

## **Translation Based on Ogden and Richard's Semantic Triangle Theory: How the Idea Is Connected to Real-World Objects**

**Rizka Aprilya**

Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru

**Afriyanti Simamora**

Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru

**Vira Budiarti**

Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru

**Yona Dwi Tirta Syafitri**

Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru

### **Abstract**

This paper aims to analyze the process of translators in translation based on semantic triangle theory in Indonesia. It parts of its intentions to provide some references for related researchers which focus on the theory of reference triangle as it is one of the important theories in Semantic field. The exploration of this study sees the reference triangle is a theory well known by the scholars for decades able to explain how words convey meaning. This study addressed that “the how” of this theory workings are like words that suggest ideas in the listener's mind. Which explains how the idea is connected to real-world objects. The triangle reference somehow continues to be used as a model for semiotic relationships into the 21st century, this theory also has several potential deficiencies that could limit its application. Which means that this theory still applicable to be used as a current meaning-framework in translation based semantic.

### **Keywords**

translation, triangle of meaning theory, semantic

---

### **Corresponding author:**

Rizka Aprilya, Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, Indonesia, 28265  
Email: ra.aprilya@gmail.com

## INTRODUCTION

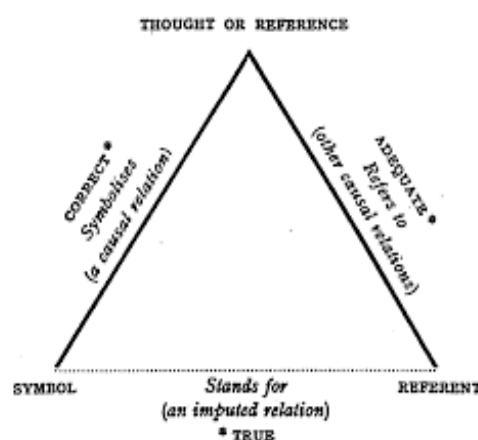
Translation is a transfer process, which aims to convert the written text of the source language into the most acceptable target language, so that it requires syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic understanding as well as the ability to analyze the source language. Hartman and Strock (1973) stated that translation is the transfer of thoughts and ideas from B<sub>Sa</sub> into B<sub>Su</sub>, both oral and written languages, whether they already have orthography (written system or not, be it sign language for deaf people or not). Linguistics as a perspective and method for the study of translation (Álvarez-Mosquera & Marín-Gutiérrez, 2018; Angelis, 2007). The theory of "semantic triangles" in semantics is a positive significance for the translation of teaching and research (Bauer, 2003; Beeching, 2016).

The translator's action is to translate one language into another language. First the translator changes the symbolic meaning from the source language to the appropriate object, and then by the translator's thinking into another language. Semantic triangle is the relationship between three forms and the sound of the sign language.

Semiotics theory is a trichotomic semiotic theory developed from the Saussure theory and Barthes theory in which there is a developmental relationship between the Signified and the Signatory (signifier) where the marker is then divided into two namely the actual function / object properties and the signifier itself. Markers are connotations of markers, while appliances are denotations of markers. In this theory Markers are meanings, concepts, ideas, while markers represent images describing devices, physical explanations of objects, conditions of objects/objects, and tend (but not always) features of shapes, spaces, surfaces and volumes that have suprasegment certain (rhythm, colour, texture, etc.) and the device is an actual (object/ function).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Ogden and Richards (1923) has stated that the meaning has been analyzed into three parts as stated in the tattoo above, namely symbol, thought, and object. These components are related to one another, directly related to and indirectly. The figure below is a semiotic triangle tattoo introduced by Odgen and Richards.



**Figure. Semiotic triangle by Odgen and Richards**

Semiotic triangle theory (semiotic triangle) has been introduced by Ogden and Richards. Ogden & Richards describe the elements of meaning with the semiotic triangle as follows. He explained that the meaning (mind or reference) is the relationship between the symbol (symbol) with the reference or referent. The relationship between symbols and references is indirect, while the relationship between symbols with references and references with references is direct (Anhua, 2013 ; Bellés-Calvera, 2018).

Relating to the elements of meaning involved there are signs and symbols, concepts, and references. The concept or reference is meaning as the relationship between the symbol and its reference. The meaning itself contains certain aspects in the form of theme, taste, tone, and mandate. It has been mentioned that meaning is the relationship between the symbol and its reference. This limit of meaning is the same as the term thought or reference (Ogden & Richards, 1923) or concept (Bowen, Winczewski, & Collins, 2017; Lyons, 1968). The relationship between meaning and symbol and reference is the same, which is direct.

Through this semiotic triangle theory, they tried to explain the meaning in terms of its components. They have solved the meaning of the three components namely symbols (words), thoughts (concepts/references) and references (things). They have used the triangle to represent the three components of meaning. Symbols are linguistic elements, namely words and verses, references are objects while thoughts are concepts (Burnett, 2019; Noth, 1995). In the semiotic triangle tattoo, there is a dashed line between symbols (words) and references (things). This shows that the symbols and references (objects) have no absolute relationship.

