

The English Students Difficulties in Translating Advertisements Text

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Submission date: 11-Nov-2020 03:53PM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1442806735

File name: ish_Students_Difficulties_in_Translating_Advertisements_Text.pdf (904.14K)

Word count: 3536

Character count: 19417

THE ENGLISH STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSLATING ADVERTISEMENT TEXT

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Abstract

This research aimed to know the students' difficulties in translating Indonesian advertisement text into English language. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research design. The data were collected from the third graders of English Education Program of STKIP PGRI Pacitan. The researcher gave text to know the students error in translating advertisement text and simultaneously found the students' difficulties. The students were asked to translate five different advertisement texts, including job vacancy and goods advertisements. The result showed that the students' difficulties in translating text are as follows: the difficulties in finding the accurate economical and persuasive word choice, the difficulties in managing the space or line, the difficulties in simplifying the text expression, the difficulties in managing the tenses.

Keywords: advertisement translation, students' difficulties in translation, advertisement text

INTRODUCTION

English is spread quickly around the world. Since it becomes the international language, it is spoken by the majority people in this universe. It is a compulsory for people to master English language in order to not be left behind. As people know that many books, internet sources, news, international conference are presented in English. Therefore, mastering English is a must nowadays.

English is also taught in school. Especially in Indonesia, it is taught start from the elementary school level. Some private schools even teach English in pre-school level. However, there are still many people that cannot speak English, or even know English in passive way. They argue that learning English is difficult. This negative perception toward English makes them difficult to learn English. Later, they will stop learning English.

Translation becomes the solution here. It is like "a bridge" that connects those people who have limited ability in English. Translation occurs in people daily lives. Every day, people are the consumers of translation. People use Google translate even to read the article in the internet. Besides, it also occurs in bi-lingual or multilingual product brochure in people consuming goods. Even the plastic package of instant noodle contains translation. It is the reason of market expansion. Surely, translation can make the things spread widely around the world.

Those importance of translation needs to be implemented in teaching-learning English. The students' achievement of English department are not only related to speaking

ability and writing English ability but also related to their translation ability. It happens in society when they are often asked by people to translate text from English into Indonesia or vice versa.

Translating, in general idea is transferring the meaning from Source Language (SL) into the Target Language (TL). For common people, translating is just reading the text-opening the dictionary-and rewriting the text in target language. It is true, but it is not absolutely true. Translation is not as simple as those three steps. It needs the integrated process start from reading the text to know the general meaning (later to decide the word diction), gaining the overall meaning, transferring into TL (sometimes the translator needs the dictionary in this step), and gaining the overall meaning in TL. According to Larson (1984), the process of translation can be drawn in the following picture:

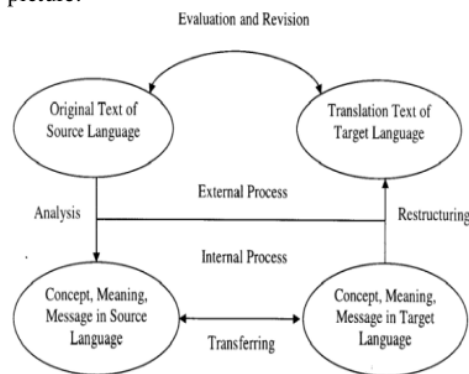


Figure 1. Translation Process

Figure 1: The Process of Translation

Sometimes, the process of translation cannot run smoothly. Some texts are difficult to be translated. Besides, there are some words that have no synonym in TL, like the cultural specific words. (E.g. the word *Nasi Kuning* in Bahasa Indonesia cannot be translated into Yellow Rice because it has different context). In addition, the translator factor also influences the process of translation. The ideal translator is not only mastering both of languages, but also both of cultures.

The text are also various. Translating descriptive text will be different from translating literary work. Besides, the target readers also play important role in translating text. Translating a story for college students will be different from translating story for kindergarten; it is a matter of grammar complexities and word choices.

One of the difficult texts in translation is advertisement text. There are some factors: the limited space of the advertisement text, the factor of persuasive and economical words that can persuade the consumers, the ability in simplifying the expression, etc. As people know that advertisement language is so economical and persuasive. However, the translators have to make the target language as communicative as the source language in order to attract the consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation has many definitions. Bell (1991: 6) defines it as the replacement of a representation of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language. While Catford (1965: 20) says that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). From those definitions, it can be derived three keywords: replacement, equivalent, and language. In other words, a translation is as an equivalent replacement of one language into another language.

