

Original Research Article

Translating an Indonesian Comic

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Abstract: The present article discusses the process and problems of translating the Indonesian comic book entitled 'Mice Cartoon: Indonesia Banget! 2'. It is a comic that contains typical Indonesian current situations. The aim of translating the comic book from Bahasa Indonesia to English is to produce the English version of the comic book, which makes foreign readers understand Indonesian comics. As the comic also describes some events and conditions in Indonesia, this can also help illustrate social conditions in Indonesia to the foreign readers and show some Indonesian culture through comics. The translation is challenging as it has many Indonesian slang and dialects which are only found during the events. The techniques and procedures of translation are discussed and analyzed using the translation techniques suggested by Molina & Albir (2002). It was found that not all techniques were used. The most frequently used translation technique is the literal translation, followed by Modulation and Linguistic amplification. Cultural translation arising from the analysis is also discussed.

Keywords: Translation techniques; comic book; Indonesian slang; social condition; cultural translation.

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INTRODUCTION

A comic is a piece of drawing that tells a sequence of stories in panels. In making a comic book, there are some elements such as characters, objects, and texts as Zanettin (2018) confirmed that comics are usually composed of speech bubbles to accommodate dialogue or thoughts, narrative boxes, and captions. These elements are critical in comic writing as they create figures that tell the whole story. Comics have more advantages than other literary works as they illustrate what has happened in the story in more detail.

Since it describes the story more clearly, comics can be a great medium to express an idea. Accordingly, comic artists can use comics as a tool for criticizing social conditions, expressing public opinion, or giving information in their way, usually with slight jokes. Mice Cartoon is a perfect example of this.

Mice Cartoon is one of the most popular Indonesian comics created by Muhammad 'Mice' Mirsad (2017). Published every week on Sunday in Kompas newspaper, Mice Cartoon reflects the reality of Indonesia recently. It usually tells the story of Mice, portraying the author himself, on how he reacted or responded to the latest issues, as a naive but wise

(sometimes can be foolish) person. Mice Cartoon successfully criticizes the condition of Indonesia in a satirical and brilliant way. It is a typical Indonesian comic because it shows the Indonesian condition and contains dialogues among ordinary people that may only happen in Indonesia. Besides the strip version, it is also available in the book version. Some of the titles are *Obladi Oblada Life Goes On*, *Little Mice: Game Over!!*, *Indonesia 1998*, *Indonesia Banget!* and *Indonesia Banget! 2*.

A translation is expressing meaning, ideas, or messages of a script from one language to another. Some of the considerations in the translation are linked to precision, explicitness, and naturalness of the meaning, ideas, or messages of the translation. The target text readers must receive the equivalent information like the source text readers do (Nugroho, 2007). More accurately, Crystal (1991, p. 346) defined translation as a process where "the meaning and expression in one language (source) is tuned with the meaning of another (target) whether the medium is spoken, written or signed."

In translating, there is a procedure that has to be followed to transmit the idea accurately. Several scholars suggest different procedures and processes, but

the idea most referred to is from Larson (1984), who suggested that the steps shop follows from two aspects: source language (SL) and target language (TL). In the SL, there is a text to be translated and followed with the TL aspect of translation. Then there is a step of discovering meaning in the SL step, followed by Re-expressing the meaning. Then came the meaning, which matches both in the SL and TL aspects.

This project aims to translate 'Mice Cartoon: Indonesia Banget! 2' to produce an English version of Mice Cartoon: Indonesia Banget! 2, to make Mice Cartoon a representative of Indonesian comics, to make foreign readers understand Indonesian comics, to illustrate social conditions happening in Indonesia, and to show some Indonesian culture through comics.

In transferring the meaning of the comic contents, there are two principles taken for consideration, known as 'big five tools' and characteristics of the translation. The five tools as suggested by Philpot (2019) take five aspects to consider when analyzing text: audience and purpose, content and theme, tone and mood, stylistic devices, and structure.

