THE USE OF TRANSLATION FOR ENGLISH TEACHING IN INDONESIA:
AN ATTEMPT TO RECLAIM ITS LEGITIMACY

Futuh Handoyo
Politeknik Negeri Malang

Translation and English teaching have had a long relation since the use of grammar translation methods. With the advance of communicative approach, translation seems to occupy a neglected room in language teaching. Drawing on several theories, this article builds arguments that translation should have a good place and an important role to play in language teaching. Further, this article also present teaching scenario using translation in English classes.

Key words: translation English teaching, teaching scenario

INTRODUCTION

While the status of translation as a field of study is improving with increasing institutional standing, translation as learning and teaching device is still viewed with great suspicion. As a field of study, translation is learned by those who have acquired sufficient proficiency in second language with the purpose of becoming professional translators. As a tool of learning and teaching, translation is used as a technique in the process of acquiring the target language learned. Unluckily, the growing status of translation as a field of study does not automatically justify its rehabilitation as a language teaching instrument.

On the heyday of Grammar Translation Method, translation played a central role in language classroom. The method gained wide acceptance before its decline around the end of nineteenth century along with the advent of Direct Method (Omaggio, 1986). Since then translation for classroom use has been faced with objections of various kinds. The proponents of Direct Method argued that the goal of learning a second and or foreign language was the ability to communicate orally using the target language, so the use of students' native language was strongly prohibited. Audio Lingual Method, a subsequent popular method, also showed strong objection to the use of students' native language in the classroom as they thought that students' native language constituted a major source of interference, which would impede the successful process of acquiring the target language. Though not as strong as the above methods, Communicative Approach, which is still widely accepted nowadays, also have significant objection to the use of translation for classroom use. Most language teachers today have been the advocates of this method and largely avoid using translation in their teaching activities, although few of them begin to view it differently.

For a long time, foreign language teaching, particularly English language teaching, in non-English departments in Indonesia has been swaying, going to where the winds of global mainstream methods blow, but until now there is still no record reporting significant improvement in the result. It has been a history of series of failures and disappointment. This seems to be the calling to approach the problem with more dignity and self-confidence. Instead of

just becoming loyal followers and consumers of global methods, experts and practitioners of language teaching in Indonesia should begin to dive into their own ocean directly, activating their own logic and intuition to probe real and actual problems and create genuine solutions. They should increase their understanding on their own problems and contexts so if strategies, methods, or approaches should be adopted or adapted from out there, consideration should be made on their suitability much more than on their worldwide acceptance.

The main objectives of this paper are, first, to reassess the role of translation in English pedagogy for Indonesian context and, second, to describe the case example of how translation is used to teach grammar for more productive purposes.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST OBJECTIONS TO TRANSLATION

First objection

Translation should be avoided because the goal of foreign language teaching nowadays is to help learners to develop communi-cative competence, primarily spoken communication, while translation only works to develop the learners' ability to understand written language. This is a typical criticism imposed by the proponents of Direct Method to Grammar Translation Method. This is obviously not fair to blame translation simply because the method that uses translation as its central technique does not serve the goal that is not its own goal. Translation has been abandoned due to the outdated ness of Grammar Translation Method orientation, not due to its own evil. Translation should not have been treated as a victim until hard efforts are made to adjust how it is used with the new language orientation.

Second objection

Translation should be rejected as it is a source of language interference which will result in language deviation. This is criticism from the proponents of Audio-Lingual Method, who believe that language is habit formation. As they see it, wrong habits and deviation of any kinds should be avoided as early as possible, otherwise they will be very hard to eradicate. This criticism is, in fact, not realistic as a number of studies have convinced that errors are inevitable and even believed as an indicator of progress. Not even single human being can acquire language without making deviation even when he learns his native language.

A process of acquiring new language, then, should be seen as a process of acquiring successive dialects or language systems which have distinct features from the learners' native language or target language, with the early systems being closer to their native language and the later systems to their target language. These successive language systems are referred to, in most literatures, as interlanguages (Selinker, 1974).

