

## The Prominent Figures and Theories in Translation

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**Abstract:** *The topic of this paper deals with the prominent figures and some theories in translation. For those who are interested in translation in deepening the theories, its aim is twofold: (1) by knowing them there will be a clear picture about the theories of translation and the experts behind them; and (2) there will also be a comparative study about them or combining ideas in order to find that translation is an activity which requires a sophisticated knowledge of the source language and the target language. It is also generally seen as a process of communicating the foreign text by establishing the equivalence based on universal of language culture.*

**Keywords:** *prominent, figures, theories, translation, practices, source language, target language.*

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### I. Introduction

Translation is transferring the message of the source language into the target language by taking into account the meaning and conformity of stylistic. In translation process, there are some steps that must be considered, i.e., preceded by lexical review and grammatical structure.

Translating can be analogized as wearing clothes, its suitability depends on the wearer and perceiver. However, translation is an art, depending on who interprets it.

Personally, the theoretical basis and approach for translation suggested by theorists is absolutely necessary. It is closely related to the exchange of ideas and experience, as well as scholarly factor and acceptance of translation product. Despite many practitioners proposed that the experiences and habitual is a vigorous factor in translation process, the uniformity of the system and high accuracy must be center for attention. For decades, the practice of translation grounded on various theories and approaches, initiated by some theorists on this field. As it is associated with the advancement of technology, this activities related to machine and software assisted in translation process (Jean-Pierre 2005; Kussamaul 2005; Sommers, 2003).

### II. The Prominent Figures in Translation and Their Heyday

With a brilliant idea, Venuti (2000) grouped the translation theorists and their approaches based on their heyday and influence. Between 1900s and 1930s was the heyday of Walter Benjamin (1923), Ezra Pound (1929), Jorge Luis Borges (1935), Jose Ortega y Gasset (1937). The period 1940 to 1950 was Vladimir Nabokov (1955), Jean Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet (1958), Willard V O Quine (1959), Roman Jakobson (1958). The period 1960 to 1970 was Eugene Nida (1964), J C Catford (1965), Jiri Levy (1967), Katharina Reiss (1971), James S. Holmes (1972), George Seiner (1975), Itamar Even-Johar (1978 / revised 1990), Gideon Toury (1978/revised 1995).

The 1980s was the heyday of the theories and approaches presented by several experts. This decade began with the emergence of broad publicity book entitled *Translation Studies* (Bassnett, 1980) which consolidated the various strands of research translation, especially in English native speaking countries. This was followed by Hans J. Vermeer (1989), Andre Lefevere (1982), William Frawley (1984), Philip E. Lewis (1985), Antoine Berman (1985), Shoshana Blum-Kulka (1986), and Lori Chamberlain (1988).

The 1990s emerged the conceptual paradigm of translation study in the form of a merger of theory and methodology that was different from the previous decade, continuing symptoms of indiscipline such as polysystem, skopos, poststructuralism, and feminism. Moreover, that was the decade of reflection on development of linguistic, particularly pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, computerized corpora, and others. The influential experts in this decade include Annie Brisset (1990/1996), Ernst-August Gutt (1991), Gayari Chakravorty Spivak (1992), Kwame Anthony Appiah (1993), Basil Hatim and Ian Mason (1997), Keith Harvey (1998), and Lawrence Venuti (2000).

### III. Theories and Approaches in Translation

#### 3.1 Linguistic Meaning of Equivalence Approach

The theory and approach to the nature of linguistic meaning and equivalents developed by Jakobson (1959/2000: 114). This approach classifies translation into three types:

- (1) intralingual translation, or rewording: an interpretation of verbal signs by using other signs in the same language.
- (2) interlingual translation, or actual translation: an interpretation of verbal signs by using other languages.
- (3) intersemiotic translation or transmutation: an interpretation of verbal signs by using nonverbal sign systems.

