

# Solving the Problem of Translating the English *Prepositional Relative-Clause Sentences*

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**Abstract**—Translating is an undertaking to replace a piece of a written work in one language, called the source language, into that of another language, the target language. Although a translator has absolutely total freedom in replacing the language making different translators render a sentence or series of sentences into various form and style of sentences, there are at least two fundamental aspects which bind a translator in their jobs. First is the aspect of accuracy which means that translation should have the same message as that of the original or source text. The second is the naturalness which means that translation should read as if it were written in the target language which in turn influence the communicativeness of the translation, the more natural the translation the communicative. Prepositional relative clause is an adjective clause whose relative pronoun, commonly *whom* or *which*, is preceded by a preposition, for example *the tools with which the carpenter make the furniture*. This clause has the function of modifying a noun. This construction causes inconsistency in translation. In adjective clause with *which* without preposition, the *which* is commonly translated into *yang*, which is correct because *yang* is the conjunction which is used to introduce a modifier. However when the *which* is preceded by a preposition, it is often translated into *mana* and the preposition is translated using word-for-word approach, resulting in *Alat dengan mana tukang kayu itu membuat kursi*, which is neither accurate nor communicative. This paper tries to propose how such construction should be translated into bahasa Indonesia accurately and communicatively.

**Keywords:** *preposition, relative clause, modifier, rendering, word-for-word approach*

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are several definitions of translation whose difference, it seems, lies on the labelling of the act of the translator, the material acted upon and the end result. Some label what the translator do with replacing a text with another in the target language, (Catford, 1974 and Newmark, 1981); transferring of thought and idea from one language (source) to another (target) (Brislin, 1976); producing the equivalent text from an original one in the receptor language (Nida in Dill, 1975); transferring of meaning from a text in one language to another in different languages (Larson, 1984). Whatever the label might be, one thing is for sure that translating means saying what we understand from one language in different language. In the case of English as the source language and Bahasa Indonesia as the target language, it means making sense or getting the meaning of what we read in English and writing what we understand in Bahasa Indonesia to Indonesian readership. This means that the first thing a translator should obtain from a text is its meaning, sense or message. In order to get this meaning a translator has to analyze the source language or doing what Barnwell (1984) calls *exegesis*. This necessitates a comprehensive mastery of the source language without which translation will only consist of word-for-word rendering of the source text. After getting the message the translator enters what is called the restructuring stage

(Nida, 1975 and Barnwell, 1984) in which he or she encodes the message in the target language. Here, he or she select words and their arrangement which reflect the message of the source text and at the same time meet the convention of the target language so as to make sense to the target language. This also means that he or she should take readership into consideration. Therefore, translation can be said as an endeavor to make a text make sense to a reader who has no knowledge of the language which put translation as a bridge connecting two sides, a reader and a written work whose language is beyond the knowledge the reader. Consequently, this makes the reader very dependent on the translator in understanding the message of the the author. The reader knows only his own language and will only understand a piece of writing in his language if it uses what is common in that language because he or she thinks in that language. If the translation is good it will serve as a good bridge, which means that he or she can get the message of the author, otherwise it will distract the reader thinking that the author has a way of expressing something which is difficult to grasp. For the reader a piece of writing can be understood if the language is familiar to him or her in terms of choice of words and their arrangement in sentences. Therefore a translator should be able to produce a translation which reads like an original piece of writing in the language of the reader, so that the reader

does not feel that he is reading a translation. Translation of this kind is said to have a high degree of naturalness (Nida in Dill, 1975:33).

### **English and Indonesian modification of noun**

Both bahasa Indonesia and English have noun phrase system. The difference is that in English a noun can be *pre* and *post* modified, while in Bahasa Indonesia a noun can only be post modified. In English, a pre-modifier is word(s) which comes before a noun which give additional information about it. This can be an adjective, noun, verb and so on. In translating into bahasa Indonesia a noun which is premodified has to be transferred post modified one, because bahasa Indonesia dose not have noun pre-modifier. Post modifier are words that come after a noun and give information about the noun. This can be in form of prepositional phrase denoting place, time, manner, etc; verb in to infinitive, present and past participle, and clause. This should also be transferred to post modifier as has been noted before. In bahasa Indonesia a noun, may be immediately post modified with noun (sopir bis), adjective (buku tebal), adverb (suasana di pagi hari), verb (ruang tunggu), prepositional phrase (angin dari laut), but mostly can be introduced with *yang*, (buku yang tebal, pekerja yang dari Cina, masalah yang dibahas dalam rapat) and so on.

