

## The Use of Pedagogical Translation in Teaching English by Scientific Approach

Masitowarni Siregar

Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia  
[siregarmasitowarni@yahoo.com](mailto:siregarmasitowarni@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** *The study is aimed to know how the English teachers use of pedagogical translation and why the teachers use it in the process of scientific approach. The subject of the study was the English teachers in MAN Medan. The study was conducted in descriptive qualitative research because the researcher did not apply any treatment and experiment in the research. Descriptive qualitative research concerns providing description of a phenomenon that occurs naturally without any intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 28). The techniques of collecting data of the study were observation and interview. The results of the study showed that three English teachers in teaching process by using scientific approach in the process of conveying and checking meaning of words or sentences, explaining grammar and classroom management. Then, The reasons of using translation were facilitating communication, teacher-student relationship and the L2 learning.*

**Keywords:** *pedagogical translation; scientific approach; English teaching*

### I. Introduction

Translation, as well as receptive and productive skills plays a significant role in developing students' English mastery. Researcher Ross (2000:61) stated that translation is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes communication and understanding. In this process, translation involves interaction and cooperation between people, which makes it a very useful tool in foreign language teaching. Mohamed (2014:28) stated that as with all professionals, English teachers and translation usually meet during academic conferences on applied linguistics, language teaching and translation in different parts of the world. However, the use of translation is often criticized based on two arguments. First, Shiyab (2006:115) states that translation should not be used in foreign language teaching because it causes language interference. Translation can inhibit thinking in the foreign language and can produce compound bilingualism rather than coordinate bilingualism.

While, foreign language teachers have been reconsidering the use of translation for different learning purposes (Mehrabi, 2014:382). Cook (2001) states that translation activities used in the process of L2 teaching can be viewed as a rich resource which, if used judiciously, can assist second language teaching and learning.

The above statement implies that the use of translation in teaching will provide an opportunity for students that they are encouraged to practice reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and speaking. This use may enable them to transform their knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure into real use and convey a message or get the meaning across (Pan, Yi-chun: 2012). For that reason, translation is an aid to develop students' communicative skill, however the use of translation is often criticised based on two arguments.

First, translation should not be used in foreign language teaching because it is considered as a negative interference. Some practitioners opposed the use of translation, due to the existence of translation in second language teaching and learning practice uses the first language (L1) as a basis for acquiring a foreign language.

Cook (2009:119) claims the bad reputation that translation often has and the criticism surrounding its use in language learning are often based on past experiences of the Grammar-Translation Method, which was criticized for encouraging the use of translation exercises as the sole method of language learning.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Grammar Translation Method (GTM) asserted that translation was highly thought of and used as an effective tool for learning a foreign language. However, some practitioners of the field began to oppose this method and challenged the inefficacy of its underlying utility for training fluent speakers in English and resulted that the ability to speak the language was greatly felt. Accordingly, MAN teachers opted for eliminating the use of L1 and translation exercises in the L2 classroom contexts.

Mehrabi (2014:382) states the opponents of GTM firmly believed that the use of the mother tongue as counter-productive in the process of acquiring a foreign language, and consequently, the application of translation in the classroom could do more harm than good, preventing learners from expressing themselves freely in the second language.

Further, Shiyab (2006:115) says that translation should not be used in foreign language teaching because it causes language interference. Translation can inhibit thinking in the foreign language and can produce compound bilingualism rather than coordinate bilingualism. Besides, using translation in foreign language teaching can interfere in attaining automatic habits.

In addition, Duff (1994) reveals further reasons why teachers objected to the use of translation in foreign language classes. He stresses that translation is text-bound and confined only to two skills, i.e., reading and writing. It is not a communicative activity as it does not involve oral interaction (productive skill). Besides, the use of the mother tongue is required, which is not desirable. It is not a productive use when the translation is founded on obliging learners to share their precious L2 use time the L1.

