

Similarities of L1 (Mother Tongue) in Terms of Grammar and Language Structure in Translation

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Malaysian philosophy, purpose and objective of the education system are rooted and based on policies stated in the National Education Policy 1956 and Education Act 1961. Whereas the Education Ordinance 1952 urged all Chinese and Tamil schools to be given an equal opportunity to learn English and Malay language together with their L1 (mother tongue). This policy has open an opportunity to the non-Bumis to learn their L1 without any fixed rules. The learning of L1 was not only limited to the basic level, but it also continues to the university level. Emphasizing on the usage of grammar and language structure is very important. Researcher was interested to see the usage of these two components among Malay, Chinese and Indian graduates. The findings of this research is important especially in the teaching of Malay language as the medium of instruction in the education system. All these three parties—the Ministry of Education, Translation Institute and Ministry of Higher Education, play important roles in producing the quality translation materials.

Keywords: usage of grammar and language structure, translation, target language, source language, L1 (mother tongue)

Background

Translation is very important in our life due to the fast growing of world of knowledge, technology and education. The world today will not be this advance if people from a country do not communicate with people from another country. Therefore, the afford of translation happens almost everyday in order to share knowledge and disseminate information in the communittee (Ahmad Khair, 2003). Nowadays, lecturers are using translation in the their teaching materials for the teaching and learning purposes. Most probably, it was not the job of a teacher to decide whether translation is important in education or not, but as an educator, teacher could determine the use of translation in teaching. Nevertheless, translation is considered as a fast-spread-field due to the establishment of the ITNMB (National Translation Institute Incorporation) on September 14, 1993 in Malaysia. Malaysia consists of people from different races, and the majority of them are bilingual or multilingual. Those are involved in education, broadcasting and publishing realising it or not experienced the L1 (mother tongue) interference during translation. Thus, the outcome of the work will spoil the purity and decrease the prestige of Bahasa Melayu.

Literature Review

Noor Aina Dani (2001) did a research on L1 interference in the process of learning Malay language

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among the Form 4 students from the Dusun tribe who came from Sekolah Menengah Kundasang, Ranau, Sabah. The study involved 109 Form 4 students. The findings on the content analysis of the students' essays produced from the formal learning process showed that the language process on the Malay consonant phoneme in the lexical aspect received the most influence of the L1. From the sentence aspect, the interference was represented by the sentence structure of the verb phrase that has a verb and a preposition. The interference like the replacement of L1 in the Malay language aspect was the most obvious one. Students who use Malay language as their daily medium of instruction would commit in making glaring language errors. Unlike those who rarely use the language would be more sensitive to the parallel exercise. She summarised that the language substituting/replacing process in the higher performances students' essays can be categorised as changes in phonetics and loan words. The speaking skills of the Malay Dusun students were still below intermediate level. If this interference of L1 increases, the marks for the essay will go very down.

Awang Sariyan (2000) analyzed the interference of English syntax in Malay language with specific reference to the academic language structure. He chose the academic Malay language as the material to be analyzed, because this material has a close relationship with educators and students. Besides, these academics who used this academic language long before the birth of the other academics received their education via Malay language as the medium of instruction was the cohort that was educated in English. Therefore, concepts and the academics transitional signals went into the Malay language through English, especially from the field of translation and English referential materials. He analyzed almost ten books that comprised of text and reference books from the secondary and university level. The books covered both fields pure and social sciences. The findings revealed that 15 aspects of English syntax interfered these academic discourse. He also found that there were 10 obvious aspects: sentence structure, common pattern, indefinite quantifiers, articles, subject-predicate, active-passive, so-called passive structure, copula, definition and relative definition.

There was one case study on the interference of L1 in the learning process of Malay language among Indian students done by Suthanthiradevi J. N. J. Money (1996). The findings showed that there were many problems faced by these Indian students in learning Malay language. One of the problems detected was the pronunciation of the "r" sound. This was due to factors like lack of exposure of the target language, attitudes of both teachers and students and interference of L1 on L2 (second language).

