POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES FOR TRANSLATING PERSONAL NAMES IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

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Abstract: Personal names are considered “specific words” and thus most often kept untranslated. However, as translation theory has developed, making it not only changing language features but also mediating cultural aspects, personal names are reconsidered in translation. Since they are culturally bound, this study aims to find out, when personal names are translated, what translation strategies apply and why. The data were collected from the weekly comic Donal Bebek (2018) as well as from the Hunger Games trilogy novels written by Suzanne Collins (2008, 2009, 2010) and translated by Hetih Rusli (2009, 2010, 2012). The findings show that translating personal names in children literature can be more complicated than translating those in literature for older readers. This study has found out that four strategies (preservation, naturalization, couplet, and adaptation) are used to approach the personal names translation for the children literature; and only two strategies (preservation and literal translation) are applied to the translation of those in young adult literature. Reasons for using such strategies are as follows: several aspects (such as connotation, pronunciation, and style) have been considered when translating personal names in children literature, while they are more flexible when translating personal names in young adult literature.

Keywords: translating personal names, translation techniques, children literature, young adult literature

Abstrak: Nama diri merupakan ‘kata yang khas’ dan karena itu seringkali tidak diterjemahkan. Namun, karena teori terjemahan telah berkembang, dimana menerjemahannya berarti tidak hanya mengubah fitur bahasa tetapi juga memediasi aspek budaya, nama diri dipertimbangkan ulang dalam penerjemahan. Karena nama-nama diri terkait secara budaya, penelitian ini bertujuan mengetahui kapan namadiri diterjemahkan, strategi apa yang digunakan, dan apa alasannya. Sumber data dikumpulkan dari komik mingguan Donal Bebek (2018) serta dari novel trilogi Hunger Games yang ditulis oleh Suzanne Collins (2008, 2009, 2010) dan diterjemahkan oleh Hetih Rusli (2009, 2010, 2012). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa menerjemahannya nama-nama diri dalam sastra anak-anak bisa
INTRODUCTION
Most people who have limited translation experience might consider that personal names should not be translated. However, the literature and translation practices have shown that names can be either preserved or translated. Zarei and Norouzi (2014) write that before the seventies, proper nouns were considered a grammatical category that should be translated, but since then there is a tendency to leave them untranslated. This was a shifting paradigm in translation theory. Al-Hassan and Jordan (2013) explain that in the initial phase of translation theory, translation was known as replacing a text in one language to another in the target language with the main emphasis on linguistic aspects, but in the later phase, translation studies have expanded to include cultural aspects; so more recently a translator is not only a language mediator but also a cultural mediator (Al-Hassan and Jordan, 2013). While it may be true that proper nouns need no translation, there are some exceptions regarding the translation of personal names.

Along this line of reasoning, when personal names are translated within the process of rendering the source language text into the target language text, this study aims to find out, first, what translation strategies apply, and secondly, why such strategies are selected.

PERSONAL NAMES TRANSLATION
Newmark (1988: 214) writes that names (first names and surnames) are usually transferred directly, especially when the nationality is important and the names have no relevant connotations. He adds that there is an exception for the names of famous saints, monarchs, popes, and prominent classical figures (Newmark, 1988: 214). That is why in Indonesian, Alexander the Great is translated as IskandarAgung, Pope Francis is translated as PausFransiskus, and Avicenna is translated as IbnuSina. I believe this exception is quite reasonable, because such figures have had influential roles due respectively to his ancient political leadership, his world-wide religious dominance, and his strong influence in philosophical and scientific ideas; therefore their names should be adjusted so that people from different language backgrounds find them easier to engage with.

Besides the aforementioned personal names, Newmark (1988: 215) explains further that names which have relevant connotations in imaginative literature are also translated, for example, Harriet, the name of a chicken in P.G. Wodehouse’s Love among the Chickens, is rendered as Laura in Swedish to maintain the incongruous connotation of the name. In line with this idea, Aguilera (2008) believes that proper nouns can also be
translated and substituted, particularly when dealing with children literature. Children are classified into three levels (pre-reading, age 0 – 6 years old; reading and writing, age 6 to adolescents; and adolescents and older); the lower their age, the lower the capability of understanding and accepting foreign words (Aguilera, 2008). This means that the translation of children’s literature targeting the lower level should be more sensitive. This is relevant to the translation of personal names in fairy tales and cartoons. For instance, Cinderella is translated as Cenerentola in Italian, Cendrillon in German, and Ashenputtel in German; and Snow White is translated as Schneewittchen in German and PutriSalju in Indonesian.

