THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
AUTHENTIC TEXTS-BASED TRANSLATION

Rusiana
(English Education Department, Universitas Muria Kudus/rusiana@umk.ac.id)

Abstract

Translation requires lots of practice. As it is generally known, authentic texts provide fruitful experience for students to translate either Indonesian-English or vice versa. Authentic texts give many real uses of language in varied meaningful contexts The texts used were advertisement, abstract, local stories, tourist attraction, community service and project for money. This research is aimed at investigating whether the use of authentic texts benefits the students and describing the students' perceptions toward the use of authentic texts in Translation class. It is a qualitative research. Questionnaires were used to obtain the students' perceptions on the use of authentic texts in translation. The findings show that authentic texts-based translation benefits students in experiencing better translation. Advertisement was considered to be the most relevant text. On the contrary, they find it difficult to cope with authentic texts particularly dealing with words/terms/vocabulary, meanings, culture, and grammar. The recommendations are that the students have to be exposed to many authentic texts of varied topics in both English and Indonesian in order that they understand both the SL and TL well. For further researchers, it would be possible to research on the influence of authentic texts based translation on the students' translation skill.

Keywords:
Students' Perceptions, Authentic Texts-, Translation

A. Introduction

Translation is a four-credit course that must be taken by the fifth-semester students of English Education Department. The objective of the course is to give students learning experiences of translating texts either English to Indonesian or vice versa which is later they would be able to deal with translation work. In this digital era, there might be several applications or software of translations. Though, this course is still seen to be important to be given. With hands-on practices during the course, students are expected to have translation skill.

Translating is not an easy job. A very good understanding of the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) is a must. The problem is sometimes Indonesian students are not good enough at using Indonesian language. Also, English proficiency contributes to the lack of translation skill.

Another reason is that lack of exposure to the authentic texts. Above all, a bad reading habit might also be one of the issues. Those problems are recognized in the beginning of the course meetings.

As I am assigned to teach one class of translation, I am interested to find alternatives of how to teach translation fruitfully and meaningfully. Then I find that translation is about practices. To be simply, it is just like learning how to ride a bicycle. One will find it easier to ride it more often instead of read how to ride a bicycle. The same idea is that students need lots of practice on translating. A little theory would be taking place since it is assumed that practices would have a greater impact on their capability in translating. It leads to an idea of using authentic texts in translation class.

Deals with authentic texts, a review has been made by Murdoch, Using Authentic Text in the Language Classroom.[1] This paper suggested teachers using of authentic text since it may advance learners' proficiency, whenever possible, to adapt them in their lesson. Since it might increase learner participation, enable learners to self-discover language features and become aware of words and spoken language. It might also provide alternatives to outdated textbook material and traditional reading comprehension classes. Another research was conducted by Suryawan entitled Methods of Translation Used in Translating Authentic Text of *Obyek Wisata Panelokan* into Panelokan Tourist Resort.[2] The finding shows that some methods of translating are applied in translating the source language text into the target language text; those methods were literal or word per word translation, modulation, and borrowing.

I have assigned students to translate authentic texts. They have worked on short functional texts such as advertisement and job vacancy. It was English-Indonesian translation. The idea of having them translating short functional texts is that they are the simplest ones and familiar. Translating from English to Indonesian is also another consideration that the students must have been more knowledgeable about Indonesian than that of English.

B. Translation

1. The Nature of Translation

Translation is defined as an operation performed on languages: a process of substitution a text in one

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[1] Yvette Murdoch, "Using Authentic Texts in the Language Classroom," *Unpublished Master's Thesis). Centre for English Language Studies. University of Birmingham, UK*, 1999.

