

**ANALYZING TRANSLATION METHODS IN SONG LYRICS “STAIRWAY TO
HEAVEN” BY LED ZEPPELIN FROM ENGLISH TO INDONESIA**
(A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STUDENTS)

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the translation methods used in translating the lyrics of the song “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin from English to Indonesian. Conducted as a descriptive study, this study involved sixth-semester students of the English Language Education Department at the Islamic University of Malang. This study examines various translation strategies used by students, evaluating how accurately the original meaning, cultural nuances, and poetic elements are conveyed in the translated lyrics. The data were collected through an online student translation test. The translation method proposed by Newmark (1988) was used as the framework for this study, followed by analysis to categorize the most widely used translation methods. The data analysis process included data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. The findings of the study indicate that there are four types out of eight translation methods used by sixth-semester students, namely literal translation, semantic translation, adapted translation, and free translation. Moreover, literal and semantic are indicated as the most effective methods determined by sixth-semester students to translate literary texts.

Key Words: Translation, Translation Methods, Song lyrics, Newmark

INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential tool used by humans to express thoughts, emotions, and information. It can be spoken, written, signed, or symbolized. Each language has its own structure and grammar that organizes words and sentences. In today's global era, translation plays an important role in connecting people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Translation helps promote cross-cultural communication and is widely applied in many fields such as business, law, science, literature, and education. According to Newmark (1988), translation is an educational tool that must reach readers of different cultures and educational levels. Ula et al. (2021) also explain that translation should be considered the fifth language skill after reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Mastering translation is not easy. It requires knowledge of both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). Translators need to understand translation procedures, methods, and techniques. Good translation skills allow students to understand and express ideas accurately. In English education, translation is often taught as an elective course to help students gain practical and theoretical knowledge. However, translation can be difficult for students. According to Muhlisoh et al. (2022), translation requires skills in vocabulary, pragmatics, syntax, and sociolinguistics. Mubarak et al. (2022) found that students often struggle with ambiguity, contextual meaning, equivalence, and grammar. Campbell (1998) notes that translators must consider the message, audience, SL, and TL. The message involves the topic of the text, and the audience refers to the readers' level of understanding. Translators also need to be aware of when and how the translation will be received.

One interesting area in translation is song translation. Song translation allows listeners to enjoy not only the melody but also the meaning of lyrics in another language (Saragih et al., 2022). According to Purba et al. (2022), translating song lyrics is a form of expressing the songwriter's thoughts and emotions. Song lyrics often contain messages that are meaningful and contextual. Therefore, analyzing how students translate song lyrics can provide insight into their translation skills.

Previous studies, such as those by Purba et al. (2022), Lola et al. (2022), and Saragih et al. (2022), have examined translation methods used in song lyrics. These studies used Newmark's (1988) translation theory to analyze how lyrics are translated. The results showed that translators often use free translation, communicative translation, adaptation, literal, and word-for-word methods. However, most of these studies focus on professional or published translations, not student translations.

This research seeks to fill that gap by exploring how students apply translation methods when translating song lyrics. As future educators or translators, students need to develop real-world translation skills. Understanding how they translate complex texts like song lyrics will help improve translation teaching. Song lyrics are ideal for this purpose because they are emotionally rich, creative, and culturally meaningful. The research addresses three main questions:

1. What translation methods are used by the students of English education department in translating song lyrics "Stairway to Heaven" by Led Zeppelin?
2. What is the most frequent translation method used by the students of English education department in translating song lyrics "Stairway to Heaven" by Led Zeppelin?
3. How is the translation method used by the students conveying the source language message to the target language in the song lyrics "Stairway to Heaven" by Led Zeppelin?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Definition of Translation

Translation is the process of transferring meaning from one language (source language or SL) to another (target language or TL), aiming to preserve the original intent of the author. According to Yunita (2022) and Muhlisoh et al. (2022), translation helps convey meaning between languages accurately and clearly.

Several scholars have defined translation differently. Catford (1965) described it as the replacement of textual material from one language to its equivalent in another. Brislin (1976) emphasized that translation includes both written and spoken forms, even sign languages, highlighting its broad scope.