Teo (1992) also had a study on L1 interference and he involved a group of mixed Chinese in Kelantan. The findings revealed the interference of Malay language in the form of Kelantan Malay dialect onto these mixed Chinese students' L1 from the aspect of words arrangement in the development of a phrase. Data were collected through the interview sessions between the researcher (original speaker of Chinese Hokkien dialect) and his middle-aged friends who have been using the dialect for ages to ensure the reliability of the data.

Methodology

Researcher chose eight universities that have language department including UPM (Universiti Putra Malaysia), UKM (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), UM (Universiti Malaya), USM (Universiti Sains Malaysia), UPSI (Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris), UiTM (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kelantan), UTM (Universiti Teknologi Mara, Skudai) and UDM (Universiti Darul Iman Malaysia). The respondents were the university graduates that comprised of Malay, Chinese and Indian. Respondents were given questionnaire and

one English text to be translated into Malay language.

Findings of the Study

When people communicate, they share their experience and knowledge with each other. The process of communication is said to be effective when the second reader understands fully what the translator means. Therefore, a simple, brief and unambiguous translation makes the reader understands it clearly. The phrases that contain an embedded phrase normally will make the sentence difficult to be understood. In this study, researcher has analyzed the frequent usage of grammar and sentence structure among graduates with the same ethnics.

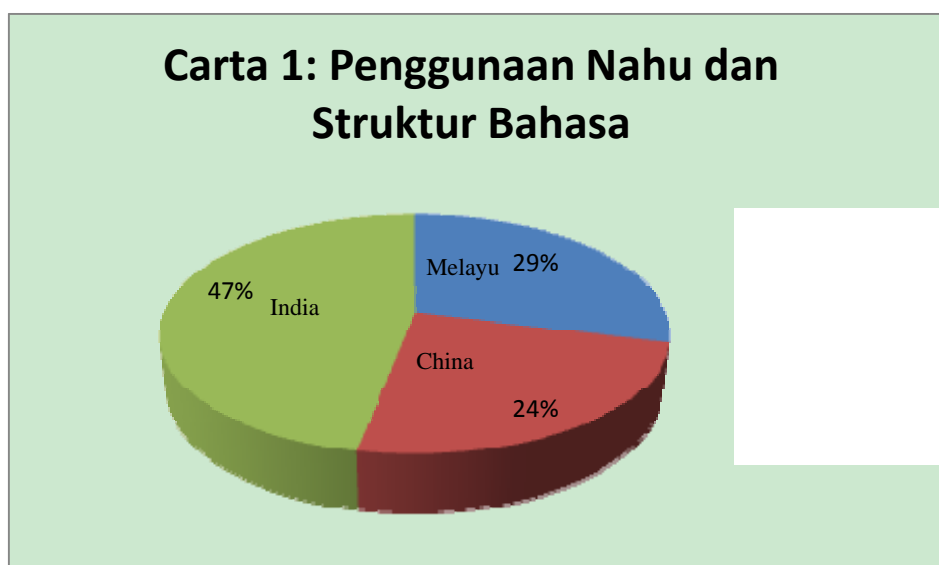


Figure 1. Usage of grammar and sentence structure.

Based on Figure 1, the most frequent similarities that exist in the translation materials were among the Indian graduates with 47%, followed by the Malays (29%) and Chinese (24%) respectively.

Similarities in the Usage of Grammar and Sentence Structure in the Translation Materials

Malay graduates. The Malays are more frequent in using passive sentences in their translations. Thus, the meaning of the sentence is rather heavier to be interpreted compared to active sentence. For example, “To determine factors that are related to obesity...”. Besides, the comprehension problem among the readers also happened when the sentences used affixes in words to tell a story. Clauses that have story were written with affixes, “... is related to obesity (kegemukan)” and compared with one without affixes “... is related to obesity (gemuk)”. The clause that contains the word “kegemukan” was more difficult to be understood compared to “gemuk”.

