

Grab your Translation Orders, Manage the Deadlines: An Indonesian translators' perspective

Sri Harto

Departemen Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Bandung, Indonesia
harto@upi.edu

Sri Handayani

Departemen Sastra Inggris
Universitas Kebangsaan
Bandung, Indonesia
handayani.uk@gmail.com

Abstract—This research seeks to investigate an Indonesian translators' perspective in grabbing translation orders and managing the translation deadlines agreed by both translators and clients. Seven competent and experienced translators were purposively selected to participate in this descriptive qualitative research. Data were obtained from a survey questionnaire administered to identify and describe the translators' orders grabbed from various translation clients and to elaborate on how they managed their deadlines. Interviews were also done to confirm the information provided by the translators and to search for some additional information not explicitly explored in the survey questionnaire. The results indicated that the translation orders were grabbed from book publishers, translation agencies, offices, multinational companies, translators' colleagues, and individuals. The translators showed some initiatives to collaborate with other competent and experienced translators to manage their translation deadlines. In addition, in some cases, the translators need to hire consultants and experts in the relevant topics to share their expertise to the translators to improve the quality of their translation. Then, the translators considered the importance of employing editors to review the overall translation, and proofreaders were also required by the translators to proofread the final draft of the manuscripts before they were sent back to their clients.

Keywords—*translation orders; translators' perspective*

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing need of a global communication will trigger international interactions and transactions among people to do their businesses. The result of the communication is commonly documented and written in the languages officially used by the related parties. In the context of Indonesia, for instance, the official documents of bilateral cooperation are written in the language of a collaborating country, i.e. in English, and in Indonesian as the Indonesian national language. The administration of the documents is involving translators to translate the documents of the bilateral cooperation both from English into Indonesian and from Indonesian into English.

In addition to the role of translators in the provision of documents for bilateral cooperation, they are also demanded to provide worldwide readers and viewers with some multilingual information spread out online all over the world. The translators play a significant role in transferring the information from one source language to various target languages. The

multilingual information is then presented in different forms of news writing for international online publications, i.e. press networks, television channels, contents for internet, world wide web resources, social media materials, blog contents, and information for wikis [1], to mention just a few.

In some cases, the works of Indonesian translators cannot be separated from the overall stabilities of politics, economics, social, cultures, and security in the country. The stability of the country in every aspect of life which is supported by fair implementation of laws and regulations will automatically attract potential foreign investors to invest their businesses in Indonesia. The foreign investors will not be worried to do their investment in Indonesia since they are completely sure that their investment will be safe and advantageous. The more foreign investors to come to Indonesia as the consequence of the Indonesian conducive situation, the more intensive interactions and communication between foreign people and Indonesians in various contextual activities will be. As a result, the more documents to translate, i.e. from both English to Indonesian and vice versa, the more works to do by the translators. In such a situation, orders of translation as the result of the foreign investment will automatically be increasing. The increasing needs of translation works in the global era are relevant to what is shared by House reiterating that "the globalization has led to veritable explosion of demand for translation" [1].

With regard to the increasing number of translation orders from various sectors, on the one hand, competent and experienced translators will always have regular or even higher opportunities to get the translation orders since they have relatively had their established market segments. However, novice translators, on the other hand, who dominate and color wider translation markets, are mostly characterized by lower cost translation services which potentially result in distrust from their customers due to lower quality works. The lower quality translation works may cause some consequences to the translators in which one of them is related to the regularity or sustainability of their works in the world of translation.

In compliance with the sustainability of translators' works, it will be very much dependent on how they grab their orders from clients. The orders should then be managed in order that they are completed by the due dates or deadlines. The completion of works by the deadlines is not easy since it needs

a serious commitment from the translators. Time pressure may influence the works of the translators to result in lower productivity or even in lower quality. This kind of consequence has initially been identified by Ghobadi, et al. concluding that “time pressure has significant influences on both the quality and quantity of the translation task” [2]. To the translators, these fundamental conclusions should be avoided in order to come up with sustainable quality works. Otherwise, translation as a profession will never get better responses from customers or clients due to lower productivity and quality resulted by the translators. These two main issues will interfere the translators in the completion of translation orders in manageable deadlines agreed by both the translators and the clients.

Orders and deadlines are two important terms in the translation business. The sustainability of translation works will be very much dependent on how the translators grab their orders from their prospective clients and on how the translators manage their deadlines. The former will determine the growth of the translation business, while the latter will show the translators’ commitment to give the translation results back to their clients based on the negotiated times. When the deadlines cannot be fulfilled by the translators, the orders will never come again to the translators. That is why the translators are not only required to show their competencies and experiences in dealing with translation works, but they are also demanded to have a high commitment to provide services to their clients.

