

# **Conceptual Model of Translation Approach in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper intends to briefly demonstrate a conceptual model of translation in teaching and learning of foreign language. Translating occurs when two difference language share the same meaning of speech. Indeed the form of two languages might be totally different at certain levels of linguistic aspect and, meta-linguistic aspect. The model discusses the principle to be considered when translating is in progress in foreign language teaching and learning.*

**Keywords:** *Conceptual Model, Translation, T&L of Foreign Language*

## **1. Introduction**

Discussion on translation means we are dealing with the meaning. Meanings are the subjects of human communication will, and actually convey everything that represents intentional actions. Since the creation of human being, language is the tool for meaning interchange. Generally speaking, language can be categorized into two, sign language and verbal language.

### ***Translation and Language Teaching & Learning***

The understanding translation in teaching and learning foreign language is now creating a new direction of T&L of language. Maria (2008) in her dissertation mentioned that we can see the relevance of the trends in language teaching/learning and its association with translation.

Robinson's (1997) suggested that "translation is actually a language learning process and the translator is always a learner" has drawn interest to language learning and translating process. He further mentioned that "translation involves complex process of conscious and unconscious learning. In addition, when a learner is translating, he/she actually goes through three levels of learning processes namely analyzing, transmitting and restructuring (Norhaili 2008).

Translation is defined as reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style (Nida & Taber, 1982). In discussing the definition above, Shiyang (2009) indicated that translation is to "reproduce" the closest natural corresponding information and meaning. For translators it is to find the presupposed meaning and express it out. In this regard, a foreign language learner becomes (unconsciously) a translator that put his efforts to express the information into target language.

From the definition also, we can draw a process of translation scientifically by perceiving language as a combination of form (spoken, written) and sense (message or meaning). It is true to believe that language

by its nature has these two essential elements. Linguistically speaking, form is referred to surface structure, while sense may be identified as deep structure.

This study employs Local strategy<sup>1</sup> as proposed by Chesterman (1997) in discussing the proposed concept. He divided this strategy into three; syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. Each category has ten subcategories summarized as follows:

1. Syntactic:
  - i. Literal translation
  - ii. Loan translation
  - iii. Transposition
  - iv. Unit shift
  - v. Phrase structure change
  - vi. Clause structure change
  - vii. Sentence structure change
  - viii. Cohesion change
  - ix. Level shift
  - x. Scheme change
  
2. Semantic
  - i. Synonym
  - ii. Antonymy
  - iii. Hyponymy
  - iv. Converses
  - v. Trope change
  - vi. Abstraction change
  - vii. Distribution change-expansion
  - viii. Distribution change-compression
  - ix. Emphasis change
  - x. Paraphrase
  
3. Pragmatic
  - i. Cultural filtering
  - ii. Explicitness change
  - iii. Information change
  - iv. Interpersonal change
  - v. Illocutionary change
  - vi. Visibility change
  - vii. Coherence change
  - viii. Cohesion change
  - ix. Partial translation
  - x. Transediting

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<sup>1</sup> According to Bergen (2011), there are three dimensions of translation strategies, namely Meta-cognitive Strategy, Global Strategy and Local Strategy.

These categories generally were taught in language learning classrooms. However the lessons content may differently be described and organized accordingly to pedagogical principal. As language students are exposed to understand them when acquiring new vocabulary, syntax structure and pragmatic meaning. Beginner learners in teenage and adulthood express themselves first in their mother tongue, which need to be translated into the target language before being able to say it themselves in the target language (Deller, Sheelagh & Mario Rinvoluceri 2002: 4). This notion supports the use of translation in teaching foreign language, especially when the learners are teenager or adults.

### ***Form and Sense***

In a simple analogy, we may assume language form as a parcel while sense is the content. Most of the time the content is the same but parcel can be vary. Indeed, the content (sense) can be moved into different parcel with some modification of the parcel to fix the content.

In the actual language use, speaker will always try to convey the meaning to the listener. He/she will try to make the listener understand the meaning. And if both of them are using the same parcel (language) it is easier to understand each other. But what if one of the parties does not know the parcel (language) of other?

In the context of Malay learners who study Arabic language as a foreign language, learners come across a difficulty and barrier to express his feeling or idea without properly using Arabic in communication. However, previous comparative and translation studies on Arabic and Malay language (such as Azman 2003; Mohd Zain 1994) found out that there were similarities between both especially on surface structure including syntax, semantic and pragmatic. These findings strongly support the belief that adopting translation strategy is effective in teaching and learning a foreign language.

