

Translation as a Course: A View of Indonesian EFL Postgraduate Students' Attitude

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Citation: Baihaqi, A. (2022). Translation as a course: A view of Indonesian EFL postgraduate students' attitude. *Notion: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Culture*, Vol 4(1), p. 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.12928/notion.v4i1.5743>

| Article Info | ABSTRACT |
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| <p>Article History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Article Received February 9th, 2022• Article Accepted March 14th, 2022 <p>Keywords</p> <p>Indonesian EFL students' attitude translation course</p> | <p>The objective of this research is to investigate the Indonesian EFL Postgraduate students' attitudes towards the course of translation. The researcher used a case study method by managing observation, interview, and questionnaire to collect the data. The questionnaire contained 30 items concerning students' attitudes in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects. The participants in this present study were 11 students of the English Education Department of Postgraduate degree at a public university in Banten Province, Indonesia. The results indicate that the students hold positive attitudes toward the existence and the learning process of the translation course. These can be verified from the results of questionnaires which show that the average scores of positive attitudes for behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects consecutively are 74.3%, 80.6%, and 84.4%. These positive attitudes are not only affected by the lecturer-student interaction, but also by the cooperative learning atmosphere and experience that the lecturer and students manage while having a teaching and learning process of translation. Since attitudes can be modified by the experience, the effective translation teaching and learning process can encourage students to be more positive towards the translation course they are involved in.</p> |

I. INTRODUCTION

The learning process of English at the university level is certainly different from the school level since the learning objectives are not only aimed at mastering language competencies and skills, but also on how this equipment is beneficial for students' lives. With these competencies and skills, students are well-prepared to get and to create jobs.

This also occurs in translation courses for Indonesian EFL postgraduate degrees whose learning outcomes are not only in mastering the theory and practice of translation, but also in preparing students to be professional translators (officially named as in-house or sworn translators). As Hatim[3] previously claims that translation teaching is a varied activity that subsumes the training of translators, either within institutionalized setting (universities) or outside (self-learning), and the use of translation is as a medium in language teaching. Similar view is also conveyed by Bassnett[2] that translation means a writing exercise and as a means of improving rhetorical style, so it plays an important component in the educational system. She even viewed that one of the purposes of the translation is to help people to recover[2]. Thus, Hollander[6] states, university students who study foreign languages generally take translation courses to master foreign languages. Even more, Toury in Setyaningsih[16] claims that translation is not only a linguistic activity but also a cultural one. This means killing two birds with one stone. The students who study foreign languages can cope with the language and the culture as well.

Meanwhile, the fact shows that most Indonesian EFL postgraduate students have their official jobs and expertise; they already have jobs as teachers and lecturers, for example. The prior study of this current work also shows that 8 from 11 postgraduate students are teachers and lecturers; they take the translation courses offered in the third semester. Therefore, is the course important for them? Is this course related to their profession? What is their attitude and response to the course? These all are challenging questions to be discussed further.

As a mental domain, attitude can influence people's lives. The same situation also happens in the

teaching and learning process. The positive attitude means learning outcomes are expected to be achieved significantly. The negative attitude, on the contrary, means fewer outcomes are achieved. Since students' attitudes are very influential in every single learning process and outcome, this current work is intended to investigate Indonesian EFL Postgraduate students' attitudes towards the course of translation.

Some of previous works had discussed the issue, but those which focus on dealing with EFL postgraduate student attitudes towards translation courses seem to have not been further discussed. These can be observed from the works by Khairunnisa & Lukmana[9] which focused on teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging in Indonesian EFL classrooms; Khotimah, Wahyudin, & Rohbiah[8], Murtisari, Widiningrum, Branata, & Susanto[11], Sudrajat & Purnawarman[18], and Sujarwo[19] which focused on students' attitudes and perceptions of using machine translation tools in the EFL classroom; and Siregar[17] which concentrated to the undergraduate students perception on translation in EFL classes. So far, those works had not discussed the issue for the Indonesian EFL postgraduate students' attitudes towards the course of translation yet. Therefore, this present work is hoped to give further information and explanation towards the issue. This works is also expected to picture a clear-cut understanding concerning the issue in Indonesian EFL context, as Gustini & Baihaqi[3]; Leung & Valdés[10]; Pym[14]; and Siregar[17] claims that language teaching and translation teaching are two activities together and not separately, they are integrated, and translation teaching is a tool to enhance language teaching respectively.

The notion of attitude, moreover, probably to be a critical factor manifested in learning outcome. If the class members have a positive attitude towards the learning process, the objectives are simply to be achieved. It is assumed that a positive attitude can strengthen the class members to have success in the learning process. Vice versa, a negative attitude can loosen the class members to have success in the learning process.

