

# ANALYSIS OF TRANSLATION METHODS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN SHORT STORY

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Received: 20-01-2021

Accepted: 29-11-2021

Published: 30-11-2021

**Abstract:** This research was conducted to find out the translation methods applied by the translator in translating figurative language in O. Henry's short stories. This descriptive analysis research took the data from nine short stories as the research documents. There were 19 pieces of data taken from those nine short stories and analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed that literal, semantic, communicative, idiomatic, and free translation methods were used in translating simile metaphors and hyperbole. It was found that the literal translation method was significantly used compared to other translation methods. The frequent use of literal indicated the poor translation competence of the translators that tended to copy both the structure and meaning of the source text into the target text.

**Keywords:** *figurative language; translation; translation methods*

## INTRODUCTION

Short stories and translations cannot be separated because there were many cases that short stories became one of the famous literary works that had been translated. For example, the short story by Edgar Allan Poe has been translated into various languages in different countries, including Indonesian that some Indonesian translators had translated. Baker (2005) states that the translation of literary works such as short stories has been done for over 2000 years. Nevertheless, even after thousand years past, a short story is still part of society and is now enjoyed by lots of people. As we know, a short story is contained with unique things such as moral values, cultures, and life values integrated into the story. For that reason, some translators tried to translate a short story from English into Indonesian to deliver the uniqueness of the short story.

As we know that to attract interest and attention, a short story should contain a style of language. Figurative language is the most language style that the author usually uses in expressing a short story. It usually describes

something which used for unusual comparison between two unrelated things to attract the reader. In this case, a reader should know the sense and the content of the short story. Therefore, the short story uses figurative language such as metaphor, hyperbole, and simile, and the reader should understand the message and the content of the short story.

Unfortunately, most translators had several issues in translating figurative languages, such as metaphor and simile. Based on Larson (1984), there are some reasons why similes and metaphors are hard to understand and cannot be translated literally. The image used in the metaphor or simile may be unknown in the receptor language. The use of literal translation is often tied to the source culture, which produces an unnatural sense to target readers. One of the more serious issues is the fact that the point of similarities may be understood differently in one culture than another.

Based on the consideration above, the

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researcher concludes that the study about the use of translation method in translating the figurative language of a short story still has a significance to be conducted, because literary works such as short stories have their own characteristic to perform for the future researcher who is more attractive to the aesthetic value of the short story itself, such as the positive value or negative value which found in the short story that created by the author to make the story beautiful. The previous study used the theory of Newmark, which is more reliable in conducting the research data. So, the present study also used Newmark's approach because in identifying and analyzing the source of data, which is a short story, the researcher needs several methods to examine the validity of the source data and classify figurative language itself. Moreover, Newmark's theory is suitable to this present research because this research was used short story.

This research was essential to be conducted in order for the translator that used the translation method in translating short story, so they can improve their skills in translating figurative language to deliver the aesthetic value to the target language. This study was mainly focused on the short stories by O. Henry that has been translated into Indonesian. His short stories are popular with Indonesian readers because they reflect his wide range of experiences and are distinctive for their witticism. In conclusion, to help the researcher's story, the researcher needs some references of figurative language types and translation methods to analyze the short story. The research question of this study is "what are the translation methods applied by the translator in translating figurative language in *O. Henry's* short stories?"

### **Translation method**

Translating a text was translating the text from Source Language into Target Language. Still, the entire meaning of the source language must be clear so that the target language understands what the purpose is. Hence, to make it good, the appropriate method is required

In translation, the translators must be able to distinguish between methods of translation and translation procedures. Newmark (1988)

mentioned the difference between translation methods and translation procedures. He writes that "while translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language" (p.81). Also, he defines that there are more than twenty translation procedures, such as transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, etc. Besides, the translation method is related to the whole text, and it refers to how the translator reveals every single meaning of the source text pervasively to the target language (Syihabuddin, 2005).

Furthermore, Newmark (1988) lists the following translation method in his book "A Textbook of Translation" and divides it into two basic categories of translation method. Firstly, Language Emphasis covers four methods: Word for word, Literal, Faithful, and Semantic. Secondly, Target Language Emphasis also includes four approaches: Adaptation, Free, Idiomatic, and Communicative.

