

Analyzing Translation Techniques Used in Sesame Street Books

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Abstract

This article discusses how have the English Sesame Streets books been translated into Indonesian. The source language had to be very carefully translated into the target language, in this case is Indonesian, since the readers are very young. Data were taken from five bilingual Sesame Street books for toddlers. They were analyzed by using translating techniques by Hoed (2006). The results showed that seven techniques were used and successfully conveyed the meaning and style from the source language to the target language.

Keywords: *source language, target language, translation techniques.*

1. Introduction

This article discusses the translation of five toddler books from English into Indonesian. Those books are as follows: I Have To Go (*Aku Harus Pergi*), Little Bert's Book of Numbers (*Buku Angka Little Bert*), Say Bye Bye (*Katakan Selamat Tinggal*), Say Good Night (*Ucapkan Selamat Malam*), and Little Elmo's Book of Colors (*Buku Warna Little Elmo*)..... The main characters of the books are the characters of Sesame Street TM. The books are supported by pictures which enable readers to digest the story easily. The target texts are available under the source text. The function of the source texts in "Little Elmo's Book of Colors" and "Little Bert's Book of Numbers" is to inform the readers while in "Say Good Night", "Say Bye Bye", and "I Have To Go" the function is to persuade the readers to do something which might be useful for the readers.

Despite the fact that the expected readership is toddler, these books are also suitable for children in primary schools ages in Indonesia. The story is good for both toddler and children due to the moral values in the texts.

The cultural environment in those books is western culture. It reflects on some activities like tea party, Halloween night, and baseball game. Furthermore, there are also some common expressions in sesame street movies like monster kiss that has got positive meaning. Such things need a creative and careful translation so that the target language (TL) texts have similar characteristics with the source language (SL) text as well as fun, excitement, moral value and knowledge.

2. Literature Review

Translating from one to another language is surely not about translating word by word without considering the meaning. According to Nida and Taber (1969: 12), translating consists of reproducing in the target language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, “first in terms of meaning and secondly in term of style”. Newmark (1988: 5) adds that “translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended to the text”. Catford (1980: 21) also adds that “the central problem of translating problem of translating practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents”.

Hoed (2006: 72) classified nine techniques used in translating a source text into a target text. They are:

1. Transposition: This technique is used by changing the structure of the sentence from SL to other structure of TL to get the correct translation.
2. Modulation: This techniques is used by giving the semantic meaning because the different point of view of the translator but in the context, it has the same meaning with the SL.
3. Descriptive translation: This technique is used by making description which contains the meaning of the message because there is no equivalent word in TL.
4. Contextual conditioning: This technique is used to add a special word to explain some words which are hard to understand.
5. Footnotes: This technique is to give an explanation in form of note to explain the meaning of translation because without the footnote explanation, the TL is hard to be understood by the reader.

6. Phonological translation: This technique is used by creating which comes from the adjustment of Phonology and Graphology from the SL to TL.
7. Official or Standard Translation: This technique is used by putting an exact word from the SL to TL because the word is the official or standard word.
8. No translation: This technique is used by just putting the SL word to the TL word because there is no exact word in TL.
9. Cultural equivalent: This technique is applied by putting the cultural word from the SL to TL.

3. Discussions

The translation has been dominated by TL emphasis. Even though there are some adaptation for both words and phrases, mostly the translator has been using the “communicative translation”. Moreover, the translator did very well in delivering the intended message in the target language as it is in source language. She has been very careful especially in translating cultural items and terms. The language used is as enjoyable as the language of the source text. The methods applied in translating the text is carefully selected so there is no boring repetition and the text goes smoothly as the source text.

The following part will discuss the techniques used in translating the books from English into the Indonesian language.

a. Transposition

- SL :] Elmo needs yellow. Yellow as little Big Bird’s feather and **my coat for rainy weather.**
- TL : Elmo membutuhkan warna kuning. Kuning seperti bulu Little Big Bird dan **jas hujanku.**

My coat for rainy weather consist of possessive pronoun + N + prep + ad j + N. In the TL it is translated into jas hujanku which is constituted by N + (N+bound morpheme). There is a structural adjustment here.

- SL : Elmo needs purple. **Will these violets do?**
- TL : Elmo membutuhkan warna ungu. **Untuk apa bunga violet ini?**

The bolded SL text consists will + det + N + aux ? It is translated into Kata depan + pronoun + N + N + det ? (Kamus besar bahasa indonesia). Moreover, the yes/no question in SL is translated into an informative question. There is structural adjustment here.

Note: I don't really agree with the result of the translation, I think "Will these violets do?" is better to be translated as "Apakah sama dengan warna bunga violet ini?"

- SL : Now **it's your turn**. What colors do you need?
- TL : Sekarang **giliranmu**. Warna apa yang kaubutuhkan?

A sentence in the SL is translated into a word in TL which consists of a Noun + bound morpheme because the word can represent the sentence.

- SL : 1 picture **of my very best friend**.
- TL : 1 foto **sahabatku**.

