

# TRANSLATION PROCESS COMPARISON BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR TRANSLATORS IN TRANSLATING WIJI THUKUL'S POEM "APA GUNA"

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## TRANSLATION PROCESS COMPARISON BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR TRANSLATORS IN TRANSLATING WIJI THUKUL'S POEM "APA GUNA"

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is entitled "Translation Process Comparison between Professional and Amateur Translators in Translating Wiji Thukul's Poem 'Apa Guna'". This study aims to compare the translation process including the problems and strategies in translating the source text and the quality of the translated text between professional and amateur translators.

The researcher used qualitative descriptive method and Miles and Huberman's (1994) technique of data analysis during the research.

Based on the analysis, the professional translator takes lesser time than the amateur one which is 45 minutes 47 seconds compared to 82 minutes 43 seconds and is noticed focusing on sentence level, instead of word like the amateur. For the problems, the professional translator faces 52 (43%) problems, lesser than the amateur who faces 68 (57%). Aesthetic Issue (77%) is the most problematic matter for both translators. For the strategies to translate the poem, the total occurrence of the professional translator applying them is lesser than the amateur which is 15 (45%) counted against 18 (55%). The most applied strategy is Literal Translation (61%). For the quality of the translation work seen from Content, Form, Imagery, and Language, the professional translator indeed holds higher score (3.4) but surprisingly not much different with the amateur (3.1) in that they are in the same range of parameter.

To conclude, poems are translatable with one condition that the original elements must be brought as well. The word choice is what matters most in poem translation.

**Keywords:** Comparison, Amateur Translator, Professional Translator, Translation Process, Wiij Thukul's "Apa Guna"

#### **ABSTRAK**

Tesis dengan judul "Translation Process Comparison between Professional and Amateur Translators in Translating Wiji Thukul's Poem 'Apa Guna'" ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan proses penerjemahan antara penerjemah profesional dan amatir yang meliputi proses itu sendiri, masalah yang ditemui dan strategi yang digunakan untuk menerjemahkan data serta kualitas hasil terjemahan.

Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dan teknik data analisis dari Miles dan Huberman (1994).

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerjemah amatir menghabiskan waktu lebih banyak dalam menerjemahkan yaitu 82 menit 43 detik daripada penerjemah profesional yang membutuhkan 45 menit 47 detik. Lebih lanjut, gaya penerjemahan penerjemah amatir cenderung kepada level kata per kata sementara penerjemah profesional kalimat per kalimat.

Berkaitan dengan masalah penerjemahan, penerjemah profesional menemui 52 masalah (43%) dan penerjemah amatir 68 masalah (57%). Aesthetic atau estetika merupakan masalah dengan persentase terbesar (77%) yang ditemui oleh kedua penerjemah.

Untuk strategi penerjemahan, jumlah strategi yang digunakan penerjemah profesional 15 (45%) sementara penerjemah amatir 18 (55%). Strategi terbanyak yang digunakan adalah Literal Translation atau penerjemahan literal.

Kualitas hasil terjemahan dalam studi ini dapat diperoleh melalui penghitungan formula yang melibatkan elemen Content (isi), Form (bentuk), Imagery (imajeri) dan Language (bahasa). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa penerjemah profesional lebih unggul dari penerjemah amatir dengan nilai 3.4 banding 3.1 namun tidak dapat dipungkiri bahwa mereka berada pada jajaran parameter yang sama.

Peneliti dapat menyimpulkan bahwa hal terpenting dalam penerjemahan puisi adalah diksi dan bahwa puisi sebenarnya dapat diterjemahkan dengan syarat elemen asli harus disertakan.

