

Translation Analysis of Noun Phrases in I Wonder Why: Kangaroos Have Pouches and Other Questions About Baby Animals

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Abstrak – Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis teknik penerjemahan frasa nomina serta kualitas terjemahannya dalam buku *I Wonder Why: Kangaroos Have Pouches and Other Questions About Baby Animals*. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Sumber data terdiri dari buku versi bahasa Inggris sebagai teks sumber (SL) dan buku versi bahasa Indonesia sebagai teks sasaran (TL). Teknik analisis data mengacu pada teori teknik penerjemahan oleh Molina dan Albir (2002), serta model penilaian kualitas terjemahan oleh Nababan et al. (2012). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 14 teknik penerjemahan yang digunakan, dengan teknik paling dominan adalah established equivalence. Teknik established equivalence digunakan untuk menyesuaikan konteks agar lebih mudah dipahami oleh pembaca anak-anak. Temuan hasil evaluasi menunjukkan bahwa terjemahan frasa nomina dalam buku ini tergolong berkualitas tinggi. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa secara umum, terjemahan mampu menyampaikan makna secara tepat, dapat diterima dalam norma kebahasaan Indonesia, dan mudah dipahami oleh pembaca sasaran. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemilihan teknik penerjemahan yang tepat sangat memengaruhi kualitas hasil terjemahan, terutama dalam teks anak-anak yang menuntut kesederhanaan bahasa namun tetap mempertahankan ketepatan makna. Temuan ini dapat menjadi referensi bagi penerjemah dalam memahami strategi penerjemahan frasa nomina, khususnya dalam genre buku anak.

Kata Kunci: *Buku Aku Ingin Tahu Mengapa: Kanguru Memiliki Kantong dan Banyak Pertanyaan Lain Tentang Bayi Hewan, Frasa Nomina, Kualitas Terjemahan, Teknik Terjemahan.*

Abstract - This study focuses on analyzing the translation techniques of noun phrases and their translation quality in the book *I Wonder Why: Kangaroos Have Pouches and Other Questions About Baby Animals*. The method used is descriptive qualitative. The data sources consisted of the English version of the book as the source text (SL) and the Indonesian version as the target text (TL). The data analysis technique refers to the theory of translation techniques by Molina and Albir (2002) and the translation quality assessment model by Nababan et al. (2012). The results show that 14 translation techniques were used, with the most dominant technique being established equivalence. Established equivalence is used to adjust the context for easier understanding by child readers. The evaluation findings indicate that the translation of noun phrases in this book is of high quality. This indicates that, in general, the translation conveys meaning accurately, is acceptable within Indonesian linguistic norms, and is easily understood by the target readers. This study concludes that choosing the right translation technique significantly influences the quality of the translation, especially in children's texts, which require simplicity of language while maintaining accuracy of meaning. These findings can be a reference for translators in understanding the translation strategies of noun phrases, especially in the children's book genre..

Key words: *Children's Book I Wonder Why, Noun Phrase, Techniques Translation, Quality Translation,*

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INTRODUCTION

Children's early exposure to foreign languages, especially English, is widely encouraged because it helps them access broader knowledge and develop global literacy skills. Their learning journey typically begins with vocabulary books and gradually progresses to picture-based knowledge books that introduce fundamental scientific and everyday concepts in a visually engaging manner. The *I Wonder Why* series is an example of a children's nonfiction book designed to attract young readers through simple explanations, colorful illustrations, and age-appropriate scientific content. The availability of both English and Indonesian versions further supports bilingual literacy, offering children the opportunity to compare vocabulary and meaning across languages. Because translation involves mediating between linguistic and cultural systems, it must ensure balanced meaning transfer rather than mere word substitution (Toury, 2021 in Fauzi, 2022; Gutami et al., 2021).

Noun phrases serve as key linguistic units in presenting scientific information, object descriptions, and conceptual explanations in children's books. However, Indonesian learners frequently struggle with English noun phrases



due to limited understanding of phrase structure and the significant differences between English and Indonesian grammatical patterns (Simanjuntak, 2020 in Aulia et al., 2023). English typically applies a modifier–head (MH) structure, whereas Indonesian follows a head–modifier (HM) pattern, creating potential challenges during translation. According to Nurmalasari (2023) and Dawi et al. (2007), translators must possess strong syntactic awareness when transferring noun phrase structures to prevent distortion of meaning. This is particularly important in *I Wonder Why: Kangaroos Have Pouches and Other Questions About Baby Animals*, where noun phrases appear frequently and carry essential scientific information intended for young readers.

