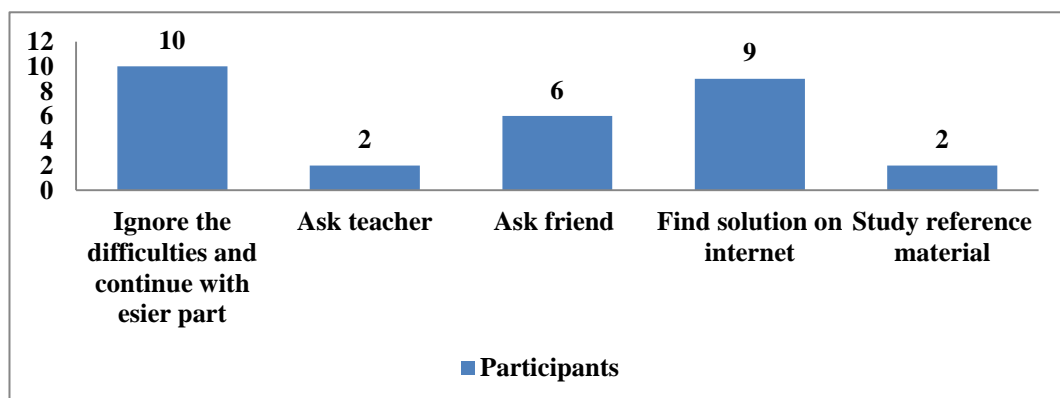
culture –specific word and find equivalent word. Only two students think linguistic problem and socio cultural problem. They still got stuck while have to find the similar meaning, collocation, and syntactic structure. Then students also got the problem, when they have to find the cultural equivalent word or expression of the SL.

To sum up, the students' experience of difficulty in poetry translation is dominated by literary problem. Such as; maintaining poetic structure, melody element and understanding metaphorical experience. Then, linguistic problems and translating certain cultures are also still considered as difficulties in translating poetry. This is different from previous research from (Afriliani, 2022) which stated that students' difficulties in translating poetry were dominated by lexical and cultural factors. Indeed, culture is a difficulty for students in translating poetry, but in this study maintaining poetic structure was considered more difficult than culture orientation

3. The students' preferred to overcome the difficulty in poetry translation

Because everyone has a different response, so do they have a different reaction when experiencing difficulties translating poetry? In this section, the questionnaire aims to determine students' most preferred solution when they face poetry translation problems. The detailed information related to the rank of the preferred solution while the student encounters the difficulty in translation poetry is as follows;

Graphs 3. Students preferred solution when encountering the difficulty in poetry translation.



As clearly shown in graph three above, nearly half of the students, ten students ignored the difficulties and continue the more accessible part when they got stuck translating poetry. Meanwhile, nine students claimed that finding a solution on the internet was a solution, while they had difficulty translating poetry. Then, Many students prefer to ask friends than ask the teacher. Six students ask friends for help, and only two ask the teacher for help. The last, only two students also claimed to study reference material to help them when they got stuck translating poetry.

In general, the students prefer to do easy way to overcome their problem when they got difficulty in translating poetry such as ignoring and find solution from the internet when they got stuck in translating poetry. Then they are lazy to open dictionary. So we can assume that, they have less effort to handle their difficulty in translating poetry. Relevant to (Rahmawati, 2019) the causes of errors made in Translation poetry by the students are lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of grammar mastery, lazy to open dictionary, contents reading and rarely to practice.

