

## ON TRANSLATING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGES IN LITERARY WORK

PUTU NUR AYOMI  
ABA Bumigora Mataram

### ABSTRAK

Berbeda dari penerjemahan teks ilmiah, penerjemahan karya sastra tidak hanya menuntut penguasaan penerjemah akan bahasa sumber dan bahasa target tetapi juga pemahaman akan konteks budaya kedua bahasa, termasuk pula pemahaman akan estetika bahasa dan stilistika. Teks sastra berbeda dari genre teks yang lain dimana terdapat pemakaian gaya bahasa seperti metafora, idiom dan lainnya, yang maknanya seringkali berbeda dari makna literal kata-kata penyusunnya. Dalam penerjemahan, hal ini menjadi tantangan karena harus pula menemukan makna yang sama dalam bentuk yang berbeda dalam bahasa target. Beberapa strategi bisa dilakukan oleh penerjemah untuk menjaga makna maupun elemen estetika teks sumber, yang harus disesuaikan dengan kondisi teks, diantaranya yaitu : menerjemahkan langsung jika memungkinkan dan natural pada bahasa target, mengganti metafora menjadi simile, mengganti dengan gaya bahasa yang bermakna sama pada bahasa target, menerjemahkan langsung dengan penjelasan dan menerjemahkan makna secara eksplisit tanpa menggunakan bahasa kias.

---

*Keywords : Figurative languages, literary work*

### INTRODUCTION

It is a common knowledge that literary work can enrich our life. By reading literature we can experience the life of people living in a totally different or similar situation of or what we have; having different religion, tradition, point of view and way of life. No matter different the cultural background of a literary work is, it is always universal, as universal as humanity is, for we all shares the same feeling and emotions; love, sadness, happiness, envy, etc. At the same time as it can supplement our knowledge, it can also extend our sense of tolerance and compassion. In the latest decade, Indonesian literary readers can easily find many high quality literary works from around the world available in Indonesian, and of course it owes to the large number of translation activities done recently. The process of translation itself, however, is not free of problems.

Translation is the interpretation of the meaning of a text in one language (the "source text") and the production, in another language, of an equivalent text (the "target text," or "translation") that communicates the same message. Translation must take into account a number of constraints, including context, the rules of grammar of the two languages, their writing conventions, their idioms and the like.

Bell (1991:5) quoting and translating Dubois' definition (1973) from French into English as follow:

*Translation is the expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences.*

However, translation is not merely about language, Hans J. Vermeer (1986) oppose this with his *Skopos* theory which state that:

*Translation is not the transcoding of words or sentences from one language to another, but a complex form of action, whereby someone provides information on a text (source language material) in a new situation and under changed functional, cultural and linguistic conditions, preserving formal aspects as closely as possible* (Snell-Hornby in Bassnett and Lefevere (eds.), 1990-82)

In this definition, translation is viewed as cross-cultural transfer and a translator need to be bicultural (having knowledge of both cultures involved) since language is the representation of culture and many cultural related concept are woven in language lexically. Beside that, the knowledge of the differences of language used in different genre of text should also be the consideration of translator.

Each genre of text has its own language style which differs from one text to another. Therefore, a translator need to have knowledge regarding to this matter and knowing the strategy needed to translate

them. Literary work is distinguished from other types of text by the frequent use of figurative language, which is intended to arouse emotion and give poetic touch to the work. In these types of language the formal equivalent is hardly available.

Translation of poetry and figurative language must then involve not only an examination of the intended meaning of the author and the formal devices used in the source language, but also an examination of the poetic forms, if they exist, and the figurative devices available in the receptor language. Ideally, a translator of poetic and figurative language would be someone who is skilled in literary work and artistic verbal expression. The translator would then re-express the poetic and figurative language of the source language in the receptor language fluently as though he or she was creating an original work of art.

The present paper examines the translation of figurative language in a short story "Luh Galuh" written by Putu Oka Sukanta which is translated into English by different translators; Vern Cork and Mary Zurbuchen. The availability of two translations of the same work enables us to examine the strategies used by different translators in handling figurative languages.

## CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

### 1. Equivalence

Since the goal of translation is equivalence, it is important to clarify the concept of equivalence. Nida argued that there are two different types of equivalence, namely *formal equivalence*, which in the second edition by Nida and Taber (1982) is referred to as *formal correspondence* and *dynamic equivalence*. Formal correspondence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content, unlike dynamic equivalence which is based upon the principle of equivalent effect (1964:159) i.e. Takes account of collocation, co-text and the context, aims to preserve some of the original text rhetorical form (a semantic translation) but not the effect (connotations, perlocutionary effect). Contextually motivated formal equivalence is a case of foreignization.

