

Translation Strategies of Similes in “*Game of Thrones*” Novel

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: March 08, 2021

Accepted: April 20, 2021

Volume: 4

Issue: 4

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.4.18

KEYWORDS

Figurative, simile, translation, strategies, trope change

ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out the similes found in the novel “*Game of Thrones*” and its Indonesian translation “*Perebutan Tahta*”, and to investigate what translation strategies are used in translating the similes from the source text to the target text. The method applied in this research is descriptive qualitative which is used to describe the phenomena occurring in the translation of similes from English into Indonesian. The data were collected from the first three chapters of the novel “*Game of Thrones*” by George R. R. Martin and its Indonesian version entitled “*Perebutan Tahta*”. The similes are identified by using the theories of similes proposed by Israel (2014), Harding (2017), Knowles and Moon (2006), and Kridalaksana (2013). In analyzing the data, the translation strategies proposed by Chesterman (2016) are used. The result shows that there are 32 data found, 28 of them are similes translated into similes, while 4 of them are similes translated into non-similes. The translation strategy used to translate similes into similes is trope change type A, while the translation strategy used to translate similes into non-similes is trope change type C. The findings show that the translation of similes into similes is dominant in the first three chapters of the novel with the percentage 87,5% from out of 32 data found, while the translation from similes into non-similes is only 12,5%. The findings also show that there is a secondary strategy found while analyzing the data, namely compression. Nevertheless, even though the similes in the source text are translated into similes and non-similes in the target text, the main translation strategy used is still trope change strategy, although the types are different. For the reason that the trope change strategy is specifically stated by Chesterman to translate figurative expressions, which includes simile. Furthermore, the secondary strategy, compression, occurred because due to the structure of the Indonesian language, the translation in the target text tends to be shorter than the original source text in English.

1. Introduction

Munday (2016) defines translation as “a process between two different languages that involves the changing of an original written ST in the original verbal language into a written TT in a different verbal language” (p. 8). While Newmark (1998) stated that translation is “rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text” (p. 5). In the process of translating the original source text to the target text, the translators may find difficulties due to cultural differences. Since translating is not only transferring the words to another language but also convey the information that exists in the text, cultural differences could be a huge problem for the translators. Translating figurative language also can be a challenge for translators due to language and cultural differences.

In novels, the writers often use figurative language as rhetorical devices to enhance the effect of storytelling. Hence, translating a novel that is full of figurative expressions might be a hurdle for translators. For example, the translation of the English simile ‘white as snow’ might be unfamiliar to the Indonesian target text reader if it is translated literally to an Indonesian simile as ‘*putih*

seperti salju. It is because Indonesia is a country with a tropical climate that only has two seasons, the dry season and the monsoon season. Hence, Indonesian readers will not be able to relate to the expression 'white as snow'. The translator has to adjust the comparison into something that is common or considered white by Indonesian people, such as '*kapas*' or '*cotton*'. As the result, the simile 'white as snow' will be more suitable to be translated as '*putih seperti kapas*' by adjusting the element of comparison to the things that are common or familiar to the Indonesian readers such as turning 'snow' into '*kapas*' or '*cotton*'. Furthermore, it is pivotal to translate similes while translating novels without making them too unfamiliar in the target language.

The novel entitled "*Game of Thrones*" from a series called "*A Song of Ice and Fire*" by George R. R. Martin is a widely known novel all around the world. The series is even adapted to a TV series produced by HBO and being starred by famous actors and actresses. Both the original novel and the adapted TV series are filled with figurative language. Hence, the occurrence of similes in the novel is also frequent which makes the researcher is interested in analyzing the similes and how they are translated into the Indonesian version of the novel.

This research seeks to find answers to the following questions: 1) What are the similes found in the novel?; 2) What are the strategies used in translating the similes from the original English novel "*Game of Thrones*" by George R. R. Martin into the Indonesian translation "*Perebutan Tahta*"? The first three chapters are the ones that are chosen to be the source of data in this research.

In line with the research problems, the purposes of this research are: 1) To find out similes in the first three chapters of "*Game of Thrones*" novel; 2) To analyze the strategies used in translating the similes found in the first three chapters of the novel.

