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Analyzing Translation Quality of Google Translate in Translating Chinese Proverbs About Dragon into Indonesian

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the translation quality of Google Translate in Translating Chinese proverbs about dragons into Indonesian. The method used is the descriptive qualitative method. The primary data in this research is the uploaded text on Weibo social media which contains Chinese proverbs with dragon elements. Assessing of Translation Quality uses Nababan's theory (2012) which consists of three assessment aspects, namely accuracy, acceptability, and readability. The text that contained Chinese proverbs about dragons, which was divided into 10 pieces of data and sent to a competent rater to evaluation. Based on the analysis using scoring scores ranging from 1 to 3, the average results for the accuracy aspect were 2.2, the acceptability aspect was 2.2, and the readability aspect was 1.8. The results of the study show that Translation Quality of Google Translate in translating Chinese proverbs with dragon elements into Indonesian is at a level that is less accurate, less acceptable, and has low readability. The overall score indicates that there are some words and content that are translated inaccurately and are less acceptable so that in general the contents are challenging for reader of the target text to understand even though they have read it repeatedly to fully understand the contents of the message. This research also shows the importance of understanding culture in translation proverbs in a language using artificial intelligence in the form of machine translation.

Keywords: Translation Quality; Google Translate; Chinese Proverbs; Dragon

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kualitas terjemahan Google Translate dalam Menerjemahkan Peribahasa Mandarin tentang Naga ke Bahasa Indonesia. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data utama dalam penelitian ini adalah teks yang diunggah di media sosial Weibo yang memuat peribahasa Mandarin berelemen naga. Penilaian kualitas terjemahan menggunakan teori Nababan (2012) yang terdiri dari 3 aspek penilaian yaitu keakuratan, keberterimaan, dan keterbacaan. Teks yang berisi peribahasa Mandarin tentang naga dipecah menjadi 10 bagian data, dikirim ke penilai yang kompeten untuk dievaluasi. Berdasarkan analisis dengan menggunakan skor penilaian yang berkisar antara 1 sampai dengan 3 diperoleh hasil rata-rata pada aspek ketepatan sebesar 2,2, aspek keberterimaan sebesar 2,2, dan aspek keterbacaan sebesar 1,8. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kualitas terjemahan Google Translate dalam menerjemahkan peribahasa Cina berelemen naga ke dalam bahasa Indonesia berada pada tingkat kurang akurat, kurang berterima, dan memiliki keterbacaan yang rendah. Skor keseluruhan menunjukkan bahwa ada beberapa kata dan isi yang diterjemahkan secara tidak akurat dan kurang dapat diterima sehingga secara umum isinya sulit dipahami oleh pembaca teks sasaran meskipun telah membacanya berulang kali untuk memahami sepenuhnya isi pesan. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan pentingnya pemahaman budaya dalam penerjemahan peribahasa dalam suatu bahasa dengan menggunakan kecerdasan buatan berupa terjemahan mesin.

Kata Kunci: Kualitas Terjemahan; Google Terjemahan; Peribahasa Mandarin; Naga

1. Introduction

Language in general communication is used to convey a meaning or purpose, the meaning conveyed can be either the actual meaning or the figurative meaning. Expressions containing figurative meanings are used with the aim of smoothing the delivery of thoughts or feelings to the other person [1]. The use of proverbs and parables is one way of communicating in figurative language. When communicating using proverbs, speakers can express their thoughts indirectly.

Proverbs are defined as sentences or sentence fragments that are passed down from generation to generation and are used to reinforce the meaning of essays, give advice, teach and guide life, proverbs also on alternative that is used as a tool to indirectly convey meaning in various languages in various countries [2].

Proverbs are referred as 成语 (chengyu) in Mandarin. According to Song & Ean [3] chengyu is a subcategory of Chinese proverbs which is composed of four beautiful and poetic characters and expresses a specific meaning, either explicitly or implicitly.

