

A CONTINUUM ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' TRANSLATION SKILLS: Descriptive Qualitative Research

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research to identify students' translation skills based on Continuum and to find out the students' difficulties in translation at the fifth semester students English Department Makassar Muhammadiyah University. This research applied the descriptive qualitative research for the data collection by using translation paper test consisting 3 short paragraph with title "Food, Nutrition and Health" and an open-ended questionnaire consisting five numbers. The data was taken from 30 students in 10 class by using random sampling technique. The result of this research was in general the students have a good translation skill, although the students result is not consistent yet. It can be seen from the student's translation paper test result. The translation results understandable in some parts. Then the difficulties that students faced in translation are 2 aspects, first is diction and the second is meaning. They rarely choose appropriate words, because they took wrong word and also got the incorrect meaning. Besides the result from the translation paper test it can be seen in the questionnaire, there are some students stated that the difficulties in translation is the choose appropriate words.

Keywords: *Continuum Analysis, Translation Skills And Descriptive Research*

INTRODUCTION

Language are important thing in life, without language people can't communicate with other people. People usually give information or ideas through language. To share experience or stories each other. According to Francis (1958) as cited in Ba'dulu (2004) language is an arbitrary system of articulated sounds made use of by a group human as a means of carrying on the affairs on their society. By Pei and Gaynor (1954) as cited in Ba'dulu (2004) language is a system of communication by sounds.

The English language is the most influential language in the world. It is used by most countries in this world. People use the English as an international language to communicate by using this language, they have to learn skills of this language. In learning English, there are some important skills, Listening, Speaking, Reading

and Writing. However there is another important skill in learning English that we are rarely aware, namely Translation.

According to Newmark (1988) translation from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 in the advanced or final stage of foreign language teaching is recognized as the fifth skill since it has the special purpose of demonstrating the learners knowledge of the foreign language, either as a form of control or to exercise their intelligence in order to develop their competence. Translation is the replacement of textual material in one language, source language (SL) into target language (TL). Newmark (1988) stated that translation is not merely transferring in one language to another one, but also a process of rendering the meaning in the way that the author intended the text. Since translating text is rendering the text from SL into TL, it does not simply transfer the lexical unit but, translator responsible for maintaining the originality of the meaning.

According to Larson (1984) as cited in Choliluddin (2005) the purpose of translation is to transfer the meaning of a source language text into a target language text. This is done by replacing the form of the source language with the form of target language. The meaning itself is maintained, even though the form may be adjusted by transferring the meaning of the source language text using the natural form of the target language. In conclusion, it can be summarized that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language, SL into TL in which the translation keeps maintaining the originality of the meaning.

Nowadays, we know that there are some students who do not like to learn English. Besides, translation subject in Muhammadiyah University in Makassar is not interesting and useful as another subject. In translation we need more than one skill, so that the students have to pay more attention, as the expert said in above, translation is like the fifth skill. Another problem that is faced by the students is not easy to translate one sentence from source language to target language and there are some words that have more than one meaning, so the meaning is based on the situation or its context. Translation is not an easy work. A good translation must fulfill the criteria of accuracy and acceptability.

From the above statements, the researcher was interested to know students' translation skill at the fifth semester English Department Makassar Muhammadiyah

University. The researcher chose a descriptive qualitative research design as the method to study the students' skill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Continuum Analysis

Continuum is a tool of measurement. Continuum is a coherent whole characterized as a collection, sequence, or progression of values or elements varying by minute degrees <"good" and "bad"> stand at opposite ends of a continuum instead of describing the two halves of a line. Continuum is a continuous sequence in which adjacent elements are not perceptibly different from each other, although the extremes are quite distinct.

In the mathematics, this theory about continuum stated by Augustinus Louis Cauchy that include the mathematics elements in the graphic or scale. He stated that a continuum is a body that can be continually sub-divided into infinitesimal elements with properties being those of the bulk material, while in Continuum that stated by Larson contain 7 levels method of translation.

According to Larson as cited by Choliluddin (2005: 24) continuum or scale that used to depict the kinds of translation method from very literal until unduly free.

