

TENOR IN OBAMA'S SPEECH

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ABSTRACT

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as pioneered by Halliday, has gained a significant position among other theories in linguistics. This theory views language as a social semiotic resource utilized to accomplish people's purposes by expressing meanings in context. Therefore, this theory is believed to be able to give significant contribution to translation studies, where context in the source language (SL) is sometimes different from the one in the target language (TL).

This paper attempts to discuss the maintenance of tenor in an English text translated into Indonesian. The source text in this study is the script of Barack Obama's speech in Cairo on June 4, 2009, and the target text is the Indonesian version of the script as released by the U.S Embassy in Indonesia. The speech is interesting to analyze since it marks the new era of the relation between America and Islam.

Tenor, that is the interpersonal meaning, is concerned more with the interaction between the speaker and addressee (Thompson, 2000). This aspect deals with how speaker maintains the relationship with the addressee, influences his behavior, and how the speaker expresses his viewpoint. The tenor is then identifiable through the analysis of the mood, modality, and evaluation. In short, tenor sees how participants work together so that they can maintain the communication process to reach their objectives.

Despite the different contexts of the source text and the target text, this study finds no significant shifts in terms of the tenor of each. The original speech is delivered orally in a body of scholars, in a meeting at Cairo University, co-hosted with Al-Azhar University. The Indonesian version is published through the website of the U.S. Embassy.

The mood structure in almost all the clauses are transferred as it is into the target language. This also happens to the modality. They are translated without any shift. Some modalities are indeed omitted, but this does not cross the borders of modalization nor modulation. Likewise, the differences in terms of level of emotive meaning of the attitudinal lexis do not significantly influence the tenor in the target language.

Introduction

The theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has been believed as sharp knife to make a surgery of a discourse. According to this approach, language is a social semiotic that is exploited by its speakers to gain special objectives. That is to say, a text in any form always has a social objective, and the social objective influences the staging, choice of words and the lexicogrammar used in the text. Another important point from SFL is that language exists in a register comprising three components: field, tenor, and mode. Different field, tenor, and mode will also result in different text. This notion is important to bear in mind when analyzing a text as a result of translation. The target readers (or hearers) of source text are of course different people.

However, this paper will show that such a difference is not significantly influencing the tenor of the target text. The discussion is focused on the aspects of appraisal: affect, judgment, and appreciation.

Framework

One more specific aspect of tenor is the concept of appraisal, the concept of evaluation. With this, we can identify the kinds of attitudes negotiated in a text. In addition, appraisal also deals with how strong the feelings are involved in the text, how values are negotiated, and how readers are aligned (Martin & Rose, 2003). That is to say, the resources of appraisal are used to negotiate the social relationships between participants; that may include the speakers (authors) and hearers (readers) as well as the thing being discussed.

There are three aspects of attitudes: affect, judgment, and appreciation (Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005).

Affect deals with the positive or negative feelings of the author. The feelings can be expressed directly or implied. Direct expressions of feelings can be done by the exploiting attitudinal lexes, the words showing specific emotions. Feelings can also be indirectly expressed by describing the

behavior that indicate the state of the feelings. Negative feeling of being worried, for example, can be shown by describing how the participants recklessly wander from one point of space to another.

Judgment deals the evaluation towards the characters of the participants. Like affect, this can be positive or negative. Martin & Rose (2003) categorize judgment into personal judgment and moral judgment. The first type of judgment refers to whether the participant admires or criticizes other participants. The latter shows whether one participant praises or condemns other participants.

Finally, appreciation is concerned with valuing the worth of things. As with other aspects of appraisal, appreciation can be positive or negative.

This Study

The text analyzed in this study is the script (and its Indonesian version) of Obama's speech before a body of audience at the University of Cairo, Egypt. The study is focused on how the appraisal in the source text is maintained in the target text. Both texts are available online on the website of the U.S. Embassy.