In order to survive in the translation business, therefore, the translators have to struggle very hard to solve their problems in terms of productivity and quality. They are required to show their initiatives to collaborate with other competent and experienced translators to maintain their quality and manage their translation deadlines. In some cases, the translators even need to hire consultants and experts in the relevant topics to share their expertise to the translators in order to improve the quality of their translation. With regard to the quality of translation, Machali defines four aspects of translation assessment criteria to see a quality translation, i.e. appropriate reproduction of meanings, including linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic meanings; naturalness of expressions; equivalence of terminologies; and acceptable spellings [3].

The phenomena of translation orders and deadlines are very interesting and challenging to analyze since the speed of translators to deal with translation works can be viewed from some aspects, i.e. typing speed, level of text difficulty, familiarity with texts, translation memory software, personal style, and job stress [4]. For these reasons, the translators have to estimate the works carefully and allocate adequate times to anticipate some possible problems that never be predicted by the translators to come up with right decisions on deadlines. Some careful considerations should be made by the translators to decide the deadlines, i.e. target audience, contents, and clarity of the source texts. The complexities of translation orders and deadlines are therefore worth investigating to find out the perspective of Indonesian translators in grabbing translation orders from their clients and managing the translation deadlines based on the mutual agreement by both translators and clients.

II. METHOD

Seven competent and experienced translators were purposively selected to participate in this descriptive qualitative research. The translators had different educational background consisting of bachelor, masters, and doctorate degrees in various disciplines, i.e. chemistry, education, English, law, pharmacy, and philosophy. Data were obtained from a survey questionnaire administered to identify and describe the translators’ orders grabbed from various translation clients and to elaborate on how they managed their deadlines to provide the clients with excellent services to arrive in a mutual trust and benefit. Interviews were also done to confirm the information provided by the translators in the survey questionnaire and to search on some relevant information to explicitly explore the information which is not comprehensively surveyed in the questionnaire. The research data were then highlighted, coded, and classified in the main categories with the emphasis on translation orders requested by the clients and the management of deadlines implemented by the translators. The classified descriptive data were interpreted and discussed using references in the relevant theories to draw the conclusions of the study.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Subjects of Translation Ordered by Clients*

Translators (Ts) have relatively different subjects to translate. The differences can be critically identified from the subjects of translation ordered by their clients. Social sciences were the most favorable subjects for the clients in which six (T1, T2, T3, T4, T6, T7) out of seven translators had experienced to work on this subject. Five subjects, i.e. culture (T1, T3, T4, T6, T7), economics (T3, T4, T5, T6, T7), engineering (T1, T2, T3, T4, T7), literature (T1, T2, T3, T4, T7), and medical (T1, T2, T3, T4, T7) were the second most favorable subjects for the clients to order to the translators. These can be viewed from the number of translators, i.e. five out of the seven translators to get the translation orders in these five subjects. Then, politics and education were the third most favorable subjects ordered by the clients. Four out of seven translators had shared their experiences in translating the two favorite subjects, i.e. politics and education.

Meanwhile, law was only ordered by the clients to three (T3, T4, T5) out of seven translators. It means that four of the seven translators did not have any experiences in doing translation works in the field of law. This is to suggest that not all of the translators had capacities to translate legal documents which were identified to have very specific terms and vocabularies and it may result in some consequences when they were mistranslated by the translators. Then, religion was a subject which was only ordered by the clients to two translators (T1, T2). This can be understood since the translation in the area of religion needed an overall understanding of the God’s verses which could not be interpreted by the translators who did not have deeper understanding and thorough knowledge in the religious aspects and human life.

Finally, other subjects can be identified from each of the translators in which the subjects were different from one

translator to another. Translator 1 got translation orders in two areas, i.e. arts and parenting. Translator 2 experienced to get the translation orders in the areas of psychology, biology, management and pharmacy. Translator 5 had to translate documents from different areas, i.e. business finance, civil documents, news, mass media, and telecommunication. Translator 6 translated a philosophy, and Translator 7 dealt with computer software and database. Details of translation subjects ordered by clients can be seen in table 1 below.