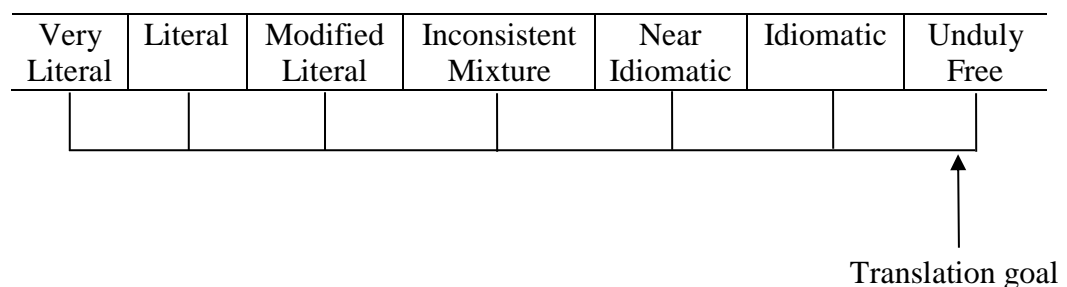


Figure 1. Larson's Continuum of Translation

According to Larson (1984) Translation method based on Continuum

1. Very literal is an interlinear translation. For some purposes, it is desirable to reproduce the linguistic features of the source text, as for example, in a linguistic study of that language;

2. Literal translation is a translation which its sounds like nonsense and has little communicative value. It may be very useful for the purposes related to the study of the source language, they are of little help to speakers of the receptor language who are interested in the meaning of the source language text;
3. Modified literal methods are a way to modify order and grammar of the source language in an acceptable sentence structure in the receptor language. However, the lexical items are translated literally.
4. Inconsistent mixture mixes literal and idiomatic translation in the final draft of translation.
5. Near idiomatic reproduces the meaning of the source language (that is the meaning intended by the original communicator) in receptor language without losing the natural form of the source language.
6. Idiomatic translation reproduces the meaning of the source language (that is the meaning intended by the original communicator) in the natural form of receptor language.
7. The unduly free translation adds extraneous information, which is not stated in the source text. It changes the meaning of SL; it distorts the fact of the historical and cultural setting of the source text.

There are some persons thinks difficult to distinguished where is the procedure and method in translation. Newmark (1988) translation methods relate to whole texts while translation procedures are used for sentences and smaller units of language

a. Literal Translation

As cited by Suryawinata & Hariyanto (2003: 40) literal translation is a replacement of a SL text into a TL text equivalency which is the structure of SL is maintained in spite of inappropriate into TL. However, Nida's and Taber's theory, as well as Larson's theory is contrast to Newmark's that is it is word for word translation as it is called unacceptably restricted translation.

b. Inconsistent Mixture

Inconsistent mixture is the method in translation that consist of 2 kinds of method. In some parts the translator used literal translation then in other parts used idiomatic translation. The most important things in Inconsistent mixture already understandable. The difference between literal translation, it is not translate with word by word but considered the meaning of the text but is not as natural as idiomatic translation (Choliluddin:24)

c. Idiomatic Translation

It is different with idiomatic translation. Nida and Taber say that *terjemahan yang menggunakan bentuk kata-kata dan struktur kalimat Bsa yang luwes dengan berusaha menciptakan kembali makna dalam Bsu (makna yang ingin disampaikan penulis atau penutur asli, di dalam kata dan tata kalimat yang luwes di dalam Bsa)*. In other words, this translation seems not as a translation but as an original text.

Concept of Translation

Translation is process performed on languages. This is a process of substituting an original text (SL) into another text (TL). There must be general principle that the translator follows. According to Nida and Taber (1982) Translating is the process of to find out the natural equivalence from source language to receptor language in terms of meaning and style. By Larson (1984) as cited in Choliluddin (2005) translation, consist of translating the meaning of the source language to receptor language.

Process of Translation

According to Larson (1984) as cited by Choliludin (2005:30-35), where translating a text, the translator's goal is an idiomatic translation which makes every effort to communicate their meaning of the SL text into the natural forms of the receptor language. Furthermore, he states that translation is concerned with a study of the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the SL text, which is analyzed in order to determine its meaning. The discovered meaning is then re-expressed or re-constructed using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context.

