



# Exploring Pharmacy Students' Techniques in Translating Pharmaceutical Texts from English into *Bahasa Indonesia*

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Translating an L1 (source text) into a target language would be a daunting task and time-consuming work for students who are non-native speakers. It might be more challenging when the L1 text is a discipline specific text. Many words and specific terms are difficult to translate, and often unintended meanings emerge during this translation process. Although there has been considerable research on the translation studies, there has been still little study on how translators cope with the challenges. To fill this void, this case study is aimed to describe techniques employed by students majoring pharmacy in translating direction for use texts from English into *Bahasa Indonesia*. Adopting [Vinay and Darbelnet's](#) translation methodology, this research is aimed to describe the translation process that students already undertook in order to produce texts that appropriately work in a particular social context. There are four drug brochures taken as samples of analysis. These texts are students' assignment for the topic of translation. This is a group work and part of the whole assessment. The study provides detailed and specific examples of how students tackle the challenges of translating discipline specific texts into equivalent languages that are socio-culturally and linguistically acceptable.

**Keywords:** translation, pharmaceutical text, pharmacy

## INTRODUCTION

The accessibility of information is a gate for people to learn and gain new knowledge. However, the transfer of knowledge is not only about getting information from a trusted source, but, people also have a willingness to share it with others. Language, as a medium of communication is inseparable from this social interaction. Language is a powerful tool that people may use to decode and encode the messages and information. Language barrier, where one person may find it difficult to understand the information she/he receives, would hinder them from getting the messages across. Thus, translation plays a very important role in filling this void. A translator has a noble job where he is able to help readers and audiences understand the texts and utterances they are reading. This also happens to Indonesian readers. They may find it challenging to digest a source text written in foreign language. A text which is translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* would be really helpful for readers, especially those who have a very limited language capability to understand the target texts.

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It is commonly believed that the spirit of nationalism may discourage people to learn a foreign language, particularly English language. Being proud of local language or national language is very important to show nationalism and patriotism, however in the era of globalization we cannot close ourselves from the development of information and technology around the world. English as lingua franca is considered very important to make us catch up with the worldwide development, networking with other countries, transfer of knowledge and technology. A great deal of books, literature, and documents has been translated into Indonesian or vice versa, so everybody can follow the latest knowledge and information (Murtisari, 2015).

Translation has very important role nowadays, no doubt about it. The question is how to master translation? It becomes a concern of many educators, researchers and translators to find answer to this question, because to do a translation needs knowledge about the language and the content for specific topic (Man et al., 2020). Translators are required to not only transfer the meaning from the source text into the target text, but, they need to be able to produce a meaningful text within its field of study. University students, particularly those who study specific fields such as nursing, engineering, information and technology, etc., should be taught about this technique.

Students need equivalent resources to their home language when learning lesson written in foreign language. More importantly, these resources are available in students' home language. For example, a science student would face many challenges when he/she has to encounter texts written in foreign language. There is a need for him a resource that is understood in order to get access to the information. In other words, he indirectly uses the language to understand and observes the information. In the same vein, language of science has been perceived that it requires a specific set of semantic construction (pattern) that requires readers' specific knowledge to make sense of the meaning (Lemke, 1990). In another definition, science lesson is hard, unless students make some efforts in predicting, observing, analyzing, presenting and writing the language Lee and Fradd (1998). Thus, the complexity would give a unique challenge for students. As the translation begins, there will be many words and terms that are difficult teachers begin to translate texts or science words, there are often many words and particular terms that are very difficult to translate and often unpredictable meaning may come up during translations.

Moreover, as Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) argue that small change or alteration in meaning may happen due to the process of translation. This happens through the following process such as borrowing (the original words from the source text are kept in the target texts), literal translation (word-for-word translation), transposition (the adjustment to linguistic differences such as reordering adjectives before or after nouns), modulation (a technique often used to change abnormal or awkward), and equivalence (a technique similar to modulation often used in idioms, proverbs, and phrases). The majority of the students were graduate students in English or Spanish literature. The problems were classified into linguistic problems and cul-

tural challenges. The findings indicate that there was a need to use several translation techniques such as Vinay and Darbelnet aforementioned. The researchers argue that there was a special need to include equivalence and modulation during the translation process from English to Spanish. Equivalence is needed to translate idioms, a cliché, slang, a proverb, or a saying or specific content relating to particular culture. Therefore, it is necessary to find similar concept in the target culture. Besides, modulation is encouraged to use as a technique involving changes in the semantics and point of view of the source text.

