

Semantics Analysis on the Relation of Meaning of Cultural Differences toward the Translation from Bahasa Indonesia to English

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Abstract: This article aims to explain how to translate the words of Bahasa Indonesia with the local cultural meaning, as source language, to English, as target language. The mentioned words are taken from short story and would translate in the level of textual and referential level. Firstly, it tried to find the meaning of the words based on the bilingual dictionary, Indonesian-English. Furthermore, they are consulted to the monolingual dictionary. Finally the translation used is those accepted in target language speaking through the translation techniques, namely contextual conditioning.

Keywords: Relation of meaning, cultural differences, and translation.

PEOPLE should consider the language as well as culture to translate, from source language to target language. It is because language and culture is an entity which cannot be separated. Therefore, the relation of meaning in this article relates to the cultural differences that are often found in texts with evaluative valuable, especially those in the literary works. In other words, when we are going to translate such a text into target language, that is English, likely we will find out the concept and the definition. However,

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there is no the equivalence or the synonym between two languages, in this written, source and target language.

Regarding to the relation of meaning in the context of cultural differences creates a problem of this written, namely how to translate Indonesian words containing local culture into English? Furthermore, this written will be useful for the translator to translate literary works, such as a short story and a poem from Indonesian into English. Generally, literary works contain cultural values because they represent the social and cultural practices in the society. The cultural differences are obviously seen in a novel or a short story than in a poem. It is because the poem has limited space for expressing using sentences or words, it is not as free as in the novel or short story.

Understanding The Meaning

Meaning does not relate directly to the reference, but it relates to the relationship of words as well as language. The word meaning consists of lexical and non lexical. Lexical

meaning has relation to the concept symbolized by the word while in the contrary the non lexical has no relation to the concept symbolized by the word. According to Oxford Dictionary (2005), green as an adjective has five meaning, dealing with: 1. Colour, 2. Covered with grass, 3. Fruit, 4. Person, and 5. Politics.

However, in communication the meaning of green depends on the context of sentences. Green in the following sentences has different meaning. 1. She wears a green dress. 2. After the rains, the rain land was green with new growth. 3. That tomatoe is still green. 4. Dodi is still green in accounting. 5. The Green Party was held last week.

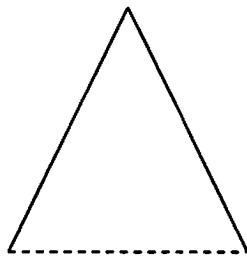
The first sentence has lexical meaning, namely refer to color of grass or leaves of most plants and trees, that is green. The second up the fifth sentence has no lexical meaning. The second and third relate to the covered with grass other plants and fruit, that is not yet ready to eat. The forth and fifth relate to the person, that is young and lacking experience and to the politics,

concerned with the protection of the environment. On one side, the three meaning of green is different because each has different referential. On the other side, the three meaning of green depends on the certain reference which is out of language and bound to the context. Therefore, it can be called as contextual meaning.

The Aspect of Meaning

According to translation theory, the aspect of meaning can be seen more broadly and called message. Message is determined by what is the writer's intention to say.¹ To understand the meaning we can pay attention to the triangle of symbolism from Ogden and Richards² in the following table 1.

(B) Concept



(A) Symbol

(C) Reference/object

The triangle of symbolism shows direct relationship which is signed by the line

between A (symbol) and B (concept), but has no direct relationship between A (symbol) and C (reference/object), it should pass the concept which is the relationship stated by dashes. Actually, this statement emphasizes that the language and the reality is not always identical. It is because the word is not sufficient to describe the situation. The main reason is word also covers the society point of view toward language to the reality. This point of view is one of the cultural elements.

Relativity of Meaning

Lyons³ has criticized the translation from lexeme of Latin into German using faithful translation. According to him to translate the German

word into Latin word is not satisfactory because a translator has freedom not to be

faithful to his language in the translation.

Indeed, what is meant by Lyon is a lexeme of source language may not translate to be one lexeme in target language. A lexeme is not a lexeme however it contains other elements, one of them is culture. Therefore, a translator has authority to adjust. The reason is often there is a word without the concept or in the contrary both in source and target language.

Furthermore, Saeed⁴ stated that linguistic relativity is a basic premise to explain that the way we see the world is determined by the background of culture and language. In other words, culture and language also determine how someone thinks and acquires knowledge.

Data Presentation

The data of this written is a text taken from an excerpt of short story written by Fenti Novianty. It was published by *Jurnal Perempuan* in the year of 1999. My opinion about the writer is she is very inspirative telling about a cultural phenomenon in detail, namely a ru-

ral atmosphere in a foot of mountain. This phenomenon has special characteristics of agrarian society. It seems she has experience to stay there because she can describe the culture lively. Based on these reasons I decide to quote her work as the data to explain about the cultural differences of two languages. See table 2.

