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Transtool versus Conventional Translation in Digital Technology Era

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Abstract: *Currently, almost 75% of textbooks, journals, periodicals, and magazines at the university libraries in Indonesia are written in English. The development of science, technology, and art are also determined by English, because nowadays many scientific books and journals are also written in English. To understand information in those textbooks and other information media, the translator has a vital role and becoming translator is a potential job. However, the quality of translation in Indonesia today is still low. In this regard, translation plays an important but problematic role. In one hand, there is a variety of translation software, such as transtool, language tool in google, etc., but conventional translation is more believable, on the other hand. Through conventional translation by professional translators, right meaning or message can be delivered to the readers, while translation offered by computer software (transtool) gives problematic results in terms of their unclear message from source language to target language. This paper therefore discusses: Firstly, the translation results and their problems found in transtool, in terms of grammar use, word order, word choice, and so on which contribute to the low quality of translation. Secondly, providing comparative analysis between translation from transtool and conventional translation.*

Keywords: *Translation, transtool, conventional translation, digital technology*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, due to science, knowledge, and technology development, translation services are needed in everyday life. This is because approximately 75 percent of textbooks, journals, and magazines in the libraries at some universities in Indonesia are written in English and other foreign languages. Sadtono (2003) also reports that currently there are 75% of scientific books in the library in Indonesia are written in English. Consequently, translation bureau and translators are very important and become a national need and a must in daily life. In relation to this need, translation services grow like mushrooms in the rainy season, and in this digital technology era, translation software also grows rapidly. One of that translation software is transtool. Transtool has been utilized by a variety of professions and people from many countries and different background in the world in this millennium.

The problem then arises in terms of the low quality of translation from source language (English or other foreign languages) to target language (Indonesian), either by using transtool or traditional translation.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. What is Translation?

Davaninezhad (2009) says that the term translation itself has several meanings: it can refer to subject field, the product (the text that has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating). The process of translation between two different languages involves the translator changing an original text (ST) in original verbal language (SL) into a written text (TT) in a different verbal language (TL). In this replacement, only form of SL is changed and the meaning is held constant. Venutti in Hoed (2007) illustrates that translation is a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation.

Furthermore, some experts in translation practices argue that translation is an art or science, and the others say that translation is skill. Cary in Nababan (1999) believes that translation is an art. Jumpelt in Nababan (1999) emphasizes that translation is a science. Nababan (1999) claims that translation is skill.

Based upon these opinions, the writer strongly believes that translation is the accumulation of art, science, and skill. A professional translator should have these three concepts. He or she should produce good translation with aesthetic value. He or she also should know that translation is applied science, and should apply the theory into translation practices. How to produce good quality of translation also depends on the translators' skill to interpret the idea or message of the words or sentences from source language to target languages.

Good translation is translation that is consistent to its source language; it is easy to be understood by the readers and like original text (Sadtono, 2003). Accordingly, Shapiro in Hoed (2007) argues that a good translation is like a pane of a glass.

Professional or good translators hopefully have a wide variety of skills and sufficient knowledge of the discipline that will be translated. They are also expected to have good insight and able to interpret the meaning of the source language (SL) into target language (TL). Norris in Algadrie (2004) suggests that when the reader encounters an unfamiliar word, he must try to find a context clue to help clarify the meaning. In this regard, if the reader as the rewriter (translator) encounters problem in understanding the meaning of the sentence or paragraph, he or she needs to apply strategies. One of strategies used is focusing on the context clue or situational context.

Generally speaking, they have good interpretation ability. This is because, the translator is rewriter of the original text of SL by using his or her own words and interpretation, and the words or interpretation employed can transfer message like the original one into TL.

Inaba (2009) strongly agrees that the translator is a *rewriter* of the original text as he or she engages in the act of cultural and ideological transportation and distorts the source text (ST) to accommodate it into the target text (TT). Inaba further states that although rewriters/translators are usually considered to be meticulous, hard-working, well-read and as honest as is humanly possible, complete equivalence between ST and TT may be impossible due to various constraints.

2.2. Types of Translation

Nababan (1999) states that there are some types of translations. Those are: i) word-for-word translation, ii) free translation, iii) literal translation, iv) dynamic translation, v) pragmatic translation, vi) esthetic-poetic translation, vii) ethnographic translation, viii) linguistic translation, and, ix) communicative and semantic translation.

