

## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED PROBLEM AND DECISION REPORTING IN LITERARY TRANSLATION CLASS: A STUDY ON STUDENT TRANSLATORS' PERCEPTION

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### ABSTRACT

*Literary translation is considered an art, and it allows literary translators to have a certain degree of freedom to solve translation problems (Landers, 2001) creatively. For student translators who aspire to be literary translators, it is logical to learn about translation problems and solutions in literary translation rather than the accurate one-on-one equivalences of certain words or phrases. Nevertheless, the insights into how student translators identify and solve translation problems in literary works are lost during the assessment process. Gile (2004) proposed the retrospection model to elicit the student translators' perspectives on translation problems and solutions in written form to counter this issue, referred to as Integrated Problem and Decision Reporting (IPDR). However, it is unknown how the student translators, as one of the stakeholders in translator training, perceive the implementation of IPDR. This research then aims to fill the gap by analyzing the student translators' perception of the implementation of IPDR. The data source for the research is a literary translation class comprised of eleven student translators who study in the English department at a private university in Jakarta. To acquire the data, the researcher conducted a focus group discussion with seven student translators to elicit their perception of the implementation of IPDR. It was found that the student translators had a positive perception of the implementation, yet they also reported several challenges that they faced during the process.*

**Keywords:** IPDR, translator training, perception, student translators, literary translation

### ABSTRAK

*Penerjemahan sastra kerap dianggap sebagai seni yang memungkinkan penerjemah sastra memiliki tingkat kebebasan tertentu untuk memecahkan masalah penerjemahan secara kreatif (Landers, 2001). Untuk mahasiswa penerjemah yang bercita-cita menjadi penerjemah sastra, sangatlah logis untuk belajar tentang masalah dan solusi penerjemahan dalam penerjemahan sastra. Namun, wawasan tentang bagaimana mahasiswa penerjemah mengidentifikasi dan memecahkan masalah terjemahan dalam karya sastra kerap hilang selama proses penilaian. Gile (2004) mengusulkan model retrospektif yang dirancang untuk memperoleh perspektif mahasiswa penerjemah tentang masalah penerjemahan dan solusi dalam bentuk tertulis, yaitu Integrated Problem and Decision Reporting (IPDR). Namun, tidak diketahui bagaimana mahasiswa penerjemah, sebagai salah satu pemangku kepentingan dalam pelatihan penerjemah, memandang implementasi IPDR. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengisi kesenjangan tersebut dengan menganalisis persepsi mahasiswa penerjemah terhadap penerapan IPDR. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah kelas penerjemahan sastra yang terdiri dari sebelas mahasiswa penerjemah program studi Bahasa Inggris di sebuah universitas swasta di Jakarta. Untuk memperoleh data, peneliti melakukan focus group discussion dengan tujuh mahasiswa penerjemah untuk mengetahui persepsi mereka tentang penerapan IPDR. Hasil yang diperoleh menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa penerjemah memiliki persepsi positif tentang pelaksanaannya, namun mereka juga melaporkan sejumlah tantangan yang mereka hadapi selama proses tersebut.*

**Kata kunci:** IPDR, pelatihan penerjemah, persepsi, mahasiswa penerjemah, penerjemahan sastra

### INTRODUCTION

Literary translation is often considered an art (Landers, 2001). Thus, unlike other forms of translation, literary translation allows the translators to have a certain degree of freedom to solve translation problems found in the translation process creatively. In addition, in literary translation, ways to convey an author's message are often perceived as important or even more important than the message itself (Landers, 2001). As a result, having multiple alternatives to solve certain translation problems is not peculiar. In addition, it can be inferred that translation accuracy is not of paramount importance in literary translation; instead, naturalness, acceptability, and readability matter most.