Context of Situation

The speech being discussed in this study is a remarkable speech of Obama during his five-day visit to the Middle-East and to Europe. It was delivered in a forum co-hosted by the University of Cairo and Al-Azhar University on June 4, 2009. These two universities are regarded as the world's leading Islamic institutions of higher education. Also present in the forum was Hosni Mubarak, the President of Egypt. People have expected much that Obama bring changes the relation of the U.S and Islam in general, and more specifically with countries in the Middle-East.

Findings

The discussion in this part is focused on how Barack Obama showed his feelings, evaluated things, and the characters. This will include the discussion on affect, judgement, and appreciation. Affect deals with the positive or negative feelings of the author. Judgement is dealing with resources to evaluate character. Finally, appreciation is concerned with valuing the worth of things.

Affect

Unsurprisingly, Obama's feelings when delivering his speech was positive. This can be traced since the beginning of his speech. He started by showing his pride of being there in the forum hosted by two higher education institutions. Another indication of his positive feeling is the use of lexes to show his mental state. This is done not only with attitudinal lexes, but also with the mental process. For example:

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|--|--|
| 1. I am honored to be in the timeless city of Cairo... | 1. <i>Saya merasa terhormat berada di kota Kairo yang tak lekang oleh waktu...</i> |
| 2. I'm grateful for your hospitality. | 2. <i>Saya berterima-kasih atas keramahan anda.</i> |
| 3. And I'm also proud to... | 3. <i>Saya juga merasa bangga ...</i> |
| 4. I know... | 4. <i>Saya tahu</i> |
| 5. I believe... | 5. <i>Saya percaya...</i> |
| 6. I am convinced ... | 6. <i>Saya yakin ...</i> |

As clearly in the examples (1), (2), and (3) above, there is a shift from attributive relational process in the source text to mental process. The shift, however, does not result in significant difference in terms of affect. This is because of the grammar of Bahasa Indonesia that does not signify that. That is, *Saya merasa terhormat* (mental process) is not significantly different from the attributive relational process *Saya terhormat*. This applies also to *Saya bangga* dan *Saya merasa bangga*. That is also why example (6) is not translated into *Saya merasa yakin*.

Judgment

This part discusses Obama's evaluation to other participants in his speech. Participants here refer not only to Obama and the audience there, but also to the parties he mentioned in his speech, especially the terrorists, society of Islam, and the public of America. These three participants are important

because the speech was delivered in Egypt, and many people had been expecting for Obama's reaction to the relation between the U.S and Islam.

Obama's evaluation to the audience is questionably positive. This is identifiable with some positive values:

- ... **timeless** city of Cairo, ... two **remarkable** institutions.
- ... Al-Azhar has stood as **beacon** of Islamic learning
- ... kota Kairo yang **tak lekang oleh waktu**, ... dua institusi yang **luar biasa**.
- Al-Azhar telah menjadi **ujung tombak** pembelajaran islam.

Further, Obama tried to put himself at the same level as the audience, that Obama regarded as the representation of the Muslim world. This can be seen by the use of pronoun "we" (*kita*) that is "you and I". Another indicator of positive judgment to the audience is the use of high level of modality, in addition to the use of if-clause.

Of course, recognizing our common humanity is only the beginning of our task. Words cannot meet the needs of our people. These needs will be met only if we act boldly in the years ahead, and if we understand that the challenges we face are shared, and our failure to meet them will hurt us all.

Tentu saja, mengenali persamaan kemanusiaan merupakan awal dari tugas kita. Justru ini adalah awal. Kata-kata saja tidak dapat memenuhi kebutuhan rakyat. Kebutuhan baru terpenuhi jika kita bertindak berani di tahun-tahun mendatang. Dan kita harus bertindak dengan pemahaman bahwa tantangan-tantangan yang kita hadapi adalah tantangan bersama, dan kegagalan kita mengatasinya akan merugikan kita semua.

