

AN ANALYSIS OF TYPES AND CAUSES OF TRANSLATION ERRORS

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Abstract

Translation is a process of changing an original text from one language into another. Nowadays its role is important in almost every single aspect of human's life. Since its role becomes more vital, the quality of the result of translation must be qualified as well. Doing translation is not an easy task, it is a combination of skill and art. However, there are many translator do some errors in translating a text. This research aims to find out kinds of error faced by translators and the causes of the errors. The researcher did library research to conduct this research. After reviewing some research related with kinds of error and the causes, the writer of this research discovered the most dominant types of errors in translation experienced by the translators lie in surface structure such as semantic, lexical, morphology, and grammar errors. However another type of errors in translation lies in deep structure which is connected with culture differences between both source and target language. The second discovery is about the causes of error in translation. The most common cause is lack of knowledge about linguistic aspect of the target language can cause the errors. Another primary factor is the anxiety of the translators themselves causes the errors in translation.

Keywords: Translation, Errors, Linguistics, Types, Causes.

Abstrak

Penerjemahan adalah sebuah proses perubahan sebuah teks original dari satu bahasa ke bahasa lainnya. Dewasa kini peran penerjemahan menjadi penting di hampir setiap aspek kehidupan manusia. Karena peranannya yang menjadi semakin vital, kualitas hasil terjemahan harus terqualifikasi juga. Melakukan penerjemahan bukanlah sebuah pekerjaan yang mudah, karena penerjemahan adalah gabungan dari kemampuan dan seni. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mencari kesalahan – kesalahan yang dialami penerjemah selama menerjemahkan. Peneliti melakukan studi pustaka untuk melakukan penelitian ini. Setelah meninjau beberapa penelitian, penulis menemukan tipe-tipe kesalahan penerjemahan dan juga penyebab yang membuat para penerjemah melakukan kesalahan. Dalam penelitian ini ditemukan bahwa tipe-tipe kesalahan yang paling dominan dilakukan oleh penerjemah terletak pada lapisan permukaan (surface structure) bahasa seperti semantik, leksikal, morfologi, dan kesalahan tata bahasa. Selain itu kesalahan lain yang terjadi dalam penerjemahan terletak pada lapisan bawah (deep structure) yang biasanya dipengaruhi oleh perbedaan kebudayaan dari bahasa sumber dan bahasa target. Kemudian untuk penemuan kedua dalam penelitian ini adalah adanya beberapa penyebab yang memicu penerjemah melakukan kesalahan ketika menerjemahkan. Penyebab yang paling umum terjadi adalah kurangnya pengetahuan tentang aspek linguistik dari bahasa target. Faktor lain yang juga menjadi penyebab terjadinya kesalahan adalah kecemasan (anxiety) dalam diri penerjemah itu sendiri.

Kata kunci: Penerjemahan, Kesalahan, Linguistik, Tipe, Penyebab.

INTRODUCTION

Through the history, written and spoken translations also interpreting have played a vital role in inter-human communication, for example in providing contact to important texts for scholarship and religious purposes. Yet the study of translation as an academic subject has only really begun in the past sixty years. In the English speaking countries, this discipline is now normally known as translation studies (Munday, 2001).

Nowadays, the propensity of development of the world in the 21st century is based on the integration and globalization. It is a common information that one country cannot be separated from others in this world community. In other words, people depend on each other for the survival, for the existence, and for the development of their own business. The need for communication and information exchange of people from one country to other countries increase more significant every single time. Since every country has their own language, thus the field of translation is needed as the element to bridge the language differences.

Translation has become an important study in this world. It is not only needed in education area. Since the overwhelming of technology, the role of translation also develop in almost every single aspect of human's life. Translation simply consists of changing form from one to another. What is meant by form is form of language, such as words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or even paragraphs (surface structure).

The term translation itself is described as a process of changing an original text in the original language into a different language by the translator (Munday, 2008). Translation includes transferring a message or meaning from source text to target text. Since translation is not only changing words from source language to target language, but also the message or meaning, thus it must be translated appropriately to convey the accurate meaning from source language to target language. Then the misunderstanding or miscommunication will not happen.

