

The Equivalence Problems in the Translation of “Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’Etat in Indonesia”

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Abstract: Translating a text from one language to another can never be identical in meaning and often creates problem. This paper aims to find out the equivalence translation problem in the translation process of “Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’État in Indonesia” from English to Bahasa Indonesia. In order to confirm the problem, researchers have analysed the equivalence within target text and the source text specifically in the word and grammatical by defining the possible literal or conceptual definitions. The results indicate that from five aspects of the text analysed, only one aspect proved to be equivalently translated. However if they are observed from conceptual point of view, all of the aspects are proved equivalent. These findings suggest that further research should consider on the same texts translated by the different translators.

1 INTRODUCTION

Translation is a practice of transferring thoughts and message from the source language to the target language. House (2009) defined the act of translation as “the replacement of an original text with another text”. The result of translation must be transferring the meaning of the source language clearly. Non-equivalence problem when doing translation should be considered. Judging from that perspective then, this textual replacement activity can be concluded into three basic types which are: (A) **Interlingual translation**, the exact rendering into the target text; (B) **Intralingual translation**, the process of rewording making variety into one another; and (C) **Intersemiotic translation**, a transmutation within the translation process into another media.

When focusing on a specific field of literary works such as the “*Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’État in Indonesia*”, the concept of these works will fall into the type of all translation types due to their characteristic in implementing substitution and rewording or rather, domestication of a source text

into a target text by possible figurative language or cultural lexical items. All three translation types will definitely fall into interpretation based on the focus on variable. This perspective leads the translation strategy usage, enabling it to reword or deconstruct a source text into the target text by focusing on the meaning rather than the word itself.

Defining a meaning of a text may lead to prominent confusion in finding the equivalence in the meaning which can be analyzed solely on the type of discourse research as Hatim (2001) proposed. The researchers focus on this essay to analyze the equivalence between the source texts which is in English, into the target text which is in Indonesia.

The research problems in this study are:

1. Does the translation process of “*Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’État in Indonesia*” from English to Bahasa Indonesia produce the equivalent meaning?
2. What are the aspects that contribute to the equivalence problems in the translation?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In “Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’Etat in Indonesia”, by using the equivalences analysis (grammatical, textual and pragmatic equivalence) based on Baker’s approach, it can be seen that most of the translations need to pay attention to the target language’s culture, politic, poetic and discourse manipulation (or notional context – metaphorical and socio-textual ambiguity). Baker (2011) proposes approach to translation equivalence. She differs the notion of equivalence at different levels. The equivalence can appear at word level, above word level, grammatical, textual, and pragmatic equivalence. For this essay, researchers focus on grammatical equivalence, which deals with the diversity of grammatical categories across languages which includes number, gender, voice, person, and tense and aspects

A word, phrase or even an idiom from culture A may be different or even does not exist in let say culture B nor C (vice versa). Hatim (2001) states that this challenge can be rebutted with appropriating the original, a concept of manipulating the structure and texture so that an appropriation of an original text may be readable for the target text. Defining a true meaning can also be translated in a translator keep the culture intact ‘by invoking a variety of perspective (cultural and linguistic) which of course will lead to the true expression of the meaning identity rather than textual identity. Hatim (2001) also defined that textual conventions are indeed fascinating, especially if a translator is doing a translation of a literary works because the challenge is not just about making a translation or even doing a translation activity but, the goal of the socio-cultural and socio-textual accurate and ideally readable for the target reader language. The challenges are tantalizing as well as the results of this research in literary works’ translating activity.

3 METHODS

In doing the analysis on translated text “Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’Etat in Indonesia”, according to House (2009), there are three basic features of translation that are very essential to the analysis process itself; the text (the source or the target texts), the process of the translation and of course, the **equivalence of the translation** itself. When a

certain text is having its translated counterpart, there is a possibility that the target text experienced changes, either literal or conceptual, which are needed due to the intercultural communication aspect. Target culture is one of the deciding factors to evaluate whether a target text is equivalence enough for the target readers. As Baker (2000) proposed, “... with the idea that translations could somehow convey the ‘same’, necessarily stable and language *independent meaning* as their source texts”. With this statement, the writer also believes that a translation equivalence is a process needed of making the possible adequate dictions or constituents from the target text into the source text. Pym (2004) also stated that the translation equivalence itself is a process of comparing SL and TL texts; with the process of evaluating certain conditions or justification.

