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THIS IS TO CONFIRM THAT THE PAPER ENTITLED "TRANSLATION
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TRANSLATION PROCESS AND SEMANTIC PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT

Translation process involves the transfer of texts of a language into those of another. This process does not only involve the two languages but also their semantic aspects conveyed by a speaker/writer in the source language, transfer of meanings relayed by a translator/interpreter in the target language, understanding by a reader/listener in his language. Hatim (2001:27) states that the translated texts and their sources demonstrate translational equivalence relation. This paper results from reflection on my experience when I did translation and interpretation for Global Training Centre, Canada. I first translated 568 pages of technical English training materials. I then helped a Canadian instructor teaching the materials in English and I did consecutive interpretation for her. Together with some other colleagues, we translated about 14,000 pages of training materials for Health, Safety and Environment and Gas Industry and did 1,500 hours of interpretation. This paper focuses on translation process and semantic problems learned from such a huge project, for example, how to translate Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), Self Acquired Breathing Apparatus (SABA), arch rays, hot work and purging.

Keywords: translation, Interpretation, process, semantic, meaning

INTRODUCTION Translation process involves the transfer of texts of a language into those of another. This process does not only involve the two languages but also their semantic aspects conveyed by a speaker/writer in the source language, transfer of meanings relayed by a translator/interpreter in the target language, understanding by a reader/listener in his language. Hatim (2001:27) states that the translated texts and their sources demonstrate translational equivalence relation.

This paper results from reflection on my experience when I did translation and interpretation for Global Training Centre, Canada. I first translated 568 pages of technical English training materials. I then helped a Canadian instructor teaching the materials in English and we did consecutive interpretation for her. Together with some other colleagues, we translated about 14,000 pages of training materials for Health, Safety and Environment and Gas Industry and did 1,500 hours of interpretation. This paper focuses on translation process and semantic problems learned from such a huge project, for example, how to translate Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), Self Acquired Breathing Apparatus (SABA), arch rays, hot work and purging.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION In Indonesian these two terms are sometimes mixed: lay persons might regard them as the same. Translation is known as *penerjemahan*: the root is derived from an Arabic word meaning transfer of language. In contrast, interpretation is known as *pengalihbahasaan* which also means transfer of language. The root *alih* means 'move' and *bahasa* 'language' originated in Sanskrit. In English, translation and interpretation are two different concepts. Translation means transfer of written language whereas interpretation that of spoken language. To be competent in these two processes, a translator/ interpreter needs to master both the source language and the target language. However, mastery of these languages does not guarantee one to be able to translate and interpret well. He should be equipped with broad general knowledge, great power of concentration, high degree of comprehension when dealing with new texts, willingness to learn from mistakes, strong interest to solve linguistic intricacies, and motivation to face unexpected problems.

Translation is less difficult than interpretation. In other words, translation is not as intense as interpretation. A translator can have more time to think about what to write in the target language

when s/he is translating. S/he can refer to several dictionaries and/or ask other translators before s/he decides to pick up a correct word or an appropriate expression.

TRANSLATION PROCESS The translation process I am now discussing refers to the one my colleagues and I did for Global Training Centre Canada over a decade ago. Eight to ten translators did their respective parts, for example, Gas Testing, H₂S and Other Toxic Atmospheres, Welding Ferrous Metals, Oxyfuel Operations, Oxygen Cutting, Surfacing Techniques. These translators were expected to be able to translate six to eight pages every day. The translation project was estimated to last 10 to 12 months and it turned out to take more than two years. My estimate went wrong for three reasons: (1) some of the translators did not meet weekly targets, (2) it took them longer times to find proper linguistic and technical expressions in Indonesian and sometimes unable to find one, (3) they also had technical problems in doing their jobs such as loss of finished files, computer viruses, hang computers, and electrical blackouts.

In addition to translating, two colleagues and I did interpretation work. Every time a Canadian instructor was teaching health and safety training courses, one of us helped him/her to transfer her/his knowledge. The interpretation was easier because the English training manuals had been translated into Indonesian and we were familiar with the training contents. The manuals also had pictures that helped understand better.

I issued directions for the translators to follow because we needed to produce good translation work and complete the translation project on time. I met with them every two weeks and we discussed important things to do in order to meet the target. However, we were also aware of difficult times waiting ahead.

