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The Necessity of Producing A High-Quality Translation Of Captions in Radya Pustaka Museum

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ABSTRACT

Most information about the Radya Pustaka Museum collection is often provided in the form of captions and storylines. Unfortunately, the Radya Pustaka Museum does not have a proper English version of the captions and storylines to display to its foreign visitors, who played a key role in providing them with important details of its masterpiece collection. In fact, the Radya Pustaka Museum has some captions written in peculiar English phrases that foreign visitors could hardly understand. The process of internationalization of the Radya Pustaka Museum through the availability of information in English is therefore critical. Also, the need to produce high-quality translations should be obvious to achieve optimum communication with tourists, particularly foreign visitors. Accordingly, a translation training and assistance program for the museum staff focuses on the errors that can be made in writing and translating museum storylines, and how they can be fixed is crucial to conduct.

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INTRODUCTION

The Radya Pustaka Museum is the local Solo Historic Museum. Some fine examples of shadow puppets, keris knives and other Javanese cultural artifacts are shown in the one of the oldest museums in Indonesia. It is one of the tourist attractions in Solo that visitors love to explore. Visitors to this museum are not only domestic but also international tourists. The information provided in this museum is therefore communicated in two languages, specifically Indonesian and English. The information available at the Radya Pustaka Museum must be of high validity to preserve its service. The validity of the information is needed since the museum is a source of information that is also used as a resource for research, news, entertainment, and other purposes. The idea of language as a means of communication is the key to achieving the functions of the museum, as stated in the Strategic Plans of the National Museum 2015-2019[2]: 1) as a place to conserve culture; 2) as an educational place; 3) as a pleasant recreation place.

A great deal of information about the Radya Pustaka Museum collection is mostly presented in the form of captions and storylines, an insightful device that tells a worth remembering story that draws the attention of museum visitors to leave the museum with a full story instead of a scattered one. However, the Radya Pustaka Museum does not have a sufficient English version of the captions and storylines to display to its foreign tourists,

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which played an essential part in providing them with important details on its masterpiece collection. The process of internationalization of the Radya Pustaka Museum through the availability of information written in English is therefore crucial. On top of that, the necessity of producing high-quality translations should be obvious to achieve an optimal communication process with tourists, especially foreign visitors.

This phenomenon highlights that training and assistance are badly needed for translators (museum staff) to convey the description of the collection of the Radya Pustaka museum in the target language. One of the critical objectives of this project is to improve their translation skills when dealing with cultural items. Newmark (1988) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression." This definition implies that the role of language as a communication medium is very important in communicating culture. When it includes values that reflect the way of life of a specific culture or group, the language that contains cultural words should not be interpreted literally. Baker (1992) also adds that in the target language, the source language can disclose entirely unknown concepts, so that translators sometimes find their equivalents difficult to find. When translating cultural words, such as food names, celebration practices, or other cultural terms related to faith, belief, and the social life of some cultures, translators frequently face this challenge. In reality, the Radya Pustaka Museum has some captions written in peculiar English phrases that foreign visitors could hardly understand. Accordingly, it is essential to conduct a translation training and assistance program for museum staff concentrated on mistakes that can be made in writing and translating museum captions and how they can be resolved.

THEORY AND METHODS

The goal of this project is to provide solutions to problems related to the skills of the staff of the Surakarta Radya Pustaka Museum in translating the cultural terms found in captions and storylines of the museum collection from Indonesian to English, which was carried out in training and assistance program. In the training session, the staff were trained in writing good museum storylines, especially related to the textural characteristics of the text. They also practiced how to translate the storylines containing cultural objects into English and how to create translations with decent quality. Following this program, content analysis on the translation of the captions of the Radya Pustaka Museum collection was carried out to observe in detail how cultural terms are dealt with. Further, content analysis was also carried out to explore the degree of naturalness of translation of cultural terms. The way the translator translates cultural terms is linked to and analyzed instantaneously with the degree of naturalness to reveal the impact of the translator's decisions on how natural the result is and the potential impact on the understanding of the target readers, particularly parts which may provide ease and those which may cause problems. The problems which were identified were brought to further study by involving theories about characteristics and translation of cultural terms, in which possible solutions to the problems were put forward.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Captions in Radya Pustaka Museum