There are some research that focused on teaching translation universities students. (Eser and Dikilitaş, 2017) mentioned that translation can be used as a learning strategy by students in one of the universities in Turkey who learn their academic subjects. Most students are unequipped with the competencies to translate, so they cope with frustration in ensuring success that they expect to attain. While translation is a method that most students turn to as a strategy to overcome their lack of competencies. Therefore, the students must have both knowledge and strategy on how to translate the original source into the target language and to make it equivalent in its discipline specific field.

Teaching translation in Indonesian higher education context also faces the same challenges. According to (Akil, 2011), the poor quality of the students' translations is the mirror of the poor quality of English teaching in all aspects. This is a pedagogic warning to all lecturers of English and English departments. Furthermore, Pangestu (2013) suggested that the error in translating food, cosmetics or drugs labels can occur because of lack of English knowledge as a target language of translation. The translator should carefully choose the word order, diction and so on related to English linguistics, in order to make sure that the translation of food, cosmetics and drugs label have no errors.

Additionally, other experts contend that the level of difficulty of the text should be taken into account before teachers assigning a translation task to students (Reiss and Vermeer, 1984). There are five major challenges regarding text difficulty : subject matter, the register, the type of language choice, the pragmatics of the reader, and the historical-cultural aspects of the text. Similarly, another study concluded that difficulty may affect the result of translation (Hale and Campbell, 2002). They found out that the level of text difficulty significantly affects the ability of Spanish and Arabic translators in producing meaningful translation. They recommended that there is a need for further investigation into the difficulties may present when translating certain words.

Although there were quite many studies undertaken in the assessment of translation result, little is still known about students' ability majoring in a particular field of study translating their texts. Thus, in this research, we are going to focus on analyzing the result of translation task of drugs brochures that was done by Pharmacy Students in one of the Private Universities in Indonesia.

To explore Pharmacy students in translating pharmaceutical texts, within this context, drug brochure, therefore, this study is intended to address these two research problems: (1) What method is dominantly used by pharmacy students to translate drug brochure? and (2) What is the biggest issue faced by pharmacy students in translating drug brochures? Both knowledge and strategies are very important to give information about what fields to focus on teaching so those kinds of mistake will not appear in students' tasks for the future classes. Despite that, theoretically speaking, this research is also intended to give contribution to the field of translation studies, particularly, translation studies in discipline specific texts, e.g. English for Pharmacy texts.

## METHOD

This is a text analysis study on the translation of the drug brochures by students of pharmacy undergraduate program. Drug brochures are selected as the object of analysis because pharmacy students would deal with these texts most frequently. It is a must have skill for them to be able to understand the text and explain the information to the customers or clients. The framework of the current study is an incorporation between linguistic theories and translation. We see these as two interconnected fields where linguistics will systematically capture how language works in a particular social setting while translation is specifically viewed as multilingual work [Fawcett \(2003\)](#).

Furthermore, social functions of the text are looked at critically. Thus, semantically and pragmatically target texts are the core goal of a translation. Texts are not viewed as a random collection of words but they are a cohesive discourse with meanings that are socially constructed. Therefore, knowledge of context and cultural aspects are two major problems that students face when they translate a specific discipline text, particularly, pharmaceutical texts. Regarding this matter, a careful attention is given to the purpose of the drug brochure texts. It serves a specific purpose to give instruction or provide readers with the procedures of how to take medicines.

A final component of our research framework is that to incorporate the theory of translation into the best practice of translation education. We used the translation techniques developed by [Vinay and Darbelnet \(1995\)](#) to describe the process of translating the text. Although this translation theory may not guarantee the quality of translated texts, it may help us identify a systematic method and/or strategies that are employed by the translators.

