

Students' Sight Translation Quality Assessment: An Application of Back Translation Technique

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Abstract: This research focuses on the quality of sight translated work of fifteen high score students in translation and interpreting subject. Each student was given a piece of religious article taken from "Selection from the Seerah of Muhammad" of which they then sight translated the article (SL) into Bahasa (TL). The process of sight translation was recorded by using a recorder and transcribed carefully. Three professional translators were involved to back translate the transcribed TL version of the article into SL. The students' work and the professional translators' work were compared to assess the level of accuracy as proposed by Nida & Taber (1974). One of the techniques to assess those works was Back Translation proposed by Colina et al. (2017). Hence, the source of data for this descriptive qualitative research was oriented to (1) the students' sight translation work, and (2) the professional translator's translation work. The result shows that, by comparing the two source languages, the majority of students still need to improve the grammatical structure of sentences and the dictions as those language components may result in the transfer of meaning could not be delivered accurately and made the sight translation was considered to be inaccurate.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sight translation (ST) in Indonesia, especially in English Department of Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University (UIN SGD) where the study was conducted, is not taught separately although Duong (2006, p. 45); Gerzymisch-Arbogast (2005) state that this deserves to be taught separately. By looking at the definition of sight translation proposed by Pochacker (2016) as "a special type of simultaneous interpreting is the rendition of a written text at sight" which was also supported by Fatollahi (2016) stating that "Sight translation is a hybrid mode that combines written texts and oral translation," the process of ST is integrated in the Simultaneous Interpreting course (SI) since one of the focuses of teaching SI is on strategies and qualities, including ST's.

In working with the process of teaching and learning ST, the lecturers usually require three to four class periods for sharing the ST theories and for bringing the ST theories into practices. When observing the process of transferring and practicing the ST theories, some language skills and language

components students require to master are speaking skill, reading skill, grammatical component, and vocabulary component. By mastering those skills and components, the students would be more enjoyable to join the ST in all class periods. Thus, to help them master their ability in transferring the meanings of what they are reading from the text, the English Department develops particularly, such as, grammatical competences through these grammar courses consisting of Basic Structure, Intermediate Structure, and Advanced Structure. These must be taught in order, meaning that the students cannot join intermediate or advanced structure course without passing from basic listening course. In other words, Basic Structure course is a prerequisite for intermediate structure course and from that course forth, the intermediate course is a prerequisite for advanced structure course. The Department also develops other language skills and components, such as speaking skill, reading skill, and vocabulary component, as that of grammatical component to be taught in order.

What has been served by the Department in Faculty of Humanities in Sunan Gunung Djati State

Islamic University is to complete the needs the students need to support the translation and interpreting courses as well as other courses. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to measure the students' language skills and language components through one of the subjects taught in the Department. The subject to be taken as the sample of measurement is simultaneous interpreting within which it teaches ST for several class periods. In other words, this study is to measure the students' ST quality as the results of the study are expected to be used as the parameter to diagnose what level of quality must be increased. One of measurements used in this study to check the accuracy of ST is Back Translation (BT) method. Pym (2009) and Colina et al. (2015) that BT is "taking the translation and rendering it back into the source language, then comparing the two source-language versions".

Unfortunately, there seems no one studies relating to ST quality in Indonesian context compared to those of studies conducted by Nilsen & Monsrud (2012) in Norway, Korpala (2012) in German, and Li (2014) in China. This study tried to fill in the gap of ST research in Indonesian context. It examined the students' quality, in terms of accuracy, in translating a religious text at sight.

2 METHOD

Applying descriptive qualitative design in this study, which involved fifteen high score students in translation and interpreting subject, is to understand and report the characteristics of current and past situation by describing what already exists in a focus group as individuals with similar characteristics. A piece of religious article taken from a book entitled "Selection from the Seerah of Muhammad" was given to fifteen students to be sight translated into Bahasa. The fifteen students were purposively selected based on the criteria of those gaining A score in translation and interpreting subjects. Those students were taken from class A to E, each of which was five students. In the process of taking the data, the students involved in this study were asked to wait for outside the classroom. The lecturer then called them one by one to sight translate the religious text in front of the class. The process of sight translation was recorded by using a recorder (Sony T-Mark) and the recorded sight translation was then transcribed carefully.

The researcher then applied Back Translation (BT) technique, proposed by Colina et al. (n.d.), to

check the accuracy of the transcribed sight translation article. The application of BT technique was adopted from Yu, Diana, and Woo (2003).