Formal correspondence consists of a TL item which represents the closest equivalent of a source language word or phrase. Nida and Taber make it clear that there are not always formal equivalents between language pairs. They therefore suggest that these formal equivalents should be used wherever possible if the translation aims at achieving formal rather than dynamic equivalence.

Dynamic equivalence is defined as a translation principle according to which a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original in such a way that the SL wording will trigger the same impact on the TL audience as the original wording did upon the ST audience. (Nida and Taber, 1982:200). Dynamic equivalence is sense bound, takes account of the effect (comprehensibility, uptake, connotations, perlocutionary effect) on reader, and in particular the need for explication and adjustment.

Hatim (2001) proposes equivalence frameworks in which the translation equivalence may be achieved at any of all of the following level.

1. SL and TL words having similar orthographic or phonological features (*formal equivalence*).
2. SL and TL words referring to the same thing in the real world (*referential or denotative equivalence*).
3. SL and TL words triggering the same or similar association in the minds of speakers of the two languages (*connotative equivalence*).
4. SL and TL words being used in the same or similar contexts in their respective languages (*text-normative equivalence*).
5. SL and TL words having the same effect on their respective readers (*text-normative equivalence*).
6. SL and TL words having the same effect on their respective readers (*pragmatic or dynamic equivalence*).

In the case of translating short story, dynamic equivalence is the one that should be retained in the translation. Based on the equivalence framework proposed by Hatim (2001), the equivalence that can be achieved in translating short story is denotative equivalence, connotative equivalence, text-normative equivalence, and normative equivalence, pragmatic and dynamic equivalence. Meanwhile it is hard to achieve formal equivalence; SL and TL words having similar orthographic or phonological features (formal equivalence), which is more relevant in translating poetry.

## 2. Translating Figurative Language

Types of figurative language to watch out for in translation include metaphor and simile, personification and apostrophe, metonymy and synecdoche, hyperbole and irony, idioms and proverbs. Satisfactory translation of any of these depends upon awareness, testing, and raw talent. A good translator should have a solid understanding of both the source text and the resources available in the receptor language, combined with an artistic ability.

In understanding the meaning of metaphor and simile it is important for us to identify the kind of metaphor occurs. According to Larson (1998), there are two types of metaphor, those are:

- a. Dead metaphors are those which are a part of idiomatic construction of the lexicon of the language. It is also called idiom. Dead metaphor is understood directly without paying attention to the comparison, but directly to the idiomatic sense e.g. *leg of the table*: there is comparison between leg of a person and the table, but nobody would think about a person when using expression *leg of the table*.
- b. Live metaphors are those which are constructed on the spot by the author to teach or illustrate. It is only understood after paying attention to the comparison

Live metaphors and dead metaphors are treated differently in translation process. It is therefore important to make distinction and identify them in text is being translated.

According to Beekam and Callow (1974) in Larson (1998:272), simile and metaphor have four parts:

1. *Topic* is the thing really being talked about, it is usually the topic of the first proposition and non figurative.
2. *Image* is what is being compared with. It is the topic of the second proposition and usually figurative.
3. *Point of similarity*. It is found in the comments of both of the propositions involved or comment of the event propositions which has the image as topic.
4. *Non figurative equivalent* is when the proposition containing the topic is an events proposition, the comment is the non figurative equivalent

To analyze the simile i.e. *the moon is like blood*, we can first state the two proposition explicitly with implicit point of similarity (in parentheses). The two propositions are: 1) *The moon is (red)* and 2) *Blood is (red)*. Here the topic is moon, the image is blood and the point of similarity is red.

Since it is hard to find the direct equivalent to metaphor in SL, according to Larson (1998) there are some procedures or the ways in translating metaphors.

1. The metaphor may be kept if the receptor language permits (that is if it sound natural and is understood correctly by the readers).
2. Metaphor may be translated as a simile (adding 'like' or 'as')
3. A metaphor of target language which has the same meaning may be substituted.
4. The metaphor may be kept and the meaning explained (that is the topic and/or point of similarity may be added)
5. The meaning of the metaphor may be translated without keeping the metaphorical imagery.