In fact, different attitudes may demonstrate different acceptance. The variations of students' attitudes are associated with the learning process and lead to the learning outcomes. This also ensures adult education as the locus of this current research has. The lecturer must recognize the different attitudes and motives of students in continuing their study to the postgraduate degree. It is important to determine the strategies and methods of learning, the learning materials, the learning needs, and so on. As Newmark[12] proposes that in teaching translation, lecturers have first to organize class procedure, includes informing syllabus, up-to-date references, and ask students of commenting on it; secondly, punctual when start and finish the class; the last, teaching with confidence, particularly when admitting mistakes, and teaching students more gifted than the lecturers have. Therefore, it considers that the present study is necessary to give further information and understanding concerning the issue of translation courses in Indonesian EFL postgraduate context.

The psychologists, moreover, put forward the notion of attitude, of which according to Pickens[13] that attitude is a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both of individual' experience and temperament. Whereas Jihad and Haris[7] claim that attitude stems from the feeling (like or dislike) associated with a person's tendency to respond to things/objects. Attitude is also an expression of values or way of life that is owned by people. Attitudes can be formed to behavior or desired action.

Then, Allport in Schwarz & Bohner[15] states that attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness regulated through experience that provides dynamic influence or directed against the individual response to all objects and situations related to it. This concludes that attitude is very influential in the individual response to something. In translation course activities, for instance, it requires the response and tendency from students to form interaction to all learning activities. These can include the students' response and tendency towards learning strategies and methods, learning curriculum and materials, learning task and evaluation, learning needs, and so on.

II. METHODOLOGY

This current work was employed by qualitative research through a case study method. The participants involved in this study were 11 students of the English Education Department of Postgraduate degree at a public university in Banten Province, Indonesia. Most of them (eight students) worked as teachers and lecturers, while the rest worked as entrepreneurs (two students) and reporters (one student). This research was conducted in the second half of the semester, starting from ninth to fifteenth meetings, where the learning activities are in offline or face-to-face mode. The course in the first half of the semester itself was managed by the online mode.

Data were triangulated through participant observation, unstructured interview, and questionnaire. The observation was employed to investigate students' interaction while having translation class. Both interviews and questionnaires were developed to discover students' attitude towards the course. Furthermore, the questionnaires were used to determine students' attitude regarding the course, whether the responses are positive (agree) or negative (disagree) towards the course. The questionnaire contained 30 statements regarding students' attitudes in terms of behavioral aspect (10 items), cognitive (10 items), and emotional (10 items). These were arranged from positive statements (15 items) and the rest were negative. The statements were put in a five-point Likert scale: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), not known (N), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). The scores were 5 to 1 for positive statements and 1 to 5 for negative ones, respectively. The last, data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The notion of translation teaching in the context of English as a first and second language with English as foreign language serves a different perspective. Newmark[12] claims that in the context of English as first and second language, teaching translation courses often meet with the same prejudices as teaching about language, particularly grammar and vocabularies. He[12] also further clarifies that such

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teaching has a dual component since it comprises the study of two or more languages as well as two cultures. To reach these two goals, Newmark[12] proposes four professional translator's skills that the translation teacher should have: (1) sensitivity, the ability to discriminate nuances of the language of habitual use; (2) a wide knowledge of language and culture of habitual use; (3) the knowledge of the topic; and (4) knowledge of two or three foreign languages and cultures.

Hatim[4] also further discusses that in most English as first language countries, translation teaching is demanded from a minor language (local) into a major one (English); the demand usually exceeds the number of those who are native speakers of English and who also have local as a second language. Therefore, Hatim [4] states that in the context of English as a first language, the translation teaching commonly takes place also varies: ranging from translation schools to in-service departments of national and international organizations, and several tasks are usually involved, such as curriculum design, materials writing, course delivery, and implementation.

There are two things that can be concluded from the views above; firstly, translation teaching is commonly aimed at mastering grammar and vocabulary; secondly, the practice of translation is usually from the local language to English, or vice versa. There are differences in translation teaching when situating English as a foreign language, as happens in the Indonesian context. The difference lies, firstly, in the practice of translation, which is intended from English to Indonesian Language, or vice versa; secondly, translation teaching is commonly managed as a subject rather than a department or school, as it happens also in this current work.

Since this study is managed in the second half of the semester, where the learning activities are in offline mode, students' activities can be thoroughly investigated. The guidelines and indicators used in the observation, interview, and questionnaire are developed based on the work by Ahmad[1]; Hatim[4]; Newmark[12]; and Siregar[17]. The guidelines are generally related to the students' experiences and attitude for translation class, translation learning

objectives and materials, classroom atmosphere, and translation tasks and assignments.