According to Bell, translation includes two terms; they are the process of translation and the product of translation (1991: 13). Generally, the process of translation is the act of giving the meaning (written or spoken) into another language. The most important aspect in the process of translation is transferring the meaning. It is because the process of translation is not creating a new meaning, but recreating

the original meaning into another form of language. The wide differences in meaning between Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL) should be avoided because it can create the different perspectives among the readers. In this case, the meaning is transferred through language realization. Language itself is the manifestation of grammar and word choices. Therefore, meaning and realization cannot be separated.

In the translation process, the translator should focus first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style (Nida, 1982). It means that the natural translation is more acceptable for the reader because the best translation should not sound like a translation. When the meaning in SL can be transferred accurately into TL, the problem is not ended there because the translator should also care to the form.

According to Larson (1984:17), the translation’s goal is explained in the following picture:

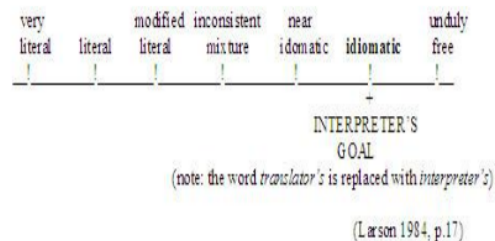


Figure 2: Translation’s goal

Based on the figure above, Larson puts the the step in translating into a continuum sequence, starting from very literal, literal, modified literal, inconsistent mixture, near idiomatic, idiomatic, and unduly free. The goal is focused on idiomatic translation. Idiomatic translation reproduces the meaning of the source language (that is the meaning intended by the original communicator) in the natural form of receptor language.

The translation process above will lead to the quality of translation. In the translation quality assessment, Larson (1984) points out that a good translation has several criteria, such as: accuracy, clarity, and naturalness. Whereas Nida and Taber (1982) suggest three criteria for assessing translations: the correctness with which the receptors understand the message of the original, the ease of comprehension, the involvement a person experience as the

result of the adequacy of the form of translation.

Hopefully, those three requirements for quality assessment can be fulfilled by the translator. Even though some texts are difficult to be translated, like advertisement texts. Nowadays, the demand for advertisements has increased. According to Williamson (1978:75), advertisements do not only sell goods and services but they are commodities themselves. Reiss et al. (2005) argues that advertising has, besides its basic role of promoting goods and services, new purposes, like transmitting new messages to the target public: interpersonal and family relations, the sense of happiness and contentment, sex roles and stereotyping, the fading away of cultural traditions, influences on younger generations, the role of business in society, persuasion and personal autonomy and others.

In advertising, the sender is represented by the advertiser and the public (or the audience – the receiver) is made of the people who see or hear the advertisements (Dan, 2005). He adds that the result of the communication process, i.e. to buy or to reject a product depends on the decoding phase. This phase involves: the perception and understanding of the message, its reading or listening, but also the assimilation of the presented symbols.

Translating advertisements is no easy task for they are “a microcosm of almost all the prosodic, pragmatic, syntactic, textual, semiotic and even ludic difficulties to be encountered in translating” (Smith and Klein-Braley 1997: 175). This type of text should cause a specific reaction from the audience, engaging it in specific actions, like buying a certain product or service (Dan, 2015). According to Reiss (2000:41), in the case of appeal-focused texts, the translator’s main purpose should be to obtain the same response from the public as in the source language.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher used descriptive qualitative research design. The data were collected from the third graders of English Education Program of STKIP PGRI Pacitan that consists of 31 students. The researcher gave test to know the students error in translating advertisement text and simultaneously found the students’ difficulties. The students were asked to translate

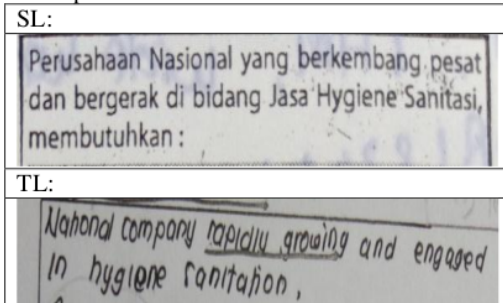
five different advertisement texts, including job vacancy and goods advertisements.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The result showed that the students’ difficulties in translating text are as follows:

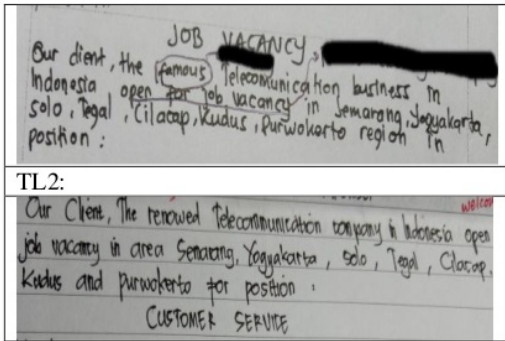
1. The difficulties in finding the accurate economical and persuasive word choice

