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Contextual meaning in translation: a relevance analysis

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ABSTRACT

Translation as an act of communication relates to pragmatic studies. Pragmatic studies are convinced that when a text is written there is communication between the author and the reader. In the context of translation, the translation of a text is also a communication between the translator and the reader. Translation as an effort to transfer messages makes the study of meaning significant. The meaning of a text is not only analyzed from the textual meaning. It means that the meaning of a text does not only come from the sentences meaning of the text. The meaning of the text, however, can also be studied contextually. This article discusses how contextual meaning in translation is studied using relevance analysis. This study used a qualitative method with a case study so it focused on the study of meaning in translation using relevance analysis in certain cases. The data source is a YouTube video of a children's story from an Indonesian fairy tales channel entitled *Amin dan Telur*. The data are all the utterances, subtitles, and images contained in the video. The results show that the relevance degree of the translation utterance is included in the high category. It is due to the translator's ability to maintain contextual effects and minimal processing efforts through relevant utterances and images. The translator's success in producing a high degree of relevance causes the reader to have minimal effort in understanding the utterance. The success in maintaining the degree of translation relevance contributes to the equivalence of the translation.

Keywords: *translation, pragmatic, relevance, children's story*



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INTRODUCTION

Translation as a process of transferring a message from the source language to the target language makes the study of meaning an important part of translation (Larson, 1984). The study of meaning is significant since the meaning cannot only be studied textually. This means that the meaning of a text is not only determined by the sentences that arrange it. The meaning of a text, however, can be studied by correlating the context with the presence of the text because it has a significant contribution to determining the meaning of the text (Kalda & Uusküla, 2019). Therefore, the study of the meaning of the text does not only focus on semantic studies but can also be studied on pragmatics. Studies of meaning related to context have been carried out by several researchers in song lyrics (Dafriana Mamun et al., 2022; Sudar et al., 2023; Yulia Syahfitri, 2021; Purnomo et al., 2022) and modal verbs (Depraetere, 2019). These studies use pragmatic concepts as the basis for their analysis.

Pragmatic studies concern that when language is used there is a meaning intended by the speaker so utterance as a unit of analysis in pragmatics can be studied not only in terms of the meaning of the speech but also the intended meaning of the speech. Austin (1962) states that there are two types of utterances based on the meaning that the speaker wants to convey, namely constative utterance in which the meaning of the utterance is the same as the meaning of the words that construct the utterance, while performative utterance is the utterance has different meaning from the meaning of the words used in arrange the utterance.

In the context of translation, performative utterances cannot be studied for their meaning by semantic analysis. The study of meaning in performative utterances must involve pragmatics by involving context analysis to obtain the meaning in accordance with the intended meaning by the speaker. In producing a translation that can be easily



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understood by the target reader, the translator must involve the context in producing performative utterances. Contextual studies in translation have been carried out by Dimitriu (2016). The study of contextual meaning in translation has been conducted by several researchers about the translation of the Qur'an (Abdul-Ghafour et al., 2022), translation strategy (Panchenko, 2019), presupposition (Cui & Zhao, 2014), bible translation (Berman, 2014), and sign public (Susini et al., 2022).

In studying context, pragmatic analyses can be used such as relevance analysis (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). This analysis emphasizes the context involved in the form of ostensive stimulus from the speaker to make it easier for the hearer to understand the utterance. This theory focuses on two aspects, the first is contextually implicated. This means that the speaker must provide a series of contexts that can be used in understanding the utterance. The second is processing effort which refers to an effort of the hearer in understanding the utterance delivered by the speaker. Without the context provided by the speaker, the hearer will have difficulty understanding the utterance.

In the concept of translation as an act of communication (Munday, 2001), translation is also an activity between the translator and the target reader. Ineffective communication, the hearer must be able to provide feedback following the speaker's expectations.

This means that if the message cannot be properly received by the hearer, the hearer cannot provide the feedback expected by the speaker. Therefore, the ease of the hearer in understanding the utterance is one of the elements of effectiveness in communication.

The achievement of equivalence is an important aspect of translation studies (Majhad et al., 2020; Alfaori, 2017; Panou, 2013). The high similarity of messages produced by the translator in translating utterances is due to the translator's success in maintaining the intended meaning of the utterance. In translating literary texts, the success of the translation depends not only on the equivalence of the message but also on the form (Y. Hu, 2003). This