Translators do not use the same strategy for translating names in all texts (Pour, 2009). However, several studies have reported common strategies on how translators approach personal names. Jaleniauskienė and Čičelytė (2009) report that the most frequently used strategies in translating personal names in children literature are preservation, transformation, and creation, as well as localization. While, Abdolmaleki (2012) suggests four possible ways of translating proper nouns in general texts: (1) keep them unchanged from the original version; Newmark (1988: 81) labels this strategy as transference; (2) modify them at the level of spelling and phonology; Newmark (1988: 81) calls this strategy naturalization; (3) expand them in order to provide meaningful information in the target culture; and (4) eliminate them if the names cause confusion for the readers in the target culture.

There are no prescribed rules on how personal names should be translated, but the above-mentioned studies indicate that readers in the target language are among key factors influencing the translators’ decisions. To see the difference how translators approach personal names in texts with different target readers, the next sections of this paper discuss the translation of personal names in children and young adult literature from English into Indonesian.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

The personal names are collected from two main sources; Donal Bebek comics and Hunger Games trilogy novels. The first data source is from weekly comic Donal Bebek (1906th and 1907th editions, 2018) published by PT PenerbitanSaranaBobo under the licence from The Walt Disney Co. This comic tells stories about Donald Duck and other cartoon characters from world famous Walt Disney. This comic, a pioneer of picture stories in Indonesia, is mostly suitable for children in pre-reading level and young adolescents. The researchers first list the names, then find out the English names using clues from open source (www.wikipedia.com) and then match the clues with names itemized in Walt Disney character directory (www.characters.disney.com) and animation source website (www.animationsource.org). The researchers then identify the translation techniques and make interpretations about the translator decisions for selecting the technique.

Next, the second data source is from Hunger Games novels written by Suzanne Collins (2008, 2009, 2010) originally in English and the Indonesian version translated by HetihRusli (2009, 2010, 2012). These novels include The Hunger Games (2008), Catching Fire (2009), Mockingjay (2010) published by Scholastic Press and the translated version published by GramediaPustakaUtama. These trilogy novels, best for young adults, tell about unspecified future of North America that changes into a country named Panem,
consisting of a wealthy Capitol and 12 poor districts. Every year a young couple from each
district should join a televised pageant involving death match supported by advanced
technology called *Hunger Games*. The winning couple and their home district will be
compensated for with food and other supplies. The researchers list names from the English
versions and find out those translated names in the Indonesian versions.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section consists of two sub-sections: translation of personal names in *Donal Bebek*
comics and translation of personal names in the trilogy novels *Hunger Games*.

**Personal Names Translation in Donal Bebek Comics**

Twelve names appeared in the two editions of *Donal Bebek* as shown in Table 1.

| No | Indonesian Names | English Names       |
|----|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | *Lady*           | Lady                |
| 2. | *Silky*          | Silky               |
| 3. | *Gufi*           | Goofy               |
| 4. | *Donal Bebek*    | Donald Duck         |
| 5. | *DesiBebek*      | Daisy Duck          |
| 6. | *Miki Tikus*     | Mickey Mouse        |
| 7. | *AgusAngsa*      | Gus Goose           |
| 8. | *Midas Serigala* | Big Bad Wolf        |
| 9. | *Lang Ling Lung* | Gyro Gearloose      |
| 10. | *PamanGober*     | Scrooge McDuck      |
| 11. | *Kwik, Kwek, Kwak* | Huey, Duey, Louie |
| 12. | *Berandal*       | Scamp               |

There are four translation techniques used for these twelve character names: (a) Pure
Transference / Preservation: *Lady* and *Silky*, names of dogs, are preserved. There are two
reasons why these names are purely transferred. First, Indonesian children possibly will not
have difficulties in pronouncing the names. Second, as synthesized by Jaleniauskiè and
Čičelytè (2009), names that include descriptive elements are not translated. The word ‘lady’
characterizes a woman of higher social status; in this case, ‘Lady’ is a name of a female
cocker spaniel that lives in an upper-class family. Then, the word ‘silky’ is an adjective to
resemble silk which is soft or smooth. Thus ‘Silky’ in the story refers to a dog whose
character is soft and polite. (b) Naturalisation: Goofy is naturalized into Gufi. The phonetic
transcription of Goofy is /gu:fi/ and thus it will be easier for Indonesian children if the
spelling of the name is closer to how it is pronounced. (c) Couplet: Couplet is combining
two techniques in translating a single word or phrase (Newmark, 1988: 91). (i)
Naturalization + Literal Translation: There are three names (Donal Bebek, DesiBebek, and
Miki Tikus) which are translated using the combination of naturalization and literal
translation. The second names ‘Duck’ and ‘Mouse,’ indicating species, are translated literally as Bebek and Tikus. But first names Donald, Daisy, and Mickey are translated closer to their phonetic transcription; Donald /dəʊld/ becomes Donal, Daisy /dæsi/ becomes Desi, and Mickey /miki/ becomes Miki. (ii) Substitution (Localization) + Literal Translation: The other couplet technique is the combination of substitution and literal translation as it is found in Gus Goose which is creatively translated as AgusAngsa. The second name Goose is literally translated as Angsa. While the first name Gus is substituted with Agus which is a typically Indonesian name. The substitution reason is that Gus has a specific connotation in Indonesian context; Gus refers to a son of a Muslim scholar, for example, Gus Dur (fourth Indonesian president) is the son of Muslim scholar K. H. Wahid Hasyim. Therefore, to make it unbiased, the translator chooses Agus to substitute Gus which sounds similar. Also, AgusAngsa has more stylistic assonance; it could still maintain the original stylistic alliteration of Gus Goose. (d) Substitution and Adaptation: The translator has used the substitution and adaptation technique for these following names based on several reasons as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Substitution and Adaptation Technique and its Reasons