A misunderstanding sometimes occurred when translating a term, for example, *shipment* (Naning, 1991) It could mean 'sending goods by ship at the port of origin' and 'the seller is no longer responsible once the goods were shipped whether the buyer received them or not', and 'sending goods by ship to the port of destination and received by the buyer.' To guarantee quality work and to avoid misunderstanding, I gave the guidelines, both in Indonesian and English to help the translators to undertake their work. For example, in relation to typing, they should: (1) type like the original copy (landscape, normal or double column), (2) leave some appropriate spaces for pictures, diagrams, and tables, (3) consider and decide whether or not you need to translate captions, and use both terms (in English and Indonesian), (4) let technical terms or international scientific symbols stay as they are, and if you want to try to translate, do like in 3, (5) always consider contexts for your translation, (6) translate as accurately as possible – not to create confusion, and (7) aim to produce clear, concise and brief Indonesian target texts.

I also wrote directions directly in English; the translators should: (1) be sure to handle technical terms correctly. Many technical terms are untranslatable. You may keep them as they are, for instance, arch welding, gauge and slag, or adjust the spelling, for instance, *oksigen*, *silinder*, and *transmitter*. If you are sure of the correct translation of these technical terms, please translate. Yet type the English version too in the brackets, and (2) type your translation in the same format and on the same page so that it looks like the original version and this makes editing easier.

It should be admitted that translating technical English required careful scrutiny and a lot of patience in addition to comprehension of the texts. Once the translation of a text or several texts was completed, certain staff members or employees of the gas company were assigned to read, edit, proofread and provide feedback for the translation team. Discussion on certain terms or parts of the Indonesian target texts between on-site translator(s) and the assigned employees was held informally wherever they could do so. We needed to report changes to a designated officer, a personnel in Health, Safety, Environment (HSE) Training Unit: he needed to document all necessary changes resulting from such discussion. Aveling (2002) states that any translation

may contain 'dumb mistakes' and 'deliberate mistakes. Editing is crucial to produce better translation.

TRANSLATION AND SEMANTIC PROBLEMS A translator is sometimes facing difficulty in selecting a lexical equivalence and also a semantic equivalence. For example, a scholar of agriculture of Sriwijaya University disagrees to translate *flavor* (English, hereafter abbreviated Eng) into *rasa* or *cita rasa* (Indonesian, hereafter abbreviated as Ind). He argues that the two expressions, *rasa* and *cita rasa* do not really reflect the real meaning of the English word *flavor*. He explains that other aspects such as texture and smell are not carried into these expressions (personal communication). His colleagues will understand '*flavor*' even if it is not translated into Indonesian.

Such argument also persisted when we did translation for the gas company. The following are examples for the case: *normally open*, *normally close*, *SCBA*, *SABA*, *safety relief valve*, *purging*, *CCR*, *vessel*, *combustibles*, *fume*, *smoke*, *toxic*, *exposure*, *arc rays*, *defensive driving*, *gate*, *wound*, *injury*, *distraction*, and *sweetening*.

I will discuss semantic problems related to the above expressions. Their respective meaning does not only signify semantic differences but each is influenced the knowledge and thought patterns of the original writer, the translator, and the target reader. On several areas of the company one can locate a notice above/ near a valve in both languages '*normally open*'/ '*jangan ditutup*'. Literal translations yield this expression as '*biasanya terbuka*' which translates back into '*usually open*' whereas '*jangan ditutup*' translates into '*not to be closed*'/ '*don't close it*.' The English version '*normally open*' indicates 'a state' and the Indonesia version '*jangan ditutup*' indicate a prohibition.' A similar pattern applies: *normally closed* has its corresponding meaning of *jangan dibuka*. When '*jangan dibuka*' is translated back into '*not to be opened*'/ '*don't open it*,' a question arises. Why do English speakers talk about 'state'? Why do Indonesian speakers talk about 'prohibition'? This linguistic intricacy led me to conclude that Indonesians are accustomed to talking about 'prohibition.' They use '*jangan ...*' more frequently than their English counterparts.

