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THE ROLE OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCESIN THE TRANSLATION FIDELITY TOWARD THE SOURCE TEXT

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ABSTRAK

Dalam menerjemahkan sebuah artikel dari bahasa Inggris ke bahasa Indonesia, masalah dapat terjadi dalam mentransfer makna. Selain itu, kompetensi penerjemah mengenai bahasa sumber dan bahasa target dapat mempengaruhi hasil terjemahan. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara kompetensi para penerjemah dan ketaatan terhadap teks terjemahan. Dalam melakukan penelitian mahasiswa diminta untuk menerjemahkan sebuah artikel berita bahasa Inggris ke bahasa Indonesia. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas para penerjemah menjalani kesulitan dalam mentransfer makna tanpa mengubah pesan dari teks asli. Oleh karena itu, ketaatan penerjemahan terhadap teks tidak terlihat. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa kompetensi linguistik para penerjemah dalam menerjemahkan bahasa sumber ke dalam bahasa target dapat mempengaruhi ketaatan suatu terjemahan.

Kata kunci: *kompetensi linguistik, ketaatan, terjemahan*

INTRODUCTION

Translation is the process of transferring the meaning of one language to another. Meanwhile 'translation' is a term, the 'translator' is the person who is in charge of transferring the meaning from one language to another and make it comprehensive to the audience of his or her culture. However, in transferring the meaning from the source language (SL) into target language (TL), is a complex process which requires the vast knowledge of the translator himself/herself. In conjunction to this, Hall and Hall (in Yulianti, 2011, p. 98) which explains the necessity in understanding the cultural context between SL and TL. Nida (in Venutti, 2000, p. 157) explains the cultural distance in corelation with linguistic itself. He elaborates an example that translation may involve languages and cultures that are closely related such as the translation from Frisian into English, or Hebrew into Arabic. He also explains about the translation of the languages that may not be related although the cultures are related such as translation from German into Hungarian and Swedish into Finnish. In this case, the languages are closely related because German and Swedish belongs to Indo-European language while Hungarian and Finnish belongs to Finno-Ugrian group. Furthermore, he explains

that the translation may involve language and cultures that are not related at all such as translation from English into Zulu, or Greek into Japanese.

Besides the necessity of mastering both cultures, the translator has to be aware to adhere into the two basis of translation in order to produce a translation product that is comprehensive to the audiences. Nida (in Venuti, 2000) states that there are two basics in translation – formal and dynamic equivalences. Formal equivalence focuses in form and content while dynamic equivalence focus on the naturalness of expression. However, translated text should preserve the meaning and the originality of the source text. During the process of translation, the translator should be able to replace the meaning of the word in the original text with those in the translated text which has to closest meaning. The loyalty of the translated text to its original source is called 'fidelity' of translation. This is in line with what Kolawole's and Adewuni's (2008) theory about 'fidelity of the translation' in which translation products should produce the same meaning of the original text. On the other hand, King (in Partee and Sgall, 1996) describes fidelity of the translation could be determined by comparing the meaning of the target text with the source text.

In this modern era, translation has been used in translating literatures and documents. Translating news article could be considered as one of the examples. News article is kind of text which can be established in many different languages. In fact, many news texts are recognized in English which is used worldwide. In reading the English news text learners may find difficulties in transferring the original text into their mother tongue. It is due to the differences in both SL and TL in their patterns, for example syntax, semantics, pragmatic, and vocabulary, one should have at least the competences mentioned before. Seeing this phenomena, this study was conducted to examine the fact whether translating news item text from Indonesian into English might be problematic. Furthermore, this study was carried on to determine whether or not the participants are loyal to the translation products of news article to the original. The participants in this study were students of Universitas Kristen Indonesia (UKI). They are in the second semester and have not acquired any background knowledge regarding to the theory of translation before. Hence, this study should provide insights for university lecturers in English Department about the importance of providing their students about theory of translation as well as to introduce them to linguistic features, such as semantics, lexicons, and pragmatics. Besides providing useful informations to the university lecturers in English and Art Departments, this study should be informative to translation practitioners about the importance of acquiring knowledge of linguistic features in relation to their profession. These are basic knowledge for them to be able to translate properly. This research has a question to ponder: "Does the translators' linguistic competence affect the fidelity of their translation product?" The case study below will provide the concise answer.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous Study

Two studies that have been conducted revealed the problems regarding to translating English texts into Indonesian. Indrayani (in Sari, 2011) found out that there are five basic problems in translation in the term of structure (grammatical matter), voice (the passive

and active voice), tenses (expressions of time), number (singular or plural), and case (possessive and relative pronouns). In the process of translating or interpreting the text, a translator may use tools such as dictionary or online translator to aid with the translation process. However, the translation tools are not quite reliable because they may produce error that may affect the translators' work. In conjunction to this, Weda (in Sari, 2011) has conducted research on how the translation tools may produce error that may hinder the translators from translating properly. He found out that translation tools, such as google translation and other similar tools often produce errors in translation due to their inability to translate complex sentences. These tools could only translate single words.

