Translation techniques of Indonesian children's picture book: The Sacred Crocodile

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ABSTRACT

Translating a children's picture book is a challenging process. The focus of translating children's picture books is not only to transfer the meaning into the target language but also to guide the children to quickly understand the meaning of the sentences. Therefore, the translator must apply the appropriate sentence translation technique. This study aims to describe translation techniques used in translating Indonesian children's picture books into English. The data of this study are sentences taken from the Indonesian picture book "The Sacred Crocodile." The researchers used a comparative method to analyze the data. The finding shows that translators use five translation techniques by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) in translating sentences: literal translation, modulation, transposition, equivalence, and adaptation The literal translation is the most frequently used translation technique, followed by transposition. The literal translation is a technique by which the translator translates expressions word-for-word from SL into TL. The dominant use of literal translation indicates that the translator tried to make the sentences easily understood by children. For further study, the researcher may consider the psychological aspects and characteristics of the children in order to motivate the children to read an English story book.

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1. Introduction

Translation activities have been done for a long time in various fields. Its main activity is transferring the context of texts from one language to another. The context here means the words, ideas, and messages. The translation works help so many readers who speak different languages gain the knowledge or information from the targeted languages. According to Newmark (1987:5), translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. Translators should have a good understanding of both source and target languages in order to be able to deliver the message from the authors. They are not allowed to change the central message of the text as the primary job is translating, not adding or reducing information from the source text. In line with this, Bassnett (2014: 35-36) defined the study of translation should incorporate an examination of the movement of translated texts since the trajectory a text pursues can tell both culture from which it emanated and the culture into which it is received and the agency of the translator in delivering the text to the readers.

Among so many fields in the translation process, children's literature has become one of the most challenging fields of translation. Children's literature is different from adult literature in many ways. Compared with adult literature which is usually full of explanations and has complex sentences to

derive the meaning, children's literature is primarily short, uses simple sentences, encourages imagination, and some of them also have pictures in it. Referring to Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1998: 2), children's literature is good-quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children of those ages through prose and poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. Further, they also explained that the content of children's books includes amazingly diverse topics that are not a part of childhood but are of interest to children, such as dinosaurs, Egyptian mummies, and world records, and fighter planes.

Regarding linguistics ability, children have limited vocabulary and sentence structure than adults. Translators should better understand children's language development to accommodate them in learning a language, in this case, English. As Lathey (2016) believes that translating children's literature is an exploration of the many developmental and linguistic issues related to writing and translating for children, an audience that spans a period of enormous intellectual progress and affective change from birth to adolescence. It should become the primary consideration for the translators when the children are the target readers of the translation works.

Children's books mainly consist of text and pictures. Lathey explained that a picture book results from a relationship between text and images such that neither would make sense in isolation (2016: 58). The text in one scene or page is usually short and only consists of a few lines. The images or pictures with the text help build a solid connection to understand the text better. By reading the picture book, children can increase their literacy and imagination in creating the message.

Furthermore, Lathey (2016: 60-61) proposed several strategies for translating visual texts. First, in an illustrated book, examine the role and placement of illustrations in the source text and suggest to potential editors the replication of that relationship in the translated version. Illustrations are the most important thing in the picture book since it helps readers to interpret the story completely. The illustrations in the target text should not be too far from the source text. If the translator thinks that the illustrations need to change, they should communicate it with the editors to avoid the story's bias. Second, when working for a publisher who has commissioned a new set of illustrations, discuss the possibility of collaboration with the illustrator at the start of the project. It is essential to do this because most publishers have a specific timeline for publishing a book. Hence, both the publishers and translators need to discuss the illustrations for the first time to meet the wishes of both parties and the publishing deadline. Next, before translating a picture book for the first time, read prize-winning examples of the genre in languages the translators can access and, if possible, share them with children. This strategy will help the translators to know the children's responses to the translated picture book. It can also be used to guide how they will translate the picture book to meet the children's needs. Fourth, consider the harmony or counterpoint between text and image when translating a modern picture book on each double spread of the source text. Texts and images have a close relationship in the picture book. Both are corresponded to each other in making inferences about the story. Texts and images on each page should have harmony and counterpoint to build the story from the beginning until the end. Lastly, take care not to add text to a page where the author and illustrator deemed it unnecessary, and avoid the temptation to insert text to explain what is happening in the pictures. Translators, editors, and publishers should have a clear commitment to not interfere with the story's plot that is already done by the authors and translated by the translators to avoid misleading the story.

