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POLITICAL CULTURE

CONVENER

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FAKULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITAS SUMATERA UTARA

IN AFFILIATION WITH
BALAI BAHASA SUMATERA UTARA
KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN DAN KEBUDAYAAN
MEDAN
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IN SUPPORT OF NATION
IDENTITIES

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Rahmadsyah Rangkuti

Finding Local Wisdoms in Indigenous Tradition of Marriage in Simeulue Island
Ratri Candrasari

Empowering Local Wisdom on Text Manoe Pucok of Bridegroom in Southwest Aceh View on Van Dijk Theory
Retno Utari, Wilda Maya Sari

Preserving the Local Indigenous Vocabulary Through Tefl in Elementary School
Riskawaty Dumaria Sianipar

Domestication and Foreignization in the Translation of the Hanged Rock (the Legend of Parapat City): Ideology in Translation Studies
Rizka Elfira, Siti Aulia Febriyanti

The Translation of Makhiou at Batak Simalungun Wedding Ceremony in Indonesian
Rohdearni Wati Sipayung, Roswita Silalahi

Lexicon and Culture Napuran 'Betel' Parts on the Toba Batak Samosir: Study Ekolinguistik
Rolan Manurung, Mery Chris Saragih

Domestication and Foreignization in the Process of Translation of the 8th Habit by Stephen.R.Covey Into Bahasa Indonesia
Roswani Siregar

Using Theme and Rheme Analysis in Indonesian-English Translation
Rudy Sofyan, Rusdi Noor Rosa

Analyse Des Problèmes Les Lycéens Dans L'apprentissage De Français A Smk Sandhy Putra-2 Medan
Sari Harahap, Mahriyuni

Dedeng. The Intoned Verses of Malay Local Culture in Langkat
Shafwan Hadi Umry

An Analysis of Mandarin Punction by Students of Chinese Language and Literature Study Program, USU
Sucita Anggraini Siregar

704
712
723
735
746
756
767
779
788
796
802
USING THEME AND RHEME ANALYSIS IN INDONESIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT
This paper focuses on the use of theme and rHEME analysis as a criterion for judging good translation as judgement without criterion is just a pain. The purpose of translation is to convey the same message in different language for understanding process assistance. However, a translated text sometimes contains a slightly different message from its source. This will certainly lead to ineffective use of translation for delivering different messages in different languages. Every message has a core realized in a theme informing the focus of the message. Different focus shapes different mental pattern of how the message is understood. Moreover, in translating extremely important documents, e.g. Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System, the theme of every clause must be carefully controlled. This Act serves as the legal framework for the major educational goal, policies and plans in Indonesia. Considering its vital role in the Indonesian education system, it should be well translated.

Keywords: theme and rHEME, translation, Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003

A. Introduction
Translation serves as a medium of facilitaing international written communication in which English usually becomes a target language (TL) of the translated texts. The texts – books, articles, laws, announcements, advertisements, etc. – are translated into English for their global recognition and application. However, translating such document is not an easy task due to the translator’s limitation of cultural, social, and linguistic knowledge of English language. This even becomes worse when the source language (SL) is obviously different from

English in terms of its language family, typology, and writing systems, such as Indonesian language.

Various methods or approaches applied in translating Indonesian texts into English contain weaknesses for their failure in representing the message contained in those texts. As a result, fluent speakers in both languages – Indonesian and English – come into different understanding once they read the original text and compared it to the translated version. The problem is usually more complicated when the translated texts are official documents stating Indonesian government’s policy, such as national education policy and system. The translated version of one of the Indonesian official documents, Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System, stating Indonesian government’s policies concerning the improvement of Indonesian education system, contains improper translated messages leading to foreigners’ misinterpretation. This brings inaccurate meaning to the efforts the Indonesian government introducing Indonesian education system for international audience.

Using different translation methods or approaches is acceptable as long as the text messages are conveyed similar meanings with similar mental pattern. Some methods or approaches applied by several translators include equivalence, shifts and naturalness (Sadiyani, 2011; Saputri, 2014; Dewi et al., 2014) basically either phrase-based translation (Koehn et al., 2003) or hierarchical phrase-based translation (Chiang, 2005; Hayashi et al., 2010); x-bar theory (Mahasari, 2012) basically syntax-based translation (Galley et al., 2004); and domestication and foreignization (Machali, 2012) basically morphology-based translation (Koehn et al., 2007). However, these methods all preserved the assumption that words should be atomic.

The phrase-based translation is considered inappropriate in Indonesian-English (I-E) context due to the different phrase structure between Indonesian and English. In spite of the same terminology used in the two languages, the phrase structure of Indonesian and English is much different in terms of its constituents. The same case happens in the use of x-bar theory in I-E translation because of the different concept of the structural meaning and the thematic meaning. Furthermore, domestication and foreignization method work in a clause level, focusing more on the diction instead of the holistic meaning of the clause.