Writing museum texts is like making artworks: it is free but has to follow certain guidelines. Blais (Strachan, 2017) distinguishes museum texts according to how they deal with relatedness and independence. 'Independence' is a text category that does not specifically refer to any objects. This piece of text has a storyline and is set in a large piece of artwork. Storyline is "a succinct narrative that represents the most important aspects of museum exhibits' themes, messages, and their relationship"(Robertson, 2020) because it has high importance to facilitate museum guests visualize the museum's exhibited

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collections. Storyline would provide initial sources for tourists to understand the specific details of the caption – a label with a limited overview of the collection – because the storyline may probably be given in the form of a short historical narrative or a general description of the collection. The storyline is often portrayed in an acclimatized combination of details and graphics called infographics – 'a set of photos, charts and minimal text that offers an easy-to-understand description of a subject that helps to convey information quickly and clearly' (Nediger, 2020).

On the one side, 'interrelate' text names objects that are related to a museum collection in a narrative or as a caption. This text includes specifics of the objects on display, such as the year of manufacture or the year in which they were found, their age, the material with which they were made, the series reference number, and so on. A caption is a method of labelling which in turn identifies the text. The narrative of the museum should consider the readability aspect of visitors, as visitors come from various ages, education, occupation, and interest, from children, adults, enthusiastic historians to scholars.

Recognized from their function, i.e. as an effective medium for engaging with tourists, museum texts are presented in descriptive texts and recount texts. Captions describe in detail the collections of museums, the framework of which consists of identification and description. It begins with the introduction of the collections and is followed by a thorough overview of them. Taking the caption of *Blangkon* as an example. The Identification aspect gives information about what *Blangkon* is and how people perceive its presence. The description provides details on its features, its purpose, and its unique segments. Also, Gerot et al.(1994) found out that the use of technical terms is a language characteristic of a descriptive text. This feature also appears in Radya Pustaka museum storylines, where there are many Javanese cultural terms employed, as portrayed in the following figures. Figure 1 shows the traditional Javanese dance property that uses Javanese cultural words to provide descriptions such as *'Irah-irahan*,' *'Empu'* and the proper name of *'Gambiranom*.' Figure 2 employs more Javanese cultural terms to classify different types of traditional weapons such as '*Pamor', 'Dhapur', 'Wilahan', 'Luk', 'Leres', 'Tangguh Sepuh', 'Tangguh Nom*', '*Gagang'*, and '*Tombak Rontek'*. Figure 3 also shows a caption explaining an ancient statue with the employment of Javanese cultural terms, such as '*aksmala', 'kendi', 'digelung', 'trinetra'*, and '*padma'*.

Figure 1. Some of Museum Radya Pustaka Collection 1

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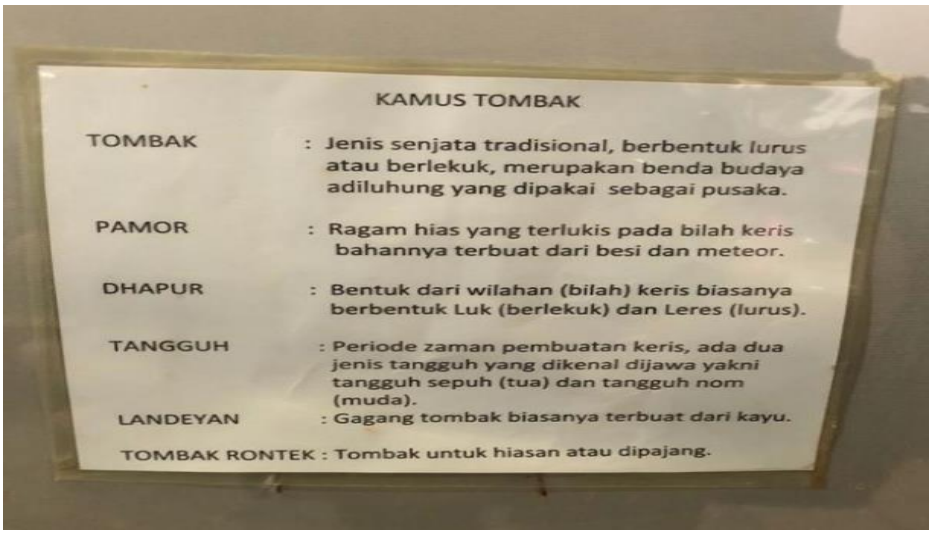