Larson (1984, 1988) argued that translation involves transferring meaning, not just form, through equivalent lexical and grammatical structures in the TL, while preserving the original message and adapting to the cultural context. Similarly, Newmark (1988) stressed that a translator must maintain the author's intended meaning, even when SL words are replaced with different TL structures.

From these perspectives, translation is more than word substitution, it involves meaning, structure, and cultural adaptation. A translator must understand both languages deeply and be able to reconstruct messages faithfully in the TL context.

The Methods of Translation

In translating, a translator must carefully pay attention to each word being translated because it will affect the equality of meaning between the SL (source language) and TL (target language) in the translation. To translate text from the source language to the target language, the translator must consider the translation process.

Apart from that, a good translator must be able to translate various types of text with the correct method. The first perspective provides word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful

translation, and semantic translation, while the second perspective provides adapted translation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation. Those methods are described in V diagram below (Newmark, 1988, p. 292).

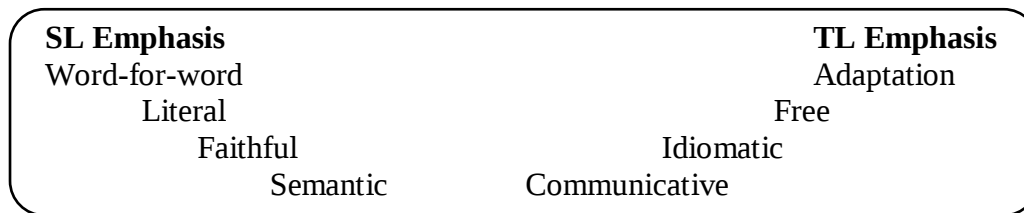


Figure 1. Diagram V of Newmark (1988)

Song Lyrics

Dallin, 1994 (in Purba and Setiasari, 2022) explained that lyrics are written as a form of interaction between the writer and the listeners. Most of the times, they carry a message (whatever that might be) with the purpose of motivating the listeners, at least, to think about it. Such a purpose and form of interaction are embedded in the cultural context of these people, according to their musical preferences, time, etc. Regarding song lyrics, the researcher used song lyrics from a rock band from the 1970s from England, namely Led Zeppelin, entitled *Stairway to Heaven*, which was released on November 8, 1971.

Song Lyrics Translation

Song lyrics can be translated from the source language, often abbreviated SL, to a separate target language, often abbreviated TL, just like any other text. Song lyrics translations, like any other translation, can be either literal or literary, and both terms refer to multiple possibilities. For example, depending on the intended application of the translation, literal translations that convey meaning can be done word by word, phrase by phrase, or sentence by sentence. Literary translations of lyrics tend to imitate formal aspects of the original text, such as rhyme and meter, and to convey connotations and subtexts, unlike literal translations which focus solely on meaning (Saragih, et al, 2022).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method to collect data. Rukajat (2018:4) a qualitative approach is a type of testing whose results cannot be obtained using quantitative methods, statistical calculations, or other methods that use numerical measurements. Since the purpose of this research was to describe how the sixth semester students of English Education Department Unisma use translation methods and the analyzed material is in the form of sentences, the design of the research is descriptive qualitative.

The subject of this research is the sixth semester students of English Education Department, academic year 2024 who had taken translation class in the fifth semester. The researcher took 8 students of sixth semester students who got a translation score above 85 in the fifth semester final test.

In acquiring the data from the students, the test is used by the researcher as an instrument. Winarno (2013) stated that a test is an instrument or tool used to collect information in the form of a person's knowledge or skills. In order to measure the estimate of the intellectual level of students in using the translation methods in translating. Thus, the researcher used an English-Indonesian translation test of English song lyrics with a title "*Stairway to Heaven*" by Zeppelin which consists of 33 lines. The song lyrics translation test is formed on *Google Form*. The researcher carried out the test process online. The song lyrics must be translated by the students into Indonesian as the target

language. The researcher applied the translation theory proposed by Newmark (1988) to identify the translation methods used in students' translation results.

