

PROBLEMS OF TEACHING TRANSLATION (PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES TOWARDS THE TEACHING TRANSLATIONS)

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Abstract

Translation is one of the courses provided in English Department of STKIP-PGRI Banjarmasin. To take this course the students must have already passed or at least have ever taken the prerequisites courses, that is, vocabular and structure III. Yet although these courses have already been taken by the students, the students still have problems in translating. The problem found in the field is the students do not master the intellectual sets.

Key words: translation, problems

A. Background

One of the courses provided for the seventh semester is Translation. This translation course is presented to introduce as a science and a skill. Translation study is the academic discipline related to the study of the theory and phenomena of translation. By its nature, it is multilingual and also interdisciplinary, encompassing any language combinations, various branches of linguistics, comparative literature, communication studies, philosophy and a range of types of cultural studies including postcolonialism and postmodernism as well as sociology and historiography. All the sessions in this course take the form of guided and supervised exercises. The materials of 50-100 words are taken from a variety of branches of knowledge, from a variety of sources (education, natural sciences, economics, etc.) so as to give the students various basic knowledge, as a background, required in translating.

This is in accordance with English Department S-1 STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin syllabus (2007:) which states that Translation course is aimed at providing the students with the skills of translating texts (especially from English into Indonesian) of approximately 50 –100 words from a variety of texts. The students are expected to acquire the elementary and intermediate skills of translation. They will be introduced to the learning activities like the theories of translation and practice of translation through discussion (class), lecturing (instructor-student), and home assignments. The topics being discussed in this course are (1) definition of a translation (translation), and translating, (2) sets of translation, (3) methods of translation, (4) translation process, (5) translation procedure and technique, (6) language function, (4) language concepts, (5) styles of language, (6) translator, interpreter, and subtitle : the difference, (7) Difficulty in translation, (8) A Translation : A specimen (9) English- bahasa Indonesia Translation (10) Bahasa Indonesia-English Translation.

Although the students had been taught the translation theory and they have known and understood the theory of how to translate well, yet most of them still have difficulty in

translating. This phenomena is quite interesting as they are supposed to be able to translate well. Based on my experience, I found some exhibits that can be used as cues to explain why this phenomena occur. The exhibits the writer means are they don't master intellectual sets that cover (1) Lack of background knowledge of source language, (2) Lack of knowledge of target language, (3) Lack of mastery of the field or subject matter, (4) Lack of the ability to apply knowledge shared.

Therefore, this case makes the problems arise in teaching translation. Theoretically, they must have understood how to translate, but practically they have difficulty in translating, it is because they don't master intellectual sets of translation well as discussed above. Thus, it is hard for them to be able to translate well.

B. Concept of Translation

Generally, translation is a process of rendering meaning, ideas, or messages of a text from one language to other language. The term translation itself has several meanings: it can refer to the general subject field, the product (the text that has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating). The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source text or ST) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL) (Jakobson 1959/2004: 139).

One of the most prominent definitions of translation is stated by Newmark (1988: 5) who defines translation as “*rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text*”. This definition stresses on rendering meaning of the source language text into the target language text as what is intended by the author.

Other definition of translation is as stated by Hatim and Munday (2004: 6). They define translation as “*the process of transferring a written text from source language (SL) to target language (TL)*”. In this definition they do not explicitly express that the object being transferred is meaning or message. They emphasize on translation as a process.

Brislin (1976) also defines “*translation is the general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language (source) to another (target), whether the languages are in written or oral form; whether the languages have established orthographies or do not have such standardization or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with sign languages of the deaf*”.

Meanwhile, Nida and Taber (1982: 12) state that “*translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message*”. This definition is more comprehensive than the previous ones. Nida and Taber explicitly state that translation is closely related to the problems of languages, meaning, and equivalence.

On the other hand McGuire (1980) states that

“*translation involves the rendering of source language (SL) text into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structure of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible, but not so closely that the TL structure will be seriously distorted*”

Very much similar to the Nida and Taber definition is that by Savory (1968) who maintains that translation is made possible by an equivalent of thought that lies behind its different verbal expressions.

From the definitions mentioned above, it can be concluded that translation is actually the process of finding equivalent meaning by rendering from source text to target text. Rochayah Machali (2001) and Mona Baker (1992) stated, the term equivalent meaning because refer to the the meaning which is transferred form source language to the target language. In this case, translators are faced with text as unit of meaning in the form of sets of words or sentences. This means that language which is used is unit of meaning in discourse which can be understood by the participants of the communication.

Translation has been understood differently from one student to another. Some might define translation as the process of transferring one language to another, while others may define it as the process of rendering mother tongue to foreign language and the others the process of changing one word to another, all this statement are of course incorrect, according to Catford (1965:22) *translation is the replacement of textual material in one language or source language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language or target Language (TL).*

Based on this Catford statement, it's obvious that the translation is not the matter of changing or transferring one language to another or rendering mother tongue to foreign language but, it also should consider its equivalency.

C. Translation devices

Translating is not simply changing words, but rather on seeing meanings or messages contained in a text, Some of the attributes the translator must have are a *very good* knowledge of the language, written and spoken, *from which* he is translating (the source language); an *excellent* command of the language *into which* he is translating (the target language); familiarity with the subject matter of the text being translated.

The students who take translation course are provided with the theory of how to translate yet, when they are dealing with translation, they still have difficulty, this case might be caused by they don't master the translation devices .