The use of translation in Indonesia has actually been actualized in the teaching and learning practice. To achieve the goal of both receptive and productive skills, teachers have used translation to ensure that students understand toward what teachers explain. It is eventually helpful and useful, however teachers do not realize the usefulness of the translation. Further, there is no research on how translation used in the teaching and learning practice in Indonesia and the teachers' perception about the use of translation which claimed as an invalid tool of teaching and learning practice.

Based on curriculum 2013, teaching and learning process uses a scientific approach as a teaching strategy using scientific steps in teaching subject matter at senior high school in Indonesia. Kemdikbud (2013) and Hosnan (2014) stated that there are five steps of applying scientific approach in teaching learning process, they are observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, and communicating. In those stages, there must be a possibility of teachers teaching Indonesian students by using translation which contains detailed instructions for conducting students learning starting from observing to communicating since English is a foreign language in Indonesia.

It had been noticed that English teachers of Senior High School in Medan used translation in the classroom. Using translation is very helpful in facilitating the process of teaching especially with low-level students. The teachers also claimed that the students find translation helpful in MAN Medan ways, especially in clarifying grammatical and lexical concepts. Therefore, to make sure that the students grasp the materials given, the teacher needs a medium to connect an interaction between teacher and students namely pedagogical translation.

The study intended to explore aspects of the use of translation by EFL teachers in MAN Medan. The study was aimed to know how the English teachers use pedagogic translation and why the teachers use it in the process of scientific approach.

## II. Review of Literature

Translation has been redefined by linguistic experts from time to time, depending on how they view the language and translation. Translation can be defined as the transfer of meaning from one language (technically called source language) to another language (target language). It is the meaning which is transferred not the form of the source text (ST).

Larson (1991:1) states that translation is a process based on the theory that it is possible to abstract the meaning of text from its forms and reproduce that meaning with the very different form of the second language. From the definition, the translator somehow may eliminate the real meaning of the source language to get a natural meaning of the target language.

Cook (2001: 414) says some particular instances when the teachers' use of the students' L1 can be helpful for the students in the EFL-classroom. One of these is when conveying and checking meaning of words and sentences.

Moreover, she points out that this can be useful when explaining grammar. Cook also writes that the L1 can effectively be used in classroom Management including when organizing tasks and discipline in the classroom.

Harbord (1992) states that there are three reasons for using L1 in the classrooms. They are facilitating communication, facilitating teacher-student relationships, and facilitating the learning of L2. Cook (2001) elaborated further by stating teachers should use L1 to convey meaning and organize classrooms. Students can use L1 for scaffolding (i.e building up the basics, from which further learning can be processed) and for cooperative learning with fellow classmates. Perhaps the biggest reason for using L1 in the classroom though, is that it can save a lot of time and confusion (Harbord, 1992).

Therefore, the study is an attempt to examine the pedagogical role of translation in teaching English as a foreign language. Translation is a real-life natural activity which cannot be avoided in language learning. Therefore, Mohamed (2014) stated that using translation should not be considered as a negative interference but as a useful tool in language learning, especially as a language testing method. He also stressed that using translation can help teachers draw students' attention to ingrained syntactic errors, such as [those of] passive construction, word order, and conditional sentences or time-tense distinctions.

### 2.1 Translation and Foreign Language Teaching

Although translation is a foreign-language-related skill it has been rejected by many Peanornory language theoreticians and teachers as a means of teaching foreign languages. Following Cook (2010: 15) stated that Translation in language teaching has been treated as a pariah in almost all the fashionable high-profile language teaching theories of the 20th century – so much so that towards the end of that century, other than at university level, it was no longer discussed in the academic literature as a serious candidate for aiding the learning of a new language.

However, Mohamed (2014) concluded that the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century have witnessed the beginnings of a serious reconsideration of the possible benefits of translation in language teaching and learning. To this effect, modern writers and researchers have expressed views in support of the use of

translation in foreign language teaching and learning. There are some view which support the conclusion above such as following.