Data Description

The data consists of three paragraphs. Mostly, they describe the condition of rural in the foot of mountain at the planting season of paddy. In the cultural of target language, which rice is not the basic needs, it will be difficult to make a paddy concept to be symbolized, for example there are some questions below in trying to find the concept of paddy. 1. What does paddy look like? 2. In which field the paddy will grow? 3. How the condition of land when the paddy starts to plant? 4. What people and other creatures usually do when the paddy planting season comes?

However, the first paragraph tells about the three creatures and their activity

that can be found in the village. First, it is about the snake, in local language it is named *Besi*. It is quite dangerous and generally appears during the planting season of paddy. Next, it is about the women who are planting the paddy in the field by bending their back. The condition of paddy field is wet. Therefore, people are willing to be wet too to plant the paddy. Lastly, it is the children who are looking for *tutut*, a kind of snail that can be eaten for food, usually it is prepared for eating with rice.

The second paragraph shows the condition of rural area when the rain falls. It describes the houses in the foot of mountain using leaf of a similar sago palm. The leaves are wet because of cats and dogs rain. The bamboo and the big teak are touching themselves noisely. The frogs are happy that can be recognized through the joyful sound produced from their mouth due to the coming of rain.

Then, the third paragraph tells about the activity of human being and animals in the morning. The animals

include chicken who are eager to crow, duck who are ready to be herd, and carabao who are going to plow. The joyful kids take a bath by jumping in the river and adults doing fishing happily by joking each other.

Those paragraphs indicate the atmosphere of agrarian society in rural. This atmosphere is the representation of practical of social and cultural differences happening in the society of the source language, namely bahasa Indonesia. I underline here that people who speak English will find difficulty to comprehend this text because the values of culture are different from their daily life. Moreover, the choice of words, especially in the bold, are not familiar for them. Consequently, it makes them difficult to find the meaning. In other words, it can be said that they have the concept of those words but they do not have the equivalence.

Data Analysis

Commonly, there are two approaches when we are going to translate a text, namely: 1. It is to translate sen-

tence per sentence directly, for example one paragraph to get the tone of the text, then the translator repeat to translate in order to improve the attitude to translate the remains of the text. 2. It is to read first the whole text for twice and three times to get the comprehension. Besides, the aim is to find the intention, register, tone, and mark the difficult words and paragraph which are difficult, and finally begin to translate.

I have made up my mind to choose the second approach in translating the source text by reading the whole text, in this written the three paragraphs. This is to understand the text by consulting to the dictionary, especially for the difficult words by marking them with italic.

The number of italic words in the data is eight consisting of six nouns and two verbs. Those are translated into target language, English. According to me, they show cultural differences because the speaker of target language may have the equivalence of them or not. Consequently, each word can be translated

using one lexem or more than one lexem eventhough it has lexical meaning. Thus, the effort to translate needs additional explanation or annotated translation. In a simple way, this can be done by using bracket, comas or dashes, or footnote in order that the reference become specific and clearer.

What it is meant by annotated translation stated by Williams and Chasterman⁵ is "form of introspective and retrospective research where you yourself translate a text and, at the same time, write a commentary on your own translation process". Therefore, I follow the statement of Williams and Chasterman to make a note and give comment deals with the translator to solve the problem during the translation proses, namely the eight bold words.

People should consider the meaning of word that refers to the textual and referential level when translating the words from source language, bahasa Indonesia, which has local cultural meaning to target language, English. It should not stop in the conceptual

level because in a word, there is different cultural element. In textual level, the translator tried to understand the source text in terms of words and sentences. Nevertheless, when I find trouble to understand the word and sentence in source language then move to referential level. In this level I look for the information from other resources to understand them, such as dictionary.

The effort to translate the italic words into English based on two the bilingual dictionary, an *Indonesian-English dictionary*,⁶ and *A Comprehensive Indonesian-English Dictionary*.⁷ The definition based on both dictionaries is as written in the following table 3.

In my opinion, it is not correct to apply faithful translation in literary works because treating the word of bahasa Indonesia exactly as the word of English can create disharmony. The reason is there is different culture between the two languages which makes the translator have to adjust toward the diction in order that the meaning is in harmony with the target language.

Moreover, Lyons⁸ states that the meaning has no directly relation to the reference, but deals with the interword and interlanguage relation.