For student translators who aspire to be literary translators, it is logical to learn about translation problems and solutions in literary translation rather than the accurate one-on-one equivalences of certain words or phrases. Along with that line of thought, translator trainers are expected to impart knowledge on identifying and resolving translation problems during translator training, and they need to design class activities that emphasize the translation process. Nevertheless, most assessment methods in translator training emphasize the translation product instead of the translation process. As a result, the insights into

how student translators identify and solve translation problems in literary works are often lost in the assessment process. This phenomenon also occurs in translation classes in the English department of a private university in Jakarta. In this university, the assessment process in literary translation class is often conducted holistically and heavily focuses on the final translation product. The student translators' insights on how they consider the context, identify translation problems, research for references, and decide on the translation are largely unknown due to that form of assessment.

Gile (2004) proposed a retrospection model designed to elicit the student translators' perspectives on translation problems and solutions in written form to counter this very issue, i.e., Integrated Problem and Decision Reporting (IPDR). Gile (2004) believes that IPDR could be beneficial in many different ways, such as compelling the student translators to stop and think about their ways of translating instead of going on autopilot mode to translate, helping them learn new translation procedures and strategies, getting them used to researching for translation solutions, and assisting them in building their creativity and critical thinking. These will, in turn, boost their confidence and autonomy, which is certainly a desirable outcome that translator trainers hope to foster in future professional translators.

This research focuses on how the student translators perceive the implementation of IPDR in Literary and Popular Translation class, a class that especially discusses the issues of literary translation. This research is expected to bring benefits to the field of translator training, particularly on the issue of translation competence and translation assessment. The student translators are expected to enhance their creativity and translation skills as parts of translation competence, and the translator trainers can benefit as they could access the student translators' minds and gauge the impact of the translator training on the student translators' performance.

### **Integrated Problem And Decision Reporting (IPDR)**

In the area of translator training, translator trainers must teach how to produce quality translation results and how to identify translation problems and devise suitable translation solutions. This line of thought should be carried throughout the teaching process, including during the assessment. However, an assessment that only emphasizes the translation product would compromise the objective above and would indirectly teach the student translators to completely rely on translator trainers' judgment, which would be detrimental to the student translators' growth, autonomy and confidence. As a result, there is a need to combine process-based and product-based assessments to evaluate student translators' competence and performance.

Integrated Problem and Decision Reporting (IPDR) is an additional task given to student translators when they are translating. It records the student translators' retrospection and decision-making process and the references and sources of information they use during the translation (Gile, 2004). A variety of other terms for IPDR exist, such as translation diary, translator's journal, self-reflection journal, written retrospective protocols, guided commentaries, and many more (Eraković, 2013; Norberg, 2014; Pavlović, 2010). Despite the different names, the focus of this task is the same: to elicit the student translators' thinking process when they are doing a translation task.

Several researchers support the implementation of self-reflection in translator training (Li, 2021; Pietrzak, 2019; Thu Huong, 2020), as both student translators and translator trainers can reap many benefits. Translator trainers can gauge the student translators' performance and competence, identify which areas of translator education need to be enhanced, and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their teaching. Meanwhile, student translators will get opportunities to creatively translate the texts and to learn to justify their translation choices. All in all, the practice of self-reflection and retrospection is expected to bring a positive impact on student translators' skills and personal development.

The implementation of IPDR is not complicated. Gile (2004) even mentioned that the retrospection method at the very basic level does not require specific formatting, advanced technology, or complex stages. However, many researchers emphasized the proper scaffolding process and clear communication of expectations from the translator trainers so that the student translators could grasp what the translator trainers seek from them. Along with the final translation product, the student translators are expected to include an explanation of problem identification, problem resolution, and sources/references in the IPDR. Problem identification involves the student translators' anticipating issues that might be problematic in the translation process and analyzing why they might be so. Problem resolution specifies the student translators' thinking and decision-making process in solving translation problems, including analysis of translation contexts, procedures and strategies, text typology, and many more. Finally, sources/references of the information are included to ensure that the student translators cite reliable

information and do not misuse machine translation tools. In a nutshell, the implementation of IPDR is similar to writing a procedural record on how the student translators conduct the translation process.