The methods mentioned above should be revisited as translation is not word-by-word translation. Consider one of the examples of the translated text in Sadiyani (2012) in (1).

(1) a. (SL) Setelah itu ibunya datang dari pasar.
  b. (TL) Soon her mother returned from the market.

The translated text in (1b) has the incompatibility in meaning with the one in (1a). The phrase ‘setelah itu’ shows the flow of the message in the clause, having nothing to do with the word ‘soon’, an adjunct (in traditional grammar known as adverb). This inappropriate translation can be improved by applying theme and rheme analysis.
B. Theme and Rheme Analysis: A Model in I-E Translation

Theme and rheme are terms introduced in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) referring to part of clauses as a message. Theme refers to the first element coming in the beginning of the clause, while rheme refers to the rest element of the clause. In more comprehensive definition, theme is the starting point for the message informing what the clause is going to be about; while rheme is the part of the clause in which the theme is developed (See Halliday, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins, 1994; Martin et al., 1997; Butt et al., 2000). The definition suggests the role of the first part of the clause as the most influential element towards the rest of the message in a clause. Putting the same word in different position of a clause influences the way of comprehending the message in the clause. Identifying the theme of a clause guarantees rheme recognition (Rosa, 2007). The clause analysis involving theme and rheme is known as theme and rheme analysis (TRA). Study the clauses in (2).

(2) a. The young lady won the singing contest last week.
   b. Last week the young lady won the singing contest

The two clauses in (2) have the same linguistic units indicating the same structural meaning. However, from the point of view of TRA, the two clauses are obviously different. Clause (2a) introduces ‘the young lady’ as the point of departure of the message on which the existence of the other elements of the clause depend. Meanwhile, in clause (2b), ‘last week’ serves as a theme that is further develop by the other elements of the clause. Another possible way of testing different meaning of the clause is through WH-question test. The question ‘Who won the singing contest last week’ can only be addressed to clause (2a), and the question ‘When did the young lady win the singing contest’ can only be addressed to (2b). Using different question words indicates different most important part of the clauses. The clauses in (2) also indicates that, based on the interpersonal metafunction of language, the theme of a clause should not always be the subject, nor should the rheme always be the predicator.

In addition, the theme does not always contain a single unit of a clause, but it can have two or more than two clause units. The theme containing only one unit of a clause is called a simple theme (ST), while theme with more than one clause unit is called a multiple theme (MT). Theme is classified into three types: textual, interpersonal, and topical theme. (See Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 79-81). Of the three types, a topical theme is compulsory indicating the complete dependence of the clause therefore only one topical theme is allowed in one clause. Other themes are optional without which the clause existence is grammatically accepted; nevertheless, they may appear more than once in one clause. Furthermore, a topical theme, either ordinary (unmarked) or extra-ordinary (marked) constitutes a simple and multiple theme of a clause. Unmarked theme is composed of nominal groups, while other groups – verbal, adjectival, adverbial, prepositional – constitute marked theme. The difference between simple and multiple theme is summarized in table 1.

781
Table 1 Simple and Multiple Theme Compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (T)</th>
<th>Simple (S)</th>
<th>Multiple (M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marked (M)</td>
<td>MST</td>
<td>MMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked (U)</td>
<td>UST</td>
<td>UMT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on table 1, the inappropriate translation in (1) is demonstrated by using TRA as in (3a) and (3b).

(3) a. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual</th>
<th>Topical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setelah itu</td>
<td>ibunya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMT</td>
<td>RHEME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the use of TRA, the two clauses represented in Indonesian and English have different thematic structure. The group ‘setelah itu (after that)’ is a conjunctive used to combine a clause with a previous paragraph which, therefore, serves as a textual theme; meanwhile the word ‘soon’ is an adjunct serving as a topical theme. The different type of the theme indicates that the translation opens a room for improvement.

In this paper, the TRA is used to improve the translated text of the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System.

C. Applying TRA in Improving the Translated Text of the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003

The main reason of applying theme and rHEME analysis in I-E translation is the unchangeable theme position in a clause for its central role in delivering a clause message. Some clauses in the translated text of the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System need to be improved based on the point of view of TRA. The TRA application in the translation of the first clause in the supplement of the Act on National Education System is shown in (4).