Here is the annotated translation for the bold words one by one which the target readers are adults and the aim of the translation is to entertain them because the source text is taken from short story. Therefore, the translation is hope to make them feel smooth when reading. 1. *Pematang* (n) :: Dike between paddy fields. The reason to translate *pematang* by contextual conditioning, namely *between paddy fields* is to show the certain reference and to make the meaning becomes clearer instead of using *dike* only without additional explanation. It is because in cultural of target language, *dike* refers to a channel. 2. *Kerbau* (n) :: Water buffalo. Water buffalo is chosen because based on two dictionaries used as references. It means that water buffalo can be accepted for the readers. According to *Oxford Advanced Learners's Dictionary*,⁹ *water buffalo* is "a large Asian animal, used for pulling

vehicle and farm equipment in tropical country". 3. *Bajak* (n) :: Plow. Plow has different punctuation and pronunciation between American English and British English, *plough*. Therefore, the choice of English word, as the translation, should be suitable for the target readers. It indicates if the readers are for American so that the word choice follows their language rule and in the contrary. 4. *Tutut* (n) :: Edible snails. The target readers understand that some types of snail can be eaten. Furthermore, there is a well known type named escargot which is prepared as an appetizer or entree. But, in the culture of source language this *tutut* is prepared for eating with rice. Hence, edible snails is preferred to be used for translating *tutut*. 5. *Daun rumbia* (n) :: Leaf of a similar sago palm. *Daun rumbia* is translated leaf of a similar sago palm because *rumbia* is a tree similar to palm. The reason to do that is the tree of *rumbia* does not grow in land of target language instead of palm. Therefore, the readers will quickly to recognize what the *daun rum-*

bia looks like. 6. *Pohon jati* (n) :: Teak. Teak is more accurate to be elected rather than *hardwood tree* because teak refer to the plantation with hard wood grows in Asia and often used as furniture. However, *hardwood tree* is used for elucidation the tree with hard wood. 7. *Melenguh* (v) :: to moo. According to *Oxford Advanced Learners's Dictionary* (2005),¹⁰ *moo* means "the long deep sound made by a cow". In short, the producing sound by cow is similar to the water buffalo. For this reason I choose *moo* to translate *melenguh*. While *bellow* or *gasp for breath* can be used either. 8. *Bersenda gurau* (v) :: Jokes around. Jokes around is more useful to explain fun situation during fishing with friends and himself. According to *Oxford Advanced Learners's Dictionary*,¹¹ *joke* means "to say something to make people laugh; to tell a funny story. Usually, the patience is needed when fishing and people like to joke in order not to get boredem.

Conclusion

From the translation of eight words with Indonesian cultural meaning into English, it needs equivalent word to represent the meaning of translated word. The problem is there is no equivalent word in English as the target language but has the concept or in the contrary for translating Indonesian word with cultural meaning. The way to overcome this is by using the additional explanation, which can be named, contextual conditioning in translation techniques, of the translated lexem depends on the contex. Moreover, such explanation can use annotated translation in the proses of translation.

Endnotes:

1. Benny H. Hoed, *Penerjemahan dan Kebudayaan*, Bandung, Pustaka Jaya, 2006.
2. Odgen, C. K and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, San Diego, HBJ Book, 1923/1989.
3. John Lyons, *Semantics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Vol. I, 1977, p. 257-258.
4. John I. Saeed, *Semantics*, Australia, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 42.
5. Williams and Chasterman, 2002, p. 27.
6. John M. Echols and Hasan Shadily, *Kamus Indonesia Inggris*, Jakarta, Gramedia, 1992.
7. Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings, *A Comprehensive Indonesian-English Dictionary*, Jakarta, Mizan, 2004.
8. John Lyons, *Semantics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Vol. I, 1997.
9. *Oxford Advanced Learners's Dictionary*, 2005.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*

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Musim tanam sudah tiba. Desis ular besi samar-samar terdengar di kejauhan. Beberapa perempuan dengan betis terendam lumpur, lelaki tua dengan kerbau dan bajaknya, bocah-bocah pencari tutut (keong yang biasa dimasak untuk lauk) yang beristirahat di pematang, kembali mengarahkan mata ke ular besi itu, seperti yang selalu mereka lakukan.

Hujan memukuli tanah dan atap daun rumbia rumah-rumah desa kecil di kaki gunung. Angin menderu-deru, menggesekkan batang-batang bambu dan pohon jati. Kodok-kodok menyanyikan lagu, sebagai rasa terimakasih pada Tuhan.

Ayam jantan berkokok panjang, itik-itik mulai digiring, kerbau melenguh puas dan mengibaskan ekornya, bocah-bocah bertelanjang badan tertawa riang berlompatan ke sungai, para pemancing menancapkan kailnya di tanah, sesekali bersenda-gurau dengan diri sendiri.

Jurnal Perempuan 10th edition, 1999, p. 74.

No	Words	1 st Dictionary	2 nd Dictionary
1	<i>Pematang</i> (n)	Bund, Dike between rice fields	Dike (in a rice field)
2	<i>Kerbau</i> (n)	Carabao, Water buffalo	Water buffalo
3	<i>Bajak</i> (n)	Plough (BE), Plow (US)	Plow
4	<i>Tutut</i> (n)	Snail	Snail
5	<i>Daun rumbia</i> (n)	Leaf of a similar sago palm	Leaf of sago palm
6	<i>Pohon jati</i> (n)	Teak, hardwood tree	Teak
7	<i>Melenguh</i> (v)	Bellow, gasp for breath	to moo
8	<i>Bersenda gurau</i> (v)	Banter for back and forth, make fun of someone	To joke around