Guided by the three features of translation mentioned above, this essay focuses on partial source text of “Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto’s Coup d’Etat in Indonesia” (John Roosa) with its counterpart Indonesian translated text. This essay only analyzes the equivalence within target text and the source text specifically in the word and grammatical by defining the possible literal or conceptual definitions. Researchers analyze the literal meanings by advising to three dictionaries and try to make us of the translated target text with possible reason why the translator translated like so.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are several findings from the source data that represent non-grammatical equivalence such as follows:

Table 1. Number.

In my reading of the scholarly literature on the movement , I did not recall its ever being m ention ed.	(none) Saya belum pernah melihat dokumen itu disebut dalam tulisan-tulisan ilmiah mengenai G-30-S.
Outrage at the killings was muted not just because	Kecaman terhadap pembunuhan-pembunuhan

the perpetrators were anti-Communists .	yang terjadi diredam bukan hanya karena para pelakunya antikomunis .
The post-Suharto parliament has maintained the laws forbidding public discourse about Marxism-Leninism and the participation of ex-political prisoners and their children and grandchildren in political parties.	Parlemen pasca-Suharto tetap mempertahankan hukum yang melarang pembicaraan publik mengenai Marxisme-Leninisme dan keterlibatan eks-tapol (dan anak cucu mereka) dalam partai politik.

The first translated text has problem with ‘**scholarly literature on the movement**’ which translated into ‘**tulisan-tulisan ilmiah mengenai G-30-S**’. The phrase ‘scholarly literature’ was bluntly translated into ‘**tulisan-tulisan ilmiah**’ which roughly the translator assumed that the writer had read many text considered as scholarly writings, but the fact is unknown. In addition, this sentence specify the word ‘movement’ into “G-30-S” to possible emphasize or refer back the information. The second translated text changed the word ‘**anti-Communitis**’ into ‘**antikomunis**’ making it more singular or in possible perception, an abstract noun word to describe a political belief. The third translated text simplify the phrase ‘**and their children and grandchildren**’ into ‘**dan anak cucu mereka**’ making it less specific and too general.

Table 2. Gender.

He had never spoken to any journalist or historian about his experiences.	Ia belum pernah berbicara kepada wartawan atau sejarawan siapa pun mengenai pengalamannya.
He is an old man leading a quiet life in a small town and does not want to become embroiled in the controversy.	Ia sudah tua dan meniti hidup dengan tenang dan tidak mau terlibat dalam kontroversi.
Who were these two men ?	Siapakah dua orang ini?

The first translated text has the words ‘**journalist**’ and ‘**historian**’ into more neutral male-specific word, ‘**wartawan**’ and ‘**sejarawan**’ The second translated text translated ‘**He is an old man**’ into more simpler sentence of ‘**Ia sudah tua**’. The third translated text changed the meaning of ‘**twomen**’ into ‘**dua orang**’ making it more general. These examples found give definition of non-equivalent translation in terms of giving literal meaning however, if it considered within the pragmatic aspect, these translated texts are still considered equivalent.

Table 3. Person.

In the early morning hours of October 1, 1965, the commander of the army , Lieutenant General Achmad Yani, and five generals on his staff	salah satu babak kejadian yang terpenting. Pada dini hari 1 Oktober 1965, Menteri Panglima Angkatan Darat (Menpangad) Letnan Jenderal
were kidnapped from their homes in Jakarta and trucked to a desolate grove south of the city.	Ahmad Yani dan lima orang staf umumnya diculik dari rumah-rumah mereka di Jakarta, dan dibawa dengan truk ke sebidang areal perkebunan di selatan kota.
What was his response to this information?	Apa tanggapan Suharto terhadap informasi itu?
As Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman have noted, the massacres in Indonesia represented a “benign bloodbath” and a “constructive terror” because they served U.S. foreign policy interests.	Seperti dinyatakan Noam Chomsky dan Edward Herman, pembantaian di Indonesia merupakan “pembantaian bermaksud baik” dan “teror yang konstruktif” karena (none) melayani kepentingan politik luar negeri AS.

The first translated text defined 'the commander of the army' into 'Menteri Panglima Angkatan Darat' which in target language is more precise, this example is unique but although not equivalent, the translation has fixed the culturally inaccurate terms. This text also translated 'five generals on his staff' into 'lima orang staf umumnya' which in my perspective has a bit of referential problem within the sentence. The second translated text specify 'his' into a name 'Soeharto' in the target language. The third translated text omit the word 'they' with possible omission strategy due to the belief that it is still readable although it was a bit confusing to whom this action of 'melayani kepentingan politik luar negeri AS' referred to exactly.