### **Figurative language**

Figurative language or speech contains images. The writer describes something through unusual comparison, for the effect, interest, and to make things more straightforward. The result of using this technique is the creation of interesting images. Figurative language always makes use of a comparison between different things. It compares two things that are different in enough ways so that their similarities, when pointed out, are interesting, unique. Figurative language provides a new way of looking at the world.

### **Metaphor**

Tarigan (1985) asserts that metaphor one thing is something else, and it is a comparison but does NOT use 'like' or 'as' to make the comparison. Also, metaphor is comparing two things directly without the word 'like' or 'as'. This type is a kind of figure of comparison which used to find the similarities in different things.

### **Hyperbole**

Tarigan (1985) asserts that a figure of speech involves an exaggeration of ideas for the sake of emphasis. This type was included in the opposition figure, which shows the contradiction or the opposite of an idea of a subject in sentences or phrases (Tarigan, 1985).

### **Simile**

Based on Tarigan (1985), simile was a type of speech that directly compares two, unlike things. The simile used the word "like or as" to compare two explicitly unlike things as being similar (Tarigan, 1985).

### **Short story translation**

Here are some problems that can be found in any translator in translating a text. Firstly, based on Haque (2012, p.101), literal translation is not possible for multiple reasons. It presents three main reasons to support their stance. Firstly, a particular word in one language often contains different meanings in another language. Secondly, the grammar in the source language is sometimes not available in the target language. Thirdly, some idioms in the source language and culture may be confusing for the target language culture. Besides, a good translator will translate for meaning and message so that the finished work conveys the same message as the original.

Secondly, Catford (1965) opines that the central issue in translation is finding target language equivalents. The main issues of translation theory sometimes are not to define the nature and conditions of translation equivalence. The translators, through using equivalence, also work hard to convince their readers by using the standard translation.

Thirdly, there are some words in most languages that will change the meaning depending on the context. In some cases, a literary translator will have to decide what the original author intended from several different possibilities. If some of them misunderstand the context that a word is used, they will translate the word differently, which could change the original meaning of the source text. Also, it is very difficult to accurately convey the real

meaning and message used as it can change, but it is essential to remain to the original text.

Last of all, translating without considering cultural differences can result in uncomfortable situations. Reading about a culture is not the same as living in it, and it is easy to miss something that could impact a translation if the translator is not intimately familiar with it. Something that was meant to be funny maybe highly offensive in another culture.

Therefore, the reason for translating short story cannot be separated from the uniqueness of the context of the text itself. Therefore, some aspects need to be paid attention to achieve a good short story translation and its technique on translating as one of those aspects will be the discussion of this study.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this research, a descriptive qualitative method was used by the writer in analyzing the data. Based on Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) the descriptive method is used to explain, analyze, and classify various techniques. Furthermore, this method was certainly helpful for deep analysis of this subject and answering the research question. Also, in this study, the writer was focused on document analysis.

This research was conducted using the qualitative method. Moreover, in translation studies, a qualitative approach may be used to explore and understand based on its natural context. It can be done through the interpretation process of data from different sources. The qualitative approach is a written process of a phenomenon (Napu, 2016). Since this research data was a short story translated into many languages, mainly Indonesian, it indicates that the short story has been a phenomenon in society. In collecting the source text version, the data were collected from the American Literature website, which is available for free to access the short stories.

Furthermore, in collecting the target text or translated text version of the short

story, the data source will be taken from a website and book. The writer was prepared the e-book version for the translated version for the data analysis. In addition, data were collected as many as possible in the form of phrases and sentences both from the source text and the target text. This study used a qualitative method, particularly the descriptive qualitative method, and it was appropriate to interpret and analyze source text and target text.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

From all the data, this research found 13 data that indicated the use of literal translation, which are simile (seven data), hyperbole (three data), and metaphor (three data). Moreover, there are two data for simile that show semantic translation and two data for hyperbole revealing the utilization of communicative translation. Lastly, two data, one hyperbole and one simile apply idiomatic translation and free translation, as presented in the following table.

Table 1. Frequency of translation methods in O. Henry's short story

| Translation          | Simile | Hyperbole | Metaphor | Total     |
|----------------------|--------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Literal</b>       | 7      | 3         | 3        | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Semantic</b>      | 2      | -         | -        | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Communicative</b> | -      | 2         | -        | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Idiomatic</b>     | -      | 1         | 0        | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Free</b>          | 1      | -         | -        | <b>1</b>  |

The above table illustrates that literal translation, semantic translation, and communicative translation as Newmark's translation methods are primarily employed in translating the figurative language in nine short stories by O. Henry. The data analysis of the translation methods mentioned earlier is given below.