In the end, translator trainers can rely on two assessments, i.e., assessment of the end-product of translation and assessment of the student translators' translation process, in determining the student translators' performance and competence. Having a twofold assessment would make the assessment process more reliable and versatile. In addition, the translator trainers could tailor more personable advice and suggestions for each student translator.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research can be considered qualitative descriptive research since it focuses on discovering the student translators' perception of the implementation of IPDR in literary translation classes. The data would be largely in utterances, and the researchers would qualitatively and inductively form the analysis and conclusion on the student translators' perceptions based on their opinions.

The data source for the research is a class comprised of eleven student translators (6th semester) who study in the English department at a private university in Jakarta. The researchers implemented scaffolding to better the students' understanding of IPDR. After the student translators were familiar with the implementation of IPDR, several translation tasks were given along with the instruction to write down IPDR, which they needed to submit along with their product of translation tasks. The process of implementing IPDR lasted for six meetings, and at the end of the experiment, the researchers conducted focus group discussions to elicit the student translators' perceptions on the implementation of IPDR. Image 1 below illustrates the procedures for collecting the data.

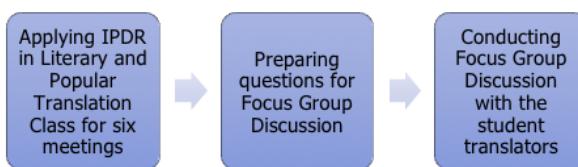


Image 1. Data Collection Procedures

FGD was chosen as the research instrument since the process of data collection is often deemed more efficient and could elicit more spontaneous and out-of-the-box responses. In addition, FGD would allow student translators to convey their personal opinions in a freer manner as they are surrounded by peers with whom they are comfortable interacting as opposed to one-on-one interaction with the researchers in interviews (Gill et al., 2008).

The FGD for the present study was conducted over the Zoom platform since many student translators were more comfortable with online sessions. In addition, as all of the students are Indonesians, the researchers used Indonesian during the FGD to ensure that the student translators could properly convey what they meant and felt without tripping over language issues. Nevertheless, the student translators were welcome to respond in English. Seven of eleven student translators participated in the FGD, and the FGD lasted for approximately forty to forty-five minutes. The content of the focus group discussion revolved around the following main questions :

1. What do you think about the implementation of IPDR? How were your experiences?
2. What are the challenges you faced when doing tasks with IPDR?
3. What are the effects of the implementation of IPDR in Literary and Popular Translation class?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages?

The content of the focus group discussion was transcribed and translated (in the case of utterances in Indonesian), and the transcriptions were analyzed using thematic analysis (Neuendorf, 2018; Terry et al., 2017). The emerging ideas were grouped into codes, and the codes were sorted under specific themes. In the end, the researchers concluded the student translators' perception of the implementation of IPDR in literary translation class. Image 2 below illustrates the stages of data analysis.



Image 2. Data Analysis Procedures

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After watching and scrutinizing the recording, the researchers found several codes which could be grouped under two themes: IPDR is beneficial in many ways, and IPDR is challenging to execute. These two themes will be discussed in-depth in the next subsections. In addition, the student translators provided valuable input for the researchers regarding the implementation of IPDR.

### IPDR is Beneficial in Many Ways

All of the student translators agreed that IPDR provides many benefits for them. The first benefit is in terms of vocabulary enrichment. Many student translators stated that doing the IPDR task pushed them to access various available resources such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and many more. Thus, along the way, they found meaningful new words or phrases they had never heard of or used. This exposure to new vocabulary items could be a way for the student translators to broaden their linguistic repertoire. One of the student translators, i.e., Edo (pseudonym), provided the following excerpts:

"I think IPDR is helpful for me since it makes me do the research, and the research helps me enhance my vocabulary and compels me to be more mindful about my choice of words."