- A. Translation has pedagogical advantages both for teachers and learners. For MAN language users it is a very practical and much needed skill (Cook, 2010: 16)
- B. Translation can be used both more imaginatively, and as a complement to direct method teaching rather than an exclusive alternative to it. Activities may involve oral as well as written practice, and focus on connected text rather than isolated sentences. Successful translation, moreover, may be judged by criteria other than formal lexical and grammatical

These statements by different ELT and translation writers and researchers agree on a central idea: translation can be useful in different ways and at different stages of foreign/second language teaching and learning. The statements clearly indicate that use of translation in foreign/second language teaching and learning is both pedagogically useful and educationally acceptable (Mohamed, 2014: 32).

## **2.2 Reasons of Using Translation in Teaching**

Many researchers have figured ways out to use L1 into the L2 teaching efficiently. For instance, Tang (2002) often use L1 for low and medium proficiency level students in English classes to give instructions, explain meanings of words, explain complex ideas and explain complex grammar points. Students may understand better when the explanations of the subject matters are given in their own language.

Alshammari (2011) and Machaal (2012) argued that the use of L1 can save teachers' time of explaining, increase students' understanding and make the learning process becomes more effective. The use of L1 with novices has verified to be a very useful and valuable device in enhancing students' understanding. Another significant reason for teachers' use of the L1 in the L2 classroom is to build natural relationship between teachers and their students. There is no obstacle between teachers and their students (Turgut and İrgin, 2009). The communication between teachers and students becomes easier (Nation, 2003). Accordingly, students feel free to ask their teachers for any difficulties they encounter.

Harbord (1992) concluded that there are three reasons for using L1 in the classrooms. They are facilitating communication, facilitating teacher-student relationships, and facilitating the learning of L2. Cook (2001) elaborated further by stating teachers should use L1 to convey meaning and organize classrooms. Students can use L1 for scaffolding (i.e building up the basics, from which further learning can be processed) and for cooperative learning with fellow classmates. Perhaps the biggest reason for using L1 in the classroom though, is that it can save a lot of time and confusion (Harbord, 1992).

## **2.3 English Teaching by Using Pedagogical Translation in Scientific Approach**

In the curriculum 2013, scientific approach is a teaching strategy that used by teacher in teaching and learning process. Long (2014) states scientific approach is defined as the process of finding out information in science, which involves testing the ideas by performing experiments and making decisions based on the result of analysis. The implementation of scientific approach steps in a classroom based on Curriculum 2013 which consists of five steps including: observing, questioning, experimenting, associating and communicating. In doing scientific approach, the pedagogic translation is conducted. Regarding with translation, Dagilienė (2012) states translation helps learners to acquire, develop and strengthen their knowledge and competence in the English language. Translation activities make students

communicate both ways: into and from the foreign language. By that, teacher may use translation in teaching analytical exposition text as a learning strategy to comprehend and produce a foreign language.

The use of pedagogical translation, however, presupposes the use of both oral and written skills and translation activities can be carried out either in first language or target language or both at the same time depending on the teaching targets.

### III. Research Method

The study conducted descriptive qualitative research because the researcher doesn't apply any treatment and experiment in the research. Descriptive qualitative research concerns providing description of a phenomenon that occurs naturally without any intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment (Bogdan&Biklen, 1992: 28). The techniques of collecting data of the study were observation and interview. The subject of the study was English teachers of MAN Medan.

### IV. Discussion

In English teaching, translation has been widely used as a pedagogical tool. Translation is considered as the most important skill by the teachers because it promotes understanding and communication between teacher and students. This study highlighted that translation is really helpful in teaching and learning practice in order to make sure whether the students understand or not. The teachers frequently used the translation itself. Translation can be the most important skill by the teachers because it helps them to improve their communication with the students. Translation is as a teaching technique to make students understand quickly.

This study is highlighted that translation is really helpful in teaching and learning practice in order to make sure whether the students understand or not. The teachers frequently used the translation itself. Based on the theory of Cook (2001:414); they are conveying and checking meaning of words and sentences, explaining grammar and classroom Management. The obtained data was supported by a video-recording during the teaching and learning process.

From the three English teachers analyzed, the totally counted that there were 51 times of using translation found during the teaching and learning itself. The following figure 1 will show the use of translation in teaching reading analytical exposition text.