This research is important to be conducted to explore the translation field on how similes are translated from English to Indonesian. Since similes belong to idiomatic expressions which are known for being notorious to translate (Duff, 1990), this research helps to understand how the notorious items (re: simile) are translated. It is also hoped that this research will be able to enhance the knowledge of those who are interested in translating similes or conducting research related to a similar topic.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theories of Simile

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the simile is a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, and it is used to make a description more emphatic or vivid. Israel (as cited in Dancygier & Sweetser: 2014) stated that, "similes are primarily comparisons, but observed that the two tropes also have different formal features—because simile is an overt act of comparison, it relies heavily on comparative forms such as like or as (neither one of the two forms is actually privileged above the other in usage, even though standard examples of simile cited by researchers much more commonly use like" (p. 139). Harding (2017) explained that "simile is a three-slot comparative construction, including a target and source belonging to different conceptual domains, and an optional but frequent and highly significant elaboration" (p. 22). While Knowles and Moon (2005) stated that "similes are very like metaphors, but there is one important difference: the comparison is explicit. Similes are introduced or signaled by words such as like, as, compare, resemble, and so on" (p. 6). In the Indonesian language, Kridalaksana (2013) explained that, "*Ibarat (simile), perbandingan antara orang atau benda dengan hal-hal yang lain dengan mempergunakan seperti dsb.: mis. Seperti anjing dengan kucing*" (p. 91). The translation of the theory is that 'simile, is a form of comparison between a person or a thing with another thing which uses the comparison word, such as like'.

2.2 Translation Strategies

In this research, the researcher uses the strategies proposed by Andrew Chesterman in his book entitled "*Meme of Translation: The spread of ideas in translation theory*" which was published in 2016. The translation strategy used for translating figurative languages (simile, metaphors, etc.) is trope change.

Chesterman (2016) explained trope change as:

Trope change

This strategy, or rather set of strategies, applies to the translation of rhetorical tropes (i.e., figurative expressions) in the same way as strategy G10 above applied to the translation of schemes. Correspondingly, we can first distinguish three main subclasses of strategy here (a–c):

(a) **ST trope X** → **TT trope X**. For instance, a ST metaphor is retained as a metaphor in the TT.

(b) **ST trope X** → **ST trope Y**. Here, the general feature of figurativeness has been retained, but the realization of this feature is different, so that for instance an ST metaphor might be translated as one based on a different tenor, or as some other.

(c) **ST trope X** → **TT trope Ø**. Here the figurative element is dropped altogether. (pp. 101-103)

Distribution Change

This is a change in the distribution of the "same" semantic components over more items (expansion) or fewer items (compression). (p. 100)

3. Methodology

The method applied in this research is descriptive qualitative. Saldanha and O'Brien (2014) explained that, "a descriptive research question seeks to elicit data through which a phenomenon can be described in detail" (p. 16). In this research, the descriptive method is used to describe the phenomena that occur in the translation of similes from English into Indonesian. The researcher also scrutinizes the phenomena from the translator's vantage point. While Creswell (2007) explained qualitative research as, "a form of inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand" (p. 39). The qualitative method in this research is used by the researcher to interpret the phenomena in the translation with her own understanding after she finished examining the phenomena. The qualitative method also indicates that the researcher will analyze and elaborate the result of this research in a descriptive manner, which is in line with Wolcott (as cited in Creswell, 2007) that, "Description is the foundation upon which qualitative research is built. ... Here you become the storyteller, inviting the reader to see through your eyes what you have seen, ..." (p. 162).

The sources of data for this research are taken from an English novel, "Game of Thrones: A Song of Ice and Fire" by George R. R. Martin which was published in 2003 by Bantam, and also from a translated Indonesian version of the novel entitled "Perebutan Tahta" translated by a translator named Barokah Ruziati and was published by Fantasio in 2015. The data taken are from the first three chapters of the novels. The similes found in the first three chapters are analyzed using trope change strategy by Chesterman (2016).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Result

The researcher has collected data from the first three chapters. Referring to the problems of the research, the researcher is inclined to discover the similes in the English source text and how they are translated into the Indonesian target text. The total number of similes found are 32 data that consist of similes translated into similes and also similes translated into non-similes in the target text. Only 5 of the total data are taken to be analyzed according to the translation strategy trope change by Chesterman (2016). The number and percentage of the data found are presented in table 1.

Table 1. The number of figurative expressions changes in the "Game of Thrones" and "Perebutan Tahta".

Figurative Expressions Changes	Number	Percentage
Simile → Simile	28	87,5%
Simile → Non-Simile	4	12,5%
Total	32	100%

As seen in Table 1, the percentage of similes in the source text translated into similes in the target text is 87,5%, for from the 32 similes found, 28 of them are mainly translated into simile in the target text. While the translation of similes into non-similes is only 12,5%, because only 4 of the 32 data found are translated into non-similes in the target text. This concludes that the translation of similes into similes is dominant rather than the translation of similes into non-similes.