[2] I Nengah Suryawan. "Methods of Translation Used in Translating Authentic Text of *Obyek Wisata Panelokan* Into Panelokan Tourist Resort. 2013." Retrieved from *udayana.academia.edu/NengahSuryawan/Papers* on October 10, 2016.

language for a text in another, Catford in Murdoch.[3]

Another definition is:

"A translation consists of transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language. This is done by going from the form of the first language to the form of the second language by way of semantic structure. It is the meaning which is being transferred and must be held constant, as meaning is a variable of greatest importance in a translation process. The source form carries the meanings ---- meanings which are encoded and recorded in the source wordings ---which should be re-expressed and maintained in the target form. In other words, only the form changes. These meanings should then be transferred, encoded, and recorded into the new target wordings, Larson in Murdoch.[4]"

Translation is much more than substituting words of one language into another; it's an art, i.e.; a teachable one, Pienemann in Tisgam.[5] Furthermore, translation is a discipline of which its materials are available in real life. Therefore, teaching a translation course without touching on different textual genres and not bringing authentic materials of them seems impractical and only theoretical.[6]

From those definitions above, the similarity is that translation is a process of transferring meanings from the source language to the target language. So, what is translated is actually meanings, not language. Therefore, a good understanding of both the source text and target text is obligatory to make a good translation. Hatim and Mason in Murdoch propose four basic translation requirements as follows:[7]

a. Making sense;
b. Conveying the spirit and manner of the original;
c. Having a natural and easy form of expression; and
d. Reproducing a similar response

It is obvious that good proficiency in both source language and target language is necessary because a good translation is one that makes sense. Translation is not about changing from one language to another one, but a process of making meanings.

2. Authentic Texts-based Translation

Authentic texts in the classroom may bring the learner and the knowledge together because the learner is lifted from the confinements of traditional and

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[3] Murdoch, "Using Authentic Texts in the Language Classroom."
[4] Ibid.
[5] Khalida H. Tisgam, "Is It Possible to Teach Translation in the Classroom," *Journal of College of Education For Women* 20, no. 2 (2009): 528–551.
[6] Seda Kuşçu and Sezer Ünlü, "Teaching Translation: A Suggested Lesson Plan on Translation of Advertising through

the Use of Authentic Materials," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 199 (August 2015): 407–14, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.526.
[7] Murdoch, "Using Authentic Texts in the Language Classroom."

more recent methodologies to become an intricate part of the language learning process.[8] As we know that, learners are varied in knowledge, skill, and styles. Using authentic text may engage an individual prior's knowledge and skills about language because making use of authentic text will activate their meanings. It presents opportunities to make generalization about the language usage that is how grammar and vocabulary are put together into what so called text. Then they may observe how prior language usage knowledge may be employed or adapted to the new circumstances. A lot of exposures to authentic materials may enable students to internalize how language is presented authentically.

Murdoch also claims that authentic text also appears to supply the essential input needed to increase learner awareness of language usage in written and spoken media and decrease reliance on pedagogic language rules, which may be viewed as inadequate since they are simplifications of language usage.[9] Authentic texts are genuine and already there available in real life context. Since it is not produced for the sake of learning, authentic text may provide an alternative to outdated textbooks, which may not meet the learners' need.

In conjunction with translations, authentic texts may take a great part in providing authentic language use. It provides opportunity for students to observe and make meaning. Authentic text benefits learners to be familiar with authentic language use in spoken or written that is very important in helping them producing other authentic texts. Authentic texts may also be labelled as authentic materials.

Findings of previous research from the perspective of teachers, Huessien found that Iraqi teachers of English faced difficulty in using authentic material in the foreign language classrooms.[10]

While, another research (Manas, reveals that students perform better under authentic technical documents because of the motivation factor: the students deal with situations that crop up in the professional world, discover how other courses in their degree programme are inter-related, use ICT, work through the entire translation process and practice skills needed to work as a professional translator.[11]

Kinds of texts that are used for translation practices are any texts

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[10] Ashwaq Abd Al-mahde Huessien, "Difficulties Faced by Iraqi Teachers of English in UsingAuthentic Materials in the Foreign Language Classrooms," *Al-Fatih Journal* 50 (2012): 22–39.

