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**Communicative Translation Method in Increasing Students'  
Performance in Translation Class**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of communicative translation method in increasing students' performance in translation class. This study used quasi-experimental approach which involved a control group and an experiment group. Communicative translation method was implemented in the experiment group during 6

meetings. Students' performance was measured before and after the implementation of learning process. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics aimed to describe and categorize the levels of students' performance, while inferential statistics aimed to discover whether there was a significant influence of communicative method in increasing students' performance. Results show that the sig value of the experiment class is 0.00. It proves that communicative method is effective in increasing students' performance as the sig. value is lower than 0.05.

**Keywords:** *Communicative Method, Translation, Students' Performance, Foreign Language Learning.*

## **Introduction**

Studies on the problems commonly faced by students in translation class have been conducted by numerous researchers (Chon & Shin, 2019; Joyce, 2018; Sun & Yuan, 2018; Nikou & Economides, 2018; Liu & Flick, 2019; Mantasiah et al., 2020). The problems among students vary, including low performance, lack of academic motivation, self-integrated learning, self-efficacy, and etc. The factors contributing to the students' problems in translation class are students' first language, metalinguistic competence, students' awareness, the process of transfer from first language to second language and vice versa, decision-making processes in direct and inverse translation, and etc. (Ma & Qu, 2018; Halverson, 2018; Cen, 2018; Ferreira et al., 2018; Akan et al., 2018). Since the problems are not specific, but general in nature, there is a tendency that other language learners from different first languages deal with the same problems.

There are some alternative ways to help students tackle the problems; one of which is to implement a learning model that is appropriate with the problems that students commonly encounter. Studies have revealed that the accuracy in opting for a learning model in translation class can have positive impacts on both cognitive abilities and non-cognitive abilities of the language learners (Li, 2019; Voit et al., 2019; Merç, 2019; Geng, 2019). Nevertheless, the most important point to emphasize is that regardless of the model and the learning method considered to be used, teachers need to adapt the model that will be implemented to the students' conditions and learning environment (Villegas et al., 2018; Mantasiah, 2018; Yusri et al., 2017; Mantasiah et al., 2018; Jufri et al., 2019).

One of the learning methods commonly employed in the foreign language teaching, especially at the university level, is the communicative method. Communicative method can be defined

as an approach that aims at making communicative competence as the goal of language learning. Studies on the application of communicative method in foreign language teaching have been conducted by Savignon (2018), Partridge (2018), Andrade (2018), Diana & Mansur (2018), Rahman & Pandian (2018). Based on the results of those studies, that communicative method can be used in an integrated way in several subjects, such as writing course, reading course, translation course, and etc. The studies also suggest that communicative method positively affect the increase of the learners' cognitive and non-cognitive abilities. However, it should be taken into account that measures to use this method need to be adjusted and adapted to the course being taught.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the implementation of communicative method in translation class. This study is different from other studies because in this study communicative method was applied in two different foreign language classes which are German and English translation classes. By conducting this study, the question if communicative method can be implemented in certain foreign languages or in all foreign languages can be answered. The findings of this study are expected to give benefits in the improvement of the quality of English language learning specifically and foreign language learning in general.

### **Research Method**

This study employed a quasi-experimental approach by involving two different experiment groups without any control group. The respondents of the research were 25 students of English Study Program in Group A and 25 students of German Study Program in Group B. The purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents; they should meet the criteria of taking translation class in both English class and German class. Data were collected by a translation test and interview. In regard to the translation test, the researcher assessed the students' performance with 4 indicators: 1) grasp of information, 2) ease of translation, 3) appropriate use of grammar, and 4) preparation. The scale 1 to 4 was used for each indicator to assess the translation; thus, the maximum score was 16 and the minimum score was 4. The scores were then categorized into 5 according to the categorization by Azwar (2010). More details can be seen in the table 1.



