

# **Improving English Prospective Teachers' Translation Quality through a Small Group Discussion**

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## ***Abstract***

*English prospective teachers should be able to well translate any text used as their teaching materials for both junior and senior high school students. Basically translation is an individual skill, yet it is believed that more heads may gain better results. This research is intended to improve the prospective teachers' translation quality through a small group discussion. This descriptive qualitative research uses a purposive random sampling technique with a pretest and posttest design. The research result show that the errors are made in translating specific terms used in the passage by 31%, followed by distortion of meaning by 25%, and misspelling or grammatical errors by 22%. As those error results are less than those made in pre-test which are respectively by 55%, 36%, and 26%, it can be concluded that Small Group Discussion used by the prospective teachers in translating the National Examination Text is effective with the highest errors in translating the specified terms available in the text followed by the distortion of meaning, and misspelling/grammatical errors.*

**Key Words:** *prospective teacher, translation quality, small group discussion*

## **Introduction**

Teacher is one key success of students to gain both academic and non-academic achievements. One excellent teacher may produce hundreds even thousands of highly qualified students. Those facts show that good teachers are greatly necessary to improve both students' competences on soft and hard skills.

There are four competences should be acquired by the students in learning English covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, English learners may not well understand what they hear if they do not understand what they are listening to. They also may not be able to deliver their speech even the simplest one if they do not know what to say. The students may not comprehend what they read if they are unable to grasp the meaning of each word and phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph and text shown in their reading materials. In addition, the English learners may also impossibly be able to express their mind and ideas into a piece of writing if they don't know what to write in English as their native language is Indonesia.

Before those four compulsory competences acquired, the students should be able to translate, starting from words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and finally passages. Translation is one natural process made by the foreign language learners, before they produce words either in spoken or written cycles. The translation processes are made while they are thinking. Thus, translation is considered as the most fundamental competence and skill should be acquired by all English learners.

Since 2015, Jenderal Soedirman University established some new study programs focusing on education. Thus, extra preparations should be made to provide prospective teachers adequate knowledge and skills. English Education Study program is the youngest

education study program. Since the study program deals with foreign language, it is necessary that the prospective teachers be equipped with the most fundamental skill, that is, translation.

Senior high school students are the highest level of education that may be handled by those prospective teachers in the future. During a four-year study, the prospective teachers should master all the courses given. One course which support their fundamental skill is English-Indonesian translation. In this course, the students are expected to be able to well translate all texts or materials related to those implemented both in junior and senior high school. Since the highest materials should be well acquired by the students are genre-based passages or texts tested in the National Examination, the prospective teachers should well understand those texts. One way to prove the prospective teachers' ability in mastering those passages, their translation ability should be measured and improved.

Based on the interview made related to the prospective teachers' competence in translation during the translation course, most of them find it difficult to understand the source texts, equivalence words, appropriate dictions, and organizing the sentences derived from the source text to the target text. Based on the above problems, this research tries to find the best solution to improve their translation quality and competences.

Small group discussion is considered as one effective way to overcome those problems. By having small group discussion, it is expected that the participants may easily translate and understand the materials. Thus, research questions are formulated to overcome those problems: (1) whether or not Small Group discussion is effective to improve the prospective teachers' translation quality and (2) on which aspects does Small Group Discussion improve the prospective teachers' translation quality.

## **Literature Review**

### **Prospective Teachers**

Prospective teachers constitute their foundation of professional experiences as a two way process which has a mutually benefit for mentor and candidate teachers (Schon, 1990 in Tarman, 2012). In general, prospective teachers are those who are studying in higher education institutions aiming at becoming teachers after graduation. During their study, the prospective teachers are equipped with various knowledge and skills related to education. In this case, the prospective teachers are those studying at English Education Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Jenderal Soedirman University in their fifth semester taking English-Indonesian Translation. During the course, the students are expected to be able to translate the provided materials taken from Senior High School National Examination Passages. Since those passages should be well understood by the students, the prospective teachers should also be able to sophisticatedly translate those passages in order to make the students understand better. Thus, to become qualified teachers in the future, the prospective teachers should master all the courses required to graduate from the program, especially the fundamental competence on translation.

### **Translation Quality**

Translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) (Catford, 1965). This definition is

considered too broad that the translation results tend to be more literal. Larson (1984) then defines translation as transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language. In this case, Larson emphasizes translation in both textual and meaning. In addition, Newmark (1988) defines translation as rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. Here, Newmark asserts that the translator may not put his/her own idea in the translation but should follow the writer's idea.

On the other side, translation quality is actually relative. One may consider that someone's translation result is good but the other one may say the other way around. Machali (2000) stated that a good translation should meet several requirements. First, the translation should be acceptable based on both content and face validity. The translation is considered acceptable when there is no distortion of meaning, having correct spelling, good sentence formation, structure, terms, as well as its naturalness. Thus the lower the distortion of meaning, less spelling, sentence formation, grammatical, and idiomatic errors as well as inappropriate terms are considered to determine the quality of prospective teachers' translation in this research.