As stated before, translating children's literature is challenging. The translators must understand the children's language development and use many techniques to produce high-quality text for children. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995:31) proposed seven strategies for translating, which were divided into two main types: direct and oblique translation. Direct translation is used when the translated text elements are similar in both the source and target languages. Unlike direct translation, oblique translation allows translators strict control over the reliability of their work. It can be done by changing the meaning or playing with the grammar and style to translate the texts. The first three techniques belong to direct translation and the last four belong to oblique translation.

The first technique is borrowing. Borrowing translation is simply using the target language's source language words or phrases. It is the most straightforward technique used in translation. The use of the source language word or phrase is for the sake of style and the message. If the translators find the concept discussed in the source text is relatively unknown to the target readers, then they

can use this technique in translating it. For example, the word 'menu' in English is translated to 'menu' in Bahasa Indonesia. There is no need to change it as the word can be accepted and understood in the target language.

The next technique is calque. Calque translation is quite similar to borrowing. The difference is in the borrowing; the translators use the word as it is, while in the calque, the translators need to translate word-by-word into the target language by considering the source language. The third is a literal translation, translating the source language word-by-word into the target language by considering the grammar and idiomatic of the target language. It is accepted if the translator uses the exact structure of the source language as the target language. For example, "I can do it" is translated into "*aku bisa melakukannya*." Both sentences have the same structure, and the meaning is not changing.

The next technique, transposition, is categorized as a high translation technique. This translation technique replaces the class of the word with another word without changing the meaning of the word. The point of this technique is to change the word class, so as long as the meaning is the same, the translators can use every word to express it. For example, "She announced she would resign" changed to "She announced her resignation." The word "would resign" and "resignation" has the same meaning, but the second one has a higher class in the word structure than the first word.

The fifth technique is modulation. Modulation translation is translating the source text by considering and changing the target language's point of view. It means from which point of view the sentences are seen. This change can be justified when translation results in a grammatically correct utterance but is considered unsuitable, unidiomatic, or awkward in the target language. Another translation technique that can be used is equivalence. Equivalence translation uses different stylistic and structural methods in the target language. The aim is to make the target readers understand the translation in their language easier. For example, the English word "Ouch" is translated into Bahasa Indonesia as "*Aduh*" as the Indonesian people are more familiar with the word "*aduh*" than "ouch."

The last technique is adaptation. Adaptation translation is used when the type of situation the source language message refers to is unknown in the target language culture. In this case, translators adapt new situations in the target language to match the situation or culture in the source language. For instance, "foie gras" translated as "*hati bebek*" in Bahasa Indonesia to meet the understanding of Indonesian people as "foie grass" is not available in Indonesian culture.

The above translation techniques from Vinay and Darbelnet are strategically used in translating texts. Translators can use a certain technique or combine several techniques in one sentence. The crucial point for translators is to analyze the needs in translating particular texts and the target readers of the translation work before deciding which techniques from Vinay and Darbelnet will help them most during the translation process. Saridaki (2021) mentioned that Vinay and Darbelnet's translation techniques are systematic and well managed in organizing the recorded translation events into some categories based on the techniques used. Children's picture book as one of the translation targets seems to be relevant to analyze using Vinay and Darbelnet's translation techniques to show the systematic techniques used by translators in translating the text.

