CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with investigating the students' methods and strategies in translating English texts into Indonesian, difficulties in doing translation activity, and ways of solving their difficulties in the translation tasks. Beginning with the reason why the topic is chosen, this chapter will formulate the research problems and the research questions that the study seeks to answer. Finally, the statements of the contribution that this study makes in the field of ELT will follow along with the organization of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study: The Role of Translation Activity in the ELT Classroom

Translation is a significant part of ELT for a long time (Kfouri, 2005 in; file:///D:/translation-activities-language-classroom.htm). With the arrival of communicative methodologies, translation was quickly neglected in the past, along with other 'traditional' tools such as dictation, reading aloud and drills. However, these activities are now a feature of many communicative classrooms. As Duff (1989) says, teachers and students now use translation to as a tool to learn, rather than learning translation. Duff further explains that modern translation activities have clear communicative aims and real cognitive depth, show high motivation levels and can produce impressive communicative results.

While there is an assumption that translation doesn't belong in the classroom because it doesn't make use of the target language, a study conducted by Kern (1994) shows the important role of translating as a cognitive strategy in

the L2 reading comprehension process. Kern finds that students often use translation to understand the text. Cook (1992) also adds that second language learners use their L1 while prcessing their L2. Cook suggests that teacher must not separate the L1 from the L2, but instead they should make use the L1 while teaching the students.

Similar studies conducted by Daulton (1999) and Roca (1992) on the use of translation in bilingual classroom show that translation may help students learn the target language in ESL classroom. Gill (1998) explains that during the language learning process, translation stimulates language learnerst to distinguish and encourage students to make comparison between the grammars of the Source Language (SL) and the Target Language (TL).

Translation activity introduces students to words and expressions that resist translation such as terms related to slang language, institutions, and the like (Gill, 1998). Duff (1990) states that translation trains the reader to search (flexibility) for the most appropriate words (accuracy) to convey what is meant (clarity). When designed well, translation activity in the classroom can support the four skills and the four systems. In terms of communicative competence, it requires accuracy, clarity and flexibility. Translation in groups can encourage learners to discuss the meaning and use of language at the deepest possible levels as they work through the process of understanding and then looking for equivalents in another language (file:///translation-activities-language-classroom.htm). Thus, translation activity consequently brings the necessity of developing foreign language teaching especially English.

Cunningham (2000; in http://www.cels.bham.ac.uk/resources/essays/cindy

<u>c2.pdf)</u> states that with a careful application aimed at specific goals and situations, translation can contribute to the students' acquisition of the target language at all levels. Unfortunately, the lack of positive literature available on translation use in the classroom, and the negative perception it receives by the 'experts' and trainers, has certainly made teachers careful of dealing with translation or doing research on it (Atkinson:1987). Does translation in the classroom accelerate or slow down the learning process? Does it prevent the students from developing second language skills? Does it, in fact, place the classrooms in an atmosphere strongly remind to grammar-based learning, which is much hindered communicatively based methodology?

While there may be some negative perceptions of using translation, this study argues that there is a place in the learning environment for translation. Cunnigham (2000) argues that there is no reason why translation activities can not be incorporated into communicatively based lesson, and they promote different activities that suit different goals and aims of students (Atkinson, 1987; Edge, 1986; Heltai, 1989; Tudor, 1986 <u>in http//www.cels.bham.ac.uk/resources/essays/ Cindyc2.pdf)</u>

Heltai (1989) suggests that if the translation activities are conducted in pairs or in small groups, the students must use the target language for negotiation in order to agree on the more appropriate language to be used (Heltai:1989; Edge:1986). Heltai further explains, for many students, the use of the L2 will be in situations where either neutral or formal language is required, and activities that do not require 'creative spontaneity' but daily language are more appropriate than

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ones which require more colloquial language. Translation can provide these situations.

At the same time, Atkinson (1987) explains that activities that involve some translation promote guessing strategies amongst students and helps reduce the word-for- word translation that often occurs and which results in inappropriate L2 use. Even Harbord (1992) admits that some translation work teaches students to work towards transferring meaning "rather than the word-for-word translation that occurs when the learner's unconscious need to make assumptions and correlations between languages is ignored" (Harbord:1992).

This study attempts to consider some of the arguments for the importance of translation and demonstrate how the arguments against it do not represent what is currently being proposed. Therefore, this study refuses the assumption that translation is an inappropriate tool for second language acquisition (SLA), or giving harm to the students because there is no access to a learning technique. For that reason, it is reasonable to say that translation is important in current teaching methodology.

It is a fact that doing translation tasks is complicated, artificial and even misleading, since using another language we are pretending to be someone that we are not. Therefore, translating one language into another is not simply reproducing so that it can never be like the original (Newmark, 1988: 7-8). This is very relevant to the researcher's teaching experience which reveals that there are many students who still perform badly when they carry out the translation activity.

With this in mind, it becomes clear that the need of investigating the students' difficulties in the translation activity, in this case translating English texts into Indonesian, is an undeniable fact. It is by diagnosing their difficulties that we, as the language teachers, could find the alternative solution to solve these problems. By knowing their difficulties, teachers can discuss the meaning and use of language at the deepest levels as they work through the process of understanding and then looking for equivalences in another language. Later, teachers could find alternative methods that could better determine students' translation competence and which would also be more teaching-oriented.

