

**THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION SKILL IN DEVELOPING
STUDENTS' POTENCY: A CASE STUDY IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT,
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

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ABSTRACT

The study of translation concerns with meaning and transferring the message from source language to target language. Translation is also regarded as a science, a skill and an art. This study aims at identifying the role of translation skill for developing the English department students' potency. This study applies a qualitative research. It takes location in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The sources of data are informant, event and document. The collected data are taken from an open-questionnaire, in depth interviewing, observation and content analysis. To analyze the collected data, the writer uses an interactive analysis. The result of the research shows that there are five roles of translation skill for developing English department students' potency. They are academic, practical, commercial, psychological, and social roles.

Keywords: *translation, skill, and english department students*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian penerjemahan membahas makna dan pengalihan pesan dari bahasa sumber ke bahasa sasaran. Penerjemahan dapat dianggap sebagai ilmu, keahlian dan seni. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi peran kemampuan menerjemahkan untuk mengembangkan potensi mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif. Sumber data berupa informan, peristiwa, observasi dan analisis isi. Untuk menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan analisis interaktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada lima peran kemampuan menerjemahan untuk mengembangkan potensi mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris. Lima kemampuan ini adalah kemampuan akademis, praktis, komersial, psikologi dan sosial.

Kata Kunci: *penerjemahan, kemampuan, bahasa Inggris, potensi mahasiswa.*

1. Introduction

Translation activities have a great role in developing science and technology from abroad. The development of science and technology is influenced by the quality of the human resources. There are many ways to improve the quality of human resources. One of them is by increasing their ability in understanding of the recent knowledge and technology. Meanwhile, it cannot be denied that most of the available books, dealing with knowledge and technology are written in English. Sadtono (1985: 141) says that there are 75 % of the available books, collected by Indonesian library are written in English, however there is only 5 % of all readers understand English. It means that the coming of translation is one of the alternative solutions. In other words, based on the case above, it can be stated that translation can be a bridge in transferring the message from English to Indonesian. By translating some English books, Indonesian readers who do not understand English can read them and they may get the knowledge that they want.

Translation is not an easy task. It needs a serious attention and concentration. It is due to the fact that the core of translation is a transfer of 'meaning' (message). The translator must be careful in replacing meaning from source language into target language. It is also hard forbidden for the translator to do 'gain' or 'loss' toward the messages. The translator should be able to look for the closest meaning from source language into target language. The translator must also keep the excess and mission in the source language then transfer them into the target language. If the translator can translate well semantically but he cannot move the closest mission, the result of translation can be non-equivalent. The translator spends his much time and energy carelessly. Therefore, to avoid this wasting time and useless activity and to have a good work, the translator should master not only linguistically both L1 and L2 and materials that will be translated but also

the theory of translation well.

Students of English department have a great potency to be the translator. This is due to the fact that they get translation subject consisting of more than 4 credits. In their studying, the students will not only focus on discussing the theory of translation but also doing some exercises as practice. The last activity is more dominant in the class. Therefore, they have great opportunity to be the translator.

The problem of this study is what are the roles of translation skill for developing English department students' potency? Thus, the objective of this study is to know the roles of translation skill for developing English department students' potency.

1.1 The Definition of Translation

There are many linguists who have different ways in defining the term of 'translation'. Catford (1969: 20) states that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. Pinchuk (in Soemarno, 1988: 28) states that translation is also defined as a process of finding a target language equivalent for an source language utterance. Savory (in Nababan 1997: 14) mentions that translation is made possible by an equivalence of thought that lies behind its different verbal expressions.