(4) a. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manusia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The theme of clause (4a) is *manusia* (human being), the main point on which the other elements of the clause must depend. Its position in (4b) is moved to the rhyme position indicating its weaker role in the clause because the theme of the clause is ‘education’. The fact shown by TRA in (4a-b) reveals the incompatibility of the clause in the SL and in the TL which eventually leads to different understanding of the message. The translated text should have kept the word *manusia* (human being) as the theme of the clause because it is the most important point of the message. The element coming in the first clause has shaped the readers’ mental semantic mapping helping them in the process of understanding the message. By changing the element of the theme, the translator also changes the readers’ way of understanding.

The translation of the third clause of the paragraph, shown in (5), also needs improvement.

(5) a. Ayat (3) menegaskan bahwa Pemerintah mengusahakan dan menyelenggarakan satu sistem pendidikan nasional yang meningkatkan keimanan dan ketakwaan serta akhlak mulia dalam rangka mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa yang diatur dengan undang-undang.

b. Verse (3) also states that the Government is responsible for the provision of a single national education system. Such a system would enable individuals to become faithful and pious to God and to possess morals and noble character, such that augments intellectual capacity and promotes character building, that is stipulated by an Act.

Based on the TRA, the clause in (5a) is a clause complex because it is composed of several clauses. However, the translation of clause (5a), shown in (5b), contains two clauses. In translation, it is certainly acceptable to reduce or to add the number of clauses depending on the translator’s writing style. But written English is stricter than Indonesian writing system in terms of its grammar and diction. In English, the less layer containing more words the clause has the more scientific the clause is (Halliday, 1989: 37-38, Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 20-21). The way to reduce is by nominalization, a process of reforming clauses into phrases. Therefore, in I-E translation, it is better to reduce than to add the number of clauses. The further TRA of clause (5) is shown in (6).

(6) a. (i)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayat (3)</th>
<th>menegaskan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>UST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RHEME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) | bahwa | Pemerintah | mengusahakan dan menyelenggarakan | satu sistem pendidikan nasional |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>UMT</td>
<td>RHEME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iii)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yang</th>
<th>meningkatkan</th>
<th>keimanan dan ketakwaan serta akhlak mulia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>UST</td>
<td>RHEME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv)</td>
<td>dalam rangka</td>
<td>mencerdaskan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>UST</td>
<td>RHEME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v)</td>
<td>yang</td>
<td>diatur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>UST</td>
<td>RHEME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. (i)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse (3)</th>
<th>also states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>UST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>that</th>
<th>the Government</th>
<th>is</th>
<th>responsible for the provision of a single national education system.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>RHEME</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Such a system</th>
<th>would enable</th>
<th>individuals to become faithful and pious to God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>UST</td>
<td>RHEME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iv)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>and</th>
<th>to possess</th>
<th>morals and noble character,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>UST</td>
<td>RHEME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(v)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>such that</th>
<th>augments intellectual capacity and promotes character building,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>UST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(vi)

| that is stipulated by an Act. |
| Textual | UST | RHEME |
The translated text is very much influenced by its SL. Despite the different number of the clauses, the translation is word by word translation, and it is a spoken text-like. By using TRA, it is found that the type of the theme in each of the clauses has been changed. The textual theme in clause (a.iii), ‘yang’ is changed into topical theme ‘such a system’ in clause (b.iii). Besides, the quality of the translated text can be improved by reducing the number of the clauses through nominalization. The way of nominalization is demonstrated in (7).

7 (i) Verse (3) also states
Verse (3) states
(ii) that the Government is responsible for the provision of a single national education system.

the government’s responsibility for the provision of a single national education system

(iii) Such a system would enable individuals to become faithful and pious to God

enabling individuals to become faithful and pious to God

(iv) and to possess morals and noble character,

through their morals and noble character

(v) such that augments intellectual capacity and promo-tes character building,

with intellectual capacity and promo-tes character building

(vi) that is stipulated by an Act.

stipulated by the Act

The italicized words are the phrases of nominalization products. The next step is arranging those phrases into a clause shown in (8).

8 Verse (3) states the government’s responsibility for the provision of a single national education system enabling individuals to become faithful and pious to God through their morals and noble character with intellectual capacity and promo-tes character building stipulated by the Act.

By using TRA, the large number of clauses is rewritten in a single clause showing a better quality of the translation.

D. Conclusions and Suggestions
Translation plays an important role in the global communication especially through written communication. Therefore, a text must be carefully translated in order not to give misconception to the readers, especially the official text containing the government policy, such as Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System. TRA can be the best choice of improving the translated text because it keeps the main point of the message. TRA does not only work in a clause level but also in a text level.

In this paper, TRA is only used to improve the translated version from Indonesian (SL) to English (TL). As a matter of fact, TRA can also be applied as a method of translating a text. For other researchers interested in translation, it is suggested to apply TRA in the whole process of translating a text, especially
official document such as the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System.

REFERENCE


