THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND TRANSLATION

Muamaroh

Language Center – LPID – UMS

A. INTRODUCTION

The word *translation* is very popular, especially for the university students, businessmen, and government officers. they need the translator to help them in solving their problems related to the language. Translation has developed sharply because of globalization, the expansion of mass media and technology, and the raising international trade. For this reason, translation pays an important role, as media, which bridges the two different languages and cultures.

Many people think that knowing two or more languages is identical to knowing how to translate properly. This idea is not always correct. Delisie in Salas (2000: 1) states that "linguistic competence is a necessary condition, but not yet sufficient for the professional practice of translation".

There is a tight relationship between culture and translation. If the translation is related to culture, the translation is not simply a matter of seeking other words with similar meaning. When someone translates a text, he or she can not translate it directly. He or she has to analyze it first before reconstructing it into the target language. There are three ways in translation: analyzing, transfer and reconstructing (Nida, 1974: 80)

In the process of analysis and reconstructing, the translator has to master the culture and source language (SL) and the target language

(TL) to obtain a good translation. If he can not understand the language as well as the culture, he is not able to transfer meaning from SL to TL correctly. Therefore the understanding of culture is very important to for the translators.

B. THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE

The word *culture* has some meanings. For some people it refers to an appreciation of good art, song, food, and literature, however anthropologist and other behavioral scientists define culture as the full range of learned human behavior patterns. The term culture was first used in this way by pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book "Primitive Culture" published in 1871. Tylor said that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society". (http://www.complete. translation.com). It states that there are very likely three layers or levels of culture that is part of learned behavior patterns and perceptions. (1) Culture tradition – the body of cultural tradition that distinguishes a specific society, (2) sub-cultural traits – common identity, food tradition, dialect or language, and other traits that came from a common ancestral background and experience, (3) cultural universities – learned behavior patterns shared by all of humanity collectively, no matter where people live in the world. The examples of these universal straits include communicating with a verbal language, raising children in some sort of family setting, having a concept of privacy, distinguishing between good and bad behavior. Therefore the extent of culture is very complicated; it covers all the aspects of human life.

People create culture. The thing people say and do and their social arrangements are products or by-products of their culture. Every society has its own culture. Culture is dynamic process. Karamanian (2002: 1) says that the term "culture" addresses three salient cate-

gories of human activity: the "personal", whereby we as individuals think and function as such: the "collective", whereby we function in a social context; and the "expressive, whereby society expresses itself (http://accurapid.com/journal/19culture2.htm).

Someone learns to speak, think, and acts the way he does because of the people and the culture that surround him. The culture has several components. According to De Fantini and Fantini (1997: 59) the components of culture are artifacts (which is made, created, produced), sociofacts (the ways in which people organize their society and relate to one another) and mentifacts (the ideas, beliefs and values that people hold). Together, these components of any culture account for any and all of the following:

Manners	customs	beliefs
Ceremonies	rituals	tools
Laws (written and unwritten)	institutions	religious
Myths and legends	knowledge	beliefs
Concepts of self	art and objects	models
Ideas and thought patterns	customs	food
Ideals	holidays	books

Accepted Ways of Behaving

The whole of culture is greater that the sum of its individual parts, and the parts are interrelated. We can say that a tool (artifact) involves the custom (sociofact) for the use of that tool, and that the custom involves the ideas or concepts behind it (mentifact). It means that to understand the things, we have to know its convention and ideology. For example: to know the meaning of *sekaten*, *ruwatan*, *tingkepan*, we can understand them not only from the things which are used, but also from the practice and the concept of these traditions.

Culture relates to language. New-mark in James (2000: 1) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a

community that uses a particular language as its means of expression". Thus, acknowledging that each language group has its own culturally specific features. Therefore, the society even generation has its own language and culture. Seelye in Fantini (1997: 23) defined culture as:

The systemic rather arbitrary, more or less coherent, group invented, and group-shared creed from the past that defines the shape of "reality", and assigns the sense and worth of things: it is modified by each generation and in response to adaptive pressures; it provides the code that tells people how to behave predictably and acceptably, the cipher that allows them to derive meaning from language and other symbols, the map that supplies the behavioral options for satisfying human needs.

