TRANSLATION APPROACH OF ENGLISH METAPHORS INTO INDONESIAN (A CROSS CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING STUDY)

PENDEKATAN TERJEMAHAN METAFORA BAHASA INGGRIS KE DALAM BAHASA INDONESIA (SEBUAH KAJIAN PEMAHAMAN LINTAS BUDAYA)

Ade Mulyanah
Balai Bahasa Bandung
Jln. Sumbawa No. 11, Bandung 40113,
Telp. (022) 4205468; Fax. (022) 4218743
E-mail: ad_ariell@yahoo.com

ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: Simile tertutup, Simile terbuka, Idiom, Live metaphor

ABSTRACT

This descriptive qualitative research aims at classifying important aspects related to sociolinguistics in rendering English metaphors into Indonesian. The study touches on several aspects dealing cross cultural understanding in translating metaphors taken from novel, TV serial, text book in 2008. The cultural aspect in metaphors is related to important aspect of metaphors, namely, point of similarity, image, and figurative language. There are four types of metaphors in the paper: closed similes, open similes, live metaphors, and dead metaphors. The research reveals that: (1) Translation of closed similes can be rendered by applying literal translation meaning the focus of translation is on linguistics point of view. Translating direct metaphors (similes) is easier to transfer than indirect comparison ('live' and 'dead' metaphors). Transferring open similes needs the knowledge of the source and target language culture due to the absence of the point of similarity in the sentence. While, translating “dead” metaphors can be more understandable than ‘live’ metaphors by considering topic, image, and figurative language in both languages. (2) The paper is also trying to perform the difficulties in rendering English metaphors into Indonesian occur due to lack of standard Indonesian equivalent.

Keywords: Closed similes, Open similes, Dead metaphors, Live metaphors
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Inspired by Alwasillah\(^1\) dissertation entitled *Cultural Transfer in Communication: A Qualitative Study of Indonesian Students in USA Academic Setting*, the writer connects the topic to translating metaphors. He mentioned that communication inter-cultural requires a good knowledge of understanding cultural setting in both languages.

As an important means of communication and a significant tool in transferring human’s mind, the form of certain language is usually different from another. It is mostly influenced by its linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. When people communicate, they transfer message. The message can be given in direct form or in metaphorical expression. Metaphorical expressions are intended to show certain meaning by giving comparison and figurative language.

In the problem recognition phase the literal representation is enhanced by a representation of the supporting context. This will be the input to the literal transformation phase in which a literal to figurative transition is affected by computation of analogy. Its result in the figurative transition will be abstract, non-verbal, general, non-imaginistic and generative representation. Those phenomena can be observed in translation novels, films, and sources related to metaphorical expression. For example, the expression *You are pig* in some television series cannot be translated *Kamu adalah babi*. The expression of *You are chicken* does not mean that the person is *a real chicken*. Surprisingly, some television series translate them literally, e.g. *He was tough as nail* is translated *dia keras bagaikan kuku*. The expression should be rendered by tracing cultural aspect emerging in that expression.

There are studies which were intended to reveal aspects dealing with metaphors and language use (e.g Ruzka,\(^2\) Peter Newmark,\(^3\) Larson,\(^4\) and North\(^5\)). Nonetheless, most of these studies focus on describing the differences among cultures in metaphors; thus, less study about some similarities of certain metaphors, and strategy dealing with translation method related to types of metaphors. The present study is an attempt to find certain strategy to deal with metaphors translation.

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The translation is bound up with cultural and metaphorical aspects. As the result, the translation process of metaphors needs a good interpretation since they are mostly dealing with culture. It requires knowledge of cross cultural understanding both source language (SL) and target language (TL). Related to that problem the writer formulated problems emerge in this study. They are as the followings.

1) What types of translation method have to be applied in rendering English metaphors into Indonesian?
2) What are cultural aspects involved in translating metaphors into Indonesian?

