TRANSLATION OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE FROM ENGLISH TO MALAY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE HARRY POTTER SERIES

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Abstract- The field of translation has become one of the activities that give great importance to the world. Translation allows us to communicate despite language and cultural differences. In the process of translating from a source language to the target language, the culture of that language is often a problem with the translator. In translating the figurative language, not only requires the knowledge of the language and cultures of both source and target language, but also about choosing the appropriate word and appropriate translation strategies. The objective of this paper was to analyze the translation of figurative language found in the original text into the target text and the translation strategies used by translators to interpret figurative language. For this purpose, the researcher has chosen the texts from the famous Harry Potter Series by JK Rowling which had been translated by Pelangi Sdn Bhd. Findings show that three categories of figurative language seem to be dominant, namely idioms, simile and metaphors. The most translation strategy used is maintaining the image of the figurative elements of the English language. If a translation of figurative language is not done efficiently and resembles the original text, it will affect the overall presentation of the work.

Index terms- translation, figurative language, idiom, metaphor, simile, Harry Potter, Malay language

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation is not only a part of applied linguistics that includes methods and techniques, but it is an activity in the dissemination of knowledge throughout the world. Translation is an interpreting activity from a source text (ST) and to reproduce the target text (TT) in another language. The aim is to produce a translated texts which carries the same meaning as the original text. Translation allows us to communicate despite language and cultural differences.

Catford (1965:20) defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (source language) by equivalent textual material in another language (target language). Larson (1998) stated that the goal of the translator is to translate the meaning (message) of the source text into the natural forms of the receptor language.

In the process of translating from a source language to the target language, the culture of that language is often a problem with the translator. In reality, we may not be able to produce translations that are similar to the original text. This is because the translation is not merely transferring words, but we also transfer the information embedded in language, especially the figurative language. Montgomery et.al (2007) stated that figurative language refers to the use of words or phrases that implies a non-literal meaning which does make sense or that could [also] be true. Whenever someone describes something by comparing it with something else, that person is using figurative language.

According to Nida (1975), the figurative word refers to a word which is used in place of another meaning or expression which is not its synonym but with which it has an association of ideas often mediated through a supplementary component such as idioms, simile and metaphors. In translating the figurative language, not only requires the knowledge of the language and cultures of both source and target language, but also choosing the appropriate word and translation strategies.


II. DEFINITIONS OF IDIOMS, SIMILE AND METAPHORS

According to Webster's Dictionary, an idiom is defined as: peculiar to itself either grammatically (as no, it wasn't me) or in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements. The idiom is an expression having a special meaning different from the usual meanings of the words.

Idioms are expressions of at least two words which cannot be understood literally and which function as a unit semantically (Beekman and Callow 1974:121). Meanwhile Larson (1998:142), stresses that idioms are a string of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words. He
also stated that idioms carry certain emotive connotations not expressed in the other lexical items. Idioms cannot translate literally. Abrams and Harpham (2012) stated that a simile is a comparison between two distinctly different things and it uses the words “like” or “as” to compare one object or idea with another to suggest they are alike.

In a definition given by Larson idiom is “a string of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words” (Larson, 1984, p.20). In another place he states that idiom “carries certain emotive connotations not expressed in the other lexical items” (Larson, 1984, p.142).

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Nida (1964) stated that metaphor is a figurative expression used instead of another to make an implicit comparison between the items referred to by two expressions, often based upon supplementary components. An expression in every way similar, except that the comparison is explicit is simile. Cameron (1999) gives another meaning to metaphor when he stated that metaphors will of course be similes, and similes are metaphors that invite an explanation. According to Larson, in English, a simile always has the word like or as. Metaphors do not have the word like or as, but they are also comparisons that can often be rewritten as similes. (Larson, 1998:271)

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bassnett in her Translation Studies (1980) focus on the concept of equivalence when she discusses the translation figurative language. According to her, a translation that involves figurative language as found in the poems, lyrics and any text involving cultural elements require consideration and attention especially in interpreting the meaning.

Ruchirawan (1984) in his thesis entitled Towards a Descriptive Model of Thai-English Translation review the translating process from Thai to English and from English into Thai. He discussed problems in the translation process. The problems are in the process of translating in view to the aspects of linguistics. These problems are at the level of word and sentence. This process is reviewed by three steps, namely, analysis, transfer and restructuring. based on the studies, the most suitable model for the contrastive analysis of the Thai-English language is the logical semantic effect of prediction analysis by Leech (1974).