Learners of early interlanguage stages or beginners still have very limited skill and knowledge about the target language so they tend to use their previous mother tongue as a means to organize the target language data (Brown, 1978).. Therefore, in these stages, interference from native language is unavoidable and the learners will transfer their L1 features to their L2, in spite of prohibition whatsoever. The interlingual deviations will diminish gradually as their competence in L2 is increasing. Thus, it is a waste of time telling the early learners not to translate as it is unrealistic and against their instinct. To reduce the problems of interference, learners are not to block them but to go through them.

ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING TRANSLATION FOR EFL IN INDONESIAN SCHOOLS

First argument

Most students, if not all, still have early interlanguage level and, thus, the pull of

interference is still very strong. They still largely rely on Indonesian when producing English, so they need to be guided how to do it properly.
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Second argument

Comprehensible language input is very limited so the chance for incidental learning to take place is low and, in turns, the chance for progress to naturally proceed beyond early interlanguage stage is also low. Deliberate efforts on both sides, the students and the teachers, are necessary to avoid premature fossilization. Lack of grammatical competence has high risk of early fossilization and translation is potential to improve grammatical competence.

Third argument

All students and teachers come from the same native language background, so translation strategy has high aspect of practicality. Potential difficulties that are rooted in L1 interference is possible to predict using contrastive linguistic and, thus, material selection and grading can be made for class.

HOW TRANSLATION IS USED TO IMPROVE THE STUDENTS SUBCONSCIOUS GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE (CASE EXAMPLE).

Conscious vs. subconscious grammar

The terms conscious and subconscious grammar was coined by Stephen Krashen. Conscious grammar refers to grammar competence that is accomplished through conscious process of learning and usually in formal setting with language form as its focus, while subconscious grammar is grammar competence that is acquired subconsciously in natural setting with language meaning as its focus. He claimed that only acquired subconscious grammar competence can give contribution to productive ability, while learned conscious grammar competence only operates as

monitoring agent. In addition, He also views that conscious and subconscious knowledge are entirely distinct with the result that conscious competence is not convertible into subconscious competence (Dulay and Krashen, 1982)

The above distinction has also been made by some other authors and variously referred to as *declarative-procedural* by Anderson*, static-dynamic* by Diana Larsen Freeman, *controlled-automatic processing* by Mclaughin and *explicit-implicit* by Rod Ellis. However, they are different from Krashen in that they believe that conscious grammar competence can be converted into subconscious grammatical competence. Therefore, unlike Krashen, who holds that explicit grammar teaching is not required and, thus, proposes zero-grammar instruction, they indicate its necessity.

Subconscious or implicit grammar competence can be acquired inductively through subconsciously generalizing substantial language input the learners are exposed to, or deductively through internalizing what they have learned consciously. The first, then, is called generalized subconscious or implicit grammar competence and the latter is called internalized subconscious or implicit grammar competence.

Theoretical framework: Anderson's Cognitive Automaticity Theory

Anderson describes the route through which explicit or conscious knowledge is transformed into implicit or subconscious knowledge. Instead of using the terms explicit and implicit knowledge, he introduced the concept of declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. In order to bring declarative knowledge into use, or to convert explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge, there are three stages to go through, cognitive stage, associative stage, and autonomous stage (O'Malley, retrieved 2008).

During the *cognitive* stage, the learner is instructed or self learn the rules to do a certain task consciously and result in a sort of declarative knowledge, which he or she can describe verbally. In this stage, the learner gets intellectual understanding on how to do the task but it is still inadequate for skilled performance. The knowledge is stored in short-term memory, which is capacity-limited. During the second or *associative* stage, two main changes occur along the process of converting the declarative into procedural knowledge. The learner begins to attempt to put his or her learned declarative knowledge in use. However, he or she still makes a lot of errors, which are gradually detected and eliminated along the course of practice. Besides, the connections among the various components required for successful performance are strengthened. This is a slow process and the ultimate result is that declarative knowledge is now turned into its procedural form or proceduralized. During the third or *autonomous* stage, the learner's performance becomes increasingly fine-tuned. Performance of the skill becomes virtually spontaneous and automatic and errors inhibiting successful performance disappear. The force on the part of the learner becomes more effortless and less conscious. The knowledge now is stored in long-term memory, which is capacity-unlimited. In short, declarative knowledge can be learned in one trial but a skill can only be mastered after relatively long period of practice.

