

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' TRANSLATION WORKS OF A BARACK OBAMA'S POLITICAL SPEECH

Wulan Nur'azizah
azizahwn18@gmail.com

Department of English Education, Indonesia University of Education

Abstract: This study was concerned with analysis of translation strategies used by the students in translating a political speech of Barack Obama, the difficulties faced by them in translating it and the quality of the translation works. This study used a descriptive-qualitative method with document analysis technique, using the theory of translation strategy proposed by Vinay & Darbelnet (in Fawcett, 1997, pp. 34-9; in Bell, 1991, pp. 70-71) and Newmark (1988). While in terms of difficulties faced by the students in translating a text, it was done by examining vocabulary problem, lexical problem, and syntactic problem. This study also used the NAATI's assessment method to find out the quality of students' translation works. The results show that the students employ several strategies in translating a political speech and the problem faced by them was complicated since political speech was contained sophisticated words and unfamiliar diction, therefore it was affecting the quality of the translation works.

Keywords: *Students translation works, translation Strategies, translation difficulties, translation quality, political speech*

Introduction

Translation has important role in human life, especially for Indonesians. It is because there are much information which does not exist in Indonesian but it is presented in foreign languages, particularly in English (Choliludin, 2005, p.1). Regarding to this, Webber (1984, p.3) says that translation is the process of transposition of a text which is written in a source language into target language. It can be said that translation

product helping people who do not understand English to get information from the English text.

Basically, according to Catford (1965, p.20) the ability for being translator is comprehending both Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL) as long as someone can find the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). However, for the quality of the translation

product, it will be defined by translator's knowledge about SL and TL, and also by translator's skill on putting the knowledge into the practice of analysis, discovery, transfer, and re-expression of the meaning (Choliludin, 2005, p.38). It can be said that educational background related to theory of translation and experiences in translation field determine the quality of translation work.

The students' translation work is an interesting object for research. Surahman (2013) has conducted research about students' translation product in level of Junior High School. Supangkat (2009) has investigated the students' method, strategies, and difficulties in translating English texts into Indonesian in the level of Senior High School. Different of both studies, this study attempts to explore college students' translation product. In other words, the participants of this research are the advanced learners with advanced translating skill of English.

English Education Department students who acquired all translation classes are more reliable since they have experiences in translation and master the theory of translation. However, the chosen text is one of the famous political speech delivered by Barrack Obama which is

important to get the actual meaning of the speech for universal understanding.

This research analyzed the documents of students' translation work to find out the quality of its translation. The students' strategies in translating text have been disclosed and also their difficulties has been discussed. The result of the research revealed the potential ability of English Education Department translating students' in translating an English text into Indonesian as well as the difficulties faced in their translation activity which can be considered as their weakness in understanding an English text.

Literature Review

The relevant theories of this study include definition of translation, translation process, translation strategies, problems in translation and quality of translation. Those theories will be elaborated as follow.

- **Definition of Translation**

One of the experts who proposed the definition of translation is Newmark. He says translation is the process of rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text (Newmark, 1988, p.5). Other experts such as Bell (1991, p.6) says that translation is the replacement of a representation of an

equivalent text in a second language. In addition, McPake and Johnstone (2002, p.i) say that translation is the conversion of written text from one language to another.

- **Translation Process**

In doing translation, some experts say there are some processes occurred. Bell (1991, p.20) says the process of transformation of a source language into a target language at least needs two steps; first step is analysis of one language-specific text or source language text into a universal (non- language- specific) semantic representation, and the second step is synthesis of the semantic representation into a second language specific text or target language.

- **Translation Strategies**

Terms of strategy in translating has same meaning with procedure and technique which refers to a series of competencies, a set of steps or processes that favor the acquisition, storage, and/or utilization of information (Jaaskelainen, 1999; cited in Ordudari, 2007).

Newmark (1988, pp. 81-91), Vinay and Darbelnet in Fawcett (1997, pp.34-39), it can be seen in Bell (1991, pp. 70-71), and Harvey (2000) cited in Ordudari (2007) explicitly write down some translation

strategies in their works some of them have concept as follows:

1. *Word-for-Word Translation or Literal Translation.*

In this strategy, the SL word-order is preserved and the words translated singly and literally by their most common meanings, there are no changes in its form (Newmark, 1988, p.45); Vinay and Darbelnet in Fawcett, 1997, p.36). Harvey (2000) said that this strategy as formal equivalence or linguistic equivalence.