The data in this study was analyzed according to the proposed data collection and analysis model by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman. Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2019: 438) suggest that qualitative data analysis consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Then, in order to figure out the most dominant translation method used in translating song lyrics. This research applied a percentage formula to calculate the result for each kind of translation method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The researcher obtained the findings from the students' translation test in translating song lyrics, in order to answer the research question of this study related to the translation methods used by the sixth semester students. Furthermore, the results of students' translation tasks were analyzed and classified by grouping them into types of translation methods they used in translating song lyrics. The researcher used 8 types of translation methods theory proposed by Newmark (1988), word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, communicative translation, idiomatic translation, free translation, and adaptation translation.

The result of this study indicated that there were four types out of eight translation methods that the sixth semester students used in translating song lyrics. Then, one of the translation methods indicated as the most dominant methods used by the students in translating song lyrics. The detailed findings were elaborated as follows:

Table 1. The Result of Translation Methods Used by the Sixth Semester Students

No	Sixth Semester Students	Types of Translation Methods			
		Literal Translation	Semantic Translation	Free Translation	Adaptation Translation
1	Student A	19	6	3	5
2	Student B	21	3	3	6
3	Student C	6	7	13	7
4	Student D	18	9	5	1
5	Student E	16	14	3	-
6	Student F	17	8	6	2
7	Student G	14	11	6	2
8	Student H	12	11	7	3
Total		123	69	46	26
		264			

Additionally, using the methodology in the previous chapter, the author determined the results for every kind of translation technique to assess the proportion of the most commonly utilized translation technique by sixth semester students.

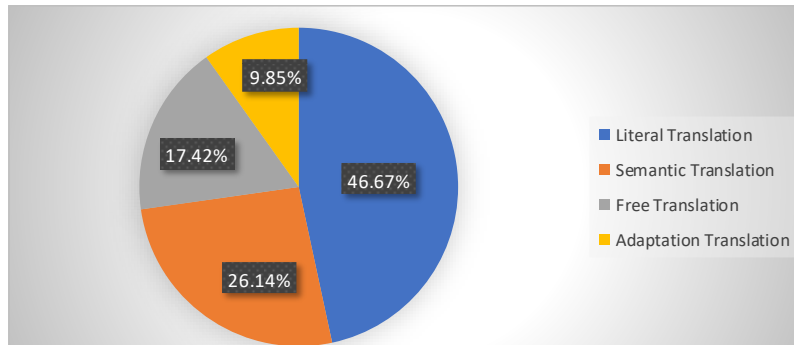


Figure 2. Proportion of Translation Techniques Employed by Sixth Semester Students

Based on the data obtained by the researcher, literal translation was found to be used in 123 sentences out of the 264 sentences that included this method. This was the most dominant method used by sixth semester students, and the percentage of literal translation was 46.67%. Next, semantic translation was found as the second most translation method used by sixth semester students. As stated from the table 4.9 above that there were 69 of 264 sentences that indicated as semantic translation method, and the percentage was 26.14%. In free translation method, there were found 46 sentences out of 264 sentences, so the percentage of free translation method was 17.42%. The last, there were only 26 sentences out of 264 sentences that applied adaptation translation, and this was the fewest translation method that sixth semester students used as figured in figure 4.1 that the percentage was only 9.85%. There were no word-for-word, faithful, communicative, and idiomatic translations found from the data which are analyzed.

From the result and the table above, there were only 4 types of translation methods used by sixth semester students out of 8 types of translation methods these are literal translation, semantic translation, free translation, and adaptation translation. Furthermore, it can be seen from figure 4.1 that the most dominant translation method used by sixth semester students was literal translation methods with 46.67%, and the fewest one was adaptation translation with 9.85%.

Besides, to word the 4 translation methods used by sixth semester students in translating song lyrics, the researcher would like to describe the sample of data that the participants produced while translating the song lyrics based on Newmark's theory.