**Kata kunci:** Amateur Translator, Comparison, Professional Translator, Translation Process, Wiij Thukul's "Apa Guna"

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Numerous studies dealing with translation have been conducted during these past decades. Translation itself can be seen as either a product or a process as suggested by Bell (1991:26). To present its nature of flexibility, he describes translation as a replacement of a text in one languageby finding an equivalent text in another language (1993:5). Another definition comes from Jacobson (1959:35) who sees translation particularly as a product. He (1959:35) defines translation as "whole message transference from source language into target language, rather than the substitution of single separate code unit." It merely means that, as Kholahi (2012:2) suggests, in translation, all components of source text which are meaning, form, content, semantic and physical features must be brought to the target text without leaving any. Hatim and Munday (2004:6), on the other hand, see translation as an active process. They (2004:6) state that translation is "the process of transferring a written text from source language to target language".

Despite the nature of flexibility, a paradigm which perceives translation only as a secondary activity, as a 'mechanical' rather than a 'creative' process, has been arising in the society and even scholars, resulting in production of many studies discussing "... the product only, the end result of the translation process and not the process itself" (Bassnett, 2002:13). However, one fact wherein the quality of translated text is also determined by the translation process cannot be ignored. Many times, decision makings during the process are often influenced by the client and it can affect the quality of translated text in the end (Nababan, 2008, accessed on December 12, 2014). Furthermore, Suciati (2010:6) also states that concepts of translation in form of plain theory may be easy to perceive but when translator attempts to apply them in real

practice, difficulties may occur. These show how analyzing translation process is not less important than the product.

The purpose of translation is to bring the equivalent meaning to the target language but it doesn't end there. Nida and Taber (2003) states that "Translating consists of 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". It is the matter of rendering a text into another language in the way the original author intended it to be (Newmark, 1988:28). Given those definitions, besides meaning, style of the author must be brought as well. Bringing the right equivalence in the translated text is already an obstacle that maintaining the same style will add the challenge more. The translator seems to encounter a lot of problems when it comes to translating, especially translating a poem.

As stated by Temirov (2012:1), poem is "... a separate world where the feelings of a poet and his or her heartfeltexpressions reside". Agreeing to this, Bennett (2011:1) adds that everything in a poem communicates. The meaning, shape of the poem, choice of words, emotions, feelings, and others which build a poem must be taken account in the translation. To summarize, a poem is a poem with everything in it. Nevertheless, this magical state of a poem makes it even harder to translate since the translator has to note things that cannot be found in other literary works. To be precise, the translator must not forget the aesthetic value a poem possesses as it is brought into target language. Robert Frost (cited in Gentzler, 2001:27) even adds the beauty weigh by stating, "Poetry is what gets lost in translation." Hence, translating poetry is not as simple as many other text types may be.

A poem with rhyme and rhythm regularity in its stanza(s) has higher difficulty level to translate. Papavassiliou (2012:2) says the problem is doubled when the same poem also has some cultural items in it. Based on a pilot study conducted on November 2014, the researcher finds that "Apa Guna", a poem written by Wiji Thukul, possesses the issues. Those are, the issues of linguistics, aesthetic, and cultural (Singh, 2013:2-3). This is one of the reasons why the researcher chooses the poem as the data. Another reason is Wiji Thukul's poems are famous for not having aesthetic rules like rhyme or rhythm (Gaus, 2013, accessed on December 4, 2014). However, "Apa Guna" shows regularity of pattern in its stanzas and lines.

Wiji Thukul, the author of "Apa Guna", wrote his poems during the time of Orde Baru orNew Order (1966-1998), an absolute government ruled by former president Soeharto. As a labor whose rights were neglected, Thukul rose as his fellow hero through words. Most of his poems are against the injustice and violence act practiced by the authorities. It led to the game of mouse and cat between the government and him until 1998. After that, he was reportedly missing until now. Robet (2013:86-87), a sociologist, says that Thukul's poem is not just a poem of protest but the protest itself. Further explained by Budiawan (2013, accessed on November 7, 2014), his poems speak of the reality of which the government tried to conceal. Thukul is a radically minded labor who uses his poems to confront and it is what makes him different compared to other artists. This is the reason why the researcher chooses this figure and his poem.