2. *Transference or Borrowing*

In rare case, the equal meaning of word in SL hard or even cannot be found in TL, so the translators use the form of word of SL directly in their translation. It can be reproducing or transliterating the original term (Harvey, 2000; cited on Odaduri, 2007). Fedorv in Fawcett (1997, p. 34) adds that borrowing is used to retain “shade of specificity’.

3. *Calque or Through Translation*

Phrase or idiom which is translated literally is called calque (Newmark, 1988, p.46). Beside that, Fedorv in Fawcett (1997, p.35) says calques tend to come into language together with the thing they refer to.

4. *Transposition or Shifts*

The transposition technique is a translation procedure involving a change in grammar from SL to TL (Newmark, 1988, p. 85; Vinay and Darbelnet in Fawcet, 1997, p. 37). It is actually a basic technique has to be comprehended by translator because each language is different. English has some differences with Indonesian, especially in grammatical aspects like word order, tenses, etc.

5. *Modulation*

The modulation technique can be used when the TL rejects literal translation (Newmark, 1988, p. 88). It can be done with changing point of view or perspective (Vinay and Darbelnet in Fawcet, 1997, p.37). Fawcet (1997, p.31) adds that Shveitser (1973) called this strategy as Antonymic Translation which is translation by the opposite to get more natural wording in TL.

6. *Equivalence*

Vinay and Darbelnet in Fawcet (1997, p. 38) defines equivalence as the translation of idioms when two languages refer to the same situation in totally different ways. It is actually different with calque which uses same

meaning and form of thing in the SL and TL.

7. *Adaptation*

Adaptation strategy is a compensation for cultural differences between two languages (Bell, 1991, p.71).

8. *Naturalization*

This strategy is used when the translator succeeds to transfer and adapt the SL words first to the normal pronunciation, and normal morphology of the TL (Newmark, 1988, p. 82).

9. *Cultural Equivalent*

This is a strategy of translation where a SL cultural word is translated by a TL cultural word, however it is not accurate (Newmark, 1988, p. 82).

10. *Functional Equivalent*

It means using a referent in the TL culture whose function is similar to that of the source language (SL) referent (Harvey, 2000; cited in Odudari, 2007).

11. *Descriptive Equivalent*

It is used when a word is translated in a description. It sometimes has to be weighed against function (Newmark, 1988, p. 83).

12. *Synonymy*

Synonymy strategy in translating has meaning as the sense of

a near TL equivalent to a SL word in a context, where a precise equivalent may or may not exist (Newmark, 1988, p. 84).

13. *Recognised Translation*

This strategy uses the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term (Newmark, 1988, p. 89).

14. *Translation Label*

It is provisional translation, usually a new institutional term, which should be made in inverted commas, it could be done through literal translation (Newmark, 1988, p. 90).

15. *Compensation*

It occurs when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in contiguous sentence (Newmark, 1988, p. 90).

16. *Reduction and Expansion*

In reduction strategy, the translator may reduce words to make simplicity in creating meaning (Newmark, 1988, p. 90).

17. *Paraphrase*

Newmark (1988, p. 90) describes paraphrase as an amplification

or explanation of the meaning of a segment of text.

18. *Couplets*

This strategy is combination of two or more strategies used by translator to translate a text (Newmark, 1988, p. 91).

All of those strategies may regularly be used by a professional translator. However for this study researcher would use strategies which were proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet which were considered simpler than Newmark's procedures.

• **Problems in Translation**

There are two main categories in translation problem as stated by Miremadi and Owji (2013). The first one is lexical problems, it occurs because one language may not be substituted with a word in another language when referring same concepts or objects (Owji, 2013). The second one is syntactic problems, it occurs because no two languages have the exact identical systems of structural organizations (Owji, 2013). In line with this, Ordudari (2007) stated that the difference between SL and TL and the variation in their cultures make the process of translating a real challenge.

Related to equivalence, Yinhua (2011) says as translation involves at least two languages and since each language has its own peculiarities in phonology, grammar, vocabulary, ways of denoting experiences and reflects different cultures, any translation involves a certain degree of loss or distortion of meaning of the source text.

