

Translatonomics: Teaching English for Economics through Translation Practice

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Abstract

Teaching English for students of non-English department is often challenging, especially when most of the students have low English competence. This study aims to propose a method called *Translatonomics* to teach English for Economics through translation practice to encourage the students to understand English contextually. The participants are 25 students of Management and 25 students of Accounting study program. The research was conducted firstly to identify the ability of the students to understand English text about Economics and translate it into Bahasa Indonesia, then to introduce contextual translation from translating simple sentences, short paragraphs, and text. The analysis showed that most students still have high dependency on instant translation such as Google Translate and do not try to relate the context as they do not understand the text. Therefore, it is important to encourage the students to understand the text contextually and one of the ways is through translation practice. In teaching translation, it was started from translating simple sentences, translating short paragraphs, and translating texts. The students were encouraged to understand and to translate Economics texts contextually from English into Bahasa Indonesia and to minimize their dependency on instant translation tools such as Google Translate.

Keywords: English for Economics, translation practice, contextual translation

Introduction

As an international language, English has a very important role for international business. The increasing importance of English as an international language has resulted in the expansion of one particular aspect of English Language Teaching, namely the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (Popescu, 2014). ESP accommodates the use of English in many fields, including academic and/or professional needs. An ESP course, in this case English for

Economics, may emphasize the development skill of Economics students to prepare them to work in related profession. In faculty of Economics, English course is known as English for Economics; others may call it Business English. Teaching English for students of non-English department needs some comprehensive studies to meet the requirements and to fulfill the objectives of the learning activity. Tarone (in Song, 2012) suggested that second language learners have a series of overlapping mental grammar which correspond to different contexts in which the second language is used. Moreover, Popescu (2014) stated that the acquisition of specific vocabulary in a foreign language by students is often slow, discouraging and even frustrating. Therefore, the teacher who works with students in economics has to perform a thorough analysis of his/her students in order to get to know them better.

In teaching English for Economics students, the researcher identifies some problems occurred. Firstly, the materials for English for Economics are still overlapped with General English or even Basic English. As stated before, English for Economics belongs to English for Specific Purpose which is different from General English. It should be more specific to teach English for the use of Economics science. Secondly, the English competency of the students is still low. This can be a problem as when most of the students have not understood Basic English yet, the lecturer has to begin the lesson from basic. In learning English, most students have high dependency on Google Translate whenever they find difficulty, for example in writing English sentence. As the result, they only know the words meaning literally, and when they have to write or translate English sentence, they would be grammatically and contextually inappropriate. As a matter of fact, ESP combines subject matter and English language teaching (Syaripah, 2014). The students are expected to be able to apply the English lesson into their field of study, especially in Economics science.

Teaching English for students of non-English department is often challenging, especially when most of the students have low English competence. In this study, the researcher would like share some experience in teaching English for Economics students, especially with low competence of English. This paper aims to propose an approach called *Translatonomics* to teach English for

Economics through translation practice to encourage the students to understand English contextually. *Translatonomics* is a concept of integrating translation studies in teaching English for Economics to higher education students. It is an approach which focused on teaching English for Economics students based on translation practice and aimed to optimize students' translation skill. In *Translatonomics*, students are guided to be skillful in translating specific texts related to Economics. The first step to apply *Translatonomics* is introducing translation studies to the students before going to translation practice. This step covers some translation theories, including definition and kinds of translation, translation process, and strategies for contextual translation.

Review of literature

ESP in english for economics context

Business English is defined as a part of English for Specific Purposes and can be considered a specialism within English language learning and teaching (Johan, 2014). In teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) the share of teaching and learning it for various professional purposes is steadily growing (Graddol in Tarnopolsky and Vysselko, 2014). Indeed, many language learners experience difficulties at the beginning stages, and they must adapt quickly to the learning context in order to succeed in their academic study. There are some problems being notified, such as language shock, culture shock, lack of study skills and proficiency, and so forth (Marr and Sakhtivel in Mehregan and Saresht, 2014). Therefore, ESP plays an essential role that ESP teachers should find more efficient method to accomplish the objective of learning. The four skills of language would be also essential in the social and academic life of international learners (Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas in Mehregan and Saresht, *ibid*).