The use of interlingual translation, i.e. when someone wants to say something in another way in the form of a phrase or text in the same language to explain or clarify something that has been described or written. Intersemiotic translation is conveyed for written text into music, movies or paintings. The interlingual translation is traditional translation that has been the object of many translation studies. Furthermore, there are two main goals of this translation studies:

- (1) To describe the phenomenon of translation and translation products as experienced in real world
- (2) To establish general principles by using the phenomena that are explainable and predictable.

Jakobson proposed that all cognitive experience and its classification can be delivered within the existing language.' (1959:238). The key issue initiated was concerning the linguistic meaning and equivalents. This approach followed the Saussure's ideas of the arbitrariness of the *signifier* (oral and written sign) and the *signified* (the sign concept). Signifier and signified form a linguistic sign, but the sign was arbitrary and was not motivated (Saussure 1916/1983: 67-69). For example, the word 'cheese' is a acoustic signifier that shows the concept of food, made of compacted starch milk (signified).

Interlingual translation that involves replacing the natural message in one language not for separate code units but for entire messages in other languages. The translator recodes and transfers messages received from other sources. Therefore, the translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes (Jakobson 1959/2000: 114).

For any messages that match the ST and TT, the units of the code will be different for these codes in two different sign systems (different languages). From the point of linguistics and semiotics, Jakobson discusses the issue of definition and equivalence, that is the equivalent of the difference as an important linguistic consideration today. The problem of meaning and equivalents focuses on differences in the structure of the language and terminology rather than the inability of language to bring the message that had been written in other verbal languages.

### 3.2 The Equivalence Theory

The equivalence theories and approaches in translation was initiated by Eugene Nida. This theory evolved from his experience from the 1940s onwards when he translated and organized the translation of the Bible. This theory used in both of his works: (1) *Toward a Science of Translating* (1960), and (2) *Theory and Practice of Translation* (Nida and Taber, 1969). Nida's approach more systematically after adopting the theoretical and terminology semantics and pragmatics concepts, and Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar.

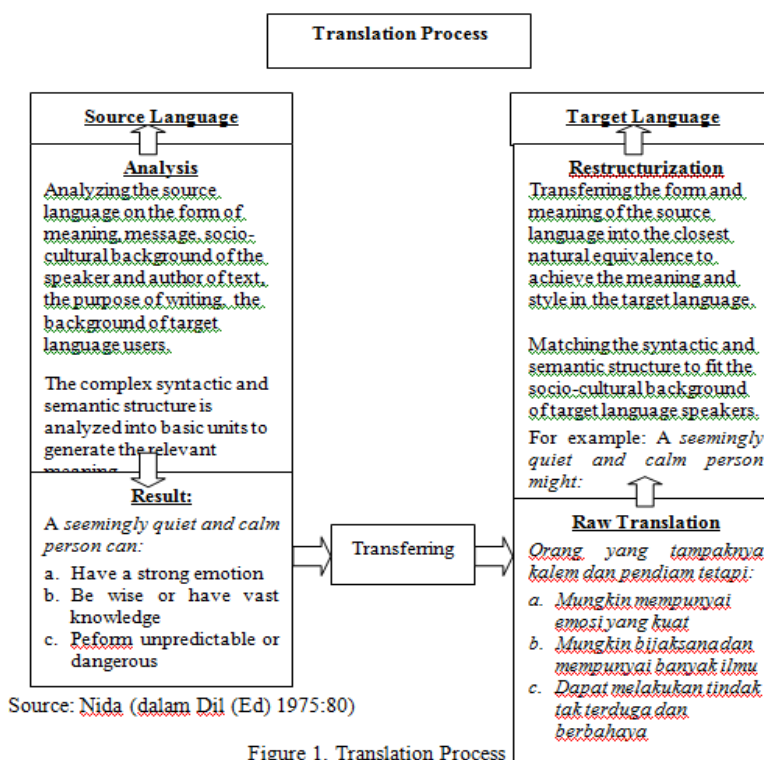
Nida classifies meaning into two classes, (1) the linguistic meaning (borrowing the elements of Chomsky's model), (2) referential meaning (denotative). A series of techniques adapted from various works in linguistics study and served as guidance for translator in seeking the referential and emotive meaning (connotative), focuses on the analysis of word structure and distinguishes the same words in related lexical field. In general, the component analysis technique is intended as the way to explain the ambiguity, avoiding the fuzzy parts, and identify the cultural differences.