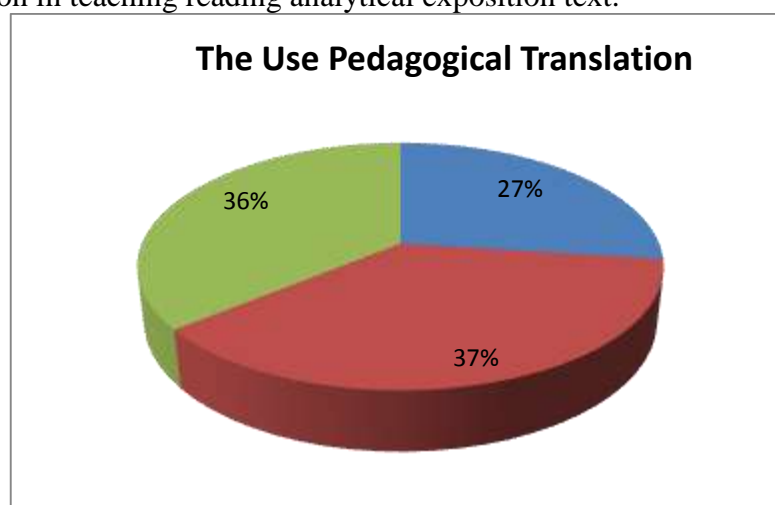
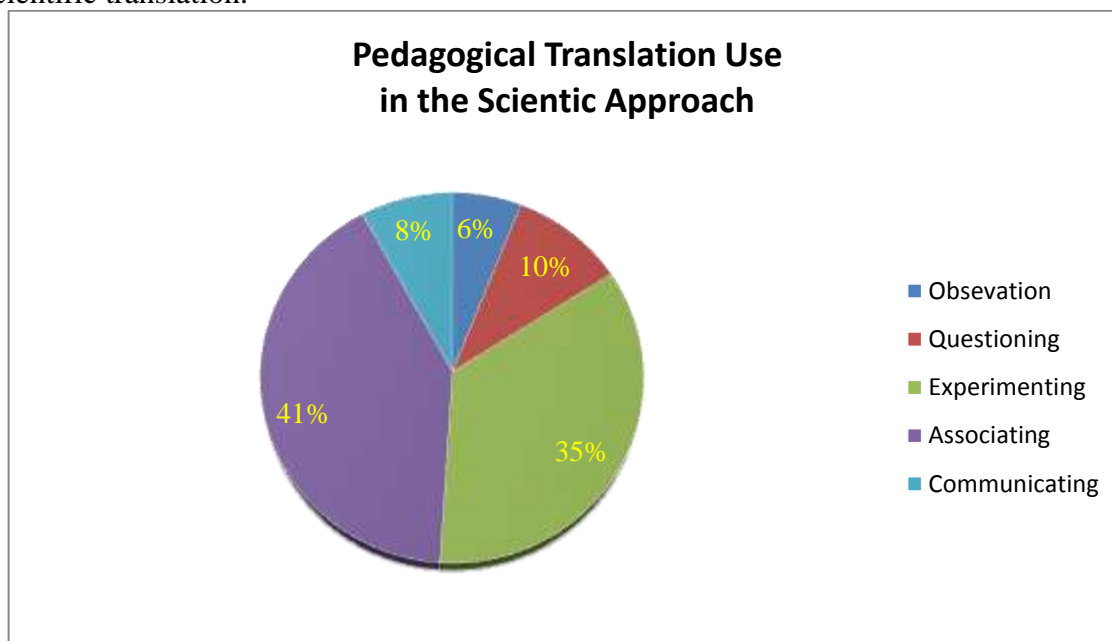


Figure 1. The Use of Translation

Based on the figure 1 above, it showed that the use of pedagogical translation for teaching by using scientific approach is 51 times. Then the most use pedagogic translation is HS.

After gathering and analyzing data, it also found that in the scientific approach activity, was often used in experimenting and associating activity rather than observing, questioning and communicating. The figure 2 below showed the percentage of pedagogic translation in the scientific translation.



