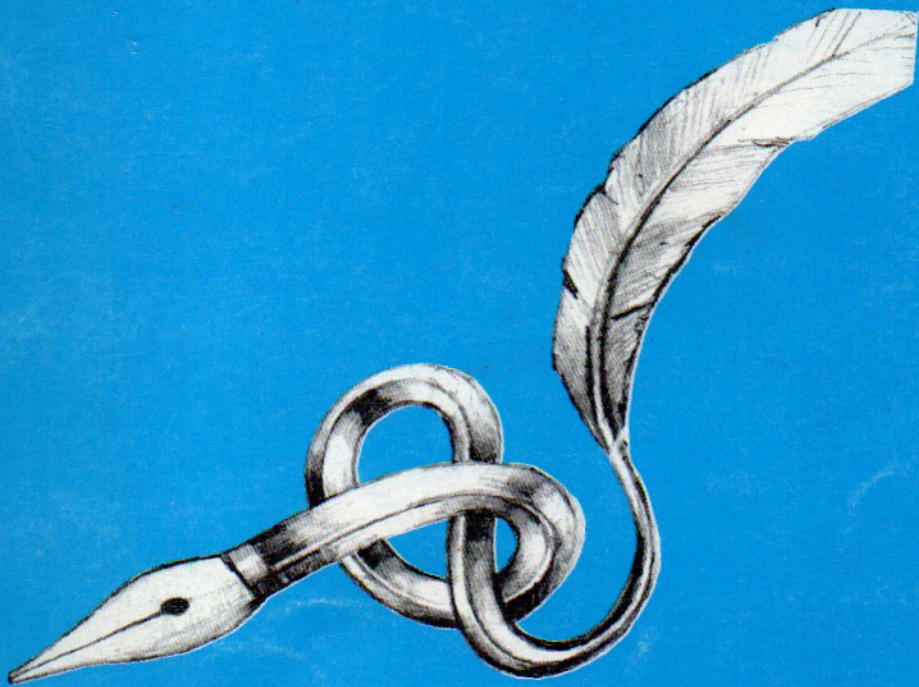


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SOME DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSLATING FROM ENGLISH INTO INDONESIAN LANGUAGE.

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Abstract

Naturally, translation from English into Indonesian language involves difficulties, both linguistic, owing to differences between the two languages as well as to dissimilarities between the cultures of the speakers. This study is an attempt to find out the linguistic difficulties in translating English texts into Indonesian. The difficulties will be focused on Syntax, Lexis, Punctuation and Spelling.

***Keywords:** General linguistics, Source Language Text (SLT), Target language Text(TLT)*

I. INTRODUCTION

Advances in science and technology entail a great demand for books relating to these areas in Indonesia. Since only a few of these books are written in the Indonesian language, the public has to rely on foreign publications most of which are written in English. The English language is the most widely used foreign language in the country and is taught as a compulsory subject starting from junior high school to the first year of the tertiary level of education. However, the level of master of English by university graduates has been left inadequate to equip medical doctors, engineers and scientists to understand required reading material. It is not uncommon, therefore, that English language courses are conducted to cater for the needs of academic and civil service personnel in these fields.

Because of these drawbacks, attempts have been made to translate important scientific and technological literature into the Indonesian language. Naturally, translating from English into Bahasa Indonesia involves difficulties, both linguistic and non linguistic, owing to differences between the two languages as well as to dissimilarities between the cultures of the speakers.

This paper will concern itself with the linguistic difficulties of the Indonesian translators especially students who learn English. The linguistic difficulties seem to be the most obvious in the procedure of translating from English into Indonesian.

The linguistic problems confronting the Indonesian translator are twofold: the inherent differences between the two languages and special problems due to the current process of standardizing Bahasa Indonesia as a relatively young and growing national language. These treatics will deal with questions concerning syntax, lexis, punctuation and spelling.