Translating a poem, in particular one which contains protests like "Apa Guna", tends to be more problematic. The emotion is one among the key elements to be brought and the right translator will be able to make it happen. Poem translation, as well as other types of translation, is actually best analyzed not only from the viewpoint

of product but also the process which underlines the participation of a translator. Nababan (2007:3) states that translation process along with the product and translator is a harmony and cannot be separated from each other. They hold important roles especially the translator as mediating agent between two languages and the actor of translation process. Genser (1994:59), aware of the importance of translator, says, "... we (translators and interpreters) are the facilitators who allow them (people) to communicate witheach other." Given that, a good translator must have best knowledge and skill to be able to produce a well-translated text. His competence and experience will give big impact to the whole translation process and the result in the end (Nababan, 2007:3).

Many people often perceive the translator's competence as bilingualism. In several translation studies, it is frequently supposed that a bilingual person is able to translate any kind of text in expert way (Năznean, 2013:581). It is because of his ability to produce what so called 'natural translation' which is defined as "the translation done by bilinguals in everyday circumstances and without special training for it" (Harris, 1977:99). Primarily, the natural ability can be seen through the use of interference and code switching in everyday life conversation (Năznean, 2013:584). However, Lörscher (2012:5) believes that "translation competence in the sense of natural translation is a natural phenomenon of bilinguals and must not be confused with one professional translator has". According to Toury (in Lörscher, 2012:6), the real translation competence should be the amount of bilingual competence and interlingual transfer competence. Thus, a good translator must be an exceptional reader in a source language and exceptional writer in a target language or an expert in both (Năznean, 2013:585). Moreover, in relation to poem translation, a translator must possess "creativity" (Venuti, 2000:118) since the nature of a poem "... by definition is untranslatable" (Jacobson, 1959: 115). Hence, not everyone can be a translator especially a poem translator (Năznean, 2013:586).

Therefore, this study is conducted to find out whether the so called professional translator possesses the real translation competence and creativity in comparison with the amateur one who are both proven to be bilinguals. This study will focus on the process, including the problems from any aspect they will encounter and strategies to translate the poem. In the end, the translation works will be compared and the quality will be measured.

#### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### Data and Subject

The data of this study are:

#### **Informant**

There were some informants for this study. They were professional and amateur translators who have translated the data.

Vonny Indrawaty is a professional translator who has translated more than five literatures such as novel, short story, song, and poem. However, due to the clients' personal request of confidentiality, the titles of respected works couldn't be named. Besides literature, she has handled many legal documents and government projects. Some of them were dealing with highway, investment and

counseling which couldn't be further explained in detail for their secrecy. She also has been an interpreter for several times in some government events.

The amateur translator for this study was Rully Akbar, a student of English Department of Faculty of Humanities in Dian Nuswantoro University, Semarang. Focusing on Literary Study was one reason why he was chosen. Because of his acknowledgement in poem and most of all, having never been paid for translating, were the reasons why the researcher chose Rully.

#### **Activity**

Since this study focused on process of translation, considering activity of the translator as another source of data was necessary. Nababan (2008) states that the background and competence of a translator will greatly affect the way he deals with the text and the quality of translation work. Therefore, the activity or process of translation became a fundamental point in this study, especially, when it aimed to compare between professional and amateur translators. The process of translation was seen through a technique called Generative True Assignment.

#### Record

The researcher used three kinds of recorder in this study: digital camera, audio recorder, and screen recorder.

Digital camera was used to record the process of translation in order to get a clear and accurate documentation. Audio recorder used in this study was the voice recorder in *smartphone*. It was particularly to record an interview which had been done before the process started. Screen recorder was used to record all the activities of translating in computer screen. The researcher used *CamStudio* as the recorder. The record was in MP4 format and had been through some process of editing. Eventually, it provided significant information concerning the problems and strategies in translating the data as well.

#### **Document**

In this study, the data in form of documents were as follows:

#### The poem

"Apa Guna" is distributed in six stanzas with the replication in the end and 16 lines in the following neat pattern: 2/2/4/4/2/2. The poem is about Thukul's criticism toward the government that confines the right to speak freely. On top of that, it holds the people's longing for justice and enhanced life in which prosperity is meant for everyone equally.