Most ESP practitioners are aware that ESP teaching implies not only constant search for up-to-date authentic professionally-oriented materials to be presented and practiced in class, but also great readiness to bring innovations in the classroom in respect to teaching methods and activities which will prove to be more efficient for achieving success in the learning process and the learning outcomes (Milosevic, 2014). Moreover, Milosevic (*ibid.*) added that the main

mission behind the constructivist approach in ESP teaching is first and foremost to enable students to develop their professional communication skills in the target language as communication skills are essential for success in academic studies and the workplace (Taha and El-Sakran, 2014).

From the explanations above, it can be concluded that teaching English for Economics students is focused on the use of English in Economic context and to meet the professional purposes. The teacher or lecturer should find an efficient method to overcome the problems that may arise in teaching English for non-English students, to accomplish the objective of learning, and to achieve success in the learning process and outcomes.

Translation in ESP

One of the ways to teach English for students of non-English department is through translation practice. This can be useful for the students to get some knowledge about the field of the study and improve their practical skills. Some studies have been conducted to integrate ESP and translation practice. Velasco-Sacristan (2009) studied translation approach to metaphor teaching in the LSP classroom by sampling exercises from Business English syllabus and suggested that translation can constitute valuable pedagogical and communicative means to teach metaphorical concepts and expressions to L2 learners of professional discourses.

Another study by Leonardi (2009) focused on the role of translation in Business English teaching. She argued that the use of translation in ESP classes can be very useful and comprehensive approach to language learning and at the same time can be used to practice only one or two language skills. Benabdallah (2013) also discussed teaching ESP through translation to shed some fresh lights on the underlying significance of making the ESP learners acknowledge with the appropriate usage of specialized terms for reading disciplinary-based texts in general and enhancing communicative competence in particular.

Introduction to translation is essential for non-English Department students to set their mind that translating is not only replacing words into a different language; it is a process of meaning transferring from one language (source

language) into another language (target language) contextually. Therefore, translation is textual and contextual matters that cannot be seen literally. *Translatonomics* is a concept of combining translation studies in teaching English for Economics to higher education students. It is an approach which focused on teaching English for Economics students based on translation practice and aimed to optimize students' translation skill. In *Translatonomics*, students are guided to be skillful in translating specific texts related to Economics. *Translatonomics* is a proper method for English lecturers who teach students of non-English Department, in this case Economics students with low competence in English.

The first step to apply *Translatonomics* is introducing translation studies to the students before going to translation practice. This step covers some translation theories, including definition and kinds of translation, translation process, and strategies for contextual translation. Introduction to translation is essential for non-English Department students to set their mind that translating is not only replacing words into a different language; it is a process of meaning transferring from one language (source language) into another language (target language) contextually. Therefore, translation is textual and contextual matters that cannot be seen literally.

Research method

This study is qualitative descriptive research to identify the translation quality of Economics students and to design the material in teaching English for Economics students using translation practice. The process of qualitative research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014). In the process of designing *Translatonomics*, the researcher first observed the English competence of the students to obtain the information. The study was conducted at Universitas Bina Bangsa located in Serang, Banten province. The location was chosen because it is the place where the researcher works as lecturer and recognizes the situation and the condition related to the ability and the needs of English teaching and learning. The English for Economics

course offered in the second semester served as the study. In this research, the participants are 25 students of Management study program and 25 students of Accounting study program.

In qualitative research, the inquirer analyzes words or images (Creswell, 2012). In this research, the data were collected through the translation practice using Economics texts from English into Bahasa Indonesia. The test was conducted to explain the students' ability in translating text from English into Bahasa Indonesia. The translation works were measured from two aspects i.e. accuracy and acceptability. After the texts were analyzed, the researcher drafted the material to teach English for Economics using translation practice approach referred to the result of the translation test.