[11] Anabel Galán-Mañas, "Translating Authentic Technical Documents in Specialised Translation Classes," *Jostrans. The Journal of Specialised Translation* 16 (2011): 109–125.

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[8] Murdoch, 2.
[9] Murdoch, 2.

depending on the source and target language that will be translated. By having sufficient prior knowledge on the real use of particular language will help learners to translate in accordance to the principles.

C. Research Design

The design of the research was qualitative research aimed at investigating the students' perceptions on the use of authentic-text based translation during a semester. The number of participants was 25 students.

To obtain the data, the instrument used was questionnaires with closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaires were used to get the students' thought on the use of authentic texts in translation class particularly on kinds of texts they prefer, level of difficulty of texts, and perceptions toward the texts used during the semester. It was administered in the end of semester.

The items of questionnaire were: 1) Did the use of authentic texts in Translation class give you experience on how to translate better in an acceptable manner?; 2) Among the authentic tasks used, which authentic text you think the most relevant to real life? And why?; 3) How much difficult is it to translate authentic texts?; 4) what is your opinion about the use of authentic texts in Translation class?

D. Findings and Discussion

The texts used were advertisement, local story, tourist attraction, abstract, articles of *community work* and a *project for money* (those two are terms that are agreed upon class). For *community work*, students had to find one from other majors who needed a help for translation for free. For *a project for money*, it was similar to community work but the students were encouraged to make money from the translation work.

The considerations of choosing the texts relied on the students' need and the global market demand. Advertisement includes job vacancy is important since it is daily available text that the students need to access for getting information about positions available in the market. Abstract, short stories, tourist attraction are also texts that the students have to cope with. For abstract, students have to be able to translate any abstract from any major for their *skripsi* (final project to obtain undergraduate degree). For short stories and local tourist attraction, it is nowadays becoming a need to promote local stuff to the world to be acknowledged by other countries. For *community work* and *project for money,* those texts are very real life texts since the students have to find and work on them.

For advertisement, abstract, articles of *community work* are English-

Indonesian translation. While local story, tourist attraction and *project for money* are Indonesian-English translation. All of the texts are group-selected text except advertisement and abstract. All of the texts were translated in group except the two. The procedures mainly selecting the texts, working on the texts individually, combining and streamlining their works, and presenting the work to the class to get input from the other groups and I as the teacher.

For the assessment, the students did peer-assessment and group-assessment after completing each assignment. The assessment was conducted with or without supervision. While for the evaluation, it was done twice during the semester. The first one was taking place in the mid of semester and the rest was in the end of the semester. The evaluation was English-Indonesian translation and considered to be individual. The mid-test was translating an article taken from *The Jakarta Post*, English Newspaper published in Indonesia. For the final-test, it was oral test translation, abstract (English-Indonesian) and local story (Indonesian-English).

When the semester ends, the questionnaire was administered. The findings are presented as follows:

1. The Students' Perceptions If The Use Of Authentic Text-Based Translation Beneficial

Responding to question, "do authentic texts-based translation give experience to students on how to translate better?", the chart is presented as follows:

Chart 1. The students' perceptions if the use of authentic text-based translation beneficial
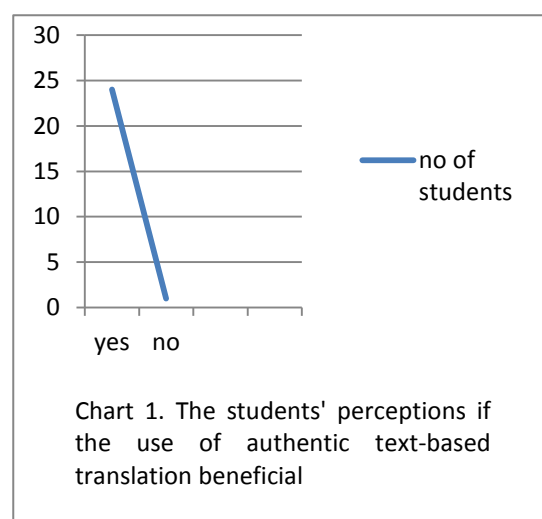
The chart above illustrates that almost all students, 24 students are benefited from the use of authentic texts-based translation, and only 1 student is not. The texts give them experience on how to translate better in an acceptable manner. Yet, the result of the translation is not presented as this research only investigating the students' perceptions. It might be my next concern to investigate more detail on the influence of authentic texts-based translation on students' skill in translation. With contextual and meaningful language use, texts have contributed in encouraging students to translate and raising their awareness of language use. It is in line with the