### **English and Indonesian relative clause**

Relative clause is an adjective clause with relative pronoun, mainly *who*, *whom*, *that*, *which*, and *whose* as the subordinator. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) discuss the relative clause on the topic of *complex noun phrases*. Relative is part of a noun phrase in which the modifier comes after the noun head. Hurford (1994) states that relative clause is a type of a subordinate clause modifying a noun and giving detailed information about a person or a thing the noun refers to. The construction of a relative clause are *noun + who/that/which + verb*, *noun whom/that/which + subject + verb*, *noun + whose + noun + verb*, *noun + whose + noun + subject + verb*. The translation of this construction should comply with rules of modification in bahasa Indonesia. Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia – the Standard Grammar of Bahasa Indonesia – (Dardjowidjojo, ed, 1997) discusses it under the topic of *Hubungan Antarklausa*, interclausal relationship. There, it is stated that there are two types of relationship among clauses, that of *koordinasi*, coordination and *subordinasi*, subordination, the concept of which also exists in English. There is also the term *klausa relatif*, which is possibly a borrowing from the English relative clause. In bahasa Indonesia it is called *klausa sematan*. From the explanation it can be concluded that *klausa sematan* is the equivalent of the English relative clause. The English subordinator *who*, *whom*, *that*, *which* and *whose* is rendered into *yang* in bahasa

Indonesia. There are some possibilities after *yang* (1) it is followed by predicate, either verb or non-verb, e.g. *karyawan yang baru*, *karyawan yang bekerja di bagian pemasaran* (2) it is followed by a passive verb, e.g. *patung yang didirikan pemerintah di pusat kota*, which can be the equivalent of the English *the statue the government erected in the city centre* (active) or *the statue which was erected by the government in the city centre* (passive) (3) it is followed by *noun + nya* as the equivalent of *noun+whose+noun*, e.g. *wanita yang suaminya bekerja disini*, the woman whose husband works here.

In conclusion Indonesian modification of noun in general and *klausa sematan* in particular will be the equivalent for the all types of English relative clause. This should be borne in mind when we are aware that we encounter this construction when translating.

### **Prepositional relative clause and its translation error**

Prepositional relative clause is a relative clause of which the relative pronoun or the subordinator is precede with a preposition as in *the man on whom we depend in financial matters* or *the scheme through which the government provides fund for research is very simple*. Therefore the construction is *noun + preposition + subordinator + subject + verb*. As far as translation is concerned there is no one to one equivalent of this construction but since this belong to a variant of relative clause this construction can be transferred to the Indonesian kalimat sematan with *yang*. So theoretically there is no problem with the translation of this construction.

However, the presence of preposition seems to confuse and distract translators and students in particular from their understanding of the concept of post modification and relative clause. Some of the errors in the rendering is in the form of word-for-word and on-to-one-correspondence approach in dealing with this construction. The frequent error, as is seen in the translation of this construction from the book entitled *Pirinciples of Plant Breeding* is because the translator use the *mana construction*. The book is translated into bahasa Indonesia as *Pemuliaan Tanaman*. The translator translates the English preposition + which into *kata depan + mana*. Kata depan is the Indonesian for preposition among which are *di*, *ke*, *dari*, *untuk*, *pada*, *kepada*, *terhadap*, *dalam*, *melalui*, *tanpa*, *dengan* and so on. The example is possibly translated into *rancangan melalui mana pemerintah menyediakan dana untuk penelitian sangat sederhana*. This translation is of course neither accurate nor natural. *Melalui* is the lexical translation of *through* and *mana* is of *which*. The translation of *which* into *mana* does not reflect the function of *which* in the phrase, and indicates that the translator regards it as a question word in question involving choice. *Which* in the above phrase is a subordinator while in Indonesian *mana*, *melalui*, and *melalui mana* is not. An example of error in

the translation of the aforementioned book is from the source sentence *the rapidity with which one or two varieties became dominant at certain location* which is translated into *kecepatan dengan mana satu atau dua varietas menjadi dominan pada suatu lokasi. Dengan mana* is not a subordinator in bahasa Indonesia and it sound strange because in daily use of the language no one be heard to say or write that. This makes the translated phrase difficult to understand because *dengan* in bahasa Indonesia is used with noun to indicate instrument as in *dengan pisau, with knife* and also accompaniment *dengan istri saya, (together) with my wife*; adjective to indicate manner, *dengan sopan, politely or in polite manner*; with verb to indicate way, *dengan berteriak, by shouting*; but not with question word *mana* and also in bahasa Indonesia *mana* or *dengan mana* is not a subordinator to introduce a *klausa sematan*.