There are some researches investigating the use of translation strategy of Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) used by translators such as: Sugyaningsih and Mardiana (2017), Aveling (2005), Damayanti *et al*. (2020), Yulianita and Yulianti (2021), Hadithya (2014), Alqunaibet (2019), Fitria (2020), Nago (2018). Sugyaningsih and Mardiana (2017) described the most common Vinay and Darbelnet's translation techniques used in the Indonesian text about Javanese culture showed that borrowing is the most used technique in the translation text. However, other techniques such as calque, equivalence, and modulation are still used in limited sentences in the translation text. Aveling (2005), in his research about translation in the short stories of Umar Kayam, A Thousand Fireflies in Manhattan, revealed that the translator mostly applied literal and borrowing techniques in translating the story. However, calque and adaptation techniques are also sometimes used by the translator in very few incidences. Damayanti *et al*. (2020) researched the translation of compound words in the book entitled "The Wings of Joy," which also analyzed the translation techniques of Vinay and Darbelnet used in the translation book and found that the most technique applied is a literal translation. The translators do not need to spend much time translating the text as they find that the source text is not complicated and need to transfer it grammatically and idiomatically into

the target language. On the other hand, Yulianita and Yulianti (2021), who researched translation techniques used in Indonesian fabels, found that equivalence is the most used technique to translate the story. It showed that the writers give their best effort to translate the story by adjusting the actual situation or culture into Indonesian culture to make it easier to understand by the Indonesian readers. Based on the studies mentioned earlier the translation strategies proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) were used in translating the stories proposed for adult reader, especially those related to culture. Whereas, the studies that investigate translation techniques in translating children's literature (Hasturkoglu, 2020; Chunhua, 2014; Sabzalipour, 2015 and Nagmeh-Abbaspour and Mahadi, 2015) that used Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation strategies were still limited and difficult to find. With this consideration, the researchers want to determine what Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation strategies are used in translating children's picture books. A storybook for children which has images to illustrate the text.

2. Methods

This study employed content analysis technique in which enables researcher to study written contents, such as stories, novels, or textbooks objectively and systematically (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2007). In this study, the data of this research are the sentences from the children's picture book entitled The Sacred Crocodile from West Papua, written in Bahasa Indonesia by Dian K. and translated into English by Dono Sunardi (2017).

The Sacred Crocodile book is a folklore series from 34 provinces, and this series originates from West Papua. This story was written by Dian K. and translated by Dono Sunardi. This book consists of 32 pages in the form of a bilingual book. Each page consists of 2 to 6 short sentences, which are very easy for children to read as this book's target. Children prefer to read books with pictures to illustrate the story. In general, they find it difficult to be interested in reading a book with many sentences and no pictures provided. This book tells the story of a character named Towjatuwa, who loves his wife very much. Towjatuwa's wife is currently pregnant and will soon give birth. However, until then, the wife did not give birth and got excruciating contractions. Towjatuwa sought advice from a neighbor who often helps women give birth. He gave the advice to look for a rock located in the Tami River. Without thinking, Towjatuwa went to Sungai Tami and started looking. Unfortunately, he could not find the stone despite looking everywhere for it. Towjatuwa began to fear the thought of bad things happening to his wife. At the end of the story, his hope to get the stone was finally achieved thanks to the help of an enormous crocodile named Watuwe, who turned out to be a magic crocodile and could talk. Watuwe is very friendly and willing to help Towjatuwa find the stone because Towjatuwe and his descendants promise not to hunt crocodiles in the Tami River.

The data had been collected and then analyzed in three stages. First, the researchers classified them based on the translation techniques used. After that, the researchers collected the frequency and percentage of the translation strategies used. Finally, the researchers drew the conclusion and suggestions for this study. In analyzing the data, a comparative method was used to compare the source and target languages and then classify them based on the translation technique proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). The data analysis then showed the whole translation techniques used in this children's picture book, the percentage of each translation technique, and the most translation techniques used in translating the sentences.

3. Findings and Discussion

This study aims to see what translation techniques are used in the translation process of the children's picture book entitled "The Sacred Crocodile." After analyzing the translation technique, the researchers look for the dominant one.