Proverbs that are owned by each country are always synonymous with the cultural history of that country. In Chinese proverbs or 成语 chengyu are quoted from classical Mandarin originating from fables, stories of gods, history, classical literary works, and the social life of Chinese society. These have been passed down from generation to generation. Even though it has been passed down from generation to generation, the use of chéngyu in today's global era is still used in everyday communication because the language is concise and beautiful and has deep figurative meanings [4].

Alemina & Xeni in [2] argues that, based on the elements of comparison or similes, proverbs have various comparator elements, such as animal elements, plant elements, object names, water elements, fire elements, names of body parts, among others. Of these many elements, proverbs that use animal elements are interesting for research, because Chinese people have great respect for the animal element.

Chinese use animal elements as symbols, it's own myths that the Chinese people genuinely believe in. One of them is a dragon animal, which in Mandarin is called 龙 (long), and in Hokkien, it is called liong. Dragons have sacred and respected values in Chinese culture. The respect given by the Chinese community is reflected in the use of the dragon symbol, which is found in every ornament, clothing, to the architecture of buildings belonging to the Chinese community [5].

In the application of everyday life, there are many chengyu or Chinese proverbs with dragon elements, and to understand these Chinese proverbs the reader must first know the meaning of the denotation and connotation to understand the entire content. Unfortunately, not everyone has adequate knowledge of Chinese proverbs. To understand the meaning, readers often go through the translation process with machine translation tools, one of which is Google Translate.

Google Translate is a translation machine that is widely used by many people to translate from one language to several other languages. Its free service makes it the choice of many people in doing machine-assisted translation. Even though it can help many people to translate content from foreign languages, Google Translate still has limitations, one of which is providing a translation whose accuracy is questionable in word choice, spelling, and grammar [6]. Therefore, discussing the quality and accuracy value of Google Translate's translation in translating Chinese proverbs, especially proverbs that have dragon elements is necessary.

2. Method

A rater was helping in this qualitative descriptive research to evaluate ten translated texts generated by Google Translate that were used to inform people. One of characteristics of qualitative research is descriptive. The descriptive stle in qualitative research is depicted through data in the form of text, words, images, and does not emphasize numbers. In the qualitative method the writer is tasked with collecting ideas submitted by informan or participants and then looking for themes or patterns to build a new idea [7]

The reason why the writer chooses Chinese proverbs with dragon elements is that these types of proverbs are mentioned frequently on Weibo social media posts. Weibo social media is the most widely used platform by Chinese people for exchanging information, news and entertainment. Researchers are interested in conducting this research to know the quality and accuracy value of Google Translate's translation in translating Chinese proverbs, especially proverbs that have dragon elements on Weibo. This research is expected to help the process of learning Mandarin related to proverbs, and to provide benefits for Chinese language reviewers to be able to consider the use of Google Translate and pay attention to the quality of the translation, especially in terms of accuracy.

This research determines several criteria as instruments to measure specific aspects of translation. These aspects are accuracy, acceptability, and readability [8].

This research employs observation and note-taking data collection techniques. Note-taking techniques are appropriate to pay attention for the use of written language that contains language errors [9]. Through the listening method, the author observes the use of Chinese proverbs with dragon elements contained in the data source. The author's position in the listening method purely acts as an observer from a written source and is not involved in producing the translated text or the translation process.

The next step, the writer uses note-taking techniques. Any relevant uploaded text data on social media Weibo and containing Chinese proverbs with elements of dragons are recorded and collected to then be compiled into tables and translated using Google Translate to Indonesian. The data was then submitted to the rater to assess the quality of the translation. The assessment will follow the translation quality assessment model according to Nababan in [8] which measures the quality of translation based on three aspects, namely: accuracy, acceptability and readability.

- Accuracy Aspect

Accuracy is a term used in evaluating translation to determine whether the source language text and target language text are worth it or not. The accuracy of a translation is affected by efforts to reduce information or add information that comes from the translator's wishes without taking into account the risk of loss of equivalent value between the source language text and the target language text. In translation techniques, omissions (deletions) and additions may be done with a purpose to produce translations that are acceptable and easy to understand without changing the main idea or statement that the original author of the source language text wants to convey to readers of the target language text. The instrument for assessing the accuracy of the translation is arranged with a score scale of 1 up to 3. The higher the score given by the assessor, the more accurately a translated text. And the lower the score given signifies the lower the level of accuracy possessed by the translated text.

