

## HOLISTIC CRITICISM: AN APPROACH IN TRANSLATION STUDY

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**Abstract:** Penerjemahan merupakan bidang ilmu linguistik terapan yang memfokuskan pada penerapan aspek-aspek baik mengenai teori-teori sastra dan budaya namun juga paradigma kebahasaan. Di dalam penerapan tersebut menghasilkan produk yang disebut dengan terjemahan. Salah satu upaya untuk melihat kualitas suatu terjemahan digunakan suatu pendekatan yang disebut dengan pendekatan kritik holistik, yaitu pendekatan yang digunakan untuk menguji suatu terjemahan dalam sudut pandang faktor genetik, objektif, dan afektif. Di dalam artikel ini penulis berusaha mendeskripsikan mengenai pendekatan kritik holistik dan implementasinya di dalam melihat kualitas suatu terjemahan.

Kata-kata kunci: Pendekatan Kritik Holistik, Terjemahan, Genetik, Objektif, Afektif

### **Introduction**

The term translation is defined by many experts. Nida and Taber states that translating consists in 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 (1974:12). It is clearly seen that the main purpose of translation is to reproduce the message in the form of closest natural meaning. The translation should be as accurate as possible in terms of meaning and natural in terms of grammar and style in the receptor language.

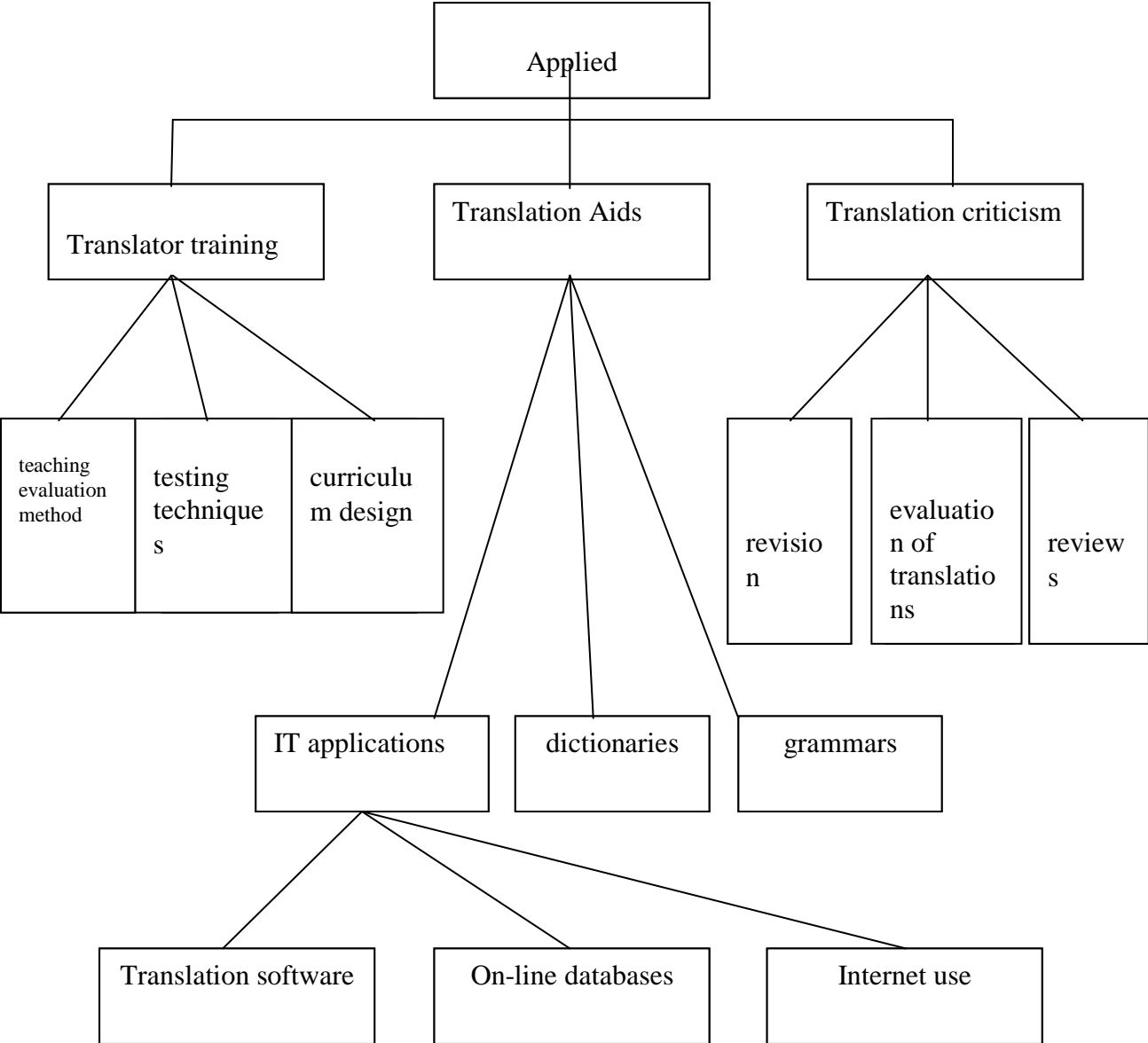
Newmark (1981: 7) views translation as a process of rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. Catford (1974: 20) defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (source language) by equivalent textual material in another language (target language). It means that equivalence is the point in translation. Further, Larson (1984: 3) states that a translation is considered good translation if the translation shows three criteria: accurate, natural, and communicative. A translation should give the sense of the original in such a way that the reader is unaware that he is reading a translation.