Language for advertisement is unique. It uses provocative language that can persuade people to buy the things advertised. Provocative here is in the form of positive context. However, the content and word choice must be in the context of persuading people. Some students cannot translate those specific words into the target language accurately, as in the example below:



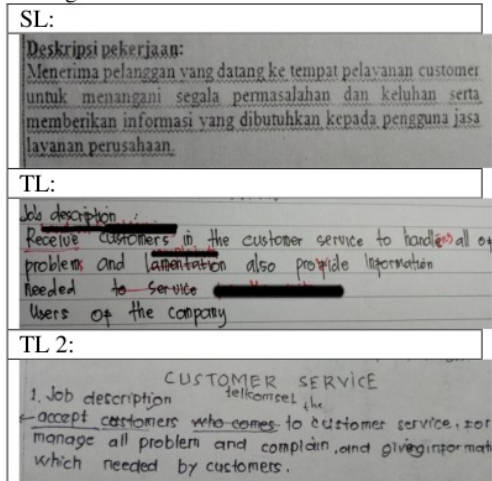
The example above shows the inappropriate translation between SL and TL. The expression in TL shows that this company is highly developed company by expressing “Perusahaan Nasional yang berkembang pesat dan bergerak di bidang Jasa Hygiene Sanitasi”. However, the translation version “National Company rapidly growing and engaged in hygiene sanitation” cannot show the big scope of the company. Besides, the verbs are also incorrect. It is better for the translator to change the TL into “A leading national company in hygiene sanitation....” This sentence is more persuasive than the example above. Another example is:



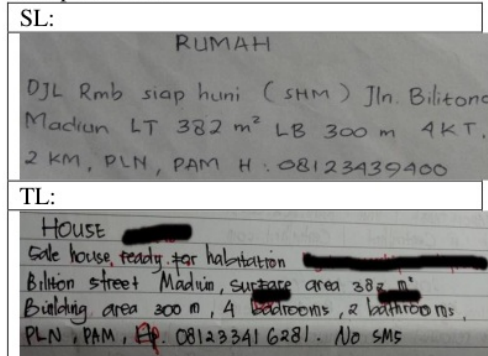


The example above shows the inappropriate expression between SL and TL. The SL expression is “Klien kami perusahaan Telekomunikasi terkemuka di Indonesia....” The translator translates it into “Our client, the famous Telecommunication business in Indonesia.....” The word “famous” in TL cannot represent “perusahaan terkemuka”. In Bahasa Indonesia, “famous” is “terkenal”. Actually, it has similar meaning, but it is still weak for business expression. Therefore, the TL should be “Our client, the leading telecommunication company...” In addition, the expression in SL “membuka lowongan pekerjaan” cannot be translated into “open for job vacancy”. Actually the meaning is accurate, but the style is different. It is better for the translator to change it into “hiring for workers in.....”

In the second TL, the translator translates it into “...the renowned telecommunication company”. It is also inappropriate translation since “renowed” must be written “renown”. The other example of students’ difficulties in finding the accurate translation is:



The example above gives the inappropriate translation between SL and TL. The first inappropriate pair is the word “menerima” in SL that is translated into “receive” in TL 1 and “accept” in TL 2. In Cambridge Dictionary, “receive” means “to take as something that is offered, given, committed, sent, paid, or the like; to accept”, as in the example “to receive a gift, a message, or a letter. However, “accept” means “to receive with a consenting mind” as in “to accept a gift”. Both of those words are used to point “a thing” especially that was set before. However, the translator can change into “handling on” for SL “menerima”. However, the complete TL will be “Handling on customers’ problems and complains and giving information needed for the company services users”. The difficulties in finding the right word is also found in line advertisement, as in the example below:



There are inappropriate translation between SL and TL. In SL, the expression “Dijual rumah siap huni” is translated into “sale house, ready for habitation”. The word “habitation” is inappropriate since the meaning of “habitation” is “The act of inhabiting, state of inhabiting or dwelling, or of being inhabited; occupancy” or “place of abode; settled dwelling; residence; house”. Therefore, the suggested translation will be “For sale, house for living”. The translator also omits the word SHM that is very important in housing advertisement. SHM is legal ownership certificate.