A phrase in SL that consists of four free morphemes (prep + N + adv + adj + N) is translated into one word that constituted by Noun + bound morpheme. The longest form in SL is translated into the shorter form in TL. Friend in Indonesian is teman. Best friend is sahabat. Therefore, my very best friend is equivalent to sahabatku.

- SL : 2 shiny trucks **parked end to end**.
- TL : 2 truk yang mengkilat **yang saling membelakangi**.

The SL consists of Verb + adj + prep + adj while according to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia in TL it is translated into prep + adv + verb. A structural adjustment occurs in the text above because the order is changed and the adjectives turn into the adverb.

- SL : "Do you want some tea?" asked Little Ernie. "**No tea for me**", said Little Grover.

- TL : “Kamu mau teh?” Tanya Little Ernie. “**Tidak**”, jawab Little Grover

A phrase is translated into a single word because the word “Tidak” represents the “No tea for me”

b. Modulation

- SL : And now can you guess **what Elmo painted** for you?
- TL : Dan sekarang dapatkah kamu menebak **apa yang digambar Elmo** untukmu?

The word “ menebak “ is usually followed by a noun as an object. Therefore the active clause in the SL is translated into a passive voice that put emphasis on the object.

- SL : “Oh, my **goodness**. Come inside!”
- TL : “**Ya ampun**. Ayo masuk!”

According to Oxford dictionary, Goodness is used in an exclamation that is used instead of God. From the God point of view, it is translated into Ya ampun ! which is not related at all to God.

- SL : We’ll have **Monster Crunch cookies** for dessert.
- TL : Kita akan mendapat **kue besar yang renyah** sebagai hidangan penutup.
- SL : Come give me a **monster kiss** ! Come give me a huggy hug !
- TL : Ayo, beri aku **ciuman yang hangat** ! Ayo, beri aku pelukan yang hangat !
- SL : Vivian will make you a **Monster-Mash sandwich** for lunch.
- TL : Vivian akan membuatkanmu **roti yang besar** untuk makan siang.

From the monster’ s point of View in the SL, it is translated into something which is good and nothing to do with monster, which has negative meaning in Indonesia. Moreover, the function of the word monster in SL reflect something nice that the children like. Therefore, Monster Crunch cookies is translated into kue besar yang

renyah, monster kiss becomes ciuman yang hangat, and Monster-Mash sandwich is roti yang besar.

c. Descriptive Translation

- SL : Elmo needs blue. Blue as the sky on a day in **spring**. Blue as this **blue bird** just learning to sing.
- TL : Elmo membutuhkan warna biru. Biru seperti langit **dihari yang cerah**. Biru seperti **burung murai** yang baru belajar menyanyi.

In the four seasoned countries, the function of a word spring is not only describe a season. It can also describe to a particular condition of a day where the sky is clear. Therefore, based on the function, spring is translated into hari yang cerah simply because it is functionally relevant.

Similarly, by looking at the function of bluebird that can sing, then it is translated into burung murai that can sing. It is also considered as a more common term for Indonesian.

- SL : Elmo needs green. Green like **Grouches**, green like grass. Green like limeade in a glass.
- TL : Elmo membutuhkan warna hijau. Hijau seperti **Oscar yang pengerutu**, hijau seperti rumput. Hijau seperti limun di gelas.

Grouches, a character in Sesame street is sometimes called as Oscar. The translator chooses Oscar which may be considered easier to pronounce. But she should also describe the word “Grouch” so that the meaning is equivalent between SL and TL . Therefore, she describes it as Oscar yang pengerutu.

- SL : 4 **stuffed animals** sitting on my bed.
- TL : 4 boneka **binatang dari kain** duduk di tempat tidurku.

There is no equivalent translation for stuffed animals, as a result the translator describes the material of the dolls that make them stuffed.

- SL : I have to lie here beneath my **snuggy quilt**

- TL: Aku berbaring di balik **selimut tebal yang hangat**

The translator describes the adjective snuggly into tebal dan hangat because there is no “one word to describe” snuggly.

- SL : You can wear your **speedy shoes**
- TL : Kamu boleh memakai **sepatu yang bisa membuatmu berlari cepat.**

There is not an equivalent word for speedy shoes in Indonesian. According to Oxford dictionary, speedy (adj) means quick. Therefore, the translator describes the function of speedy shoes. It is translated into sepatu yang bisa membuatmu berlari cepat.

d. Contextual conditioning

- SL: Elmo needs **blue**.
- TL : Elmo membutuhkan **warna biru**.

The translator uses a contextual conditioning in order to provide more understanding. If it was translated into: Elmo membutuhkan biru, it might be difficult for children to define what or which blue it is. As a result she adds a word “ warna” to give more information that the rest of the text will talk about “color”.

- SL : Orange as **pumpkins** on Halloween night.
- TL : Jingga seperti **buah labu** pada malam Halloween.