### The possible cause

This error is indeed very surprising because as far as the translator is concerned there is a shift in the *which*. How can it be seen as a subordinator when it is used *without* a preposition, but not when there *is* a preposition. It seems that the presence of a preposition before the subordinator make the translator unable to see the relationship between the head noun, the one the clause modifies, and the preposition + *which*, that instead of using grammatical analysis to find the meaning of the noun phrase, he or she uses word-for-word approach to translate the phrase. The preposition and the *which* is treated in isolation while it should be seen as a part of a whole. This treatment results in the translation of the preposition with its primary meaning (Larson, 1984) in bahasa Indonesia, the meaning obtained the first time by learners in their process of learning a foreign language, and in the case of *through* is *melalui*. This is not to say that using primary meaning in the translation of prepositional relative clause is wrong but the clause that follows should be considered in order to get the message and accordingly to decide what modification should be used to sound Indonesian, hence the principle of *accuracy* and *naturalness* can be realized.

### The solution

The solution of this problem we should not be distracted from the that the construction is still the same, with or without preposition. The *which* is still part of the relative clause which serves as a modifier on the head noun, and so is the preposition. As we know that the pattern of the prepositional relative clause is noun + preposition + whom/which + subject + verb, and the preposition appears because the clause especially the verb necessitate it. Let's return to the example *the scheme through which the government provides fund for research is very simple*. The preposition *through* should not be

seen in isolation but as part of the clause which comes after the subordinator *which*, namely *the government provides fund for reasearch*. Therefore the noun phrase *the scheme through which the government provides fund for research* can be put into a sentence *the government provides fund for research through the scheme* and every translator can easily render this sentence into bahasa Indonesia, that is *pemerintah menyediakan dana untuk riset melalui rancangan tersebut*. After that there needs to be a transformation of the sentence *pemerintah menyediakan dana untuk riset melalui rancangan tersebut* into a phrase starting with *rancangan, the scheme*. This is like students doing exercises of combining pairs of sentences

a *The house is big.*

b *We live in the house.*

into

*The house we live in is big*

or

*The house in which we live is big,*

It can also be rewriting sentence activities in which students are given instruction to complete sentences, as follows

*We live in a big house.*

*The house \_\_\_ is big.*

Therefore, to be able to give the right translation to

*the scheme through which the government provides fund for research is very simple*

the translation should imagine himself doing similar exercise as above. Hence he has to combine the following pair of sentences with the first sentence as the main clause

*Rancangan itu sangat sederhana.*

*Pemerintah menyediakan dana penelitian melalui rancangan itu.*

Or he can also also give himself an exercise similar to the second type above in which he or she write down the raw translation.

*Pemerintah menyediakan dana penelitian melalui rancangan yang sangat sederhana.*

and asks him or herself to rewrite it into

*Rancangan \_\_\_\_\_ sangat sederhana.*

To this the translator can have several choices as the end result and at the time the translation, such as

*Rancangan yang digunakan oleh pemerintah untuk menyalurkan dana penelitian sangat sederhana.* (the scheme the government uses to channel research fund is very simple)

*Rancangan pemerintah untuk menyalurkan dana penelitian sangat sederhana.*

(the government's scheme to provide research fund is very simple)

*Rancangan penyaluran dana pemerintah untuk penelitian sangat sederhana.*

(the scheme of the government's channelling of the research fund is very simple)

*Rancangan penyaluran dana penelitian dari pemerintah sangat sederhana.*

(the scheme of the channelling of government's research fund is very simple)

and still many others, but let's be sure that he or she will never use *melalui mana*.

### **The pedagogical implication**

Today's English learners may be the future's translator or English teachers or lecturers whose one of the job is to teach translation or English practioners whose jobs may include translating. Therefore, it is necessary for them to undergo exercise which enables them feel the meaning of the construction of the prepositional relative clause. This includes understanding the concept of modification, its construction and its rendering in bahasa Indonesia which means that they have to have a good command of both and bahasa Indonesia, the first to get the message and the latter to get the message across the Indonesian audience.

The steps of the activities in providing the skill may include.

- a. facilitating the understanding of the general concept of the English post modification especially that using the prepositional relative clause
- b. facilitating the knowledge of the pattern and examples of the prepositional relative clause and providing explanation its grammatical meaning
- c. providing exercises various kinds of exercises which train the students to combine, rewrite sentences into those using prepositional relative clause
- d. providing ample English sentences using the prepositional relative clauses to be translated in bahasa Indonesia
- e. providing incorrect translation for students to correct
- f. providing feedback to the students works.

### **Conclusion**

People see a translator as someone who knows everything about the source language, that they think that

translator can do no wrong. So when they find difficulty getting the message from a translated work they will not think that it is because of translator, rather they may think it is the original work which is to blame or it is themselves who are not sophisticated or smart enough to understand a piece of writing. Therefore if a translator is to remain a good bridge connecting the readers and the message written in a language foreing to them his or her work should be readable and comprehensible, and in the case of the prepositional relative clause he or she should fully understand both its structure to extract the message and the Indonesian structural equivalent to provide accurate and communicative translation.

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