**Figure 2.** *The Use of Translation*

In answering the research problem about the reasons why the English teachers used pedagogical translation, the researcher interviewed the teachers. There are some reasons of teachers to use translation in scientific approach of L2 such as: (1) The students are weak in English; (2) Translation can help the students to learn English; (3) Translation develops contrastive knowledge; (4) Using translation saves time during class; (5) There are the difficulties in explaining English.

Furthermore, the teachers used translation in L2 since the translation are intended such as, (1) As a technique to help students clarify the meaning of a word, phrase, idiom or sentence; (2) As a technique to check students' understanding; (3) As a technique to increase students' vocabulary; (4) As a technique for developing students' ability of contrastive analysis; (5) As a technique for assessing students' learning; (6) As a technique to strengthen students' command of English.

The explanation above relates with the previous study by Mohamed (2014). Mohamed investigated the pedagogical utility of translation in L2 teaching process. He explored the aspect of the use of translation by EFL teachers in classroom in Tripoli and nearby. Based on the data collected from 171 teachers of English as a foreign language, the following findings are: Translation is widely used by the English teachers in Tripoli and nearby areas; Some Libyan teachers do not use translation in teaching English as a foreign language; Teachers use translation in the classroom because their students are weak in English and using translation saves time during class; Some teachers believe that translation can help students learn English and develop contrastive knowledge; Some teachers use translation in class because they face

problems in explaining things in English; Then teachers use translation in EFL classroom as a technique to check students' understanding, help students clarify the meanings of linguistic units, increase students' vocabulary, develop students' ability of contrastive analysis, strengthen students' command of English, and assess students' learning.

## V. Conclusion

This study was devoted to the exploration of aspects of the use of translation by EFL teachers of English as a foreign language in MAN Medan. The findings of the study confirm that:

1. Translation was used by the three English teachers in teaching process by using scientific approach in the process of conveying and checking meaning of words or sentences, explaining grammar and classroom management. The experimenting and associating activity were the dominant used of using translation.
2. The reasons of using translation were facilitating communication, teacher-student relationship and the L2 learning. It might facilitate the communication and achieve the target of L2 learning. Then, it also built the relationship between the teachers and students that the students may ask everything when they encounter.

## References

- Academic Writing: A practical Guide for Students. London: Routledge.
- Arikunto, S. (2006). *Metodologi Penelitian*. Yogyakarta: Bina Aksara. Bailey, S.
- Blackman, Natalia. (2013). *EFL teachers' perceptions on the use of L1 in a primary and secondary classroom*. A dissertation. University of Edinburgh.
- Bogdan, Charles R. & Kopp Sari Biklen. (1998). *Qualitative Research in Education: an introduction to theory and methods*. USA.
- Brown, H. (2001). *Teaching by principles (2nd ed)*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Calis, E & Kenan, D. (2012). The Use of Translation in EFL Classes as L2 Learning Practice. *Social and Behavioral Sciences Procedia*, 46, 5079-5084.
- Cook, G. (2010). *Translation in Language Teaching*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cook, V. J. (2001), . Using the first language in the classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(3), 184-206.
- Dagilienè, I. (2012). Translation as a Learning Method in English Language Teaching. *Studies About Languages*. 21, 124-129.
- Dirgeyasa, I Wy. (2014). *College Academic Writing: A Genre Based Perspective*. Medan: Unimed Press.
- Emzir. (2015). *Teoridan Pengajaran Penerjemahan*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.
- Fernández-Guerra, A. (2014). The Usefulness of Translation in Foreign Language Learning: Students' Attitudes. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 2(1), 153-170.
- Florentina, G. (2007). *The Role of Translation in Foreign Language Teaching*. University of Pitesti.
- Flores, K. F. (2015). Second Language Pedagogy and Translation: The Role of Learners' Own-language and Explicit Instruction Revisited. 6(1), 51-65.