Furthermore, to present the meaning appropriately there are some steps in doing translation. The first is the translator should be studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text. Then analyzing the source text to determine its meaning, and the last is restructuring the same meaning using lexicon and grammatical structure which are suitable in the target language and its cultural context (Larson, 1984)

On the other hand, even the translator has enough knowledge about translation and linguistic theory and other related studies, there are still difficulties in doing translation. Some difficulties commonly experienced by the translators are meaning components (lexical items), same meaning occurs in several forms, one form represents several meanings, and one meaning represents several forms. According to some articles which conduct research about error in translation, they discover some types of error in translation and the causes of the error itself (Newmark, 1988).

In order to guide and limit this research, the writer of this research only focuses on the types of translation error and the causes of translation error. As stated before that translation has become an important study in this world because it can bridge the communication gap, especially in written aspect. Thus, this research is important to be done because by knowing the kinds of error and also the causes led the errors, the translators can understand what kind of error that mostly occur while translating. Another significant is by knowing the causes led the errors, it can make the translators

more aware in translating a text from certain language into another one, especially when the text contains specific terms related with the source text's culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation

The word translation has numerous meanings, it can denote to the general discipline, the product (the translated text) or the process (translating). The translating or the process of translation between two languages in written text include the role of translator that change a text from the source language (SL) into a text in target language (TL) (Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, 2008). The element that is changed from the source language into the target language is the form of language. Form of language consists of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs (surface structure).

To translate a text from source language into target language means to study the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text; analyze source text to determine its meaning; restructure the same meaning using lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context (Larson, 1984).

Moreover, translation examines the process of translating and its relationship with other disciplines, including: sociology, psychology, philosophy, and many more. The field of translation study is different with other discipline. Translation examines the process and the relationship between translation and other disciplines. Translation also has a role as a bridge to connect different languages and cultures, and contributes meaningfully towards cross-cultural communication (Kafipour & Jahanshahi, 2015).

Translation is not an easy work to be done as it is not simply the substitution of words in one language by another language, but the transmission of meaning and sense that the translator wants to convey in the most natural way. Therefore, it requires the training of prospective translators which are done carefully in order to produce efficient translators (Cúc, 2018).

According to Machali (2000) commonly there are two devices in translation, they are intellectual device and practical device. The intellectual device includes good skill in source language, good skill in target language, good skill in understanding the text which is translated, applying the knowledge that has gotten, and talent. On the other hand, for the practical device includes ability in using references, whether it is a written dictionary, electronic dictionary, or thesaurus dictionary as well as the translated field source; ability in understanding the context of a text, indirect and direct context.

Those two devices also can be called as the fundamental factor that must be had by the translator. If one of those devices is missing or lacking, it will cause the result of the translation is not qualified enough, based on what device he or she is

lacking (Machali, 2000).

Another reference also state the step to begin a translation. The first thing must be done by the translators is choosing a method of approach. Then when the translator begin to translate, they commonly use four levels more or less consciously in their mind. The first level is the SL text level, the level of language, where they begin and which they continually but not continuously go back for. Then the second level is the referential level, the level of objects and events, real or imaginary, which they progressively have to visualize and build up, and which is an essential part, first of the comprehension, then the reproduction process. The third level is the cohesive level, which is more general, and grammatical, which traces the train of thought, the feeling tone (positive or negative) and the various presuppositions of the SL text. This level encompasses both comprehension and reproduction, it presents an overall picture, to which we may have to adjust the language level. And the last level is the level of naturalness, of common language appropriate to the writer or the speaker in a certain situation (Newmark, 1988).

There are some criteria to determine whether the translation is good or not, they are use the normal language forms of the receptor language, communicates as much as possible to the receptor language speakers the same meaning that was understood by the speakers of the source language, and maintains the dynamics of the original source language text (Larson, 1984).

In conclusion, translation is a process of transmitting message from source language with the closest natural both the term and the style of target language (Salam, Akil, & Rahman, 2017).

Errors

After talking about the definition of translation, now the next issue discussed here is what is meant by “error”. It simply describes as something is wrong. Furthermore, an error is a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar situation or condition of production, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speaker’s native counterparts (Lennon, 1991).

Talking about the term of “error”, there are many people still cannot differentiate with the term “mistake”. Even both terms are used interchangeably, there is a difference between them. Related with scientifically speaking, error reflects a gap in student’s knowledge and it is systematic. On the other hand, mistake is generally considerate as a fault in performance and it does not occur systematically (Goff-Kfour, 2004).

