

TRANSLATION THEORY AS THE BASIS OF TRANSLATION LEARNING

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to understand the importance of mastering translation theory in translation learning. This is qualitative research. Data were obtained through observation of the implementation of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, interviews with lecturers teaching the course, and documentation. The research was conducted at the German Language Education Study Program, focusing on the Translation (*Uebersetzung*) course. The results showed that: (1) translation theory must be mastered by both lecturers and students so that the learning objectives are optimally achieved. (2) It is necessary to apply the right strategy; (3) the material in the lesson plan must be in accordance with the objectives set from an easier level to a more difficult level; (4) teaching materials are developed and adapted to the media and infrastructure that can motivate students; (5) lecturers and students must collaborate well to create a conducive learning atmosphere.

Keywords: translation theory, translation learning.

In this era of globalization, there has been rapid development in almost all fields of science and technology. Information and communication between science and scientists are needed to improve the intelligence of the nation and the state of Indonesia. One way to spur national development and utilize science and technology is to improve the ability and capability to translate the knowledge and progress that have been made by developed countries.

The era of globalization is characterized by openness, competition, and interdependence between nations and the swift flow of information that penetrates the boundaries of geography, ethnicity, race, religion, and culture.

The openness characteristic of the globalization era indicates a process of interaction between languages and cultures. In the era of free competition, mastery of information, science, and technology is a prerequisite for the survival of a nation. The demand for transferring information and science and technology from one language to another has made translation an important and urgent activity that has been recognized and felt by various parties.

In fact, most of the reference books in Indonesian universities are written and published in foreign languages, such as English, German, Japanese, French, and others. In addition to these reference books, more and more scientists are publishing their knowledge

and research results in various fields in foreign languages. The publication of so many books and research results will be wasted if the community or students who use or need the knowledge do not understand the language. This is a challenge for scientists who have mastered and understood the language of science and technology to disseminate, through translation efforts, a lot of information and the latest technology to those who need and do not understand the foreign language.

In the context of interlingua, the translator acts as an intermediary who must be able to express the message or intention of the source language into the recipient language appropriately. In this regard, Nida and Taber, quoted in Stolze (2008:88), explain as follows: Translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language's message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. What this means is that translation is the creation of an exact and closer equivalent in the receptor language of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style.

A similar limitation is proposed by Newmark, which means that translation is an exercise in replacing a written message in one language with the same message in another language. Furthermore, Larson (1989), cited in Mannahali (2015: 19–20), said that translation is the transfer of meaning from the source language into the target language through semantic structure, the meaning of which is retained while the form may be changed. He further adds that translation means 1) studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language; 2) analyzing the source language to find its meaning; and 3) re-expressing the same meaning using the appropriate lexicon and grammatical structure in the target language and its cultural context.

From these opinions, it can be concluded that translation is essentially a series of processes for transferring the message contained in the source language, which is then poured into the target language with as close a meaning as possible, considering the reading audience. It is the meaning that is found as close as possible in the target language so that the meaning or intention of the original language writer can be conveyed to the readers. To achieve this, a translator is not only required to understand the meaning of the source language

text; the translator is also required to master the use of the target language so that the translation can be clearly understood by the readers but does not shift from the expression of the original language text (Johan, 2009: 11).

However, in essence, it is not enough to conclude that if someone is able to understand the meaning of the source language text well and is able to translate it into the receiving language well, he or she is considered a professional translator. There are still some other important aspects that a translator must master and pay attention to, such as mastering translation theory, understanding the cultural context, understanding the linguistic variety, and understanding the science being translated.

Translation is not a simple process but a complex one. In the translation process, the translator needs to go through various stages, and in each stage, there are often complicated problems that must be solved. There are several stages that must be passed to overcome the difficulties in translation, as stated by Newmark (1994) as follows: 1). Analysis Stage. At this stage, the translator must read and understand the whole message contained in the original language. Important and problematic parts are marked. At this stage, comprehension problems are often found, the solution of which must be sought outside the text in various sources, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and others. 2). The transfer stage, where the translator begins to translate in the mind and, if necessary, begins to write it down while still looking outside the text for solutions. Here the translator diverges, i.e., breaks away from the ties of the sentences of the source text to look for the smallest discernible unit of translation to work with. 3). Restructuring stage. At this stage, the translator begins to perform the actual translation and starts to organize the sentence structures carefully. At this stage, the translator also changes the grammatical and semantic structure of the original language into the receiving language while checking whether the translation is in accordance with the importance analysis.