## 3. Principles in Translating Figurative Languages

Based on his research in the translation of St. Lucian Creol, Samuel and Frank (2000) proposed principles in translating figurative language

1. Translate with awareness of both form and meaning and the relative importance of each in a particular source language text, and with understanding of the forms available in the receptor language, using the appropriate genre or verbal art form.
2. In translating, consider whether the topic, image and/or point of similarity of a simile needs to be made explicit in order to be understood, or whether the image needs to be adjusted or abandoned completely.
3. Recognize the use of metaphor and consider whether it should be adjusted, translated as a simile or abandoned completely
4. Recognize and deal with the appropriate range of meaning of a single word
5. In translation, retain ambiguity where appropriate, if possible.

6. Recognize the use of idioms and euphemisms in the source text and do not necessarily expect to translate them literally, but rather use whatever idioms and euphemisms are appropriate to the receptor language, whenever appropriate.
7. Recognize the use of personification and apostrophe in the source text and evaluate and test whether they can be translated as such.
8. Recognize metonymy, synecdoche and hyperbole and consider whether at times they need to be reduced to a more literal meaning.
9. Recognize irony and translate it as the equivalent type of speech
10. Translate using the grammatical forms natural to the receptor language

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Translating Simile

Getting down to specific types of figurative language, we will look first at the simile. A simile is a figure of speech involving a comparison (Barnwell 1986:144). Not all comparisons involve figurative language, e.g. "I am as tall as you are," but a simile has a figurative element to it. It is usually described as a comparison of two *unlike* things using "like" or "as". Every simile (and metaphor) can be analyzed in terms of these three components: a *topic*, an *image*, and a *point of similarity* (though the terminology used might vary). In the short story we can find three examples of the translation of simile:

	SL	Translation by Cork	Translation by Zurbuchen
1.	<u>Dengus babi yang tak pernah berhenti</u> <u>bagai musik pengantar tidur.</u>	Visitor had sat around together there, while the space under the granary was used by sprawling pigs, <u>their endless squealing company</u> for her while she slept.	<u>Their ceaseless snorting was like a lullaby.</u>
2.	<u>Sekarang lumbung itu sudah seperti kantung kumal,</u> <u>berlubang-lubang digigit tikus</u> dan tak pernah lagi dilintasi oleh sesuatu yang bernilai	Now the granary was like a dog-eared purse, full of rat holes: nothing of any consequence ever passed through it.	Now the rice bam was like an old and rumpled basket, full of rat holes; nothing important ever took place there.
3.	<u>Tamu itu mangguk-mangguk</u> <u>bagai ayam diberi gabah</u>	The young Balinese briefly told the tourist about what Luh galuh had been when she was young, and <u>the tourist nodded his head like a hen given rice to eat</u>	<u>The tourist nodded his head up and down like a chicken pecking grain</u>

To translate the simile we have to analyze the four parts of simile or metaphors namely topic, image, and point of similarity. Often the three components of a simile are not all explicit. One or more element might be implicit in the text. In creating a text in one language based on a source text in another language, sometimes an implicit component of a simile needs to be made explicit in order for the nature of the comparison to be clear

Sentence (1), (2) and (3) are all based on two propositions. In sentence (1) the two propositions are:

- 1). The squealing of the pig is endless 2).The lullaby is (endless, continuing until we fall asleep)

The implicit information in parentheses proposition two is implicit. So we can conclude that the *topic* is the squealing of the pig, the *image* is the lullaby and the *point of similarity* is endless.

There are two strategies applied by the two translators in translating sentence (1). Cork chooses to eliminate the metaphorical imagery which is lullaby and translates the meaning directly without using figurative language. The result is no longer figurative language, and no comparison element retained; ..... *their endless squealing company for her while she slept*. Here, Cork used the fifth steps of translating simile and metaphor that is proposed by Larson (1998) which is: "The meaning of metaphor may be translated

without keeping the metaphorical imagery”. On the other hand Zurbuchen decided to retain the metaphorical image and kept the simile by translating literary. Since the information and meaning is clear in both culture of SL and TL and though the squealing of the pig might be a bad lullaby but in fiction, the comparison become the right of the Author.

In the translation of sentence (2) Cork uses different strategy. He substitutes the *image* of the propositions which is *kantung kumal* (rumpled basket) into another metaphor in TL which is *dog-eared purse*, while Zurbuchen kept the metaphorical image and translated the whole simile directly.

In sentence (3) both translator translated the simile directly without substituting any of the three parts. Only part of *image*, *a hen given rice*, is substituted in Zurbuchen’s translation. *Rice* is substituted by *grain*, since *rice* is not a common chicken food in TL culture.