### Literal translation

This present study discovered 13 data that show the use of the literal translation method; they are divided into simile (seven data), hyperbole (three data), and metaphor (three data). Provided below is the data analysis.

### Simile

ST: *And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "oh,oh!" (The Gift of The Magi)*

TT: *Kemudian Della melompat kecil seperti seekor kucing yang bernyanyi dan berteriak*

*kecil, "Oh, oh!"*

The above sentence displays how the author constructs the clause "*Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried*" by using the connection word "*like*" as the sign of a simile. In this case, the author tries to portray Della's reaction to a Christmas gift from her husband and she is overjoyed because it is what she has wanted for a long time. Then, compare it with a cat's reaction when touched something heat. Meanwhile, the translator has successfully delivered the message from the source text into the target text. Further, here, the translator prefers literal translation to word-for-word translation because s/he has successfully translated all the words in a literal way, except the words "*singed*" and "*cried*". The phrase "*singed cat*" is translated to "*kucing yang bernyanyi*". However, it will be better if the translator translates it to "*kucing yang kepanasan*" which sounds more

natural since the word "singed" means "kepanasan/kegosongan" in Indonesian. Also, the word "cried" should not be translated to "menangis", but "berteriak".

Meanwhile, the translator has successfully delivered the meaning and message of the source text, although the translator has missed some words. However, as long as the target text keeps the message of the source text it is still well-accepted. Newmark (1988, p.45) asserts literal translation that this method is typically retaining the original message, the structure, and the meaning of the source text. Accordingly, this type of translation is considered a literal translation because the target text still keeps the structure and the core message of the source text.

### **Hyperbole**

ST: *For she saw in his eyes love, which no woman can mistake, and a thousand tons of regret and remorse. (The thing's the play)*

TT: *Dia melihat di matanya rasa cinta, tak seorang perempuan pun keliru dalam hal ini, serta ribuan ton penyesalan yang menimbulkan rasa belas kasihan.*

The datum comprises hyperbole because the author constructs a phrase that overestimates the situation. Here, the author wants to tell the reader about the statement to emphasize the reader feels how bigger her regret about the mistake she made, which portrays by the author to the reader with "thousand ton" which is indescribable by words. Furthermore, The phrase is straightforward, and the translator has successfully translated it to the target text; it describes the situation and feeling to draw readers' attention. Further, the phrases "a thousand tons" and "regret and remorse" are literally translated to "ribuan ton" and "penyesalan dan menimbulkan rasa belas kasihan", respectively. Despite that, the translator adds a new word "menimbulkan" that is not mentioned in the source text; it is done to avoid rigidity, as long as the meaning of both languages remains the same. Considering the fact of Newmark's theory (1988, p.45) that the translator translates the sentence as simple as possible to make it well-accepted without

changing the structure of the source text into the target text, a literal translation method is applied.

### **Metaphor**

ST: *Art is an engaging mistress (A service of love)*

TT: *Seni adalah kekasih yang menarik hati.*

The above sentence associates "an art" with "the mistress", thus indicating a metaphor. Here, the author tries to compare two unrelated things without using any connection words, such as like or as. Also, the author also wants to tell the readers that art is all about beauty and love. Further, Since the culture is shared in both languages, a literal translation can be applied. The translator has successfully translated the whole sentence by retaining the structure of the source language and the core message. In addition, the translator does not translate the word "mistress" as "Nyonya" that refers to a woman (lady or madam) who has control over someone or something. Instead, it is preferably translated to "Kekasih" to sound more natural and to avoid rigidity.

Also, the word "engaging" is translated by the translator without altering the structure and the meaning. Therefore, the translator cannot change the source text's structure or message into the target text. In sum, the translator employs a literal translation in translating the sentence in datum 1.

### **Semantic translation**

This type of translation method allowed the translator to be more flexible and put more aesthetic values in the target text. Here, this research was found two data comprising simile that utilize the semantic translation method, as follows.

### **Simile**

ST: *A splattered stain, raying like the shadow of a bursting bomb, witnessed where a hurled glass or bottle had splintered with its contents against the*

wall. (*The Furnished Room*).