theory, Murdoch claimed that authentic text also appears to supply the essential input needed to increase learner awareness of language usage in written and spoken mediums.[12]

The students experienced authentic texts-based translation either Indonesian-English or English-Indonesian in different topics. They found the texts themselves and then translated into the target language. For instance, an English advertisement was translated into Indonesian. Then it should be retranslated into English. They then compared their translation with the original texts. In so doing, they knew how translation worked and became aware with the language use.

2. Students' Preferences on Kinds of Texts

Dealing with the preference of kinds of texts, the chart showing which text the students think to be the most relevant to real life.

Chart 2. The distribution number of students preference on authentic –text based used in translation class
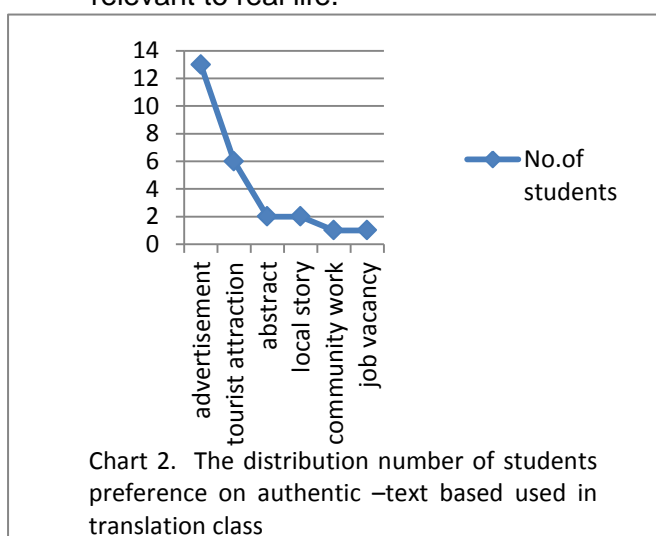
[12] Murdoch, "Using Authentic Texts in the Language Classroom," 2.

Based on the chart, among the texts, advertisement was the most relevant text to real life (13 students). The second place was tourist attraction (6 students), abstract (2 students), local story (2 students), article of community work (1 student), and article of *a project for money* (1 student). Advertisement was the first place to be the most relevant text during the semester. Following the advertisement, tourist attraction was considered to be relevant to 6 students. While, those which were less relevant were abstract, local story, and articles of *community work* and *a project for money*. It is understandable since advertisement is very common text that students are used to be dealing with. Also, from the complexity, ad is considered to be the simplest compared to other texts. The texts they translated were varied in title. The student worked individually in translating the advertisement from the SL to TL. Then they exchanged their translation work and retranslated from TL to SL. Group work was also maximized since individual task was not always effective due to time management.

For advertisement, articles of community work and a project for money, the translation is English-Indonesian, for tourist attraction, local story, and abstract, the translation is Indonesian-English. Mostly the texts were obtained from internet. Before translating, the class decided what tourist attraction that is worthy to be

introduced to public. Then they searched the available text from internet and translated into English and presented to the class in group. The problem rises when the SL was not really a good text. The students had to understand the meaning of the SL then later translated into TL.