The awkward translation is also found in the translation “siap” for “ready”. In this context, “ready” and “siap” is different, even though it has similar meaning. Based on Cambridge Dictionary, “ready” is “prepared for what one is about to do or experience; equipped or supplied with what is needed for some act or

event; prepared for immediate movement or action”. However, the word “*siap*” in this context cannot be translated into “ready”.

Another example:

SL:	
TL:	

The example above shows inappropriate translation between SL and TL. The sentence “*Anda seorang yang agresif dalam bidang pemasaran dan menginginkan income keseluruhan minimum Rp. 2.000.000 diluar insentif. Bergabunglah dengan kami dengan posisi...*” cannot be translated into “You are aggressive in marketing want minimum overall income in RP. 2.000.000 beyond incentives”. Come join us for...” In this example, the TL cannot represent the tone in SL. SL expression contains a challenge for the job seeker. It indicates that the job is challenging for young people. It is also used for attracting the readers. The tone in TL has no “challenge sense” for the readers. It is only a statement” therefore, the translator can translate it into “If you are aggressive in marketing and want to get minimum income Rp. 2.000.000 out of incentive, join us for...”

Another example:

SL:	
TL:	

The example above also contains inappropriate translation, especially for the expression “*berasal dari jurusan...*” In this case, the translator translates it into “originate from secretary department...”. However, “*berasal*” and “*originate*” have different senses in this context. Based on Cambridge Dictionary, “*originate*” means “To give an origin or beginning to; to cause to be; to bring into existence; to produce as new”. The context is related to place or hometown. Therefore, the

translation may be changed into” Graduated from Secretary.....”

Another example:

SL:	
TL:	

In the example above, there is an appropriate translation between SL “*wanita*” and TL “*woman*”. Here, the translator needs to make sure that its translation is for general. Therefore, “*woman*” can be changed into “*female*”. The example below is another example of students’ difficulties in finding the right word for the right context.

SL:	
TL:	

The example above shows that the expression in SL “*Dikontrakkan*” is translated into “*contracted*”. It is actually inaccurate translation for the advertisement context. Based on the Cambridge dictionary, “*contract*” means “to bring on, to incur, to acquire,”. Therefore, it is different for “*contract*” in the context of “*housing*”. Here, the translation can be changed into “*For rent...*” Another example:

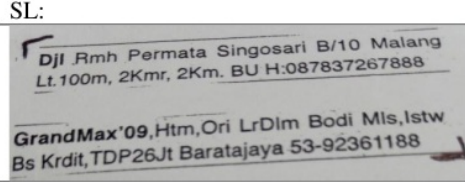
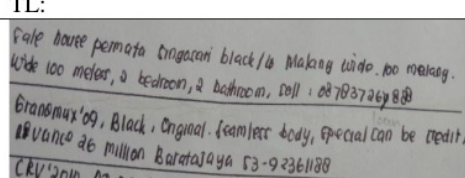
SL:	
TL:	

The above example contains inaccuracies in meaning between SL and TL based on the context. The SL expression “*Tangan 1*” is translated into “*first hand*” in TL. Literally, the translation is accurate based on the meaning of dictionary, but it is inaccurate in the context. It

“must be changed into “first owner”. The expression of “first hand” is different from “*tangan 1*” or “*tangan pertama*”. First hand is not merely always translated into “*kepemilikan pertama*”. It is “hand” in the meaning of literal.

2. The difficulties in managing the space or line

The translator needs to maintain the space and line in translating the advertisement text because it deals with the cost. Advertisement is expensive for some newspaper. Therefore, the translator has to minimize the expression as long as the original text. Here is the example:

SL:

TL:


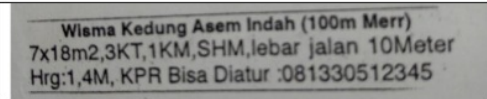
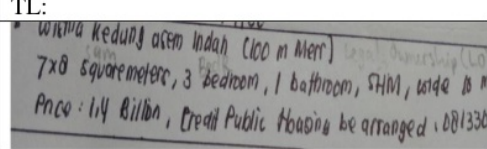
The table above is the example of line advertisements. The information is written in short and simple sentences. Even, some readers have difficulties in understanding the meaning of the text. However, the translator needs to make the TL in very short expressions too. If the SL consists of two lines, the TL also consists of two lines.

In this example, the translator still has the difficulties in minimizing the expression, as in the word “BU”. SL consists of ten words and TL is also 10 words with deleting the translation of BU (*Butuh Uang*). In the space, TL looks longer than SL because the translator has to minimize the TL, such in “2 Kmr” and “2 KT”. However, the expression of “2Kmr” or “2 Kamar Tidur” can be simplified into “2BdR” and “2KT” can be simplified into “BtR”.