## 2. Translating Metaphor

A metaphor, like a simile, involves a topic, an image, and a point of similarity, but it does not use “like” or “as” or anything else to make it explicit that a comparison is made. So while a simile might be “You *are like* a snake,” a corresponding metaphor might be “You *are* a snake.” (Samuel and Frank, 2000). Below are the examples of some metaphor that can be found in the text;

No	SL	Translation by Cork	Translation by Zurbuchen
4.	Memilih adalah barang mewah yang tak terbeli olehnya.	Choice was a luxury she couldn’t afford.	Choosing was a luxury she had never been able to afford.
5.	Kecemasan telah meredupkan sinar matanya	Her misfortunes had dulled the brightness of her eyes	Frustration clouds her eyes.
6.	Untuk ke kaki bukit banyak motor nambang	To go to the foot of the mountains there were plenty of vehicles queuing	There were many motorcycles in operation, in use as far away as the foot of the hills,
7.	Maka tukang dokar banyak makan angin ketimbang makan uang penumpang.	Consequently many of the horse-cart drivers ate air rather than passenger fares.	This was the reason the horse-carriage were getting more fresh air than passenger fares.

According to Larson (1998), first thing to be done in translating metaphor is analyzing the kind of metaphor occurred. Whether the comparison is “live” metaphor or simile, or whether it is simply a “dead” figure or idioms. Actually sentence 5, 6, and 7 contain dead metaphor or idiom. It is hard to understand the meaning based on lexical meaning. But in the case of sentence (5) and (6) the two languages SL and TL share the same idiomatic expression. *Kaki gunung* literary translated to the *foot of the mountain* that are acceptable in both languages. The two translators translate *kaki gunung* literary. *Sinar mata* (*the brightness of the eyes*) is also a poetic expression that can be understood by most people. But Zurbuchen simply translate this phrase into the word eyes, omitting the metaphor *brightness*.

*Makan angin*, literary translated “eat the wind” in sentence (7) is dead metaphor. It means “getting nothing” in Source Language. The two possibilities in translating this phrase is making it explicit or substitute it with more appropriate metaphor which in TL. However, Cork translated it literary into *ate air* which is maybe awkward and not understandable in English language. *Makan uang penumpang* (eat the passenger’s fare) is living metaphor which created to make parallel metaphor with *makan angin*. Here Zurbuchen choose to make the metaphor explicit: “*This was the reason the horse-carriage were getting more fresh air than passenger fares.*”

## 3 Translating idioms

An idiom is a phrase that functions as a single semantic unit, not to be taken literally (Beekman and Callow 1974:121). It is important in translation to recognize idioms in the source text and to translate meaningfully. There are times when it will work to translate an idiom literally, but not often; there are times

when one has to abandon the idiom and translate according to the meaning; and there are times in translating naturally when one might use an idiom in the translation where there was not one in the source text. (Samuel and Frank, 2000).

No	SL	Translation by Cork	Translation by Zurbuchen
8.	Tetapi suaminya lenyap tanpa berita ketika orang-orang seperti kesurupan membunuh orang lain yang dianggap <u>kena garis</u>	Long ago she had been married but her husband had disappeared without a trace at the time when people, as though in a trance, had murdered others who were believed <u>to be on the wrong side politically.</u>	She once had a husband but he disappeared without word in the mid-1960 during that period when people, as if possessed killed other for <u>not sharing the same opinion.</u>
9.	Dan gerobak pengangkut <u>hasil bumi</u> sudah lama pensiun dimakan rayap di sebelah rumah pemiliknya.	And the hand-pushed carts used to transport <u>goods</u> had been pensioned off and were now rotting beside their owners' home	The old pushcart employed to transport <u>the harvest</u> had long since been retired, and were being eaten by termites alongside the compound gateway.
10.	Warung-warung penduduk di tepi desa telah lama <u>gulung tikar</u> karena beberapa kali dalam sehari lewat pickup penuh barang dagangan menwarkan dari terasi sampai gincu.	Villager's little stall in the suburbs <u>closed too</u> because each day a number of pickup trucks would come offering all kinds of good for sale ranging from fish paste to lipstick.	The small stall people had run in the village had <u>gone out of business;</u> instead pickup trucks full of wares passed by several times a day

In sentence (8) the idiom *kena garis* (touch the line) is translated based on its explicit meaning which are "... others who were believed to be on the wrong side politically." in Cook's translation and "... other for not sharing the same opinion.". This idiom is based on the context of situation or history in the language environment (1965's PKI). Here Cook's translation is more explicit, detail and clearer rather than Zurbuchens.

In sentence (9) for the translation of *hasil bumi* literary translated (earth's product), Zurbuchen translate it explicitly into harvest, which is the meaning of this idiom. Instead, Cork does not translate this idiom and replace it by the word goods, the most generic words.