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995: 31) introduce two general translation procedures (direct and oblique). The direct translation, when the translator notices a gap in the target language, they can employ either a parallel category or a parallel concept to convey the meaning of the source text (Waliński, 2015). The techniques that belong to the direct translation method are borrowing, calque, and literal translation. These three techniques directly translate the ST to TT, word-to-word, and follow the grammatical structure. Furthermore, as supported by Waliński (2015) explained, the

oblique translation method is a method that allows translators to exert strict control over the reliability of their efforts. The oblique translation method happens when it cannot be translated literally or word-to-word because of the awkward structure and understanding. The translation technique that belongs to the oblique translation method is a transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation.

The table below presents the results of data analysis using the theory of translation technique from Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). There are 98 sentences in total to be analyzed.

Table 1. Frequency of translation techniques

No.	Technique	Frequency	Percentage
1	Borrowing	-	-
2	Calque	-	-
3	Literal translation	59	60,2%
4	Transposition	19	19,38%
5	Modulation	11	11,22%
6	Equivalence	7	7,14%
7	Adaptation	2	2,04%

From the table, the literal translation technique is the most used 59 times (60,2%). This study applies 5 of 7 types of Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation techniques. Moreover, this children's folklore book does not use calque translation techniques. This study will discuss the translation techniques found in children's folklore books.

3.1. Literal Translation

As Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) explained in their book, the literal translation is a word-by-word translation. It is the direct transfer of an SL text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate TL text in which the translators' task is limited to observing the adherence to the linguistic servitudes of the TL (p.33). Saridaki (2021), in his study, said that this is the replacement of SL syntactic structures typically on the clause or sentence scale by TL syntactic structures, which are isomorphic and synonymous in terms of content. Furthermore, if literal translation distorts the meaning of the ST, translators must turn to their methods of oblique translation (Vinay and Darbelnet in Saridaki, 2021). It happens when the sentence or phrase gives another meaning, has no meaning, is structurally impossible, does not have a corresponding expression within the metalinguistic experience of the TL, and has a corresponding expression but not within the same register. (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995).

The example of the literal translation found in the children's folklore book "The Sacred Crocodile" are:

ST : Towjatuwa menunjukkan bayinya pada istrinya.

TT : Towjatuwa showed the baby to his wife.

ST : Tubuhnya lalu oleng, dan tercebur ke sungai.

TT : He lost his balance and plunged into the river.

The sentence is translated without any addition to the TT. Each ST is translated literally and follows the grammatical structure of the TT. In Bahasa Indonesia, the sentence structure is S-P-O-K, where S stands for the subject, P for the predicate, O for an object, and K for a complement or adverb. The TT sentence above follows the sentence structure, which has Subject-Verb-Noun.

3.2. Transposition

It is a unique translation procedure since it replaces one-word class with another without changing the message's meaning (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995). Saridaki (2021), in his study,

explains that the replacement is done without any change in the meaning of an SL element by structures that have the same meaning but belong to different word classes.

The sentence found in the children's book "The Sacred Crocodile" using the transposition is:

>   ST : *"Suamiku, perutku mulas sekali."*
>
>   TT : *"My dear, it hurts me so bad."*

In the ST, the phrase *mulas sekali* belongs to the adjective, while it changes to be a verb in the TT which is translated into hurts me so bad.

3.3. Modulation

Modulation is a variation of the form of the message obtained by a change in the point of view, and this technique results from the translator's point of view changing (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995). Modulation translation technique is done when translated into a literal translation, and it is considered unsuitable, unidiomatic, or awkward in the TL.

The sentence found in the children's folklore book "The Sacred Crocodile" is:

>   ST : *"Bayinya sulit keluar.*
>
>   TT : "The baby is hardly pushing out his head.

The ST sentence has a different literal and grammatical structure when translated into TT. In the TT, the sentence is explained clearly. Modulation translation has two kinds of techniques they are fixed and free modulation, where the difference is one of degree. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) explained that in the case of fixed modulation, translators with a good knowledge of both languages freely use this method, as they will be aware of the frequency of use, the overall acceptance, and the confirmation provided by a dictionary or grammar of the preferred expression (p. 37). Furthermore, the free modulation thus tends toward a unique solution that rests upon a regular train of thought and is necessary rather than optional.