Nature of Translation: Definition and Equivalences

Newmark (1988, p. 5) points out that "translation ... is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended into the text." In addition, Nida & Taber (1982), define translation as an attempt to reproduce the meaning in the source language into an appropriate form of the target language in the matter of meaning and style. Meaning stands for the content of the message. The style refers to the originality of the translated product. Besides meaning and styles, a translator is also supposed to understand the equivalents in translation in which according to Nida (in Venuti, 2000, p. 156-157), there are two basics in translation: (1) formal equivalence and (2) dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence focuses on form and content in which the message in the receptor's language is compared to the source language's. On the other hand, dynamic equivalence focuses on the naturalness of expression. It relates values in the source culture into what is acceptable in the target culture. For example, the term "Holy Kiss" means a formal greeting in the New Testament era. In order to make it suitable to the culture of the translator, he or she may replace it with "handshake" instead.

Translation Competences

Zainnurahman (2010) elaborates the five

competencies of translations: (1) linguistic competence (2) textual competence (3) subject competence (4) cultural competence (5) transfer competence. Linguistic competence stands for the term 'intralingual translation' which explains how the translator interprets the verbal signs in the source language to be interpreted into the target language.

In this case the translator has to have a good knowledge in the linguistic aspects such as syntax and vocabulary. Textual competence stands for the importance to distinguish the type and convention of the text. The translator has to keep in mind that translating poetry is different from translating news items due to lots of use in metaphors in poems. In the matter of convention, it is important to know that expressions in both source and target language may be different. Hence, the translator has to be able to 'replace' the expressions with that one which suits the target language's culture. Subject competence is about the knowledge of the relevant subject (the translator) and expertise. The translator has to keep in mind about the relevancy of the genre of the translated text in conjunction with the source text.

Cultural competence explains how the expressions in the source language may be different in target language. This one is closely related to the textual competence. Transfer competence is the translator's ability to transfer message from source text to target text. The translator has to be able to replace the text of the original text with the appropriate form of the translated text without altering the meaning. In addition, in translating a text, one has to be able to translate the difficult expressions into proper ones.

Fidelity of Translation

A translated product should adhere to its original source. This term is called 'fidelity' of translation. In conjunction to this, Kolawole and Adewuni (2008) state that fidelity in translation is passing of the message from one language into another by producing the same effect in the other language (in sense and in form), in a way that the reader of the translation would react exactly as the reader of the original text. In contrast, King (in Partee and Sgall, 1996)

states:

Judging fidelity of translation then involves no more than extracting the content from the original, extracting the content from the translation and comparing the two. It is worth noticing that two steps are involved here. First the initial postulate must be accepted; secondly, the language of thought must be articulated and made explicit if it is to be of any practical use in the programme as stated.

Based on her statement, King would like to emphasize that fidelity of translation could be judged by comparing the meaning in source text in contrast with the original text. The translated text could be considered as 'loyal' only if it preserves the meaning of its original ones after the translator replaces the form of the word with the suitable one in the target language.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Method

The method the writers used in the research was qualitative. Therefore, they analyzed the data used descriptive approach.

Data and Sources of Data

The data in the study was the Indonesian translation (target language) obtained from students who are studying in English Teaching Study Program consists of 21 students. The participants have no background knowledge regarding translation theories because they were the students of Faculty of Education and Teachers Training, not specifically studying English literature or linguistic. They are currently in the second semester of their university years. The data used for this research were an extract from a well-written English paragraph of news article about 'education' taken from "Business News" magazine (May 2012, p. 1), a questionnaire containing two rating-scale questions and an interview. The English version was delivered to the students while the Indonesian version was kept for the reference.

Data Analysis Technique

Documentary technique was used to analyze the translation outcomes collected from the participants based on their loyalty to its

original text which was written in Indonesian. The outcomes were graded as "A" for being excellent, "B" for being average, and "C" for being poor. Participants whose scores were "A" had an excellent translation product. After being analyzed based on the original text, their outcomes' meaning remains close it. Grade "B" participants committed several errors in interpreting the word order which made the particular sentence seem ungrammatical. Participants with grade "C" committed a significant number of errors which brought the meaning away from the source text. The participants' opinions regarding to their translation product were justified in the questionnaire-filling and were categorized based on the categories written on its questions. The interview result was analyzed to find out the reason underlying the participants' difficulties in translating.