The idiomatic phrase "*gulung tikar*" (roll up the mat) in sentence (10) means "gone out of business". This meaning is literary translated by Zurbuchen ; *The small stall people had run in the village had gone out of business; instead pickup trucks full of wares passed by several times a day.* Meanwhile Cork translated it into verb closed which is synonymous in meaning.

#### 4 Translating Metonymy

Metonymy and synecdoche are figures of speech whereby one thing substitutes for something else, based on some kind of associative relationship between the two. In the case of metonymy, the association is one of temporal, spatial, or logical contiguity (Samuel and Frank, 2000). For example in English we say "*He has a good head.*" *head* is the place where *brain* is located. It is being used in a figurative way to refer to the brain. This is based on spatial relationship. This is also occur in sentence (11) where the metonymy '*otot balungny'a* (*her muscles and bones*) in this context was determined to refer to "bodily strength or power". Here Cork translated the metonymy literary into: "...to rely on her own muscle and bones to earn living." While Zurbuchen translated it into the phrase's associative meaning; "...relied on her own *strength* to make a living."

No	SL	Translation by Cork	Translation by Zurbuchen
11.	Oleh karena itu ia tetap mengandalkan <u>otot balungnya</u> sendiri untuk hidup	For while she had worked as a domestic, and she continued to rely on <u>her own muscle and bones</u> to earn living.	She had always relied on <u>her own strength</u> to make a living.

## 5. Translating personification

Personification is figures of speech whereby something inanimate is referred to as though it were animate. Sometimes it may be possible to translate these literally, if comprehension tests positive, and other times it may be necessary to make adjustments or abandon the figurative language (Samuel and Frank, 2000).

In the case of personification in sentence (12) and (13) below, all the personifications are translated literary.

No	SL	Translation by Cork	Translation by Zurbuchen
12.	Demikian juga <u>dua lumpang batu yang masih tertanam, masih mengangakan mulutnya yang sudah lama tidak pernah me-ngunyah gabah.</u>	The same applied to the half-buried logs which lay with <u>their mouths agape; leaving had nothing to grind for so long.</u>	So too were the <u>two stone mortars implanted in the ground, still stretching open their mouths that had not chewed on unhulled rice for so long.</u>
13.	Lagipula <u>lapangan pekerja-An itu telah banyak di-rampok oleh benda-benda asing yang datang seperti kalap</u>	And now even those jobs had often been <u>stolen away by foreign machines that had come like mad things.</u>	Even worse <u>work was being snatched away from her by the strange machines that had suddenly appeared.</u>

## CONCLUSION

In order to translate the figurative language properly, first the translator should be able to recognize kinds of figurative language used in the text, since different figurative language requires different treatment. Translator would also find benefit from studying translation technique of figurative languages and also consider the equivalence principles and principles in translating figurative language before determine the translation of certain figurative languages.

According to the analysis of the translation of the short story we can conclude that literary translation and explicitly translating the meaning is the most dominant choice made by both translators, while substitution to figurative language in TL that has synonymous meaning is less applied.

## REFERENCES

- Barnwell, Katharine. 1986. Bible translation: *An Introductory Course in Translation Principles*. Dallas: SIL
- Bell, Roger T. 1991. *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. London: Longman
- Cork, Vern.1999. *The Sweat of Pearls*. Australia. Darma Printing
- Hatim, Basil. 2001. *Teaching and Researching Translation*. England: Pearson Education Limited
- Larson, Mildred. 1998. *Meaning Based Translation*. USA: University Press of America.
- Nida, Eugene (1964). 2000. "Principles of Correspondence" dalam Lawrence Venuti (Ed.). *The Translation Studies Reader*, pp126-147. New York:Routledge.
- \_\_\_\_ dan Charles Taber. 1974. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Samuel, Peter & Frank, David.2000. *Translating Poetry and Figurative Languages into St. Lucian Creole*. A Paper Presented at the Thirteenth Biennial Conference of the Society for Caribbean Linguistics in Mona, Jamaica, in August, 2000.
- Snell, Mary-Hornby. 1995. "Linguistic Transcoding or Cultural Transfer? A Critique of Translation Theory in Germany" dalam Bassnett, Susan dan André Lefevere (Eds.). 1995. *Translation, History and Culture*. USA: Cassell
- Oka Sukanta, Putu. 1991. *Keringat Mutiara*. Jakarta: Yayasan Kalyanamitra Pusat Komunikasi dan Informasi Perempuan.