The audience of the comic book is generally those who like humor, and the purpose is to make a joke when facing the life reality; with tone and mood, the author used satire, happiness, hilarious, pity, and sadness tone in making the comic book, and the moods that author expected are happy, funny, sympathetic, and sad. The translation uses colloquial language for stylistic devices, so it sounds more natural in the target language. In terms of structure, the translated version of the comic book retains its originality: the product has the same design and layout as the comic book.

A good translation must transfer the same feelings as the original text. A good translation does not necessarily mean to be faithful. So, several characteristics are applied in this translation. Sometimes, the translation needs to be unfaithful to achieve the translation's naturalness. For example, some idioms must be translated to the equivalent idioms in the target language to be natural.

Some cultural aspects must be translated through domestication so that the target readers do not need to search for the reference. If the contents talk about culture, it is best to retain the cultural aspects by foreignization, so the target readers learn about the culture in the source language. Neutralization also can be used when it talks about cultural differences, especially religious aspects, by finding the secular alternatives or excluding the word, so it is more acceptable in the target language. All in all, a good translation must have the flexibility to adjust to a

particular situation to achieve translation naturalness. Transposition,

In conducting the translation work, there are some techniques to consider. According to Molina & Albir (2002), 18 techniques can be used in the translation. Those are Adaptation, Amplification, Borrowing, Calque, Compensation, Description, Linguistic compression, Discursive creation, Established equivalence, Literal translation, Generalization, Linguistic amplification, Modulation, Particularisation, Reduction, Substitution, and Variation.

Translating comics is different from translating other literary works. Although comic and speech use spoken language, comic translation does not require formal language as it is demanded in speech translation (Hu, 2020). Translating comics is arguably one of the most complex texts to translate, as Skwarzinsky (2019) stated. As there is an illustration in the comic, it can help give a picture of the meaning of what the characters say. Comic creates situations by images, while literation hardly shows an illustration. As Salor, E., & Marasligil (2013) stated, translating comics is the same as translating literation; it involves knowing the target language and readers, being creative, playing with words, and feeling the original story and the medium in the way it is presented. However, Zanettin (2018) argues that translating comics does not only involve translation in a more limited sense, namely the translation/republication of comics in other languages and cultures or within the confines of medium/language/semiotic code/ graphic narrative form but translating comics is also a link and exchange between comics and other media. Similarly, Zolczer (2019) mentions three different perspectives to the approach of translating comics, namely, the constraints of translating comic books, multimodality (the relation between the visual and the verbal), and humor translation.

There are certain peculiarities in the translation of comics because of the combination of iconic language and literary language in comics translation as suggested by Igareda (2017). This is different from translating political news, which should strive to integrate the translation into the target language's cultural factors and atmosphere, accurately express the original information in terms of the target reader's comprehension, and ensure that the translation is readily accepted by target readers (Shi & Li 2020),

However, there are some points to be considered. First, the tone of the character's voice needs to be identified, and the second, onomatopoeia, should be translated by finding the equivalence.

The Comic translator should understand stylistic choices and the cultural connotations that underlie the making of the cartoons (Salor, E., & Marasligil, 2013). They further suggest that the translator who is aware of the visual choices that comic writers make is more in tune with the interaction between visual and textual elements than a comic.

The problem is when there is a joke as it is not easy to translate a joke: it may work in one culture (Japanese), but it does not in another (English). The joke turns out to be misunderstood and not funny at all. This is what has been stated by Davisson (2016) when translating *Mangga* (Japanese comics).

Not all cultural parts can be translated but need filtering. Some of the Western cultural aspects revealed in the Donald Duck comic are acceptable in Indonesia. So, in translating these comics, the translator must manipulate the text so that it can be accepted by readers, especially parents who often accompany their children when reading comics (Yuliasri, 2017)

Another confession was made by Rizzi (2017), who suggests that translating comics is very complicated. He continued stating that the relationship between the media and its readers seems simple, although comics are taking effect gradually. There is an effect of a single image on the reader, with its graphic style and clarity. Then, putting the pictures in order and forming a sequence is a challenge. As there are many aspects in comic, the translation of comic involves other disciplines, not just linguistic per se (Kraindl, 2004).