### **Discussion**

In line with the various definition of translation, the approaches of translation have also been formulated. A notion that has been formulated is the notion of *skopos*, which is generally used to refer to the aim or the function of a translation (Vermeer 2000, Nord 1997:27). *Skopos* theory is the idea that in any translation, the translator has to be conscious of the purpose or the goal that the target text has. This so-called functionalist approach differs from previous in that it does not place emphasis on the equivalence between the source text and the target text.

In skopos theory, the purpose of the target text is of the essence, thus it is not necessary for the translation to have the same function as the source text. Equivalence is not the central concept of skopos theory. It can be said that in skopos theory, the target culture features are important, not the equivalence between the source text and the target text. This gives the translator more freedom so that he or she can focus on the purpose that the translation commission has. When a translator is commissioned to do translation work, he or she usually starts with the important phase of examining the skopos of the translation. In the beginning stage, the readership has to be considered. In addition, the translator has to ponder what effect the text will have on those readers. This phase often includes the analyzing of the textual features of the original; the translator can also consider how the source text has influenced its readers. In this endeavor, the effect of textual properties, especially the level of readership must often be taken into account as well.

Translation as an applied and interdisciplinary studies focuses on many aspects, not only on literary theory and cultural studies but also on linguistics philosophy. It means that translation studies attempt to discover aspects of structuralism (language reflects structure of thought, culture and society) and functionalism (language and its social functions). Linguists perceive it as related to contrastive linguistics, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, psycholinguistics, and etc. Also, translation studies cover areas of translation training, translation aids, and translation criticism.



## Map of translation studies (Toury, 1995)

As professional translating is becoming more respected due to the development of the role and influence of the international community and various multilingual bodies, in-depth studies are being carried out, not only on the various theoretical approaches to translation that have been formulated throughout the years, but also on how translators actually translate with respect to these approaches.