Translation Error

An error refers to the production of incorrect forms in speech and writing by a non-native speaker of the target language, due to the incomplete knowledge of the rules of that target language. According to Pym (1992) states that errors come from

different levels of language, pragmatics, or culture. Another statement comes from Seguinot (1989) that argues if errors as the effect of misunderstanding the source text or incapability of translators in producing toward target text (as cited in Kafipour & Jahanshahi, 2015).

There are various types of translation error experienced by the translators. Previous studies have reported those kinds of difficulties. There are three kinds of error, they are linguistic error, comprehension error, and translation error (Popescu, 2013), (Cúc, 2018). Error in translation faced by the translators is not only because they lack of knowledge of the target language, but they seemly lack of knowledge in both source and target language such as the structure, vocabulary, and punctuation (Youfi 2014). Thus, it causes further errors in translation which are divided into three types of error, those errors are linguistic error, cultural error, and stylistic error.

On the other hand Kafipour & Jahanshahi (2015) stated that possible reason the error exists due to the translation training which does not give sufficient material. Due to that reason, the translators do some errors while translating. According to Kafipour & Jahanshahi (2015) research, they exposed other three types of error in translation, they are language error, miscellaneous error, and rendition error. Besides those kinds of error, Wongranu (2017) added some types of error in translation. The three types of error in translation are syntactic error, semantic error, and miscellaneous errors. On the other hand, another study found different kinds of translation error. Lexical error, morphological error, and syntax errors were found by Silalahi, Rafli, and Rasyid (2018) appeared in the result of scientific text translation from English into Indonesia.

Translation error not only occur in translating paper based. The following study discovers translation error in translation application which is translated manually by people. Since the translators in the application are people from any kind of background, there are some errors while translating texts. Five types of error were found in this translation application, those five errors are inversion of meaning, addition of meaning, omission of meaning, deviation of meaning, and modification of meaning (Salam, Akil, & Rahman, 2017).

The effect of translation error besides changing the meaning of the source text, the purpose of the source text will not be delivered well and it can make the readers misunderstand. Gunawan & Rini (2013) conduct research of error in translation in humor text. In their research there are translation errors in translating the humor text which causes the readers misunderstand with the purpose of the original humor text. The researchers stated errors in transferring the message and possible variation in translation as the types of error found in the result of humor text translation.

In this modern era where technology develop sophisticatedly, the innovation in translation world also develop. Nowadays there are some translation machines to favor translating certain language to another language. One of the translation machine which can help in doing translation is Google Translate. However even it is a kind of artificial

intelligence, there are some errors in the result of translation using Google Translate. Halimah (2018) in her paper presented three types of error found in Google Translate. The three types of error are semantic error, syntactic error, and

Causes of Translation Errors

Besides discovering the types of translation errors, the previous studies also presented the causes of translation errors experienced by the translators. Time limitation of translation training, unique register of Islamic texts, and culture differences between Iran and English countries were the factors caused translation errors (Kafipour & Jahanshahi, 2015). Popescu (2013) added another factor caused translation errors among translators was the lack of linguistic knowledge. Other researchers also found another causes of translation error. The interference of mother tongue (intra-lingual interference) of the translator can lead the error of translation and also the lack of knowledge of the target language causes translation error (Cúc, 2018), (Utami, 2017).

Additionally, Silalahi, Rafli, and Rasyid (2018) presented some further causes which led the translators did errors while translating. They said there were six causes of error, those are lack of knowledge, unable to compose correct grammar of the target language, not consulting with dictionary or employing translation machine. The researchers also added if the causes of translation error were not always came from the translators. The source text also can cause the translation error, such as bad quality of the source text, unclear sentences, and incoherent idea of the source text.

On the other hand, Wongranu (2017) gave another perspective about the causes of error. Carelessness which includes misreading and interference of background knowledge, low self-confidence, and the main cause affected the translation errors which was experienced by the translators was their anxiety.

RESEARCH METHOD

There are some steps of collecting the data. According to Kothari (2004, p. 96) there are some methods of collecting the primary data, they are: “(i) observation method, (ii) interview method, (iii) through questionnaires, (iv) through schedules, and (v) other methods which include ... (g) depth interviews; and (h) content analysis.”

This research is using content analysis method. Based on Kothari (2004) in his book, he explained content analysis as a method of data collection which deals with document substances, such as magazine, book, newspaper, and all of the verbal contents whether can be spoken or written. This research was using secondary data collection which means the data have already available, collected, and analyzed by other researchers.