According to Brown (2000:216) “Mistakes, misjudgments, miscalculations, and error form an important aspect of learning in acquiring information”. Difficulties in translating is when someone who translates a text, but does not understand how to use words, phrases, sentences. Difficulties are usually compared with impotence.

In order to analyze the student language in an appropriate perspective, it is crucial to make a distinction between difficulties and impotence. In details, the two terms may be distinguished if they are viewed from the student’s existing knowledge.

METHOD

Research Design

Based on the title, the researcher chooses Qualitative Descriptive method as design method because it is comparable to collect the data from the students skills in translation. Based on the scope, there are two variables, first is the students skills in translation based on continuum, there are 7 levels in continuum but the researcher focused on literal, inconsistent mixture and idiomatic translation and the difficulties that students faces in translation which is focused on intralingual aspect.

Population and Sampling

The population was the students’ English Department at the fifth semester of Makassar Muhammadiyah University. There are 367 students from 10 classes. To determine the subject in this research, the samples were 30 students that picked by randomly in 10 classes.

Data Analysis

There were some procedures in doing analysis of data that the researcher applied in her research. (1) The researcher formulatee the research test and the focus of the research, (2) prepared the instruments of collected the data, in this case, translation test, (3) determined the subjects or students who were the representative of the research, the fifth semester students of English Department, (4) collected the data from the subjects of the research through translation test, (5) evaluated and

analyzed the data to come at the fixed result of the research, (6) reported the result of the data analysis to induce research finding.

Instruments

To collected data from samples, the researcher used observation and translation test as instrument.

1. Translation test

The researcher used translation test. In this translation test, the researcher gave some paragraph to the sample of the researcher. The sample translated it into English as a target language.

2. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is required for collecting data from the students or participants. By John (2012) the questionnaire aims to give the opportunity for the researcher to gather data from a number of people and the good thing about qualitative questionnaire is that they are flexible and could be worded in different ways to allow participant to responses in their own words. The questions of this research will consist of open-ended question form. Which is the questions allow the respondents to answer the questions by their own word. It consists of 5 numbers of questions related to the research questions.

RESULTS

The Students' Skills in Translation based on Continuum

In the continuum that is stated by Larson, there are 7 levels of method in translation. But in this research, the researcher focuses only on 3 levels. The first is, Literal translation that translate word by word without cosidering about another point such as context of the text or structural items of the sentences. The second is, inconsistent mixture, this is the 4th level in continuum. we can understand the meaning of the text with this method, but in some parts we can feel improper word. The last is Idiomatic translation, this is the 6th level of translation, this is the Translation's goal. The translator has to achieve this level. We can directly understand the meaning behind the text, although in some parts, we can't easily

translate the text. To resolve the problem above, the researcher used Translation paper test. This is the result of the first instrument.

Based on the obtained data, it is found that between 30 students as sample, most of them translated the paper test with Inconsistent mixture method which is the 4th level in Continuum by Larson. There are 5 students who translated it with Idiomatic translation method (Translator's goal) but it was not consistent, they translated some sentences with good meaning but in another sentences they translated it literally. It is hard to consistently translate idiomatically or literally. These translations are often a mixture of literal and idiomatic forms of language. For example, in the second sentences, *In a single year, on a three meal a day basis, most of us eat well over 1000 meals*, the students has various answer, just for *meals* the students translated into many kinds of bahasa, there are students who translated as a *cemilan* or *karbohidrat*. there are some literal translation that the students do, for *eat well* in some cases actually we cannot translate it literally, but some students translate it as *makan dengan baik*.

Bu the last sentences in *You should remember that other reasons for poor health might be lack of sleep, poor sanitation, poor housing and so on*, there are many students who translated into idiomatic translation, *Anda haruslah ingat bahwa sebab lain buruknya kesehatan mungkin disebabkan oleh kurang istirahat atau tidur, sanitasi yang buruk, keadaan perumahan yang buruk, dan lain-lain*. The students who do it even poorly, got good result in this sentences, they translated into inconsistent mixture, there some words they wrote that does not naturally, for example for *poor sanitation*, the students has various answer *lingkungan buruk, kurangnya kebersihan, lingkungan kotor* etc. That even they wrote different meaning, the result still can be used in the classroom.