| No | American names (A) and Indonesian names (I) | Explanation |
|----|--------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Big Bad Wolf (A) Midas Serigala (I)        | The last name Wolf is literally translated as Serigala. The substitution Midas is taken from the middle name of his alias name, Zeke Midas Wolf. |
| 2. | Gyro Gearloose (A) Lang Ling Lung (I)      | Gyro Gearloose is a famous inventor in the Donald Duck universe, but his ideas are often outrageous. He is such a ‘linglung’ person. Linglung in Indonesian describes an absent-minded person because s/he is confused or too serious in thinking of an object. Then, to make the Indonesian name more stylistic, the translator creatively modified the name into Lang Ling Lung. |
| 3. | Scrooge McDuck (A) PamanGober (I)          | Scrooge McDuck is also popular as Uncle Scrooge. Thus the translator uses ‘Paman’ as a literal translation of ‘uncle.’ While Gober is simplified from the Dutch name of Scrooge McDuck, Dagobert Duck. The translator chooses to adapt from Dutch name because the English name Scrooge /skru:dʒ/ is more difficult for children to pronounce. Denham and Lobeck (2013: 124) write that the structure of children’s names... |
possible techniques for translating

No American names (A) and Indonesian names (I) Explanation

4. Huey, Duey, Louie (A) Kwik, Kwek, Kwak (I) The American names of these triplet little ducks (/hui/, /dui/ and /lui/) possibly sound strange and uncommon as Indonesian names. Therefore they are modified following the sound of duck ‘quack-quack’, whose onomatopoeic Indonesian equivalent is ‘kwek-kwek’. For the stylistic reason, the triplet names then become Kwik, Kwek, and Kwak.

5. Scamp (A) Berandal (I) The personalities of Scamp in the stories are stubborn and disobedient. A person with this personality is frequently called berandal in the Indonesian context. The translated name ‘Berandal’ is taken from the personalities of the character.

Personal Names Translation in Young Adult Literature

Most personal names in Hunger Games are preserved in the translation, except a few, which are given literal translation. Alphabetically, these names are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Personal Names in Hunger Games and their Indonesian Translations

| No | English      | Indonesian       | No | English       | Indonesian             |
|----|--------------|------------------|----|---------------|------------------------|
| 1  | Annie Cresta | Annie Cresta     | 45 | Leeg 1        | Leeg 1                 |
| 2  | Atala        | Atala            | 46 | Leeg 2        | Leeg 2                 |
| 3  | Beetee (Volts)| Beetee (Volts)  | 47 | Leevy         | Leevy                  |
| 4  | Blight       | Blight           | 48 | Lyme          | Lyme                   |
| 5  | Boggs        | Boggs            | 49 | Madge Undersee| Madge Undersee         |
| 6  | Bonnie       | Bonnie           | 50 | Mags          | Mags                   |
| 7  | Bristol      | Bristol          | 51 | Martin        | Martin                 |
| 8  | Brutus       | Brutus           | 52 | Marvel        | Marvel                 |
| 9  | Buttercup    | Buttercup        | 53 | Mayor Undersee| Wall Kota Undersee     |
| 10 | Caesar Flickerman | Caesar Flickerman | 54 | Maysilee Donner | Maysilee Donner |
| 11 | Cashmere     | Cashmere         | 55 | Messalla      | Messalla               |
| 12 | Castor       | Castor           | 56 | Mitchell      | Mitchell               |
| 13 | Cato         | Cato             | 57 | Morphlings    | Morphlings             |
| 14 | Cecelia      | Cecelia          | 58 | Mr. Everdeen  | Mr. Everdeen           |
| 15 | Chaff        | Chaff            | 59 | Mr. Mellark   | Mr. Mellark            |
| 16 | Cinna        | Cinna            | 60 | Octavia       | Octavia                |
As can be seen in Table 3, the preservation technique is mostly chosen by HetihRusli (the translator) because she might consider that young adults are more open-minded than children in respecting foreign names. Aguilera (2008) states that the older the readers, the more capable they are in accepting foreign words, including foreign names. Moreover, the setting of the *Hunger Games* story is in North America, and it has been clearly stated by Newmark (1988: 124) that personal names are not translated when there is an emphasis of nationality.