The Objectives and contribution of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem above, the objectives of the study cover as the followings

1) to find out types of translation method that should be applied in rendering English metaphors into Indonesian;
2) to analyze cultural aspects involved in translating metaphors into Indonesian.

The paper is intended to give contribution for novel translators, televised series translators, and for those who are dealing with translation can do the steps dealing with translation, namely, by applying idiomatic translation and by finding equal meaning from those existing in the target language culture.

Theoretical Framework

The present study attempts to offer further explanation about problems dealing with translating metaphors from a cross cultural study approach by analyzing translation method and cultural aspects involved in metaphors. Some studies dealing with types of metaphors Dirven\(^6\) and translation method Newmark,\(^3\) and Catford\(^7\) have been examined the translation approach from which cultural aspect of metaphors has been developed. Relevant information from Larson\(^4\) and Herlina\(^8\) have contextualized framework for that the translation should put forward the equal meaning from both cultures, source and target language.
Honeck and Kibler\textsuperscript{10} examine the concept of representation in explaining metaphors and proverb and draw a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic representation. They confirm that mental imagery and all analogue representation are intrinsic, while propositional representation is considered as extrinsic. They criticize the assumption that proposition represents all forms of language because they believe that the purposes of representing all forms of figurative language proposition pose difficulties in understanding figurative language in metaphor. In their conceptual basic theory of proverb understanding they postulate four phase and suggest multiple representation for them. They explain that a literal, and non-imagistic representation of a proverb in the problem of recognition phase may arouse imagery.

In view of the above statement, it can be concluded that the general problems in translation are related to some language barrier such as differences in syntax, semantics, idiomatic expressions, and sociolinguistic aspects. In the case of syntax and semantics these can be done by learning English linguistics. However, the barriers in idiomatic expression and sociolinguistic include cultural background of SL. If a translator is not skilful enough to translate them, the message of TL will not be the same as the original message in SL. The translation is bound up with cultural and metaphorical aspects. As the result, the translation process of metaphors needs a good interpretation since they are mostly dealing with culture. It requires knowledge of cross cultural understanding both source language (SL) and target language (TL).

### a. Kinds of Metaphors

**Similes**

According to Dirven\textsuperscript{6}, similes are categorized into word metaphors. Similes are metaphorical expression having the word like or as to indicate the things being compared with. Keraf\textsuperscript{11} defines similes as explicit comparison. The comparison expresses things directly. He divides it into two types. They are closed similes and open similes. Closed similes are comparison including point of similarity from the sentence. For example, he runs as fast as a storm means dia berlari secepat kilat.

While open similes are comparison excluding point of similarity from the sentence, e.g., you are like pig kamu rakus sekali/kotor sekali.

### Live and Dead Metaphors

Indirect comparison (live and dead metaphors) is classified as sentence metaphors Dirven.\textsuperscript{6} Live Metaphors are metaphorical expression which can be understood only after paying special attention to the comparison in SL text, e.g. You are chicken, Joe!. The sentence cannot be translated literally. It will sound meaningless. The difficulty is that the point of similarity is implicit and hard to identify and image of the word chicken compared with human does not exist in Indonesian comparison. It leads the problem in interpreting the message inside the SL. The idiomatic translation should be done by tracing the original message of SL.

Dead metaphors are metaphorical expressions which are part of the idiomatic construction of lexicon of language (simply idiom). It means the meaning of the sentence no longer stick to comparison in SL text. For instance, The response from the floor is positive because the topic of discussion is interesting seems difficult to translate. Yet, it does not need interpretation of point of similarity because the meaning can be found by considering the sentence context.

### b. Translating Metaphors

The process of translation is divided into four sections: translating closed similes, open similes, live metaphors, and dead metaphors.