### The texts

The texts are drug brochures taken from any sources by students, particularly from the web. They are written in English. Students are assigned in groups to translate the texts into

*Bahasa Indonesia*. There are three source texts and nine target texts used as the sources for data analysis. Each source has three target texts. Thus, the total number of the target texts are nine.

### Translation process

The translation process follows these procedures: (1) The teacher asked students to work in groups to find a sample of directions for use text from the internet, (2) students worked in groups translating their texts into *Bahasa Indonesia*, (3) The translated versions were then collected, (4) The original texts and the translations were then compared to identify the most dominant translation technique used by students and some issues regarding their translation, and (5) conclusion was then drawn.

### Translation analysis

The focus of the current analysis is on both texts; source text (in *Bahasa Indonesia*) and target texts (in English). The main work of this research is to compare and analyze each source text along with its target texts. Furthermore, the analysis procedure is undertaken as follows: (1) The center of analysis is on the source and target texts, (2) to produce a frequency table of translation techniques, (3) to provide a context for how the word was used in the text; (4) to provide a comparison of English and *Bahasa Indonesia* meanings of the scientific words; and (5) to provide us with an account of the translation processes and translation techniques themselves. There are five techniques identified using Vinay's and Darbelnet's framework, namely borrowing, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and literal translation.

#### Borrowing

In this process the original word is not translated into the target language because there is no equivalent vocabulary for the word. Another reason is that the original word is world widely acceptable. For example, the word 'internet' has been world widely acceptable.

#### Transposition

The translation is undertaken by rearranging the words in order to create a clearer meaning in the target language. For example, Red Apple will be translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*: *Apel Merah*, not *Merah Apel*

#### Modulation

Using a similar phrase, but different words, to convey meaning. For example, I cut my finger would be translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* *Jariku teriris*, NOT *Saya memotong jari*.

#### Equivalence

The process of using a near source-text equivalent in a context where a precise equivalent may or may not exist in the target language. This approach is employed when there is no clear one-to-one equivalence, when literal translation is not possi-

ble, or when the word is not important in the text translated. For example, the idiomatic expression “don't cry over the spilt milk” would be translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* “nasi sudah menjadi bubur”.

### Literal translation

The process of translating exactly the word or group of words.

For example:

SL: Students need a clear explanation about the rubric of assessment

TL: *Mahasiswa memerlukan sebuah penjelasan yang jelas tentang rubric penilaian*

Despite the analysis of translated texts, linguistics aspects of the texts and their social function are also looked at in order to give more comprehensive findings and interpretation. Halliday's linguistics theory of field domain of text is the central of linguistics analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1** provides a report regarding the most frequently translation technique utilized by students. Those techniques that are used by students mentioned many interesting finding as follows:

From the table, there are three source text (drug brochures written in English) and nine target texts (a translation results by nine groups of student). The three source texts have the same level of difficulty, but they have different content. Each group is assigned with different text. It is clearly seen that literal translation is the most predominant translation technique utilized at 45 occurrences while transposition is the second most dominantly techniques (28 occurrences) employed. On the other hand, modulation and borrowing are not quite often used by students, this is indicated by only 10 and 6 occurrences respectively for both. There is no equivalence translation technique selected as a method in translation. Overall, these results show that students prefer to use simple and basic technique, in this context literal translation, rather than choosing other techniques. There is no wide range of translation techniques employed. The translation of target language is merely focused on the literal meaning.

Based on the findings, literal translation is the most frequently used translation technique chosen by the participants. Let us look at this sample:

**Adult and children 12 years and over: take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours, not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours. (ST)**

***Dewasa dan anak-anak 12 tahun ke atas : ambil 2 tablet setiap 4 sampai 6 jam; tidak boleh lebih dari 12 tablet dalam 24 jam. (TT)***

[Ercikan \(1998\)](#) pointed out that meaning is not the only main goal for a translation, but the translation process should consider intent, tone, and context of the original text the employment of various translation techniques rather than focusing on one literal translation may preserve the intended

meaning of the original text. This is in line with what [Fawcett \(2003\)](#) contend that the effective use of a variety of translation techniques may ensure readability of the target texts. [Ercikan \(1998\)](#) contends that misleading and confusion may be due to the product of poor translation. It can be argued that the use of a wider variety of translation techniques, and of course, with an alert of cultural and linguistic consideration, may produce a clearer meaning of the target texts. This also would help readers to improve their learning of pharmaceutical texts.