The second benefit is promoting good habits for student translators. The student translators agreed that the practice of IPDR necessitates them to stop and consider available translation options before making decisions on the best translator choice. One of them, i.e., Cleo (pseudonym), admitted that she often had quite automatic and instinctive impulses when translating. However, with the implementation of IPDR, she compelled herself to stop making translation decisions immediately after reading the source text and take extra steps to slowly mull over the available choices and contemplate the audience's expectations and the readability of the translation. This is in line with Gile's (2004) statement that IPDR is useful for "unlearning inappropriate reflexes" when translating as the reflexes signal that the student translators might not be aware of existing translation problems and better translation options (p. 5). In other words, compelling the student translators to retrospect and reflect on their translation decisions would shape their habits and thinking process and help them formulate justifications for their actions in the translation process. In addition, the student translators concurred that the research is one of many valuable benefits of IPDR. Chronicling references and resources have been a crucial part of IPDR, and the student translators stated that this requirement has helped them develop their research skills. Moreover, since the student translators need to enunciate their thinking and decision-making process in writing verbally, they accustomed themselves to writing their reports in an organized and chronological manner.

Finally, the student translators reported that composing verbal reports using IPDR enhanced their critical thinking. One of the student translators, i.e., Fanny (pseudonym), stated, "I think it's helpful to stimulate critical thinking." When faced with several options and specific translation contexts, particularly in literary translation, which allows translators a certain degree of freedom and personal interpretation, the student translators learn to consider the best ways to proceed with the translation. In doing so, they, in turn, learn to exercise their autonomy and creativity by making bold translation choices and providing appropriate justifications.

### IPDR is Challenging to Execute

Despite its usefulness, IPDR is not without problems. Even with the implementation of scaffolding at the beginning of the experimental process, student translators expressed a range of difficulties they faced when executing IPDR. The first challenge is in terms of analyzing the source text. IPDR heavily focuses on the notion of why, and one of the ways to answer the question is by unpacking the source text to identify translation problems. Gile (2009) stated that the ideal translation steps start with carefully reading the source text and highlighting any elements within the text that can potentially hinder the translators from optimally delivering meanings in the target language. Nevertheless, sometimes the source text might be deemed too complex to analyze, as reported by the student translators for this study. They believe that the complexity of the language used in the source text may contribute to the challenge of implementing

IPDR as they need extra effort to comprehend the language in the source text and to identify translation problems within the source text.

The second challenge is in terms of filtering reliable sources and credible information. IPDR necessitates the student translators to support their arguments and decisions by citing information from reliable and credible sources. Meanwhile, all student translators claim that they conduct their research process through the Internet. They agree that the Internet provides a large pool of data and wealth of information, which could assist them in making various translation choices and decisions. However, they reported that they experienced confusion and indecisiveness due to an overload of information. It made them feel overwhelmed, and it impacted the process and duration of decision-making. One of the student translators, i.e., Diane (pseudonym), mentioned that "when faced with many options, it is difficult for me to make decisions since I am indecisive." This is in line with the research by Giampieri (2020), who found that while Internet data could assist the student translators in making an informed decision on their translation choices, they "felt overwhelmed by Internet data and were often led astray by too much information" (p. 60). In other words, they experienced difficulties in shifting the available data and information from the Internet. However, as IPDR strictly requires the inclusion of reliable and credible sources of information as a part of translation justification, the student translators thought that contributed greatly to the complexity of IPDR implementation. In addition, the student translators expressed difficulties finding credible sources of information regarding Indonesian and its linguistic system over the Internet.

The next challenge is concerning the expectation of the IPDR report. The student translators expressed difficulties when asked to provide detailed accounts and explanations of the translation and decision-making process. They wondered how detailed the report should be and how those details should be written, organized, and delivered. Fido (pseudonym), one of the student translators, stated that "one of the difficulties is elaborating the explanation and the level of details." The researchers have provided scaffolding at the beginning of the experiments to provide descriptive examples of what the IPDR report should entail and what it looks like. However, the student translators still reported difficulties in writing the IPDR report.