1) Analyzing Closed Similes

He is as strong as an ox (Larson\textsuperscript{4})

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Point of Similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He (dia)</td>
<td>Ox (Lembu Jantan)</td>
<td>Strong (kuat)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the example is not too difficult to translate because the point of similarity is included in the text (strong). The comparison to an ox is being used to show how strong he is. What makes the translation difficult is the image in the metaphors in SL unfamiliar in TL. The
word *an ox* does not have similar comparison to Indonesian simile. However, the context in which metaphor is used will give clue that helps the translation (Larson⁴).

2) Analyzing Open Similes

Translating open similes is more complicated than closed similes. The problem occurs due to the absence of point of similarity in the sentence.

*You are like a pig.*

Table 2. Analyzing Open Simile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Point of Similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He (dia)</td>
<td>Pig (babi)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sentence in Table 2 shows that *he* is compared to *pig* because of point of similarity and common characteristic. Yet, the problem in analyzing the similes is the missing comment—in what way they are alike. The Indonesian translation will sound impolite since *Dia seperti babi* is rude in TL.

The hardest thing is that Indonesian similes do not have such comparison. The example taken from novel “All Around the Town” written by Marry Higgin Clark and translated by Juni Suharjo.

*Sexy Allan is dead as a doornail* (AAT, 119 cited from Herlina⁸)

‘*Allan si seksi sudah mati*’ (KK, 155)

The meaning in the sentence is not easy to identify because it consists of the integration human language in specific social-cultural environment (Lankoff cited Dirven⁶)

3) Analyzing Live Metaphors

*You are chicken*

Table 3. Analyzing Live Metaphors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Point of Similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You (kamu)</td>
<td>Chicken (ayam)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sentence has two difficulties. First, point of similarity is implicit and hard to identify. Second, the image from SL is unknown in TL. The word *chicken* is not used in Indonesian metaphors compared to human. In English metaphors the word *chicken* means *pengecut* (coward). While Indonesian metaphors do not have the comparison. So, it may lead to the wrong interpretation. It proves that different point of similarity of figurative language poses difficulty in the SL message. The similarity in a metaphor depends on cultural code (North)⁵.

4) Analyzing Dead metaphors

*The response from the floor* is positive because the topic of the discussion is interesting.

Table 4. Analyzing Dead Metaphors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Point of Similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>The floor (lantai)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sentence does not contain topic and image. The translation of dead metaphors should not keep the image in metaphors.

c. Important Aspects in Translating Metaphors

Various problems in translating metaphors are caused by different perception of belief, thought, and custom. Larson⁴ formulates it into three factors: *topic* (nonfigurative language), *image* (figurative language), *point of similarity*. In analyzing metaphors and similes, it is very helpful to write out the proposition which are basic to the comparison. Topic, image, and point of similarity should all be included. The adequate translation can be made into TL only when these aspects have been identified.

d. Problem in Interpreting Metaphors

Larson⁴ states that not all metaphors and similes are easily understood if they are translated literally, word-for-word, into a second language. They are often completely misunderstood.

The most complicated problem is that there is possibility that the target language does not have comparison to the expression occurring in source text metaphors. Therefore, the equivalent should be searched carefully by tracing the meaning inside the metaphors in the SL.
RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach
This study applies a qualitative approach. It is applied in order to dig the analysis from the data taken from novel, film, and text book.

Method
It uses descriptive analysis. It is used to describe several aspects dealing with a cross cultural understanding. The aspects focus on two forms, translation method and content analysis of metaphors. Firstly, the translation method is described by the suitable translation for metaphors. Secondly, applying of cultural aspects is by carrying out the analysis of image, topic, point of similarity, and figurative language in English and Indonesian. Then, it describes into the analysis of metaphors existing in English and Indonesian.

Data Source
The sources of data were secondary data taken from English and Indonesian version. Those data were taken in from January–March 2008. The data were taken by using purposive sampling. Here are the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>English Version</th>
<th>Indonesian Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“All Around the Town”, Mary Higgin (AAT, online corpus)</td>
<td>Kota Kenangan, Juni Suharjo (KK, Herlina8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Larson⁴</td>
<td>Kera⁴⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Majeed⁶⁹</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Sex and the City” (SAC)</td>
<td>RCTI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The writer also included some informants by doing direct interview dealing with some metaphors which are hard to find the equivalent. The questions is about the Indonesian equivalents from those in English.