From the result of observation, it can be shown that all of the students actively participated in the class. These are observed from the students' participation in every meeting. They are dynamically involved in the class activities, they actively interact in every class meeting and group discussions, and they can complete the course task on time.

To triangulate the observation result above, the researcher then employs the interview. The interview sheet is designed by using the unstructured interview. The interview sheet regarding the EFL postgraduate students' attitude towards the course of translation is developed based on the following guidelines. There are eight indicators asked to the students regarding their attitudes towards the issue.

| No | Indicators |
|----|---|
| 1 | Starting the translation class with preparation |
| 2 | Running the translation class without hesitation |
| 3 | Asking and commenting wisely |
| 4 | Encouraging others to work and discuss together |
| 5 | Focusing on translation learning objectives |
| 6 | Accepting the shortcoming of others |
| 7 | Avoiding duplication and plagiarism |
| 8 | Completing the task and assignment without coercion |

Table 1. The Interview Guidelines

Based on the above guidelines, the results can be informed that most students reflect the positive attitude towards the course of translation. They start the class with preparation and run the class without hesitation as well, running question and answer sessions respectfully and accepting other shortcomings by avoiding rudeness and insolence, encouraging all members of the class to work and discuss together, avoiding plagiarism in completing the task as well. Explicitly, these can be viewed based on the interview result as below.

The students start the class with preparation; they check the syllabus and read the material, the textbooks or research result, before joining the class. The students also run the class without hesitation as well as they start the class with preparation. In question-and-answer sessions within the class and group work discussions, they always try to handle it

wisely; the students prohibit themselves from saying rude, profane, and taboo. Next, the students also always encourage others to work and discuss together; they all commit to start and pass the study together. As they check the syllabus and read the material gradually, they also focus on the planned objectives through class and group work discussions. Accepting the shortcomings of others is the primary goal for macro-skills learning. Therefore, the students agreed to help and motivate each other in every learning process. Next, the students agree that plagiarism is a crime; this is an academic foul. They always cite other people's work based on academic rules. Like the previous response, the students also try to accomplish the task without coercion. They believe that every course, including translation, serves beneficial knowledge and skill for their future lives.

Then, the questionnaires are developed based on the following guidelines.

| No | Behavioral Aspect/Statements |
|----|---|
| 1 | Translation class is beneficial. |
| 2 | Translation class helps my English practice. |
| 3 | Translation class helps me to connect with others. |
| 4 | Translation class influences my behavior. |
| 5 | Translation class is enthusiastic. |
| 6 | Translation class makes me worried. |
| 7 | Translation task is burdened. |
| 8 | Translation class seems unenjoyably. |
| 9 | Class and group discussion feel embarrassed. |
| 10 | I never discussed it in class and group discussion. |
| No | Cognitive Aspects/Statements |
| 11 | Translation course helps me to grasp other subjects. |
| 12 | Translation course helps my English competence. |
| 13 | Translation course helps my English skills. |
| 14 | Translation course helps me to understand others. |
| 15 | Translation course covers many fields of knowledge. |
| 16 | Translation discussions are useless. |
| 17 | I follow the translation course just to pass the study. |
| 18 | Translation materials are inapplicable in real life. |
| 19 | Translation materials are complicated. |
| 20 | Translation practices are less meaningful. |
| No | Emotional Aspects/Statements |
| 21 | Translation class is pleasurable. |
| 22 | I feel proud in studying translation class. |
| 23 | Translation class helps my confidence. |
| 24 | Translation tasks can help my emotions. |
| 25 | I will ask and comment wisely. |
| 26 | I sometimes accept others' shortcomings. |
| 27 | I think small plagiarism is allowed in ending the task. |
| 28 | I feel anxious while running the group discussion. |
| 29 | I feel the task is complicated and burdened. |
| 30 | I have no interest in taking translating class. |

Table 2. The Questionnaire Guidelines

The results of questionnaires are calculated as shown in the following table. To simplify, the highest scores are displayed only.

| No | Aspects | % | Note |
|----|------------|------|------|
| 1 | Behavioral | 74.3 | SA |
| 2 | Cognitive | 80.6 | SA |
| 3 | Emotional | 84.4 | SA |

Table 3. The Questionnaire Results

The most interesting results are informed by the questionnaires above. Among the points from strongly agree to strongly disagree; most of the students elicit the responses to the positive attitude towards the course. It can be informed that the highest scores for each aspect are referred to the strongly agree (SA). These are calculated from the average scores for each aspect.