CONCLUSION

This research has drawn three important conclusions regarding the student's experience of the difficulty of Poetry translation. First, Most students think poetry translation is a difficult activity in a poetry class. They not only find this activity difficult, but it makes them lazy to translate poetry outside of the course; this can be seen from their responses who have never translated poetry outside of poetry class. Second, based on three categories of the difficulty of translating poetry, they got problems with literal or aesthetic translating, followed by linguistic and socio-cultural issues. However, only two students thought that finding equivalent words / syntactic words and translating culture to specific terms was difficult. Then, the last conclusion was about how students preferred to solution to overcome the problem of solving the poetry, and the result was they chose to ignore the difficulty and continue with the easier one—then followed by asking friends and

finding the solution on the internet. Clearly, students are not trying enough to deal with the difficulties they experience in translating poetry. It can be seen that Students prefer ignoring the problems, asking friends, and finding solutions on the internet compared to their efforts by studying references or asking their teachers for help to overcome their difficulty in transiting poetry.

The writer has suggested some solutions to help students and teachers overcome the difficulty in poetry translation. The writer has recommended that the students put more effort into poetry translation, such as practicing a lot in translating poetry outside of the classroom. For the lecturer, it can be suggested that translation theory and practice should be done together; the lecture focuses more on the literary or aesthetic part of poetry because most students get stuck in those areas. Lastly, for further research, the writer suggested continuing with their preferred solution to overcome the difficulty in poetry translation, such as What you choose that preferential to overcome the problem.

REFERENCES

- Afriliani. (2022). Translating Poetry on E-Learning Discussion Forum; Students' Lexical Choices and Cultural Orientations. *Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Inggris*, 11(2), 123–135.
- Bui, T. M. N. (2019). FOURTH-YEAR ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF POETRY TRANSLATION FROM ENGLISH TO VIETNAMESE IN LITERATURE CLASSES AT UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES, HUE UNIVERSITY. *Journal of Science: Social Sciences and Humanities*, 128(6B), 85–95.
- Fadaee, E. (2011). Poetry in translation: A comparative study of Silverstein's monolingual and bilingual (English to Persian) poems Elaheh Fadaee. *Journal of English and Literature*, 2(3), 75–82.
- Hariyanto, S. (2003). Problems in Translating Poetry. *ResearchGate*, March 2003. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322735211_Problems_in_Translating_Poetry/citations
- Jafari, Z., & Karimnia, A. (2015). A Survey of Poetry Translation According to Antoine Berman's (1985) Text Deformation System: A Case Study of English Translation of Book II of Mathnavi Manavi. In *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research* (Vol. 2, Issue 2). <http://www.jallr.ir/index.php/JALLR/article/view/82>
- Jamshidian, E., & Mohammadi, R. (2012). TRANSLATION ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF POETIC DISCOURSE: EXTRA-TEXTUAL MEANING IN PERSIAN AND ENGLISH Elahe JAMSHIDIAN * Razieh MOHAMMADI*. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 5(21), 158–

167.

- Manzoor, M., Shehzadi, A., Abbasi, A. W. A., & Irfan, F. (2021). Translation; An Injustice to Poetry. *Elementary Education Online*, 20(5), 6716–6726. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.05.760>
- New Mark, P. (1981). Introduction to Translations. In *UK: Prentice Hal International Ltd.: Vol. (Issue)*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12479>
- Nida, E. A. & Taber, C. R. (1974). *The Theory and the Practice of Translation.pdf* (p. 218).
- Rahmawati, R. (2019). An Analysis on Students' Indonesian-English Translation Errors (A Case Study at 7 th Semester Students of English Department UIN Mataram). *Thesis, UIN Mataram*.
- Sukmaningrum, R., Setyaji, A., & Hawa, F. (2023). Students' Challenges in Translating Poetry. *Borneo Educational Journal (Borju)*, 5(2), 192–203. <https://doi.org/10.24903/bej.v5i2.1314>
- Tisgam, K. H. (2014). *Translating Poetry: Possibility or Impossibility?* 36(5), 6–15.
- Zhao Dan. (2021). Difficulties in Poetry Translation. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 18(6). <https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8072/2021.06.006>
- Zid, M., & Belushi, A. Al. (2016). The Untrodden Way: Unexplored Challenges in Poetry Translation. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 6(4), 51. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ells.v6n4p51>