

# TRANSLATING POETRY ON E-LEARNING DISCUSSION FORUM; STUDENTS' LEXICAL CHOICES AND CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS

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## Abstract

*Translating poetry in the distance learning ecosystem allows students to learn through an online discussion forum called E-Learning. Participants are students who are given the task of translating poetry and writing comments about other students' translations. This article compares three translations of the poem entitled "Air Mata Bunda". From the results of the translation, it was found that students had variations in the structure, translation procedure and ideology of translation poetry of Source Language (SL) to target language (TL). The students' difficulties include agreement on lexical, parallelism of tenses, and be more active learner in discussion forum. Word choice, aesthetic considerations, and cultural substitutions that are reflected in the translation can all cause variations in the translation. The researcher also discovered that there was still a low degree of engagement in E-Learning, which encouraged the lecture to create better framework for discussion, particularly when it came to practicing translation.*

**Keywords:** translation, poetry, cultural substitution, and E-Learning

## INTRODUCTION

Learning experiences have been modulated recently due to the demand of reachable access. The demand comes along with the advance of internet which being massively used during COVID-19 pandemic (Kulikowski et al., 2021). These issues have prompted a migration to the internet among students, instructors, and other education professionals. E-learning is then offered to aid students in their academic endeavours. The E-Learning in this instance is Moodle based.

E-learning has both benefits and drawbacks in teaching languages. The benefit is that students can access the educational process digitally or without paper at any time. Meanwhile, there is a barrier to addressing students' work via online Moodle on an individual basis because contact between students and teachers is delayed.

Distance learning is familiar to university students at Universitas Terbuka. Having Moodle is helpful for distant learners to better understand the lecture. Furthermore, it is used in translating literary works and poetry. As independent

learners, they can improve academic performance, digital literacy, self-motivation, and collaboration work by using Moodle (Aikina & Bolsunovskaya, 2020).

One of Moodle form called E-Learning. E-Learning is virtual classroom where students can access the lesson and interact among them. In learning poetry, it is gainful having peers review or reading other students works to get comparison of literature work. Then, it expands their expertise of poetry translation.

#### *Translation and Distance Education*

Translation is the part of applied linguistic that English literature students are being taught in University (Cook, 2003). Translation is not limited to literal semantic transfer but also bring a whole context on it to be loaded. According to O'Brien (2013), context encompasses direct and indirect factors such as politic, social, economy and ideology, which affects the translator and target culture. For that reason, it is concern to students to have board knowledge in lengthen circumstances. As for teaching English as foreign language, Translation is double-edged instrument. The first is foreign language as a lesson to students. The second is instrument to exercise intelligent in doing the translation work (Newmark, 1988). Knowledge and context become important in translation class and will be salient in translating poetry.

Modern technology renders it challenging for pupils and teachers to learn about translation. The help of machine translation will make the work a lot of easier but also make teacher more difficult to evaluate originality of the task. Stated by Cronin (2012) that digital technology contributes on the internet of translation interested by future human cultures when translation used to be about practice that transform to be semi-automated. E-Learning is combination of digital learning ecosystem that also include machine translation that students nowadays prefer to use (Gina Larasaty & Indra Yoga Prawiro, 2021). Moreover, the focus of this research seeks interactive classroom on E-Learning discussion through Moodle. Moodle is Open-Source management system that is modular and portable in design (Zenha-Rela & Carvalho, 2006). Moodle that have been known and

widely used in education purposes namely Google meet, Learning Management System (E-Learning), Microsoft teams, and other integrated software (Gamage et al., 2022)

In order to learn translation by E-Learning, students must engage in translation activities that are indirectly arranged by the teacher, tutor, or lecturer through the availability of internet space. Indirectly means that even while there isn't direct contact or distant learning, the material can still be created, saved, accessed, and used (Bates, 2005). Learning materials serve as the teacher's primary means of instruction when students are taking classes remotely. In learning translation, students not only is doing his own work but also doing peer review of others (Zenha-Rela & Carvalho, 2006).

#### *Translating Poetry*

The art of translation is subjective. Particularly when it comes to syntax, meaning subtext, literary and cultural references, rhyme, and rhythm, poems are rife with considerations. Since it is impossible to replicate every aspect of the original language in English, the translator must pick the one they believe to be most crucial (Fishman, 2021). Aesthetic and expressive reflects the truth of meaning and beauty of rhyme in poetry are also included in translation matter. Translator gives attention to corresponding punctuation and accurate translation metaphor or reproducing figurative meaning (Newmark, 1988). Finally, translations of texts must match the beauty of the originals (Zhang, 2012).