The other linguist, Nida (1969: 12), explains that translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. Mc Guire and Newmark also have different definition. Mc. Guire says (1980: 2) that translation is the rendering of a source language text into the target language so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structure of the source language will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the target language structures will be seriously distorted. Translation is also a craft consisting in

the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language (Newmark, 1981: 7)

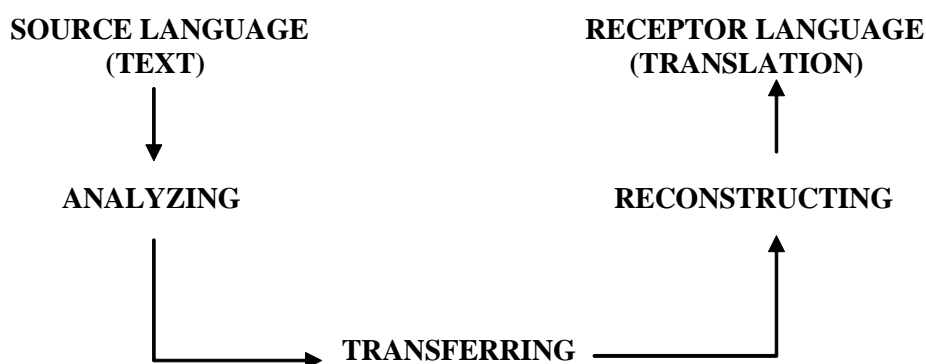
From those definitions, the writer may conclude that translation is the process of transferring meaning from source language into target language, for example, from English into Indonesian. The translator must be careful in transferring the meaning. It is due to the fact that meaning is very important in translation activity. If the translator cannot get the right meaning from the source language, the result of the translation will be dangerous.

1.2 Translation Process

Process of translation cannot be away from discussing meaning. Meaning will be reflected by the message in the text. There are many linguists who have different concepts of translation process. The followings are some opinions about translation process. Soemarno

(1988: 28) says that process of translation is some steps that should be done by the translator before beginning his work on translation field. Those steps are (1) analyzing, (2) transferring, and (3) restructuring. It means that before translating a certain text, the translator should follow those steps. The other linguist, Nababan (1997: 13) defines that process of translation is the series activities which done for transferring the message from the source language to the target language. For this, his statement is not so different from Soemarno's concepts. They are analyzing, transferring, and restructuring.

Larson (1991: 135) says that the focus of translation process is on 'meaning'. While Nida (1975: 80) explains that there are three steps of translation process: (1) analyzing, (2) transferring, and (3) reconstructing. This translation process is commonly used by the other experts in translation studies as seen in diagram below.



(Translation Process according to Nida, 1975: 80)

From those explanations the writer may draw conclusion that the process of translation is some phases that must be followed by the translator in doing his work. The phases consist of analyzing, transferring, reconstructing and restructuring. The works means translating a certain text from source language to target language.

1.3. Method of Translation

After discussing the definition and translation process, the next discussion is about the method of translation. Catford (1969: 21) divides translation into three distinctive types, namely: (1) full translation v.s partial translation, (2) total v.s restricted translation, and (3) rank translation. The distinction between full

and partial translation relates to the extent of source language text, which is submitted to the translation process. In a full translation the entire text is submitted to the translation process, that is, every part of the source language text is replaced by target language text material, for examples;

Indonesian : *Aku cinta Indonesia*
Dia akan pergi ke sana
Mereka tidak membeli apa-apa
 English : I love Indonesia
 He will go there
 They didn't buy anything.

In a partial translation, however, some parts of the source language text are left untranslated. They are simply translated to and incorporated in the target language text, either because they are regarded as 'untranslate' or for the deliberate purpose of introducing "local color" into the target language text or even because they are so common and frequently used that translation is not needed. For examples:

Indonesian : a. Saya suka *humberger*
 b. Rock Hudson meninggal karena *aids*
 c. Kami memerlukan *mikro-film*
 d. *Pesinden* itu menyanyikan *megatruh* dengan sedihnya
 e. Ibu masak *rujak cingur* untuk makan siang
 English : a. I like *humberger*
 b. Rock Hudson died of *aids*
 c. We need *microfilm*
 d. The *pesinden* sang *megatruh* sadly
 e. Mother cooked *rujak cingur* for lunch.