Based on the data, in the first paragraph, most of them used Inconsistent mixture; these paragraphs became the most crucial part because this paragraph have more sentences than others do. And then, in the second paragraph, usually they translated half of them with inconsistent mixture or literal translation but in another half, they translated it by using idiomatic translation. In the last part, most of them succeeded to translate it with Idiomatic translation.

Literal translation is the process of translation by used word by word method, the translator does not think about the context or continuity of the text. This kind of translation cannot be used in the class, learning teaching process especially in translation. While inconsistent mixture is the process of translation that use half of idiomatic translation and literal translation. There are many translator that stuck in this method, besides this kind of translation usually use by teacher in classroom. The last is idiomatic translation, this is translator's goal, this kind of translation pay more attention in context of the text, the translator who reach this level, use delicate word or with a sentence "a good translation does not sound like a translation".

The Students difficulties in Translation

a. The Students' difficulties in meaning

In meaning, there are many students do errors because they used to make another meaning of the words for example: there is a phrase in the text "the quiet breathing at night" based on idiomatic translation, it means *nyenyaknya tidur dimalam hari* but there are many students or most of them mistranslate it. So, actually the most difficult thing in translation is when the student give a text with idiom and they command to translate it.

b. The Students' difficulties in diction

For the diction, the researcher count it as a error if the word too different with the real meaning. Besides, there are 11 phrases that researcher expected to be the difficult part in the paper translation test. First phrase in first pharagraph *from birth to death* the researcher translate it as "*sejak kelahiran hingga kematian*" between 30 samples, just 2 persons succesfully translate as it is, while most of them translate it as "*dari lahir sampai mati*". Second phrase in first pharagraph, *Our lives* means *kehidupan kita* there are 14 samples successfully translate it while the other students use *hidup kita* or *kita hidup*. The third phrase, *in a single year* which means *dalam setahun* or *dalam satu tahun*, but the researcher used the first as a key because it is more natural, for *dalam setahun* there are 10 students that use it, then most of them, 14 students use *dalam satu tahun*. The fourth phrase, *three meal a day* most of them already succeed in translate it, although in this phrase there are various answer there another 10 answer and 13 students face that difficulties. The next *the quiet breathing* no one

sample success translate it as *nyamannya tidur*, all of 30 students have various answer but the dominant answer is *bernafas dengan tenang*.

The body's need which means *kebutuhan tubuh*, there are also many various answers but most of them translate it *dibutuhkan tubuh*. There is one phrase that will difficult for the students translate it *lack of sleep* the researcher expected that the students will struggling when translate it but most of them, 25 students succeed in translate it.

DISCUSSION

On the basis of the research findings above, the research question written in Chapter 1 is answered that most of the students have good skills in translating the text, the students have got a good result in continuum although their translation is not consistent. Then, the researcher discovers two common problems that students face in translation, diction and meaning. These data are obtained after the students' translation result divided into phrase and sentences.

Of the research findings, it can be said that the students who have a good theory in translation mostly have good results, even in the questionnaire, the students say that they translated something into Indonesian easily, but in fact, the students who never practice their translation skill still translate it poorly. It means that actually the students have to pay more attention to the principle of both of languages, TL and SL which are totally different.

Comparing the research findings to the latest researchers, it is found that all there are many researchers who do researches in different years, different universities, different subject and different objects. For examples there is researcher who focus on difficulties in translating texts for beginner translator students and as a result is the students still have difficulties in understanding the text and in restructuring it into good Indonesian, their problem is still transferring to the meaning, but besides the students have to reconsider about their diction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the respondents of this study gave the researcher some knowledge about the translation subject.

Most of the students that gave contribution in this research actually got a good result in translation, in their second meeting with translation subject, they can use inconsistent mixture as their method in translation which is the fourth level in continuum, means that they have a good skill in translation.

Besides they thought that the difficulties of translation lied on the structural words, meaning and the unfamiliar words. The difficulties based on the paper test that students take are the chosen word and the meaning. First, they used incorrect word then they got wrong or different meaning.

The translation subject in the fifth semester even this is the second meeting with translation still does not interest for students. There are some students that think as a good and important subject but most of them think that is not interesting.

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