Several previous studies have examined noun phrase translation across various contexts, such as news captions (Fitria, 2023; Cabinet Secretariat Study, 2023) and children’s storybooks (ASEAN Children’s Storybook Study, 2023), drawing upon Molina and Albir’s (2002) translation techniques and the quality framework proposed by Nababan et al. (2012). While these studies demonstrate how translation techniques affect acceptability and readability, they seldom investigate how specific noun phrase structures influence translation accuracy in children’s scientific nonfiction. Furthermore, translations in children’s educational books require clearer wording and more accessible sentence structures than news texts or social media captions. This distinction highlights the need for research that directly addresses how noun phrases should be translated to maintain clarity, conceptual accuracy, and reading appeal for young audiences.

To bridge this gap, the present study examines the translation techniques used to translate noun phrases in *I Wonder Why: Kangaroos Have Pouches and Other Questions About Baby Animals* and evaluates the quality of their Indonesian equivalents. By focusing on accuracy, acceptability, and readability, this research aims to provide deeper insight into how linguistic structures are transferred across languages while maintaining suitability for children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to analyze translation techniques and translation quality of noun phrases in the children's knowledge book *I Wonder Why: Kangaroos Have Pouches and Other Questions About Baby Animals*. The data consist of noun phrases extracted from the English source text and their corresponding translations in the Indonesian target text. Data collection was conducted through several stages: identifying noun phrases in the source text, identifying their translations in the target text, classifying translation techniques based on Molina and Albir (2002), and validating the findings through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with two translation experts. In addition, a readability test was carried out by reading selected translated segments to three children aged 8–9 years. The analyzed data were organized into taxonomy and componential analysis tables. Data analysis followed Spradley’s (1980) ethnographic approach domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme analysis to evaluate accuracy, acceptability, and readability, as well as the cultural relevance of the translated noun phrases for young readers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of noun-phrase translations in *I Wonder Why: Kangaroos Have Pouches and Other Questions About Baby Animals* reveals the application of fourteen translation techniques that contribute to conveying clear and accessible meaning for young readers. These techniques include established equivalence, modulation, amplification, transposition, generalization, variation, reduction, description, discursive creation, linguistic compression, particularization, omission, and addition. The diverse use of techniques demonstrates the translator’s strategic effort to adapt English noun phrases into Indonesian while preserving the informational and educational qualities of the original text. Because the book is intended for children, the translator must consistently balance semantic accuracy with readability to ensure that learners can follow the content without difficulty. Therefore, each technique is chosen not only for linguistic equivalence but also for pedagogical clarity, resulting in translation outcomes that align with the characteristics of children’s literature.

Table 1. Translation Techniques Applied to Noun Phrases

No.	Translation Technique	Total	Percentage
1	Established equivalence	102	62 %
2	Modulation	17	10,3%
3	Amplification (explicitation)	14	8,5%
4	Transposition	11	6,7%

Table 1. Translation Techniques Applied to Noun Phrases

No.	Translation Technique	Total	Percentage
5	Generalization	6	3,63%
6	Variation	4	2,42%
7	Reduction	3	1,8%
8	Description	2	1,2%
9	Discursive Creation	2	1,2%
10	Linguistic compression	1	0,6%
11	Particularization	1	0,6%
12	Reduction (Omission)	1	0,6%
13	Amplification (Addition)	1	0,6%

Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the translation techniques applied to noun phrases. The data show that established equivalence dominates with 102 occurrences, accounting for 62 percent of all techniques. This predominance indicates that the translator frequently relies on familiar Indonesian expressions that already have established meaning within common usage. Such choices ensure immediate comprehension and reduce cognitive load for young readers. Techniques such as modulation and amplification also appear regularly, especially when the translator must adjust perspective or clarify referents that may otherwise seem vague. An example is the phrase *leave their babies*, which is rendered as *jarang pulang ke sarangnya* to align more naturally with Indonesian conceptual structures. Meanwhile, less frequent techniques such as reduction, description, and discursive creation are applied only when necessary, often to simplify or reorganize information so that the narrative flows smoothly for children.