TABLE I. SUBJECTS OF TRANSLATION ORDERED BY CLIENTS

No	Subjects	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	Total
1	Social Sciences	•	•	•	•		•	•	6
2	Economics			•	•	•	•	•	5
3	Culture	•		•	•		•	•	5
4	Engineering	•	•	•	•			•	5
5	Literature	•	•	•	•			•	5
6	Medical	•	•	•	•			•	5
7	Politics			•	•		•	•	4
8	Education	•	•	•	•				4
9	Law			•	•	•			3
10	Religion	•	•						2
11	Others	•	•			•	•	•	5

Notes: n=7; T=Translator. Others=T1: Arts & parenting; T2: Psychology, pharmacy, biology & management; T5: Business finance, civil documents, news, mass media & telecommunication; T6: Philosophy; T7: Computer software & database

B. Types of Documents Commonly Translated by Translators

In relation to the translation subjects, some types of documents were commonly translated by the translators. Zhang warns translators not to ignore the contextual factors surrounding the translation, i.e. the culture of the intended readers and of the clients in the translation of scientific and academic papers, instructions for use, tourist guides, and contracts [5]. Translator 1, for instance, translated textbooks, papers, story books, reports, contracts, manuals, official documents, leaflets and brochures. Textbooks and story books were two types of texts dominantly translated by T1, while magazines, reports, contracts, manuals, official documents, leaflets, and brochures were less dominant in T1's translation experiences.

Another translator, T3, had experienced to translate papers, correspondences, reports, contracts, manuals, corporate official documents, leaflet, and brochures. Papers, correspondences, reports, contracts, and corporate official documents were types of the documents dominantly ordered by the clients. However, textbooks, story books, theses and dissertations were less dominant to T3. Meanwhile, T4 had experienced to translate story books, contracts, dissertations and public reading books. Story books and public reading materials were two dominant types of documents to translate. Papers, correspondences, reports, manuals, official documents, theses, leaflets and brochures were less dominant, while T4 had translated approximately more than 45 books in various topics.

Finally, T7 had translated textbooks, story books, correspondences, reports, contracts, manuals, corporate official

documents, leaflet, brochures and database. Textbooks, manuals and database were three dominant types of documents to translate, while story books, correspondences, reports, contracts, leaflet and brochures were less dominant. In addition, types of documents commonly translated by the translators were textbooks (T1, T2, T4, T6, T7), academic papers, contracts, correspondences, official documents, reports (T3, T5), story books (T1, T4), database, manuals (T7), public reading books (T4).

C. Grabbing Translation Orders

The results indicated that the translation orders were grabbed by the translators from book publishers, translation agencies, offices, multinational companies, translators' colleagues, and individuals. Details are explored in the following.

1) *Regular translation orders from book publishers:* Each book to translate was initially offered by the publisher for bidding. The bidding process took two to three weeks. The bidding was first done through inviting three translators to translate the first five pages of the book as samples of their translation. Samples of translation from the three translators were then evaluated by a team in the publisher to decide the best translation result. Then, the translator of the best translation was then invited to sign a contract to translate the whole part of the book. The allocated time to translate the book was determined by the team based on at least two considerations, i.e. number of pages and level of difficulty of the source text. Then, in the process of translating the book, the publisher monitored the progress of the translation and asked the translator to send some parts of the translation results to the publisher, several chapters for instance, for editing purposes.

Five (T1, T2, T4, T6, T7) out of seven translators shared their experiences to work with different publishers. They got translation from the publishers through various ways, i.e. sending applications to some publishers (T7); making frequent contacts to get translation works (T6); and joining biddings held by different publishers (T1, T2, T4). The translators translated books in various topics, i.e. Islam, culture, philosophy, legend, spiritual, and parenting, ordered by different publishers. An example of a translated book was 'Sophie's World' written by Jostein Gaarder exploring a philosophy, which was considered to be very difficult and complicated, it was presented in such simple ways that was easy to understand by readers. The book was found as one of best sellers in one of the publishers in Indonesia. The translator (T4) shares about the book in the following.

"I think 'Sophie's World' is a very good book. The writer can write a book on philosophy which is actually difficult, but it can be presented in a very simple way (T4)".

The idea of translating foreign books were identified from the low production of books written in Indonesian language (R2). The academic culture of the Indonesian people to write books was still low. As the consequence, translation of books, for instance from English into Indonesian, would at least

provide the people with some reading materials in Indonesian language. These books were believed by the translators to fill in the gap between the people who did not understand English and the need of the people to read quality books written by foreign writers. The regular production and publication of the Indonesian books resulted by translators in the translation processes would give better understanding to the people of their reading materials. The quality reading materials purposively written by Indonesian writers or translated by Indonesian translators were believed to significantly contribute to the development of Indonesian human resources. In the case that the production of Indonesian writers to write in Indonesian language was low, then the demand of translating foreign books into Indonesian would be relatively high. Therefore, chances for experienced translators to translate the books would also be high.