Hoed (2006:11) suggests four levels of translation to support the above three stages. The four levels are: 1). The text level is when the translator tries to understand the translated text, especially at the word and sentence levels. 2) Referential level: where the translator goes out of the text to find out what a word, term, or expression in the text actually refers to. 3) The

level of cohesion, which checks whether the translation is cohesive, 4) The level of reasonableness is to check whether the translation is clear and acceptable to the potential readers. These four levels need to be observed in order to produce a translation that is acceptable to the reader.

To realize this, teachers need to improve the quality of translation teaching. For this reason, it is necessary to think about solving various problems and obstacles faced by conducting literature reviews. In addition, ethnographic qualitative research is considered effective enough to reveal and solve various problems. One of them is to study the mastery of translation theory in the process of translation learning, where the success of translation learning can be seen from students' mastery of translation theory.

This study is needed to find linguistic problems faced by students in their efforts to master translation learning. This study not only looks at the lecturer's strategy in presenting translation materials but also at how the lecturer develops teaching materials, whether in accordance with the needs of students or not, and whether the lecturer has led students to understand the basics of translation theory or not, because the basics of the theory are very important for learning the next level.

In the German Language Education Study Programme, Faculty of Language and Literature, Makassar State University, translation courses are presented in stages and levels, namely: *Einfuehrung Uebersetzungswissenschaft* (Introduction to Translation Study) is presented in the third semester (3). In this course, the materials presented are mostly theoretical in nature and include some examples of words, terms, sentences, and phrases in written form that can support students' understanding. At the next level, namely in semester five (5), the course *Uebersetzung in der Praxis* (translation practice) is presented. In this course, the proportion of time allocated is mostly used for exercises or practice of translating simple texts in writing (written translation), with occasional references to the theory of translation given in the previous semester (if needed) to guide students in applying the theory learned previously.

The presentation of the above-mentioned two courses in tiered semesters is a compulsory course or must be programmed by students in the current semester and is a prerequisite course

(conditional course), meaning that students are conditionally allowed to program the following stage of the translation course if they have passed the previous translation course.

In addition to the presentation of the two courses, which are exercises and practices in written translation, the *Dolmetchen* (oral translation) course is also presented. This course aims to provide students with the ability and skills to translate orally. In this course, students are mostly assigned to practice in the field, such as in hotels as receptionists, in travel as *Reisefuhrer* (tour guides), and other places that are considered to hone students' oral translation skills.

Considering the importance of translation as a means of teaching science and technology, as a medium of cross-cultural communication, and also as one of the interesting fields of study in the field of language, the mastery of theory as a basis for learning translation needs to be studied. Mastery of translation theory plays an important role in translation skills, as it is one of the factors that will determine the quality of translation results. Although translation theory is not a solution provider for problems arising in translation activities, it is a general guideline for translators in making decisions when they perform their duties as translators. Therefore, the foresight and ability to apply translation theory will determine the success of translation activities. This is in line with Nababan's (2003:16) statement that understanding the concept of translation theory is the key to success.

METHOD

In accordance with the research objectives, the method used in this study is a qualitative approach that refers to ethnographic design. For the purpose of data collection, interviews and the collection of documents about the group under study were conducted. This is in accordance with the opinion of Creswell (2008), who says that the core of understanding ethnography is culture, whose purpose is to understand the developing culture. This ethnographic qualitative study describes the characteristics of a group or society as the subject under study and examines the behavior of the group under study in a natural situation seen from a cultural perspective and its aspects. The group of subjects in this study are

translation teachers and students enrolled in the *Einfuehrung der Uebersetzungswissenschaft* course who are involved in the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