Translating poetry used to be focus on structure that called Grammar-Translation method which vocabulary equivalent is a big deal (Halimah, 2015). According to Cook (2003) approach have been shifted in teaching translation, then communicative language teaching is favourable because it seeks context and what have to be done in discourse rather than cramped on form and neglected meaning. When translating poetry for online learning, the tutor provides feedback and answers to help students understand why they are doing the work that way. It is a component of the communicative method as well.

Translating poetry that have decent form and appropriate context is not easy task. It could be perplexing because it must consider aesthetic factor and target

audience. To assess translation, there are criterion such as accuracy (equivalent semantic, pragmatic, and poetical close), clearness (sounds natural, and cultural translation), naturalness, and communicative (Halimah, 2015; Newmark, 1988; Susan Bassnett, 2016). However, the criterion does not finite on those mentioned above. In the translation of poetry, creative translation tends to be less rigid in its adherence to the theoretical procedures normally followed in translation in general (Halimah, 2015).

Dastjerdi et al. (2008) said the primary quality of poetic discourse that sets it apart from ordinary language is the inseparability of form and substance. Poetry translation is more challenging than other sorts of translation because the content is so tightly connected to the language. As stated by Weissbort (1989), besides lexical and structure choices, translating poetry have to give attention in rhyme. The feeling and admiration for poetry must be reconstructed and responded to by translators. Most significantly, cultural and social content in source language/SL must be effectively conveyed in Target Language/TL (Hariyanto, 2003; Zhang, 2012).

Difficulties on translating poetry had been discussed in several previous studies. Saleh & Weda (2018) mentioned three difficulties that are translating figurative language, keeping the form and adapt the meaning. According to Cullell (2015), poetry that has been translated is not only for individuals who want to escape reality or have exotic interactions with other cultures, but also for those who want to comprehend the complexity and beauty of their own culture. So, in addition to linguistic aspects, cultural appropriateness should also be considered in the translation of poetry.

Previous study explains relationship on translation poetry and figurative language, relationship about lexical choices and difficulty on face-to-face classroom. However, in this study, we would like to point out the novelty that this work wants to investigate: whether the translation correct grammatically, obeying the consistence of word choice and background culture and summarizing their experiences in E-Learning ecosystem on translating poetry

During the observation of student translating poetry, there are many interesting cases to be explored in translation itself and how E-Learning approach students' behaviour. Translating poetry is unique and not as the same as translation common text. Besides, translator must give attention to grammatical form and linguistics function (Gina Larasaty & Indra Yoga Prawiro, 2021). Since the outcome of translation is posted openly in E-Learning that everyone enrolled in the classroom can read it, they unconsciously compared their work to other and expectedly try to do different and better. This learning sequence of reading posting other students is giving students learning experience.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Students were given assignment to translate poetry in E-Learning translation class. The poetry entitled "Bunda Air Mata" by author Emha Ainun Nadjib, most well known as Cak Nun. They posted their assignment in a discussion forum, and the tutor responded with feedback. The comments are either positive or constructive and express gratitude for their work.

Translation research is qualitative research. According to Glynn (2021), qualitative translation research implemented of theory and concept, case study, and generating new theory. This research core is case study with comparative review. To compare students' assignment, method of translation is used by Hatim & Munday (2019). They categorize translation into some procedure. Procedures in translation are namely borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Borrowing is the target text contains foreign passing. Calque is borrowing with modification; it stands for lexical and structure calque. Literal translation is word-to-word translation. Transposition is substituting a different word class without altering the message's meaning. Modulation is reforming the meaning based on different point of view. Equivalence is having the same meaning but different stylistic and structural. Adaptation is adapting lexical in SL since nothing equivalence yet in TL (Hatim & Munday, 2019).

After conducting comparison, the paper presents what are the founding benefit and obstacle during learning poetry translation in E-Learning class. It also includes students sum up commentary of their discussion.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section will discuss about the finding in three works of students' translation and the finding on students' experiences in E-Learning ecosystem.

### Students' Translation Case Study

There are 17 students participated in translation poetry task that had been posted in Discussion Forum of E-Learning. Three participants' poetry translations are taken based on their dissimilarity. The assumption seems to be that the more diversified the lexical options, the more dissimilar the task.