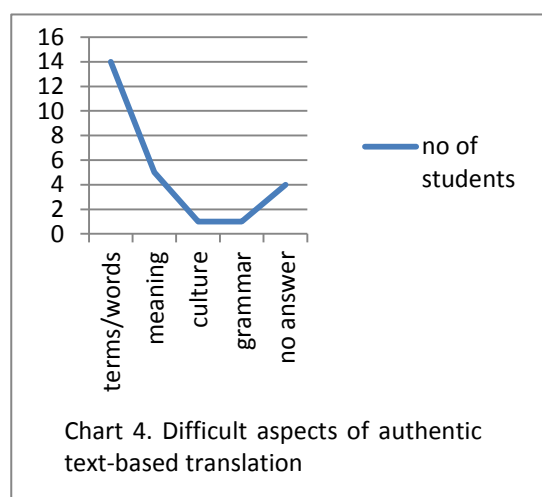### 3. Difficult aspects found in Authentic Texts

Dealing with difficult aspect found in authentic texts, it can be seen from the chart as follows:

Chart 3. The students' perceptions on the difficulty level of authentic-text based translation
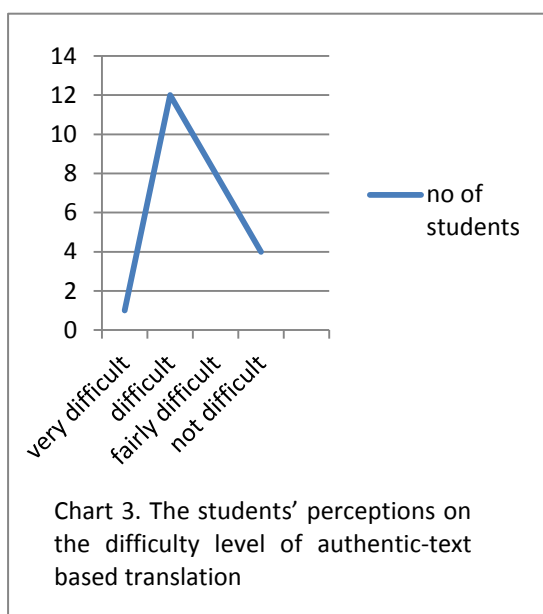
The chart shows that the level of difficulty was ranging from very difficult to not difficult. Almost a half, 12 students, found it difficult to use the texts. The rest, there was only 1 student found it very difficult. Other categories were in moderate number; they were 8 students found it fairly difficult and 4 students found it not difficult. To see the number distribution, it represents that

authentic texts are difficult. As we know, learners are varied in knowledge, skill, and styles. It does need lots of exposure so that the students are familiar and get used to using the texts and finally find that the texts are not that difficult since authentic texts may bring the learner and the knowledge together because the learner is lifted from the confinements of traditional and more recent methodologies to become an intricate part of the language learning process.[13]

Authentic texts are in many cases are not appropriate because of many aspects, such as the complexity of language. Related to translation, some aspects considered to be difficult by students are terms/words/vocabularies, meaning, culture, and grammar.

Chart 4. Difficult aspects of authentic text-based translation

For difficult aspects of authentic texts-based translation obtained from the students' responses, there were four categories: terms/words/vocabularies, meaning, culture, grammar. There were

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[13] Murdoch, 2.

4 students gave no answer on that point. Others admitted that terms/words/vocabularies were the most challenging in doing translation (14 students). Often they did not know how to translate certain words or terms. For meaning, there were 5 students answered that meaning was the most difficult in translation. For culture and grammar there were 1 student said that those aspects were difficult to cope with. The rest 4 students did not give any answer on what is difficult in translating the texts during the semester. When difficult aspect of translation was words/ vocabularies/terms, it is not in line with the theory. Larsen in Murdoch states that translation is transferring meanings from the source language to the receptor language.[14] He emphasizes a lot on meanings. How meanings would be still in the same sense when it is translated to another language. The students based on the translation results which were discussed in class, still emphasized on word to word translation. It might be the reason why meaning was not the aspect which was considered as difficult. It might be the 5 students who considered that meaning was difficult were those who really understand about the nature of translation.