The first translated text changed the tense of 'wisdom of hindsight Robert McNamara' with the target language, 'renungan reflektifnya, Robert McNamara,' this shifted the importance of the subject since in the target language, Robert McNamara is an appositive meanwhile in the source text, it was the opposite (based on the comma punctuation mark). The second translated text shifted 'in my reading of the scholarly literature on the movement' and then translated 'I did not recall its ever being mentioned' first. The third translated text added 'dalam dokumen itu' in the target language to specify what was missing in the target text.

Table 4. Tense and Aspect.

<p>With the wisdom of hindsight Robert McNamara, the secretary of defense under presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, has argued that the United States should have downscaled its involvement in Indochina after Suharto's annihilation of Communists in Indonesia.</p>	<p>Ro Dal renu reflektifnya, am ngan ifnya, Me Pert McNa nte aha dala mara, ri nan m pemerintahan Kennedy dan Johnson, mengatakan seh aru bah , sny mengu wa ! a rangi keterlibatannya di Indocina setelah pembasmian kaum komunis di Indonesia oleh Suharto.</p>
<p>In my reading of the scholarly literature on the movement, I did not recall its ever being mentioned. Atmodjo also confirmed many of the claims that Supardjo had made (not described).</p>	<p>Saya belum pernah melihat dokumen itu disebut dalam tulisan-tulisan ilmiah mengenai G-30-S. Atmodjo juga mengonfirmasi banyak penegasan yang dikemukakan Supardjo (added) dalam dokumen itu.</p>

Table 5. Voice.

<p>The Orientalist stereotypes about Indonesians as primitive, backward, and violent came to the fore, swamping the factual reporting about organized cold-blooded executions.</p>	<p>Stereotip yang dibuat para orientalis mengenai orang Indonesia yang primitif, terbelakang, dan bengis mene mengemuka nggelam sehingga kan pemberitaan faktual tentang pembunuhan-pembunuhan berdarah dingin yang diorganisir militer.</p>
<p>Theodore Friend, a historian of Southeast Asia, asserts with great confidence that they represented a "vast popular irruption [sic]"; they began "spontaneously" without military direction and involved a violence that was "face to face" and "strangely intimate."</p>	<p>Theodore Friend, seorang sejarawan Asia Tenggara, dengan yakin mengatakan bahwa pem itu "bunuha mencerminkle dan an kan kekerasan massal yang hebat"; dimulai "secara spontan" tanpa arahan militer dan merupakan kekerasan "muka dan "kedekatan yang aneh."</p>

In the case of the movement, the head of the PKI was somehow involved (Aidit was at Halim Air Force Base) and some PKI personnel were participants.	Dalam kasus G-30-S, ketua PKI bagaimana punjuga terlibat (D.N. Aidit berada di pangkalan AURI Halim) dan beberapa personil PKI ikut berperan serta.
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The first translated text translated ‘**army-organized cold-blooded executions**’ into ‘**pembunuhan-pembunuhan berdarah dingin yang diorganisir militer**’ which changed the phrase ‘**army-organized**’ into ‘**yang diorganisir militer**’, this target text, although not equivalent but, clearer in meaning. The second translated text, shifted the voice into passive from the target text, ‘**they beganspontaneously**’ into ‘**secara spontan**’. The third translated text shifted the voice of ‘**were participants**’ into strangely ‘**ikut berperan serta**’ changing not only the verb but also shifting the objects into adverbs.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Overall, the translated text can never be identical to its original although it may be equivalent in certain respects which is in line as what House (2009) said and so by that statement, researchers believe that this translated academic article is still equivalent enough if they are viewed from the spectacle of conceptual meaning rather than solely, the literal meaning. As House (2009) described (as the examples from the analyzed translated word above) translation is basically a secondary communication of what is actually already given or exist and therefore, the recipient from the target language also play the role as well to interpret the translated text as not just a literal words but also, a yet possible conceptual meaningful words within the book’s utility which is to inspire the richness of a person’s inner-self.

In addition, Lee (2003) stated that a language is an expression of a culture and the culture is inseparably related to its language. The translation of culture is defined as somewhat difficult especially when the culture of source language is remarkably different from that of target language. When it comes to the various translating strategies of culture-

bound vocabulary, there doesn't seem to be the best strategy. There are only more appropriate strategies in a given situation. In addition, the appropriate ones also depend on the purpose of the translation and the choice of the translator. The result found in this study was from the effort of the translators, who try to seek cultural, functional, and technically dynamic equivalence as well as naturalness to target language. Therefore, translators can have their own various translation strategies, and their choice of strategies depends on the purpose of the translation.

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