SCBA stands for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus. When it was translated into *Alat Bantuan Pemapasan dengan Tabung Oksigen*, the gas company's training participants (also students/ readers) commented, "Let's just call it SCBA. We're familiar with this equipment. You don't need to translate it into Indonesian. This term, *Alat Bantuan Pemapasan dengan Tabung Oksigen* is too long. We've got the idea." The course participants were familiar with the details of SCBA: they knew their specs, weight, and advantages of using this equipment. Here a translation failed; the users preferred practicality. A similar case also applied when SABA was translated into *Alat Bantuan Pemapasan dengan Pemapasan Sendiri*. I learned from this sight translation that using SCBA provided the user to be able to stay longer in a work space with less oxygen.

Safety relief valve was translated into *katup penganaman* 'valve that functions as a safety.' It proved to be useless to translate into Indonesian because the course participants had been familiar with this English expression. They regularly used the English term and they knew well what it was. They suggested that all English terms they usually used in their workplace were necessary to translate. And this condition was contrary to the Canadian management team of the gas company. They asked us to translate their English manuals, training materials, and documents into Indonesian so that Indonesian employees would learn faster because they had access to their own language. Here is a lesson for translators. They need to consider whether their translation would be needed for practical use. Indonesian speakers might object the use of Indonesian mixed with English terms. However, the employees of the company find it easier to communicate in such kind of language.

In a high tech workplace like in a gas company I was assigned to translate, some English terms it used were hard to translate, for example, *purging* and *central control room* or abbreviated as *CCR*. *Purging* means cleaning unwanted gas elements out of a piping system or

a vessel. Even if an Indonesian translator understands such term, a question arises: How can he translate into an Indonesian word? He can only explain what it says but finding one suitable is a problem. It is easy to say that we clean hazardous or toxic elements in the piping system or in the vessel so that blocking or danger or explosion can be avoided. In addition, it is safe for an employee to work in a vessel when fresh air or enough oxygen is guaranteed to be available in the vessel. I found it difficult to identify a semantic equivalence for *purging* in Indonesian. This is due to differences in *semantic fields* or *conceptual fields* (Mona, 1992: 18). If there should be a special Indonesian term to find and to introduce it to public, it will take a long time to permeate in the minds of Indonesian speakers. Indonesia linguistics experts once attempted to introduce local terms '*sangkal*' and '*mukus*' to replace 'efficient' and 'effective.' The local terms are rarely heard or used and the borrowing words '*efisien*' and '*efektif*' are more frequently used by Indonesian speakers.

Kamus Inggris – Indonesia (Echols and Shadily, 1975: 629) lists vessel as *kapal* (istilah Kelantan, for maritime term), *tempat/ bejana* (untuk cairan, for liquid), and *pembuluh* (istilah anatomi, a term in anatomy). None of the meanings above applied to the real condition when the word vessel was used in the gas company I was assigned to do translation work. Vessel refers to a huge tank that contains gas or crude oil. If a translator simply looks up in a dictionary and selects one of contextual meaning, he still has something to think about. How does he translate the word vessel that fits in the context of this gas company? After he refers to Kamus Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary he found that the meaning of *vessel*: *a container used for holding liquids* (Hornby, 2005: 1638), how does he say in Indonesian?

Combustible means substance that easily catches fire. The word form is an adjective. *Combustible materials* was translated into *zat mudah terbakar*, substance that easily caught fire. The two English terms have one corresponding counterpart, namely, *zat mudah terbakar*. This is true in the sense that a translator simply focuses on the meaning. Why does addition of one word in English not influence its semantic equivalence in Indonesia?

Fume was hard for me to translate into one Indonesian word; an adjective should be added to reflect its meaning. Therefore it was translated into *asap berbahaya*, *asap beracun*. *Smoke* has one corresponding meaning in Indonesian, namely *asap*. *Toxic* can refer to poisonous working condition. The employees in the gas field could distinguish certain areas that had fumes, smokes and toxics. When they passed the welding shop they had to know that there would be fumes around. When they stood near a waste disposal, they had to know there would be toxics. Usually warning boards or notices are erected to remind employees of certain safety matters. They have this kind of knowledge because they have learned from their experience and observation. In this situation, a translator could learn from the employees and their explanation could help the translator to know difference between fume, smoke, and toxic. He could check whether or not his attempted translation fitted to their knowledge, to the terms they were familiar with.