However, it is interesting to note that the translator does translate several nicknames, especially the descriptive ones. Pour (2009) notes that nickname is shorter than the real name, for example, Sue as the nickname of Susan; besides, a nickname can also be descriptive, for example, The Iron Lady for Margaret Thatcher. Table 4 shows several cases of descriptive nicknames in *Hunger Games* which are given literal translation.

**Table 4.** Literal Translation of Nicknames in Hunger Games

| NO | Source Language (English) | Target Language (Indonesian) |
|----|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | I don’t know his real name, everyone just calls him **the Goat Man.** | *Akutaktahunamaaslinya, semua orang memanggilnya Pak Kambing.* (I.p.298) |
As shown in Table 4, the translator used the literal translation technique for the title (president/presiden and commander/komandan) as shown in (3), (4), and (5). She also used a similar technique for translating nicknames in (1) Goat Man/Pak Kambing and (6) The Head Peacekeeper/Pemimpin Penjaga Perdamaian, and also used the same technique with the addition of ‘Si’ for the nickname in (2) Foxface/Si MukaRubah. ‘Si’ is one of the Indonesian articles that is attached to someone's name and adjective (Simanjuntak, 2014).

Different from those in (1), (2), and (6), the nickname in (7) is unique because Lover Boy is kept as it is, using the preservation technique. ‘Lover Boy’ belongs to English slang, referring to a lover or an attractive man that makes girls easily fall in love (Heriyati, 2010). Slang is part of language variation, socially popular among youngsters, and sometimes gives prestige to the speakers (Zhou and Fan, 2013; Muharto and Wijaya, 2014). In this respect, the translator keeps using ‘Lover Boy’ because she probably assumes that the readers are familiar with the meaning of this expression. It is also possible that she intentionally introduces the slang expression to attract readers who have not known yet about the meaning.

Finally, the nicknames Nuts and Volts in number (8), like number (7), are also preserved in the translation: Nuts dan Volts. Notice that the preservation here is probably motivated by the ‘suggestive meaning’ of each word. The word Nuts (in machinery) applies to the female; and Volts (in physics) applies to the male. This semantic play is much like sound symbolism in phonology, where sounds may suggest meaning, such as the word knock, which refers to the ‘act of knocking’.

**CONCLUSION**

Personal names translation could be problematic because names are culturally and contextually bond. Referring particularly to translating literary works, the adjustment should consider acceptance degree by the target readers in responding to foreign names. When the target readers are children, the translation of personal names should be more

| (I.p.266)           | Susanti, Kadarisman, Possible Techniques for Translating | 65 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 2. Career Tributes. | Foxface. Thresh and Rue. (I.p.156)                      |    |
| 3. President Coin   | Presiden Coin                                            |    |
| 4. President Snow   | Presiden Snow                                            |    |
| 5. Commander Paylor | Komandan Paylor                                           |    |
| 6. The Head Peacekeeper | loved wild turkey. (I.p.52)                          |    |
| 7. “Go on, then, Lover Boy,” says the boy from District 2. (I.p.160) | “Pergisana, Lover Boy,” kata anak lelaki dari Distrik 2. (I.p.180) |    |
| 8. “Johanna’s nicknamed them Nuts and Volts,” he says. “I think she’s Nuts and he’s Volts.” II.p.191. | “Johanna menjulukimereka Nuts dan Volts,” kata Peeta. “Kurasa yang perempuan Nuts dan lelakinya Volts” II.p.249 |    |

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careful, considering several aspects such as pronunciation, connotation, and style. But the translation of texts for young adult readers can be more flexible in terms of preserving the original foreign names and translating descriptive nicknames. Moreover, a translator, as a cultural mediator, can introduce some slang to the readers. Above all, translators should understand how personal names are commonly translated. Small samples discussion in this paper has shown several practices of personal names translation in children and adult literature by experienced translators using techniques of preservation, naturalization, couplet, substitution, adaptation, and literal translation. Further studies should explore translation of personal names, which include names of places and objects, especially in adult literature and in other genres or text types, both from English and any other language into Indonesian.

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