II. Discussion

Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another (Catford J.C: 1). In other words, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language, we call it as a general linguistic theory. General linguistics is a theory about how language work. It provides categories, drawn from generalization based on observation of languages and language-events. Therefore, these categories can, in turn, be used in the description of any particular language.

A. Syntactic problems

In coping with syntactic problems, the translator will find some guidelines in the methods recommended by Savory (1969: 50). However, he may still be at a loss as to the choice of method, or combination of methods, that best lends itself to producing the desired results. The following examples illustrate difficulties relating to sentence structure

1. Eng. : The insight of the basic difference between word and morpheme is.....
 Ind. : *Perbedaan pengertian dasar antara kata dan morfem adalah.....*
2. Eng. : That “becak” driver sleeping in his “becak” during the whole night in front of Garuda Hotel on Malioboro street
 Ind. : *Tukang becak tidur di becaknya selama semalaman di depan Hotel Garuda di jalan Malioboro itu.*
3. Eng. : They bought that valuable old French writing desk
 Ind. : 1. Mereka membeli meja tulis kuno yang bernilai itu di Perancis
 2. *Mereka membeli meja tulis antic yang berharga dari Perancis.*

The first example is concerning about word order. Here, the translator produces a translation that contains different meaning because he changes the word order. English is not a language noted for the flexibility of its word order (Duff 1989:49). Therefore, a word out of place can easily alter the meaning, or lead to ambiguity. This can be avoided if we firstly translate the noun before *of-genitive*. Meanwhile, the word-for-word translation on *that “becak” driver sleeping in his “becak” during....* reflects faulty in translating the Noun Phrase. A phrase is not a sentence, but there may be a sentence in a phrase-clause. *Sleeping* on the example above is a non-finite clause which is attached in the phrase. *Sleeping*, in this case is not an independent sentence. We should translate it as a whole, as a phrase.

The above unsatisfactory translation mainly result from the translator’s tendency to concentrate on formal correspondence rather than the reproduction of meaning. In this context it may be to observe statements made by Larson (1984:3):

“translation consists of transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language. This is done by going from the form of the first language to the form of a second language by way of semantic structure. It is meaning which is being transferred and must be held constant.”

Another syntactical difficulty facing the Indonesian translator is the rendering of some personal and possessive pronouns, and the neuter form “it”. As Bahasa Indonesia does not differentiate genders and uses the words *dia* or *ia* and the suffix *-nya* to refer to both male and female, forms different from those in the SLT have to be employed to make the translation readily intelligible. The example below, for instance, will confuse the reader.

4. Eng. : *He gave her a bunch of flowers. She loved them very much since they are beautiful.*
Ind. : *Dia memberikan seikat bunga kepadanya. Dia sangat menyukainya karena mereka itu sangat indah.*
5. Eng. : *She told me that she didn't send it because she didn't like him anymore.*
Ind. : *Dia mengatakan pada saya bahwa dia tidak mengirimnya karean dia sama sekali tidak menyukainya*

Thus the Indonesian reader has no way of knowing the sex of the persons involved unless the translator replaces the personal and possessive pronouns with *names*.

The personal and possessive pronouns corresponding to “we” and “our” in bahasa Indonesia are *kami*, excluding the second person, and *kita*, including the second person. Though the translator may often be able to produce the correct Indonesian equivalents, he can easily be puzzled by a SLT in which the author alternately uses “we”, sometimes referring to himself and his associates and sometimes to himself and the

reader. The examples below are worth considering (with relevant pronouns in italic).

6. Eng. : "As far as *we* have been able to ascertain.....
Ind. : *Sejauh ini kita sudah sanggup untuk memastikan.....*

Further down the page the author states:

7. Eng. : In this article *we* will give a short exposition of *our* method.
Ind. : *Di dalam artikel ini kami/kita akan memberikan ekposisi yang singkat dari metode kita/kami.*

He continues with:

8. Eng. : Especially the last four paragraphs of the article. *They* are very important for *us*.
Ind. : *Terutama empat paragraph terakhir dari artikel itu. Mereka sangat penting bagi kita.*

While "we" and "our" in the second sentence, and "us" in the third are quite clear, the translator is doubtful whether to use *kita* or *kami* as the equivalent of "we" in the first sentence.

