**Indonesian – English Dissimilarities and Confusions**

**Contrastive Analysis**

**examples**

**Verbal system (governance, tense, mood)**

(think of the underlying question)

I am going to school [Where are you going?] (progressive)

I go to school. [Where do you go every morning?] (repetitive motion/condition)

I go to school. [Why do you not have a job?]

Dia pergi ke sekolah:

He is going to school.

He goes to school (every morning)

He went to school.

He has gone to school. (sudah? telah?)

He will go to school. (Does this match: Dia akan pergi ke sekolah?)

He will have gone to school. (Dia akan pergi ke sekolah.??)

**Prepositional Usage (verbal governance or noun governance or situation)**

Choosing *at* versus *in*

At school, in school, to school, for school

At the school, in the school, to the school, for the school

Choosing *of* versus *from* (versus to)

Saya ibu dari tujuh anak.

~~I am mother from seven children.~~

I am (the) mother of seven children.

I am mother to seven children.

There are seven children from this mother.

Di mana, di sana, di sini – no “of”

Infinitives require the word “to” (technically not a preposition)

Saya ingin (mau) membayar. I want TO pay.

The second verb of a stacked set is most often an infinitive.

Dia suka membaca dan menulis. (He likes to read and write.)

He works in order to live.

**Rendering *yang* in English**

There is no real equivalent, given the disparate use of *yang* in Indonesian. Here are some observations:

*Yang* can be used to introduce a relative clause: which is, who is, who are, of which, of whom, etc. In this case, a relative clause is required in English.

*Yang* can be used as an intensifier, for which no equivalent exists in English, except perhaps, where appropriate, to italicize the emphasized word. In this case, emphasis could be added in English but no special wording.

*Yang* can be used between a modifier and its nominal antecedent. English does not have an equivalent syntactical feature. In some cases, however, *yang* does change meaning, which requires a different lexical item in English.

orangtua … parents vs orang yang tua … old people

**Rendering nya in English**

*Nya*, when referring to individual personal possession would be the equivalent of *his* or *her* in English.

Lampu kamernya tidak berfungsi.

The lamp in her room does not work.

*Nya* can be used as an intensifier, referring to non-owned items. This usage has no precise equivalent in English and generally is not expressed.

Ini supnya enak.

This soup is delicious.

**How do you get it right?**

Ask the underlying question that produced the statement?

Consider the relationship among the words.

“Break away” – leave Bahasa behind and use those English expressions that you have learned, then learn more. Don’t try to translate, especially not word for word.

Read and listen A LOT – with thoughtfulness and with abandon. Notice connector words, means of emphasis, relative clause construction, management of adjectives, and verbal governance.