The similarity in the meaning of the word “national” for “peringkat kebangsaan” (national level) clearly showed that the Malays were confident that all information in foreign language was in the Malay language. So, they tried not to borrow words from other language. They used natural patterns that are parallel with the foreign language. Similarities in grammar and sentence structure of Malays are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Similarities in Grammar and Sentence Structure of Malays

| SL (Source language) | TL (Target language) | Sample of Malay graduate's language translation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spending more time around the family dinner table and less time in front of the television can help prevent children from getting fat, a new study shows | Kajian baharu menunjukkan bahawa jika kanak-kanak meluangkan lebih masa bersama keluarga di meja hidangan daripada di hadapan televisyen, perbuatan ini boleh mengelakkan mereka menjadi gemuk | Spend more time with family dinner table and reduce hours of watching television. Meluangkan lebih masa bersama keluarga di meja makan dan mengurangkan masa menonton televisyen. Spend more time eating dinner with family and reducing time watching television. Meluangkan lebih masa makan malam bersama keluargadan mengurangkan masa menonton televisyen. |
| 8,000 children followed from kindergarten | 8,000 orang kanak-kanak dari peringkat tadika | 8,000 kindergarten children 8000 kanak-kanak tadika 8,000 children from the kindergarten 8,000 orang kanak-kanak dari tadika |
| To identify factors associated with being or becoming overweight | Untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor berat berlebihan | To determine factors that are related to obesity Untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang dikaitkan dengan kegemukan To determine factors that are related to obesity Untuk mengenal pasti faktor yang dikaitkan dengan kegemukan |
| Gable and her team divided the 8,000 children who were participating in a national, long-term study into three groups | Gable bersama rakan kajiannya membahagikan 8,000 orang kanak-kanak kepada 3 kumpulan dalam satu kajian jangka panjang nasional | Gable and friends divided the 8,000 children that participated in the long-term national study into three groups. Gable dan rakan-rakan membahagikan 8000 kanak yang mengambil bahagian dalam pembelajaran jangka masa panjang di peringkat kebangsaan kepada tiga kumpulan. Gable and his friends has divided the 8,000 children who became the national participants to a long-term study into three groups. Gable beserta rakan-rakannya telah membahagikan 8,000 orang kanak-kanak yang telah menjadi peserta peringkat kebangsaan kepada pendidikan jangka panjang dalam tiga kumpulan. |
| Those who had never been overweight; those who began the study at a normal weight, but then become overweight throughout the study | Mereka yang tidak pernah mengalami masalah berat berlebihan; mereka yang berbadan normal pada mulanya tetapi berat berlebihan kemudiannya; serta mereka yang berat berlebihan sepanjang kajian | The first group is children who had never been overweight. The second group is children who began a study at a normal weight. Kumpulan pertama ialah kanak-kanak yang tidak pernah mengalami kegemukan. Kumpulan kedua ialah yang memulakan pembelajaran dalam keadaan normal. First, those who had never been overweight, second, who began a study at a normal weight. yang pertama, mereka yang tidak pernah mengalami berat badan yang berlebihan, kedua, mereka yang memulakan belajar dengan berat badan yang normal. First, children who did not have overweight problem or normal. Second, children with normal weight. pertama, kanak-kanak yang tidak mengalami masalah berat badan atau normal. Kategori kedua, kanak-kanak yang mempunyai berat badan normal. |
| And the fewer meals children ate each week with their families, the more likely they were to put on excess kilos | Seseorang kanak-kanak itu juga mungkin bertambah berat sekiranya sajian mingguan bersama ahli keluarga berkurangan | The fewer meals children ate each week with their families, the more likely they were to put on excess kilos. Lebih sedikit makanan yang dimakan oleh kanak-kanak dalam seminggu bersama keluarga, lebih mudah berat badan mereka bertambah. And it was found out that the lesser time spent by the children eating with the family, the more frequent they put on weight. Dan didapati, semakin sedikit masa yang diluahkan oleh kanak-kanak untuk makan bersama keluarga pada setiap minggu, semakin kerap mereka menambah berat badan mereka. Besides that, the lesser time allocated with family contributed to the overweight problem. Selain daripada itu, masa yang kurang diperuntukkan makan bersama keluarga juga boleh menyumbang kepada masalah lebih berat badan. |