Anderson's three stage processing matches PPP teaching procedure, in which Cognitive stage relates to Presentation, Associative stage to Practice, and Autonomous stage to Produce. Out of the three stages, it is obvious that the second stage constitutes the most complex and crucial stage because it is exactly there the process of converting knowledge to skill is in progress; consequently, in PPP procedure the Practice step constitutes the most challenging step. Mechanical drill in Audio-Lingual Approach and communicative drill in Communicative Language Teaching with their repetition seem to be designed to serve this purpose. Therefore, it makes sense to say that the success of converting knowledge into skill depends largely on whether the learners make a lot of practice or not.

General Principles:
1). Deductive grammar teaching is seen as complementary to inductive grammar teaching and consciousness raising.
2). Grammar items to be taught deductively should be selected only those that are basic and global and have strong role in comprehensibility. Other complicated details are left to subconscious acquisition process and consciousness raising through communicative activities in Speaking and Reading classes.
3). Though distinguishable, conscious learning is not separable from subconscious acquisition. Grammar items learned consciously can subsequently be put into the subconscious or made automatic through three stages described by Anderson.
4). Form-meaning connection should be made to enhance acquisition.
5). Grammar teaching should focus on facilitating students' interlanguage development.
6). Translation practice should not be done on surface structure or syntactic level only but on semantic level.
7). The Indonesian expressions to be translated should be those that the students are likely to use, instead of standard Indonesian only.
8). Written drill should complement oral drill to reduce the students' being too exhausted.
7). Students' positive attitude and their active participation in teaching and

learning activities play a very important role in learning success.

General procedure

The procedure of the teaching is basically deductive, proceeding from rule conscious understanding, which constitutes short term memory, to rule subconscious internalization, which is long term memory. In spite of hard criticism, the technique adapts the variant of Audio Lingual procedure which is often referred to as PPP. PPP stands for Presentation, Practice, and Produce.

Since grammar has delayed effect and, hence, takes long time to be reflected in language natural production, the target in this teaching is only to improve the students' speed in translating Indonesian sentences orally. In Practice stage, a grammar rule consisting of mainly form and meaning is presented deductively using Indonesian language. In Practice stage, unlike in its original practice which focuses on mechanical drill such as substitution drill, etc., more cognitive practice in the form of translating Indonesian expressions into English is given. The early part of practice is focused to reinforce the students understanding. The effect of the practice is observed thoroughly to monitor the students' conscious understanding and error correction, therefore, is often made. The later part is focused on internalizing the conscious understanding to more subconscious competence. In this stage, the speed of the practice is increased gradually and correction is focused more on students' mistakes. Finally, Produce stage is used to test the result.

Since learning-acquisition category is seen as a continuum, there is no clear-cut demarcation border between conscious learning and internalization stage. The movement from reinforcing conscious understanding to internalizing the conscious understanding constitutes a fading emphasis from the heavy weight of conscious learning proceeding gradually to that of subconscious internalization.

Sample learning scenario

Topic : Full verbs vs. verbs be

Objectives :

1. Students are able to identify propositions that require verbs be and those that do not.

2. Students are able to translate propositions that require verbs be and those that do not into grammatical English sentences.

Procedure :

1. The teacher explains about the rules of basic English sentences (sentences with be and without be) by comparing with the corresponding Indonesian sentences.

2. The teacher trains the students to be able to judge very quickly whether a sentence requires be or not. First, the class is divided into groups of five or so, then they are given ten Indonesian sentences, some of which require be and some others do not when translated into English. What is required from them is only write be (is, am or are) or verb (go or goes etc.) For example, for the sentence *Ayahku di rumah*, they should write *is*, and for the sentence *Ibu kerja di bank*, they should write only *works*

3. The students submit their work (one work for one group). The teacher corrects their work and gives it back to discuss in the groups.

4. The teacher asks the groups to translate the complete sentences and submit to him to correct and give back to them.

5. The teacher dictates another ten Indonesian sentences and tells the students to work individually translating the sentences into English. In order that the students focus their attention on grammatical problem, they may ask the teacher about difficult vocabulary, if any. They, then, submit their work and the teacher correct the work at home.

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