Figure 2. Some of Museum Radya Pustaka Collection 2

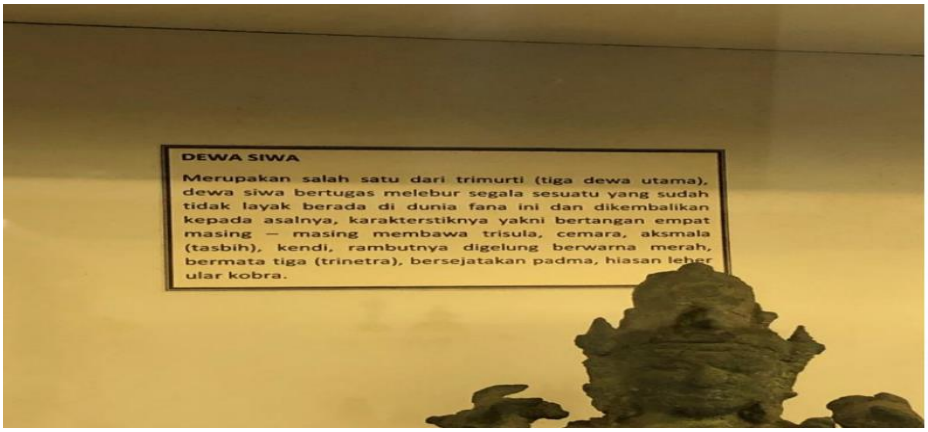

Figure 2. Some of Museum Radya Pustaka Collection 3

The Problems of Caption Translation

The training and assistance program has revealed that the Javanese cultural words most extensively used in the source text have triggered major problems for museum staffs in conveying acceptable and equal terms in the target language. To provide the English description for the following captions of "*BLANGKON* ADUMANCUNG and *BLANGKON TUMPANG SARI*, for instance.

BLANGKON ADUMANCUNG	BLANGKON TUMPANG SARI
DIPAKAI SEBAGAI KELENGKAPAN BUSANA HARIAN BAGI ABDI DALEM PENEWU (ASISTEN WEDANA/KEPALA ADMINISTRASI KERATON), BLANGKON INI JUGA DIGUNAKAN OLEH ABDI	DIGUNAKAN UNTUK KELENGKAPAN BUSANA CALON PENGANTIN PRIA

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Both captions *use* the same word '*Blangkon*' but each of the captions illustrates a different explanation based on its use and features. Both are kind of headwear, but the first *Blangkon* (*Adumancung*) is for everyday use, while the other one is used for the groom at a wedding ceremony. The specific occasions of wearing must be well treated by the translator since English distinguishes the terms of Headgear and Headdress. The choice of the word for the second title would be more fitting with the words Headdress instead of Headgear as it is primarily worn on a ceremonial occasion.

To achieve the quality of the translation of the storylines, the elements of the translation evaluation must be factored. According to Tytler, as quoted by Bell (1991) that translation should include a full transcript of the ideas of the original work. The definition is generally referred to as accuracy – an essential translation quality assessment to apply to the Source Text (ST) equivalence in the Target Text (Cowie, 1997). The degree of naturalness is another important aspect to also be concerned in creating a qualified translation. Newmark (1988) recognizes that 'the degree of natural use in grammar/syntactic structures and lexis' and natural use is distinct from ordinary language because 'naturalness depends on the relationship between the writer, the reader, and the subject. The requirement of 'reading as an original' on the reader side decides the key to a wholly acceptable translation.