Findings and discussion

Translation strategy applied by the students

The term 'strategy' connotes a teleological course of action undertaken to achieve a particular goal in an optimal way (Inghilleri, 2009). Baker (2005) explained that translation strategy is related to finding the equivalence at word level and the equivalence above word level. Based on the analysis, most students tend to literally translate the economics texts from English to Bahasa Indonesia, word by word. They prefer to use more general words and loan words with explanation. During the translation process, dictionary is an essential tool for the references to find out the words meaning—the economics terms—and to find the equivalence terms in Bahasa Indonesia. Both management and accounting students rely on bilingual dictionary; either it is conventional dictionary or translation tool such as Google Translate.

Besides bilingual dictionary, the researcher found that the students often ask their friends or copy their classmates' works. It is due to their lack of confidence about their translation works, so they need to check their friends' to have 'the same perception'. The results show that the students cannot understand the English text and unable to translate it into Bahasa Indonesia properly as they have high dependency on Google Translate and never re-check the translation they made to make sure it is grammatically correct.

Translation quality

In this research, the translation quality is measured from two aspects: accuracy and acceptability. In terms of accuracy, the translation quality of Management students show that 10 (ten) students produce not accurate translation, 9 (nine) students produce less accurate translation, and 6 (six) students produce accurate translation. Meanwhile, the Accounting students show that 4 (four) students produce not accurate translation and 21 (twenty one) students produce less accurate translation. None of the students produce accurate translation.

In terms of acceptability, the translation quality of Management students show that 15 (fifteen) students produce not acceptable translation and 10 (ten) students produce less acceptable translation. None of the students produce acceptable translation. Meanwhile, the result of the Accounting students show that 4 (four) students produce not acceptable translation and 21 (twenty one) students produce less acceptable translation. None of the students produce acceptable translation.

The recapitulation of the translation quality of Management and Accounting students are respectively presented in the following tables:

Table 1. Recapitulation of the Translation Quality of Management Students

DATA	SCORE	ACCURACY	SCORE	ACCEPTABILITY
MA 01	3	High	2	Medium
MA 02	2	Medium	2	Medium
MA 03	2	Medium	1	Low
MA 04	2	Medium	1	Low
MA 05	2	Medium	1	Low
MA 06	1	Low	1	Low
MA 07	1	Low	1	Low
MA 08	1	Low	1	Low
MA 09	1	Low	1	Low
MA 10	3	High	2	Medium
MA 11	2	Medium	2	Medium
MA 12	2	Medium	2	Medium
MA 13	1	Low	1	Low
MA 14	1	Low	1	Low

MA 15	1	Low	1	Low
MA 16	1	Low	1	Low
MA 17	1	Low	1	Low
MA 18	1	Low	1	Low
MA 19	3	High	2	Medium
MA 20	2	Medium	1	Low
MA 21	2	Medium	2	Medium
MA 22	2	Medium	1	Low
MA 23	3	High	2	Medium
MA 24	3	High	2	Medium
MA 25	3	High	2	Medium
RECAP	1,84	High: 6	1,4	High: 0
		Medium: 9		Medium: 10
		Low: 10		Low: 15

The results in Table 1 show that the translation ability of students from Management Department is still low. Meanwhile, the translation ability of students from Accounting Department is on the medium range (shown in Table 2).