The distinction between total and restricted translation relates to the levels of language involved in translation. In total transla-

tion, source language grammar and lexis are replaced by equivalent of the target language grammar and lexis. The third type of differentiation in translation according to Catford relates to the rank in grammatical hierarchy at which translation equivalent is established. This rank translation can be in the form of: word for word, group for group, sentence for sentence etc. In this type of translation, lexical and grammatical adjustment should be applied to achieve equivalent in terms of meaning. Meanwhile Nababan (1997: 20-33) and Soemarno (1988: 23-28) mention that there are eleven methods or types of translation, namely word for word, literary, free, dynamic, pragmatic, esthetic-poetic, ethnographic, linguistics, semantic and communicative, communicative, and semantic translations.

From explanation above it can be seen that mainly there are three methods of translation. They are (1) word for word translation, (2) literary translation and (3) free translation. Translator never uses only one of them. Usually he uses all of them depending on the text that will be translated.

1.4. Translation as a Science, Skill and Art

It is not a new issue to discuss the existence of translation. Is translation as a science, a skill or an art? This problem has been existed along time ago. For example, Carry (in Nababan, 1997: 8) says that translation is an art. Perhaps, this statement is influenced by his specialization in translating literary books. Besides, his competence in translating literary books is skillfully. The similar argument is stated by Bornstones (1993: 76). He says that translating poetry is an art and poetry is a product of art. He also explains that the problem of meaning is a part of the core in translation studies and semantics is a part of semiotic, which needs linguistic analyses.

However, it must be understood also that the translation is 'Applied Science'. It is due

to the fact that translation needs many supports. To have a good result of translation, it needs another science, like linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and the material that will be translated. Jumpelt (1981: 33) argues that translation is a science. This idea is influenced by the background of his knowledge and specialization, which focused his translation on scientific works and technological documents. It is, however, important to know that translation is not 'inner talent' only. The ability in translation or translation skill can be transferred, taught and improved from time to time.

Translation can also be classified into a skill. This skill may be obtained by doing as many as exercises possible. The proverb says that 'practice makes perfect'. By doing a lot of exercises from day to day, this skill will be achieved. The students will be skillful. Practice will help trainees or students in mastering this skill.

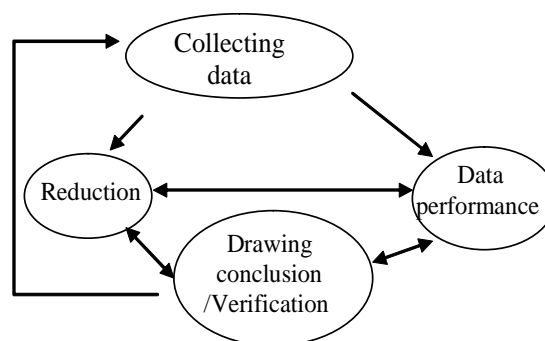
Actually the question 'Is translation as an art, a skill or a science?' is not good question because this question will force people to choose one of them. In fact, they cannot decide that. It is impossible to justify that translation is an art or a science only. It is also difficult to understand that translation is an art or a skill only because in translation process the translator also uses semantic or linguistic analyses.

Based on the explanation above, the writer concludes that translation can be classified as an art, a skill, as well as a science. The next problem will appear when the translator applies them in accordance with the situation.

2. Research Method

This study is a qualitative research. This study is done in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The sources of data are informant, event and document. The collected data are taken from an open-questionnaire, in depth interviewing, observation and content analysis. In this study, the writer has focused on 12

informants. They are 5 lecturers and 7 students. To check the validity of data, the writer uses data and method triangulations. Meanwhile, to analyze the collected data, the writer uses an interactive analysis as seen in the following diagram:



3. Result and Discussion

Based on the process of analysis, the writer finds five roles of translation skill for developing English department students' potency. They are academic, practical, commercial, psychological, and social roles.

Academic role means that by mastering this skill, students can improve their academic achievement. It is due to the fact that their reading skill may influence them in understanding the text they read. By having a good skill in line with translating materials (texts or books), automatically, they can read the text that will be translated well. Without this competence (reading skill) their translation result will not be so good. They cannot transfer the message well.

On the other hand, it can be stated also that a good skill in translating texts influences their academic achievement. Whether agree or not, translation activity may improve their academic performance.