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[14] Murdoch, "Using Authentic Texts in the Language Classroom."

4. The Students' Perceptions toward Authentic Text based-Translation

The last perception is general opinion on the use of the texts. It can be seen in the chart as follows:

Chart 4.5 The students' opinion on the use of authentic texts-based translation
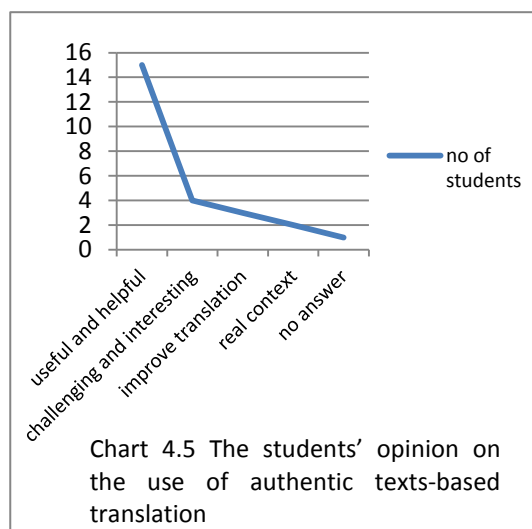
The main perception that this research aims to know is the students' perceptions on the use of authentic texts-based translation. There were five different answers including one student who gave no response. The highest number was that the texts were useful and helpful for their translation experience (15 students). Others, 5 students responded that the texts were challenging and interesting; 3 students said that the texts improved their translation skill; and 2 students learned real context form the texts. .

From the findings and discussions above, it can be generally withdrawn that authentic texts-based translation benefits students in experiencing better translation. On the contrary, they find it difficult to cope with authentic texts particularly dealing with

words/terms/vocabulary. Among varied texts used during the semester, advertisement is considered to be the most relevant are. Considering as difficult, the students believe that the texts are good, useful, helpful, interesting, and challenging. In other words, students do agree that authentic texts are fruitful and meaningful but it seems that they need longer time to get used to with the texts. With sufficient to a lot of exposure, authentic texts might be more effective.

E. Conclusion

Translation is a skill that needs to be trained. Keep practicing is the key for better translation. Seeing the findings and discussion, authentic texts based translation is, in fact, still difficult to be understood from the aspect of vocabulary. Though, it can be said that the students are benefited from the use of the texts. The use of authentic texts needs to be carefully selected and utilized in longer periods. In order to experience the students with real and contextual translation and to be skillful in translating, many models and authentic texts should be employed. It is actually a challenge for the students to cope with that by keeping trying to learn how translation works from Indonesian-English or vice versa.

The reason of why authentic texts of which its vocabulary is claimed to be difficult might because the students have not been familiarized with such texts.

Therefore, some things have to be taken into account in choosing texts such as level of difficulty, genres of texts, and assessment. For student selected-texts, the teacher might take part in helping the students to choose appropriate texts.

This research can be considered as preliminary research since it only captures students' perceptions toward the use of authentic texts. For the further idea, some alternatives that might be considered are integrating the tasks into project-based learning or seeking the influence of the use of authentic texts on the students' translation performance. Due to lack of details presented in this research, recommendations are made for me as the teacher, students, and further researcher as well. For teachers, some recommendations are as follows:

1. Create more clearly assessment scales to help the students perform better.
2. Provide more well-designed rubric of peer-assessment and group-assessment in order to control the students' work.
3. Define guidelines for working on the authentic texts and give appropriate feedback within moderate time after work has been handed in.

For students, some recommendations are made as follows:

1. Familiarise themselves with many authentic texts of varied topics in both English and Indonesian in order that they understand both the SL and TL

well. Having a good mastery of English and Indonesian would help them to perform better.
2. Utilize dictionaries or other resources might be worthy dealing with the difficulties of using authentic texts to be translated especially vocabulary/term.

At last, for further researcher, it would be possible to research on the influence of authentic texts-based translation on the students' translation performance.

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