TT: *Noda noda yang tersebar bagaikan bayang bayang bom, menjadi saksi dimana gelas atau botol pernah dilemparkan, dan isinya memercik ke segala penjuru dinding.*

The sentence contains a simile as it compares "A splattered stain" to "shadow of a bursting bomb" by using the connection word "like". It shows a similarity between two things, such as a stain on the wall compared to a bursting bomb. Here, through the source text sentence, the author tries to portray the room's condition, such as the walls full of stain that indicates someone ever living there and ruining that room. Further, the sentence in datum 1 applies the semantic translation method because the translator tries to be more flexible towards the target text and be faithful by taking into account the structure of the source text. Here, the translator uses some reduplication to add aesthetic value and reduce the rigidity of the source text. Also, the word "splattered" is translated to "tersebar"; if the word is literally translated to "memercik", it will reduce the meaning. The word "memercik" takes place in a small area, not in a larger one (entire room), so that "tersebar" is more appropriate. Also, the over translation of the phrase "with its contents against the wall" is "dan isinya memercik ke segala penjuru dinding" to beautify the target text. If the phrase is translated literally, it will be "dan isinya melawan dinding", by which the meaning of the source text is lost and may confuse the readers. The translation is also to convince the readers that the stain is splattered nearly over the wall. Based on the translation result, the semantic translation method is used in translating the sentence. Based on Newmark theory (1988), it can be inferred that the translator attempts to be more flexible towards the target text and be faithful by still considering the structure of the source text. In short, the sentence above used the semantic translation method.

### Idiomatic translation

This method typically reproduces the message by using an idiom in the target language with a different meaning from the source language.

This present study obtains one datum (hyperbole) that applies an idiomatic translation.

### Hyperbole

ST: "You know, Sam," says Bill, "I've stood by you without batting an eye in earthquakes, fire and flood, dynamite outrages, police raids, train robberies and cyclones. I never lost my nerve yet. (The ransom of the red chief)

TT: "Tahukah kau, Sam?" tanya Bill, "bersamamu, tanpa berkedip, kuhadapi gempa bumi dan tsunami, kebakaran, angin topan, banjir bandang, kapal karam, penggerebekan, kerusakan. Tak pernah sedikit pun aku gentar."

It is categorized as hyperbole because the sentence is exaggerated. Datum 1 tells a story about Bill's loyalty to his only friend, Sam, because they confront a disaster but are still alive and stay together. Here, the translator idiomatically translates "Batting an eye" to "tanpa berkedip", instead of "memukul mata" to avoid losing the meaning and confusing readers. This phrase is an idiom, which means they have faced the worst situation and still been together. Also, the clause "I never lost my nerve yet" is not literally translated to "aku tak pernah kehilangan akal", yet idiomatically translated to "tak pernah sedikitpun aku gentar" by the translator. "I never lost my nerve yet" was an idiom referring to a feeling of fearlessness. Based on Newmarks theory (1988, p.47), It is concluded that the sentence comprises an idiomatic translation since the translator has successfully reproduced the original message of the source text that is not presented in the source text. The translation will give a wrong message if the translator does not comprehend the original meaning and does not know both languages. Truthfully, the translator has successfully carried out their job.

### Communicative translation

This method is a type of target language emphasis that attempts to transfer the exact

meaning of the source text by taking into account the readers of the target text. The result of this translation method will be either shorter or longer. This research discovers two data (hyperbole).

### Hyperbole

ST: *Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out of the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts* (The Gift of The Magi).

TT: *Jika saja Ratu Sheba tinggal di flat seberang, Dela pasti akan membiarkan rambutnya menggantung di jendela agar kering hanya untuk membuat perhiasan dan hadiah milik Yang Mulia itu terlihat kurang bernilai.*

The datum contains hyperbole as it compares Della's hair and Queen Sheba's jewels and gifts. It can be inferred that the communicative translation method is applied because the translator has translated the sentence more directly and clearly than other methods. On the other hand, "Queen of Sheba" is literally translated to "*Ratu Sheba*". If the translation becomes "*Ratu Balqis*" or "*Ratu Saba*", it will be more natural and clearer, yet it is still well-accepted by the readers of the source text. Besides, the phrase "*across the airshaft*" is briefly translated to "*seberang*", and it does not change the meaning of the source text. In this case, the target text is shorter than the source text to make it simpler, clearer, and more direct. As we know, communicative translation (1988, p.47) is clearer, natural, emphasizing the message and allowing the translator to improve. On that ground, a communicative translation occurs when the translator transfers the exact meaning of the message, not the sentence of the source text, by considering the target text readers.

