THE TRANSLATION OF SIMILE IN THE HUNGER GAMES NOVEL: TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Simile is one of the elements that can be found in a literary text. It is a common figure of speech found in many languages that represents the semantic structure. It can be challenging for a translator to translate this element since different languages possess different world view and interpretation on the simile. This study will identify the similes and strategies used by the translator in translating this element. To collect the relevant data, the whole original text of The Hunger Games novel will be read thoroughly and finally examples of simile will be extracted from it. Later, through comparing the English similes and their translations, the type of strategy used for translating the simile will be determined. The data will be analyzed using strategies proposed by Pierini (2007).

Keywords: Literary translation, translation strategy, simile translation, The Hunger Games.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Aesthetic value is one of the elements that should be taken into consideration by translators when they are translating literary texts. However, not all the sentences can be translated literally or considered as a single unit of translation in order to retain this value. So, as translators they should be very particular with this kind of situation. Even though they want to retain the values but they have to remember that there are things that cannot be translated literally in literary texts. For example, figure of speech that occurs in literary texts. This figure of speech cannot be translated literally.

Simile is one of the common figures of speech that found in literary texts. According to Pierini (2007:25), similes fulfil an aesthetic function and are usually creative, and it is a way of talking about something in a surprising way. It cannot be translated literally since it may cause misinterpretation in other languages. Misinterpretation of the similes could happen when they have different point of similarity or image in other languages. This is one of the challenges that has to be faced by translators. There are also situations when translators cannot understand the real meaning of the similes in the source language and these will also lead to misunderstanding to the target readers. According to Larson (1984: 250) not all the similes can be easily understood and it is usually cannot be translated literally.

Based on this situation, it is interesting to identify the strategies applied by translators in translating figures of speech particularly the translation of similes from English into Malay. As we know, the divergences of two language systems may pose translation problems to the translators. Furthermore, two different cultures may use different images in expressing the same thing.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kennedy and Gioia (2002), simile is a comparison of two things, indicated by some connective, usually like, as, than, or a verb such as resembles and it is usually compares two things that initially seem unlike but are shown to have a significant resemblance. These two markers, which are 'like' and 'as' are used to identify the similes.

There are few researchers that have conducted researches on similes. Pierini (2007) has discussed on the nature and function of similes. She has classified simile into certain criteria and their interpretation. The study also examined a range of similes which illustrate the translation problems that posed by similes. She also discussed on strategies that can be adopted for problems stated. According to Pierini (2007), there are 6 different strategies that can be applied in translating simile. The strategies are: (1) literal translation (retention of the same vehicle), (2) replacement of the vehicle with a different vehicle, (3) reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, (4) retention of the same vehicle plus explicitation of similarity feature(s), (5) replacement of the vehicle with a gloss and (6) omission of the simile.

Israel, Harding and Tobin (2004) discussed simile as a figure on its own right, and as an object of study which distinct both from metaphorical expression and literal comparison. Larson (1984) also discussed simile and metaphor together. According to her, a metaphor or simile has four parts including 'topic', 'image', 'point of similarity' and 'nonfigurative equivalent'. She also divided the simile and metaphor into *dead* and *live* categories. Finally, she proposed five ways to translate metaphors of which three can be applied to translation of similes. They are: (1) Substitute a simile of the receptor language which has the same meaning; (2) keep the same simile and explain the meaning, that is, the topic and/or point of similarity may be added; and (3) translate the meaning of the simile without keeping the metaphorical imagery.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Materials of the Study

The Hunger Games novel and its Malay translation were used for materials of the study. The researcher used a pdf version of The Hunger Games novel to extract the similes, then cross validated with the hard copy of The Hunger Games novel to ensure that there were no differences in the lexical used in the pdf version with the hard copy version. The translation of similes was extracted using the hard copy version of The Hunger Games translated novel. 'Like' and 'as' markers were used to identify the similes in the pdf version.

3.2 Procedure of the Study

To carry out the present research, the following steps were taken. First, the Hunger Games novel was chosen as the main data source. The researcher browsed the web and selected a pdf version of The Hunger Games. Then, similes and its translation were identified. There were 44 similes with 'like' marker and 16 smiles with 'as' marker found in the text. The researcher compared the similes and their translation in order to identify the strategies adopted by the translator.

Later, to analyze the data, Pierini's (2007) model was selected. She proposed six strategies that can be adopted to translate similes. Through comparing the English and Malay texts, the type of strategy used for each simile was determined. The frequency of the strategies applied in the translation was counted so that finally the percentage could be presented in the next subtopic.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis, below is the percentage of strategies selected by the translator. There are 4 strategies adopted by the translator. The strategies were: (1) literal translation, (2) reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, (3) retention of the same vehicle plus explicitation of similarity feature(s) and (4) omission of the simile.

Table 4.1 Frequency (percentage) of simile translation strategies applied in the The Hunger Games

Strategy	Frequency (percentage)
1. Literal translation (retention of the same vehicle	45 (75%)
2. Replacement of the vehicle with a different vehicle	0
3. Reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense	12 (20%)
4. Retention of the same vehicle plus explicitation of similarity feature(s)	1(1.7%)
5. Replacement of the vehicle with a gloss	0
6. Omission of the simile	2 (3.3%)
Total	60 (100%)

The purpose of this study is to identify the translation strategies used by translator to translate similes. The findings of the study show that among the six strategies proposed by Pierini (2007) to translate simile, the translators applied the first strategy, literal translation, much more than the other strategies and also another three strategies which are reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, retention of the same vehicle plus explicitation of similarity feature(s) and omission of the simile. On the other hand, the other two strategies were not used are, replacement of the vehicle with a gloss and replacement of the vehicle with a different vehicle. Literal translation was mostly used in the translation because it still can be understood and acceptable in Malay language. The translator has reduced the idiomatic meaning of the simile to its sense thus omitting the simile because the similes were not used in Malay language and it can be misunderstood by the readers. The other two strategies were avoided by translator because they were quite hard for the translator to be replaced with another similes that have the same meaning as the similes in the original text. To retain the similes together with an explanation was not an option to the translator since it may reduce the aesthetic values of the original text.