2) *Online orders from translation agencies and offices:* In Robinson's opinion, translation does not only find equivalences but also deals with clients, agencies, employers, networking, research, and use of technology [4]. In this view, agencies and offices were two of several sources of translation orders that should be considered by translators. They might get some translation orders from their better relationships with translation agencies and offices through the use of internet connection and or social media. Official documents and correspondences were some of the translation documents mostly requested by the clients from these sources, in addition to the other types of documents in various topics ordered by clients.

3) *Translation orders from multinational companies:* Four translators (T3, T5, T6, T7) claimed to have some orders with multi-national companies. They dealt with corporate documents such as letters, contracts, news materials, contents for public hearings, and other materials for publication both online and printed versions. The translators considered the importance of building networking with other companies for the sustainability of their translation orders. In the translators' point of view, networking was a key to build a translation business with the multinational companies. The networking could be done to different people with various backgrounds, i.e. translators, notaries, judges, report writers, and Chief Executive Officers (CEO) from different corporations. These people might share some of their translation works, i.e. corporate and legal documents, to the other translators in order to complete their translation on time.

4) *Collaborative orders from translators' colleagues and individuals:* Collaborative works in translation coming from colleagues were identified to arrive in various backgrounds, i.e. lawyers, public notaries, and the other translators showing their interests in different businesses. The translators received translation orders from their colleagues who wanted to collaborate their works with their peers through on-line discussion forum or a network in form of legal documents. The lawyers were also required to write article drafts resulted from a negotiation which should initially be written in a legal writing. Therefore, the lawyer was then required to show

his/her skill in legal drafting. The legal drafting itself was actually the essence of the translation in legal areas. Orders of translation in legal areas were growing regularly following the recent development of social and economic conditions of Indonesia. The conducive business environment would trigger foreign investments which would potentially provide opportunities for the translation works. Orders would automatically come to translators as the consequences of using documents in different language spoken by business people from different countries. In the course of its development, disputes among business people would need the provision of documents in different languages, for instance, English and Indonesian that should be done by translators providing the source and the target language documents through translating activity. In addition, most translators (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7) received translation orders from individuals in several areas, i.e. official reports, papers (T4); corporate official documents, legal documents (T3, T5); and textbooks, manuals, and database (T1, T2, T7).

D. Managing Translation Deadlines

The translators had to show some initiatives to collaborate with other translators to manage their translation deadlines, anticipate unpredicted conditions, identify urgencies of documents, and negotiate time to translate the documents to achieve the deadlines. In order to achieve the intended deadlines, Rimalower suggests that the translators maintain the accuracy and consistency in terms of contents, punctuations, and formats particularly in the multiple versions of different languages [6].

1) *Initiating collaboration with competent and experienced translators:* The respondents as competent and experienced translators found the importance of collaborative activities dealing with managing the translation deadlines. The translators had to work very hard and think of collaborating with other parties for the completion of the translation works by the deadlines. In the translators' experiences, the people invited to be collaborators were different from one to another. A translator (T3) preferred to collaborate with personnel who had a relevant discipline. Another translator (T4) had shown experiences to work with editors and experts in the relevant field. Personnel to collaborate to deal with deadlines in translation among others were other translators who were interested in the topics of the translation; consultants to provide some assistance for the completion of the translation; experts of the relevant topics to see whether the translators in certain subject knowledge were relevant in terms of contents without any violation; and experts on the relevant topics or subject knowledge that were being translated.

2) *Anticipating unpredicted internal and external conditions of translators:* Internal and external conditions might influence to the completion of translation deadlines. Unpredicted conditions should be anticipated in order that the deadlines could be met on the due dates. Some conditions of the internal of the translators, for instance, sickness or unfit condition. In addition, from the external parties, from the

clients requesting earlier completion of translation works due to changes of early use of documents to the related parties, inquiries of any incidental meetings or other similar accidental activities. Then, technical matters related to technology, telecommunication, network, internet connection, internet quota, or even problems with electricity, force majeure like natural disasters, volcano explosion, flood, and earth quake. Also, problems with the personal computer or laptop due to viruses and operating systems. Therefore, there was a need of a regular back up of files through USB, flashdisks, emails, drives, or a cloud. These should be anticipated by translators to come up with the completion of translation works on time or on the due dates.