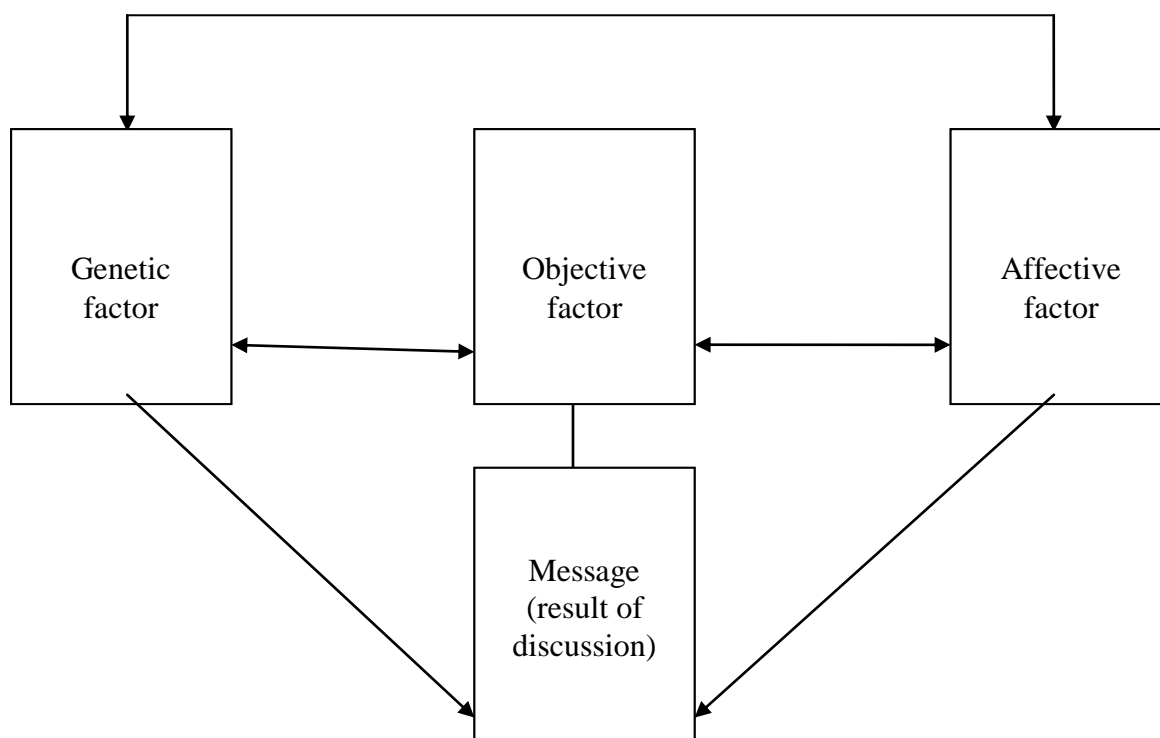
### **Holistic Criticism Approach**

Holistic criticism approach is an approach which is used to refer to the examination of translation in viewpoints of genetic factor, objective factor, and the affective factor. The idea of holistic criticism approach is in line with the Gestalt psychology (Gestalt theory), an approach to psychology in which behavior is studied as undivided wholes. Gestalt psychologists believe that we cannot understand a person's response to a situation in terms of a combination of separate responses to a combination of separate stimuli, but that it should be studied as a whole response to the whole situation. Gestalt psychology is a holistic approach.

The holistic criticism approach is originated from the three group of criticism, namely: history criticism, stressing on value of the genetic factors (background); formal criticism, as a modern approach focusing on value of the real condition 'captured' by our sensory perception; and emotional criticism, stressing on value of the message received by the target. Further, as a synthetic from the history, formal, and emotional criticism, the holistic criticism approach is emerged. This approach is considered more comprehensive and details in viewing problems.

The focus of the holistic criticism approach is the idea that there is an interplay between translators as the mediating agents, processes of translation, products of translation, and the opinion of the readers about the products of translation. They are closely related in the sense that when translators are engaged in translation processes, they are obviously producing products. Their competence in the translation process is determined, to a certain degree, by their backgrounds and knowledge about translation. Similarly, the quality of the products, to a large extent, is dependent on how well they can apply their knowledge of translation processes in translation practices. Their linguistic competence in the source language and the target language, and their understandings of the subject matter, target readers and quality of a translation also play a significant role in the performance of translation tasks.

The thought of holistic criticism is illustrated as follows:



### **Implementation**

In research on translation, the holistic criticism approach is implemented by categorizing source of data into genetic factor, objective factor, and affective factor. The idea underlying the implementation of holistic criticism approach is that researches on translation which are based just on analysis of the product of the translation can be certainly predicted that the quality of the product of translation tends to give no comprehensive and holistic understanding about translation as a process in making decision in the efforts of translator to produce translation accurately and easily understood. This assumption is basically that products of translation are created through processes of translating and that is why, readable or not and accurate or not of translation works will rely on the way the translator conducts the process of translating.

Other reason is that translator is the main agent in process of translating and that is why all of the decision-making in translating are influenced by the background and the competence of the translator. Also, product of translation is produced because of the demand of the clients or target readers, so that the responses of readers are important to consider in process of translating. In other words, research on translation must be viewed holistically covering the background and competence of the translator, product or object of translation, and responses of readers toward the product of translation.

### **Genetic factor**

Genetic factor is the factor that participates in forming the works. That is why, in translation, the genetic factor is the translator who conduct his or her work of translation from the source texts into the target texts. Basically, genetic factor consists of two factors, namely; the subjective factor and the objective factor. The subjective factor is the translator himself, and the objective factor is the socio-culture surrounding the translator. Persons which are used as source of data in a research are called as respondents. This term is very common in quantitative research, in which the researcher has a very dominant role. The duty of respondents is only to give response/s of what is needed by the researcher. In qualitative research, persons as source of data are considered very important and have an important role as researcher. They have very important information, in which they do not only give the information needed by the researcher but they also determine purpose and desire in conveying information they have. That is why, in qualitative research, persons which are considered as source of data are called informants than respondents. Componets of translator as a genetic factor covers personality of translator, psychological condition of translator while translating, competence and experience of translator, socio-cultural background and other events surrounding the translator related to process of translation.

### **Objective factor**

Objective factor is in the form of documentation or product of translation. In research of translation, the products of translation are the original texts (source language) and the translated texts (target language). In translating a novel, for instance, the original novel and its translation can be analyzed in the way how the process of translating in terms of aspects of literature (setting, plot, theme, characterization, conflict, climax, and viewpoints), and aspects of linguistics (grammar, lexis, vocabulary, metaphore, style, etc).

