

The Actual Processes in the Making of Translation Works:

Views of Indonesian translators

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Abstract—This paper elaborates the actual processes of translation viewed by Indonesian translators in the making of translation works. Twelve experienced translators having various educational backgrounds, from tourism, English, education, chemistry, pharmacy, law, to philosophy were purposively invited to get involved in this research. This research implemented a descriptive qualitative method aimed to reveal the actual processes of translation experienced by the translators in their day to day activities to deal with translation works. The data were collected through a questionnaire to identify the translators' actual processes, a deep interview to clarify the translators' views on their translation practices, and some relevant documents of the translators' works to confirm the overall translation processes undertaken by the translators. The results showed that the actual processes followed by the translators in the making of translation works were reading the source documents to comprehend the overall messages of the original texts, looking for some relevant references to better understand the source texts, i.e. relevant dictionaries, glossaries in similar topics, theories to support the translator's understanding of the materials to translate, translating from the source language to the target language, hiring proofreaders to look for some inputs and suggestions, and revising process to see whether or not some parts of the translation works should be revised.

Keywords—*actual processes; Indonesian translators; translation; views*

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation process is done differently by one translator to another. The difference may be understood since some translators have their own experiences and actual practices in the process of translation in their day to day activities. Translators' competences and experiences will determine the quality of their translation and the productivity of the translators in the making of translation works. The actual processes followed by the translators in the making of translation works are also different from one translator to another which are very much dependent on the level of difficulty of the source texts, the subject knowledge of the translators, familiarity of the translators to the subject matters

they are translating and the length of time provided by the clients for the translators to complete their translation.

There are four language skills required by the translators in the process of translating, reading and writing. Reading stage is the process that should be done by the translators to truly understand the source language texts, while writing is done by the translators to write the messages of the writer in the source language texts to the target language readers without any violation of meaning as it is intended by the writer of the texts. These two language skills are usually called as the first language skills connection. The other language skills connection is that between listening and speaking. These two language skills are usually required by interpreters where they are working on listening to the source language speakers and try to understand the messages and then interpret them to the target language listeners through their speaking skill.

The actual translation processes cover the processes of reading the source language texts. In the process of reading translators found different experiences in dealing with this initial stage. In the reading process translators may find some difficulties understanding the source texts, in that case, translators try to look for some relevant references to better understand the source texts, i.e. relevant dictionaries, glossaries in similar topics, thesaurus, encyclopedia, and some translation theories to support the translators' understanding on the subjects and the materials they are translating.

The research in translation process may cover two broader methods, translation process research relied on introspection and the evaluation of retrospective or think aloud protocols (TAP). In addition, more recent computational methods allow for collecting objective user activity data (UAD) [1]. The research may use the computer technology which can cover keystrokes, mouse clicks, gaze data and other user activities constitute the directly observable translation behavior which can be recorded and quantified, and which reflect traces of the hidden translation processes [1].

Jakobsen distinguishes three phases in the translation process [1]: 1) initial orientation, in which the translator gets a gist of the source text, 2) translation drafting in which a raw version of the translation is produced and 3) translation

revision, in which the draft is refined and finalized. Carl, et al. then try to contrast differences between student translators and those of professional translators in dealing with the initial orientation of doing the translation works [1]. Student translators have a systematic initial orientation, they prefer large-context planning during drafting and often skip the revision phase. Professionals are more frequently head-starters, they show small-context planning during drafting and often have an extensive end-revision.

The *translation process* is defined as everything that happens from the moment the translator starts working on the source text until he finishes the target text. It is all encompassing, from every pencil movement and keystroke, to dictionary use, the use of the internet and the entire thought process that is involved in solving a problem or making a correction – in short everything a translator must do to transform the source text to the target text [2].

The research of translation process is done through introspective and retrospective methodology [1,3,4]. These two processes are then further clarified by House that introspective is translators' oral production elicited in the process of translating, while retrospective is made immediately after doing the translation works [3]. These can be undertaken through monologic and dialogic tasks, i.e. interviews with translators and questionnaires or surveys.

In this paper will not cover the discussion on the new experimental methods of researching the translation process using keystroke logging (or keylogging), screen recording, eye-tracking and various other physiological measures, i.e. stress, frustration, arousal, and other types of emotion highlighted by House since this research is not yet facilitated with a keystroke logging tool (Translog) [3].