3) *Identifying translation documents based on urgencies:* Systems of filing documents should be made by translators to ease the management of files and manage the deadlines. The documents were managed based on their urgency levels to show which of them should be given a priority to complete earlier, then, and later. In the experiences of the translators, they put them at least in three levels of urgency, i.e. very urgent, urgent, and not urgent. The level of urgencies was classified based on the deadlines requested by the clients as agreed by the translators, the importance of the documents, and other considerations related to the priority of the clients as agreed by the translators.

4) *Negotiating unrealistic time to translate the documents:* Some considerations were made to decide the deadlines, i.e. target audience, contents, and clarity of the source texts. Unrealistic request pertaining the time frame, i.e. translation of a 200-page documents which were requested to be completed within three days negotiating the time frame from three days to a week. Certain documents might be translated by a team, however, other documents which were united in terms of contents could not be translated by different translators. One or two-week time were allocated by the translators to provide some time for editing and proofreading processes. In real practices, for instance, Segard estimates that a professional translator will never accept to translate more than 1,500 to 2,000 words a day since he knows that translation and production do not go hand in hand [7]. It is then specified by Segard that a normal rate of translation work of a five-year professional translator is 250 words per hour [7].

Although professional translators work for money, however, their speed and income are not directly related to all translators [4]. In term of a time negotiation, Alonso shares the possibility of appearance of conflict and mistrust during the management tasks of a translation project, for instances, in terms of emailing, translation portals, and negotiation between translators and clients or project managers [8]. Likewise, in term of a price negotiation, Robinson has to think of a logical consideration related to price since 'a translation which is too expensive for the clients will not be done, while a translation which is too cheap for translators may not get done' [4].

E. Contributions of Consultants and Experts in Relevant Topics

In some cases, the translators needed to hire consultants and experts in the relevant topics to share their expertise to the translators to improve the quality of their translation. Consultants could provide the translators with some assistance in special skills which could not be done by the translators. Experts in the relevant topics should also be hired to give some professional development to the translators to improve their subject knowledge in the required fields. These experts would upgrade the translators' knowledge needed to improve the quality of their translation works. The action taken by the translators was relevant to what is suggested by Handayani and Harto stating that in order to produce a quality translation, translators should be proficient to acquire relevant skills and competences to cope with their problems in translation [9]. Also, Russi and Schneider emphasize the importance of subject matter experts who are familiar with correct technical or scientific terminology and style in the target language to contribute to a final translation of the highest quality [10]. In Perez's view, quality is about stakeholders' satisfaction, work efficiency, team cohesion, control and communication techniques [11].

F. Roles of Reviewers, Editors and Proofreaders

Translators considered the importance of employing reviewers to review the overall translation works to come up with some necessary revisions on the translation manuscripts. The editors were requested to see whether or not there were some parts of the translation works were in need of editing. In addition, proofreaders were also employed by the translators to proofread the final draft of the manuscripts before they were then sent back to their clients. As it is mentioned in the introduction section above, Machali has identified the four aspects of translation assessment criteria to see the translation quality whether or not the documents are in need of revising [3]. These aspects can be used as a guidance by the reviewers, editors, and proofreaders to review, check, and revise the translation works in order to improve the quality of the translation.

In addition, three important aspects to maintain the quality and appropriateness of meaning, among others, are accuracy of expressions, adequate choice of words, and right sentence structures [12]. In the process of translating, Russi and Schneider remind translators to involve experts in glossary development, editing/revising processes, and proofreading steps. In such a big project, there is a need of a project manager who are supposed to manage the overall translation projects [10]. According to Rimalower, the project manager is the quarterback of a team who can include translators, editors, consultants, terminologists, designers, proofreaders, and subject matter experts [6].

In order to control the quality of the translation, in the process of translation the translators have to keep and transfer the writer's meaning, not the translators' meaning [13]. It means that the translators are not allowed to change the messages of the writers, but they are only transferring the intended messages into the languages of the target readers.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results indicated that the translation orders are grabbed by the translators from various sources, i.e. book publishers, translation agencies, offices, multinational companies, translators' colleagues, and individuals. In order to meet the translation deadlines, the translators show some initiatives to collaborate with other competent and experienced translators, anticipate unpredicted internal and external conditions of translators, identify documents based on urgencies, and negotiate unrealistic time to translate documents from the clients. In addition, in some cases, the translators need to hire consultants and experts in the relevant topics to share their expertise to the translators to improve the quality of their translation. Then, the translators consider the importance of employing reviewers and editors to review the overall translation works to come up with some necessary revisions on the translation manuscripts. Finally, proofreaders are also required by the translators to proofread the final draft of the translation manuscripts before they are then sent back to their clients.

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