4.2 Discussion

In this section, the analysis of 5 data of similes is being presented below.

Datum 1

ST: Simile	TT: Simile
The Other said something in a language that Will did not know; his voice was like the cracking of ice on a winter lake , and the words were mocking.	Makhluk Lain mengatakan sesuatu dalam bahasa yang tak dikenal Will; suaranya bagaikan derak es di danau musim dingin , dan kata-katanya bernada mengejek.
Martin, G. R. (2013). <i>A game of thrones</i> (p. 14). Bantam Books.	Martin, G. R. (2015). <i>A game of thrones</i> (B. Ruziati, Trans.). (p. XV). Fantasio. (Original work published 1996)

Comment:

"**his voice was like the cracking of ice on a winter lake**" is a simile in the source text, signified by the existence of the word "like" which indicates a simile. In the source text, a voice of a person is being compared to the cracking ice on a winter lake. The simile in the source text is translated into "**suaranya bagaikan derak es di danau musim dingin**" which is also a simile in the

target text. The translation in the target text is also a simile because there is a presence of the word **“bagaikan”** which indicates a simile in the target text. There is no change of figurative expression, because the simile in the ST is translated into a simile in the TT. Ergo, the translation strategy used in this datum is trope change type A where the figurative expression in the ST is retained in the TT. Moreover, the simile in the source text which consists of 12 words is translated into a simile in the target text which consists of 8 words. It means that there is compression in the translation because the target text is shorter compared to the source text.

Datum 2

ST: Simile	TT: Non-Simile
His cloak was his crowning glory; sable, thick and black and soft as sin .	Jubah Ser Waymar merupakan kebanggaannya; dari kulit musang, tebal, hitam, dan sangat lembut .
Martin, G. R. (2013). <i>A game of thrones</i> (p. 7). Bantam Books.	Martin, G. R. (2015). <i>A game of thrones</i> (B. Ruziati, Trans.). (p. VII). Fantasio. (Original work published 1996)

Comment:

“His cloak was ... soft as sin” is a simile in the source text. The occurrence of the word **“as”** in the source text indicates that it is a simile. The phrase **“soft as sin”** means that something is very soft to the point it is sinful. This expression is common in the ST, but it would be awkward to be translated it into a simile **“lembut seperti dosa”** in the target text. For that reason, it is translated into **“Jubah Ser Waymar ... sangat lembut”** which is not a simile in the target text. The translation is not a simile because no word denotes a simile in the target text, such as **seperti, bagai, bagaikan**, etc. Instead of translating it into a simile in Indonesian which most likely would be very unfamiliar in the Indonesian language, the translator chose to translate it into a non-simile. Thus, there is a change from figurative expression from the ST into the TT. The translation strategy used in this datum is trope change type C where the figurative element is dropped altogether. Furthermore, the simile in the source text which consists of six words is translated into a non-simile in the target text which consists of five words. Hence, there is compression in this datum because the words in the target text are fewer compared to the source text.

Datum 3

SL: Simile	TL: Simile
The weirwood’s bark was white as bone, its leaves dark red, like a thousand bloodstained hands .	Kulit pohon <i>weirwood</i> seputih tulang, daunnya merah gelap bagai seribu tangan bernoda darah .
Martin, G. R. (2013). <i>A game of thrones</i> (p. 25). Bantam Books.	Martin, G. R. (2015). <i>A game of thrones</i> (B. Ruziati, Trans.). (p. 12). Fantasio. (Original work published 1996)

Comment:

“its leaves dark red, like a thousand bloodstained hands” is a simile in the source text, denoted by the existence of the word **“like”** which indicates a simile. In the source text, the dark red leaves are being compared to a thousand bloodstained hands. The simile in the source text is translated into **“daunnya merah gelap bagai seribu tangan bernoda darah”** which is also a simile in the target text. The presence of the word **“bagai”** indicates that it is also a simile in the target text. Hence, there is no change of figurative expression, because the simile in the ST is also translated into a simile in the TT. The translation strategy used in this datum is trope change type A where the figurative expression in the ST is retained in the TT. Additionally, the simile in the source text which consists of ten words is translated into a simile in the target text which consists of eight words. It means that there is compression in the datum because the simile in the target text has fewer words compared to the source text.