To be more specific, to be able to translate a good translator must have at 2 devices of translation, as according to Machali (2008) there are two devices which are normally used by the translator, namely: intellectual sets and practical sets. The intellectual tools cover mastery of the source language, mastery of the target language, mastery of the field or subject matter, the ability to apply knowledge, and skills. While the practical tools cover the ability to use referral sources, and the ability to recognize context.

1. Intellectual sets

a. Mastery of the source language and target language.

Source language and target language mastery are two of the intellectual tools need to be mastered. If we translated an English text to Indonesia, the source language is English. While Bahasa Indonesia is the target language. If someone only masters English while Bahasa Indonesia does not, he/she will not be able to translate the text well and also otherwise, mastering two languages means also mastering the

level of source language and target language grammatical, lexical meaning , morphological and rhetoric science , etc

b. Mastery of the field or subject matter

When the process of transferring is conducted, the choice of words or diction depend on the field or subject matter being translated. It influences the choice of appropriate word to adjust with its field. Mastering the subject matter translated, make it easier in translating process, especially when getting various terms associated with a particular specialization science

c. The ability to apply knowledge shared

To be able able to translate well, one also must be able to apply the knowledge he/she shares. Otherwise one will not be able to do that. One might have a good knowledge of structures, but he might not be able to well apply it. For instace, one might be able to mention the concept of simple present, the formulae of simple present tense, construct a an isolated simple present tense sentence. But, can one uses it in the form of passage translation ? The answer is might be 'yes' or might be 'no', depending on his skill.

People who have the potential English language with a good Indonesian language skill, does not by itself able to carry out the translation of texts into Indonesian optimally. Experience and flying hours in the translation system also determines the ability to perform activities that are trained and indeed require exercises

2. The Practical sets

a. The ability to use referral sources, either in the form of regular general dictionaries, electronic dictionaries, and terminology dictionary and translated resource areas

A translator should have a dictionary of two languages at once. It would be better if he also has a wide range of dictionaries, mainly related to the specialization of a dictionary of science. Thus, when he found a certain terminology in a discipline specialization, he will be easily to find a translation in accordance with the language meant.

b. The ability to analyze the context of a text, either context directly or indirectly context.

The both of type sets, still according Machali, also called basic capital must be owned by a translator. If one of the authorized capital was not owned or less, then the result of translation can reveal various shortcomings, depending on the level of ability to take advantage of the above sets. Deficiency or weakness in one or more of the authorized capital, causing the translation to experience weakness, depending on the capabilities of the device utilizing the above.

D. Problems in Teaching Translation

To be a good translator someone should has a comprehensive knowledge of both source and target languages. Students should read different genres in both source and target languages including modern literature, contemporary prose, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, announcements, instructions, etc. Being familiar with all these genres is important, since they implicitly transfer culture-specific aspects of a language

As discussed above that to be able to translate well, the students have to master sets of translation, one of the translation sets is intellectual sets, this intellectual sets have been the center of the writer intention and one of the skill components of intellectual sets is the mastery of source language and target language.

Translation is the process of replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). In this concept, there are two important terms need to be understood. The first is Source language (SL) and the second is target language (TL). SL is a term used to refer to the language of the text being translated, while the Target Language is the result of translation language of the text being rendered.

The phrase *Dear sir* translated in bahasa Indonesia as *Dengan hormat*, the phrase *Dear sir* then is the SL while *Dengan hormat* is the TL. Yet, it may be in the reverse. *Dengan hormat* may be translated as *Dear sir*. In this case the phrase *Dengan hormat* is the SL and the phrase *Dear sir* as TL.

As Catford stated above that the translation is the replacement of textual material in one language or source language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language or target Language (TL) and on the other hand Nida and Taber (1982: 12) also stated that translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message. It is clear that the translation is not the matter of changing or transferring one language to another or rendering mother tongue to foreign language but, it also should consider its equivalency as the writer previous discussed. To make considering translation equivalency we have to master intellectual sets that consist of the mastery of source language and target language so that we will know whether the readers of the target text accept equivalent information as the readers of the source text or not. As an example above, translation of the salutation *dear sir* as *Tuan yang terhormat* or *Tuan yang tersayang* is not acceptable, because the translation does not shows any equivalency. The above translation only shows similarity. Similarity is not the same as equivalency. Similarity tends to refer to the sameness or conformity in form while equivalency refers to the closeness in meaning.

The phrase *dear sir* is similar with the phrase *Tuan yang terhormat* as *Dear* is translated *yang terhormat*, while *sir* is translated as *Tuan*. Or the word *Dear* is translated as *yang tersayang* while *sir* is translated as *Tuan* is considered as similar, but not equivalent. Its equivalency is *Dengan hormat*. Because in Indonesian correspondence, the letter salutation uses the phrase *Dengan hormat* instead of *Tuan yang terhormat*. This use is based on Indonesian correspondent convention. It is one of the real example that can be used to emphasize the important of the mastery of intellectual sets. In other words, students who want to translate well, they have to know Indonesian correspondence, it means that they have to master target language as one of the components of intellectual sets.

E. Conclusion

To be able to translate one does not only must to have knowledge of translation theory but also need to master the linguistics of both languages and develop specific skills

and knowledge regarding the text. In addition, a translator must have an understanding of the cultures of both the source language and the target language.

The students who study translation theory well, but still lack of intellectual set mastery that consists of knowledge of source language, knowledge of target language, mastery of the field or subject matter, the ability to apply knowledge shared, they will still experience difficulty in translating. Thus, it is suggested for the students who want to take translation course to prepare themselves to learn further about the components of intellectual sets.

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