## The interview with professional and amateur translators in form of transcript

The interview done before generative true assignment was to acquire information concerning the process which is usually done by the translators in general. The result was then compared with that achieved after generative true assignment is done.

#### The translation works of professional and amateur translators

In this study, the researcher analyzed the translation works of professional and amateur translators. Through them, the strategy used and the quality could be described comprehensively.

#### The questionnaire result

The researcher used the questionnaire result to describe the quality of the translation works which ultimately portrayed the competence and skill each translator had.

#### **Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis of this study was the whole poem. However, based on the fact that a poem is physically built of lines which form into stanza (Siswanto, 2008:113-126), the researcher saw the necessity to analyze each line of the poem as well to grasp a more thorough analysis. The problems, strategies, and quality (imagery, form, and language only) were examined per line. Meanwhile, the whole poem analysis was applied to process and quality (tone).

#### **Technique of Data Collection and Analysis**

Before analyzing the data, the researcher collected the primary data which is Wiji Thukul's poem "Apa Guna" from www.wiji-thukul.blogspot.com on October 19, 2014. After that, the researcher interviewed the professional and amateur translators before they started translating. Both translators then began the activity of translating the poem through a technique called Generative True Assignment. In addition, during the process, the translators did Think-Aloud Protocol where they verbally said their thoughts while translating. In the same time, the researcher recorded the behavior of the translators in translating the poem using digital camera. Meanwhile the translation process was recorded using CamStudio. It recorded all actions done by the translators as what exactly appeared in computer screen. After the process was finished, the researcher distributed questionnaires to three selected respondent which was necessary to measure the quality of the translation works. Ultimately, the score was counted using a self-made formula and classified based on Hablamos Juntos' Modified Parameters of Translation Quality (2009).

After the data had been collected, they were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's Technique of Data Analysis (1994) which consisted of The Collected Data, Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusion.

The Collected Data were poem "Apa Guna" as the primary data, complemented by the interviews with the translators about the translation process in the form of transcription, the video of the translation process, the list of the steps from the recorded voice and video transcriptions as well as the problems based on the problem indicators seen from the video and lastly, the questionnaires distributed to respondents.

The steps completed in Data Reduction and Data Display applied for both translators. Data Reduction consisted of reducing the lines which are translated the same to make an effective analysis.

In Data Display, the researcher displayed the process steps and problems and put each line of the poem along with its strategy in tables, respectively. The researcher also displayed the result of questionnaires in tables.

The Conclusion was then made based on Data Reduction and Data Display. One thing to be noticed is that the two-sided arrows which link Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion allow the researcher to redo the previous step whenever feels necessary. For instance, the researcher may jump from Data Reduction to Data Display or vice versa or when she already reaches Conclusion, she can go back to Data Display or Data Reduction or vice versa.

#### **ANALYSIS**

## The Comparison of Translation Process between Professional and Amateur Translators

The first statement of problem of this study is to compare the translation process between professional and amateur translators which can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1. The Comparison of Translation Process between Professional and Amateur Translators

PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATOR		AMATEUR TRANSLATOR		
STEPS	PERIOD	STEPS	PERIOD	
Exegesis	14.05	Exegesis	41.00	
Transfer and Initial Draft	28.14	Transfer and Initial Draft	24.50	
Evaluation 1	00.52	Evaluation 1	00.11	
Revising Draft 1	00.07	Revising Draft 1	00.12	
Evaluation 2	02.24	Evaluation 2	16.14	
Revising Draft 2	00.13	Final Draft 00.05		
Final Draft	00.14	Filiai Diait	00.03	
TOTAL	45.47	TOTAL	82.43	

Based on the table above, the researcher concludes that there are seven steps of process based on Larson (1984:476-490) utilized by the professional translator. Meanwhile, the amateur applies six. Compared with the original theory, both translators exclude Establishing a Project and Consultation. Establishing a Project is not included for it basically covers the translator's pre-preparation like finding a team to help, the tools, etc., that in this case, the translator required is only one, not a group and the tools are already provided by the researcher. As for Consultation, it is impracticable since the translation project is aimed to finish in two meetings so meeting with other parties is not taken as an option. In addition, compared with the amateur translator who revises the draft only once, the professional translator does twice.