II. METHOD

This paper elaborates the actual processes of translation viewed by Indonesian translators in the making of translation works. Twelve experienced translators having various educational backgrounds, from tourism, English, education, chemistry, pharmacy, law, to philosophy were purposively invited to get involved in this research. This research implemented a descriptive qualitative method aimed to reveal the actual processes of translation experienced by the translators in their day to day activities to deal with translation works. The data were collected through a questionnaire to identify the translators' actual processes, an in-depth interview to clarify the translators' views on their translation practices, and some relevant documents of the translators' works to confirm the overall translation processes undertaken by the translators. The data were then coded, classified, and analyzed qualitatively to come up with the answers revealing the actual processes undertaken by the translators in the making of translation works.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Translator-1 (T1) translated a text through sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph. These ways were taken to make sure that the core meaning of the sentence and the

paragraph can be met in the translation. In addition to T1, there were four other translators (T5, T6, T8, and T11) who did their translation in the similar ways with that of T1. These translators shared their translation processes as in the following quotation (1).

- (1) *Membaca seluruh teks sampai mengerti, mencari kata-kata sulit dan membuat glossary baru kemudian menerjemahkannya* (Reading the overall texts to truly understand the content, looking for difficult words, creating glossaries and then translating the texts) (T1, T5, T6, T8, T11).

In addition to that, Translator-5 (T5) read one or two paragraphs, then translated the paragraphs through word for word, summarized the paragraphs or defined them using relevant words. Then T5 tried to combine three translation units, i.e. word for word, sentence by sentence, and paragraph by paragraph. Meanwhile, in the actual translation process, Translator-6 (T6) tried to understand the contexts first, translated the texts through sentence by sentence, or paragraph by paragraph, reread the translation results while edited the translation and finally added a footnote when necessary. T6 claimed that the translator had to completely understand the contexts in doing the translation works, otherwise, when the translator translated words, sentences, or paragraphs without truly understand the contexts this may result in an awkward translation and it may out of the contexts which would mislead the readers and or the clients.

Different from T5 and T6, Translator-8 (T8) started to work on the translation by reading the overall texts first, then collecting terms and making a list of difficult words. Then, looking for definitions or information of the listed terms, translating the texts roughly, reading the translation results to make sure if the translation had been accurately made, editing the translation and making some corrections on some irrelevant translation works, giving the translation to proofreader to get some correction from the proofreader and making some consultation with the proofreader for comments and corrections. Again, T8 reiterated that doing a translation cannot be out from the contexts. In the case that the works should be made based on the contexts, even if the translation should be done through word for word, this may be possible since the core of the translation was actually transferring the messages from the first language (L1) to second or target language (L2). Meanwhile, in translating a text, Translator-11 (T11) did it paragraph by paragraph to make sure that the whole meaning of the paragraph was completely united. This can be done through reading the whole texts to truly understand the meaning, finding the meaning of some difficult words, and making a glossary and finally translating it.

In the translation processes, Translator-2 (T2) did three main stages, i.e. reading source texts repeatedly, asking translation subject to clients, and making contextual interpretation. In doing the translation, T2 did it through sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph. These two ways were undertaken by T2 since these may ease the understanding of the texts and adapt them with the target language. Three other translators (T9, T10, and T12) also

implemented the technique used by T2. They expressed their technique in their translation process in the following way (2).

- (2) *Membaca sekilas sambil mencari kata-kata yang sulit, membuat glossary baru kemudian menerjemahkannya* (Reading the texts at glance, looking for some difficult words, creating glossaries and then translating the texts) (T2, T9, T10, T12).

In addition to T2, Translator-9 (T9) experienced two main stages in the translation process, i.e. reading the texts to truly understand the content and translating the texts in the writer's language style. T9 focused the translation on the sentence level considering that the meaning of the writer could be clearly transferred to the readers. T9 believed if the translation was made in word level, on the one hand, the readers would find it difficult to understand the translation. On the other hand, when the translation was made in the level of paragraph, it would be considered too free, so that the language styles of the writer could not be identified by readers any longer. T9 expressed the idea in the following (3).

- (3) *Saya dapat menyampaikan maksud pengarang dengan lebih jelas. Jika secara kata demi kata, terjemahan akan sulit dipahami karena terlalu kaku. Jika secara paragraf demi paragraf, terjemahan akan menjadi terlalu bebas, sehingga gaya bahasa asli pengarang tidak bisa ditangkap lagi* (I can convey the author's intended ideas more clearly. If the translation is done word for word, it will be difficult to understand because it is too rigid. If it is done paragraph by paragraph, the translation will be too free, so that the author's original language style cannot be captured) (T9).

Translator-10 (T10) highlighted the process through reading the source documents, preparing the translation through opening dictionaries, providing glossaries, finding relevant theories, comprehending the overall messages of the original documents, translating the source documents to the target language texts. In general, T10 did the translation through paragraph by paragraph to make sure that the results of the translation were coherent. However, T10 admitted that the most ideal strategy to work on the translation was through reading the overall texts to truly understand the contents, but this was hard to practice due to some constraint of time or deadlines.