Pumpkins that are related with Halloween is considered as not common in Indonesia, so that the translator has added a word “buah” to make it clear that pumpkin is a kind of fruit.

- SL : 4 stuffed **animals** sitting on my bed.
- TL : 4 **boneka binatang** dari kain duduk di tempat tidurku.

The picture shows some dolls on the bed. Therefore, the translator uses an additional word “boneka”. Moreover, it wasn’t added “boneka”, then it would be considered as ambiguous, since there aren’t any “binatang dari kain”.

- SL : Elmo needs purple. Will these **violets** do?
- TL : Elmo membutuhkan warna ungu. Untuk apa **bunga violet** ini?

To make the meaning clearer, A word “bunga” is added to show that violet is a kind of flower. This is also to distinguish between violets as flowers and a kind of colour which is famous in Indonesian as “ungu violet”

- SL : Little Big Bird **was pounding pegs** when Little Grover went by. “
- TL : Little Big Bird **sedang memaku** ketika Little Grover lewat.

Here, pegs is not translated. Perhaps, pegs is considered difficult for children, and it might affect the children’s understanding on the whole text.

e. Phonological translation

- SL : You can wear your **baseball** hat.
- TL : Kamu boleh memakai topi **bisbolmu**

Baseball game is not popular in Indonesia. In addition, there isn’t an equivalent word for that in Indonesian. Therefore the translator uses a phonological translation in order not to change the meaning, but still can be read easily by children.

f. No translation

- SL : Orange as pumpkins on **Halloween** night.
- TL : Hingga seperti buah labu pada malam **Halloween**.

The word that related to culture, as Halloween, is usually not translated since it is related to a special occasion.

- SL : 5 **Figgy Fizzes** with 5 bottle caps.
- TL : 5 **Figgy Fizzes** dengan 5 tutup botol.

There is, of course a picture to support the text. The picture shows many Figgy Fizzes bottles in the fridge. There aren’t any translation equivalent for Figgy Fizzes in Indonesian, but since the meaning is clear from the pictures, then it isn’t translated. The children can directly see that Figgy Fizzes is a kind of drink that is packed in a bottle.

g. Cultural words

- SL : Elmo needs green. Green like grouches, green like grass. Green like **limeade** in a glass.
- TL : Elmo membutuhkan warna hijau. Hijau seperti Oscar yang penggerutu, hijau seperti rumput. Hijau seperti **limun** di gelas.

Limeade isn't originally come from Indonesia, therefore is not popular here. In order to make it understandable easier, the translator translates it into limun, which is more common in Indonesia.

- SL : Little Grover was riding his **choo-choo**. "**Chug-chug-chug**". Suddenly he pulled down hard on the air brake. "**Chuff-chuff-hisssss**". He came to a stop. "I have to go", said Little Grover.
- TL : Little Grover sedang naik **kereta api**. "**Tut tut tut**". Tiba-tiba ia menarik rem anginnya. Dengan kuat. "**Jus-jus-jesssss**". Ia berhenti. "Aku harus pergi", kata Little Grover.

In Indonesia, there is not a special word to say "choo-choo". Based on the illustration in the book, it must be a train. Therefore it is translated into *kereta api*. Since the topic is about train, the translator makes some adjustment, then. Chug-chug-chug becomes tut tut tut, and chuff-chuff-hisssss is translated into Jus-jus-jesssss. The translation in TL is based on the sound which is associated with the train in Indonesian.

- SL : Little Ernie and Little Bert were having **a tea party** when Little Grover went by.
- TL : Little Ernie dan Little Bert sedang **menikmati teh** ketika Little Grover lewat.

Tea is common in Indonesia while Tea party is mostly related to western culture, in order not to change the meaning, then the translator uses a word "menikmati teh".

- SL : Vivian will make you a **Monster-Mash sandwich** for lunch.
- TL : Vivian akan membuatkanmu **roti yang besar** untuk makan siang.

Here we can see a generalization from sandwich which is specific to Roti (bread) which is more general. It could happen since sandwich is not common in Indonesia.

- SL : You can take all your boats in the **tubby** with you.
- TL : Kamu dapat membawa semua kapalmu ke **bak mandi**.

Most people in Indonesia do not use bath tub while taking a bath. They use what they called as bak mandi – container for water in a bathroom. While taking a bath, they take the water from bak mandi by using a dip. That’s why, even though the picture shows a bath tub, tubby is translated in bak mandi which is considered more common in Indonesia. Here we can see a domestication in translating a cultural words.

It is noted that two techniques were not applied. One is footnote, which is not used due to the fact that children books are usually made simple, with no more explanations put in the footnote. Another unused technique is official or standard translation since these books, again, are for children. As a result, no official words found there.

4. Conclusion

The translator generally had successfully delivered the same message of the TL text to the SL text which is an absolute criterion of good translation. In translating cultural issue, the translator translated to words which are familiar to the target readers. The translator has used many techniques to enable the readers to understand this text and get the same enjoyment as the SL readers. It is therefore a piece of successful translation.

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