Data Analysis
Several steps were used in translating English metaphors into Indonesian. Here are the analysis: (1) identifying and transcribing metaphoric expression, (2) classifying types of metaphors, such as: open simile, closed simile, live metaphors, and dead metaphors, (3) identifying translation method, (4) and identifying the emerged difficulties. Then, the data were analyzed by using cultural aspects given by Larson: image, point of similarity, and topic.

Table Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Point of Similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You (kamu)</td>
<td>Stone (batu)</td>
<td>Hard (keras)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
This section presents the findings from the analysis of translating English metaphors into Indonesian. Those data are described by using two types of translation method: literal and idiomatic translation as well as three factors formulated by Larson.

Translation Method
Considering the complexity of language in transferring the message in metaphors from SL into TL, the data will be performed in two kinds of translation method: (1) literal translation and (2) idiomatic translation. Literal translation based on Larson⁴ is the process of transferring the message emphasizing on the form of SL into TL. The process of translation just follows the form of SL. Idiomatic translation is applied when the message of SL tends to be more cultural. The text cannot be rendered only by the form of SL. Idiomatic translation utilizes the natural form of TL both the grammatical construction and the choice of the lexical items. The method makes the product of the translation come from reader’s mind not like a piece of translation. Here are the methods of translating metaphors.

a. Translating Closed Similes
Closed similes are comparison including topic, image, and point of similarity. The following examples show the description.

1) He is as strong as an ox (MBT,1984: 252)
   (1a) Literal translation: Dia kuat seperti lembu jantan
   (1b) Idiomatic translation : Dia kuat seperti baja/banteng
The literal translation (1a) gives a strange translation product. Although the point of similarity is included in the sentence, it is still difficult to find the suitable equivalent. It is due to the unfamiliar image in TL metaphors. The word an ox is not common to show strong object. However, the point of similarity strong is in baja or banteng in TL culture as shown in sentence (1b). In metaphors the ground may require a more complex process of association, comparison, and receptive side of interpretation.

2) We look as different as day and night from those guitar playing (AAT, 29)
(2a) Literal Translation: Penampilan kita berbeda bagaikan siang dan malam
(2b) Idiomatic Translation: Penampilan kita berbeda bagaikan bumi dan langit (KK,47)

Sentence (2) shows that the comparison to different is being used to emphasize how different their look to day and night. However, the comparison of day and night cannot be directly translated into literal. The right translation is by finding the right message of SL as written in sentence (2b).

3) Your heart is as hard as a stone
(3a) Literal Translation: Hatimu keras bagaikan batu
(3b) Idiomatic Translation: Hatimu keras bagaikan batu/baja (SAC, 2008)

The translation of sentence (3) is easier to do as the point of similarity is known in TL culture. What makes the sentence can be understood is that the expression has TL equivalent. Thus, it supports Larson theory that closed similes is more easily understood than metaphors in most languages.

b. Translating Open Similes
Translating open similes is more difficult to do than closed similes. The absence of point of similarity in the sentence poses difficulty. The following examples will show the description.

4) They are light as feather (AAT, 277)
(4a) Literal Translation: Ringan bagaikan bulu
(4b) Ringan bak bulu ayam (KK,363)
(4c) Idiomatic Translation: Ringan bagaikan kapas.

The translation is quite difficult because the point of similarity is excluded in the sentence. The sentence They are light (ringan)) is compared to feather. The context of the sentence shows how light it is. The point of similarity is feather. The equivalent in Indonesian simile to express light in running is feather.

5) He is like chicken (SAC, 2008)
(5a) Literal Translation : Dia seperti ayam
(5b) Idiomatic translation: Dia seperti pengecut

The word chicken cannot be translated literally as shown in (5a). It is meaningless in TL culture. Such comparison does not have Indonesian Equivalent. The only way to find the meaning is to get the original message of SL. The word chicken in English culture means cowed (pengecut).