Similarly, Translator-12 (T12) had five translation stages in the process of translating: reading source texts, looking for some references, translating source texts to target texts, hiring proofreaders to read the whole texts, and revising process. In the translation process, T12 did the translation through sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph. This way was undertaken by T12 considering that a sentence is the smallest unit in translation which has a complete meaning. In the case that this process cannot be done, then a group of sentences would be the translation units, and if this process cannot be done, then the paragraph is used as the unit of translation.

- (4) *Kalimat adalah unit terjemahan terkecil, yang mengandung makna lengkap. Kalau dengan cara itu tidak bisa, saya pakai sekelompok kalimat sebagai unit terjemahan, kalau tidak bisa, baru pakai paragraf sebagai unit terjemahan* (The sentence is the smallest translation unit, which contains a complete meaning. If that way doesn't work, I use a group of sentences as a translation unit, if it can't be done, then I use a paragraph as the translation unit) (T12).

Different from the earlier two groups of translators, Translator-3 (T3) translated texts sentence by sentence and this was intended to unite the translation with that of the standardized spelling of the Indonesian standard. In the process of translating, T3 read the overall texts several times to truly understand the meaning of the texts and then translated them. T3 was the only translator who did the translation through this process. T3 shared it in the following quotation (3).

- (5) *Membaca seluruh teks beberapa kali sampai mengerti baru kemudian menerjemahkannya* (Reading the overall texts several times to truly understand the content and then translating the texts) (T3).

Then, Translator-4 (T4) translated the texts through three main stages: consulting the dictionary, asking people who know the translation subject better, and finding the meaning through understanding the contexts. T4 translated the texts through word for word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph and based on the contexts of the sentences. These might be done by T4 since translating was not only done by one way, but it depended on the contexts and their meanings. Therefore, the translator had to read the overall texts at glance once then translate them. T4 expressed the idea in the following (4).

- (6) *Membaca seluruh teks secara sekilas satu kali kemudian menerjemahkannya* (Reading the overall texts once at glance and then translating the texts) (T4).

Finally, Translator-7 (T7) had a relatively unique strategy in working with the translation. The translation was done through glancing at the reading session and roughly translating the source texts to the target texts without considering difficulty of words when doing the translation. T7 tried to leave the unfamiliar words without checking them first in the dictionary. This stage was done until the end of the works, then during the editing process, the unfamiliar words were then checked up in the dictionary to find out the most suitable or relevant meanings to the contexts of the translation.

The actual processes followed by the experienced translators in the making of translation works can be viewed and summarized in the following table (Table 1).

TABLE I. PROCESS OF TRANSLATION FOLLOWED BY TRANSLATORS

No	Translation Process	Translator (T)	Total	Percentage (%)
1	Reading overall texts once at glance and translating the texts.	T4	1	8.33
2	Reading overall texts several times to truly understand the content and translating the texts.	T3	1	8.33
3	Reading texts at glance, looking for difficult words, creating glossaries and translating the texts.	T2, T9, T10, T12	4	33.34
4	Reading overall texts to truly understand the content, looking for difficult words, creating glossaries and translating the texts.	T1, T5, T6, T8, T11	5	41.67
5	Other: I directly translate the text while reading it.	T7	1	8.33
			12	100

Three translators out of 12 worked on their translation unit on the word level (25%), while the rest 75% of the translators did not work on word level in doing their translation. Then, eight translators (66.67%) worked on their translation unit on sentence level, while the rest 33.33% of the translators did not

work on sentence level. Finally, nine translators (75%) worked on the paragraph level, while the rest 25% of the translators did not do it on the level of paragraph. The views of the translators on the unit of translation level can be critically identified in the following table (Table 2).

TABLE II. TRANSLATORS' VIEWS TO WORK ON THE LEVEL OF TRANSLATION UNIT

Level of Translation Unit	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	Total (√)	Total (x)	% (√)	% (x)
Word	x	x	x	√	√	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	3	9	25	75
Sentence	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	√	x	x	√	8	4	66.67	33.33
Paragraph	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	x	x	√	√	√	9	3	75	25

Notes: T=Translator

IV. CONCLUSION

From the data findings and analysis some conclusions can be drawn as follows. The actual processes followed by the translators in the making of translation works were done through reading the source documents to comprehend the overall messages of the original texts, looking for some relevant references to better understand the source texts, i.e. relevant dictionaries, glossaries in similar topics, theories to support the translator's understanding of the materials to translate, translating from the source language to the target language, hiring proofreaders to look for some inputs and suggestions, and revising process to see whether or not some parts of the translation works should be revised. This research can provide the other translators, lecturers, teachers and other translation practitioners with some views on the actual

processes undertaken by the translators to come up with a quality translation.

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