There are some lexicons in the English translation of the caption analysed that potentially do not sound natural for target readers since they are very closely related to Javanese cultures, as can be seen in the following examples.

Table 1. Names of Museum Collections of Javanese Clothes

No	Source Text	Target Text
1.	Samir Kadipaten Anom	Samir Kadipaten Anom (Sash Of Kadipaten Anom's Abdi Dalem)
2.	Samir kasepuhan	Samir Kasepuhan (Kasepuhan Sash)
3.	Samir patih keputren	Samir patih keputren (Sash of keputren's vice-regent Abdi Dalem)
4.	Busana Bupati Lampah	Busana Bupati Lampah (Lampah Regent's Clothes)
5.	Kloncer	Kloncer (The Accessories Of Male's Traditional Dodot Clothes)
6.	Kancing Gelung	Kancing Gelung type dagger
7.	Nganggar Dhuwung Gayam	Wearing gayam type dagger on the left side
8.	Nyengkelit dhuwung ladrang	Wearing ladrang type dagger on the back side

On the source text column of the above table are names of museum collections of Javanese clothes. They are translated using loan words plus explanations in which the Javanese names of the objects are used in the English version, accompanied with an explanation. The loan words plus explanation technique for translating the collection

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names has been appropriately chosen since the names can be classified as Javanese cultural terms, the words that are closely related to Javanese cultures. To deal with culture-specific items, the strategy of using loan word plus explanation is commonly used (Baker, 2011). The Javanese names which are kept in the translation make the translation accurate since the borrowed terms can transfer the source text terms' propositional meanings to the target text. Propositional meaning of a word or an utterance, as Mona Baker puts, " … arises from the relation between it and what it refers to or describes in a real or imaginary world, as conceived by the speakers of the particular language to which the word or utterance belongs" (2011: 11). She continues that "It is this type of meaning that provides the basis on which we can judge an utterance as true or false" (Baker, 2011:11). When the object names are kept unchanged in the target text, the propositional meanings of the names have been transferred in the target text which makes the translation accurate.

The borrowed terms as names of the objects, on the contrary, make the translation potentially unnatural since they will sound foreign to target readers. The Javanese cultural terms used in the explanations add the items which make the translation unnatural. As we can see in the examples, there are some Javanese cultural terms that are still used in the English translation on the additional description part, such as *Anom* and *Abdi Dalem* (in sash of *Kadipaten Anom*'s *Abdi Dalem*), *kasepuhan* (in kasepuhan sash), *kaputren* and *Abdi Dalem* (in sash of *keputren'*s vice-regent *abdi dalem*), and *lampah* (in lampah regent's clothes), and *kloncer* (in the accessories of male's traditional *dodot* clothes), *gayam* (in Wearing gayam type dagger on the left side), *Kancing Gelung* (in Kancing Gelung type dagger), *ladrang* (in Wearing ladrang type dagger on the back side). They prevent the translation as 'reading as an original' on the English text readers. Being 'reading as an original', as has been stated earlier, is the key to a wholly acceptable translation.

Besides disturbing the naturalness of the translations, the Javanese cultural terms included in the descriptions will also prevent the readers from easily understanding the text. This is because the terms are not something known to be found and heard by the readers. The Javanese cultural terms included in the descriptions make the translation contain terms which need to be explained further. This means that the high level of readability of the English translation of the museum captions is unlikely to be achieve. The descriptions should have been able to make it easier for readers to understand the collections.