The data for this research were 10 articles from various journal which conducted research in translation error. The writer of this research used keyword translation error to find out the related articles. Then the collected articles were classified based on the

types of translation error and the causes of translation errors. After that the writer took notes for some important information.

FINDINGS

Nowadays translation has become important in human life. However translating a text from a certain language into another language is not an easy task. Some translators face difficulty in transferring source text into target language. Previous studies have reported some kinds of difficulties experienced by the translators. Yousofi (2014) found many Iranian novice English Translators did error translations in translating English text into Persian text and vice versa. He showed that errors occurred on the result of their translation were caused by linguistics, cultural, and stylistics difficulties. He concluded that those translators did not have enough background in both English and Persian. What is not clear yet in this research is the factors caused those difficulties, because he was only interpreted the texts. This is an important issue for future research, thus Yousofi (2014) suggested holding a research using interview or questionnaire to find the source of those problems.

Similarly, Kafipour *et al.* (2015) also found error translation done by Iranian Translators in translating Islamic texts into English. Due to practical constraint, this research only provides 9 Islamic books which were translated from Persian into English as the data. This research conducted by Kafipour *et al.* found another types of error translation appeared in the translated text. They reported that many Iranian translators made mistakes in translation mostly on language error category, then followed by miscellaneous and rendition error categories. Interestingly, the authors presented the causes of error translation made by Iranian translators. Those were time limitation of translation training, unique register of Islamic texts, and culture differences between Iran and English Countries.

It has been discussed that many novice translators or students who tried to translate a certain text into English and vice versa experience error analysis due to many factors. Another research also found some types of error translation made by Thai university students (Wongranu, 2017). In contrast, in this case the frequency of error translation in translating from Thai into English was higher than translating English into Thai. Wongranu (2017) assumed it was caused Thai students were less proficient in English, as their second language. Syntactical, semantical, and miscellaneous errors were found as the types of error translation faced by the students (Wongranu, 2017). Factors found by Wongranu (2017) to be influencing the errors among the students were caused by their anxiety. It led other factors such as translation procedures, carelessness, and low self-confidence. This research crucially can be an important suggestion for teachers who teach translation class. They can help the students to be more confident. Significantly, it also can improve the students' ability in translation.

Furthermore, Popescu (2013) analyzed error translation done by Romanian

EFL students using corpus. This research has some similarity with the previous studies where there are 3 types of translation error occurred in the result of translation. By using corpus in analyzing the translation text, Popescu (2013) found linguistic, comprehension, and translation errors appeared there. The most frequent errors translations were morphological and collocational errors. Thus, Popescu (2013) concluded that the translators' collocational competence needs to be improved. In the next step of this research, the translators were asked to revise their work, but they still cannot did it well. Two causes affected this case were they lack of linguistic knowledge and did not know where to look the correct structures. Since there were many translators lacking in collocational competence, to solve this case Popescu (2013) suggested to start using dictionaries of collocations, online concordances, or lexical database.

Relating with the research conducted with Popescu (2013), Cúc (2018) also found the same types of translation error in Vietnamese EFL students. He conducted this research toward 36 students from the 4th year of English Linguistic Major. Those students are asked to translate some texts from Vietnamese language into English. Then result showed if there were three types of error found in the result of those 36 students' translation. Those types were linguistic, comprehension, and translation errors. After discovering the types of errors, then the researcher found if there were 2 possibilities causes which led the errors. The first was inter-lingual interference and the second was intra-lingual interference. Inter-lingual interference was also known as mother tongue interference. This interference made errors in the students' translation because they used their first language linguistic knowledge, rather than the target text linguistic knowledge. Since there were some differences from both source text and the target text, then it made the errors happened. For the second cause was intra-lingual interference. In this case, the students might accept the rules of English wrongly, misunderstood the concept of a particular rule, applied the rule incompletely, and ignore the exception rule (Cúc, 2018). Then Cúc (2018) recommended to overcome these problems. He suggested the students to read more English texts, thus they will be more familiar with its linguistic knowledge.