1. Literal Translation

Newmark (1988) stated that "The SL grammatical structures are transferred to their closest TL equivalents, but the lexical words are translated singly by their most common meanings." This method is the most dominant translation method used by sixth semester students in translating song lyrics. Some students used literal translation method in a few sentences such as **"There's a lady who's sure all that glitter is gold"** translated to **"Ada seorang wanita yang yakin bahwasanya setiap yang berkilau itu emas"** or **"And she's buying a stairway to heaven"** translated to **"Dan ia membeli tangga-jalan menuju surga"** the students produce the sentence structure of TL keeps the SL sentence structure, where there were no addition or reduction of word or sentence. It can be seen from sentence **"And when she gets there, she knows if the stores are closed"** translated to **"Pada saat ia tiba disana ia tahu jika semua toko tutup"** or **"Causes she knows sometimes words have two meanings"** translated to **"Karena dia tahu terkadang kata-kata memiliki dua makna"**. The lexical words are transferred singly by their most common meaning. However, the grammatical structure was correspondent with the TL grammatical structure.

2. Semantic translation

In this method, Newmark (1988) said that semantic method maintains the nature of the Source Text, but the message and the grammatical structure have attached to the TL structure. However,

cultural context is translated naturally and functionally, so it tends to be over-translated or be more specific than the original text. For example, in sentence **“With a word she can get what she came for”** translated to **“Dengan sepatah kata dia bisa mendapatkan apa yang ia mau”** where the students conveyed the original meaning and nuance of sentences in the target language, not just the words. This was also used in sentence **“But in the long run”** translated to **“Tapi dalam jangka panjang”** so the message of SL was conveyed properly with the text context. Then, in the sentences **“Sometimes all of our thoughts are misgiven”** translated to **“Terkadang pikiran kita keliru”** where sentence is translated accurately to convey the original meaning, tone, and context, rather than simply translating words or phrases directly.

3. Free Translation

Newmark (1988) stated that “free translation is part of TL emphasis which reproduces the matter without the manner or the content without the form of the original.” The translation of this method is typically much longer or shorter than the original text, as it focuses on conveying the appropriate message, so it sometimes looks more like a paraphrase. Since there were many additions and reduction, even the structure and the meaning were changed. As in sentence **“There’s a feeling I get when I look to the west”** translated to **“Ada sesuatu yang aku rasakan saat aku melihat ke arah barat”** or **“And the voices of those who stand looking”** translated to **“dan suara orang-orang yang hanya terpaku”** and **“And it’s whispered that soon if we all call the tune”** translated to **“Mulai dibisikkan tapi sayup-sayup bahwa jika kita melantunkan nada tersebut”**. The student changed the structure of the words to convey the message from SL to TL. It can be seen that the structure between the SL and TL was very different, but the message and the topic were transferred properly to the TL. with free translation students can create their own sentence structures, whether there are additions or subtractions when translating a sentence. This aims to make the text easier to understand for TL readers, more flexible in adapting the text to the cultural and social context of the target language, and avoiding the rigidity and awkwardness that often arises in literal translation.

4. Adaptation translation

Newmark (1988) stated that “this is the 'freest' form of translation. It is used mainly for plays (comedies and poetry; only the themes and characters that are usually preserved. The source language culture is converted to the target language culture, and the original text is rewritten and customized to the target reader’s culture”. This method is the fewest translation method used by sixth semester students in translating song lyrics. Some students used adaptation translation method in a few sentences such as **“And my spirit is crying for leaving”** translated to **“Dan jiwaku meronta-ronta ingin pergi”** or **“It’s just a spring clean for the May-Queen”** translated to **“Itu hanya yang muda menggeser yang tua”** and **“and as we wind on down the road”** translated to **“Dan saat kita jalan perlahan”**. In the sentence above, the phrase **“my spirit is crying”** is adapted to **“hatiku meronta-ronta”**, and in the phrase **“a spring clean for the May-Queen”** is adapted to **“yang muda menggeser yang tua”** and in the phrase **“wind on down the road”** is adapted to **“berjalan perlahan”** which more familiar and emotional for the readers, while still maintaining the original meaning of the text. Besides that, adaptation translation makes the text more relevant, and easy to understand by readers in the target language, avoids misunderstandings that may arise from cultural differences, and maintains the emotional impact and communication function of the original text.