### ***Conceptual Model of Translation***

The role of translation merges when certain message is transmitted. In this situation, a speaker is searching for the appropriate parcel to convey his content. He/she has to be able to modify and fix the parcel that he/she is going to use. To help understand this concept better, previous works by Larson (2008), Catford (1996) and Hāli (2002) were adopted as illustrated in figure 1:

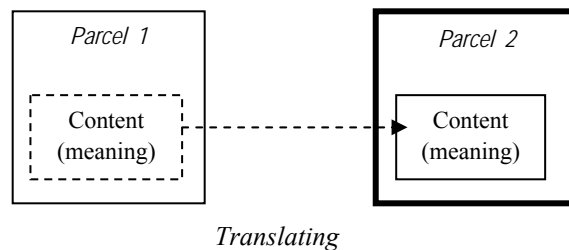


Figure 1: How translation happens

Based on this figure, we can see that the speaker has to be able to create and find a suitable parcel for his content. Sometimes, his content can be misinterpreted by the listener. Therefore, his performance depends on his capability to create a new parcel. However, we believe creativity and innovation in developing the parcel need a lot of efforts. The parcel structure will comprise of vocabulary, grammar, style and all linguistic aspects, in addition sign language (body language).

Linguistic form has to be investigated from several points of view. The linguistic features of each language will have a great influence on translation, so the analysis from the perspective of linguistics is necessary and useful (Shiyang, 2010). In teaching foreign language, linguistic knowledge is vital, in

addition to other aspect such as teaching method and environment. The ability to analyze linguistic structure within sentence and word will assist to make teaching more affective. When actual linguistic form is perfect and appropriate, the language teacher can explain both side of the languages, source and target respectively.

Take an example of a Malay sentence, “*Dia akan bermusafir pada minggu depan*”<sup>2</sup> to be translated into Arabic. The first step preferred by the teacher is to find out the linguistic form of Arabic. “Dia” in Malay could be denoted by هو or هي respectively. However in the Arabic language, the use of this pronoun has to consider gender aspect. While in the Malay language gender will be denoted by certain word as auxiliaries like *lelaki, wanita, jantan, betina* and etc. Gender in the Malay culture might be understood through speech context. Indeed the verb “bermusafir” in Malay should be translated into present tense in the Arabic language. It is denoted by the auxiliary “akan” to present future action. In this case, the teacher needs to explain the tenses pattern in Arabic verbs which comprise past tense and present tense (future tense can be embodied with auxiliaries either سوف or س).

From the example above, we can understand how the content is rendered. Parcel of the SL (source language) should be well examined and carefully understood grammatically. As the content plays a major part in translation, sometimes the form may be looked in different style and structure. Take an example of the following sentence: “Kucing itu makan ikan”. This construction can be rendered into two different structures: السمك يأكله القط or القط يأكل السمك.<sup>3</sup>

The first sentence is active, consisting of subject (القط) and verbal phrase (يأكل) and object (السمك) were predicate. From contextual meaning, the emphasize is more on the subject as the topic. It is the cat that the sentence is highlighting. The second sentence is active as well, when the subject is (السمك) and the phrase (يأكله القط) is regarded predicate. This sentence mentions the major topic is about the subject, the fish.

Initially, we can understand that the action was done by the cat. That was the fact and must be agreed by the receptor. But, when this sentence is embodied in the discourse, the implicit meaning should be highlighted. In this regard, relevant theory of translation will take his turn.

### 3. Suggestion and Conclusion

This concept should be a part of knowledge for teachers when teaching adult learners. Teenager and adult learners as a target group commonly has their own mother tongue or second language. Therefore when we are teaching them a new parcel (language), do we consider translation-as we mention above-to be thought and how our attitude toward it is. We might need to identify the following points when applying translation strategy as pedagogical approach in teaching and learning of foreign language:

1. Find and meet the closest parcel in the TL and its content,
2. Fixed parcel (daily expressions for instant) must directly be matched to the TL,
3. Exposure to the syntax meaning, the right way to construct a sentence of TL,
4. Manipulating context of speech to enhance the parcel and the content,
5. Knowledge of linguistic structure of TL must adequate to create a desirable parcel of TL.

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<sup>2</sup> هو سيسافر في الأسبوع القادم (He will travel for the next week).

<sup>3</sup> This example was elaborated from “*Teori & Kaedah Penterjemahan Arab-Melayu*” by M. Helmi (2008)

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