

Translation Techniques in Translating Children's Bilingual Storybooks

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Abstract: Bilingual children's storybooks are a medium to learn English. This study focused on the translation process from previous studies. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The purpose of this study is to find the frequently used translation techniques, strategies, and procedures in studies of translating children's bilingual storybooks. This study found that the most frequently used translation technique is literal translation. Furthermore, the word-for-word is commonly used by the translator.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There are various media for children to learn English as a second language. A bilingual storybook is one of the media. Children can learn English in a fun way by reading bilingual

storybooks. However, children have limitations on words. Therefore, the translation in bilingual storybooks plays a crucial role in delivering the meaning of the source language into the target language. This study focuses on finding the most frequently used translation methods, translation strategies, and translation procedures in children's bilingual storybooks from previous studies. The study would like to summarize the most common, frequently used translation methods, translation strategies, and translation procedures in translating children's bilingual storybooks.

Translation has been identified as the replacement of the representation of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language (Bell, 1991). In translating texts, the translator has to decide the best translation methods, translation strategies, and translation procedures. A translation method is a translation process that follows certain principles consistent with the translator's objective. The translator has the right to use a suitable method, for example, choosing between literal, free, or communicative translation for translating a text. The decision for choosing a translation method is based on the objective of the translation. After the translator decides on the translation method, the translator has to set the translation strategy. That is the translator's plan for solving the translation problems in the translation task. The decision to set the strategy may include whether to domesticate or foreignize cultural elements of the source text, reorder sentences, or restructure discourse. Then, the last step to translate a text is the translation procedure.

During the translation process, the translator could face various problems. Translation shift is one of them. Translation shift can occur due to the different structures of words between the source language and the target language. In the literature, there are several examples of translation shifts in bilingual storybooks. For example, the pronoun in English cannot be translated into the same pronoun in Indonesian. It is because of different aspects of pronouns like gender.

A study by Ruddamayanti (2021) conducted a contrastive analysis between English and Indonesian pronouns through semantic components. The study would show the translation shifts and the meaning in Indonesian. Translation shifts of pronouns in the bilingual novel "Twilight" were examined by Utami and Hikmaharyanti (2019). The translation shifts were classified by type. Furthermore, the translation techniques employed were analyzed, and factors leading to the application of techniques in translating pronouns from English to Indonesian were investigated.

Besides, cultural words might be difficult to translate due to the different cultural backgrounds between the source language and the target language. Therefore, equivalent meaning can be a strategy to solve the problem. Furthermore, translating children's storybooks has to consider the diction for children. Although equivalent meaning is important in translation, the diction should be considered as simple as it can be. It is because children have a limited vocabulary. Therefore, a translator should consider several things before translating children's storybooks.

This study would focus on the translation process in bilingual children's storybooks. This study aimed to find the most frequently used translation methods, translation strategies, and translation procedures in children's bilingual storybooks. Furthermore, this study would like to summarize the translation procedures mostly used in children's bilingual storybooks.

2. METHOD

This study aims to analyse the translation methods, translation strategies, and translation procedures in children's bilingual storybooks. To achieve the aim, this study

uses a qualitative research method. The qualitative research method employed in this study involves a large analysis of data. It is more effective than using quantitative research methods. It provides a study to examine the translation methods, translation strategies, and translation procedures found in the bilingual children's storybooks. Furthermore, it may lead to various studies of the translation process in other sources.

For further analysis, the study uses a descriptive qualitative method. The descriptive qualitative method will enable a detailed examination of language choices in translated texts, providing insight into the translation process. Many researchers used a descriptive qualitative method to deliver better analysis. Previous studies of the translation process in bilingual books used qualitative descriptive methods to show the result of the analysis in a better way, rather than showing the numbers of the translation process.

This study searched for previous studies by Publish or Perish. Publish or Perish was used to collect articles about the translation process in children's bilingual storybooks. The search was focused on Google Scholar. Keywords used for the search were translation, translating, children, storybook, and bilingual. The studies have been limited over the last ten years. The search is limited to fifty papers for a better classification. The result is then sorted out by the topics related to this study. Twenty papers were selected for the literature review.