Practical role means that by having a good skill in translating texts, students may apply their ability, especially, in writing research paper. As we know that, at the end of their study, students of English department should write a re-

search paper. In this research paper they support some quotations taken from scientific books. When they have translation skill, they have no problem in getting or rewriting a quotation.

Translation is important because not all books needed as references in writing the research paper are written in English. Some of them are written in Indonesian, Japanese or Dutch. After rewriting the quotation in source language, they should explain it in English. In this step, translation skill may help them. So, by understanding this problem we may justify that translation has a practical role.

Translation skill helps students in doing business. Business here means that students can sell their competence dealing with translation skill. Students may promote themselves as translator through newspaper, door to door or writing a banner at home or boarding house as a translator, even joining the translator agent. This activity may support them in getting the consumers. Usually the consumers are also UMS students that do not master English well. They are the students from non-English department. They have problem in line with translation so they may come to the translator.

Commercial role means that students are able to translate and to get new income. This income is an extra or additional income because their main task is studying. Sometimes, they are not only getting money but also receiving some goods, like dictionary, clothes, lunch box or dinner as the compensation from their work.

They, moreover, are able to be an agent of a certain translation service bureau. If they are skillful, of course, the translation service bureau may join them in carrying out translation business. According to one of the informants, usually students do this commercial role in cooperation with a certain translation service bureau. They use 50: 50 system in dividing the benefits. The task of bureau staffs is receiving the order and typing the translation

result using computer in double spacing. The task of the translator is translating the text using his handwriting. If the price is Rp. 10.000,- each pages, so the translator will get Rp. 5.000. Usually, students who have mastered translation well, they do this commercial role and they brave enough to do a business.

The next role is psychological role. Translation skill is also concerned with psychological role. Psychological role here means that students who can translate well have a great self-confidence. They also will be prouder and not easy to give up. They may share their knowledge with their friends actively. They are always ready in all time during attending the lecture, especially, if they follow teaching learning process subject which explained in English. This role will have a great role in campus, at home, or boarding house. They may show that they are brilliant students. They believe with their own capability, competence, and thought.

Social role means that the translation skill can be used to help other people. As we know also that human being cannot live individually. He needs friends and environment. He is not only individual person but also society member. It is impossible for him to avoid other people, or he does not need other people.

This mutual correlation may reflect a good social interaction among society members. Each person has duty to help one to another. Students can use their competence dealing with translation skill in helping other people or students, especially their friends. For example they may help their friends who are writing research papers. In this process of writing, he can take certain participation. It is also usual for village people to assume that undergraduate is skillful. Student of university is regarded as a young scientist that should be able to do everything. Therefore, when a village leader wants to translate some important documents into English, he asks him (student) to do this job. By doing this task well, of course, he can feel that translation has social role. This kind of activi-

ties can be done also for helping his sisters, brothers, and everyone that needs it.

By understanding those examples, the writer may conclude that translation is able to increase human relationship or friendship as the media for helping one to another. Their activity can be done whenever they want, especially in campus, at home, or boarding house.

4. Conclusion

In the end of the discussion, the writer may draw conclusion that translation has an important role in developing the knowledge and technology. Translation is not an easy task. It needs a serious attention and concentration. Translation is the process of transferring meaning or message from source language into target language. There are three steps in translation process, namely (1) analyzing, (2) transferring and (3) restructuring. Generally, there are also three types of translation; (1) word for word translation, (2) literary

translation and (3) free translation. On the other hand, translation is also able to be claimed as an art, a skill and a science. Based on result of the analysis, it can be found that there are five roles of translation skill for developing English students' potency of UMS. They are academic, practical, commercial, psychological, and social roles. Academic role means that by mastering translation skill well, students can improve their academic achievement. Practical role means that by having a good skill in translating texts, students may apply their ability, especially, in writing research paper. Commercial role means that students may be able to translate well and they get new income. This income is an extra income because the main task of students is studying. Psychological role means that if students can translate well and correctly, they will have a great self-confidence. Finally social role means that the translation skill can be used to help other people at home, in village or campus.

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