Finally, as they are faced with the challenges explained above, the student translators reported that composing an IPDR report is a laborious and time-consuming task. The student translators agreed that the part of writing an IPDR report is labor-intensive since they need to analyze the source text, identify translation problems, conduct research, and make translation decisions, and in the end, they need to recall, reflect and justify the whole translation process in the form of writing. The implementation of IPDR in the translation task complicates the process of doing the translation task, and to manage the complexity of the task, they compensate with extra efforts and energy. Accordingly, they also spent more time compiling the IPDR report. The time-consuming part is the challenge frequently cited by the student translators. Lyla (pseudonym), one of the student translators, provided the following account:

"The system is really helpful, but it takes time to think. It might be difficult to do that since I'm the type of someone who has to think for a long time. It's not just for a week or two. Most likely it will take one month or more [for me to do one task]. Because I'm a slow thinker."

### **Implications for Translator Training**

As explained in the previous section, IPDR has many benefits for student translators. The student translators overall perceived that IPDR positively affects their education as budding translators. They reported that IPDR enhanced their vocabulary richness, helped student translators accustom to various good habits, and boosted their critical thinking. However, there are several challenges that translator trainers need to take into account, and to respond to those challenges, the researchers provided several recommendations for the translator trainers to consider if they are interested in applying IPDR to the process of translator training.

First and foremost is the source text analysis required by IPDR to identify translation problems. To help the student translators overcome this problem, the translator trainers need to provide specific information on translation problems and how to look out for them. The researchers suggest that translator trainers provide lessons on the contrastive analysis between the source language and target language to make the student translators aware that the two languages are different in many ways and highlight possible translation issues that might occur during translation. Experts such as Klaudy (2006) and Nord (2005) also attested to the efficacy of contrastive analysis in identifying translation problems in translator training.

Next, to overcome the second challenge, i.e., the student translators' difficulties in filtering reliable information and credible sources, the researchers would recommend the translator trainers provide examples of credible sources of information over the Internet, discuss criteria that make those sources credible and provide guidance on evaluating the credibility of the sources. This could be done by pointing out Internet resources such as online dictionaries, machine translation tools, electronic corpora, official websites from the government, and so on and asking the student translators to engage in a thorough discussion on how to cross-check information from various resources in order to get solutions over translation problems. By doing this, it is hoped that the student translators would be able to sift through the wealth of information over the Internet and make appropriate translation choices.

Next, to ensure that the student translators get overwhelmed with the expectations of the IPDR report, the translator trainers need to provide more intensive scaffolding and coaching sessions. Scaffolding is an important step for the student translators' self-reflection (Pietrzak, 2019) so that the student translators would get better pictures of how IPDR work and what expectations they need to meet. During the scaffolding and coaching session, the translator trainers can create discussion on IPDR by providing samples of IPDR reports and highlighting what should and should not be elaborated on in the reports. In addition, providing a template would orient the student translators further and give them better ideas on how the IPDR report should be written, how much information should be included, and how it should be organized.

Finally, to deal with the labor-intensive and time-consuming nature of IPDR, the researchers suggest that the translator trainers make the initial implementation into group work. It is advised that the translator trainers start with small-scale translation tasks, which can be done in groups, and when the groups are finished with their translation tasks, they collectively reflect on the moments they made the translation choices and write their IPDR reports. In addition, Gile (2004) emphasized the importance of reviewing the IPDR reports together as a class so that each student translator can learn from each other and improve their performance. After several IPDR implementations in groups, the translator trainers may slowly introduce individual IPDR implementations.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the student translators of this present study perceived that IPDR positively impacts their learning process. They claimed that they could reap many benefits out of this retrospective process. However, the implementation is not without complications. It was found that the student translators experienced difficulties during its implementation, such as difficulties in analyzing source texts, filtering information, managing expectations, and coping with the laborious and time-consuming nature of IPDR. In other words, there are benefits and challenges that the translator trainers would reap and face when they implement IPDR in their translation classroom. For translator trainers interested in trying IPDR in the process of translator training, the researchers have provided several recommendations that the translator trainers could try to apply. It is hoped that by conducting this research, the researchers would be able to broaden the translator trainers' horizons and make the translator training less linguistic-based.

## Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to thank Universitas Bunda Mulia for funding the research and the students of Literary and Popular Translation class for providing their opinions on the issue.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

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