The previous studies collected were classified into three group themes. Group 1 theme was translation techniques, methods, and strategies. Group 2 theme was translation quality, readability, and impact. The last group theme, Group 3, was challenges, cultural aspects, and stakeholders.

This study focused on the group 1 theme, translation techniques, methods, and strategies. Therefore, the writer read the papers classified into the theme to find a summary of the most frequently used translation techniques, methods, and strategies.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study would like to review previous studies that have been mentioned in the method section. This study found a research paper about the translation technique and the author's ideology. The data source of the research was seven bilingual storybooks that were chosen randomly. The data was analysed by the method proposed by Newmark (1988). The research found that the bilingual books' author mostly used literal translation as the technique. The method used in the translation of the bilingual book is used to emphasize the source language. The result showed that the most frequent methods were a word-for-word and literal translation. Based on the results, the author's ideology was foreignization because of the tendency to use methods that emphasize the source language (Hidayati, 2020).

Another study analysed the methods, techniques, and ideology of a story in a bilingual story book for children. The research found that the author used literal translation as the method. The result showed that the highest frequency of techniques is the reduction technique. The reduction was used to omit words, phrases, or sentences from the source language to the target language. The author focused on domestication ideology because the technique and method emphasize the target language (Syafutri & Sujarwati, 2021).

A study conducted by Septarani (2022) found that the most used translation procedure in the collection of animal short stories for children is literal translation. In addition, the least procedure used was descriptive equivalent. Furthermore, in the study, Nida's meaning equivalent is applied. The study found that the most used meaning equivalence procedure was Dynamic Equivalent (Septarani, 2022).

Noerjanah (2017) investigated the strategies applied in a series of bilingual children's storybooks. The result of the research showed that the most frequently used translation strategy was the cultural equivalent strategy. Furthermore, the translation result was appropriate with skopos theory (focused on Target Text) – the text should be coherent both in the Source Text and the Target Text. The result also showed that the bilingual children's storybooks were well translated, as identified from the acceptability aspect (Noerjanah, 2017).

Research conducted by Maryani & Rini (2021) found that the equivalence of the meaning of Indonesian–English words in a bilingual story book is mostly achieved. Furthermore, the study found that most of the translation techniques use word-for-word techniques. However, although the equivalent meaning is achieved, the equivalent word is not suitable for children due to their limited vocabulary.

A study by Hidayat & Harmoko (2018) investigated the translation method and procedures of three bilingual storybooks. The study found that the frequently used procedures are literal, modulation, shift, addition, and reduction. Based on the result, the most dominant procedure used is literal. The literal procedure is frequently used by two out of three bilingual storybooks. The result also showed that semantic translation was dominant for the translation method (Hidayat & Harmoko, 2018).

Marpaung (2022) conducted research on the translation technique in a bilingual children's storybook. The study found that there were 9 techniques used in the book. Furthermore, the most frequently used technique was literal translation or the word-for-word technique. In addition, the least frequently used techniques were Deletion and Adaptation techniques (Marpaung, 2022). The result can be developed more for further research.

Research conducted by Amalia (2022) analysed translation difficulties and strategies to achieve word-level equivalence of a bilingual storybook. The result showed that a word-by-word and free translation strategy was mostly used to achieve word-level equivalence. Furthermore, the study found that differences in word forms, differences in the purpose and level of use of certain forms, cultural special concepts, and the absence of subordinate elements in the source language were the difficulties in achieving word-level equivalence. Based on the difficulties found, the study also found that the author eliminates certain words and uses more general words to overcome the difficulties.

Nuranisa (2019) investigated research on direct translation procedures of a bilingual children's storybook. The study found that literal translation was the most dominant direct translation procedures used in the book. Furthermore, the study found that literal translation is dominantly used because the target language has the closest structure and style to that used in the source language, and is simple to understand by children.

A study by Ariyati (2019) analyzed a bilingual book to identify translation techniques and measure translation readability. The study found the translation techniques used in the book were literal translation, modulation, transposition, addition, elimination, and borrowing. The most frequently used technique is literal translation. Furthermore, the study investigated the readability of the translation by having respondents for the research. The study concluded that the translation of the bilingual book was quite readable.