*Table 1. Lines 1-4 Poetry Translation*

Line	SL	TL1	TL2	TL3
1	Air mata Ibu	Mother's tears	A mother's tears	Tears of mother
2	Kalau Engkau Menangis	When thou cries	When you cried	When you cry
3	Ibundamu yang meneteskan air mata	Thy mother shed tears	She sheds tears	Your mother shed tears
4	Dan Tuhan yang akan mengusapnya	And the lord will wipe the tears away	God shall wipe her tears	And the god will wipe away the tears

The first line shows that participants translate the tittle in different form of noun phrase. TL1 and TL2 prefer possessive pronoun while TL3 is adjective pronoun. As the pronoun, TL1 is using *thou* while other is using *you*. Pronoun *thou* used to be in English classic written text that originated from Scot. While todays, *thois* second singular person that has been replaced by *you* as modern English use. It is also applied on pronoun *thy* that used to be served as adjective pronoun. Looking for aesthetic point of view, the use of *thou* and *thy* is adding the classy on the work. However, if you're searching for a communication goal, using *you* might be more effective.

Grammar-wise, the translation remains incorrect. The noun *cry* is used in both the past and the present, but as it is second-person singular, it must be written as *cry* rather than *cries*. Additionally, the inconsistent use of time is obvious because the past and present tenses frequently overlap. For example, TL 1 used

*cries, shed, and will wipe* and TL2 used *cried, shed, and shall*. It is assumed that pupils don't pay enough attention to agreement in time.

Word selections have an impact on rhyme, rhythm, and semantics. The selection differs on the form of rhythm. TL2 translates the poetry more compact in form of words counting than the SL. TL2 is shorter compared with TL1. As rhyme, all the three translations are trying to make benefit of word *cry* to be place at the end or near the end. Meanwhile word choices in translating “mengusap” have varied. TL1 and TL2 simply translate it as *wipe* while TL3 emphasize it with more amplitude words that *wipe away*.

Table 2. Lines 5-7 Poetry Translation

Line	SL	TL1	TL2	TL3
5	Kalau engkau berseidih	When thou feel sad	When you are feel sad	If you sad
6	Ibunda yang kesakitan	Mother's aching	And your mom's been hurt	Mother hurts
7	Dan tuhan yang menyiapkan hiburan-hiburan	And the lord will entertain	And God will give comfort	And the God entertain

The usage of the word "Tuhan" in this translation marks the following distinction. While TL2 and TL3 chose the term *God*, TL1, who attempted to evoke an old English ambiance, ended up choosing the term *Lord*. Translators frequently choose specific lexical to make cultural adjustments or modify their translations based on background culture they embrace. The clause "menyiapkan hiburan-hiburan" is translated using a particular group of words. Although the terms *entertain* and *comfort* are used, *comfort* is more appropriate in this context and has a warm nuance.

Grammar and lexical mistakes are frequent among students. TL2 and TL3 have grammatical errors. While TL3 probably utilizes a noun without a verb, TL2 has an excessive amount of auxiliary that doubles the verb. TL2 rhymes almost exactly with SL. Lines six and seven in SL conclude with "kesakitan" and "hiburan," while lines six and seven in TL2 end with *hurt* and *comfort*, respectively, with the sound of /n/ and /t/.

Table 3. Lines 8-10 Poetry Translation

Line	SL	TL1	TL2	TL3
8	Menangislah banyak-banyak untuk ibundamu	Shed a lot of tears for thy mother	Your tears for your mom	Cries a lot for your mother
9	Dan jangan bikin satu kalipun untuk membuat Tuhan	And don't even once make the God	Don't make God	And don't make God
10	naik pitam kepada hidupmu	Angry with thy life	angry with you And with your life	angry once at you

The problem in lines 9-10 is the inconsistency of sentence form. Significant differences in the results of the translation are lexical choices. The word *shed* provides a variety of options in replacing the word *cried* which often appears in previous translations. In sentence form, first line of TL2 is not imperative but declarative sentence. The most noticeable mistake in TL2 is that the absence of connection between lines 8 and 9 which affects coherence in the poem. However, students already have awareness in giving the value of beauty in poetry like giving repetition to the lexical of *your life* into *with you and with your life*.

Table 4. Lines 11-18 Poetry Translation

lines	SL	TL1	TL2	TL3
11	Kalau Ibundamu menangis, Para malaikat menjelma	As thy mother's tear drop	If your mom unhappy, the peace angle	If mother cries, the angles shed their tears
12	butiran-butiran air matanya	And the emanating light from mother's	taking her tears	And the light that shine from the mother eyes
13	Dan airmata yang memancar dari airmata ibunda	tear	The tears are shining	
14	Membuat para malaikat itu silau dan marah	Make the angles dazzle and angry	Angles do express sorrow and anger	Make the angle's angry
15	Kepada mu	To you	with you	At you

Lines 11 through 15 are where the translation differences are most obvious. The translation is frequently deleted and rephrased in TL1. TL2 frequently translates

words to words. Transposition translation is commonly used in TL3. The three translations used different set of prepositions of *you* to end the Line 15.