The above phenomena show that the English translations are not in line with the requirements of good museum descriptions. Ravelli (2006:29) indicates that considering the 'cultural specificity of museum genres,' an unfamiliar genre must be mediated by more descriptions to prevent the alienation of readers as well as the possibility of under-differentiation. The translators have indeed given further explanations of the names of the museum collections. The explanations, however, can still potentially make readers alienated due to the Javanese cultural terms used. Applying the advice of Ravelli (2006) to the translation of museum genres possibly requires an approach quite similar to Venuti's domestication strategy (1995, 1998). This approach involves using an expression with a target language item that does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a comparable effect on the target reader, evoking a similar context in the target culture, for example. In other words, the use of the source language cultural terms needs to be avoided in the additional explanations. On the contrary, words that are closer to target language culture or lexis which are potentially familiar for target readers are necessarily employed. The technique of domesticating needs to be applied to avoid the source language culture-specific concept in the explanations added after the names of the museum collections. Translating the culture specific terms using more general words can also be done.

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The text structures of the translations also contribute to the unnaturalness of the English translation since they are not equivalent to those of text structure of museum description generally written in English. In English-speaking countries, museum collection descriptions generally provide information on its provenance, date of origin, and information the museum deems of importance or which will elicit the public's curiosity (Ravelli, 2006). The English translations of the descriptions analysed in this study do not show the same content of information since they only contain the name of the object and the functions of the object.

The unnatural information content of the English translation is also found in the source text itself. The translation assistance that has been completed confirms one critical thing that the source text production must be of exceptional quality. A source text failure is also referred to as a source text error. Sirriyya (2016) describes the ST error as "a deviation from the standard language or standard use of language" In some Indonesian captions, the Indonesian version of the captions in Radya Pustaka museum are not written following the International caption structure standard. Besides, the details were found mismatched to the object displayed. As shown in the image below, using local language (Javanese) without giving additional information in Indonesian language has posed a problem for some translators. Furthermore, a number of the captions are currently only shown on a sheet of paper, which seems really underwhelming from an artistic viewpoint.

Figure 3. Caption with Javanese Language

To a large degree, the presence of Javanese words lets those who are not part of the Javanese community, such as international travellers, better grasp the Javanese language. However, this will only be a struggle for a translator to transfer the message if the terms are only displayed without a proper definition. Although the Internet can have a reputation for accuracy, it cannot provide correct and valid facts and trustworthy sources of information.

The low quality of the source text, however, are not supposed to be multiplied through translation. It is true that on the basis of an original text, translation is made. It, however, should be an activity carried out in order to adapt the original to a certain philosophy or naturalism of a certain audience under the constraints of patronage, poetics and ideology conducted by the target structures. Molnár (2013: 64), putting remark on the relation between the quality of source text and that of translation, states that "to ensure a good quality translation, a thorough analysis of the ST and its context must be involved and ST defects must be identified and dealt with properly". The cited line brings to

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translator's mind that good translation demands source text to be made of best quality possible. It is all because flawed or imperfect source materials will critically weaken the quality of the result (ibid.). To a certain degree, source (original) texts, particularly the flawed or defected ones, are reworked. The act of rewriting the original text in order to comply with certain purposes as defined by the receiving system is necessarily carried out. This is in line with Lefevere's proposal that translation is "a rewriting of an original text" (Lefevere, 1992).

CONCLUSION

The findings suggested that a particular series of training and assistance programs in translating captions of the Radya Pustaka museum leads to additional benefits to the museum staff. Research has shown that museum staff has acquired a new awareness of museum labelling in many developed countries, primarily in Europe. This training exercise was useful because it showed participants how to translate the museum collections more professionally and effectively. However, the use of proper translation techniques needs to be constantly demonstrated and implemented in a translator's work as an increased quality translation would benefit from appropriate translation techniques. Another problem with the translation is that the source text is untested and may contain mistakes, causing misinterpretations or incorrect readings. Accordingly, the original text of captions must be checked thoroughly for errors before translation as one of the key causes of poor translation quality is the poor-quality source text. The results indicate that there is a great need for high-quality translation of captions in Radya Pustaka Museum, which can be achieved by improving the source text and translator competencies.

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