Table 1. Translation Accuracy Assessment.

Category	Score	Qualitative Parameters
Accurate	3	The meanings of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts are accurately transferred to the target language; there is no distortion of meaning.
Less Accurate	2	Most of the meanings of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, the sentence or text of the source language has been transferred accurately into the target language. However, there are still distortion of meaning or doublemeaning translation (taxa) or there is meaning that is omitted, which disturbs the integrity message.
Inaccurate	1	The meanings of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or source language texts are inaccurately transferred to the target language or deleted.

- Acceptable Aspect

Acceptance is a term used to express whether a translation has been disclosed under norms, rules, and culture applicable in the target language based on the micro and macro levels. Translation texts whose statements are accurate can be rejected by readers target if the method of disclosure is not under the norms, rules, and culture. The concept of acceptance is something relative, that is considered reasonable and polite in a community group may be not polite to other community groups. Therefore, a translator is required to have a thorough understanding of cultural values, social connotations, and emotional values contained in the target language to produce translations that are acceptable and easily understood by the target readers [8]-[10].

Table 2. Translation Acceptable Assessment.

Category	Score	Qualitative Parameters
Acceptable	3	The translation feels natural, the technical terms used are usually used and familiar to the reader; the phrases, clauses and sentences used are under the rules of the Indonesian language
Less Acceptable	2	In general, the translation already feels natural, however there are slight problems with the use of technical terms or slight grammatical errors
Unacceptable	1	The translation is not natural or feels like a translation work, the technical terms used are not commonly used and are not familiar to the reader; the phrases, clauses and sentences used are not under the rules of the Indonesian language

- Readability Aspect

Readability is a term that describes the level of ease for the reader to understand the translated text. The readability of the translation depends on the content and ways of presentation, such as vocabulary selection, sentence length, sentence structure, elements of ambiguity, as well as the layout of shapes and letters determine the readability of the text translation. To produce translated text that has a level of legibility high, a translator needs to understand the concept of readability in the language text source and target language text. A good understanding of the concept of readability will help the translator in performing their job. The score scale of 1 to 3 is arranged to classify the readability level of a translated text. The higher the score given by the rater, the better and easier the translation is to understand.

Table 3. Translation Readability Assessment.

Category	Score	Qualitative Parameters
High Readability	3	The translation feels natural, the technical terms used are usually used and familiar to the reader; the phrases, clauses and sentences used are under the rules of the Indonesian language
Medium Readability	2	In general, the translation already feels natural, however there are slight problems with the use of technical terms or slight grammatical errors
Low Readability	1	The translation is not natural or feels like a translation work, the technical terms used are not commonly used and are not familiar to the reader; the phrases, clauses and sentences used are not under the rules of the Indonesian language

The raters in this study had to meet the required qualifications, including (1) being declared physically and mentally healthy (2) Being in the age range of 25-45 years old (3) Having linguistic competence, passing the HSK standard at a minimum HSK level 4 and passing the UKBI middle level with score 482-577 (4) Experienced as a translator of Mandarin – Indonesian. Then as a closing step, the author will analyze the results of the rater assessment to describe the quality of the translation contained in Google Translate and provide conclusions.

3. Result and Discussion

From the data studied, there were 10 data consisting of source language text (Mandarin) and target language translation text (Indonesia). The data was analyzed based on Nababan's theory of translation quality [8] and grouped into a table of translation quality assessment mechanism, this can be seen from the data below:

Table 4. Accuracy Aspect Research Data.