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means that the translation utterances in literary texts must be able to maintain their form and meaning in the target language. In translation performative utterance, the translator does not only require to produce utterance with the same form and meaning but the translator must also make it easy for the reader to understand the utterance. The translator must provide sufficient context for the reader to understand the text. Thus, in the study of literary text translation, the translator must be able to translate utterances with the same form and meaning that can be easily understood by the hearer.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative research with a case study. This means that this research only presents the research analysis based on the focus of the problem being studied. This study explains how to achieve translation equivalence with relevance analysis, especially the degree of relevance. This study used data sources of children's literary in Indonesian fairy tales YouTube channel entitled *Amin dan Telur*. The data are all of the performative utterances in the Indonesian language and its English translation. This study used the listen and record method in data collection, which means that the researcher records all performative utterances in Indonesian and their English translations. This study also used a series of research stages, namely first, listening and recording performative utterances in the YouTube video entitled *Amir dan Telur*. Second, analyze the category of the degree of relevance in Indonesian utterance and its English translation. Third, determining the degree of relevance of Indonesian utterance and its English translation. Fourth, categorizing the degree of relevance of utterance with two categories of degree of relevance, namely, high relevance and low relevance. A high degree of relevance is indicated by the presence of ostensive stimulus involved in understanding utterance in the form of images that are relevant to the intended meaning of an utterance. Meanwhile, a low degree of relevance is



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indicated by ostensive stimulus in the form of images that are not relevant to the utterance. Fifth, determining the equivalence of the achievement of the degree of relevance of the translation with its source text.

DISCUSSION

In this article, the study of contextual meaning is shown by the analysis of utterance relevance. In this analysis, all of the utterances are analyzed for the degree of relevance using the previously category degree of relevance. The category of degree of relevance is classified into high and low categories. A more detailed explanation can be seen as follows.

Table 1. Degree of relevance in translation utterance of source text

Degree of Relevance Category	Source Text	Target Text
High	85%	80%
Low	15%	20%

The table above shows that the majority of utterances are categorized with a high degree of relevance in the source language text and the target language text. In the source language text, there are 85% of utterances with a high degree of relevance category and 15% of utterances from the total data are included in the text with a low degree of relevance. Therefore, 85% of the data from the total data are included in the high degree of relevance category while 20% of the total data are included in the low degree of relevance in the target language text. Further explanation can be observed as follows.

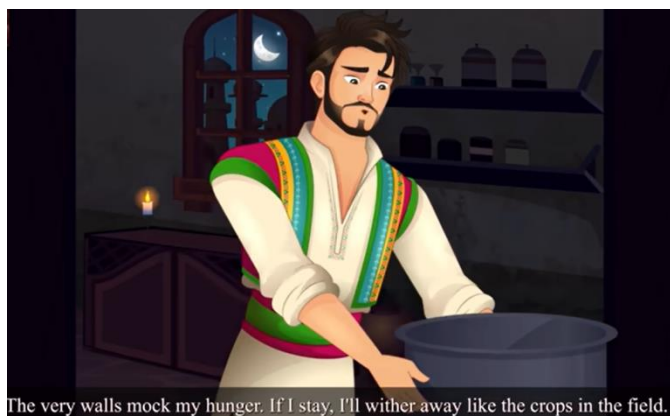


Figure 1. Data of high degree of relevance
(Source: YouTube Indonesian Fairy Tales)

- (1) ST: *Dinding-dindingnya mengejek rasa laparku. Jika aku tinggal, aku akan layu seperti tanaman di ladang.*
TT: The very walls mock my hunger. If I stay. I'll wither away like the crops in the field.

Data 1 is classified as a high degree of relevance category. The high degree of relevance is caused by the presence of an ostensive stimulus that is relevant to the utterance. This causes the reader do not to make a hard effort to understand the utterance. The utterance "*Dinding-dindingnya mengejek rasa laparku. Jika aku tinggal, aku akan layu seperti tanaman di ladang*" means that the character Amin feels in a worrying condition so that he describes himself as being mocked by the walls of his house. By using this performative utterance, Amin wants to emphasize that his living conditions are very worrying. In addition, the assertive utterance in the example above is used to provide actual information related to Amin's living conditions.

The literal translation of the ST utterance "The very walls mock my hunger. If I stay. I'll wither away like the crops in the field" is also an utterance with a high degree of relevance. The translator maintains the performative utterance so that the utterance in the target



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language still has the same form as the source language utterance. This is done by the translator to be able to maintain the aesthetic of the literary text. However, the translator can also provide context to the reader with the support of ostensive stimulus given in the form of images so the reader can easily understand the meaning of the utterance. The correlation between the image and the utterance is also very close and it makes the reader does not need a great effort in understanding the meaning of the utterance.



Figure 2. Data of low degree of relevance
(Source: YouTube Indonesian Fairy Tales)

(2) ST : *Apakah sudah gila kawan, kacang rebus tidak pernah tumbuh.*

TT: Have you lost your wits, man? Boiled beans will never sprout.

Data 2 is categorized as data with a low degree of relevance category. The low degree of relevance is shown by the presence of an ostensive stimulus that is not relevant to the utterance. The image and the utterance have a weak correlation and cause the reader requires great effort to understand the utterance. The reader must involve the storyline in understanding the intended meaning since the image and utterance cannot be used directly to understand the intended meaning of the utterance. The utterance "*Apakah sudah gila kawan, kacang rebus tidak pernah tumbuh*" has the meaning of an assumption that is



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impossible to happen. The utterance is delivered by the judge to defend Amin that the boiled eggs given by Dirar couldn't hatch into chicks so it illustrates how impossible the assumption spoken by Dirar. By using the performative utterance, the judge wanted to state that the assumption condition spoken by Dirar is impossible to happen. In addition, the assertive utterance in the example above is used to provide actual information.