Discussions

Based on the findings part, the researcher has elaborated on the details of translation methods used by sixth semester students of English Education at Unisma. Moreover, in order to give clear answers to the research questions, the researcher explained them in this discussion part, one by one.

The first question was “What translation methods were used by sixth semester students of the English Education Department Unisma in translating the song lyrics?” From the translation tasks

using song lyrics “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin. Based on the results of sixth semester students’ translation, it was figured out that there were 4 types of translation methods used by sixth semester students in translating song lyrics. The 4 types of translation methods were based on Newmark theory, as follows: literal translation, semantic translation, free translation, and adaptation translation.

The previous study examined by Purba et al. (2022) about "Analyzing Translation Method in Song Lyric "Memories" Maroon 5 From English to Indonesian" also analyzed the data based on Newmark’s theory. The 5 types of translation methods used by the translator were found in this previous study that are word for word, literal, semantic, free and communicative translation.

However, the present study contradicted with the previous study conducted by Lola et al. (2022) entitled “Translation Method of English Hymn Song into Indonesian Version in Kidung Jemaat” The source of data was taken from Indonesia Hymn songs book namely Kidung Jemaat which contains 22 Hymn songs. Some contains of the book are in Indonesia version of Hymn songs which were translated from various languages. Every translated song also has the original title and the writer’s name can be found at the bottom of the song Lyrics. The research results showed that the translator applied 3 methods out of 8 translation methods according to Newmark’s theory. The translation methods are adaptation, free and communicative translation. While other methods of word for word, literal, faithful, semantic, idiomatic, and adaptation translation were not used at all in translating the song contained in the 22 songs that translated by E.L. Pohan in Kidung Jemat.

Besides, this study also contradicted with the previous study which analyzing about translation methods used in “Emma Heesters Song Lyrics Album” conducted by Saragih et al. (2022). The results of this study indicated that there were four methods found in 5 song lyrics of Emma Heesters Song Lyrics Album. Those were literal, communicative, free, and adaptation translation.

The second research question was “What was the most frequent translation method used by sixth semester students of the English Education Department Unisma in translating song lyrics “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin?” From the analysis results of students’ translation tasks, it was figured out that sixth semester students used 4 types of translation methods based on Newmark’s theory. First, 123 sentences out of 264 were indicated as literal translation. Second, it was found that 69 out of 264 sentences as semantic translation. Third, free translation was found in 46 out of 264 sentences. Last, in the adaptation translation was found in 26 out of 264 sentences indicated as adaptation translation.

Based on the findings, it was showed that literal translation was the most common used by sixth semester students in translating the song lyrics “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin. It was found that 123 sentences out of 264 sentences as literal translation with (46.67%). On the other hand, free translation was the least used by sixth semester students and was found only in 26 out of 264 sentences (9.85%).

On the contrary, the dominant translation method from previous research conducted by Lola and Winda (2022) entitled “Translation Method of English Hymn Song into Indonesian Version in Kidung Jemaat”. Was different from this study. The results showed that there were 3 types of translation methods used in Hymn Song into Indonesian Version in Kidung Jemaat. Then, it indicated that adaptation translation was the most dominant used by the translator with 68,18%, while the present study showed literal translation was the most dominant used by the sixth semester students in translating song lyrics.

However, the present results were in line with Saragih et al. (2022) presumption about translation methods used in song lyrics. The writer stated that “Song lyrics can be translated from the source language (SL), to a separate target language (TL), just like any other text. Song lyrics translations, like any other translation, can be either literal or literary, and both terms refer to multiple possibilities”. For example, depending on the intended application of the translation, literal translation that convey meaning can be done word by word, phrase by phrase, or sentence by sentence. Literary translations of lyrics tend to imitate formal aspects of the original text, such as rhyme and meter, and

to convey connotations and subtexts, unlike literal translations which focus solely on meaning”. And it can be seen from the findings and discussion parts that literal translation was most dominant applied in song lyrics translation used by the sixth semester students. Thus, the present results supported this presumption that in translating song lyrics can be translated literally. literal translation focused on maintaining the exact meaning of the original words or phrases, often without considering the nuances of idiomatic expressions, cultural context, or artistic elements like rhyme and meter.