Table 1.  
Categorization of the Students' Performance

Interval	Categorization
$X \leq M - 1,5 \sigma$	Very Low
$M - 1,5 \sigma < X \leq M - 0,5 \sigma$	Low
$M - 0,5 \sigma < X \leq M + 0,5 \sigma$	Moderate
$M + 0,5 \sigma < X \leq M + 1,5 \sigma$	High
$X > M + 1,5 \sigma$	Very High

**M: Average Hypothetical Scores**  
 **$\sigma$  : Hypothetical Standard Deviation**

To explore students' responses during the learning process, an interview was conducted with students regarding the implementation of communicative method in the translation learning process. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was performed in order to describe the average of students' performance, while inferential statistics, which was in this case paired sample t-test, was conducted in order to discover whether there was a significant influence of communicative method on the students' performance in translation class.

### Results and Discussion

The study began with a pretest given to the students to measure their initial performance in both English and German translation classes. After the pre-test, the students took part in the learning process in translation class with communicative method for 6 meetings. In addition to communicative method, the researcher used other methods called *Team Group Tournament*, *Two Stay Two Stray*, *Blended Learning*, and *Problem Based Learning*. These other methods were integrated with communicative method in order to help the students avoid boredom during the learning process. At the end of each meeting, the researcher always made reflections on the students' responses which were especially related to the weaknesses of the methods to be improved in the next meeting. After 6 meetings, the students' performance in translation was measured using questions that were different from the pretest, but with the same level of difficulty.

Data on the students' performance before and after the implementation of communicative method in both English and German translation classes are provided in the following table.

Table 2.

*The Results of Translation Test in English Class*

Interval	Level	Pretest		Posttest	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
$X \leq 7$	Very Low	0	0	0	0
$7 < X \leq 9$	Low	4	16	0	0
$9 < X \leq 11$	Moderate	20	80	10	40
$11 < X \leq 13$	High	1	4	10	40
$X > 13$	Very High	0	0	5	20
<b>Total</b>		25	100	25	100

In general, before the intervention was given, most of the students were categorized at the level of moderate with 80% and only one student (4%) reached the very high level. The pretest results suggest that students face problems in translation course that needs a further action. After the intervention, however, an increase in the students' performance was seen. The majority of the students were at the level of high and moderate with 40% each and 20% were at the very high level.

Table 3.

*The Result of Translation Test in German Class*

Interval	Level	Pretest		Posttest	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
$X \leq 7$	Very Low	0	0	0	0
$7 < X \leq 9$	Low	7	28	1	4
$9 < X \leq 11$	Moderate	15	60	4	16
$11 < X \leq 13$	High	3	12	15	60
$X > 13$	Very High	0	0	5	20
<b>Total</b>		25	100	25	100

The same results are shown in the learning process of translation in German class. Before the intervention was performed, most of the students belonged to the moderate level with 60%, while 12% were at the high level. In contrast, after the intervention, the students' performance increased in which 60% of the students reached the high level, while 20% reached the very high level. More information on the increase of the students' performance can be seen from the analysis of inferential statistics provided in the table below.

*Table 4.*

*Paired Samples Statistics in English Class*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Posttest	12.40	25	1.414	.283
	Pretest	10.24	25	.779	.156

Table 4 illustrates that the average of the students' performance before the intervention was 10.24. The performance increased to 12.40 after the intervention was given to students. Thus, there was an increase of 2.160. However, in the German translation class, there was an increase from 10.16 to 12.76. More details can be seen in Table 5 below.

*Table 5.*

*Paired Samples Statistics in German Class*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Posttest	12,76	25	1,508	,302
	Pretest	10,16	25	1,214	,243

To discover if the increase of the students' performance in translation class was significant, data in Table 6 and 7 can be taken into account.

Table 6.

*The Results of Analysis of Paired Sample T- Test in English class*

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.	Std.	95% Confidence				
		Deviat	Error	Interval of the				
		ion	Mean	Difference				
			Lower	Upper				
Posttest - Pretest	2.160	.898	.180	1.789	2.531	12.025	24	.000

The results of analysis of paired sample t-test show that the significance value was 0.000 lower than the standard of the significance value (0.05). Additionally, the t-count value obtained was 12.025, which was higher than the t-table value 1.710. Based on these data, it can be concluded that there was a significant increase before and after the learning process in translation class using communicative method.

