



# AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSLATING POETRY

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## Abstract.

This research aimed to find out students' difficulties in translating poetry and its causes. In conducting the research, qualitative method and descriptive study are used. The data are taken from the students' work, questionnaire and interview. The research is conducted to 15 third grade students of English Education Program. The research result shows that the students faced some difficulties in translating poetry. The students got difficulties in finding equivalent words from the source language into the target language, translating words which function as symbols, translating sentences with figures of speech, and the writing style of poetry which uses ungrammatical structures. Based on the result of the research, the researcher suggests that to translate poetry, the students have to enrich their knowledge about translation and poetry.

**Keywords:** Translation, Poetry, Students' Difficulties, Translating Poetry

## INTRODUCTION

Poetry is one of the oldest kinds of literary text. It is used to express the writer's feeling. Wolosky (2001: 03) mentions that poetry is a language that always means more. It means that language used in poetry may have some levels, connections or meanings intended for a certain reason or purpose by the writer to create meaningful and beautiful messages or images.

In an effort to spread out information that has been written in literary texts, translation comes as a solution. Through translation, everybody who does not use English as their mother tongue can understand the famous work of English poets easily by reading the works in written form of their mother tongue. Newmark (1988: 5)

mentions that translation is a process of rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. On the other hand, people who use English as their mother tongue also can obtain information from other languages by reading it in written form of English.

However, many students find some problems in translating. Many students say that it is really hard to translate poetry text into Indonesian. Difficulties in translating are lexical, not grammatical – i.e. words, collocations and fixed phrases or idioms; these include neologisms and ‘unfindable’ words, which deal with separately. Difficulties with words are of two kinds: (a) words hard to understand; (b) hard to translate.

Concerning the use of poetry and the problem in translating, it is necessary to investigate the students’ problem in translating poetry. In other words, this study will find out students’ difficulties in translating poetry.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In ascertaining the data, the researcher needed to use a method of the research problem. The method that the researcher used was qualitative method. Qualitative research thus refers to the analysis of the meaning, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things briefly in order to discover a meaningful answer from participants (Jackson’s in Bruce L. Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2009). This study was conducted in order to analyze a meaningful answer and description about the types of students’ difficulties in translating poetry and the causes of the difficulties.

According to Creswell (2009) research design are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumption to detailed methods or data collection and analyses”. To achieve the purpose, this research used descriptive study. The reason for choosing descriptive study was to describe a set of phenomena found in students’ difficulties in translating poetry. Kothari (2004) also said that descriptive study was concerned with describing the characteristic of one specific problem. In collecting the data, this study used documentation, questionnaire distribution and interview techniques to find out the students’ difficulties in translating poetry.

The population at this study is the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students of the English Education Program of one university in Garut, West Java. The number of population is 152 students. The reason for choosing these students is that the students had learned poetry and translation. Based on the data from the students’ work, questionnaire result, and interview transcription, the researcher found the students’ difficulties in translating poetry. The factors that caused them get those difficulties are also revealed.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Students’ Difficulties in Translating Poetry**

After analyzing the students’ work, questionnaire result and interview transcription, the researcher found some difficulties that the students may face in translating poetry.

#### **a. Finding the equivalent words**

The first difficulty is finding the equivalent words. From the students’ work, as mentioned above on the data description, the researcher found that almost all of

the students get difficulties in finding the equivalent words from the source language into the target language. It is also supported by the result of the questionnaire where there were 10 participants (66.7%) who claimed that they got difficulty to find out the equivalent word from the source language into the target language.

**b. Translating symbols**

Based on the students' work, the researcher found that all of the participants got difficulties to translate words which function as symbols. All of the participants translated the words which are functioned as symbols directly and literally. It is also espoused by the result of the questionnaire that almost all of the participants (80%) agreed that they got difficulty to translate symbols. It is also strengthened by the interview transcription where all of the participants said that the use of symbols could cause them get difficulty to translate poetry.

**c. Translating sentences with figure of speech**

Last, the researcher found that the participants get difficulties to translate sentences which use figures of speech. This is found from the result of the questionnaire and interview transcription. From the result of the questionnaire, it can be seen that there were 12 participants (80%) who said that they got difficulty to translate sentences in poetry with metaphor and personification. This is also supported with the interview transcription where all of the participants stated that they get difficulty to translate sentences in poetry with metaphor and personification. Besides that, 11 participants (73.3%) also said that they got difficulty to translate poetry with simile.

**The Causes of Students' Difficulties in Translating Poetry**

From the result of the questionnaires and interview transcription, the researcher found some sources that caused the difficulties in translating poetry.

**a. Lack of knowledge about translation and poetry**

Based on the result of the questionnaires, it can be seen clearly that the participants were lack of knowledge about translation and poetry. The result of the questionnaire shows that there were seven (46.7%) participants who understood the language style used in poetry. Furthermore, there were eight participants (53.7%) who knew the functions of sound features used in poetry. Almost all of the participants could not explain the translation methods and gave an example of the figures of speech and mention the functions of sound features used in poetry. Then, almost all of the participants (86.7%) got difficulty to differ the source language and target language system in translating poetry.

**b. The writing style of poetry**

From the result of the questionnaires, almost all of the participants (80%) said that the language of poetry which use metaphor and personification made them difficult in translating poetry. Next, almost all of the participants (86.7%) said that the writing of poetry with ungrammatical sentences and a lot of symbols made them difficult in translating poetry. In addition, from the interview transcription, the participants also confessed that the use of figures of speech could cause them get difficulty to translate poetry.

## CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, the researcher found that all of the participants still have difficulties in translating poetry. Based on the result of the data description and analysis, it can be seen that the participants faced some difficulties in translating poetry. The difficulties that were faced by the participants in translating poetry are: finding the equivalent words from the source language into the target language, translating words which function as symbols and translating sentences with figures of speech. The students' difficulties in translating poetry are caused by some factors. They are: first, the students are lack of knowledge about translation and poetry and second, the writing style of poetry uses figures of speech, symbols and ungrammatical structures.

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