Table 2. Recapitulation of the Translation Quality of Accounting Students

DATA	SCORE	ACCURACY	SCORE	ACCEPTABILITY
AK 01	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 02	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 03	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 04	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 05	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 06	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 07	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 08	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 09	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 10	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 11	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 12	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 13	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 14	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 15	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 16	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 17	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 18	2	Medium	2	Medium

AK 19	1	Low	1	Low
AK 20	1	Low	1	Low
AK 21	1	Low	1	Low
AK 22	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 23	1	Low	1	Low
AK 24	2	Medium	2	Medium
AK 25	2	Medium	2	Medium
RECAP	1,84	High: 0	1,84	High: 0
		Medium: 21		Medium: 21
		Low: 4		Low: 4

Teaching english for economics using translation approach

After observing the students for one semester, the researcher decided to try to teach English for Economics using translation approach. It aims to get the students understand English text and translate it into Bahasa Indonesia without relying too much on instant translation tools such as Google Translate. It should be considered that in translating into the target language, acceptability is important. Acceptability means that the translation must be acceptable in the grammatical rules of the target language.

As it has been explained, *Translatonomics* focused on teaching English for Economics students based on translation practice and aimed to optimize students' translation skill. Once the students have adequate translation theories, they are ready to bring the theories into practice. In translation practice section, students are encouraged to translate English texts. The translation practice section is divided into three parts: translating simple sentences, translating short paragraphs, and translating texts. On the first part, students are encouraged to translate English simple sentences about Economics. Then, on the second part, students are encouraged to translate English short paragraphs extracted from Economics texts. Finally, on the third part, students are encouraged to translate some Economics texts.

Each topic in translation practice section has three subject focuses: vocabulary/ terminology, comprehension (finding the equivalence), and translating. When the students are about to translate a text, they have to analyze it by recognizing the specific vocabularies or terminologies and finding the

equivalent terms in the target language. After they understand the source text, they are able to translate it into the target language; in this case from English into Bahasa Indonesia. In presenting the stages of the *Translatonomics*, the researcher captured some extracts from the module draft for the translation practice.

Translating simple sentences

The approach is started from translating simple sentences. In this part, there are twenty simple sentences related to Economics which are divided into four topics. It aims to introduce some terminologies of Economics and to guide contextual translation practice through short sentences about Economics. The practice of this section is presented as follows:

Topic 1: Economics in the Modern World

- 1) Spending only the money that you really have is just basic economics.
- 2) Economics is a really popular subject to study at university.
- 3) Development economics examines how investment might help countries to plan sustainable growth.
- 4) The ideas of 'supply' and 'demand' are basic principles of economics.
- 5) The economics of reducing government borrowing are extremely complicated.

Topic 2: Economics and Technology

- 1) People may resist new technology if it threatens their jobs.
- 2) The introduction of new technology may be expensive to introduce.
- 3) The skills gap becomes wider when only some people learn new skills.
- 4) The new technology may not work well if the infrastructure is poor.
- 5) Technology gives governments more information to compete for trade and development.

Topic 3: The Economics of Agriculture

- 1) Rice may be traded in some national South East Asian markets.
- 2) Milk is virtually impossible to trade internationally as so many production factors are involved.
- 3) Some countries have high technology for pasteurizing or homogenizing milk, others do not.
- 4) Human staple food include milk, wheat, rice, meat (beef) and, for developed countries, sugar.
- 5) For millions of people worldwide, rice is an essential food which they eat every day.

Topic 4: Market Economies

- 1) A market is where goods and services are traded.
- 2) There is a lot variation in prices according to supply.
- 3) Prices vary according to supply.
- 4) Traders may change prices according to the availability of products.
- 5) If consumers cannot find exactly the product they want, they might choose a substitute.

Figure 1. Design for Translating Simple Sentences

Translating short paragraphs

After the students are able to translate simple sentences, then they will learn to translate short paragraphs. In this part, there are five short paragraphs related to

Economics which are divided into five topics. It aims to teach the students how to arrange the sentences into a good paragraph and to guide contextual translation practice through short paragraphs about Economics. The practice of this section is presented as follows:

Topic 1: Products

A product is anything that can be offered to a market that might satisfy a want or need. This means that services, leisure activities, people, places and organizations can also be considered as products. Most manufacturers divide their products into product lines—group of closely related products, sold to the same outlets.