Table 7.

*The Results of Analysis of Paired Sample T- Test in German class*

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.	Std.	95% Confidence				
		Deviat	Error	Interval of the				
		ion	Mean	Difference				
			Lower	Upper				
Posttest - Pretest	2.600	.707	.141	2.308	2.892	18.385	24	.000

The same results are obtained in the German translation class. The results of analysis of paired sample t-test indicate that a significant increase occurred after communicative method was used in the learning process in translation class. This conclusion is drawn based on the comparison between significance value, t-count value, and t-table value. The significance value obtained was 0.000 lower than the standard of significance value used in this study (0.05). Furthermore, the t-count value obtained was 18.835, which was higher than the t-table value 1.710.

Based on the results of analysis of the qualitative data obtained from an interview with students, it can be understood that the communicative method is appropriate to be implemented in translation class. One of the reasons is because this method primarily puts emphasis more on the semantic and communicative dimensions than on the grammar rules. This is considered very necessary in translation class. Besides, the objectives to be achieved by employing communicative approach better reflect the needs of students as they primarily learn a foreign language for communication. Thus, the general purpose of learning a foreign language in the perspective of communicative method is to improve students' ability to communicate (Al Asmari, 2015; Astawa et al., 2017; Zhou & Niu, 2015; Jafari et al., 2015; Suparsa et al., 2017). One of the indicator items used to assess the result of student's translation is how the meaning of the translation results can be understood properly and certainly in accordance with the meaning of the source language. By using the communicative method, students do not think too much about the grammar of the results of the translation, but students can focus on conveying the meaning of the source language. In addition, the results of the translation are very easy to read, simpler, and certainly not structural. This is consistent with what was stated by Fazal, Majoka, & Ahmad (2016) and Fu (2020).

Before conducting this research, some students tend to use semantic or literal translation methods. They focus on semantic structure and syntactic, so they try to maintain the position of words, position of clauses, and length of sentences. This causes the results of the translation to be more rigid and very structural (Putra et al., 2016). The result is that some of the meanings of the translation results cannot be conveyed properly. So the student's score in translation class obtained is not maximal, because the main poin assessed in translation class is the ability to convey the meaning of the source language.

The results of this study do not emphasize that the communicative method is better with the semantic, literal or other method of translation. However, the findings of this study emphasize that when learners are more willing to prioritize the meaning of the source language than the structural aspect, the communicative method is the right choice than some other translation methods. Conversely, when the translation process demands to maintain the structural aspects of the source language, it will be better when not using communicative methods. Several studies have used and integrated the two approaches as conducted by Shakernia (2013), Wang (2014), & Yu-yu (2007). However, the context of the research is not in the learning process. Therefore, it is still necessary to study related methods that integrate the two approaches in the context of learning in school or in college.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of the results of the study discussed previously, it can be concluded that translation class is considered one of the most difficult subjects in learning foreign languages and less attractive for students. This can be seen from the students' pretest scores in which most students were categorized into low. After implemented in translation class, however, the communicative method was considered to be an effective method in increasing the students' performance, especially in translation class. The results of the analysis of paired sample test show that the students' performance increased significantly in English translation class with the average value of the increase 2.160 and in German translation class with the average value of the increase 2.6. Therefore, communicative translation method is an effective alternative method that teachers can use in teaching translation.

## **Pedagogical Implication**

The findings of this study are global in nature and quite possible to be generally implemented in learning foreign languages, such as English, German, and other foreign languages. The findings of the study are also expected to bring benefits to the improvement of the quality of English learning for non-native English speakers, and other foreign language learning. Although the study is highly concerned only on the application of communicative method in translation class, the literature studies suggest that this method can also be implemented in learning other subjects, such as writing course, reading course, and etc.

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