Datum 4

SL: Simile	TL: Non-Simile
No fire burning, but the firepit was still plain as day .	Tak ada api yang menyala, tapi lubang api masih terlihat jelas .
Martin, G. R. (2013). <i>A game of thrones</i> (p. 8). Bantam Books.	Martin, G. R. (2015). <i>A game of thrones</i> (B. Ruziati, Trans.). (p. VII). Fantasio. (Original work published 1996)

Comment:

“... the firepit was still plain as day” is a simile in the source text. The phrase **“plain as day”** indicates that it is a simile as well as an idiom. **“plain as day”** originates from an idiom **“(as) plain as day”** which means ‘very obvious’ (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>). It is an idiom by definition because an idiom is ‘a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words’ (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s 9th Edition*), and the expression **“as plain as day”** has already been categorized as an idiom. It is also a simile, because according to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 9th Edition*, simile is ‘a

word or phrase that compares something to something else, using the words like or as, for example a face like a mask or as white as snow; the use of such words and phrases'. The simile in the ST is translated into "... **lubang api masih terlihat jelas**" which is a non-simile in the TT. The translation is not a simile because no word denotes a simile in the target text, such as **seperti, bagai, bagaikan**, etc. Instead of translating the simile into a simile "**jelas seperti hari**" which is an uncommon expression in the Indonesian language, the translator chose to translate it into a non-simile to avoid awkwardness. Therefore, there is a change of figurative expression from the ST into the TT. The translation strategy used in this datum is trope change type C where the figurative element is dropped altogether. Moreover, there is compression in this datum from seven words into five words. The translation of simile in the target text has fewer words compared to the simile in the source text.

Datum 5

SL: Simile	TL: Simile
A scream echoed through the forest night, and the longsword shivered into a hundred brittle pieces, the shards scattering like a rain of needles.	Jeritan bergema di sepenjuru hutan gelap, dan pedang panjang itu terburai menjadi ratusan kepingan rapuh, pecahannya bertebaran bagai hujan jarum.
Martin, G. R. (2013). <i>A game of thrones</i> (p. 14). Bantam Books.	Martin, G. R. (2015). <i>A game of thrones</i> (B. Ruziati, Trans.). (p. XV). Fantasio. (Original work published 1996)

Comment:

"**the shards scattering like a rain of needles**" is a simile in the source text, denoted by the existence of the word "**like**" which indicates a simile. In the source text, the shards of the swords scattering are being compared to a rain of needles. The simile in the source text is translated into "**pecahannya bertebaran bagai hujan jarum**" which is also a simile in the target text. The word "**bagai**" in the target text indicates that it is also a simile in the Indonesian language. Since the simile in the ST is also translated into a simile in the TT, it means that there is no change of figurative expression. The translation strategy used in this datum is trope change type A where the figurative expression in the ST is retained in the TT. There is also compression in this translation from nine words into five words. The translation of simile in the target text is shorter than the original simile in the source text.

5. Conclusion

Several points can be concluded from this research. The result shows that there are 32 data found by the researcher from the first three chapters of the novel "Game of Thrones" and its Indonesian translation "Perebutan Tahta". Only 5 out of the 32 data were taken to be analyzed. The findings show that from the total 32 data found, 28 of them are the translation of similes into similes which holds 87,5% of the total data. While 4 of them are the translation of similes into non-similes which holds 12,5% of the total data.

From the 5 data analyzed, 3 of them are the translation of similes to similes, while 2 of them are the translation of similes to non-similes. The translation strategy used to translate similes to similes is trope change type A where the figurative expression in the source text is retained in the target text. While the translation strategy used to translate similes to non-similes is trope change type C where the figurative element is dropped altogether. Furthermore, all the 5 data analyzed in this research also showed that the translation of the 5 of them is shorter (compressed) compared to the source text. It means that, in analyzing similes, not only trope change strategy can be applied but also distribution change strategy, namely compression. This is because the translated text is often compressed or expanded compared to the source text.

It can be concluded that the similes in the source text are mostly translated to similes in the target text, while a few of them are translated to non-similes. Nevertheless, the translation strategy used to translate similes to similes and similes to non-similes is still trope change, because it is the only strategy proposed by Chesterman (2016) that is specifically stated to be used for figurative expressions.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgments: The researcher would like to express her gratitude to her supervisor, Prof. Ratna Sajekti Rusli, for the support and encouragement to finish this research. This research would not have been possible to be finished without her supervision. The researcher also would like to express her gratitude to her beloved friend, Regina Ayu Harna Shindy, for the fun time they spent together in finishing this research.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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