4.1 Literal translation

Example 1

ST (source text): Even so, I always take a moment to listen carefully for the hum that means the fence is live. Right now, it's <u>silent as a stone</u>. Concealed by a clump of bushes, I flatten out on my belly and slide under a two-foot stretch that's been loose for years. (page 5)

TT (target text): *Walaupun begitu, aku selalu berhenti sejenak untuk mendengar bunyi desiran yang menandakan pagar itu berfungsi. Sekarang, ia <u>senyap bagaikan batu</u>. Terlindung di sebalik serumpun semak samun, aku meniarap dan menyusur di bawah pagar sepanjang dua kaki yang menjadi longgar sejak bertahun lamanya. (page 5)*

In example 1, the translator just retained the same vehicle which is 'stone' as a comparison to silent since both languages has the same interpretation of the similes. So, this sentence can be easily translated since the vehicle that has been used in the source text could be interpreted in a same way in the target text. The translator had chosen the appropriate strategy in handling the simile.

4.2 Retention of the same vehicle plus explicitation of similarity feature(s)

Example 2

ST: He's one of the giants, probably six and a half feet tall and <u>built like an ox</u>, but I noticed he rejected the invitations from the Career Tributes to join their crowd. (page 146)

TT: *Dia sangat tinggi, barang kali enam kaki setengah dan <u>badannya besar bagaikan kerbau</u>, namun aku perasan dia menolak pelawaan Ufti Harapan untuk bersama-sama kumpulan mereka. (page 110)*

In Malay, the expression 'besar seperti gajah', is commonly used to refer to something which is big. However, in this context, the translator used 'besar bagaikan kerbau' in order to portray the physical appearance of the character. The translator chose the word 'kerbau' instead of 'gajah' because she assumed that it was more suitable. Because, there is no human that is big as an elephant. So in this situation, she chose to translate the word ox as buffalo because ox and buffalo have similarity in term of the physical appearance. Both are bigger in size and have horns. It is hard for the translator when dealing with two different languages that have different images in representing the same meaning. The comparison may not be used in the target language. If it was retained in the translation it may be unknown for the target readers. Nevertheless, the translation still can be understood by the target readers since the translator had used something that is known in the target language.

4.3 Reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense

Example 3

ST: She's wrapped her skinny arms around me <u>like a vice</u>.(page26)

TT: *Dia memeluk aku erat <u>dengan lengannya yang kurus</u>. (page 21)*

Example 4

ST: The community home would <u>crush her like a bug.</u> (page 32)

TT: *Rumah komuniti akan <u>memusnahkan semangatnya</u>. (page 25)*

In example 3 and 4, the translator reduced the idiomatic meaning of the similes and rendered the meaning of the simile instead of translating it literally. Malay language is slightly differ from English, especially in comparing the actions or gestures in literary text. So the translator chose to render the real meaning of the similes. In this situation, the translator had changed the form in order to convey the meaning of the similes into target language. If the translator translated both sentences literally, it may sound unnatural in Malay language since it is uncommonly used in Malay. This is because both languages have different ways of portraying the behaviours.

4.4 Omission

Example 5

ST: But that's a dark and creaky thing that moves <u>like a snail</u> and smells of sour milk. (page 84)

TT: no translation

Example 6

ST: Delly Cartwright is a pasty-faced, lumpy girl with yellowish hair who looks about as much like our server <u>as a beetle does a butterfly</u>. (page 90)

TT: *Delly Cartwright ialah seorang gadis berwajah pucat dan gempal dengan rambut berwarna kuning yang kelihatan seperti gadis itu. (page 69)*

In example 5 and 6, the similes have been omitted in the translation. The translator may found it difficult to be translated or because it does not disturb the meaning of the story so the similes was omitted in the target text. The meaning of source text still can be understood by the target readers. If the translator translated the sentence literally it does not give the same effects as the original text. That is why the translator chose to omit the translation in the target language.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, there are few strategies that can be used in translating similes. In translating The Hunger Games novel into Malay, there are only four strategies were used by translator to translate similes which are literal translation, reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense, retention of the same vehicle plus explicitation of similarity feature(s) and omission of the simile. Literal translation seems to be the most strategy used by translator probably because some of the similes can be understood and interpreted the same way in Malay. So, as translators, they should be very particular in applying the suitable strategies when translating similes. They have to remember that, not all similes can be translated literally. It is because different environment and worldview will give different interpretation to similes. There are certain images used in the simile are unknown to the target readers and if the translators do not apply the suitable strategies it may lead to misunderstanding to the readers. So, translating

similes is not an easy task. The translator should read and do some research in order to apply the best strategies. In addition, the translator would also encounter problems in providing same interpretation in the target language that comprises the same meaning as in the source language. Thus, it depends on the translators whether they want to preserve the form or o render the meaning by changing the form as long as the meaning is conveyed to the target readers.

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