Accuracy Aspect	Score	Data (Source Language & Target Language)
Accurate	3	<p>SL: 梦见有一个我在上学时做坏事 后暴露, 被恋爱对象的家长对峙·愧得我直接醒了。醒来我意识到: 哦, 原来我一直以来, 追求的当然便是解脱之道, 当然从一开始便是一龙一蛇之道。</p> <p>(mèng jiàn yǒu yīgè wǒ zài shàngxué shí zuò huàishì hòu bàolù, bèi liàn'ài duìxiàng de jiāzhǎng duìzhì, kuì dé wǒ zhíjiē xǐng le. Xǐng lái wǒ yìshí dào: Ó, yuánlái wǒ yīzhí yǐlái, zhuīqiú dí dāng rán biàn shì jiětuō zhī dào, dāngrán cóng yī kāishǐ biàn shì yī lóng yī shé zhī dào)</p> <p>TL: Saya bermimpi bahwa saya dikonfrontasi oleh orang tua dari orang yang saya cintai setelah saya melakukan hal-hal buruk di sekolah, dan saya langsung terbangun. Ketika saya bangun, saya menyadari: Oh, ternyata yang saya kejar selama ini tentu saja jalan pembebasan, tentu saja sejak awal jalan satu naga dan satu ular.</p>

The data already shows that the contents of the text are transferred well. There is no distortion of meaning and the text is translated quite effectively. The Google Translator also translates the meaning in the source language (SL) accurately, according to the rules of writing in the target language (TL). In this topic, the Chinese proverb 一龙一蛇 (yi long yi she) has a metaphorical meaning for one's actions and behavior that change because the changing circumstances.

Table 5. Accuracy Aspect Research Data.

Accuracy Aspect	Score	Data (Source Language & Target Language)
Less Accurate	2	<p>SL: 宋仲基宋慧乔婚姻来龙去脉...宋仲基离婚后直接把曾经的婚房推了。这真是曾经有多爱·后面就有多恨。</p> <p>(Sòng zhòngjī sònghuìqiáo hūnyīn láilóngqùmài... sòng zhòngjī lǐhūn hòu zhíjiē bǎ céngjīng de hūn fáng tuī le. Zhè zhēnshì céngjīng yǒu duō ài, hòumiàn jiù yǒu duō hèn)</p> <p>TL: Seluk beluk pernikahan Song Zhongji dan Song Hye Kyo... Usai Song Zhongji bercerai, ia langsung menepikan bekas ruang pernikahan. Ini sebenarnya seberapa besar cinta dulu, dan seberapa besar kebencian di kemudian hari.</p>

In the source language, it is written in Chinese “直接把曾经的婚房推了” which Google translate translates to “ia langsung menepikan bekas ruang pernikahannya.” The word “推” is more accurately translated as “menyingkirkan” rather than “menepikan”, the word “婚房” is more accurately translated as “rumah pernikahannya” rather than “ruang pernikahannya” because in the text of the post it discusses Song Zhong Ji tried to renovating and completely changing the shape of the house which he bought when he got married. In the text of the post, the proverb 来龙去脉 (lailongqumai) appears and is used to describe the origins, reason, intricacies of an object or a cause for something to happen. For example, divorce can be a reason to renovate a whole house.

Table 6. Accuracy Aspect Research Data.

Accuracy Aspect	Score	Data (Source Language & Target Language)
Inaccurate	1	<p>SL: 今天周六, 家庭聚会, 三个厨师下厨, 菜做不少, 居然忘记煮饭, 难道光喝酒? 唯有到对面快餐店买饭·龙多乃旱!</p> <p>(Jīntiān zhōu liù, jiā tíng jù huì, sān gè chú shī xià chú, cài zuò bù shǎo, jū rán wàng jì zhǔ fàn, nán dào guāng hē jiǔ? Wéi yǒu dào duì miàn kuài cān diàn mǎi fàn, lóng duō nǎi hàn!)</p> <p>TL: Hari ini hari Sabtu, kumpul keluarga, tiga koki memasak, memasak banyak hidangan, benar-benar lupa memasak, apakah hanya minum alkohol? Satu-satunya cara untuk membeli makanan di restoran cepat saji seberang, Long Duo Naihan!</p>

In the source language, it is written in Chinese “忘记煮饭” which translates to “benar-benar lupa memasak”. The translation is categorized as inaccurate because of the reduction in meaning which should be "tanpa diduga lupa memasak nasi" The omitted word "nasi" can make the reader receive false information. The proverb 龙多乃旱 (long duo naihan) is a metaphor that describes many people who rely on each other, but nothing can be done.