Exposure was first translated into *pengenaan*, being touched by lights, rays. A fire safety training participant commented, "We use the term *paparan*. *Pengenaan* is a new thing for us." We later on had discussion on this matter and he showed me some other references that used the term *paparan*. Since the term was common in his work field, I then changed my term *pengenaan* into *paparan*.

Asking about and listening to the employees' comments on the translated target texts (manuals, training materials, working procedure documents) help me and my colleagues to tap their knowledge and find out certain terms or concepts they usually used in their workplace. For examples, I wanted to find the real meaning of *arc rays* in Indonesian. Word-for-word translation results in '*cahaya*' and '*busur*.' When I asked a Fire Safety staff about the real meaning, he said, "Oh those strong lights coming from welding, they are very dangerous for your eyes. You should wear goggles when you look at those strong lights." They used '*sinar las*' for arc rays. Why *las*? *Las* mean welding. In their mind, they wanted to say 'lights coming from welding.'

Referring to Kamus Inggris – Indonesia (Echols and Shadily, 1975: 170), the term *defensive driving* was first translated into *mengendarai dengan aman*, driving safely, *mengendarai dengan hati-hati untuk menghindari bahaya kecelakaan*, driving carefully to avoid car accidents. Since the training participants had been familiar with the concept, they kept using 'defensive driving' their daily communication when they talked about health and safety. Health and safety were two things they had to keep in mind because they worked in the working environment of a gas company. It was hard to introduce the Indonesian expression '*mengendarai dengan aman*, driving safely.' They preferred to use the English expression.

The term 'gate' was first translated into *pintu keluar*, door to go out. When the Canadian was teaching and explaining more and more about it and I was interpreting for her, I realized I made a mistake. The term gate did not talk about *pintu keluar*, door to go out, but it was about space, in front, left side, right side, a driver had to think about in case another car was running into his car; he would have time to avoid the accident. I then translated into *ruang gerak untuk menghindari kecelakaan*, a space for avoiding an accident. What should a translator do when s/he encounters this problem: using long explanation, keeping the original term, trying to identify an equivalence that s/he never finds?

I thought *wound* and *injury* had the same meaning and I translated them into *luka*. Then two First Aids training sessions showed that *wound* and *injury* were two different things. When I looked up in Kamus Inggris – Indonesia (Echols and Shadily) they had the same meaning. However, physical and textual contexts proved that they referred to different ideas: *wound* was translated into *luka berdarah*, *luka terbuka* and *injury* into *luka lebam*, *luka tertutup*, or *cedera*. In case of an injury, a person might break his bone but no blood was flowing out. *Wound* was an injury that caused tearing of flesh. The determining factor to distinguish them was whether or not bleeding occurred.

Sweetening seemed a simple word to a translator of our team. *Sweeten* was derived from *sweet*. The suffix *-en* related to an activity or process; therefore, the suffix indicated the making of something and to become something. In the gas industry, *sweet gas* did mean not gas that was sweet. The term referred to the gas that was already purified, or no toxic element in the gas that could cause any danger to humans. The term *gas sweetening* in the gas industry did not refer to the process of making gas sweet; it was intended to say about the process of purifying gas so that it could not cause any harm to humans.

Finally, these two terms 'hot work' and 'cold work' also deserved our attention when we discussed their respective meaning or semantic problems. In the gas industry, hot work could not be translated into *kerja panas*, and cold work into *kerja dingin* in Indonesian. Hot work was any work that might be liable to create sparks. In a certain working area of the gas industry sparks might cause fire and/or explosion. The employees needed to know safe working procedures. A translator of our team was responsible for transferring this term into Indonesian to enable them to understand and work in a safe working condition. *Hot work* was translated into *kerja/ pekerjaan yang menyebabkan timbulnya percikan api dan bisa menimbulkan kebakaran atau ledakan*. *Cold work* means '*kerja/ pekerjaan tidak menimbulkan percikan api*'.

CONCLUSION The above examples show that semantic problems came up when a translator/interpreter did his/ her job. My colleagues and I were challenged to have long discussions to solve linguistic intricacies caused by different dimensions of semantic field between English and Indonesian. My translation team needed to fully understand the technical English texts before they attempted to translate or interpret. Once their translation work was completed and then it was up to the readers/listeners/training participants/users of the gas company to decide how well the work was done. Of course, semantic problems stand out to challenge a translator/interpreter.

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