There is a need to understand media literacy – that is, an understanding to decode, interpret and enjoy the mass media in dealing with pop culture (Serafini, 2011) as in modern comics, pop culture can become one of the undeniably existent elements.

Some comic translation books have been made and are available in print or online. The first one is a bilingual comic book of Garfield named *Garfield Goes to Waist*, which Davis made (2004). This version of the book has English and Bahasa Indonesia texts where the original texts are kept, while the translated texts are placed outside boxes. There are strengths and weaknesses in this type of translation. The strength is that people know what the original texts look like, and the weakness is that the translated texts are rather small, and people may have difficulty reading the translated texts. The translated texts also sound unnatural that makes the jokes confusing.

Another literary work that is full of local dialect is interesting to note. The translation of a Sundanese Novelette Entitled 'Nu Ngageugeuh Legok Kiara' by Dadan Sutisna from Sundanese to English (Dewi & Setiawan, 2017). It was challenging, but the

translation result is satisfactory using the translation technique that is suggested by Newmark (1981).

Chen & Zhang (2019) stated that translation is a comprehensive process. Throughout this process, the translator must fully demonstrate his comprehension and interpretation of the original text's meaning and his ability to control the translation. The present research comprehensively discusses problems and issues arising from the project in translating the comics using the techniques suggested by Molina & Albir (2002), which was intended to perform the best possible translation.

METHODS

The end product of the project is the translated version of the comic book. The first thing to do was find the comic book entitled "*Mice Cartoon: Indonesia Banget! 2*". The permission to translate the book was sent by email to the author, and we got a reply from him not long after.

Mice Cartoon has published several comic books, and this project only focuses on one of them. The comic book tells a story about the social condition in Indonesia through the point of view of Mice. It is served in satire to criticize the current issue that has happened. This comic book is very challenging to be translated as there are many colloquial and informal local dialects.

Reading and understanding the comic book is necessary, so the comic contents' meaning could be caught clearly. This is helpful to achieve translation naturalness. Then the next step is translating the comic book in which the source language is Bahasa Indonesia, and the target language is English. The technique used is 18 translation techniques by Molina & Albir (2002). If there were some words the meaning of which was not familiar, a dictionary was used to solve this problem. Unfortunately, there is no online Indonesian slang dictionary so far that is reliable, but the English one such as *The Online Slang Dictionary - American, English, and Urban slang* (Rader, 2020) is helpful, especially to make sure about the existence of the slang words.

After translating, the result of the translation was edited. This was done to make sure that there were no mistakes in grammatical and vocabulary aspects. Also, this is intended to translate interpreted well. I was then editing and proofreading to check for the minor flaws in the translation, such as spelling and punctuation.

In creating the English version of the comic, the comic book was scanned to get a copy of the comic book. Later, the original texts were erased by using Adobe Photoshop. The blank version of the comic book was printed, and the translated texts were handwritten.

Last, all translated pages were scanned once again, and the English version was done and ready to print.

To sum up, the methodology process went from providing the text in the source language, then discovering the meaning. It can be done by reading the text several times. Later, the meaning of the text was discovered, then re-expressing the meaning into the nearest equivalence in the target language. Editing and proofreading were conducted before the publication or printing of the comic translation project.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of this final project is the English comic book entitled "So Indonesian! 2". The comic book has 112 pages and is bound. The comic book retains its original design and layout to keep originality feeling in terms of design and layout. Only the language content of the book is changed after translating. Since the texts in the original comic book are handwritten, the text in the translated version is also written by hand.