Davaninezhad (2009) describes that there are a wide variety of translation types, such as word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptation, free, idiomatic, communicative and cognitive translation. In a closer look she presents Roman Jakobson's interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic, Dryden's metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation, George Steiner's literal, free and faithful, and Cicero's Word-for-word and sense-for-sense.

Furthermore, Douglas Robinson in Hodges (2009) writes that for some translators "the entire purpose of translation is achieving equivalence. He therefore says that the target text must match the source text as fully as possible." Linguistic meaning and equivalence are the key issues for the Russian structuralist Roman Jakobson who, in his 1959 work *On Linguistic Works of Translation*, states that there are 3 types of translation: 1) intralingual – rewording or paraphrasing, summarizing, expanding or commenting within a language, 2) interlingual – the traditional concept of translation from ST to TT or the "shifting of meaning from one language to another" (Stockinger), and 3) intersemiotic – the changing of a written text into a different form, such as art or dance (Berghout lecture 27/7/05; Stockinger).

Besides, traditional translation, there are a lot of software tools used to produce translation. One of them is transtool.

2.3. Transtool versus Conventional Translation

Like conventional translation, the transtool can translate words, phrases, sentences, and even

paragraphs or texts. The translation results by using transtool software are usually low quality. This is because; this software can not translate complex sentences in good quality.

The following examples of translation reveal that conventional translation is better than the translation resulted by transtool. In this article, the language used as the source language is English as one of Indo-European languages and the target language is Indonesian as one of Austronesian languages.

Table 1. *Words*

Word Class	Words	Transtool results	Conventional translation
Noun	Book	Buku	Buku
	Ancestor	Nenek moyang	Nenek moyang
Verb	To use	Untuk menggunakan	Menggunakan
	To read	Untuk membaca	Membaca
Adjective	Beautiful	Indah	Indah, cantik
	Lazy	Malas	Malas
Adverb	Yesterday	Kemarin	Kemarin
	Now	Sekarang	Sekarang

Table 1 reveals that all word classes in simple word in English can be translated well, either in transtool or conventional one. In translating simple word(s), transtool does not have difficulties.

Table 2. *Phrases*

Category	Words	Transtool results	Conventional translation
Noun pharase	Green house	Rumah hijau	Rumah hijau
	A new book	Suatu buku yang baru	Sebuah buku baru
	My beloved mother	Ibu terkasihku	
Verb pharase	To find out	Untuk menemukan	Menemukan
	To look for	Untuk mencari	Mencari

In table 2, the translation result from transtool has minor mistakes. This is because, the machine translation (transtool) do not meet difficulties in translating the simple words and phrases.

Table 3. *Compounds*

Compounds	Transtool results	Conventional translation
Greenhouse	Rumah kaca	Rumah kaca
Loudspeaker	Pengeras suara	Pengeras suara
Crossword	Teka teki silang	Teka teki silang

Table 3 illustrates that the translation results, either from transtool or conventional translation are good. This is because; the transtool has compound words and their equivalents.

Table 4. *Sentences*

Sentences	Transtool results	Conventional translation
I go to school every day	Aku pergi ke sekolah tiap hari	Saya pergi ke sekolah setiap hari
She studied English yesterday	Dia belajar bahasa Inggris yang kemarin	Dia belajar bahasa Inggris kemarin
They are playing badminton now	Mereka sedang belajar bahasa Inggris sekarang	Mereka (sedang) belajar bahasa Inggris sekarang
We will go to the zoo	Kami akan pergi (bagi/kepada) kebun binatang	Kami akan pergi ke kebun binatang
I have eaten lunch.	Aku sudah makan makan siang	Saya telah makan siang

Table 4 reveals that the translation results from sentences with NP+VP+NP+Adverb have minor mistakes or the translation results only need little revision. Compare the translation results from transtool and conventional translation. The first sentence ”I go to school every day.” If the sentence is translated word by word, so its equivalent is ”*Saya pergi ke sekolah setiap hari*” or ”*Aku pergi ke sekolah tiap hari*.” In Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), *saya* and *aku* have the same meaning but *saya* is more formal than *aku*. *Saya* is usually used in formal meeting or scientific writing while *aku* is only used in informal dialogue.

The second sentence ”She studied English yesterday.” The translation result of this sentence in Indonesian is ”*Dia belajar bahasa Inggris kemarin*.” The translation result from transtool needs revision. The word ”*yang*” is not needed in the Indonesian equivalent.