The common English usage of "it" and "they" for inanimate objects, according to Indonesian norms, cannot be rendered into "*dia*" and "*mereka*" (see example 8). Instead, a repetition of the objects referred to is called for, or an Indonesian synonym has to be found. However, the repeated mention of the same word tends to turn the translation into a dull piece of writing. Furthermore, the search for several synonymous words is not a light task, Bahasa Indonesia being a developing language. These difficulties occur in the following sentences.

9. Eng. : the morphological *procedes* in a language are not isolated; they form systems of different degrees of complexity.
 Ind. : *Prosedes-prosedes morfologis dalam sebuah bahasa tidak berdiri terpisah, prosedes-prosedes tersebut merupakan system-sistem dengan tingkat kekompleksan yang berbeda-beda.*
10. Eng. : It is probable that *maq-* also was considered to be a word and not a morpheme. It is listed as such in the dictionaries. Like *patin-* and *dipun-* it is written, in Romanized script, separated from the rootmorpheme with which it is connected.
 Ind. : *Ada kemungkinan bahwa dahulu maq- juga dianggap sebagai kata dan Bukan sebagai morfem. Maq- dicantumkan sebagai kata dalam kamus. Seperti halnya dengan patin- dan dipun-; maq- ditulis, dengan huruf Latin, secara terpisah dari morfem akar yang dibubuhi mag – itu.*

The question of whether to reproduce plurality in bahasa Indonesia poses the translator frequent problems. Unless a plural inanimate noun is preceded by modifiers such as *beberapa*, “some”, *banyak*, “many” or *sepuluh*, “ten”, for example, the plural form of a noun is expressed by reduplicating the singular. To prevent a piece of writing from becoming flat or unsophisticated, the use of the singular to indicate plural nouns is perfectly justifiable, as the idea of plurality may be inferred from the context. There are many instances, however, in which the consistent use of duplicated forms is necessary, as shown in the following passage.

11. Eng. : The insight of the basic difference between word and morpheme is of particular importance for the morphology of Indonesian *languages* such as Javanese and Sundanese,

as it is characteristic for these *languages* that the same formal *means* are used over and over again in different morphological *sub systems*. The formal identity of the *morphemes* in this *systems* (such as the nasal prefix, duplicated, forms, the suffix –an etc)

Ind. : *Pengertian mendalam tentang perbedaan pokok antara kata dan morfem adalah sangat penting bagi morfologi bahasa - bahasa di Indonesia, seperti bahasa Jawa dan bahasa Sunda, karena bahasa – bahasa ini mempunyai ciri khas, yakni cara-cara formal yang sama berulang-ulang dipakai di dalam subsistem-subsistem morfologis yang berbeda. Identitas formal morfem-morfem dalam system - sistem ini (seperti awalan nasal, bentuk-bentuk yang diduplikasikan, akhiran-an dsb)*

B. Lexical problems

Before discussing lexical aspects of translation it will be appropriate to refer again to remarks made by Nida and Taber (1974: 12)

“Translating consists in 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.”

“The translator must strive for equivalence rather than identity.”

All too often the above principles have been overlooked. Negligence on the part of the Indonesian translator often affects lexical aspects of translation. Only some of these aspects will be dealt with here. Many frequent difficulties occurring in translation concern the transfer of individual words, phrases and idiomatic expressions. From the translations below it will be evident that these difficulties have been the result of:

- (1) inadequate English proficiency,
- (2) fidelity to the form of the SLT, and

(3) lack of confidence in Bahasa Indonesia.

The translations show that by remaining faithful to the SLT both in terms of structure and identity, the TLT reveals distorted, if not altogether different, meanings. Apart from the use of faulty grammar, some phrases appear to be completely nonsensical.