Table 7. Acceptable Aspect Research Data.

Acceptable Aspect	Score	Data (Source Language & Target Language)
Acceptable	3	<p>SL: 如果不是亲眼所见都不敢相信·手工大神用泥巴做出一条活龙活现的龙!</p> <p>(Rúguǒ bùshì qīnyǎn suǒ jiàn dōu bù gǎn xiǎngxìn, shǒugōng dàshén yòng nībā zuò chū yītiáo huó lóng huóxiàn de lóng!)</p> <p>TL: Jika Anda tidak melihatnya dengan mata kepala sendiri, Anda tidak akan mempercayainya. Pengrajin ahli membuat naga hidup dari lumpur!</p>

The translation of the data above as a whole is under TL rules and is common for TL readers. The meaning of the proverbs in the translation text is also appropriate, the proverb 活龙活现 (huolonghuoxian) is a metaphor for an expression or something very lively, which makes people seem to believe it after seeing it with their own eyes. Based on observations of the origins of the proverbs, the informants assessed that Google Translate has translated the proverb 活龙活现 accurately. This can be seen in the sentence “手工大神用泥巴做出一条活龙活现的龙!” translated as “pengrajin ahli membuat naga hidup dari lumpur!”

Table 8. Acceptable Aspect Research Data.

Acceptable Aspect	Score	Data (Source Language & Target Language)
Less Acceptable	2	<p>SL: 都说龙生九子·各有不同·我种胡萝卜·七个也不一样·看来世间万物都有自己的想法</p> <p>(Dōu shuō lóng shēng jiǔ zǐ, gè yǒu bùtóng. Wǒ zhòng húluóbo, qī gè yě bù yīyàng, kàn lái shìjiān wànwù dōu yǒu zìjǐ de xiǎngfǎ)</p> <p>TL: Dikisahkan bahwa naga tersebut memiliki sembilan anak laki-laki yang masing-masing berbeda. Saya menanam wortel, tujuh berbeda, tampaknya segala sesuatu di dunia memiliki pikirannya sendiri.</p>

Based of the data above, the translated text feels natural, but there are several words whose translation is not quite right. In Chinese “七个也不一样” (*qi ge ye bu yiyang*)” should be translated as “ketujuhnya tidak sama” not “tujuh berbeda”.

Table 9. Acceptable Aspect Research Data.

Acceptable Aspect	Score	Data (Source Language & Target Language)
Unacceptable	1	<p>SL: 客场险胜湖人·加上鹈鹕的落败·国王队凭借近期的一波五连胜·已经将自己的排名拉高到西部第三! 16年没有翻身的咸鱼·这一年看上去已经下定决心·要翻它一个活蹦乱跳·要翻它一个生龙活虎·翻它一个鱼跃龙门!</p> <p>(Kèchǎng xiǎnshèng húrén, jiā shàng tíhú de luòbài, guówángduì píngjiè jìnqī de yī bō wǔ lián shèng, yǐjīng jiāng zìjǐ de páimíng lā gāo dào xībù dì sān! 16 Nián méiyǒu fānshēn de xiányú, zhè yī nián kàn shàngqù yǐjīng xiàdìng juéxīn, yào fān tā yīgè huóbèngluàntiào, yào fān tā yīgè shēnglónghuóhǔ, fān tā yīgè yú yuè lóngmén!)</p> <p>TL: Dengan kemenangan tandang tipis atas Lakers dan kekalahan dari Pelicans, Kings telah menaikkan peringkat mereka ke posisi ketiga di Barat dengan lima kemenangan beruntun baru-baru ini! Ikan asin yang belum terbalik selama 16 tahun sepertinya sudah mengambil keputusan tahun ini, membaliknya dan melompat ke gerbang naga!</p>

Translation on the data above, Google Translate only translates “年没有翻身的咸鱼” as salted fish that has not been turned over for years. In the source language it can mean "good things that were not possible before, finally happened".