The behavioral aspect displays that the highest score is 74.3%. This means that 8 students strongly agree towards the course of translation. They share positive behavioral attitudes towards the course. To check students' consistency, the questionnaires are also arranged with the negative statements. The results show that they share the similar attitude as the positive statements have. These can be inferred that the students share strongly disagree if the translation course makes them worried as well as the class seems pleasantly; they strongly disagree if the tasks are burdened and seem useless for their lives; and they also strongly disagree if the class and group work discussion makes them embarrassed so it hinders them to fully interact.

The cognitive aspect also shares the similar result as the behavioral aspect has. This aspect results in 80.6 as the highest score. It means that 9 students strongly agree towards the course of translation. They tend to have positive cognitive attitudes towards the course. For a second time, the questionnaires are also arranged with the negative statements to see their consistency in filling the questionnaires. The results also show that they share the identical attitude as the positive statements have. These can be concluded that the students are strongly disagree if the class and group work discussions are useless as well as they

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follow the course just to pass the study; they absolutely disagree if the translation materials are useless and seem to be complicated to handle; and they also strongly disagree if the translation works, and practices are meaningless.

Along with behavioral and cognitive aspects, the emotional aspect also shares that the highest score is strongly agree (84.4%). It shows that 9 students strongly agree towards the course of translation in EFL postgraduate class. They have positive emotional attitudes towards the course. The results of the negative statements also show its consistency. The results show an equal attitude as the positive statements have. These mean that the students strongly disagree with bullying other shortcomings; they view plagiarism as a crime; they do not feel burdened by class-group discussions and tasks; all in all, they say that the class is exciting.

Discussion

The current work proves that the Indonesian EFL postgraduate students share the positive attitudes towards the course of translation. They reveal positive attitudes in terms of learning experiences, objectives, atmosphere, materials, and tasks. These can be observed from their activities in class-group discussions and the organization of course works and assignments.

The researcher ensured all groups' members to work cooperatively. They are stimulated to respond to the question-and-answer session. Since they help each other, they may promote and resolve the problems.

The students' positive attitudes also reflected in the interview result. It shows that the students start the class with preparation and run the class without hesitation as well. They can manage the question-and-answer session respectfully and accept other shortcomings by avoiding rudeness and insolence. Keep encouraging all members of the class to work together and avoiding plagiarism in completing the task are reflected based on the interview session.

The interesting results are informed from the questionnaires. Most of the students have the positive attitude towards the course. The analysis of

behavioral aspects show that 8 students strongly agree towards the course of translation, and 9 students strongly agree towards the course of translation in terms of cognitive and emotional aspect. These all aspects share 79.7% as the average scores for the questionnaire results. It reflects an exciting finding considering no one of the students' works as translators. This may be inferred that translation will be beneficial to support their official works as teachers, lectures, entrepreneurs, and reporters. Hoed[5] claims that more people are choosing the profession as translators now, or at least, as part-time translators.

Conforming to the previous works, furthermore, this present study also reveals that translation can play a role as a medium in language teaching[4] and it can encourage them to learn the language better[12]. Syamardeli & Ismael[20] also confirm that the role of translation teaching in English as second and foreign language is effective in some situations: clarifying the new vocabularies, discussing grammar, teaching idiomatic expression, explaining reading passages, and comparing L1 and L2 as well as checking students' reading and listening comprehension. Translation also can serve as an activity that raises students' alertness toward similarities and differences between two different languages. So, the students shall figure out the structure of both source and target language since translation is not simply a matter of language choice, but also culture as well.

This work also proves that students' attitudes are a crucial factor in translation courses to help them develop learning as well as the course design in Indonesian EFL context[17]. Finally, this work concludes that the Indonesian EFL positive attitude can significantly encourage the learning process of translation course. Their attitudes towards the course are also influential in managing every single learning experience, atmosphere, material, and task. They may share and discuss the learning materials and tasks cooperatively; they may experience the class in a lively atmosphere.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the result, it can be viewed that the students hold positive attitudes toward the existence

and the learning process of the translation course. The results of questionnaires also show positive attitude for behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects. The students' positive attitudes are not only affected by the lecturer-student interaction, but also by the cooperative learning atmosphere and experience that the lecturer and students manage while having a teaching and learning process of translation. Therefore, the effective translation teaching and learning process can empower students to be more positive towards the translation course they are involved in.

Considering the discussion of the issue is still limited, further studies are really suggested. The next studies can also be developed both at the EFL postgraduate and doctoral degrees. So, the students' attitudes and needs towards the course of translation can be continuously reviewed to enhance its curriculum design, learning strategies and materials, learning tasks and evaluation, and the outcomes.

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