The content of the product is the English version of the comic book. Besides, the theme is to illustrate the social condition happening in Indonesia. The author of the comic book used several tones. They are satire, happiness, hilarious, pity, and sadness. The table below contains examples of each tone. By reading

those texts above, the audience is expected to feel happy, funny, sympathetic, and sad.

The translated version of the comic book uses many colloquial and slang languages to approach the audience, so it is more acceptable.

The structure of the product follows the original structure of the comic book with some additions. However, there is a part excluded which is the advertisement page. Thus, the product's structure is the front cover, half-title page, title page, copyright page, readers comment page, acknowledgments, preface, the content, about the author, about the translator, and back cover.

Translation Techniques Used

Translation techniques were used to determine how the texts were translated. From the analysis, we have found that from the 18 translation techniques, only 11 translation techniques were used in translating the comic book. They are borrowing, Compensation, Description, established equivalence, Generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, Transposition, and variation. The table below shows the number of translation techniques and their percentage applied in translating the comic book.

Table 1: Translation Technique Used in the Comic under Analysis

No.	Translation technique	Occurrences	Percentage
1	Literal translation	147	24.58%
2.	Modulation	141	23.58%
3.	Linguistic amplification	98	16.39%
4.	Compensation	85	14.21%
5.	Linguistic compression	63	10.54%
6.	Established equivalence	25	4.18%
7.	Transposition	19	3.18%
8.	Description	11	1.84%
9.	Generalisation	4	0.67%
10.	Variation	4	0.67%
11.	Borrowing	1	0.17%
Total		598	100%

From the table above, it can be seen that the most frequently used translation technique is the literal translation, followed by Modulation and Linguistic amplification. The least frequent translation technique used is borrowing with 0.17%, and the second least frequent technique used is Generalization and variation, which share the same percentage in 0.67%.

The translation techniques that are not used in this final project are adaptation, amplification, calque, discursive creation, particularisation, reduction, and substitution. The most frequently used technique is Literal translation or 'word by word translation'. As the name suggests, it is a translation technique used by

translating a sentence or phrase or expression word by word. The following is an example of a literal translation taken from the translation works.

Original text : - Suatu hari disebuah mal di Serpong...

- Suatu siang di Stasiun Sudimara...

Translated text: - One day in a mall in Serpong

The second most frequent technique is modulation. It is a technique that is used by way of changing the point of view. Below is an example of the modulation technique used in the comic book.

Original text : Right or wrong it's my country!!

INILAH Indonesia...Indonesia kita... -

Era, dimana individualisme telah di mulai...

Translated text: Right or wrong, Indonesia is our country. our beloved country! - The individualism era has begun.

The phrase "inilah Indonesia" translated to "Indonesia is our country" by changing the point of view. Indonesia, which is the object in the source text, becomes the subject in the target text.

The third most frequently used technique is Linguistic amplification. It is used by adding linguistic elements. The example of linguistic amplification is below.

Original text: - Lebih canggih nii...

- Pah... Udah lama gak pergi liburan nih?!

Translated text: - This one is more sophisticated.

-Darling, we haven't gone on vacation for a while.

The phrase "lebih canggih nih" has no subject and verb. In English, it is necessary to have a subject in a sentence. So, the phrase "this one is" is added to give the phrase subject and verb.

The next technique used is Compensation. It is used to introduce the stylistic effect from the source language to the target language. Below is an example of a compensation technique.

Original text: - Waduh?! Udah sumpek gini!

- Host2 Kuliner Dadakan

Translated text: - Uh-oh, it's already full.

- Amateur Culinary Presenters

The literal translation of the word "sumpek" is stuffy, but it is not in the right context. So, to keep it in context, the word "sumpek" becomes "full".

The next technique used is Linguistic compression. It is used by compressing linguistic elements in the target language. Its example is:

Original text: - Ketika ada teman akan datang berkunjung dan bertamu ke rumah kita...

