

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Public signs are the important part consisting of language and human environment in the International city and tourist destination. The beautiful places like Parapat and Bukit Lawang as neighboring place of Medan plays an important role in the world of tourism, and more and more people want to know and come to Medan. So, the image of the tourist resorts is very important. Public signs are the indispensable part of the tourist resorts. Translation of public signs, to a large extent, reflects an International level of environment establishment in a tourist resorts whether the proper use of public signs will have a direct impact on the International image of the tourist resorts. Meanwhile, it relates to the understanding of Indonesian culture, status of society and economic situation, so that Indonesia can get better developments from each aspect. Therefore, the English translation of public signs has a growing importance. But now, there are uneven unnatural translation in Parapat and Bukit Lawang as the tourism places.

Public signs play a very important role in the life and work of the public. In translation, the form of the source language is replaced by the form of the receptor language. However, the form expresses a variety of meaning. The form relates to lexicon and grammar while meaning to semantics. Each language has its own distinctive forms for representing meaning. In translation, meaning is the main point. Larson (1988:38) states that the implicit meaning is the meaning that

expresses something without being stated directly while explicit meaning that expresses as what it is.

As is known that public signs, usually in the form a few words, pictures, or words accompanied with a picture, function not only as a face of a city and nation, but also as a first calling card given to the foreigners. Moreover, public signs have definite functions as informing, warning, or directing. However, to our disappointment, mistranslations of the public signs are often presented in some places. As a special text whose function is strong and communicative purpose is quite clear, the translation of public signs should be based on the text's functions and the translators' purpose. In view of the fact that one can translate without knowing anything about linguistics, even as one can speak a language without being a student of the science of language, many persons have concluded that translation is scarcely even an aspect of applied linguistics. Rather, it has often been regarded only as a more complicated form of talking or writing, in which one decodes from one language and encodes into another. Nida (1982: 41) highlights that correctness must be determined by the extent to which the average reader for which a translation is intended will be likely to understand it correctly. Moreover, we are not concerned merely with the possibility of his understanding correctly, but with the overwhelming likelihood of it. In other words, we are not content merely to translate so that the average receptor is likely to understand the message; rather than we aim to make certain that such a person is very unlikely to misunderstand it. Posing the question of correctness in this manner naturally implies that there will be different translations which can be called "correct." In fact, for the scholar who is himself well acquainted with the original, even the

most labored, literal translation will be correct," for he will not misunderstand it. On the other hand, in most large linguistic communities, especially when they employ so-called international languages spoken by millions of people, there are a number of socioeducational levels of speech and comprehension. This means that several different levels of translation, in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structures, are required, if all people are to have essentially equal opportunities to understand the message.

Public signs' translation is a special domain of translation studies, as it deals with the linguistic, cultural, and social features in both languages. In this era of modernity and globalization, the language of public signs is important as well as challenging, so it is not difficult to justify why we should study this discourse. It is important because public sign is one of the components of a linguistic landscape (Landry & Bourhis, 1997:25) that marks a public space in a given territory. In Parapat and Bukit Lawang, bilingual Indonesian-English public signs for tourism are used extensively in public places such as hotels, restaurants, shopping centers, tourist attractions to convey information to the reader of the two languages. It is not easy to translate the public signs due to the constraint of physical space, and the expressions used on public signs are usually succinct, conveying essential information in just a few words (Ko, 2010:1). The translation of public signs can therefore be considered a special domain that requires appropriate strategies to convey the information from the source language to the target language effectively. In terms of translation strategies, there have been a number of translation theories that can be applied to analyze public sign for tourism and one of them is the equivalence theory

We can see many English texts in public signs in Parapat and Bukit Lawang as in accommodations, restaurants, and souvenir places. Parapat and Bukit Lawang as one of the tourist resorts places in North Sumatera, bilingual Indonesian-English public signs are used extensively at public places such as hotels, restaurants, shopping centers, parks, public amenities and places of tourist interest to convey information to the people both Indonesian and foreigners. Public signs have a number of distinctive features. For instance, they are mostly in the form of a single sheet of board, paper or metal, with clearly written words or drawings in large print for people to read or view from a distance. Due to the constraint of physical space, the expressions used on public signs are usually succinct, conveying essential information in just a few words, such as “Wet paint” and “No entry.” The translation of public signs can therefore be considered a special domain that requires appropriate strategies to convey the information from the source language to the target language effectively. Tourism is a typical field in which public signs need to be translated. Due to some special features of the Indonesian language used in tourism, the translation of such public signs presents unique challenges and creates a number of problems for the translators. Unnatural translation of public signs in English means a lot to alien tourists. The translator faces the formidable task of conveying to another culture the intricacies of the original, but to do that accurately would require innumerable footnotes and make the translation unreadable for the average person. So, the translator must try to transpose the meaning and underlying thought of the original into another language and cultural background, which ideally cannot be done. However, by its very definition, an ideal cannot be reached. The achievement is in the striving, not

in the perfect result. Standard English version of public signs that may perform intended functions should at least meet the following basic specifications: correct spelling, brief and concise language style, choice of appropriate words, use of frequent words and the consideration of cultural differences (Guo:2012). Yet, if we look carefully when walking along the streets in the city we live, when we are in stores, parks, hotels, etc. it is not difficult to find many problematic translations of public signs in many public places. These mistranslated public signs are just extremely embarrassing when a foreigner encounters them.