Regarding the equivalence, Nida proposed two types of equivalence: (1) the formal equivalent, and (2) the dynamic equivalent (1964a: 159). The formal equivalent focus on the message itself, both form and content..., that the message in TL should match as little as possible the different elements in the SL. The formal equivalence carefully oriented to the formal structure of the SL, which uses a strong influence in determining the accuracy and correctness.

The dynamic equivalent based on the principle of equivalent effect where the relationship between the recipient and the message substantially same as the original one. Messages should be created for the recipient and linguistic needs and cultural expectations 'leads to fairness of complete expression'. The purpose of dynamic equivalents is looking for the closest natural equivalent of SL message.

On another occasion, Nida described that the translation activities requires sophisticated knowledge of source and target languages. Translation is viewed as the process of communicating the foreign text based on the universality equivalence of cultural language. Translation involves double action, that communicate and represent not merely one language, but also two different languages. The first process is analyzing the text of SL, that can be examined from various aspects. They are includes (a) analyzing the grammatical relationship between the constituent parts, (b) identify the meanings of semantic units. The nonlinguistic analysis employed to get the message in the text, socio-cultural background of the speaker, elements that are closely related to the communication situation where the text was used, and condition of users. The next phase is parsing the text into units of basic structure and semantics. The goal is to assure that there are no more points are lost.

The chart below illustrates the process of conveying the message that consists of the basic units translation, then reconstruct the raw translation results into semantic units in accordance with the wishes of the users. (Nida in Dil(ed). 1975:80).



### 3.3 Semantics and Pragmatics Theory

Semantics and pragmatics theory was proposed by Peter Newmark. This theory is classified on Semantics and Communicative Translation. The two of his great works are (1) Approaches to Translation (1981), and (2) A Textbook of Translation (1988).

The Newmark's approach departs from the idea of Nida. In avoiding the common term, especially on SL and TL, Newmark used the term 'semantic translation' and 'communicative translation'. The semantic one translates the syntactic and semantic structure of TL and contextual meaning as close as possible to SL. And the communicative translation tries to generate an effect for the reader to gain authenticity. (Newmark 1981:34).

The description of communicative translation is similar to dynamic equivalents suggested by Nida, while the semantic one is equal to formal equivalent.

### 3.4 The Functional Approach

Reiss developed the concept of equivalence that focused on context, rather than word or phrase, the degree to which communications may be obtained and the equivalent must be obtained (Reiss 1977/89: 1,130,114). The functional approach aimed to systematic assessment of translation. His approach based on categorization of language functions initiated by Karl Bühler. Reiss connected these functions to dimensions of language and type of text or situation of communication used. The characteristics of the type of text can be viewed as follows:

- 1) Communication about the simple facts: information, knowledge, opinions, and others. The dimensions of the language to convey the information is logic, referential, the main focus of communication is content or topics, and the type of text is informative.
- 2) Creative composition: the author uses the aesthetic dimension of language. The author sends a set on foreground, as well as the form of the message, and the text type is expressive.
- 3) The response stimulation of behavior: The objective function is to emerge or convince the reader or recipient of text to act in a certain way. Language is a form of dialogue, focus on operative appointment.
- 4) Audio-medial text, such as film or commercial sound or visual that add three other functions with visual images, music, and others.

Reiss (1971: 54-88) also listed a set of criteria of intralinguistic and extralinguistic instructions where the completeness of TT can be assessed.