- Wahai temanku... Sebenarnya apa yang sedang kau cari dan kau kejar dalam hidup ini??

Translated text: - When friends are visiting us

- My dear friend, what do you actually search for in this life?

The phrase "dan bertamu ke rumah" and the word "berkunjung" has the same meaning in English. So, to synthesize the linguistic elements, the phrase becomes "when friends are visiting us".

The following technique used is Established equivalence. It is used to express the same expression from the source language to the target language. The following is the example of established equivalence used in the comic book.

Original text: - Wuiich?!

- Uhuk...Uhuuk...Uhuuk!!

Translated text: - Whoa

- Cough, cough, cough

The example above is onomatopoeia words. Onomatopoeia must be translated by searching its equivalence so there is no misinterpretation. The word "Wuiich" has the same meaning as "Whoa", which is to meant to express 'surprised'.

The next one is Transposition. It is a translation technique used by changing the grammatical category. The example of Transposition used in the comic book is below.

Original text: - Sound yang memekakkan telinga!!

- Indonesia tuh! Jorok! Kumuh! mmpph....

Translated text: - Deafening speaker!

- That's Indonesia! What a slum!

The phrase "yang memekakkan telinga" is an adjective in the source language. It becomes "deafening" which is a verb in the target language. Similar to the change in 'Indonesia tuh!' which is just a noun (Indonesia) and an interjection 'tuh!' becoming 'That is Indonesia! – a complete sentence with a subject, verb, and complement.

The next technique used is Description. It is used to replace the expression with a description. An example of a description technique is below.

Original text: - Cobek

- Takjil

Translated text: - *a traditional mortar made from stone, used to grind chilies or spices

- *opening snacks for breaking fast.

Here, the description technique is used to give information about the word without deleting the word. The Description is put below the comic.

The last three-technique used are Generalization, variation, and borrowing, and borrowing. While Generalization is a translation technique that uses the more neutral term. Variation is used to change linguistic and paralinguistic elements.

The examples of generalization translation technique are:

Original text: - Semua berapa, Bu? Beng2 6, Teh manis...

- Di teras depan rumah

Translated text: - How much? Six chocolate bars and a cup of tea.
 - In front of the house

"Beng-beng" is a popular chocolate bar in Indonesia. However, in other countries, there is no "beng-beng". So, the translation is "chocolate bar" to give it a general term in the target language.

The following is an example of a variation translation technique.

Original text: - Hehehe ogah ach...
 - Waah!?! Siap mbak Vina!
 Translated text: - Nuh-uh!
 - Really? OK, Mbak Vina

The phrase "hehehe ogah ach" becomes "nuh-uh" in the target language. "Nuh-uh" is a paralinguistic element showing disapproving.

The least technique used is Borrowing which is a translation technique used by taking a word or expression from the source language to the target language. The following is an example of a borrowing technique used in the comic book.

Original text : Martabak Telor
 Translated text: Martabak Telor

The word "Martabak Telor" is borrowed from the word "Martabak Telor" which is a street food (snack) commonly found in Indonesia, especially Java areas.

However, some words cannot be translated. The following are some examples of the untranslatability of Indonesian expressions.

Chiye to express something which may look different. This is given as a comment to someone or a friend or passers-by.

Doong just an additional expression which may have no meaning to words that precede such as Boleh dong!

Deeh! this is also just an additional expression that is meant to emphasize the proceeded word as in Percaya deeh!

Nih! This can mean here (sinih), but sometimes it does not have a meaning as in Gua gebuk nih!

Dah or deh! This also may have no meaning; is just an additional as in Dari pada di gebuk, mendingan di gembok dah!

Such expressions are only available in spoken languages, and translating comics is also translating spoken language, but they are written through a comic.

Cultural Words

In this final project about translating Mice Cartoon: Indonesia Banget! 2, some words contain cultural and religious words. Extremera (2015) has suggested the importance of including cultural aspects in translation. Dimitriu (2006) even suggests that contextualizing translation within the culture is a must. These words can be translated by domestication, foreignization, or neutralization technique depend on the need. Here are examples of cultural words with their techniques.