It is clear that the understanding of culture enable individuals to relate to other people from different places. Culture is proscriptive: it tells us how to behave within our in-group. The expression of culture can be seen from the behavior, the norms, values, and belief of the people. Therefore we can learn the culture of certain society. Ryffel in E. Fantini, (1997:28) states:

In Culture learning is so deeply concerned with norms, values, beliefs, worldviews, and other aspects of subjective culture, it is a type of learning subject to the action of many variables and often accompanied by feeling of discomfort and even shock.

Based on those definitions of culture, it can be concluded that every society has own culture, which is different from each other. The scope of the culture is very complex. Theculture covers all the human need. The component of culture is artifact, sociofact, and mentifact. Our speech, behavior, thought is influenced by the culture that surrounds us.

C.   THE DEFINITION OF TRANSLATION

Translation is a kind of activity, which involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions. Translation is not simply a

matter of seeking other words with similar meaning. Catford (1974:20) states: "Translation may be defined as the replacement of textual in on language (SL), by textual material in another language". It means that the translation is only replacement the text from the source language to target language. Whereas, in translation does not only render the text but also the style of language and culture. Nida and Taber (1974:14) says that: "Translation consist of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language message first in terms of meaning and secondly terms of style". The translator has to know the kind of writing. He must not change the poetry into prose or short story into scientific article etc. Each style of writing has own characteristics. The translator should find appropriate ways of seeking things in another language. He has to use proper equivalence from the SL to the TL. Bell (1991:6) states: translation is the replacement of a text in one language by a representation of on equivalent text in a second language.

Translation is very complex activity, because of that not all people can not be called as a translator. The quality of translation will depend on the quality of the translator's knowledge, training, kultutral background, expertise, and even mood. Newmark in salas (2000:3) distinguishes some essential characteristics that any good translator should have:

1. Reading comprehension ability in a foreign language.
2. Knowledge of the subject.
3. Sensitivity to language (both mother tongue and foreign language).
4. Competence to write the target language dexterously, clearly, economically and resourcefully.

The mastering of culture and language of source and target language does not guarantee someone to be a good translator. Bell (1991:36) says the translator must as a communicator, posses the knowledge and skill. Therefore a good translator should have broad knowledge and master the theory of translation. Bell (1991:36) says:

"…professional (technical) translator has access to five distinct kinds of knowledge: target language (TL) knowledge; text-type knowledge; source language (SL) knowledge; subject area (real world) knowledge and contrastive knowledge

In transferring meaning from source language to target one, the translator should consider the linguistic and non-linguistic aspect. McGuire (1991:13) says: Translation involves the transfer of meaning contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through component use dictionary and grammar, the process involves a whole set of extralinguistic criteria also. The linguistic aspect covers the form of the language form word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph to discourse. The extralinguistic contains of social and the cultural context. The social context is called register while cultural context is called genre.

There are many kinds of translation. Catford (1974:20-25) divides translation into three types: 1. Full Translation v.s Partial Translation, 2. Total v.s Restricted Translation, and 3. Rank Translation. Whereas Nababan (1997:20-33) divides translation into eleven types, namely word for word, literary, free, dynamic, pragmatic, esthetic-poetic, ethnographic, linguistics, semantic and communicative, communicative, and semantic translations.

Translator never uses only one of the types of translations. He usually uses all of them depending on the text that will be translated.

Based on those definitions, it can be concluded that translation is the process of transferring not only the message but also the style and the culture from source language to target one. The translator has to be careful in transferring the message. He must keep the fidelity of the meaning from the SL to TL. The quality of translator will decide the quality of his translation. To be a professional translator, someone must have a broad knowledge, skill and cultural background of SL and TL. There are many kinds of translation. The use of the kind of translations depends on the type of the text, which will be rendered.

D. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND TRANSLATION

There is significant relationship between culture and translation. Since translation is concerned with two things which are different each other. It is related to language and culture. Language behavior is a subset of cultural behavior (Seelye in Fantini, 1997:22).

A good translator has to master the language and the culture of the SL and the TL. In globalization era, everything changes very fast. The translator should aware about this condition. Referring to the progress achieved in cross-cultural understanding in recent decades. Edward Hall in Wierzbicka (19996:70) writes:

> … there is one element lacking in the cross-cultural field, and that is the existence of adequate models to enable us to gain more insight into the processes going on inside people while they are thinking and commu-nicating. We need to know more about how people think in different cultural…

Thus culture changes rapidly. It is a dynamic process. Because the human thought and behavior change fast. It is clear that the translator must understand about culture. Translation is a kind of activity, which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions (Toury in James, 2003:2). This statement implies, translators are permanently faced with the problem of how to treat the cultural aspects implicit in a source text (ST) and of finding the most appropriate technique of successfully conveying these aspects in the target language (SL). Let us take the Javanese words "*slametan, sedekah bumi, pitungdinan*" as the examples. These words are not well known or traditional in any English-speaking countries, and there are no obvious English terms to translate the Javanese words.

The other evidence is in translating the expression of idiom. In translating idiom, the translator should know not only the

characteristic but also the culture of idiom. McGuire (1991:123) states: the translation of idiom takes us a stage further in considering the question of meaning and translation, like puns are culturally bound. It means that idiom is bounded by culture. Idiom and culture is related each other. For instance Indonesia is agricultural and maritime country so the idioms appear such as: *nasi sudah menjadi bubur, seperti mendapat durian runtuh, sekali mendayung dua tiga pulau terlampaui*. We can not find those idioms in America or England. The people in the West like hunting and materialism, so that the expression of its idiom such as kill two birds with one shoot, etc.

The problem that faced by the translator in rendering idioms is such idiom has the same pattern but different in meaning. Samiati (2004:4) says: one of the problems in recognizing idioms is that he might not know whether a particular phrase should be interpreted in terms of its idiotic or literal meaning. Another problem is that he might misinterpret the meaning of a particular idiom, which has structural parallelism but has a different meaning in the source and target languages. We fell difficult in recognizing idiom, if the idiom has the same pattern but different in meaning. For instance: the idiom **black sheep** in English means a person who embarrasses his family in front of many people. But in Indonesia the idiom **kambing hitam** means a person who is to be the focus of mistakes. To translate the expression of idiom the translator can use free translation. In free translation, the most important is the meaning. In cases like these, according to Anne (2000:1) there are several different options available to the translator. 1. Make up a new word. 2. Explain the meaning of the source language word, rather than translating it. 3. To keep the source language term intact, and maybe add an explanatory comment the first time, it is used in the text. Which choices we make between these strategies ultimately depend on which aspect of meaning that is most relevant in the text we are translation, and what type of equivalence we are aiming at.

At the present time the need for a systematic study of a Special Purpose Language (SPL) translation arises directly from the problems

encountered during the actual translation process. As we have seen so far, the translator's role is to facilitate the transfer of the message, meaning and cultural elements from one language into another and to create an equivalent response from the target audience. Teleoaca (2004:6-7) states that the translator's main aims are:

1. The translator has to possess adequate language competence and cultural background in both SL and TL.

2. As a consequence, he can aim at producing an impact on the target audience as close as possible to that produced on the readers of the original.

3. A variety of different approaches have been examined in relation to the cultural implications of translation. Assertions have been made in the paper that in order to preserve specific cultural references, certain additions need to be brought to the TT (Target Text). Therefore, the translator has to, if not adopt, then adapt, and even modernize where possible, the TL cultural background.

4. Much attention has to be paid to neo-logisms and newly coined computer terms such as emotion, because this SPL is growing fast.