Data Research Procedures

Having collected the news article, the researchers then determined and distributed the extract to the participants. They were then instructed to translate the English paragraph into Indonesian based on their own interpretations. Dictionary or similar types of translation aids were allowed during the process. In the week after, the participants were instructed to fill out the questionnaire and certain participants who did not achieve satisfying scores were gathered for an interview. The interview was used to reveal the reason underlying their misunderstanding regarding to the context given, for grade "B" and "C" students were to answer all of three questions provided. The first question is to find out why the participants produced the erroneous words. The second is to know their opinion of translating English into Indonesian. And the last is to find out whether they understand how to translate the news article. While grade "A" students were required only to find out their perspective in translating the source text into target text and determine whether they understand how to translate the text given.

Verification of Data

After collecting and analyzing the data, the researchers used triangulation, member-check and reread the data for verification of data.

The researcher also asked for some experts are qualified in the field of translation to ensure the accuracy of the collected and analysed data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Based on the data analysis, the researchers concluded that there was a relation between the participants' linguistic competence and their ability in translating the text. The participants' overall achievements were shown as in the diagram below.

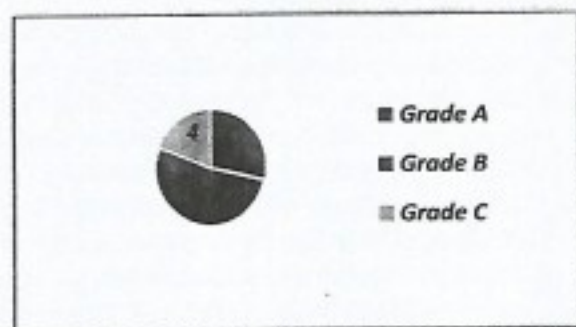


Diagram. The Participants' Achievement

The result shown in the table above that most of participants are being average in their performance with several misunderstanding regarding to the interpreting the meaning. Next, the participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire to translate the news article and to find out whether or not they understand how to translate the news article. The result also shown that majority of the participants found it difficult in translating English news article into Indonesian.

They also stated that they were in the neutral position regarding to their knowledge to translate news article as shown. The Table 1 reveals the participants' opinion regarding to the difficulty in translating the Indonesian news items text into English.

Majority of the participants admitted translating the text as "difficult". In the other hand, Table 2 shows the participants' opinion on their being knowledgeable regarding to how to translate the text. In this case, most of the participants admitted their position is "neutral" in which they are not too knowledgeable about the theory of translation.

Table 1. Participants Opinion on Translating TL into SL

Question 1						
Easy	Easier	Easiest	Difficult	More difficult	Most difficult	Neutral
5	0	0	13	1	0	2

Table 2. Participants Opinion on their Position of Translating TL into SL

Question 2				
Agree	Strongly agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
1	1	17	2	0

DISCUSSION

Based on the qualitative data collected during interview session, vast majority of the participants admitted that the main burden was due to their usage of the dictionary. They had admitted that the dictionary they were using did not provide the correct meaning. The result of the interview showed that the language competence of the students were still insufficient to produce the good translation. A large number of the participants encountered difficulties regarding to translating English news article into Indonesian. The outcome of the research proved that only 6 out of 21 participants were able to translate the article perfectly without any single errors, hence they were graded as "A". Whereas 11 out of 21 made few errors and graded as "B" while only 4 out of 21 were incapable in sustaining the meaning of the original text and labeled as "C". By the time they were asked for their opinion through questionnaire, the majority of whom admitted that translating news article from English into Indonesian was difficult. They also confessed that their position was neutral – neither overly knowledgeable nor blank at all regarding to their understanding of how to translate English into Indonesian news article. The main factor contributing to the problem is their usage of the dictionary which informed them the wrong type of translation as well as inefficiency in grammatical and vocabulary knowledge of English. Several participants were unable to distinguish the form of words, such as nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. In conjunction to this, they have not acquired

any background knowledge about translation theories. These problems affected their way of translating which brought the original meaning away from the translation outcomes.

CONCLUSION

There is a relation between the translators' language competency and the fidelity of the translation product. Despite the usage of the dictionary, the participants' linguistic competence plays the major role in the outcome of the translation. The translator's competency in both SL and TL is required to distinguish the word forms between SL and TL shown by the dictionary to suit it with the contextual need. For example, the translator typed the word 'spotlight' and the dictionary shows 'lampu sorot'. The translator had to decide whether it suited to the context or not. If the word 'lampu sorot' was not suitable then he or she was required to find another meaning of the word 'spotlight'. In translation, the loyalty to the original text should be sustained at all cost. The word forms and orders could be changed and replaced to preserve the original meaning.

SUGGESTION

The writers suggest that in the context of university level, the lecturers are supposed not only to teach and transfer the knowledge of the language skills but also notice the students' competency, their level of proficiency, and their understanding of the cultural background as well. By doing such mentioned, the students are enabled to implement their skills into a real life situation, particularly, in translation of text.

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