In addition to the major techniques, several minor techniques such as linguistic compression, particularization, omission, and addition are found, although their instances are comparatively few. Their selective use reflects specific contextual needs in the source text, especially when simplification is required to maintain readability. For example, the noun phrase *every other day* is compressed into *dua hari sekali*, which, although introducing a slight semantic shift, offers a clearer temporal reference for younger readers. These adjustments illustrate the challenges inherent in translating children's literature, in which literal accuracy must sometimes be subordinated to conceptual accessibility. Consequently, the translator must carefully weigh the risks and benefits of modifying noun phrases so that meaning remains sufficiently preserved while ensuring the information remains understandable for the book's intended audience.

Table 2. Technique And Quality Translation

Translation Technique Of Noun Phrase	Translation Quality									Total
	Accuracy			Acceptable			Readability			
	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	
Established equivalence	98	4	0	102	0	0	102	0	0	102
Modulation	8	9	0	16	1	0	16	1	0	17
Amplification (explicitation)	13	1	0	14	0	0	14	0	0	14
Transposition	4	6	1	8	3	0	8	3	0	11
Generalization	4	2	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	6
Variation	3	1	0	1	3	0	1	3	0	4
Reduction	0	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	3
Description	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2
Discursive Creation	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
Linguistic compression	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Particularization	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1

Reduction (Omission)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Amplification (Addition)	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	132	28	5	154	9	2	154	9	2	165

Table 2 presents the relationship between translation techniques and translation quality, assessed through accuracy, acceptability, and readability. The analysis of 140 noun phrases reveals that established equivalence overwhelmingly dominates with 102 occurrences, all of which achieved the highest scores in all three categories, confirming excellent translation quality. Modulation appears 17 times, with most receiving high scores (eight rated “3” for accuracy and nine rated “2”), indicating generally successful adaptation of meaning. Amplification through explicitation, found in 14 instances, consistently yields accurate, acceptable, and readable translations. Transposition shows more variability; while most cases perform well, one case is rated low in accuracy and two receive reduced acceptability and readability due to unnecessary structural shifts. Generalization and variation, though less frequent, maintain high clarity and accuracy, demonstrating that these techniques were used judiciously. Less frequent techniques such as reduction, description, discursive creation, and several single-instance techniques show that the translator applied them only when required for contextual, stylistic, or grammatical reasons.

A closer examination of the quantitative results reinforces the strong performance of established equivalence in delivering accurate and natural expressions. Out of 165 accuracy ratings in Table 2, 132 fall into the highest category, confirming that the translator preserved meaning in most noun phrases. Errors primarily arise from techniques like omission, compression, or excessive modulation that unintentionally alter meaning. For instance, translating *this lazy mum* merely as *ia* results in the loss of descriptive information, weakening narrative nuance. Similarly, translating *every other day* as *dua hari sekali* introduces a specific interval absent in the original. These findings underscore the need for careful calibration when applying techniques that inherently modify semantic content. While such choices may improve readability, they can also reduce precision, particularly in educational texts that depend on accurate details to support scientific understanding.

Table 3. Accuracy Levels of Noun-Phrase Translation

No.	Accuracy level	Total	Percentage
1	Accurate	396	86,7%
2	Less accurate	56	12,3%
3	Inaccurate	5	1,09%

Table 3 summarizes the accuracy levels of the noun-phrase translations, showing that 86.7 percent fall into the accurate category. This high percentage indicates that most noun phrases maintain their intended meaning in Indonesian. Translations such as *three years* into *tiga tahun lebih* and *a type of ape* into *sejenis kera* reflect effective meaning preservation and alignment with Indonesian usage. However, 12.3 percent are categorized as less accurate due to partial loss of meaning, typically resulting from omitted relational or descriptive elements. Meanwhile, 1.09 percent of the translations fall into the inaccurate category, often due to clearer semantic distortion. These inaccuracies reveal the challenges encountered when adjusting complex noun phrases into simpler forms for young readers while attempting to maintain essential semantic components.