The total time for the professional translator to translate the poem is 45 minutes 47 seconds while the amateur translator is 82 minutes 43 seconds. Exegesis and Evaluation 2 are the stages in particular which creates the huge period gap while the others display only small differences.

From the analysis, it is concluded that both the professional and amateur translators utilize some tools to help them with the translation. The professional translator chooses Thesaurus and consults for 22 times. On the other hand, the amateur translator makes use of Google Translate along with his own analysis and consults for 8 times.

As for the translation unit, the researcher concludes that the professional's work is at word up to sentence level while the amateur's rests at no more than word level.

## The Comparison of Problems Found in Translating the Poem between Professional and Amateur Translators

The second statement of problem of this study is to compare the problems found in translating the poem between professional and amateur translators which can be seen in table 2 below.

Table 2. The Comparison of Problems Found in Translating the Poem between Professional and Amateur Translators

NO PROBLEM		PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATOR	AMATEUR TRANSLATOR
		Σ	Σ
1	Linguistic Issue	-	19
2	Aesthetic Issue	46	46
3	Cultural Issue	6	3
	TOTAL (%)	52 (43%)	68 (57%)

Based on the table above, the researcher concludes that the amateur translator encounters more problems compared with the professional, particularly Linguistic Issue wherein the professional faces none. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice that Aesthetic Issue is the most problematic matter for both translators as they even come across the same number of difficulty. The professional's problems are mainly observed in Transfer and Initial Draft and fixed on Word Choice whereas the amateur's are in both Transfer and Initial Draft and Final Draft. In Transfer and Initial Draft, the problems mostly concern with Word Choice while in Final Draft with Image and Sound.

By means of the indicator, the professional's problems are mostly indicated by her consulting a reference. On the other hand, the amateur's are signified by him frequently pausing for more than three seconds.

The researcher also concludes that each translator has his own problematic line wherein the professional reckons the twelfth while the amateur the fifth.

## The Comparison of Strategies Used to Translate the Poem between Professional and Amateur Translators

The third statement of problem of this study is to compare the strategies used to translate the poem between professional and amateur translators which can be seen in table 3 below.

Table 3. The Comparison of Strategies Used to Translate the Poem in Translating the Poem between Professional and Amateur Translators

NO	STRATEGY	TPT (∑)	TAT (∑)
1	Phonemic Translation	-	-
2	Literal Translation		13
3	3 Metrical Translation		-
4	Verse to Prose Translation	-	-
5	Rhymed Translation	3	-
6	Free Verse Translation	-	-
7	Interpretation Version	3	1
8	Interpretation Imitation	2	4
TOTAL (%)		15 (45%)	18 (55%)

As can be seen from the table above, the total occurence of the amateur translator applying the strategies is more than the professional. It is in accordance with him also dealing with more problems compared with the professional (see page 99).

Next, it can be seen that there are some strategies left unused which are Phonemic Translation, Metrical Translation, Verse to Prose Translation, and Free Verse Translation.

To the researcher, Phonemic Translation is excluded from the list for the sound features in English and Indonesian is already dissimilar. It is proven by English possessing some sounds which cannot be found in Indonesian like  $/\delta$ / (in "then") and  $/\Theta$ / (in "thin").

For Metrical Translation, it is already mentioned in page 81 and 97 that the nature of English and Indonesian is different. Therefore, to reproduce the same meter as the source text is rather impossible to do.

As what Lefevere (in Bassnett, 2002:87) states, Verse to Prose Translation deforms the sense, communicative values and syntax of the source text whereas a poem is best translated like the original (Chan, 1994:100-111). Given this, the researcher agrees that Verse to Prose Translation is excluded.