Tan (1986) in his thesis entitled Problems in Translation and Their Implications For Language Instructional Materials Production focuses on the problem in translation, Chinese-English and recommended techniques to solve the problem and the implications of methods and materials for language teaching. In the study, he reviewed the twelve types of syntactic structures in Chinese and English, the similarities and differences, suggesting ways to overcome the structural differences in the translation and noted the need for a good translation. He found that there were many mistakes in the translation, Chinese-English. The errors include three aspects, namely, syntax, vocabulary, and semantics.

Baker (1992) in her book, In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation assume idioms and expressions as two different categories under multi words. Baker lists four difficulties in translating the figurative language. First, a figurative language has no equivalent in the target language. Second, a figure of speech might have the same equivalent in the target language, but may vary with the context. Third, a figure of speech in the source language may be translated literally and idiomatic in the target language. Fourth, the use of figurative language in writing discourse, context and frequency of usage may differ with the source language and the target language. Baker also suggested two strategies for translating the figurative language. First, using a figure of speech that is similar in meaning and form. Second, the use of figurative language is similar in meaning, but differ in form and the last is translated by the paraphrase. According to Baker, translation by paraphrasing is most often used when an equivalence match cannot be found in the target language.

approach means that each translation process does not only translate the language, but also the concept of a term in the source text. According to Nord, translation is an intermediary between the two languages and two different cultures, translation within the same language and culture (intercultural) and translation of two languages and different cultures (cross-cultural or cross-cultural). He also discussed the Skopos theory. The Skopos theory also emphasizes the difference between the types of text. Nord (2005: 37-38) states that the typology of text that is often used in the context of Skopos theory is informative text (informing the audience about objects and phenomenon in the real world), expressive texts (informative aspect combined with the aesthetic component), operative text (both meaning and form are subordinated to the effects extralinguistic). He also states that the translator is not always able to determine the purpose of a translation of the source text into the target language and therefore, the translator requires a clue. Therefore, translation is no longer determined by the principle of equivalence, but based on the adequacy in accordance with the directions of translation. However, the production of the translation must be logical or coherent.

Ragavan (1991) in his thesis entitled The Translation of Metaphors: A Text Analysis of The Good Earth, The Great Gatsby, The Moon and Sixpence and In Dubious Battle have studied the relationship between the metaphor in English and the Malay translation. He analysed the relationship between metaphor in two ways, namely the form of a metaphor of the source language and the translation in the target language, and the second, the translation procedures employed by the translator. He found that most metaphors changes in their form in the source language. His research also found that cultural factors are not an obstacle to the process of translating a metaphor from English to Malay.

From this literature review, it was concluded that there are gaps in studies before, is not many studies related to figurative language translation from English to Malay. Therefore, researchers feel that there is a need to study the figurative language translation from English to Malay.

IV. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The use of figurative language in the Malay community had been for centuries, especially in the works of literary texts. It is intended to express something implicitly and for more effective impact on its readers. Problems arise when there are cultural differences between the English and Malay texts. In the process of translation, the translator as possible as he or she could, will try to maintain the figurative language of the source texts. Each word represents a specific meaning in the language. The use of a specific image from the source language into the target language will have a negative impact on the target reader if it’s not correctly translated. This is because the translators might have misinterpreted the use of images that are specific to a source language and cultural resources. For example the word ‘snow’ to refer to ‘white as snow’ in the ST (source texts). The term ‘snow’ is not understood by the audience because this element is not in the culture. To overcome misinterpretation of the meaning, the translator had to use a term that is familiar or image in the target language and can be understood by the audience in the target texts (TT). The word ‘snow’ from the ST can be replaced by the word ‘kapas’ or cotton which symbolizes something pure or sincerity.

There are issues of words with the same images, but different meanings. This is because when the same image is used, yet due to the difference in meaning between the two languages, will cause misunderstanding when translating.

V. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to analyse the translation and the strategies used to interpret the figurative language. For this purpose, the researcher has chosen the English novel of the Harry Potter series by JK Rowling which had been translated by Pelangi Sdn Bhd. In general, the study was conducted using the library and a texts analysis research methodology. The study only focused on figurative language and the translation strategies used by the translator.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Of the eight categorization was stated by Seidl and Mcmordie (1978), only six categorization used in the novel, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, namely (1) the informal idioms; (2) verbal idioms; (3) idiomatic pairs; (4) idioms used in special field; (5) idioms related to special themes; and (6) idioms containing special keywords. For comparison idiom, will be discussed under similes. Examples of identified idioms in the texts are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Texts (ST)</th>
<th>Target Texts (TT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. the tip of the dungheap (Informal ID)</td>
<td>sedikit sahaja daripada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. in the dead of the night (Verbal ID)</td>
<td>kisah dahsyat yang sebenar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. in and out of sight (Paired ID)</td>
<td>di tengah malam sunyi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. sky-rocketing (SP ID)</td>
<td>tenggelam timbul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. get off his high Hippogriff (TID)</td>
<td>melambung tinggi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. face to face</td>
<td>turun daripada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hippogriff tingginya berdepan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The idiom the tip of the dungheap’s derived from the tip of the iceberg. The idiom meaning a problem, things or situations that are seen as a small thing, but deep inside, there is a bigger issue than what it seems to be. The idiom yanking your wand is modified from the actual idiom, which is yanking your chain. The idiom meaning to say something is not right with the intention solely as a prank. The translator did not translate the two idioms as a literal translation, but chooses the Malay word which gave a similar meaning to the actual situation.

An example of a verbal idiom is, out of sight is used to mean someone who will be quickly forgotten when he or she was not together anymore. The idiom coined by the author, namely Merlin’s beard, which aims to express the feeling of surprise. The author also uses Merlin’s pant for the same meaning. The translators have used the word ‘astaga’ as a word that replaces ‘Merlin’s beard’. In the Kamus Dewan Bahasa (2010), the word ‘astaga’ is synonymous with ‘astaghfirullah’. This word is not appropriate because the word is not to be used based on the context of the narrative in the novel. This is because, in order to facilitate the reader’s objectives, namely multi-ethnic society in Malaysia can understand the context of sentences in the novel. For idiom in a particular area, the skyrocketing which is an idiom often used in business meaning importing such a price is soaring or very expensive. According to Larson (1998: 48–49), a literal word-for-word translation of the idioms into another language will not make sense. The form cannot be kept, but the receptor language word or phrase which has the equivalent meaning will be the correct one to use in translation.

Translation of similes mostly maintains the image or element of the ST. This occurs because to facilitate the understanding and the message to be conveyed in the narrative so that it can be delivered effectively. Examples are as follows.

<table>
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<th>Source Texts (ST)</th>
<th>Target Texts (TT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. you spineless worm</td>
<td>kau cacing lembek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a Dung bomb</td>
<td>bom najis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. vulture</td>
<td>burung hering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translators chose not to change the image that represents the word “vulture” and do not give an explanation about the image because the image is already being understood by the reader, which refer to the character Rita Skeeter who is similar to a vulture.

In translation, there is the possibility for translators to translate the metaphor of the source language text into a simile. The strategy of translating metaphor to simile by using the word 'like' or 'as' to express the
relation between the subject and the image was proposed by Larson (1998).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Texts (ST)</th>
<th>Target Texts (TT) Malay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. basset’s hound eyes</td>
<td>mata kayu seperti anjing baset yang beralun-alun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a rippling scarlet caterpillar</td>
<td>seperti beluncas merah yang beralun-alun</td>
</tr>
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The metaphor of ‘a rippling scarlet caterpillar’ is translated as ‘seperti beluncas merah yang beralun-alun’ in the TT. The translators translate the metaphor as a simile in Malay by adding the word ‘seperti’ which means ‘like’ in English. While the translators have made changes in the target text, the message conveyed by the original author is still retained and understood by the readers of the TT. According to Larson (1998), a metaphor can also be translated without keeping the image of the metaphor. This means that the translator can ignore the image in the ST and translate the meaning directly with or without the use of metaphor. For example the phrase “that muck” translated as “surat khabar picisan”. The translators chose to explain the meaning of the image and also to maintain the image of metaphor so that the translation is understood by the readers. Topics for the above metaphor is a newspaper and its image. The translators chose the word ‘picisan’ to replace the ‘dirt’. The choice of the word still carries the same meaning, referring to the press.

CONCLUSION

Translation of figurative language should be handled carefully and thoroughly in order to ensure the message is conveyed. This is crucial for the target reader with no knowledge or cultural backgrounds of the English. The choice of strategy is also very important in order to maintain the style of writing the ST. The translators have to choose or use words that are easily understood by the target language community, namely Malay. The translators also used the literal strategy in translating the novel, which replaces the word phrase in a paragraph without having to make major changes to the structure of the novel. As a conclusion, translating figurative language needs a deep understanding and should be interpreted to get the actual meaning. Figurative language is a language that is difficult to understand by those who are less aware of the meaning that embedded in the words or phrases.

REFERENCES