- 1) Intralinguistic criteria: semantic, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic characteristics.

- 2) Extralinguistic criteria: situation, subject, field, time, place, recipient, sender, and implications of such affective humor, emotion, and ridicule.

Despite the relatedness, the interests of the above criteria vary, according to the type of text. For example, any translation of text content-focused, in the first place should lead to the retention of semantic equivalent. However, the TT of news article put grammatical criteria in the second place; the popular science books will be more attention on individual styles of the ST. Similarly, it's more important to retain metaphor in expressive text translation rather than informative TL, where the semantic value of the translation itself will suffice.

### 3.5 Skopos Theory

This theory proposed by Hans Vermeer. Skopos in Greek means 'purpose' and has been introduced in the 1970s by Hans Vermeer as a technical term for the purpose of a translation and translational action. The main work of skopos (Skopos theory) was *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* (Groundwork for a General Theory of Translation). Despite skopos predated the translational action theory that initiated by Holz-Manttari, this theory is considered to be part of the same theory. The Skopos focuses on the purpose of the translation that determines the methods and strategies undertaken to produce the translation results that are functionally appropriate. For Vermeer, these results called *translatum*. Hence, the skopos figure out why a SL translated and how the TL functions will be important for the translator.

Reiss and Vermeer (1984:119) suggests a general theory for the translation of the whole text. There are six basic principles of this theory:

- 1) Translatum (TT) is determined by its skopos
- 2) TT is an offer of information in the target culture and TL concerning the offering of information in the source culture and SL.
- 3) TT does not initiate an offer of information in a way that clearly could be reversed.
- 4) TT must be internally coherent/related
- 5) TT must be coherent with TS.

### 3.6 Systemic Functional Linguistics Theory

Systemic functional theory of translation formulated by M.A.K. Halliday, then known as the Halliday Model. The text analysis based on the Systemic Functional Grammar, that capable of assessing the language as communication, assumed the meaning in linguistic options and the readers systematically connect these choices in a framework of a wider socio-cultural.

There is a strong relation between the realization of linguistics at the surface level and the socio-cultural framework. Halliday outlined the relationship of genres and registers with the language. *Genre* (the text types are conventionally associated with specific communication functions, such as business letters), conditioned by environmental/socio-cultural situation and determine the other elements within a systemic framework.

The register consists of three variable elements:

- 1) Field: about what is written, for example speech;
- 2) Tenor: who is communicating and to whom, for example, the field of marketing to consumers;
- 3) Model: forms of communication, such as writing

These registers variables associated with strands of meaning. These strands together form the semantic discourse of any text that contained three metafunction: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The metafunction is formed or realized by lexicogrammar, i.e. choices of words and syntactic structures.

The text field associated with the ideational meaning that is realized through transitivity patterns (types of verbs, the structure of the active/passive, participants in the process, etc.). Tenor is a text associated with interpersonal meaning that realized through the patterns of modality (capital verbs and adverbs, such as *hopefully*, *should*, *possibly*, and evaluative lexis, such as *beautiful*, *dreadful*, etc.). The mode of text associated with the structured meaning that realized through the thematic structure and information (especially the order and arrangement of the elements in a clause and cohesion (the manner of text lexically interdependent, including the use of pronouns, ellipsis, word collocation, repetition, etc.))

The analysis of metafunction has a major place in this model. The closeness of the relationship between the lexicogrammar patterns and metafunction implies that the analysis of transitivity patterns, modality, thematic structure and cohesion in the text revealed how metafunction works and how the text is meaningful (Egins 2004:210-2013).

#### IV. Conclusion

The Indonesian proverb 'takkenalmakataksayang' applies in this paper. Without recognizing characters and the theory developed in any field, especially in translation, it is difficult to handle the translation practices. Hence, the light of their theories and approaches has broadened our perspective in practice. There are two important ways to be followed: the first is comparing the theories and approaches, and the second is combining the relevant theories and approach.

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