1.2. Identification of the Problems

Based on the researcher's teaching experience at Madrasah Aliyah *(Islamic Senior High School)* for eleven years as an English teacher, it shows that students still find difficulties when they are faced with English texts to be translated into Indonesian or vise versa. This phenomenon can be easily observed from the results of their translation tasks. There are many factors that play in the difficulties of doing translation tasks. A study carried out by Yusrida (2001) has identified that there are at least four problems that may arise when someone is doing translation tasks, namely; 1) grammar, 2) lexicon, 3) grammar that cause global and local problems and 4) lexicon that causes global and local problems.

With regard to the statement above, Harto states that there are also four problems regarding to the translator; 1) finding the general terms relevant with the target language, 2) getting original texts not clearly written, 3) finding the relevant terms in accordance with the original cultures and concepts, and 4) minimum subject knowledge about the materials being translated (Harto in Nasir, 2007).

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Altay has also conducted a similar research and identified that there are at least five problems arising when doing translation activities. They involve; (1) culture-specific quality of the texts, (2) differences in language systems, (3) problems related to terminology, (4) the use of unusual sentence structures in English, and (5) the use of old English words. Meanwhile, a study about students' difficulties in translating Belgium texts into English, as conducted by Binche (1999), revealed that in many cases vocabulary has always become the most difficult part in translating. The reason, according to Binche, is that translators are oftern faced with the task of either keeping the term in the source language and including the explanation, or translating the terms in the source language. This is not easy because once the term is translated, a great deal of the meaning is lost.

Since this study attempts to investigate students' difficulties in doing translation tasks, those theories seem very relevant to be applied here. However, prior to investigating the students' difficulties in translating the texts, an investigation about the students' methods and strategies of translation should also be explored. This is based on the argument that the kinds of methods and strategies the students employ determine the quality of their translation. The appropriate methods and strategies the students use, the appropriate and natural translation it will be.

1.3. The Formulation of the Problems

Based on the descriptions above, this research would address the following questions:

1. What methods and strategies do the students use in doing the translation tasks?

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2. What difficulties do the students encounter in translating English texts into Indonesian?

3. How do the students solve their problems in translating English texts into Indonesian?

1.4. The Purpose of the Study

In line with the problems formulated above, this study aims to;

1) identify the students' methods and strategies when translating English texts into Indonesian.

2) identify the factors that make it difficult for the students when translating English text into Indonesian.

3) identify the students' solution when translating an English text into Indonesian.

1.5. The Significance of the Study

The findings of the research will be expected to be useful for the contribution of the practical, theoretical, as well as professional benefits for students and those taking interests in translation works. The findings are also expected to;

1) provide teachers or those interested in translation works with the issues in accordance with the problems the students may have.

2) contribute to the development of teaching learning process, particularly for theoretical reference.

3) contribute the teaching profession especially the methods and strategies of translation.

1.6. The Scope of the Study

The scope of the study will cover the participants and the delimitation of the study. The participants of the study are the students of the third class of one Madrasah Aliyah/MA *(Islamic Senior High School)* in Bandung. The reasons for choosing the participants at this school is that they meet the criteria for the purpose of doing this research (Alwasilah, 2006). The reasons are; (1) they are the students of MA, a similar school in which the researcher teaches, (2) the accessibility and coorperativeness. The English teacher studies at the same university as the researcher which makes it more accessible, (3) the students are very cooperative, and (4) the consideration of financial effectiveness. While the reason for choosing the third students is that they are going to face the national final examination.The study will be delimited to the results of students' translation tasks. The study limits itself and focuses on the methods, strategies, and difficulties in translating English texts into Indonesian. There are four kinds of texts used in this study which can be seen in Appendix 1.

1.7. The Definition of Key Terms

To make it easy for readers to understand the key terms, this research will then provide explanation with respect ot some important terms in the study as follows:

1. Difficulty refers to the state of quality of being hard to do or to understand; the effort that something involves (Oxford Learners' Dictionary).

2. Translating refers to the act of process of transferring meaning of a text from one language into another.

3. Translation refers to (1) the act or an instance of translating, or (2) a written or spoken expression of the meaning of a word, speech, book, etc, in another language (Concise Oxford English Dictionary in Hatim and Munday:3).

4. Text is any form of written material; the main printed part of a book or magazine, not the notes, pictures, etc (Oxford advanced Learner's Dictionary).

5. Strategies are the procedures the participants employ in translation and to solve problems (Newmark).

1.8. The Organization of the Research

This research will be organized into five chapters, each of which consists of the points to be discussed. Chapter I discusses the burning issues of the research which leads to the interest of this study. This part will be followed by the identification of the problems, the purpose of the study, significance of the study, and the scope of the study, the definition of key terms.

Some concepts adopted for the study is discussed in chapter II. This chapter also discusses the previous study undertaken by others on similar issues. In this part, some theories about translation are explored. Chapter III explains the way the researcher carries out the research. It covers the research design, research site, research participants, subjects and objects of the study, research data, technique of collecting the data, and the analysis of the data.

Chapter IV focuses on the research findings in which it covers the analysis of the students' translation, factors that make their difficulties to do translation tasks, their strategies, and the problems in translating an English text into Indonesian. This chapter also attempts to answer all the questions presented

in chapter I. Finally, the conclusion and some recommendations about ways to improve the quality of translation are presented in chapter V. This chapter will present a guidance for a further research.