Topic 2: Management

Management is important. The success or failure of business organizations, government institutions and public sector services, voluntary and non-profit organizations, sports teams, and so on, often depends on the quality of their managers. The work of a manager can be divided into five tasks: planning (setting objectives), organizing, integrating (motivating and communicating), measuring performance, and developing people.

Topic 3: Accounting

Accounting is frequently called the "language of business" because of its ability to communicate financial information about an organization. Various interested parties, such as managers, potential investors, creditors, and the government, depend on a company's accounting system to help them make informed financial decisions. An effective accounting system, therefore, must include accurate collecting, recording, classifying, summarizing, interpreting, and reporting of information on the financial status of an organization.

Topic 4: Advertising

Advertising informs consumers about the existence and benefits of products and services, and attempts to persuade them to buy such products or services. Most companies use advertising agencies to produce their advertising for them. Advertising is widely considered to be essential for launching new consumer products. Combined with sales promotions such as free samples, price reductions and competitions, advertising may generate the initial trial of a new product.

Topic 5: Company

Experts are forecasting that in the future companies will use the internet and the "wikieconomics" principle (from wiki, the Hawaiian word for 'quick', and economics). This means collaborating with people outside the traditional corporate structure, letting people around the world cooperate to improve an operation or solve a problem, and paying them for their ideas. This is an extension of the trend of outsourcing. In other words, companies will no longer need to get all their knowledge from their own full-time employees.

Figure 2. Design for Translating Short Paragraphs

Translating Texts

The last step is translating the texts. It is hoped that the students already have translation knowledge and skill and ready to translate the texts. In this part, there are five texts related to Economics which are divided into five topics. It aims to teach the students how to arrange the sentences into good paragraphs which constitute the whole text and to guide contextual translation practice through short paragraphs about Economics. The practice of this section is presented as follows:

Topic 1: Money and It's Function

Money, the medium of exchange, is used in one-half of almost all ex-changes. Workers exchange labor services for money. People buy or sell goods in exchange for money. Money is the medium through which people exchange goods and services. To see that society benefits from a medium of exchange, imagine a barter economy. A barter economy has no medium of exchange. Goods are traded directly or swapped for other goods. In a barter economy, the seller and the buyer each must want something the other has to offer. Each person is simultaneously a seller and a buyer. There has to be a double coincidence of wants. Trading is very expensive in a barter economy. People must spend a lot of time and effort finding others with whom they can make mutually satisfactory swaps.

The use of money –any commodity generally accepted in payment for goods, services, and debt –makes the trading process simpler and more efficient. The unit of account is the unit in which prices are quoted and accounts are kept. In Britain prices are quoted in pounds sterling; in America in dollars. It is usually convenient to use the units in which the medium of exchange is measured as the unit of account as well. However there are exceptions. During the rapid German inflation of 1922-23 when prices in marks were changing very quickly, German shopkeepers found it more convenient to use dollars as the unit of account. Prices were quoted in dollars even though payment was made in marks, the German medium of exchange.

Money is a store of value because it can be used to make purchases in the future. To be accepted in exchange, money has to be a store of value. Nobody would accept money as payment for goods supplied today if the money was going to be worthless when they tried to buy goods with it tomorrow. But money is neither the only nor necessarily the best store of value. Houses, stamp collections, and interest-bearing bank accounts all serve as stores of value. Since money pays no interest and its real purchasing power is eroded by inflation, there are almost certainly better ways to store value. Finally, money serves as a standard of deferred payment or a unit of account over time.

Topic 2: Market Structures

Monopoly is the extreme opposite of pure competition and has the following characteristics: (1) the market consists of a single seller; (2) the seller sells a product for which there are no close substitutes; (3) there are barriers to entry that prevent competitors from entering the market; and (4) the seller can control the price of his or her product. Monopoly disadvantages include the following: (1) a monopolist charges a higher price and produces less output than a perfectly competitive firm, (2) resource allocation is inefficient because the monopolist produces less than if competition existed, (3) monopoly produces higher long-run profits than if competition existed, and (4) monopoly transfers income from consumers to producers to a greater degree than under competition.