The excerpt above displays some interesting grammatical shifts. First, the possessive adjective *our* (*kita*) is omitted in the target text (the needs of our people – *kebutuhan rakyat*). Second, the translator changed the construction of the clause. The mental process in the source text is changed into material process, by making the process into a nominalization functioning as an accompaniment: tool. In addition, the translator also adds the high level modal *harus*. However, again, all these shifts do not bring significant difference in the judgment resulted. The positive judgment is not much influenced by the shift.

The second judgment worth discussing is the one to the so-called 'violent extremists'. Look at the following excerpt:

Violent extremists have **exploited** these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims. The **attacks** of September 11, 2001 and the **continued efforts** of these extremists to **engage in violence** against civilians has led some in my country to view Islam as **inevitably hostile** not only to America and Western countries, but also to human rights. All this **has bred more fear** and **more mistrust**.

Kelompok ekstrimis garis keras telah mengeksploitasi hubungan yang tegang itu, jumlah mereka kecil namun memiliki potensi di kalangan Muslim. Serangan pada 11 September 2001 dan upaya berkelanjutan dari kalangan ekstrimis ini untuk menyerang warga sipil telah membuat sebagian kalangan di Negara saya menilai Islam bukan cuma memusuhi Amerika dan Negara Barat, melainkan juga hak asasi manusia. Semua ini semakin memupuk rasa takut dan saling tidak percaya.

Despite the different meaning that results likely from the shift in the first clause, we can see the same stand of evaluation both in the source text and in the target text. The excerpt above shows that Obama's evaluation to the violent extremists is negative. Indeed, Obama softened the label, by not using the label 'terrorists' as what had been more popular to common people. This is reasonable because he was talking to the highly educated Muslim people, in a formal forum. Another softening is found in **engage in violence**. This is translated into *menyerang*. The meaning features of *menyerang* is different from *engage in violence*, that includes the features of repetition or involvement in a long

period of time. However, such a shift does not significantly influence the negative judgment. The same also happens to the group *inevitable hostile*, translated into *memusuhi*.

In short, Obama’s judgment can be summarized in the following grid.

No.	Other participants	Judgment in ST	Judgment in TT
1.	Audience, society of Islam	Positive	Positive
2.	Violent extremists	Negative	Negative
3.	Public of America	Positive	Positive

Appreciation

Finally, Obama’s appreciation is focused on the relationship between the U.S. and the public of Islam. Like Obama’s attitude to the violent extremists, the appreciation to the relationship is also negative, as shown in the following excerpt:

We met at a time of **great tension** between the United States and Muslims around the world – tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate. The relationship between Islam and the West includes **centuries of coexistence and cooperation**, but also conflict and religious wars. More recently, **tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities** to many Muslims, and a **Cold war...**

Kita bertemu pada saat ada **ketegangan besar** antara Amerika Serikat dan warga Muslim – ketegangan yang berakar pada gerak sejarah yang melampaui setiap perdebatan kebijakan yang kini berlangsung. Hubungan antara Island an Barat selama **berabad-abad** mencakup **koeksistensi dan kerja sama**, tapi juga konflik dan peperangan bernuansa agama. Akhir-akhir ini, **ketegangan muncul akibat kolonialisme yang menyangkal hak dan peluang bagi banyak warga Muslim**, serta perang dingin...

The negative appreciation is intensified with high level of modalization that proposes the end of such a tense. Again, Obama wanted to stop the tension and start a new relation. Therefore, his appreciation to Islam is highly positive. In many occasions, he admired the values of Islam. Like what happens in the other aspects of appraisal, the appreciation in the target text is similar to the one in the source text.

Conclusion

This paper has elaborated how the shifts in lexicogrammar do not result in significant difference in the aspects of tenor, especially the aspects of appraisal. This study also fails to show that the different context where the source text is created will create different tenor. This is so probably because the audience in the target text is more or less similar to the one in the source text, that is the society of Islam. Further study, therefore, is required to identify the strategies to maintain such a tenor from the source text to the target text. This study is merely a discourse analysis of both the source text and the target text. Another study is then required to assess the quality of the translation, by asking respondents or raters to read the translation.

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