The relationship between the angles of a triangle can be expressed more precisely in causal terms as follows:

- 1) This problem arouses the mind of the writer.
- 2) The writer refers to the problem to the symbol.
- 3) Symbols arouse the reader's mind.
- 4) The reader refers to the symbol back to this problem

An example of the understanding of the semantic triangle theory is that we do not know why animals that are scaly and live in water are called 'fish'. The word 'fish' does not affect the characteristics found in the animal. Therefore, the symbol (words) of "fish" has no relation to the object to which it refers to the animal. Ogden and Richards argue that symbols (words) first symbolize the mind (concept). Then the mind will refer to the object of reference.

Furthermore, the relationship between symbols and thoughts and thoughts with reference is a direct relationship (no dotted line) and thought (concept) is a link between symbols and references (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, & Richardson, 2018; Liyuan & Yuetian, 2009). For example, if a speaker says "durian" (symbol), then the listener will imagine in his mind (concept) the shape of the fruit "durian" (the object referred to). This semiotic triangle is also closely related to the naming process. Naming is a process of symbolizing a concept that refers to references that are outside the

language (Augustine, 2011; Chan & Wong, 2021). The symbol is a word in a language when the object referred to is something that is indicated by the symbol that may be in the form of objects, activities, concepts and events.

The naming relationship between the words and the object being referred to is quite real. However, a symbol which is a word with something which is symbolized is arbitrary and there is no obligatory relationship between the two. Naming is conventional among members of community groups (Bublitz & Norrick, 2011).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The method used a descriptive qualitative to develop a triangle reference theory. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) defined descriptive method is a method of checking the status of a group of people, objects, and a set of conditions, systems of thought or class of events at the moment. The purpose of this descriptive study is to make a description, or painting of facts, properties, and systematic, factual and accurate relationships between the phenomena under investigation. By finding the references related to triangle theory, the author elaborated in detail how this theory can be worked for translators in choosing the right words while translating literature or any written works.

According to Sugiyono (2007), qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of post-positivism, used to examine natural conditions of objects, (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is as a key instrument, the sampling of data sources is done by purposive and snowball, collection techniques with tri-estimation (combined), data analysis is inductive or qualitative and the results of qualitative research emphasize the meaning rather than generalization. Based on this definition, the author tried to collect data obtained from other references and literature studies, which support the author's findings while elaborating this triangle theory.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Relationship between semantic triangles and translators**

The translator's action is to translate a type of language into another type of language. From the viewpoint of the semantic triangle theory process, the translator first converts the symbolic meaning of the source language to the appropriate object, and then with the translator's thinking to another language. This process can be described in Figure 2. This is represented by the semantic triangle theory. Translators must experience the process of thinking; the most extensive translator is with the symbol 'a', after the translator's thought directly to the symbol B, not after the object in the process. If the symbol 'a' refers to an object and the symbol B refers to an object, or the symbol refers to an object in another symbol that is in a culture does not exist, how? In the process of learning foreign languages, students tend to have the concept of "fixed equivalents". Many people set aside text from special efforts to memorize words to reflect ideas, so that memory that is equivalent to words, in fact, will be a barrier to understanding and using language foreign. For example, in China, the word "Fenmu" is generally translated into a grave or tomb. However, these two objects can only be

considered the same, but not the same. Sometimes, the difference will cause a misunderstanding.

### **Relationship between Semantic Triangles and Readers**

Under normal circumstances, the writer writes with an imaginary audience in his mind. He did not think about the specific acceptance of the personal characteristics of objects, but for this population general historical background, cultural characteristics, thinking and understanding, language habits were realized. This similarity is good, and the effect is good. Obviously, the translator must also consider the expected effect of the target text with the group. However, the source language reader and the historical background of the target reader, cultural characteristics, thoughts and habits of the language are not the same, for the same thing and even have the opposite understanding. A prominent example is the "Chinese" dragon. It is a manifestation of luck, noble, without wings, but can enter the water and fly and fly. However, the western "dragon" is a manifestation of evil.

The two are different and they are not the same. If Chinese "dragon" only translates into a dragon is clearly not enough. As a translator, in the choice to translate the text the reader must be in a certain group of people as their recipient's imagination to the general public background, culture, thinking habits. The reader cannot continue reading the article unattractive and unreasonable, is still lacking to accept the views expressed in the article. Even if the text is chosen, the translator must always be from the perspective of the target reader to translate the works. Because the reader in reading the first look is a symbol of the text, then after the brain thinking, intentionally or unintentionally, text symbols become objects in the world of experience and by way of thinking eventually to understand the relationship between various things and events. Therefore, when the source text reader and the target text reader understand the same thing in different ways, a misunderstanding will result.