5. Unless the translator breaks the rules above, he will meet his target reader's expectations in terms of clarity and optimal communication, that is, understanding and truth relevance.

In different societies people not only speak different languages and dialects, they use them in radically different ways (Goddard and Wierzbicka. 1996:1). In some societies, normal conversations bristle with disagreement, voices are raised, and emotions are conspicuously vented. In other, people studiously avoid contention, speak in mild and even tones, and guard against any exposure of their inner selves. In some parts of the world it is considered very bad to speak when another person is talking, while in others, this is an expected part of a co-conver-

sationalist's work. The cultural norms reflected in speech acts differ not only from one language to another, but also from one original and social variety to another (Wierzbicka. 1996:26). It amply demonstrates that different cultures find expression in different systems of speech acts, and that different speech acts become entrenched, and to some extent, codified in different languages. There are considerable differences between Australian English and American English, between mainstream American English and American Black English, between middle-class English and working-class English, and so on.

E. CLOSING

There is relationship between langu-age and culture. If language is an integral part of culture, and the concept of culture is a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception, then the translator needs to be not only bilingual (proficient in two languages), but also bicultural (at home in two cultures). The culture understanding will help the translator in transferring the meaning from the source language to the target language correctly. Since the fidelity of meaning is the core of the translation. When the translator doesn't find the equivalence of certain words in target language, he can use paraphrase in transferring meaning from SL to TL.

REFERENCES

Anna. 1996. *Cross-Cultural Communication*. Philadelphia. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Anne. July. 2000. *Culture Shock! On Words and Expressions for Culture-Specific things and Phenomena*. Line Graedler and the Department of British and American Studies, Univ. of Oslo.

Bell, Roger. 1991. *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. London. CN Candlin.

Ed Fantini, Beatriz and E.Fantini, Alvino. 1997. In ER. Fantini (Ed). 1997. *New Ways in Teaching Culture.Alexandria*. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages. Inc (TESOL).

Fantini, Alvino E (ed). 1997. New *Ways in Teaching Culture.Alexandria*. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages. Inc (TESOL).

Goddard, Cliff and Wierzbicka, Anna. 1996. *Discourse and Culture*. In Wierzbicka. Anna. 1996. Cross-Cultural Communication. Philadelphia. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

James, Kate. 2002. *Cultural Implication for Translation*. In Translation Journal and the Author 2002 in (http://accurapid.com/journal/22delight.htm).

Karamanian, Alejandra Patricia. 2002. *Translation and Culture*. In Translation Journal and the Author 2001 in (http://accurapid.com/journal/19culture2.htm).

Kunardi Hardjoprawiro. 1991. *Laporan penelitian Beberapa Prinsip Terjemahan dan Aplikasinya di dalam Praktek Penerjemah*. Surakarta. UNS.

Mc Guire. Susan Bassnett. 1991. *Translation Studies*. London and New York, Routledge.

Nida, Eugene A. taber, Charles R. 1974. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden. The United Bible Societies.

Ryffel Carolyn. 1997. From Culture "Teaching" to Culture "Learning": Structures and Strategies for Increased Effectiveness. In E. Fantini (ed). 1997. New Ways in Teaching Culture. Alexandria. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other language. Inc (TESOL).

Samiati, M.Sri. 2000. *English Idiomatic Expression and Some Problems of Translating Them into Indonesian*. Jurnal Bahasa Sastra dan Study Amerika. UNS Surakarta.

Seelye, H.Ned. 1997. *Cultural Goals for Achieving Intercultural Communicative Competence*. In E. Fantini (ed). 1997. New Ways in Teaching Culture.Alexandria. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages. Inc (TESOL).

Teleoaca, Anca Irinel.2004. *Internet and Cultural Concepts from a Translation Perspective*. In Translation Journal and the Author 2003 in (http://accurapid.com/journal/27romania.htm)

Wierzbicka, Anna. 1996. Cross-Kultutral Communication. Philadephia. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

(http://www.comlete.translation.com)

(http://accurapid.com/journal/19culture2.htm)