Table 2: Examples of Cultural Words from the Comic under Analysis

Original Text	Source Text	Technique
Bencong Ngamen	Ladyboy Street Singer	Domestication
Hajatan	Party	Domestication
Cobek	*a traditional mortar made from stone, used to grind chilies or spices	Foreignization
Takjil	*opening snacks for breaking fast	Foreignization
YESS!! Alhamdulillah... Transferan gua udah masuk!	Yes! My money has been transferred!	Neutralization

As mentioned above regarding the Characteristics of the Translation, domestication aims to make the target readers no need to search the reference. The example, "hajatan" means a celebration that always includes dangdutan. In the translation, it is changed into "party" which has the same context. For foreignization, the cultural words were not deleted to be introduced to the target readers. Instead, a description is added to the cultural words that can be understood by the target readers. The last, neutralization is used to make the cultural words have no religious aspects. For example, the word "Alhamdulillah" is excluded in the translation. This can be done since it is still in the context, although without the word.

When conducting this project, several problems occurred. These are the problems with the given solutions. The first is finding the right expression in the target language. Translating an expression is a real challenge in translating. The expression needs to be translated well, so the translation result is not awkward. The solution to this problem is finding the same expression in newspaper or magazine articles or searching for some similar expressions in movies or TV shows.

Another problem is translating specific terms. Some specific terms are found in the comic book, such as buka puasa, sahur, and batu wulung. In translating

those terms, some research was done by finding the English article about the terms.

The last one is translating onomatopoeia and interjection. Every language has different words for onomatopoeia and interjection. Thus, onomatopoeia and interjection must be translated into the target language. To translate onomatopoeia and interjection, reading an online onomatopoeia and interjection article was helpful.

CONCLUSION

Translating a typical Indonesian comic showing the reflections of Indonesian current events and conditions with satire using Indonesian daily language phrases is like translating slang and colloquially used in society. There are problems concerning the use of slang and cultural words as well as local dialects. This is the nature of language use because language is what native speakers speak. People use the language as they want to. They may not consider the grammar or formally and grammatically correct language. The people use the language they want to use to communicate and even to make jokes to entertain themselves or make fun of the happening conditions.

When it comes to the translation of such comics, the translator has to find a way to transfer the meaning and transfer the aspects that represent the culture. Not all the techniques used in translating the comic book used all the 18 translation techniques suggested by Molina and Albir (2002). From those techniques, 11 translation techniques are used. They are borrowing, Compensation, Description, established equivalence, Generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, Transposition, and variation.

Indonesian comics are typified with two characteristics. First, they are flourished in Indonesian situations. Second, they are colored with Indonesian dialects. Both contain hilarious aspects that readers can make jokes about.

In conducting this project, translating comic books is quite a challenge. Translation needs some understanding of the target language and the culture and conditions or situations of the country when the comic is written. There are some expressions, idioms, colloquial languages, interjections, and onomatopoeias needed to understand. Therefore, the lesson learned in conducting this project is translating added knowledge about expressions in the target language.

Translating a comic book is exciting and challenging. The translator cannot just know the meaning of the words or phrases, but they should also know about pop culture in the target language. Also

required are the knowledge and use of onomatopoeia words and interjection in both languages. They need to be translated well and appropriately as they add to the livelihood of the language use. If such the onomatopoeia is not translated, the expressions may sound dull, and the words may have no meaning at all.

Finding idiom, colloquial, and expression is not easy. We need to do some research first by reading articles, watching films, or movies. As there are no web site or printed materials that are reliable, it will be of great assistance to collect Indonesian colloquial and slang that are currently used. The existence of the web page of the Indonesian slang dictionary will also be of advantage to foreigners traveling to Indonesia or interested to learn about Indonesia.

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