Additional inaccuracies emerge when modulation is applied more extensively than necessary. For example, translating *every other day* into *dua hari sekali* simplifies the temporal reference but alters the specific alternation implied in the original phrase. Such shifts demonstrate the complexity of translating temporal and descriptive expressions, where exact equivalence is often difficult to achieve without compromising naturalness. In the context of children’s literature, this balance is especially critical because young readers rely heavily on explicit cues to understand unfamiliar concepts. Thus, the translator must consider not only linguistic equivalence but also cognitive processing, ensuring that children can interpret the text accurately while maintaining engagement with the material.

Table 4. Acceptability Levels of Noun-Phrase Translation

No.	Accuracy level	Total	Percentage
1	Acceptability	462	96%
2	Less acceptability	18	3,73%

3	Not acceptable	2	0,41%
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Table 4 shows the acceptability levels of the translated noun phrases, with 96 percent classified as acceptable. This demonstrates that the majority of translations conform to Indonesian grammatical, lexical, and stylistic conventions. High acceptability is essential in children's literature, where unnatural or awkward phrasing can disrupt comprehension. The 3.73 percent of less acceptable translations result from reduced descriptive detail, such as the simplification of this lazy mum into ia, which removes meaningful characterization. The two cases categorized as not acceptable involve referential mismatches that significantly distort meaning, such as translating their young as sarangnya. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining clear referential accuracy to avoid misleading young readers who may interpret such expressions literally.

Table 5. Readability Levels of Noun-Phrase Translation

	No. Accuracy level	Total	Percentage
1	High readability	462	96%
2	Medium Readability	18	3,73%
3	Low Readability	2	0,41%

Table 5 presents readability levels, showing that 96 percent of the noun phrases exhibit high readability, suggesting that the translations are clear, fluent, and accessible for young readers. The rendering of her chick as anaknya sendiri exemplifies how translation choices can support intuitive understanding. Medium readability appears in 3.73 percent of the data, commonly resulting from oversimplification that removes contextual information necessary for a fuller understanding of the situation described. The translations classified as low readability, making up only 0.41 percent, usually omit crucial descriptive elements that disrupt logical flow. For instance, the omission of its mum's fur interrupts an otherwise coherent explanation of marsupial habits, potentially confusing readers who depend on detailed descriptions to grasp new scientific concepts. These cases underline the importance of retaining essential information to maintain narrative cohesion and conceptual clarity.

The overall findings from Tables 1 through 5 demonstrate that the translator consistently prioritizes clarity, naturalness, and accessibility, which are essential components of children's literature. Even when adjustments are made, such as through amplification or modulation, the primary intention remains to maintain narrative coherence and conceptual accuracy. These translation choices reflect a strong awareness of the target audience's cognitive level, ensuring that young readers can grasp scientific information without feeling overwhelmed by unfamiliar terminology.

Another important observation is that the translator effectively balances literal fidelity with interpretive flexibility. While established equivalence dominates, the controlled use of techniques like generalization, variation, and transposition shows adaptability in addressing linguistic differences between English and Indonesian. This balance ensures that the translated noun phrases remain both meaningful and contextually appropriate. Such strategic technique selection is especially important in educational material where both semantic precision and natural phrasing contribute to learning outcomes.

Overall, the analysis confirms that the translation of noun phrases in this book reaches a high level of quality across all measured dimensions. The translator demonstrates a well-calibrated approach that successfully integrates linguistic accuracy, cultural suitability, and readability tailored for young learners. This comprehensive alignment ensures that the Indonesian version retains the pedagogical function of the original text, making complex biological concepts more accessible while maintaining engaging and age-appropriate language.

CONCLUSION

This study reinforces the view that translating noun phrases requires not only an understanding of grammatical and lexical aspects, but also sensitivity to the culture, the purpose of the text, and the intended audience. Certain translation techniques tend to be used more frequently because they maintain a balance between meaning and form in the target language.

This indicates that although there are still some areas for improvement, particularly in terms of accuracy, the translation is generally acceptable and easily understood by the target readers, namely children. These findings also reinforce that the choice of dominant translation techniques, such as established equivalence, plays a crucial role in maintaining the stability of meaning, readability, and acceptability of the text in a balanced manner, so that the message from the source language can be conveyed accurately, easily understood, and in accordance with the

linguistic and cultural norms of the target readers.

Thus, the success of translating noun phrases depends on the accuracy in choosing the right strategy and the ability to present a communicative and contextual translation according to the characteristics of the target audience.

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