Besides translation techniques used in children's bilingual storybooks, this study also found research on translation shifts in the illustrated bilingual children's story by Widarwati et al. (2024). The study found that translation shifts in noun phrases predominantly occur in the form of unit shifts. The data was an illustrated bilingual children's story. The use of translation shifts occurred most frequently in structure shifts,

unit shifts, and class shifts. Furthermore, the unit shift occurred in the form of phrases to nouns.

Research conducted by Rahmat et al. (2022) analysed the translation techniques used in bilingual children story books. The study found that literal translation was the frequently used technique. Based on the result, the researcher concluded that the translation of the three books is accurate, acceptable, and readable due to the use of the translation techniques.

A study by Baihaqi (2021) found that human and machine translations deliver different lexical, grammatical, semantic, and stylistic versions. Machine translation has not been able to well-recognize the context of the situation and culture. A machine can serve as a pre-translation. Most translations used were word-by-word translations and complex translations. Some bilingual books show subtle translation errors, ranging from tense errors, inconsistency in using pronouns, passive voice, superlative, and even errors in choosing diction (Hidayati, 2019).

Research conducted by Khrisna et al. (2025) showed that the translation's accuracy is highly prioritized across four different levels – emergent, early, intermediate, and advanced, compared to other aspects, such as acceptability and readability. Maintaining high accuracy does not necessarily equate to high readability; it failed to convey meaning effectively. The most frequently used strategy is borrowing, which can hinder comprehension for the target readers, children.

A study by Rahayu & Apriyanti (2016) investigated the non-equivalence in meaning found between propositional meaning and expressive meaning. The non-equivalent meaning caused the source language concept not to be lexicalized in the target language, the source and target languages make different distinctions in meaning, the target language lacks superordinate, and differences in physical or interpersonal perspectives between the source language and the target language.

A quantitative study by Maharani et al. (2021) found that 48 parents of 52 parents consider bilingual storybooks as media. 50 parents buy bilingual storybooks for their children. 37 parents checked the language of the books; 15 parents did not match. 42 parents believe that the books are qualified for learning English. Considerations for parents in buying books: story, picture, language, price, and publishers/authors.

Despite the parents' perspective on bilingual storybooks, a study conducted research on difficulties in translating children's bilingual storybooks. A study by Nuraeni et al. (2019) found linguistic difficulties faced by students of the English Diploma 3 Program of Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS), who translated children's story books, covering a limited English vocabulary, inappropriate diction for children, wrong meaning understanding of particular sentences, and the use of the wrong phrase in book titles. Cultural challenges include less understanding of the source text cultural context; culture-related onomatopoeias; high culture-related colloquial phrases; names of flora, fauna, artefacts, and habits; and community life development.

Another study investigated the grammar errors in ten bilingual children's storybooks. A study by Apriyanti & Rahayu (2016) found that the grammar errors were missing verb, S-V agreement, pronoun, double verb, parallel structure, and missing subject.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the most frequently used translation techniques in translating children's storybooks were literal translation. Furthermore,

most researchers found that word-for-word translation or direct translation was used in the translation process. Literal translation found frequently used because the translation process because it is simple and easy to do. The author or the translator used literal translation to describe the words literally in the source language. It is likely for the purpose of teaching children new words. Children are young learners of a second language. Therefore, the words used in the storybook should be simple and easy to understand. It might be the reason for the use of literal translations for children's bilingual storybooks.

Literal translations are suitable strategies for the purpose of word-for-word learning. It is because the linguistic comprehension of children is at the word level. It might be the reason why translators or authors use word-for-word translation for the storybooks. It can be used for children to learn a foreign language by learning the words in bilingual storybooks. However, it should be analysed by conducting research on the literal translation.

In my conclusion, literal translation is mostly used for the translation of children's bilingual storybooks. Furthermore, the most frequently used translation technique is word-for-word translation, although there were other techniques found in the research. Therefore, analysing the use of literal translation can be a recommendation for further research. Further research can analyse the reason or the background of the frequently used literal translation. Furthermore, the result of the literal translation should be analysed for its impact on the children. It should be analysed whether the literal translation gives a good impact on the children for the learning acquisition or not. Thus, the translation of the children's bilingual storybooks should consider the impact of the translation on the children's language learning acquisition.

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