3.4. Equivalence

Equivalence technique is the replacement of an SL situation by a communicatively comparable TL situation (Saridaki, 2021). Most equivalences are fixed and used in translating idioms, proverbs, nominal or adjectival phrases, and many more. The classic examples of equivalence include the translation of exclamations and expletives (Waliński, 2015: 62). In *Bahasa Indonesia*, we show our pain like *aduh* and *au*; in English, they have ouch. The sentence found in "The Sacred Crocodile" book are as follow:

>   ST : *"Huhu, bagaimana ini?"*
>
>   TT : "Ah, what do I do now?"
>
>   ST : *"Oeeek... oeeek...,"* suara bayi pun meramaikan keheningan malam.
>
>   TT : *"Waah... waah...,"* the baby's cry enlivened the quiet night.

The word *huhu* is translated into ah, which means afraid of Tohjatuwa when he did not find the stone in the river. Then in the second sentence, the word *oek..oek…* that means baby's cry is translated into waah..waah…
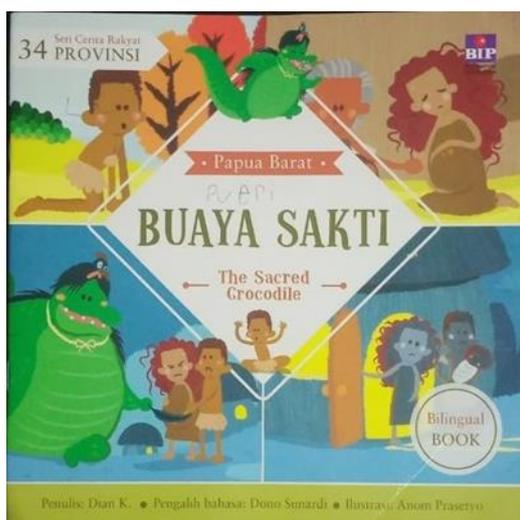
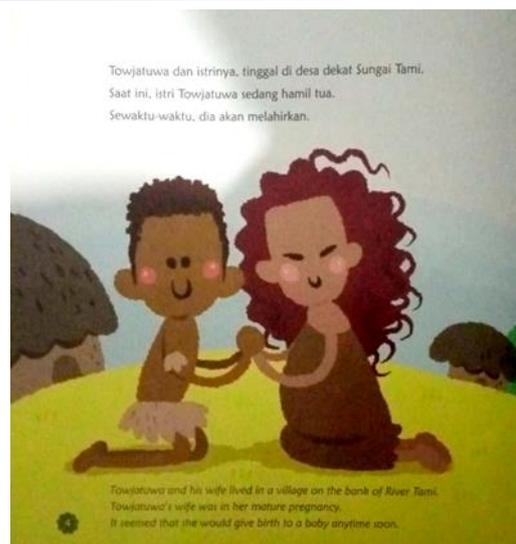Fig. 1 Book Cover of "The Sacred Crocodile"

Fig. 2 The Appearance of the book

4. Conclusion

This study examines the translation techniques used in a children's picture book containing 98 sentences. From this study, it can be concluded that the translation of an Indonesian picture book entitled The Sacred Crocodile uses several translation techniques: literal translation, modulation, transposition, equivalence, and adaptation. The literal translation is the highest technique used in translating the children's picture book examined in this study. It is used to make the children quickly understand the sentences' meaning. Designing a children's book should use a children's point of view, and the literal translation is appropriate for this condition. Children like to read simple and understandable sentences. Most children's books have pictures to make it easier for children to understand the meaning of their sentences. Further study is expected to examine the translation techniques used in children's picture books, consisting of hundred sentences, images, and pages. Besides concern with the translation techniques, further study is expected to consider the psychological aspects and characteristics of the children in translating the English story book. These aspects encourage the children's interest in reading an English picture book.

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