In this case, what is studied is the behavior of lecturers who teach translation to students through the learning process in a natural situation, seen from a cultural perspective. Furthermore, the behavior is interpreted in accordance with the knowledge found. In this case, the research reveals social and cultural information, which includes the formulation of learning objectives, approaches, methods, and strategies used, the form of the syllabus or lesson plan, the roles of lecturers and students, the media, facilities, and infrastructure used, and the evaluation system used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The operational curriculum of the German Language Education Study Program contains core curriculum content in the form of compulsory and elective courses presented in eight semesters. The curriculum designed is intended to produce graduates who are able to use German both in writing and orally and have the spirit to progress and develop. The curriculum designed for eight semesters is aligned with the flow of increasing student knowledge and skills. Courses that present material that is basic knowledge are presented in the early semesters and become the foundation for learning courses that are more difficult, specific, and comprehensive. Therefore, there are several courses that are prerequisites, including the translation course. The curriculum of the German Education Study Programme is designed in such a way and has undergone several revisions to align with the needs of students in their era. The curriculum that is now used as a benchmark for implementing the teaching and learning process is based on or supports *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)* in 2021. The preparation of this curriculum is based on several philosophies, namely: 1) the philosophy of perennialism, which refers to a view of learning that prioritizes learning discipline as a basis; 2) rationality; and 3) the principle of independence. 2) the philosophy of essentialism, which emphasizes the importance of the essence of science and skills as the basis and substance of

a valuable curriculum for living in society; and 3) the philosophy of reconstructionism, which is structured with an emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking so that students can be equipped with basic abilities that can be used to solve existing problems.

In the research, several results and findings were obtained, as follows: Firstly. Lecturers formulate the learning objectives of translation from German into Indonesian by referring to the *MBKM* curriculum. Second, the approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques used by lecturers in learning are those that can motivate students to learn, such as bottom-up strategies, which mean starting from the easiest level to the most difficult level. Third, the syllabus or lecture design contains objectives, teaching materials, learning methods, media, and assessment forms used. Fourth, the teaching materials developed by lecturers who teach translation are relevant to the instructional objectives that are in accordance with the needs or ability levels of students, actively involve students, and can show the types of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor behavior. Fifth, the procurement and management of infrastructure and media used under the coordination of the Faculty and the Department of Foreign Languages continue to be developed, such as revamping language laboratories, multimedia projectors, computers, lecture rooms, and libraries. Sixth, learning evaluation is carried out based on assignments, and the determination of the final grade is based on the weight of 10% for attendance, 20% for assignments, 30% of the mid-semester score, and 40% of the final semester exam score.

Discussion

The purpose of learning translation is for students to be able to apply the theories of translation that have been learned previously as a guide in stepping into translation practice. Considering the variety of books that study translation theories from various authors, lecturers should make a summary of concepts to uniformize the terms of translation theory so that it is easier for students to understand and apply in the translation process. The concepts should be clear and directed, and they can be applied in actual translation practice. In addition to mastering translation theory, the translator must also master the strategy and accuracy of translating one original language text into the receiv-

ing language text properly. It is impossible for a translator to produce a good translation if he does not have an understanding of the concept or theory of translation (Nababan, 2003).

One of the strategies that a good translator must master is the strategy of finding equivalents because the source language and the target language sometimes have different grammatical, syntactic, and semantic structures. These differences are usually at the level of words, phrases, and sentences, as well as at the level of text or discourse.

Every lesson must be guided by a syllabus or lesson plan because learning without a syllabus is like a ship without a rudder that has no clear direction or purpose. The syllabus or lesson plan made by the lecturer to guide the student in implementing translation learning includes teaching materials arranged from the easiest to the most difficult level in accordance with the hierarchy of languages. Each objective for each meeting or subject matter is clearly stated.

Lecturers develop translation teaching materials that are relevant to the instructional objectives; the level of difficulty of the teaching materials tends to match the students' ability level, which is able to involve students actively and arouse students' interest in learning because the content is relevant to real-life experiences and is developed with appropriate learning media. In addition to this, the translated texts given to students as assignments can provide two benefits, namely the benefits of practicing

translation and the benefits of their use in everyday life in society.

In evaluating the learning outcomes in the form of translated texts, various criteria or rubrics from translation experts are used, including those proposed by Larson, Sybille Bolton, and Claudia Angelelli. The rubrics proposed by these experts generally refer to the assessment of the accuracy of meaning, fairness, and readability.

CONCLUSION

Translation learning objectives are formulated with the aim that students are able to apply translation theory, finding the closest possible equivalent of the language using correct and appropriate grammatical structure and language style. Teaching translation requires a lecturer who is able to plan. Master or control the class with various strategies, methods, and approaches that are appropriate and effective so that teaching and learning activities are carried out successfully.

Teaching materials that are in accordance with the instructional objectives are able to encourage students to understand the translation material. In the assessment of translation, a reference or rubric is used that prioritizes the accuracy of meaning, i.e., the compatibility of meaning between the source language and the target language, reasonableness (using reasonable grammar and style), and clarity (whether the target language reader can understand the translation well).

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