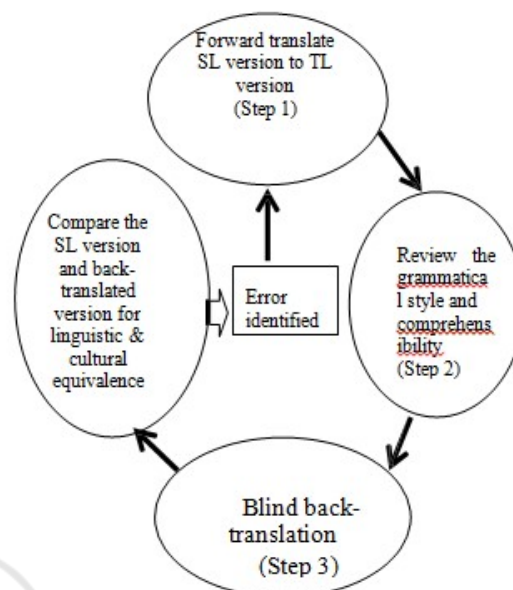


Figure 1: The Process of Back Translation

The application of BT technique was done by involving three professional translators from different areas: one was from Lampung (Bandar Lampung), one was from Yogyakarta (Central Java), and the rest was from Bandung (West Java). The consideration of involving three professional translators was based on the statement by Wild et al. (2005) mentioning that "the people who develop the translations from the target language back to the source language should be professional translators, native speakers of the language of the source measure, and fluent in the target language." She also adds that they should have no prior knowledge of the measure and should not see the source or any other language version before or during back translation.

Besides, those three professional translators were chosen based on the accessibility and professionalism. The researcher felt easy to access their existence as they felt over the moon involved in this study. The professionalism means that they had a certificate or licence showing that they are qualified to be chosen as the sample of the study. They were involved to back translate the transcribed Bahasa version of the article (TL) into English (SL). The process of back translating the article was done by mailing the articles to them. They were not asked to sight translate the articles as those of the students. They were asked to translate the transcribed students' ST in short time and to send back the

English version of the article to the researcher. Afterwards, the professional translators' work was compared to assess the level of accuracy as proposed by Nida and Taber (2003).

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After having compared the two language sources (the professional translator's work and the original—existing source language), it was found that the majority of them (8 students) sight translated the religious text inaccurately; 5 students were less accurate; and 2 students sight translated the religious text accurately. This shows that most of them still need to improve their translation accuracy.

3.1 Students' Accurate Sight Translation

Accuracy is important because it is closely related to equivalence, the nature of translation. Baker and Malmkjær (1998) state that equivalence refers to the relationship between an original and its translation where both fulfil the same communicative function. A text is sight translated accurately if the words, terms, clauses, and sentences are not partially translated. A meaning of the message is of great importance not to be added, reduced, or deleted because, quoting Nida and Taber's (2003) statement that, meaning must be of utmost attention. It was found that two students sight translated the religious text accurately into Bahasa. Here is one of data showing accurate sight translation.

Table 1: Data of accurate sight-translation

SL	The Prophet (saaw) was not just a human being. He received a revelation from Allah (swt). He was thus a Messenger.
TL	<i>Nabi Muhammad saw bukan sekedar manusia biasa. Beliau saw adalah manusia yang memperoleh wahyu dari Allah swt. Beliau saw adalah seorang manusia sekaligus seorang Rasul.</i>
BT	The Prophet (puh) was not just a human being,, he received a revelation from Allah (swt), and thus he was a Messenger.

The ST above was accurate as the compared work of SL and BT version was showing the accurate meaning. It means that the student's TL was also accurate both viewed from the meaning and the grammatical structure of the TL. Therefore, the more close the BT version to the SL, the more

accurate the TL version. This is in line with the statement by Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997) that "a term used in translation to refer to the extent to which a translation matches its original."

3.2 Students' Less Accurate Sight Translation

A text is sight translated less accurately by five students involved in this study. Their translations were considered less accurate because the meanings they transferred were not fully conveyed—there was omission in the target language. One of the data can be seen below.

Table 2: Data of less accurate sight-translation

SL	The life of the Prophet (saaw) provides a source of legislation to each and every one in all aspects of their life.
TL	<i>Kehidupan Nabi saw menjadi sumber hukum bagi setiap manusia dalam berbagai aspek kehidupan.</i>
BT	The life of the Prophet (pbuh) becomes a source of law to each human in several aspects of life.