In addition, Nababan (2008) says there are three reasons why equivalence is difficult. First, it is impossible for a text to have constant interpretations even for the same person on two occasions (Hervey, Higgins and Haywood, 1995, p.14 cited in Nababan, 2008, p.2). Second, translation is a matter of subjective interpretation of translators of the source language text. Third, it may not be possible for translators to determine how audiences responded to the source text when it was first produced.

- **Quality of translation**

- Criteria of good translation**

Translation experts say that the quality of translation is determined by some circumstances. Larson (1984) mentioned three characteristics of a good translation, they are accuracy, clarity, and naturalness. National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (trading as NAATI) states two translation standards. Firstly, the finished translation must be

accurate, with no margin for error. It must read fluently and accurately reflect the register, tone and style of the original. Secondly, finished translation is expected to be a fair copy and clearly legible.

Tyler (in Bassnett, 2002, p. 69) offers three basic principles of a good translation quality; the translation procedures a complete transcript of the idea of the original text, the translation has same style and manner with the original text, and the translation should have all the case of the original composition. In line with this, Massoud (in Abdellah, 2002) sets some criterias for a good translation, such as; a good translation is easily understood, a good translation is fluent and smooth, a good translation is idiomatic, a good translation conveys, to some extent, the literary subtleties of the original, a good translation distinguishes between the metaphorical and the literal, a good translation makes explicit what is implicit in abbreviations, and in allusions to sayings, songs, and nursery rhymes. A good translation will convey, as much as possible, the meaning of the original text.

- **Quality Assessment of Translation**

Evaluation in translation field is known as Translation Quality Assessment or

TQA. TQA can be qualitative or quantitative, it can be based on statistical/mathematical measurement or on reader response, interview and questionnaire (William, 2009, p.4). Judging the quality of translation that is “good”, “satisfactory”, or “acceptable” is not easy. However there should be an agreement to decide or measure translation quality.

The quality of translation depends largely on the translator’s subjective interpretation and transfer decisions, which are based on his linguistic and cultural intuitive knowledge and experience (Williams, 2009, p.4). He adds that the most important thing in evaluation translation is determining the criteria of good translation and its defect. Whether the focus is on products, performance or competence, it is essentially tried to determine degrees of goodness when performing TQA (Williams, 2009, p.4).

• **NAATI’s assessment method**

NAATI is one of the institutions which assess the translation product. According to NAATI Booklet A: Accreditation by Testing (2014), NAATI is the national standards and accreditation body for translators and interpreters in Australia. Turner (2010, p.4) states that the evaluation of NAATI approach is derived

from the errors found in the translation work. He also adds that the errors are determined based on the different severity, and guidance on the points (from half a mark to five points or more) that should be deducted in each case. The errors are categorized in terms of accuracy, quality of language and technique.

The example of the calculation table is as below:

Table 2.1 the Example of NAATI Marking for Translation Errors	
Source text	Pollution Advocacy: Demanding the Public’s Right to a Clean Environment
2 1 ½ ½	Pollution Lawyers: Suing for the Public’s Right for a Clean (Living) Environment

(Turner, 2010)

In this research the adaptation of the NAATI’s method in assessing translation applied in order to find out the quality of students’ translation work. Participants need to get score 70 as minimum score to be judged as acceptable translation. This research used terms acceptable and unacceptable instead of fail or pass. In the discussion part, it was also examined by the criteria of good translation proposed by Larson (1984), Enani (in Abdellah, 2002), Tylter (in Bassnett, 2002, p.69), and Massoud (in Abdellah, 2002).

Methodology

This research was a qualitative case study which investigated students' translation product. The site of this research was a translating program in English Education Department, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Bandung. The participants of this research were translation students who have been acquired all translation classes (translation students in 8th semester).