The inter-lingual interference and intra-lingual interference which were discovered by Cúc (2018) also found in Utami's research (2017). Before discussed about the causes of the errors, firstly Utami (2017) tried to discover types of translation error towards 40 students of college of English Major. They were asked to translate 20 Indonesian sentences into English. Unluckily, they made some errors dominantly in grammar section. Utami (2017) then classified the grammatical errors into three types, the first was global errors, then the second is local errors, and the last is other errors. The most dominant errors appeared in the result of translation is local errors. Regarding to Utami (2017) two possible causes of errors were intra-lingual and inter-lingual. Those students mostly made mistake by making false concept hypothesized and denying the rules of the target language (Utami, 2017).

Another research conducted by Silalahi, Rafli, & Rasyid (2018) found out different types and causes of translation errors. The research was done towards 55 college students of 6th semester of English Major. The data of the research were the result of scientific articles translation from English into Indonesian language. Before the students began translating the text, they were given 2 translational strategies; structural and semantic strategies. From both strategies, the students tend to use semantic strategy. However, even they have provided translational strategies, they still made errors in their translation result. There were 3 kinds of error in the translation result. The first was lexical error, then morphological error, and the last was syntax error (Silalahi, Rafli, & Rasyid, 2018). The writers then claimed if there were some factors led the errors among the students. There were 5 possible factors according to Silalahi, Rafli, & Rasyid (2018), they were; lack of understanding of the source text, incapable to compose sentences of the target language correctly based on the grammar, not using dictionaries or translator machine, then, bad qualities of the source text, and incoherent ideas of the source text. To sum up, the factors caused errors were not only coming from the translator, but the quality of the source text also can be the factor of error.

After discussing about error translation in paper based, the following study concerns about translation error in translation application. Salam, Akil, & Rahman (2017) examined error translation in Crowdsourcing application. It is an online translation application which translates manually by people. Since the application is translated by people from any background, there are some errors while translating texts. The data of this research only focus on Indonesian sentences which translated into English. Apparently, there were 5 kinds of error, they were inversion of meaning, omission of meaning, deviation of meaning, and modification of meaning. Moreover, the most dominant type of error was deviation of meaning. Deviation of meaning happened because the translators lack of linguistic knowledge. This kind of error can affect the whole meaning of the text. Since the effect of the error analysis is very crucial, thus this study can make the translators more aware in translating a text from certain language into another language.

Discovering translation error in translation application was not only conducted by Salam, Akil, & Rahman (2017). On the following year, Halima (2018) also did a research about translation error in translation machine. Halima (2018) conducted research about translation error found in Google Translation. It is a product of Google where it can translate a text from one language to another automatically. However, even the machine can translate automatically, there were still some errors in the translation result. Halimah (2018) classified there were three kinds of error made by Google Translation. The most dominant error found in the result of Google Translation was semantic error, then followed by syntax error, and the last was morphology error. It can happen because Google Translate tend to translate the text word-per-word without

looking at the cultural aspects. Thus, it can lead the errors happened.

Moving to the last research conducted by Gunawan & Rini (2013) about translation error in translating humor from English into Indonesian language. The data of this research were 80 translation texts translated by 20 students of Basic Translation Class. Transferring humor needs more effort because the translator should find the most appropriate form without changing the essence of the original text, thus the humor can be delivered well. However based on the data, the students made some mistakes in translating the text. The researchers found 2 types of error in the result of humor text translation. The first was error in transferring message, it contained 4 categories, errors which change the whole story; errors which change half of the story; errors which change one sentence; and errors which change one phrases. Then the second error was possible variation which also divided into some categories such as adding; deleting; using foreign word; saying it in a natural way; avoiding colloquial word; avoiding redundancy; and diction (Gunawan & Rini, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Since translation is not an easy task because it is a combination of both skill and art, thus the translators must master in some important aspects of source and target language. For example be familiar with translation theories, have enough knowledge of linguistics from both source and target language, and also be aware of culture differences between source and target language. However there are still many translators experiencing difficulties in translating text from source language into target language, thus they make errors while translating. Those errors occur because of some factors, such as anxiety and lack of knowledge of linguistic. In order to decrease the frequent of errors in translation, those factors should be solved thus the following errors can be prevented. This research hopefully can help those who want to be a translator to be more aware about the errors and the causes, then those two major problems can be prevented. Thus the result of the translation can be more qualified. Another suggestion to minimize occurrence of the errors, the translators can use any supporting tools such as dictionary, for example dictionary of collocations or dictionary of certain discipline; online software such as online concordances or lexical database.

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