Although few industries are controlled by a single firm, many industries in the United States are dominated by a few giant firms. Such a market structure is known as oligopoly, and it is the market structure under which most large corporations operate. Oligopoly has the following characteristics: (1) a few sellers; (2) substantial barriers to entry; (3) standardized or differentiated products; and (4) substantial non-price competition. Non-price competition includes advertising, packaging, product development, better quality, and better service. Under imperfect competition, firms may compete to each other using non-price competition, rather than price competition.

Monopolistic competition is a market structure that is characterized by (1) many sellers; (2) differentiated products; (3) non-price competition; (4) relatively easy entry and exit. It has similarities to both pure competition and oligopoly. Monopolistic competition is similar to pure competition in the sense that there are many sellers and no strong barriers to entry. Firms can enter and leave markets on a regular basis and, indeed, do so. The amount of money required to go into business is relatively small, and there are few government regulations restricting those wishing to enter a market. In addition, each seller controls such a small share of the market that each believes that his or her actions will bring no reactions from competitors. Unlike pure competition, however, monopolistic competition is characterized by product differentiation and non-price competition. The latter involves efforts to persuade consumers to buy a particular product for reasons other than price. In fact, product differentiation and non-price competition are the most important characteristics that distinguish monopolistic competition from pure competition. Firms operating in markets characterized by monopolistic competition do extensive advertising in an effort to convince consumers that their products are better than those of their competitors.

Topic 3: Supply and Demand

The terms supply and demand refer to the behavior of people as they interact with one another in markets. A market is defined as an institution or mechanism which brings together buyers – “demanders” and sellers – “suppliers”. Demand is the amount of the good that buyers are willing and able to purchase. What factors determine the demand for any good?

The quantity demanded falls as the price rises and rises as the price falls, so the quantity is negatively related to the price. The relationship between price and quantity demanded is true for most goods in the economy and, in fact, is so pervasive that economists call it the law of demand: other things equal (*ceteris paribus* in Latin), when the price of a good rises, the quantity demanded of the good falls.

A lower income means that you have less to spend in total so you would have to spend less on some – and probably most–goods. If the demand for a good falls when income falls, the good is called a normal good. Not all goods are normal goods. If the demand for a good rises when income falls, the good is called an inferior good. An example of an inferior good might be bus rides. As your income falls, you are less likely to buy a car or take a cab, and more likely to ride the bus.

When a fall in one price of one good raises the demand for another good, the two goods are called complements. Complements are often pairs of goods that are used together, such as gasoline and automobiles, computers and software. The most determinant of your demand is your tastes. If you like ice-cream, you buy more of it. Your expectations about the future may affect your demand for a good or service today too.

We now turn to supply that is the amount that sellers are willing and able to sell. What determines the quantity an individual supplies? Because the quantity supplied rises as the price rises and falls as the price falls, we say that the quantity supplied is positively related to the price of the good. This relationship between price and quantity supplied is called the law of supply: Other things equal, when the price of a good rises, the quantity supplied of the good also rises.

The supply of a good is negatively related to the price of the inputs used to make the good. By reducing firms' costs, the advance in technology raises the supply of a good. The amount of goods you supply today may depend on your expectations of the future. For example, if you expect the price of goods to rise in the future, you will put some of your current production into storage and supply less to the market today.

Figure 3. Design for Translating Texts

Conclusion

Most students tend to translate the text literally word by word. In finding the equivalence of Economics terminologies, the students use more general words for the terms and loan words (borrowing). It is necessary to teach translation so that the students will be able to translate contextually. *Translatonomics* focused on teaching English for Economics students based on translation practice and aimed to optimize students' translation skill. In translation practice section, students are encouraged to translate English texts. The concept of *Translatonomics* is designed to integrate teaching English for Economics students using translation practice approach.

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