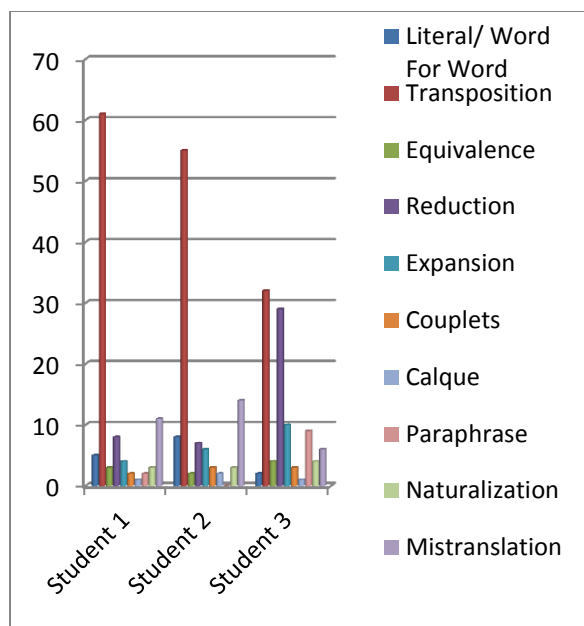
Meanwhile, there were two kinds of data which have been analyzed in details. The first was students' translation works or documents and the second was the interview. The analysis started with analysis of translation strategies used by the students through translation strategies theory proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (in Fawcet, 1997, pp. 34-39; in Bell, 1991, pp. 70-71) and Newmark (1988) to determine which one was the most appropriate strategy for each unit of translation. For the quality of students' translation works, this research adapted NAATI's method in assessing translation work. In the discussion, it also has been examined by the criteria of good translation works proposed by Larson (1984), Enani (in Abdellah, 2002), Tylter (in Basnett, 2002, p. 69), and Massoud (in Abdellah, 2002). The data from interview were analyzed through the theory of

translation problems proposed by Miremadi in Owji (2013) to determine the difficulties faced by the participants in translating a text as well as through the theory of good translation proposed by Larson (1984), Enani (in Abdellah, 2002), Tylter (in Basnett, 2002, p. 69) and Massoud (in Abdellah, 2002).

Data Presentation and Discussion

- **Students' translation strategies**

Translation strategies analysis in students' translation works, shows that the strategies mostly used by the students from the highest to the lowest percentages were transposition (49,33%), reduction (14,66), expansion (6,66%), literal/word for word (5%), paraphrase (3,66%), naturalization (3,33%), equivalence (3%), couplets (2,66%), and calque (1,33%). Some cases of mistranslation were also found which reached 10,33%. The findings of the strategies applied by participants are presented in the following chart:



• **Students’ Translation Difficulties**

In terms of translation difficulties, it can be categorized into three categories which involved vocabulary problem, lexical problem, and syntactic problem. The three categories of translation difficulties was confirmed by some of the participants through the answer of interview. Since the political speech contained sophisticated words and unfamiliar diction the process of analysis the meaning was not conducted properly which triggered inaccurate translation product in a target language. It was in line with what Bell (1991, p.20) said that the process of transforming a text from SL to TL was through analysis and synthesis.

• **Students’ Translation Quality**

In terms of translation quality two students translation product which were categorized as an acceptable translation and the other was an unacceptable translation. The result of analyzing students’ translation quality are presented in the following table:

Participants	Score	Acceptable/ Unacceptable
1	75.5	Acceptable
2	69.5	Unacceptable
3	88	Acceptable

The sentences that contained errors shows that the sentences were lack of accuracy, clarity and naturalness which were stated as characteristics of good translation by Larson (1984), and the analysis also based on the other characteristics of good translation which were proposed by Enani (in Abdellah, 2002), Tylter (in Bassnett, 2002, p.69), and Massoud (in Abdellah, 2002).

Conclusions

In conclusion, the strategies used by the students in translating a political speech from the highest to the lowest percentages; transposition (49,33%), reduction (14,66%), expansion (6,66%), literal/word for word (5%), paraphrase (3,66%), naturalization (3,33%), equivalence (3%), couplets (2,66%), and calque (1,33%). It is also

found some cases of mistranslation which reached 10,33%. The difficulties faced by the students were categorized as vocabulary problem, lexical problem, and syntactic problem. It was found that many of the sophisticated words were translated out of context and some of them were wrongly translated. For the quality of students' translation works, two of the student translation's works were categorized as acceptable translation. Since the scores were more than 70. The other one was unacceptable since the score was under 70. The score were 69.5, 75.5 and 88.

Based on the data analysis and discussions, the researcher suggests some recommendation for lecturers and further researchers in the students' translation works analysis. For the lecturer, the problems or difficulties faced by the students in this research can be an input to conduct more effective way to help students in translating high level text. For further researcher it will be better if there are another studies which examine student's ability in translating another genre of text in another level.

This study has a limitation as well. The other studies are needed to find out more information about students difficulties in translating high level text.

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