6) The rain is like cat and dog (EEIPM/1994:159)
(6a) Literal Translation: Hujan seperti kucing dan anjing.
(6b) Idiomatic Translation: Hujan tersebut lebat sekali disertai kilat.

The simile sounds strange in TL. The word rain as topic and cat and dog as image. The literal translation as shown in sentence (6a) is hard to understand. The best way to find the equivalent is by finding the point of similarity of cat and dog, that is, they always fight each-other. The figurative meaning shows how noise they are. The translation in sentence (6b) is transferred directly to the meaning of TL. It is done due to the lack of Indonesian standard equivalent.

c. Translating Live Metaphors
Translating live metaphors is more difficult than open similes. The process of rendering the message from SL into TL should be done by paying special attention to the comparison in the SL text.
7) That child is a little pig because he is able to eat more than two plates of rice in a few minutes.

(7a) Literal Translation: Anak kecil itu adalah babi kecil karena dia bisa makan lebih dari dua piring nasi dalam waktu beberapa menit.

(7b) Idiomatic Translation: Anak kecil itu rakus sekali karena dia makan lebih dari dua piring nasi dalam waktu beberapa menit.

Without the context, it will be very hard to translate it. The reason is the image (figurative meaning) of the word pig is not common in Indonesian culture. Besides, the expression misses the point of similarity and leaves the thing being compared with.

8) You are bitch (SAC, 2008)

(8a) Literal Translation: Kamu anjing betina

(8b) Idiomatic Translation: Kamu wanita jalang

The metaphor is difficult to translate into TL. The word bitch literally means a female dog and it is used to refer to a prostitute. Indonesian does not have similar image to call such person, still it has many expressions to describe that kind of woman.

9) The death of her beloved wife made him burst into the tear because she was the apple of his eyes (MBMEL/1985:87)

(9a) Literal Translation: Kematian istri tercintanya membuat dia menangis karena dia apel matanya.

(9b) Idiomatic Translation: Kematian istri tercintanya membuat dia menangis karena dia jantung hatinya.

The translation in sentence (9a) is meaningless. The expression the apple of my eyes cannot be rendered directly. The problem is caused by the difficulty to trace the meaning in the SL figurative meaning (image).

10) Even though Robert and Ricard are twins, they are chalk and cheese (EEIPM/1994:159)

(10a) Literal Translation: Walaupun Robert dan Ricard kembar, mereka itu kapur dan keju.

(10b) Idiomatic Translation: Walaupun Robert dan Ricard kembar, mereka beda bagaikan bumi dan langit.

The image chalk and cheese cannot be literally translated into kapur dan keju as shown in sentence (10a). The phrase is meaningless. However, the metaphors chalk and cheese based on Larson⁴ and Majeed¹² show different object. Showing something very different is in Indonesian metaphors by using the word bumi and langit as taken in sentence (10b). The translation shows that the receptor language reader will interpret the message in terms of their own culture. They cannot draw on the experience of source text writer, but only their own culture.

d. Translating Dead Metaphors

Translating dead metaphors needs the knowledge of idiomatic expression. It does not need the consideration of comparison of SL text.

11) The response from the floor is positive because the topic of the discussion is interesting (MBT/1984:251)

(11a) Literal Translation: Respons dari lantai bagus karena topik diskusinya menarik.

(11b) Idiomatic Translation: Sambutan dari hadirin bagus karena topik diskusinya menarik.

The sentence does not include topic and image being compared with the metaphors. The word floor cannot be literally translated into lantai as shown in sentence (11a). It is ambiguous. The only way to interpret the kind of metaphor is by paying attention on the context of the sentence as given in sentence (11b).