Table 10. Readability Aspect Research Data.

Readability Aspect	Score	Data (Source Language & Target Language)
High Readability	3	<p>SL: 我希望所有父母能够明白·拿自己孩子和别 人家孩子比之前·先比比自己和人家家长的实力·思 想·别望子成龙·望女成凤</p> <p>(Wǒ xī wàng suǒ yǒu fù mǔ néng gòu míng bái, ná zì jǐ hái zǐ hé bié rén jiā hái zǐ bǐ zhī qián, xiān bǐ bǐ zì jǐ hé rén jiā jiā zhǎng de shí lì, sī xiǎng, bié wàng zǐ chéng lóng, wàng nǚ chéng fēng)</p> <p>TL: Saya harap semua orang tua dapat memahami bahwa sebelum membandingkan anaknya dengan anak orang lain, bandingkan dulu kelebihan dan kemampuannya sendiri dengan orang tua yang lain.</p>

The data above is one example of data that belongs to a high level of readability. In terms of grammar and lexical form, a high readability level makes the reader not experience difficulties in the reading process.

Table 11. Readability Aspect Research Data.

Readability Aspect	Score	Data (Source Language & Target Language)
Low Readability	1	<p>SL: 不是说是感冒吗？不是吵着放开吗？现在是 闹哪样？叶公好龙？</p> <p>(Bù shì shuō shì gǎn mào ma? Bù shì chǎo zhe fàng kāi ma? Xiǎn zài zhè shì nǎo nǚ yàng? Yè gōng hǎo lóng?)</p> <p>TL: Bukankah kamu bilang itu flu? Apakah Anda tidak berteriak-teriak untuk melepaskan? Apa yang terjadi sekarang? Ye Gong menyukai naga?</p>

Translation of the data above, the message to SL is not conveyed correctly to TL. This is due to a reduction in translation in SL, causing a distortion of meaning and the use of sentence structures that are not under the rules of the Indonesian language. The proverb 叶公好龙 (Ye Gong Menyukai Naga) is often used to express someone's hypocrisy, usually used to satirize or criticize two-faced politicians as in the source language text, the real meaning the author wants to convey is disappointment regarding the German embassy's decision to close its office in China due to an epidemic in Beijing, even though previously the epidemic had been classified as the common cold but why is the situation such as being exaggerated again.

The translation quality model according to Nababan (2012) every aspect has a rating weight, where the value 3 for accuracy, 2 for acceptability, and 1 for readability. The calculation needed to find the total score of translation quality is to add up the average score of each aspect multiplied by each aspect value divided by the number of aspect scores. Below is a formula to simplify the calculation:

$$\frac{(avg. accuracy score \times 3) + (avg. acceptability \times 2) + (avg. readability score \times 1)}{(total weighted value of each aspect)}$$

$$\frac{(2.2 \times 3) + (2.2 \times 2) + (1.8 \times 1)}{(3 + 2 + 1)}$$

$$\frac{(6.6 + 4.4 + 1.8)}{6} = 2.13$$

Based on the assessment of translation quality according to Nababan in [8] score the average for the accuracy aspect of Google Translate in translating Mandarin proverbs with dragon element is 2.2, the average score is 2.2, and the average readability score is 1.8. The scores of the three aspects are summed up and divided by the weight value to get the total average score. The total average score of Google Translate's translation quality is 2.13, with the lowest coverage score is 1 and the highest is 3 indicates that in general the translation of Google Translate in translating Mandarin proverbs are at the level of less accurate, less acceptable, and low readability. Some of the source text content is poorly translated accurate to the target language so that it is not easily understood by the reader.

4. Conclusion

In general Google Translate translations can be understood by readers, but there are some details of the contents of the message that are missing and can be misleading. Google Translate translations are also sometimes found not to use the appropriate rules and equivalents in the target language and tend to be unnatural or unfamiliar to the readers. This shows that the translated text of Chinese proverbs with dragon elements on Google Translate from Mandarin into Indonesian is challenging to read and understand even though it has been read several times.

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