### **Affective factor**

Affective factor in research of translation is the readers. Readers that are considered as source of data are experts who write many works (novels, for instance) and often publish their works. Choosing the experts as affective factor will give worthwhile opinions and inputs. Other readers which are considered as affective factor are professional readers (e.g., English lecturers, including their students). The objectives of selecting those readers are to get information according to the problems to analyze.

Further, the objectives of the research can be formulized:

- 1) to identify background and competence of the translator,
- 2) to examine in what extent the background and competence of the translator influence process of transferring messages and quality of translation,
- 3) to look at ways how process of transferring messages from source texts to target texts in terms of literature and linguistics aspects,
- 4) to measure quality of translation in terms of readability and accuracy,

5) to identify opinion of readers toward the product of the translation.

Holistic criticism approach in translation of literature, for instance, can not be seen merely as an effort to replace texts from one language to another, but it needs competence of discourse to produce translation syntactically correct, accurate in meaning and style, and socially accepted in cultural based context. If what the translator does is to re-express messages of source language to target language, then the target texts should be equivalent and adequate with the source texts, in which meaning and style of those source and target texts can be understood equally by the readers of source language and target language. Literary translation as a process of transferring messages involves not only two different codes of languages, source language and target language, but also socio-culture condition since texts in translation are in context of socio-culture related to source and target languages.

An accurate literary translation can not fulfill its practical purposes as a means of communication between the author of the source texts and the readers of the target texts if the translated texts are difficult to understand by the readers, likewise the translated texts which are considered easy to understand are not good translation if their messages are deviated from the source texts. For that purpose, the translator of literary works needs to master knowledge of socio-cultural background of the source texts, has certain quality of literature, and language esthetics and artistic, and understands the literary works holistically.

Further, in translating literary works, translator needs to understand basic concept and analysis of literary works. Understanding basic concept of literary works means that the literary works should be viewed from their function to communicate. As such, the literary works are seen as a discourse, that is as a unity containing information, message, expression of the author, and fiction elements. All of those elements are reserved and comprehended fully in life and experienced by the author and then ordered and composed with his imagination and further expressed into story, drama, or novel using simple, fresh, accurate, and live, so that the translated works are not boring, can clearly reveal the purpose of the author, and create desired situation by applying suitable idiom, register, and choices of words. All of those elements are interrelated in texts holistically. Besides, in practice, what is needed by the translator of literary works is not to comprehend literary criticism as a discipline to further become a literary critic, but to interpret literary works better and holistically. So, what is needed by the translator of literary works is more practical analysis approach to understand comprehensively and adequately of the literary works.

Translating literary works, i.e. a novel, is not conducted word by word, in which at glance is well to read, but in fact holistically do not convey messages as it is commissioned by its source texts. Sentences in a novel are not simply utterances of their own, but function as a guide for further ideas. If the translator only translates the words and based on meaning in each sentence, then the result of his translation will be superficial and loss the overall meaning conveyed by the author to his readers.

In translating novel, it is possible that the translator find out some difficulties, such as in aspects of culture, i.e. difficulty in finding terms

equivalence related to materials and events of culture, in aspects of literature, i.e. difficulty in translating main characters equivalent to the condition of the readers of novel translation, and also in aspects of linguistics, i.e. difficulty in translating complex sentence and complicated structure.

Based on the complicated requirements in translating novel, the analysis of the process of translating novel needs to be holistically approached. The analysis is used to refer to the examination of translation in viewpoints of genetic factor (translator of the novel), objective factor (novel and its translation), and affective factor (opinion from the readers).

In holistic criticism approach, techniques used to collect the data can be in the form of in-depth interview, documentation, cloze test and table of accuracy scale, and questionnaire. In-depth interview is carried out to get the data on how the translator translates the novel and on what considerations and decision-making of the translator in translating. Documentation is used to obtain data on transferring messages from the source texts to the target texts of the novel in terms of literature and linguistics aspects. The cloze test and table of accuracy scale are employed to measure quality of translation in terms of readability and accuracy, and questionnaires are used to collect data about the range of background and competence of the translator and to identify opinion of readers toward the product of the translation. To increase validity of data, it employs data triangulation by comparing the results of interview to the content of translation (objective factor), comparing to the data gathered from the translation experts (affective factor), and comparing to the data gathered from the translator (genetic factor). Technique of data analysis is interactive analysis model. It is started by gathering data in the form of information about the translator, process of translating, and opinion of the readers toward the product of translation. Then the data are selected based on stated problems (data reduction) and served in the form of information. Based on this information, the conclusion is formulised. And to get valid conclusion, then the conclusion needs to verify. This process of cycle is conducted simultaneously.

## **Conclusion**

Holistic criticism approach is considered to be very important, especially when it is used to examine craft and art of translation based on the aspects of the translator, the product of the translation, and the readers.

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