The third research question was “How is the translation method used by sixth semester students conveying the source language message to the target language in the song lyrics “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin?”. From the analysis results of students’ translation tasks, it was figured out that sixth semester students used 4 types of translation methods based on Newmark’s theory those are literal translation, semantic translation, free translation, and adaptation translation. In addition, the students used the literal translation to produce the sentence structure of TL keeps the SL sentence structure, where there are no addition or reduction of word or sentence. To sum up, the lexical words are transferred singly by their most common meaning. However, the grammatical structure is correspondent with the TL grammatical structure. Meanwhile, the students also used semantic translation, where the students conveyed the original meaning and nuance of sentences in the target language, not just the words, so the message of SL is conveyed properly with the text context. To sum up, the students translated the phrase or sentence accurately to convey the original meaning, tone, and context. Besides, the students also used free translation. In free translation the students changed the structure of the words to convey the message from SL to TL, where the structure between the SL and TL is very different, but the message and the topic are transferred properly to the TL. With free translation students can create their own sentence structures, whether there are additions or subtractions when translating a sentence. This aims to make the text easier to understand for TL readers, more flexible in adapting the text to the cultural and social context of the target language, and avoiding the rigidity and awkwardness that often arises in literal translation. Furthermore, students used adaptation translation to produce relevant meaning from SL to TL though the form and content of the TL are very different from SL. However, the message in SL is still conveyed into TL.

CONCLUSSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the finding on the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there were 4 types of translation methods used by sixth semester students of English Education Department Unisma. The methods were literal translation, semantic translation, free translation, and adaptation translation that used in translating the song lyrics “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin. As a result, the most dominant translation method used by sixth semester students in translating the song lyrics “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin was literal translation.

Moreover, from the analysis results of students’ translation tasks, it was figured out that sixth semester students used 4 types of translation methods based on Newmark’s theory those are literal translation, semantic translation, free translation, and adaptation translation. In addition, the students used the literal translation to produce the sentence structure of TL keeps the SL sentence structure, where there are no addition or reduction of word or sentence. To sum up, the lexical words are transferred singly by their most common meaning. However, the grammatical structure is correspondent with the TL grammatical structure. Meanwhile, the students also used semantic translation, where the students conveyed the original meaning and nuance of sentences in the target language, not just the words, so the message of SL is conveyed properly with the text context. To sum up, the students translate the phrase or sentence accurately to convey the original meaning, tone, and context. Besides, the students also used free translation. In free translation the students changed the structure of the words to convey the message from SL to TL, where the structure between the SL and TL is very different, but the message and the topic are transferred properly to the TL. With free

translation students can create their own sentence structures, whether there are additions or subtractions when translating a sentence. This aims to make the text easier to understand for TL readers, more flexible in adapting the text to the cultural and social context of the target language, and avoiding the rigidity and awkwardness that often arises in literal translation. Furthermore, students used adaptation translation to produce relevant meaning from SL to TL though the form and content of the TL are very different from SL. However, the message in SL is still conveyed into TL.

Suggestion

After completing this research, the researcher would like to suggest several ideas as follows:

1) For students, it is suggested that students continue to improve their knowledge of translation theories and enhance their practical skills in applying various translation methods. Understanding the strengths and limitations of each method will enable them to make more accurate and contextually appropriate translation choices, especially for literary and creative texts like song lyrics. 2) For lecturers, the lecturers are encouraged to provide more opportunities for students to explore and practice diverse translation methods in the classroom. Including varied types of texts, particularly song lyrics, poetry, and idiomatic expressions, can help students become more flexible and creative in their translation approach. 3) For future researchers, the future researchers are advised to explore similar topics with broader or different data sources, such as professional translator works, different musical genres, or cross-cultural texts. Comparative studies involving more varied respondents or combining qualitative interviews may also yield deeper insights into translation choices and their underlying rationale.

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