Despite predominant use of literal translation, transposition is another quite frequently technique used. [Fawcett \(2003\)](#) points out that although modulation and transposition are more difficult to use, it may reduce the number of inaccuracy of the target texts. This difficulty is often encountered because these techniques need grammatical knowledge and structure of the sentence. Grammatical equivalence need to be ensured to be transferred into the target text in this translation process. Syntactical arrangement is one of the most difficult elements to transfer from the original text into the target one ([Ercikan, 1998](#)). Here is the sample of translation:

**Adults and children 12 years and over: 1 to 3 tablets in a single daily dose**

***Dewasa dan anak-anak usia 12 tahun ke atas: 1 hingga 3 tablet dalam dosis harian tunggal.***

Original version:

**When first opening the tube, puncture foil seal with top end of cap.**

Translation:

*Ketika pertama kali membuka tube tusuk segel foil dengan tutup bagian atas.*

Another technique that the students use very few is that modulation. Students use another phrase or expressions, but it still has the same meaning with that of the original text. Look at this sample:

**Adults and children 12 years and over: 1 to 3 tablets in a single daily dose**

***Dewasa dan anak-anak 12 tahun dan lebih: 1-3 tablet dalam sehari (LT)***

The phrase 'a single daily dose' is not literally translated as it is, but the students find an equivalent phrase in *Bahasa Indonesia* which has the same meaning. This change in semantic point of view of the original text sometimes happen because the translator take into account the relationship between the content (text message) and the word form ([Delzendehrooy and Karimnia, 2013](#)).

Furthermore, the technique students have never used is that equivalence. This is very understandable because the technique is only utilized when the translator could not translate scientific terms using other translation techniques as it may lead readers to misunderstand the meaning. In this specific technique, the translator tries to find nearly equivalent meanings for the words, idioms, and expressions that literally do not have their equivalence in the target language. Therefore, knowledge of context and cultural aspects are required for the case in order to make an acceptable translation. Even, to some extent,

**TABLE 1** | Frequency of translation techniques to be used

Texts Source Texts	Target Texts	Translation Techniques				
		Borrowing	Transposition	Modulation	Equivalence	Literal
1	1	0	0	0	0	3
	2	0	0	0	0	3
	3	0	0	0	0	3
	4	0	0	1	0	5
2	5	0	0	3	0	5
	6	0	2	1	0	5
	7	7	9	0	0	6
3	8	0	9	0	0	7
	9	3	8	1	0	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>

where equivalence is not possible to do, non-equivalence strategy can be an option in order to allow the translator to obtain a more equivalent meaning for culture specific target texts such as idioms, proverbs, and metaphors (Kashgary, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

The findings show that students still have a lack of ability to use various translation techniques in order to produce a clear meaning target texts. The dominant use of literal translation implicitly tells us that students work orientation is merely about meaning and paying little attention on the context and cultural aspects. Even though the texts contain specific registers and terms, an acceptable target text for its reader is still the first priority. Students need to be taught to be more capable of exploiting various translation techniques to produce a good and clear translation.

Teachers need to be provided with detailed information regarding kinds of translation techniques and their awareness of linguistically diverse readers of target texts need to be also increased. Appropriately utilized translation techniques and

the awareness of context and culture underlying a text may preserve the intended meaning of the original text and prevent meaning loss in the translation process. Apart from that, this research is only focused on the text analysis study. There should be a further study that delves into students' experience in translating discipline specific terms. This is aimed to get more comprehensive generalization and inferences. A suggestion for further research is that it may also add more understanding of strategies students used to deal with difficulties in translating other pharmaceutical texts.

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