12. Eng. : Miss. Yani teaches English in Erie's class. She is very popular among her students for she never gets angry and always explain everything with patience. *Her students say that she is a very lovely and sweet-temper teacher.*

Ind. : *Murid – muridnya berkata bahwa dia sangat baik dan guru yang amat manis sikapnya*

13. Eng. : James spoke Mandarin so well *that I took for granted that he was a Chinese*

Ind. : *.....sehingga saya menerima sebagaimana adanya bahwa dia adalah orang Cina*

14. Eng. : Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Ind. : *Jangan menaruh semua telur itu dalam satu keranjang.*

15. Eng. : She told her child to try not to be so trying.

Ind. : *Ia berkata pada anaknya agar beusaha jangan terlalu mencoba-coba.*

C. Punctuation and Spelling

The final aspect of translation to be discussed here concerns punctuation and spelling. The use of punctuation marks is commonly shared by many written languages. Nevertheless, the function of certain marks may vary from one language to another. While the use of a comma in a given English sentence, for example, may be optional, it may be obligatory in the Indonesian rendering, or vice versa, as illustrated in these two examples. Again, by following too closely the form and structure of the SLT, translators neglect rules governing the use of

punctuation marks in Bahasa Indonesia and thus produce translations lacking in naturalness, as seen in these examples,

16. Eng. :Thus garden, besides beautifying the house with flowers and trees, can also be useful and productive if they are planted with fruits, vegetables, or medical herbs. It will give us extra advantages.
Ind. : *Jadi, berkebun di samping mempercantik rumah dengan berbagai bunga dan pohon, dan dapat juga berguna dan productive jika mereka di tanam dengan buah-buahan, sayuran, dan tanaman obat-obatan. Itu akan memberikan kita keuntungan tambahan/ekstra.*
17. Eng. : In Autumn, on the other hand, we have deluges of mud.
Ind. : *Di musim gugur, adalah kebalikannya, kita di banjiri oleh Lumpur.*
18. Eng. : There we are; now let us classify them.
Ind. : *Demikianlah; kini marilah kita mengelompokkannya.*
19. Eng. : And there are other parallels — for instances their method of drawing character.
Ind. : *Dan ada juga persamaan lainnya— misalnya cara mereka menggambarkan sifat orang.*
20. Eng. : ..I don't believe it was made by a nail after all...
Ind. : *...betapapun saya tidak percaya bahwa tanda itu bekas paku....*

As for spelling difficulties, they are not encountered by translator only. A great many Indonesians fail to observe the spelling reform officially effective since 1972. Thus one still finds forms such as *meja2*, *dimana*, *kwalitas*, *ying*, *dgn*, etc, rather than *meja-meja*, *di mana*, *kualitas*, *yang*, *dengan* etc. However, translating from English into Indonesian involved specific problems of spelling in that a considerable number of English words have been adopted in the Indonesian vocabulary with some

spelling adjustments, which many translators seem to ignore. Thus one comes across in TL text words, such as:

21. Eng. : The export - import company where she works at is the biggest company in east Java which exports their stuff to Asia, America, and Europe.

Ind. : *Perusahaan export-import di mana dia bekerja merupakan perusahaan yang terbesar di Jawa Timur yang mengekspor barang-barangnya ke Asia, Amerika dan Eropa Mengekspor instead of mengirim.*

The other words are:

22. *productive* instead of *produktif*

23. *extra* instead of *ektra*

24. *essensiel* instead of *esensial*

25. *jenius* instead of *genius*

III. Conclusion

From the translations above we can conclude that the difficulties have been the result of: (1) inadequate English proficiency, in this case the translator applies incomplete rules and his lack of vocabularies. His mother tongue usually interfere his translation; (2) fidelity to the form of the SLT (Source language Text); and (3) lack of confidence in Bahasa Indonesia.

As a translator, we should be careful in translating English into Indonesian language for there are some different rules in grammar, spelling, and punctuation between two languages. We should also take a look at the context. Contextualization will be important in translation.

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