Chinese graduates. It was clearly shown that grammar translation and language structure of the Chinese graduates were heavy to be understood, because the sentence was long and the grammar was all over the place. For example, the sentence “Gable said that family needs to work together to help children maintain their weight so that they will be healthy” did not commit to any ungrammatical error in Malay language even though the sentence was different from the original. Normally, in the basic Malay language sentence structure, there are two constituents: subject and predicate. Furthermore, in Malay language words or phrases that are explained must be followed by words or phrases that explained. This formula is different from the Mandarin which uses the M-D (explain and to be explained) concept. The similarities are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Usage of Grammar and Sentence Structure Among Chinese Students

| SL | TL | Sample of Chinese graduate's language translation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “Families need to work together to help children maintain a health weight”, Gable said | Menurut Gable, ahli keluarga perlu bekerjasama bagi mengekalkan berat badan yang sihat | Gable said that family needs to work together to help children maintain their weight so that they will be healthy. Gable mengatakan bahawa keluarga perlu bekerjasama untuk membantu kanak-kanak menjaga berat badan supaya menjadi sihat. According to Gable, family members must work together to help children to maintain the body to be healthy. Menurut Gable, ahli keluarga perlu bekerjasama bagi membantu kanak-kanak mengekalkan berat badan yang sihat. |
| Even the simple things, like how often families eat together and the amount of time that children spend watching television | Perkara-perkara harian berperanan penting dalam penjagaan berat badan kanak-kanak. Ini termasuk kekerapan ahli keluarga makan bersama-sama dan jumlah masa kanak-kanak menonton televisyen | Even the simple things, like how often families eat together. Walaupun perkara yang mudah seperti kekerapan makan bersama keluarga dan. Even the simple things, like the whole family eats together and the amount. Walaupun bagi perkara yang mudah seperti sekeluarga makan bersama dan jumlah. |
| Gable and her team divided the 8,000 children who were participating in a national, long-term study into three groups | Gable bersama rakan kajiannya membahagikan 8,000 orang kanak-kanak kepada three kumpulan dalam satu kajian jangka panjang nasional | Gable and her team divided Gable dan kumpulannya membahagikan Gable and her team divided Gable dan kumpulannya membahagikan |
| Long-term study into three groups | Kepada three kumpulan dalam satu kajian jangka panjang nasional | Into three groups Kepada three kumpulan Kepada three kumpulan Kepada three kumpulan |
| The risk of persistent overweight by 8% | Meningkatkan risiko berat berlebihan sebanyak 8% | The increase of the children's body weight by 8%. Peningkatan berat badan kanak-kanak sebanyak 8%. The increase of body weight by 8%. Peningkatan berat badan sebanyak 8%. |

Indian graduates. The grammar and language structure were most detected via translated materials among the Indian graduates. There were sentences that used discourse markers too. The explanation was smooth and clear from one sentence to the other. Among the markers used were “for” and “to”. Besides, the sentence structure was easy to understand, because it has connection with the before and after sentence. The similarities are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Usage of Grammar and Sentence Structure Among Indian Students