The characteristics of public signs translation determine its better accordance with that of the second level creation technique. In a sense, translated texts should be results of double reading and writing. The translated text is originally nontransparent text needing to be deciphered from source texts to translated texts, in other words, needing to be deconstructed and recreated from linguistic notation to translated texts. This text goes through an interlingual two dimensional reading process, which is much too complicated. In order to avoid misunderstanding, public signs need to be translated properly and carefully. Due to some special features of the Indonesian language used in tourism, the translation of such public signs presents unique challenges and creates a number of problems for translators.

Darwish (2000:10) highlights that translation is innate in that it is a skill can be acquired, but it is not natural. Darwish adds his explanation by giving analogy as following "Breathing underwater is not innate or natural. Try to breathe under water, and you will surely die." Translation is like flexibility in ballet dancing or the martial arts. We can work hard at stretching to increase the degree of

flexibility and suppleness in our joints, muscles and ligaments, but if we stop for a while, we are bound to lose the range of flexibility we had before. Stretching the body is innate, suppleness is innate, that is we can physically do them, but they are definitely not natural. Furthermore, Darwish (2000:2) highlights that translation in adults is not natural. It does not occur automatically unless the individual makes a conscious decision to translate. It also requires a developmental path, where the translators build upon their past experience and develop their skills to a certain level that allows them to translate efficiently. This view is supported by Bell (1991: 106) who confirms that many bilinguals who can function extremely well in two languages in clearly demarcated situational contexts often find it difficult to translate spontaneously between their languages without heavy interference. This is one reason why professional interpreters require special training for a task that does not necessarily come naturally, even if they were childhood bilinguals. Darwish (2000:3) confirms that translation is not natural because it requires a mental switch into the translation mode.

Naturalness can be understood as a set of requirements for the target language used (Shei: 2002) which makes the translation read naturally and fit the context. Shei (2002) adds that natural translation does not gravely spoil the general meaning of the text; nonetheless, to some extent, it distorts the writer's intention, disappoints readers for not meeting that set of requirements. Lan (2006:13) highlights that unnaturalness in translation can be observed from the linguistic angle, analyzing the clumsy use of words, expressions, grammatical structures. In translating the public signs, the use of words, and grammatical structures are important rules. To translate public signs into English, an

understanding of linguistic features of public signs is required to enable the researcher in analyzing public signs translation. Guo (2012) states that the basic characteristic of public signs in general must consider a correct grammar and spelling, with a short and clear language, a precise word choice, commonly used words, comprehend the cultural differences. Agreed to Guo, Kang & Zhang (2008:125) also state that public signs should use simple words or everyday language with short vocabularies, clear and brief. They argue that this is in accordance with the purpose of making public signs, that is to make people understand the message in a short time. It means that using unusual words, slang, or technical terms should be avoided. Understanding of linguistic features of public signs is required to enable the researcher in analyzing public signs in tourist resorts. The primary data shown there are inappropriate use of words and also grammatical structures in public signs both in Parapat and Bukit Lawang. Inappropriate use of words and grammatical structures are belongs to unnatural translation

One example of unnatural translation at Parapat was shown below.



Picture 1.1 The primary data for unnatural translation in Parapat

The analysis of this public signs was written below:

SL : *Ada Kamar*

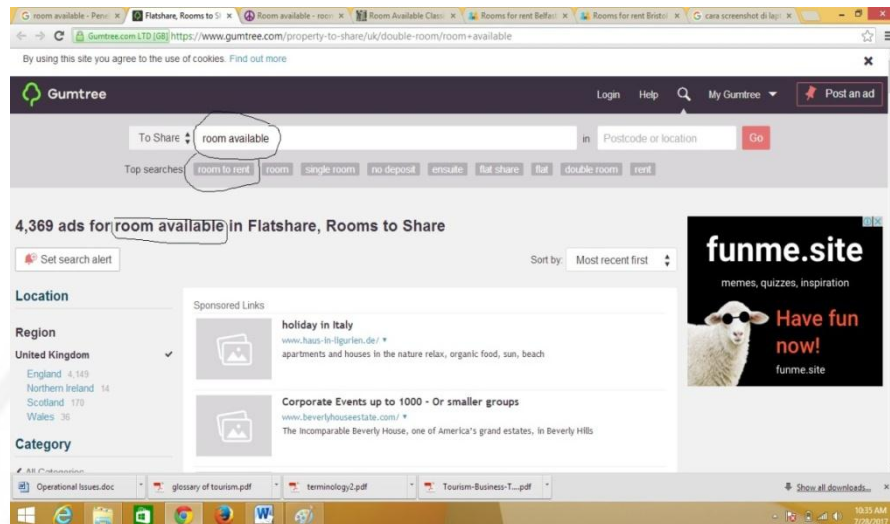
TL : *Have Room*

From the data above, the owner of the accommodation translated *ada kamar* into have room. By looking at the international advertisement, and asking at Word Reference Language Forums, to mention *ada kamar* in the accommodation such as hotel it should be *rooms for rent, a room available, and rooms available for rent.*

By looking for some International hotel, the English translation of *ada kamar* was seen below.



Picture 1.2 Bahrain Rooms Available; source from Bahrain



Picture 1.3 Ads for Room Available in Flatshare, Rooms to share

Based on the data above, it was seen how to mention *ada kamar* correctly, grammatically, and sounds naturally is by using *room available*, *room for rent*, and *room is available for rent*. Signs are common to be written in short form with be verbs or generally function words dropped e.g. waitress wanted, evenings and weekends which is actually a waitress is wanted here in the evening on the weekend, so room available is short for a room (to rent) is available. Available room is more like labeling a room (this is an available room) than a sign reading room is available to rent.

Newmark (1988) says “There is no universal naturalness. Naturalness depends on the relationship between the writer and the readership and the topic or situation (Newmark :1988:28). The English translation of *ada kamar* into *have room* sounds strange or unfamiliar with the text based on the situation in tourist resorts. Then, the data from a man who works at International Hotel in Singapore shows that the English translation of *ada kamar* into *have room* also sounds

strange or unfamiliar . That is why the research about unnatural in Indonesian-English translation of tourist resorts will be interesting topic to be discussed.

Here is another example of unnatural translation gotten from public signs in Bukit Lawang



Picture 1.4 The primary data for unnatural translation in Bukit Lawang

From the picture above, there was *Thank's For Coming*". Actually, the owner wanted to say thank you to the tourists for his coming. The owner wanted to say *terimakasih atas kunjungan anda*.

SL : *Terimakasih atas kunjung*

TL : *Thank's For Coming*

The use of apostrophe s is to show the possession of the things (Simmons: 2017). For example:

A woman's hat which has the same meaning as a woman has a hat. The hat belongs to the woman. Comparing with the public sign *Thank's For Coming*, there are two things sound unnatural.

1. *Thank's* ; there is no meaning *thank's* in English by looking at some dictionaries such as Oxford dictionary and also online dictionary. If the

owner use apostrophe s before thank “*thank’s For Coming*”, it may have meaning that thank is a noun and thank has something. In this text, there is no possessive belongs to thank

2. *Thank’s For Coming*. The use capital letters of *For*. Prepositions are only capitalized if they are used adjectivally or adverbially. For example the capitalization the word *up* in a title that read *Squiggly Looked Up a Word*” but not in a title that read *Squiggly Walked up the Mountain*. That is the short version of the formatting recommended by the Chicago Manual of Style.

The best way to represent *terima kasih atas kunjungan anda* was *Thank you for coming*. Koltai (2013) mentions there are various reasons why people would want to express thanks to guests. The right words picked and remembered will make everyone feel like that we are really appreciate what they have done for us. One way to express it is by saying *thank you for coming*. In addition, thank you for coming is a participle, similar to *I am grateful that you come*.

The phenomenon of many mistakes found in the English translation of public signs for tourism in Parapat and Bukit Lawang has been chosen on this subject matter. It is necessary to identify and solve the problems translating public signs for tourism that spread all over the city since tourism plays an important role in boosting the economic development in Indonesia.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as the follows:

- a. How are the unnatural Indonesian-English translation of public signs found in Parapat and Bukit Lawang?
- b. What are the causes of unnatural Indonesian-English translations of public signs?
- c. What techniques should be used to avoid unnatural translation?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problems, this study aimed at:

- a. Finding out the unnatural Indonesian-English translation of public signs at the two tourist resorts (Parapat and Bukit Lawang)
- b. Finding the causes of the unnatural Indonesian-English translation
- c. Finding the suitable techniques to avoid the unnatural Indonesian-English translation.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study will find the unnatural Indonesian English translation of public signs at the two resorts (Parapat and Bukit Lawang)

1.5 The Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to be relevant and useful theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, the findings are expected to enrich the theories of unnatural translation and also it will be valuable as reference for students who want to do a further research on unnatural translation in other fields.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to contribute faithful information about unnatural translation for students, teachers or lecturers. For students, they can enrich their knowledge about unnatural translation. For teachers and lectures, they can use it to support the teaching and learning materials related to the unnatural translation.