### **Selection between Original Meanings and Extended Meanings**

Expansion of meaning is the process of interpreting an example of a basic word which originally had a special meaning to be of general or broad significance. As for several factors that expand the meaning, among others, are grammatical processes, the development of terms in Indonesian, and so on.

The expansion of meaning can also be called the meaning of generalization. In addition, one of the types of the meaning of this word is also one of the types of shifting meaning other than the meaning of specialization, the meaning of synesthesia and for example, the meaning of amelioration, the meaning of exploration and examples, and examples of the meaning of association. Examples of the expansion of meaning are the word head. Initially, the meaning of this word was a part of the body at the top. However, the meaning of this word is expanded to be the leader or chairman of an institution.

The original meaning is explicit meaning in nature. This reasonable meaning is the meaning in accordance with what it is. The original meaning is an understanding which is contained in an objective word. Often the original meaning is called conceptual meaning. The word 'eat', for example, means to put something in your mouth, chew, and swallow. The meaning of eating like that is the original meaning.

The lexical meaning of the word often contains original meaning and expanded meaning. When an English word is translated into Chinese, it can be translated into a number of Chinese words. When choosing which one needs to understand language knowledge, including the language culture, we must consider the original meaning and expanded meaning. Semantic triangle theory is a fundamental theory that can effectively guide the practice of translation. In sentence translations, it often fails to follow the original meaning to one in translation. Because one word appears in a sentence, it can also produce relevant extensions. Examples are "dogs", American dogs and Chinese dogs are no different, four legs two ears can wag their tails, but emotionally there are significant differences emotionally. Americans love dogs and thinks that it is a lucky dog , and every dog has its day. The Chinese not only eat dog meat but also consider dogs to be inferior creatures, such as "worse than dogs and pigs", "runaway dogs" are ruthless curse words.

## CONCLUSION

Translators must pay more attention to the reader's response in the translation process. In the case of words that can cause readers to misunderstand, translators must concern choosing original or extended meanings. Based on the semantic triangle theory, translators can provide target articles with "loyalty", "expressive" and "elegance".

The use of the reference triangle theory in translation can be exemplified as, we see trees, see are real objects. And at the same time, our mind will appear "meaning" from "tree", is "semantic triangle" in "truth"; and if we want to tell others what we see "objects", "trees", we need to go through the "form (tree) / tone" sign language to express.

As a result, although the triangle theory has several shortcomings in its implementation, the triangle theory seems still to be used as a benchmark for language research in the semantic field to date, especially for translators.

## REFERENCES

- Álvarez-Mosquera, P., & Marín-Gutiérrez, A. (2018). Implicit Language Attitudes toward Historically White Accents in the South African Context. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 37(2), 238-248. doi: 10.1177/0261927X17718349
- Angelis, G. D. (2007). *Third Or Additional Language Acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Anhua, F. (2013 ). On Translation of Object Names Based on Semantic Triangle Theory. *Journal of Nantong Textile Vocational Technology College*, 4, 41-44.

- Augustine, D. C. (2011). Semiotics for Beginners. from <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem02.html>
- Bauer, R. (2003). *The cultural geography of colonial American literatures: Empire, travel, modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beeching, K. (2016). *Pragmatic Markers in British English: Meaning in Social Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bellés-Calvera, L. (2018). Teaching Music in English: A Content-Based Instruction Model in Secondary Education. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated-Laclil*, 11(1), 109–139.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*. Boston: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.
- Bowen, J. D., Winczewski, L. A., & Collins, N. L. (2017). Language Style Matching in Romantic Partners' Conflict and Support Interactions. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 36(3), 263-286.
- Bublitz, W., & Norrick, N. (2011). *Foundations of Pragmatics*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co.
- Burnett, H. (2019). Signalling games, sociolinguistic variation and the construction of style. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 42(5), 419-450.
- Cameron, D., Frazer, E., Harvey, P., Rampton, M. B. H., & Richardson, K. (2018). *Researching Language: Issues of Power and Method*. London: Routledge.
- Chan, C. K., & Wong, H. Y. (2021). Students' Perception of Written, Audio, Video and Face-to-face Reflective Approaches for Holistic Competency Development. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 146978742110544., 0(0). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14697874211054449>
- Hartman, R. R. K., & Strock, F. C. (1973). *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. London: Prentice Hall International. (UK), Ltd.
- Liyuan, P., & Yuetian, X. (2009). Rectifying the Classic Semantic Triangle. *Foreign Language Research*, 4(1), 51-54.
- Lyons, J. (1968). *Introduction to theoretical linguistics*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Noth, W. (1995). *Handbook of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Ogden, C. K., & Richards, I. A. (1923). *The Meaning of Meaning*. Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Sugiyono. (2007). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Bandung: Alfabeta.