### Free translation

This method focuses on the content of the target text, rather than the translation form without considering the structure of the source text. In this type of translation, this study finds one datum of simile with a free translation method.

ST: *He was sure that since her disappearance from home, this great water-girt city held her somewhere, but it was like a monstrous quicksand, shifting its particles constantly.* (The Furnished Room)

TT: *Dia yakin sejak menghilangnya gadis itu, bahwa gadis ini telah terkurung dalam suatu tempat. Namun, kota tempatnya tinggal itu bagaikan pasir apung mengerikan yang telah menyedotnya entah kemana.*

Datum 1 is a simile that compares "a city" to "a monstrous quicksand" by using "like". The author wants to portray the sentence above as the comparison used to describe a lifestyle in a big city, which is difficult to seek and glamour because people always hang out and do not stay for a long time. The author portrays it just like quicksand, which suddenly disappears if someone above it. Furthermore, free translation is employed in the above sentence because the meaning of "*shifting its particles constantly*" is metaphorical. Moreover, the general meaning is to explain the quicksand works "*menghisap segala sesuatu*". The translator freely translates it to "*menyedotnya entah kemana*". Here, it is focused on the content of the target text, rather than the translation form without considering the structure of the source text. In this case, the translator decides to change the phrase in the target text to deliver the context of the previous part about the missing girl. In conclusion, the sentence goes through a free translation as it does not consider the form of the source text and only pays attention to the content of the target text.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate translation methods applied in figurative language translation of English-Indonesian short stories in relation to the research question "*what are the translation methods applied by the translator in translating figurative language in O. Henry's short stories?*". The short stories being examined were nine popular short stories written by O.

Henry. Next, Newmark's theory (1988) about translation methods was utilized to analyze the short stories' figurative language that divides them into two basic categories of a) language emphasis that covers four methods, including word-for-word, literal, faithful, and semantic translation; b) target language emphasis that also encompasses four methods; adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation.

This research limits the types of figurative language being analyzed: simile, hyperbole, and metaphor. These types are mostly discovered in short stories, and the most common issue is the translator's inability to deliver the meaning correctly. However, there are only minor problems taking place, especially in the literal translation method. Larson (1984, p. 250) points out multiple reasons people find it challenging to understand a metaphor or simile, making it unable to be translated literally. The image used in the metaphor or simile may be unknown in the receptor language (p. 251). Meanwhile, there are still several issues.

From nine short stories that have been obtained, five translation methods are employed in approximately 19 figurative languages in total identified data. The methods consist of 13 literal translations, two semantic translations, two communicative translations, one idiomatic translation, and one free translation. The translator, in consecutive order, relies on literal translation, semantic translation, communicative translation, idiomatic translation, and free translation.

Among all, the most used method was literal translation. The study concludes that the translators frequently use literal translation because it is easier for them to identify the text and deliver the meaning of the source text. The readers of the target text also find it more effortless to grasp the text's context that utilizes a literal translation method than any other method.

The frequently used translation method in translating figurative languages in English – Indonesian short stories still has several quality issues, e.g., unnatural translation results. On that ground, the translator can seek many opportunities to improve the quality of short

story translation

The following recommendations are given to the readers of short stories and further studies.

Since the findings contribute to understanding the translation result of short stories, this study recommends the readers to be more selective and careful in finding words, phrases, or sentences in any English-Indonesian short stories that may be confusing and ruining the message of the whole story. It should be repeatedly checked and compared to get the real meaning and message that the author intends to deliver.

For further studies, two recommendations are offered. First, since this study only examines nine short stories with 19 data, which are very small, it is expected that other categories can be analyzed, such as in more specific figurative language categories, for more detail. Next, a more extensive research scale in literary works is also necessary. Second, this present study investigates the most applied translation method in translating figurative language so that further studies should support the findings. The studies can be more specific to linguistics or the structure of figurative language in prose (fiction or non-fiction) or target text readers' perception of confusing and unnatural translation in a short story or novel. It is to determine the impact on the readers' comprehension of the original meaning and whether or not the original meaning from the source text is successfully delivered.

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