The third sentence ”They are playing badminton now” has Indonesian equivalent: *”Mereka belajar bahasa Inggris sekarang*.” The translation result from transtool ”*Mereka sedang belajar bahasa Inggris sekarang*” is also correct. With and without the word ”*sedang*,” the sentence is correct and it is understandable.

The forth sentence ”We will go to the zoo.” If the sentence is translated into Indonesian using conventional translation, so the translation is *”Kami akan pergi ke kebun binatang*.” In translation result from transtool, the correct word for ”*bagi”* or ”*kepada*” is the word ”*ke*” as revealed in the conventional translation.

The fifth sentence ”I have eaten lunch” has equivalent in Indonesian ”*Saya telah makan siang*” or ”*Saya sudah makan siang*.” The word ”*telah*” and ”*sudah*” are the same. If the sentence is translated into Indonesia word by word, so the Indonesian equivalent is ” *Aku sudah makan makan siang*.” This translation result needs revision. The revision is one of the word ”*makan*” should be omitted and the correct translation is ”*Saya telah makan siang*.”

Table 5. *Clauses*

Clauses	Transtool results	Conventional translation
I do not know what he means	Aku tidak mengetahui apa yang ia berarti	Saya tidak mengetahui apa yang ia maksud
Do you know where he lives?	Apakah kamu mengetahui di mana ia hidup?	Apakah kamu (anda) mengetahui dimana ia tinggal?/Apakah kamu mengetahui ia tinggal dimana?
She does not know how old he is	Ia tidak mengetahui bagaimana tua dia adalah	Dia (pr) tidak mengetahui berapa umur dia (lk).
I don’t know whose pen this is	Aku tidak mengetahui pena siapa ini adalah	Saya tidak mengetahui polpen siapa ini/Saya tidak mengetahui polpen ini milik siapa.
The woman whom I called gave me some information	Perempuan (siapa) yang aku (memanggil/hubungi) memberi aku beberapa informasi	Perempuan yang aku panggil memberikan informasi
The man whom I met was friendly	Orang (siapa) yang aku jumpai adalah ramah	Orang yang aku jumpai adalah ramah

Table 5 reveals that transtool fails to translate the clauses well into bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian) as a target language. The correct translation of those clauses are illustrated in conventional translation.

Table 6. *Paragraphs*

Paragraphs	Transtool results	Remarks
If we compare two different words used by two different groups of people speaking different languages, and we find that they express a similar (or identical) meaning by using similar (or, again, identical) sounds, then we need to ask ourselves this question: why? Maybe it is because there is some natural connection between the meaning and the form of being used to express it. On the other hand, maybe it says something about some kind of historical connection (Crowley, 1987).	Jika kita bandingkan dua kata-kata yang berbeda yang digunakan oleh dua kelompok orang yang berbeda (yang) mengatakan bahasa yang berbeda, dan kita temukan bahwa mereka mengatakan suatu yang serupa (atau serupa) maksud/arti dengan penggunaan yang serupa (atau, lagi, serupa) bunyi, kemudian kita harus (minta, tanya) diri kita pertanyaan: mengapa? Barangkali (itu) adalah sebab ada beberapa koneksi yang alami antar(a) maksud/arti dan format yang digunakan untuk menyatakan itu. Pada sisi lain, barangkali (itu) ada di rumah tentang sesuatu beberapa macam koneksi historis.	From the translation results in the target language (bahasa Indonesia), we can identify some mistakes, such as: word choice (e.g., *mengatakan* should be *menggunakan*, *mengatakan* should be *mengungkapkan*, *koneksi yang alami* should be *hubungan alamiah*, *format* should be *bentuk*, *pada sisi lain* should be *di lain sisi*).

Table 6 presents the translation results using transtool and the translations are understandable on the one hand but on the other hand, the translations need some changes.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As has been revealed in this paper, translation is an art, science, and even skill. Therefore, the professional or good translators should have enough competence and skill, either in source language and target language. They are also expected to have competence towards the material that will be translated. In regard to the digital technology era, translation software grows rapidly, i.e., transtool, but the quality of translation resulted by this software is low.

Therefore conventional translation is still needed in this millennium, because there are some grammatical mistakes made by transtool. Those mistakes are: diction (word choice), word order, grammar, etc. On the other hand, transtool is only recommended to translate words, phrases, compound, and simple sentence. It is not recommended to translate complex sentences.

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