12) There is the storm in the parliament due to dispute among parties (MBT/1984:252)

(12a) Literal Translation: Ada badai di parlemen karena perselisihan antar partai

(12b) Idiomatic Translation: Ada perdebatan sengit/keributan di parlemen karena selisihan antar partai.

The translation product in sentence (12a) does not meet the message in the SL. The word storm in the sentence cannot be literally translated...
into badai. The effort to find the right meaning inside the SL should be traced. Considering the context, the word storm in the sentence means the dispute. Thus, the equivalent is transferred into keributan/perdebatan sengit as shown in sentence (12b).

13) You can’t only wait for the windfall but you have to do effort to reach it (EEPIPM/1984:160).

(13a) Literal Translation: Kamu tidak bisa hanya menunggu angin jatuh tetapi harus berusaha untuk mencapainya.

(13b) Idiomatic Translation: Kamu tidak bisa hanya menunggu bintang jatuh tetapi kamu harus berusaha meraihnya.

The translation of the above sentence can be traced by considering the context of the sentence.

Cultural Aspects of Metaphors

Attempt to analyze the phenomenon of English translating metaphors into Indonesian in a more rigorous way has been made by Herlina in her more recent works in novel translation. She believed that the cultural elements are represented in the language used in the novels, especially in the form of idiomatic expression. It is important that foreigner reader should read the translated versions as if they read the original works. Then, it is translators having to make this heavy responsibility.

The most helpful method in translating metaphors is by considering cultural aspects, topic, image, and point of similarity. The findings are mostly on cultural transfer. The image of pig, chicken, bitch, ox, chalk and cheese, cat and dog, and feather has the different perception from those emerged in English metaphors. Pig has a very sensitive word in Indonesia culture related to religion. English culture uses image of chicken having negative meaning to show something ridiculous. It is a part of the difficulties of understanding metaphors.

However, the most important findings that there is similar in the metaphors. To show the hard things is by using stone image.

4. CONCLUSION

1) translation method

- translating closed similes is easier to do than open similes. The translation process is more helpful by including point of similarity like in sentence (1) and (2). Besides, there is simile in the SL containing the same image and point of similarity in the TL as shown in sentence (3);
- (translating open similes is more complicated to transfer. The absence of point of similarity poses the difficulty. The difficulties lie on the difference of comparison, point of similarity and image (figurative language) between Indonesian and English metaphors. Therefore, the equivalent message should be traced like in sentence (4), (5) and (6); translating live metaphors is the most difficult to do. The expression is mostly the same as open simile. However, the more complex association reflects SL culture. It also needs good interpretation translation can be seen in sentence (4), (5) and (6); translating live metaphors is the most difficult to do. The expression is mostly the same as open simile. However, the more complex association reflects SL culture. It also needs good interpretation translation can be seen in sentence (7), (8), (9) and (10); (c) translating dead metaphors is more successful to do than live metaphors. It is difficult, but the sentence context helps interpret the message of SL. The translation can be observed in sentence (11) and (12).

2) there are some similarities between English metaphors and Indonesian. The important finding is there are some metaphoric expressions that are the same from those exist in English. There are also some metaphors hard to find the equivalent due the different of figurative language and point of similarity.

Suggestion and Recommendation

Related to metaphoric translation, the writer would like to propose some suggestion as follows.

1) Metaphorical expression are usually found in daily conversation, magazines, novels, newspapers, and movies. Since it has high frequency in daily life, it should be translated properly based on the both cultures by using the suitable translation method.
2) Since the purpose of translation is to help those not mastering foreign language to get information they need from the printed materials, a translator is supposed to be careful in translating the message having extended meaning (metaphors); otherwise, the goal of translation could not be attained.

3) Considering the difficulties in translating English metaphors into Indonesian as shown by finding, the data indicates that the students find it hard to translate the text. The difficulties lie on the difference of comparison, point of similarity, and figurative meaning (image) between English and Indonesian. Therefore, the writer suggests that translation metaphors should get along with translators’ competence on metaphoric expression of both cultures.

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