| SL | TL | Sample of Indian graduate's language translation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spending more time around the family dinner table | Meluangkan lebih masa bersama keluarga di meja hidangan | Spending more time eating with family. Meluangkan lebih masa makan bersama keluarga. More frequent eating with family. Lebih kerap makan bersama keluarga. |
| Dr. Sara Gable of the University of Missouri, Columbia, and her colleagues found | Dr. Sara Gable dan rakan sekerjanya daripada University of Missouri, Columbia | Dr. Sara Gable and her colleagues from the University of Missouri, Columbia. Dr. Sara Gable dan rakan-rakan dari Universiti Missouri, Columbia. Dr Sara Gable and her colleagues from the University of Missouri, Columbia. Dr. Sara Gabel dan rakan-rakannya daripada universiti Missouri, Columbia. |
| Those who watched the most TV were at the greatest risk of being or becoming overweight | Kanak-kanak yang meluangkan lebih masa untuk menonton televisyen akan menghadapi risiko tinggi dalam peningkatan berat badan | Those who watched TV the most were at the greatest risk of being or becoming overweight. Mereka yang menonton TV paling kerap menghadapi risiko tertinggi menjadi gemuk. Children who like to watch TV were at the greatest risk of being or becoming overweight. Kanak-kanak yang suka menonton televisyen berisiko tinggi menjadi gemuk. |
| And the fewer meals children ate each week with their families | Sajian mingguan bersama ahli keluarga berkurangan | The lesser the children eat with their family in a week. Semakin kurang kanak-kanak makan bersama keluarga dalam seminggu. The lesser the children eat with their family. Makin kurang kanak-kanak makan bersama keluarga. |
| Gable and her team divided the 8,000 children | Gable bersama rakan kajiannya membahagikan 8,000 orang kanak-kanak | Gable and her team divided the 8,000 children. Gable dan pasukannya membahagikan 8,000 kanak-kanak. Gable and her team had divided the 8,000 children. Gable dan pasukannya telah membahagikan 8000 kanak-kanak. |
| Long-term study into three groups | Kepada three kumpulan dalam satu kajian jangka panjang nasional | Into three groups Kepada three kumpulan Kepada three kumpulan Kepada three kumpulan |
| The risk of being persistent overweight increased by 3% for every additional hour a child spent watching television each week | Risiko berat berlebihan meningkat sebanyak 3% bagi setiap tambahan jam mingguan seseorang kanak-kanak itu menonton televisyen | The risk of being persistent overweight increased by 3% for every additional hour a child spent watching TV each week. Risiko menjadi gemuk pada kadar yang tetap meningkat sebanyak 3% bagi setiap jam tambahan seorang kanak-kanak menonton TV setiap minggu. The risk of being persistent overweight increased by 3% for every additional hour a child spent watching TV each week. Risiko untuk sentiasa menambah berat badan meningkat sebanyak 3% bagi setiap pertambahan masa seseorang kanak-kanak menonton TV setiap minggu. The findings showed that the risk of being persistent overweight increased by 3% at every additional hour of every child who watched TV every week. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa risiko sentiasa gemuk naik 3% setiap tambahan jam seseorang kanak-kanak menonton TV setiap minggu. |
| Children who did not become overweight ate 10.26 meals a week with their families | Kanak-kanak yang tidak mempunyai berat berlebihan mengambil 10.26 sajian bersama keluarga setiap minggu | Children who did not become overweight had 10.26 hours with their family. Kanak-kanak yang tidak menjadi gemuk mencatatkan 10.26 masa makan bersama keluarga. Children who did not become overweight ate 10.26 meals a week with their families. Kanak-kanak yang tidak menjadi gemuk, makan 10.26 kali seminggu bersama keluarga. |
| Children rely on parents | Kanak-kanak bersandar pada ibu bapa | Children rely on parents. Kanak-kanak bergantung kepada ibubapa. Kanak-kanak bergantung pada ibubapa. |
| Children are not going to learn these things on their own | Kanak-kanak sendiri tidak akan membelajari perkara ini | Children are not going to learn these things on their own. Kanak-kanak tidak akan dapat mempelajari perkara-perkara sedemikian secara sendiri. Small children are not going to learn these things on their own. Kanak-kanak yang kecil tidak akan boleh belajar perkara seperti tersebut secara sendiri. |

All in all, the findings showed the frequent similarities of grammar and language structure detected through translation. Therefore, similarities do exist in the translation materials among the samples of the same ethnics. The factors were depending on how far can the translation understand the thoughts or feelings of the original author during the writing process. The Malay graduates were most frequent in using affixes and passive sentences in their translations. Thus, the meaning of the sentence was rather heavier to be translated compared to active sentences. Looking at the Chinese graduates' translations, they did not commit to grammatical errors in Malay language, instead, their sentences were long and not straight forward. Nevertheless, the translation materials of the Indian graduates were the easiest to be understood, because the connection of ideas in the sentence was clear. The before and after sentence were related to the main one. Finally, the impact of using the discourse markers was great. It made the explanation go very smoothly from one sentence to another sentence.

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