### **Small Group Discussion**

One effective method which is familiar among academicians is Small Group Discussion. Small Group discussion is a series of activities made by the students within a specified group to achieve the formulated educational objective (Ismail, SM, 2011). Small Group discussion enables the students to deliver ideas and breakthrough to find the necessary solution. By having a Small Group Discussion, the students may broaden their knowledge since within a group there are several members with different levels of knowledge. Small Group discussion also encourages the students to appreciate others' opinions and ideas to generate the best solution to a problem.

Although translation is actually an individual skill, Small Group Discussion is expected to assist the other students especially the low level achievement students to improve their translation results. Not only equipped with dictionaries, a translator also requires partners in translating a specified text. Thus, Small Group Discussion is considered as an alternative and effective way to have better translation results.

### **Research Method**

This research is classified into a descriptive-qualitative research with a randomly purposive pre-test post test design. There are 40 prospective students used as the populations in this research. As the maximum group discussions consist of 4 members, 10 students are obtained as the research samples.

To obtain the data, the students are given a text taken from the National Examination Texts for Senior High School students ranging from 2010-2016. The students are given a specified time to finish the translation results. The students may use any dictionary necessary to complete the translation. After having the translation pre-test, all students are treated with a small group discussion in various types, such as working in pair, in group of 3, and in group of 4. After the treatment, the students are once again given a different text to be translated within a specified time. The data are then collected. The students' translation results meeting the research requirements are taken to be the samples. The

samples are then tabulated to analyze the errors made based on indicators of misspelling or grammatical, terms, and idiomatic translation errors as well as the distortion of meaning.

## Result and Discussion

### Prospective Teachers' Translation Pre-Test Results

A text entitled *Multinational Crystal Lagoons* is given to the prospective teachers to translate. There are only 8 simple, compound, or complex sentences. They have to complete the translation with a specified time. After the completion, the translation pre-test results are obtained and then analyzed. The results are eventually shown in the following table.

Table 1. Analysis of Prospective Students' Translation Pre- Test Results on a National Examination Text

No.	Analysis of Prospective Teachers' Pre-Test Translation Results				
	Data Number	Misspelling/Grammatical Errors (number of sentence: 80)	Term Errors	Idiomatic Translation Errors	Distortion of Meaning
1.	Data 1	1	2	1	5
2.	Data 2	5	6	0	1
3.	Data 3	3	4	1	3
4.	Data 4	2	5	0	2
5.	Data 5	3	2	1	4
6.	Data 6	2	6	0	1
7.	Data 7	0	3	0	5
8.	Data 8	2	5	0	2
9.	Data 9	3	6	1	2
10.	Data 10	0	5	1	4
Total		21	44	5	29
Percentage		26%	55%	6%	36%

Based on the table above, the results show that the highest error percentage is on the translation of terms used in the text (55%) followed by the distortion of meaning (36%), misspelling (26%), and idiomatic translation error (6%). The facts prove that the prospective teachers have poor understanding on the provided text as there are more than half errors in terms used in the text which also results in quite high level distortion of meaning. Thus, a small group discussion should be conducted within the specified meetings.

### Prospective Teachers' Translation Post-Test Results

After the prospective teachers have been treated several times using a Small Group Discussion method, analysis on the prospective teachers' translation results is presented in the following table.

Table 2. Analysis of Prospective Students' Post-Test Translation Results on a National Examination Text

No.	Analysis of Prospective Teachers' Post-Test Translation Results				
	Data Number	Misspelling/Grammatical Errors (number of sentence: 120)	Term Errors	Idiomatic Translation Errors	Distortion of Meaning
1.	Data 1	4	1		2
2.	Data 2	2	6		4
3.	Data 3	4	3		4
4.	Data 4	2	3		4
5.	Data 5	3	4		3
6.	Data 6	1	3		2
7.	Data 7	0	4		4
8.	Data 8	3	4		2
9.	Data 9	7	4		1
10.	Data 10	0	5		3
Total		26	37		29
Percentage		22%	31%		25%

Based on the above table, the result shows that various errors still appear. However, the number of errors decreases. The highest errors is still in translating the terms (31%) available in the text followed by the distortion of meaning (25%) and misspelling (22%). Meanwhile, there is no error in term of idiomatic expressions since there is only few even no data at all in the passage used in this research.

### Conclusion

Based on the analytical results above, it can be concluded that the Small Group Discussion method used by the prospective teachers in translating the National Examination Text is effective. The highest errors made by the prospective teachers in translating the National Examination Text is on Terms followed by distortion of meaning, and grammatical errors/misspelling. Meanwhile, the idiomatic expression analytical result may not be considered as the measure of the prospective teachers' translation quality as there are not many source texts using idiomatic terms or expressions

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