In these lines, it is obvious that students frequently neglect grammar in favour of word choice, which is what gives poetry its aesthetic appeal. This can be seen in the translation of the word "silau dan marah". TL1 translates literally as *dazzle and angry* while TL2 translates the connotative form to denotative into *sorrow and anger*. While TL3 simplifies the translation to *angry*. Students utilize their imagination and flexibility to translate the poetry according to their perception.

*Table 5. Lines 16-18 Poetry Translation*

lines	SL	TL1	TL2	TL3
16	Dan Kemarahan Para malaikat adalah kemarahan suci	And the angle's wrath is sacred	Their anger from religious texts	And the angle's wrath is the pure wrath
17	Sehingga Allah tidak melarang mereka tatkala	That the lord does not forbid them when	And Allah's angles have been permitted when they are	And Allah never forbid them at the time
18	Menutup pintu sorga bagimu	Closing the gate of heaven upon thee	Closing the door of Jannah	Shut the heaven's door on you

The cultural word choices present a challenge in translation lines 16-17. For example, "kemarahan suci" might be rendered as *wrath is sacred*, *anger from religious texts*, or *the pure wrath*. TL1 has the closest accurate translation, however TL2 and TL3 have not yet used the right lexical choices. It appears that the students have lack cultural context and adequate terminology. The lexical choices to translate God in specific name of "Allah" is also varied. TL1 persist word choice "Lord", while TL2 and TL3 adapting the word "Allah". TL2 specifically use word "Jannah" as translation by cultural substitution with Arabic adaptation.

### **Challenges in Translating Poetry**

The largest issue for pupils is how the translation be parallel in terms from SL to TL. Students have already demonstrated their excellent word choice in several lines of translation. They can also select a group of terms with similar

meanings, such as "*ache, pain,*" "*tear, drop, shed,*" "*entertain, comfort,*" "*tear, drop, shed, cry*" and "*angry, wrath*". However, there are still some lexical items that is not appropriate to use, for example "religious text."

Cultural substitution has a significant impact on the choice of translation procedures and ideologies. TL1 is converting old English culture into Indonesian poetry, resulting in translations that are far from SL culture. This led to the incorporation of the SL cultural context in the new TL. TL2 contains more substantial components of Islamic religious culture, one of which is demonstrated by the use of the term "Jannah." Finally, TL3 retains the SL cultural background by not modifying the specific terminology in the text much.

Students continue to make grammatical mistakes. Almost all TL contain minor to significant issues. One of them is that SL poetry is not grammatically in a standard language. Students appear to have begun to add a touch of aesthetic by paying attention to the selection of words that rhyme with the correct rhyme and rhythm.

E-learning studies are intriguing for pupils since they have enough time to think and enough space to ask inquiries. This can be viewed at the students who complete the translation work within the time frame specified, which will be used as evaluation material for other students. Students also are founded to reuse and remodified their peers work by collecting others lexical variation into their tasks, it means they learn by reading each other work. Nevertheless, they are don't fully aware to pay attention about grammar.

Lecturers can record and report translations and provide feedback on their own translations. Such as appreciate their work, commenting their lexical choices, rhyme, and rhyme, and revising their grammar. E-learning will be more effective if the information is comprehensive and easily accessible to students, and the lecturer actively provides feedback on their progress.

The weakness of e-learning in this poetry translation class is the low of participation rate. Only 56% of students are actively discussing. Online classes, similar face-to-face classes, consist of students who are too bashful to participate

in discussion activities. This is a note for lecturers in developing materials and procedures in learning translation to support students to be more active.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Students can produce diversity and accuracy of meaning by selecting different words within the same range of significance while translating poetry texts. Although students have mastered utilizing English language, they nevertheless occasionally make minor to major grammatical errors.

Students have done a good job of transferring meaning from SL to TL. From the terms the translator lexical choice, it appears that the translation's outcomes contain a specific cultural background. The beauty of poetry is also students' issues from their awareness of rhyme and rhythm. Students are also doing transposition to get appropriate translation results.

It is advised that tutors give examples and create a more effective and efficient discussion practice framework because the level of involvement is still low. This will encourage more students to participate in the E-Learning discussion forum during the following class.

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