The literal translation of the source text utterance, namely "Have you lost your wits, man? Boiled beans will never sprout" is also an utterance with a low degree of relevance. The translator maintains the type of performative utterance but the ostensive stimulus in the form of images is not relevant to the utterance. This makes it less easy for readers to understand the utterance due to the fact that they must be involved in the storyline to understand the intended meaning. The literal translation chosen by the translator is an attempt to maintain the aesthetic of the literary text. However, in the context of translating performative utterances, the translator is also required to be able to provide context to the reader with the support of ostensive stimulus in the form of images so that they can easily understand the intended meaning.

Discussion

The achievement of a degree of relevance equivalence must be achieved in the translation of performative utterances in literary works. The success of achieving the degree of relevance shows that the translator has succeeded in maintaining the form and intended meaning without requiring great effort from the target reader to understand the utterances.



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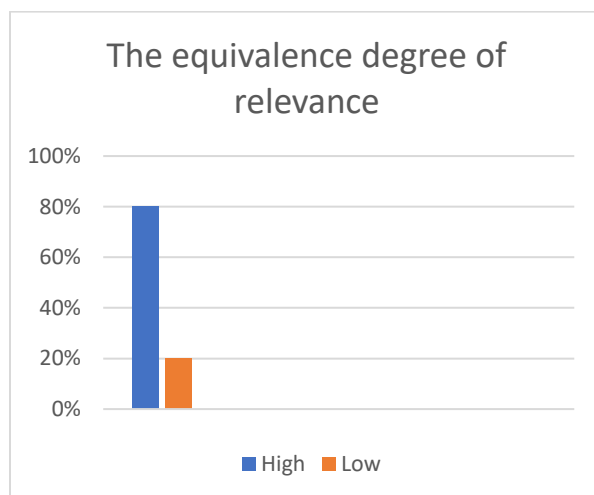


Chart 1. The equivalence achievement degree of relevance

Diagram 1 above shows that the achievement of equivalence translation of relevance degree utterance is included high category. There are 80% of the total data is included in the category of translation with a high equivalence degree of relevance. There are also data included in the category of low degree of equivalence of relevance with 20%. The high degree of relevance is determined by several factors, namely the success of the translator in maintaining the form of utterance, the availability of sufficient context in understanding the utterance, and the ease of readers in understanding the utterance.

The high equivalence degree of relevance indicates the translator's success in maintaining the form of utterance in the literary text. In translating children's literature, the translator must focus on translating the form of the literary work (Alla, 2015) since there are many contextual meanings in literary works (Diaz, 2009) so the translator's efforts in maintaining contextual meaning contribute to maintaining the aesthetic of the literary work. Translation of literary works prioritizes the maintenance of form and intended meaning so that the translator's focus is not only on maintaining the intended meaning but also on the form of the literary work. Maintaining the form of literary works can use direct translation



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as a form of realization of the ideology of foreignization (Li, 2023) and an effort to create effective communication with target readers.

The high equivalence degree of relevance is also determined by the availability of context that can be used by the reader to easily understand the utterance. Although in translating children's stories the translator needs to consider the storyline (Suprpto, 2010), the availability of context is still needed. Context in the case of translating children's stories can be shown by the presence of images that are relevant to the utterance. The relevance of images and utterances in translation is significant since the translation will seem natural. This is due to the fact that naturalness is one of the elements for measuring translation quality (Fadaee, 2011; Farahzad, 1992; Saputra & Rini, 2021) and is an important aspect in translating literary works (Farahani & Ghasemi, 2012; Obeidat et al., 2020; Safei & Salija, 2018). Context is determined by the presence of an ostensive stimulus that can be used by the reader as information involved in understanding the intended meaning of the utterance. In translation studies, the finding equivalence of meaning is a look for equivalence of the context situation (S. Hu, 2010).

The high degree of relevance also shows the ease of readers in understanding the utterance. In relevance theory, successful communication is highly dependent on contextual information that is accurate and accessible to readers (Zu, 2021). This means that a high degree of relevance makes it easier for readers to understand the utterance because readers are provided with sufficient context to understand the utterance and they do not need a great effort to understand the intended meaning of the utterance. Therefore, the ease of readers in understanding the utterance is due to the availability of ostensive stimulus provided by the translator.



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CONCLUSION

The study of meaning in translation needs to examine contextual meaning, especially for performative utterances. The success of the translators in maintaining a high degree of relevance utterance in their translation can increase the equivalence of the translation. A high degree of relevance can be achieved by presenting relevant utterances and images so that readers can understand the utterance easily. However, the involvement of the storyline in understanding the utterance makes the low degree of relevance of the utterance because the reader must make more effort in understanding the utterance.

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