- Griffe, Dale T. (2012). *Language Teaching Research & Language Pedagogy*. London. Wiley-Blackwell, A. JhonWilet& Sons, Ltd., Publication.
- Harmer, J. (1998). *How to Teach English: An Introduction to the Practice of English Language Teaching*. (2nd ed). Longman.
- Johnson, A.P. (2008). *Teaching Reading and Writing: A Guidebook for Tutoring and Remediating Students*. Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Education.
- Kelly, N & Jennifer, B. (2015). Translation as a pedagogical tool in the foreign language classroom: A qualitative study of attitudes and behaviours. *Language Teaching Research*. 19(2), 150-168.
- KheradRanjbar, M. (2015). The Comparative Impact of Reading Comprehension and Translation Practices on EFL Learners' Grammar Achievement. In : *Journal of Studies in Education*. 5(4), 51-73.
- Kim Pham, C. T. (2017.) Reading Comprehension and Translation Performance of English Linguistics Students of Hung Vuong University: A Correlational Study. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 5(3), 79-85.
- Lodico, M., Spaulding, D., & Voegetl, K. (2010). *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice*. San Fransisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- M. Zaim. (2017). Implementing Scientific Approach to Teach English at Senior High School in Indonesia. *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 13(2), 33-40.
- Maxwell, J. A. 1996. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mehrabi, B. A. (2014). Pedagogical Utility of Translation in Teaching Reading Comprehension To Iranian EFL Learners. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 5(2), 381-395.
- Mohamed Azrien, M. A & Shukeri M. (2014). The Use of First Language in Arabic Language Classroom: A Teaching Buttress or a Learning Obstacle. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, 2(2), 55-70.
- Mohamed, J. (2014). Use of Translation in the Classroom by EFL Teachers in Libya (A descriptive study). *Arab World English Journal*, (3), 27-40.
- Moleong. (1998). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. CV. Remaja Rosdakarya, Bandung.
- Nation, I.S.P. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing*. New York: Routledge.
- National Education Association. (2000). "Ten Proven Principles for Teaching Reading", in: *State of the Art (ed): Transforming Ideas for Teaching and Learning to Read*. Department of Education: U.S.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Nida, E. A. & Charles, R. T. (1969). *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: EJ.Brill.
- Pan, Y. C. & Yi. C. P. (2012). The Use of Translation in the EFL Classroom. *Philippine ESL Journal*, 9, 4-23.
- Peverati, Costanza. (2015). *Translation in University Foreign-Language Curricula: An Analysis Of Teachers' Attitudes, With Reference To Vocational And Transferability Criteria*. A Doctoral Thesis. Universitat Rovira I Virgili.
- Resti Martanti, I. F. (2013). *Improving the Teaching Of Reading By Using Silent Card Shuffle Strategy (Scss) To The Eighth Grade Students Of Smpn 1 Seyegan In The Academic Year 2012/2013*. A Thesis. Yogyakarta: English Language Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Yogyakarta.
- Richards, J. C., & Lockhart, C. (1996). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms (6th ed)*. New York: Cambridge University Press.



- Ross, N. J., (2000). Interference and Intervention: Using Translation in the EFL Classroom. *Modern English Teacher*, 9(3), 61–66.
- Shiyab, S. (2006). *A Textbook of Translation: Theoretical and practical implications*. Antwerp: Garant.
- Silabus Mata Pelajaran Sekolah Menengah Atas/Madrasah Aliyah/Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/Madrasah Aliyah Kejuruan (SMA/MA/SMK/MAK): Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris. (2016). Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Jakarta.
- Silviana, E. (2008). *An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Translating Narrative Text (A case study at eleventh grade of SMK Hass Ashabulyamin Cianjur)*. English Education Study program Language and Arts Department, (STKIP) Siliwangi Bandung.
- Siregar, M. (2018). *Bahan Ajar Translation I: Latihan Translation Berbasis Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing*. Medan: Unimed Press
- Sugiyono. 2008. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Topolska, P.J. (2010). Use of L1 and Translation in The Efl Classroom. 11-25.
- Wiersma, W. (1991). *Research Method in Education: An Introduction USA*: Allyn and Bacon