When comparing the SL given by the professional translators and the original SL, there were words 'every one' and 'all' that were not conveyed into target language. This hampered the accuracy of meaning which should be "*Kehidupan Nabi saw menjadi sumber hukum bagi setiap dan seluruh umat manusia dalam seluruh kehidupan mereka.*" This coincides with the statement by Gatenby (2000) that "translator shall render the message faithfully without deletion, omission, or addition."

Table 3: Data of less accurate sight-translation

SL	The Prophet (saaw) was not just a human being. He received a revelation from Allah (swt). He was thus a Messenger.
TL	<i>Nabi Muhammad saw bukan sekedar manusia biasa. Sang Nabi saw adalah manusia yang memperoleh wahyu dari Allah swt. Dia saw adalah seorang manusia sekaligus seorang Rasul.</i>
BT	The Prophet (puh) was not just a human being. He received a revelation from Allah (swt). He thus was a Messenger.

The ST in the Table 3 was actually accurate as the compared work of SL and BT version was showing the accurate meaning and grammatical structure. In fact, as seen in the TL grammatical structure, the student's ST was less accurate because

there was a repetition of the word “Nabi” in the second sentence of which it should use a personal pronoun ‘He’. Appropos of this, Bartłomiejczyk (2014) states that:

“Accuracy is no doubt an important aim in translation, but it is also important to bear in mind that the use of common target-language patterns which are familiar to the target reader plays an important role in keeping the communication channel open.”

The statement shows that accuracy is not only viewed from the meaning but also viewed from the grammatical structure of sentence in the target language.

3.3 Students’ Inaccurate Sight Translation

Inaccuracy can be simply viewed from the label ‘wrong, bad, and low quality’ as the opponent of ‘right, good, and high quality.’ According to Steiner and Erich Steiner and Yallop (2001), inaccuracy in translation is indicated by unequivalence between SL and TL which results different idea. The following is a data showing inaccurate ST.

Table 4: Data of inaccurate sight-translation

SL	Many writings have only talked about one aspect of the life of the Prophet (saaw), the family aspect. By doing this a major aspect of his (saaw) life was ignored or over shadowed. Thus, this paper discusses the untold aspect of his personality in order to know how to obey him.
TL	<i>Sejauh ini tulisan-tulisan mengenai beliau hanya berbicara tentang satu aspek kehidupan yaitu aspek keluarga. Melihat hal tersebut, tulisan ini mencoba menengahkan aspek-aspek lain dari kepribadian sosok manusia yang Agung itu, yang selama ini belum terekspos.</i>
BT	So far, many papers about him have only talked about one aspect of life, namely the family aspect. Looking at this, this paper presents unexposed aspects of his personality.

The table 4 shows an inaccuracy in the ST of a religious text from English to Indonesian. The inaccuracy can be easily found from the not translated words or sentences. The student did not sight translate the sentence “a major aspect of his (saaw) life was ignored or over shadowed” and “in order to know how to obey him.” Therefore, the professional translator left them blank as they were not sight translated into Bahasa. The cause of this inaccuracy was the student failed to understand the

meaning, word choices, and the structure of the sentence. This may result the back translation done by the professional translators was much different from the original (SL). This coincides implicitly with Anderson’s (2018) statement that the further the gap of the translator’s work with the original, the more inaccurate the target language.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The sight translation quality of fifteen students of English Department of Faculty of Humanities Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University was in the category of inaccurate after being compared to the professional translators’ work. The inaccuracies were caused by not translated sentences and incorrect grammatical structure of sentences. This may result in the transfer of meaning could not be delivered accurately and made the sight translation was considered to be inaccurate.

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APPENDIX

Direction: Please translate at sight the following religious text into good Bahasa.

The Prophet (saw) was not just a human being, he received a revelation from Allah (swt) and thus, he was a Messenger. His (saw) roles in life were not limited to being a father, a grandfather, and a husband. He (saw) was a judge, a ruler, an army commander and a statesman. Thus to understand his personality we have to understand all his (saw) roles. And for him (saw) to be our example he (saw) should be obeyed in all of these aspects. The life of the Prophet (saw) provides a source of legislation to each and every one in all aspects of their life. From the private citizen and to the head of the state. From the father and to the husband. And from the neighbour to the judge. Many writings have only talked about one aspect of the life of the Prophet (saw), the family aspect. By doing this a major aspect of his (saw) life was ignored or over shadowed. Thus, in this book we discuss the untold aspect of his personality in order to know how to obey him.