"Apa Guna" was chosen in the first place for its rhyming lines that applying Free Verse Translation will only lead to the loss of beauty and emotional force. Hence, it is best to exclude this strategy.

Furthermore, the researcher would like to conclude that the mostly applied strategy is Literal Translation. However, there is a clear difference of the impact on the readers (the researcher and the questionnaire's respondents) between the professional and the amateur translator. While Literal Translation in the

amateur's work rather fails to evoke the emotion and sensual experience, the opposite happens in the professional's. It is mostly caused by the over simple vocabularies that the amateur translator uses in his work. Nevertheless, the professional's work has its own concern as some of the words are incorrectly picked regarding their literal meaning and the equation to the original poem.

Moreover, the researcher personally agrees with the professional translator's decision to apply Rhymed Translation and produce the same rhyme scheme like the original, as what Chan (1994:100-111) believes when translating a poem.

## The Comparison of the Translation Work's Quality between Professional and Amateur Translators

The last statement of problem of this study is to compare the translation work's quality between professional and amateur translators. To measure the quality of the translated poem, the researcher has some respondents participated in a questionnaire who were the lecturers in English Department of Dian Nuswantoro University who major in Literature. They are Muhammad Rifqi, S.S., M.Pd., Haryati Sulityorini, S.S., M.Hum, and Valentina Widya, S.S., M.Hum. Henceforth, Muhammad Rifqi will be referred as Respondent 1, Haryati Sulistyorini as Respondent 2, and Valentina Widya as Respondent 3. The quality is evaluated through four tools based on Freeman and Clough (2009:1-2) which are Content, Imagery, Form, and Language. Ultimately, the researcher uses modified parameters from Hablamos Juntos (2009) to measure the poem's quality. It ranges from score 1 to 4 with 1 as the lowest and 4 the highest. The scores are displayed in table 4 below.

Table 4. The Scores of the Professional and Amateur Translators Counted Using Hablamos Juntos (2009) Modified Parameters

	FINAL SCORE		
RESPONDENTS	PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATOR	AMATEUR TRANSLATOR	
Respondent 1	3.9	2.9	
Respondent 2	3.8	2.4	
Respondent 3	2.7	4	

Based on the table above, it can be seen that two out three respondents who are Respondent 1 and 2 prefer the professional translator's work proven from the nearly perfect scores while the last respondent, Respondent 3, obviously chooses the amateur translator's work for a perfect score is given. Further, by summarizing the scores from Respondent 1 until 3 and dividing them by 3, the researcher has got the final score as in the table 5 below.

Table 5. The Final Score of the Professional and Amateur Translators

PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATOR	AMATEUR TRANSLATOR
3.4	3.1

At last, based on the questionnaire result, the researcher would like to summarize that the professional translator's work is more preferable with the word choice as the determining element, proven from the higher score in the table above.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis, the researcher would like to draw some conclusions as follows:

For the translation process, the professional translator takes less time than the amateur and is noticed focusing on sentence level when translating proven by consulting Thesaurus and not dictionary like the amateur.

For the problems encountered while translating, the professional translator faces fewer problems than the amateur. Aesthetic Issue is the most problematic for both translators.

For the strategies to translate the poem, the total occasion of the professional translator applying them is less than the amateur. The most applied strategy is Literal Translation. The professional translator is also noticed to use Rhymed Translation strategy, one that the amateur does not, showing that she is concerned about producing rhyming lines like the original poem.

For the quality of the translation work, the professional translator holds higher score than the amateur. It is largely caused by the use of Literal Translation strategy as the most applied one wherein the professional translator is able to find variations of words and not basic vocabularies like the amateur picks. By being selective on the word choice, the professional translator can then produce the rhyming lines like the original and it is another positive point to the readers.

As the conclusion of this study, the researcher believes that poems, which are said to be untranslatable, are translatable with one condition that the original elements, like rhyme, as what Chan (1994:100-111) states, must be brought as well. The researcher is also able to summarize that what matters most in poem translation is the word choice that once it is falsely picked, the elements will not be delivered appropriately that will affect the translation work immensely.

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