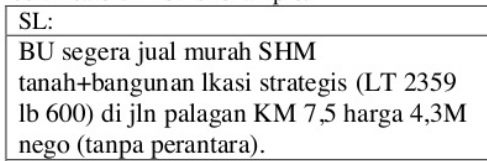
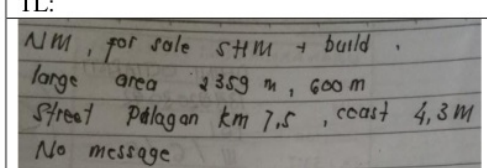
3. The difficulties in simplifying the text expression

As the explanation in point 2, the translator needs to minimize the expression from SL to TL. It is the reasons for cost and effectively, as in the example:

SL:


TL:


The example above shows the students’ difficulties in minimizing the expression from SL to TL. The word “7x18m2, 3KT, 1KM, SHM” is difficult to be translated into very short expression to in Bahasa Indonesia. Here, the translator translates it into “7x18 squaremeters, 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, SHM...” It actually has accurate meaning between SL and TL. However, it is ineffective for line advertisements. The suggestion for the translator is “7X18sqm, 3BdR, 1BtR, legal certificate”. Another example:

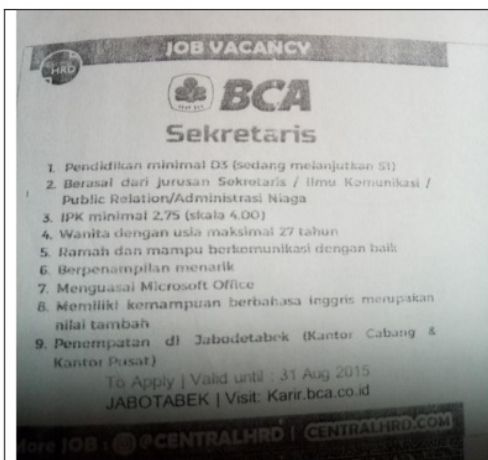
SL:

TL:


In the example above, the SL expression “BU segera jual murah...” is translated into “NM, for sale...” It consists of inaccuracies between SL and TL. The translator writes “NM” that stand for “Need Money” for “BU” or “Butuh Uang”. In this case, the TL readers will be difficult in understanding the meaning of “NM”. Here, the translation can change into “urgently sale...”

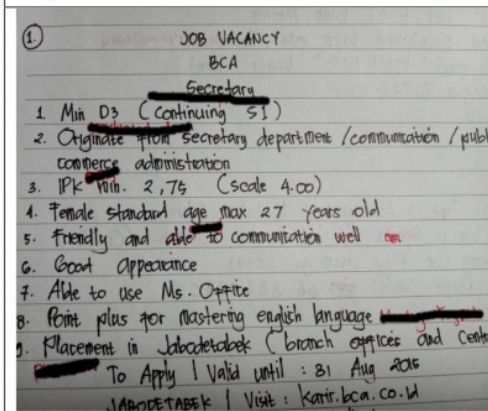
4. The difficulties in managing the tenses

Language for advertisement is different from language in general. The sentences are written in practical and simple expression, with incomplete grammatical structure. Therefore, sometimes, the translator has difficulties in translation it into English because in English, tenses have meanings, as in the example:

SL:



TL:



The above example shows the difficulties in arranging tenses in TL. The expression number 5-9 consists of verbs that indicate tenses. In number 5, the SL expression is “*Ramah dan mampu berkomunikasi dengan baik*”. The translator translates it into “Friendly and able to communicate well”. The better translation will be “Friendly and having good communication skill”. The SL number 7 “*Menguasai Microsoft Office*” is translated into “able to use Ms. Office”. The suggestion for the TL is “mastering Ms. Office”. In this case, the word “mastering” is used to make the expression “*menguasai*”. The word “*menguasai*” is not only “able to” or “*mampu*”, but it is in the higher level.

The sentence number 8 “*Memiliki kemampuan berbahasa Inggris merupakan nilai tambah*” is translated into “Point plus

for mastering English language”. It is better for the translator to change the TL into “Having English skill is a plus”. It is simpler than the first TL version, but it can deliver the exact meaning with the SL.

CONCLUSION

During the translation process, there are many difficulties handled by the students. Actually, they have translated the text based on the dictionary, but the meaning in the dictionary is sometimes different from the context. The result showed that the students’ difficulties in translating text are as follows: the difficulties in finding the accurate economical and persuasive word choice, the difficulties in managing the space or line, the difficulties in simplifying the text expression, the difficulties in managing the tenses.

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