SIMILE & METAPHOR IN TRANSLATION: A STUDY ON STUDENTS' TRANSLATION OF AMY TAN'S "TWO KINDS" SHORT STORY

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Abstract

Similes and metaphors are two forms of figurative language which are very familiar in literary works. One factor that arise some common problems faced by translators in translating simile and metaphor is the cultural difference between the source language and target language. Therefore, translators would apply certain strategies or procedures to find the equivalence of similes and metaphors in the target language. In "Two Kinds" short story, it can be found that Amy Tan also uses several similes and metaphors. For student translators in Literary Translation class, it is a challenge to translate similes and metaphors in "Two Kinds" into Indonesian. Thus, this research aims at describing how student translators of Literary Translation class deal with the translation of those similes and metaphors. Hopefully, this study would give worth contribution to the development of literary translation and particularly for student translators in translating any literary works. By comparing students' translations and the source text, it is found that students mostly applied reproducing the same image in the TL procedure to translate similes and metaphors from English into Indonesian.

Key Words: Simile, Metaphor, Figurative Language, Literary Translation

INTRODUCTION

Simile and metaphor are still interesting to study about and always be challenging to analyze. They are not only found in literary texts but also in the texts from other genres or areas. In translation studies, the translation of simile and metaphor has often been studied due to their peculiarities as the part of figurative language.

"Two kinds" is an interesting short story that was chosen as one translation project in the literary translation class. This short story has some similes and metaphors that have arised difficulties for students to cope with in completing their translation project.

Thus, this research would strive to answer two research questions, as follows:
1. How do students translate some similes and metaphors found in Amy Tan's *Two Kinds* short story?

2. What procedures do students apply in translating similes and metaphors in *Two Kinds*?

This study aims at helping student researchers to identify common problems student translators face in translation, to have deeper understanding about metaphor & simile, and to assess the translation quality of metaphor and simile by choosing or determining one or two translations considered as the most equivalent and/or natural version(s).

METHODOLOGY

This study is a comparative analysis of target texts with its source text. The data of this research are taken from students' project translations in Literary Translation class on Amy Tan's short story "Two Kinds". There are 12 students in the class, so there are 12 versions of translation that will be compared in this study in terms of the translation of simile and metaphor from English into Indonesian.

In choosing the data for this research, the researcher identify all similies and metaphors found in the source text. After having identified the data from the source text, the researcher compare each simile and and metaphor and their 12 versions in Indonesian to determine the most equivalent translation for them. By analyzing different versions of translation, the researcher would understand whether student translators have managed to identify the existence of metaphors and similies in the text as well as to translate them well or not. Therefore, the researcher would analyze students' translations on English metaphor and similes in order to determine certain procedures they used and to assess their success in producing the most natural and equivalent translation.

Knowles & Moon (2006) said that metaphors "are instances of non-literal language that involve some kind of comparison or identification: if interpreted literally, they would be nonsensical, impossible, or untrue." Therefore, it might be saying that translating metaphor as well as simile are more difficult than other kinds of translations. Similes are very like metaphors, but there is one important difference: the comparison in metaphor is implicit while in similes is explicit. Similes could be easier to identify because it is introduced by some signalled by words such as *like*, *as*, *compare*, *resemble*, and *so on*. Indonesian also has a list of words which can be used to indicate the existence of similes such as *seperti*, *laksana*, *bagaikan*, *bak*, etc. The example of metaphor in comparison with simile in English is: "To say that someone is a fox is to use a metaphor; to say that they are like a fox is to use a simile." (Knowles & Moon, 2006)

The other differences between simile and metaphor are : "While metaphors typically transfer the meaning of an expression, similes rather proposes transference, ... while metaphors use the qualities from one object to describe another object, similes show a more visual relationship between the objects (Waldau, 2010:8).

To sum up, simile and metaphor are similar ini many aspects, but still can be distinguished especially in form of sentence and the use of some signalled words or phrases.

There are many ways to translate metaphors and similes. Ideally, metaphor and similes should be translated using equivalent metaphor or simile in the target language. However, it does not that easy to find the equivalent metaphor in the target language, therefore translators need some techniques, strategies, or procedures to translate them.

Larson (1984: 254) proposed five ways to translate metaphor and/or similes, i.e:

1. The metaphor may be kept if the receptor language permits (that is, if it sounds natural and is understood correctly by the readers);
2. A metaphor may be translated as a simile (adding like or as);
3. A metaphor [or simile] of the receptor language which has the same meaning may be substituted;
4. The metaphor [or simile] may be kept and the meaning explained (that is, the topic and/or point of similarity may be added); and
5. The meaning of the metaphor [or simile] may be translated without keeping the metaphorical imagery.

Whereas, Machali (2000) suggested two tehniques of translating metaphor, i.e. by using the equivalent metaphorical imagery in the TL or by using functional equivalent as in translating idiomatic expression with semantic and communicative methods.

In translating metaphor (and simile), Newmark (1988) proposed seven procedures, as follows:

1) Reproducing the same image in the TL
2) Replace the image in the SL with a standard TL image which does not clash with the TL culture
3) Translation of metaphor by simile
4) Translation of metaphor (or simile) by simile plus sense (or occasionally a metaphor plus sense)
5) Conversion of metaphor to sense
6) Deletion
7) Same metaphor combined with sense

In order to limit the analysis, this study would apply Newmark's procedure for translating metaphor and simile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research would discuss students' translations on two metaphors and 12 similes from the source text. In discussing the metaphor and simile in the source and target texts, this paper would analyze three main things: object, image, and sense by referring to Newmark's procedure (1988).

Metaphors
Metaphor 1
I was a dainty ballerina girl standing by the curtain, waiting to hear the music that would send me floating on my tiptoes.

Object : I
Image : a dainty ballerina girl
Sense : a beautiful, admiring girl with a perfect body

When the main character identified herself as a ballerina, she just imagined how proud it was to be a ballerina. Being ready to perform before the audience must be a challenging situation, but it will turn immediately into satisfaction when the performer succeed to perform well. A ballerina has made a testimonial that "I love the feeling of accomplishment that comes from dancing a show for three hours with seven costume changes. I love performing for the audience; when I smile under those lights, that's genuine joy." http://www.cosmopolitan.com/career/a45009/what-its-really-like-to-be-a-ballerina/). Many people also see ballerinas as having the 'perfect body'. The world of ballet cannot be separated from the sequins and feathers, the bright lights and clapping audiences, or everything that's pink (https://storify.com/dancer523/eating-disorders).

In translating the metaphor, most students applied reproducing the same image in the TL procedure. To be 'was' was translated into

adalah by two students, *seorang* by four students, *adalah seorang* by four students. The rest two of the students failed to get the right meaning by translating it as *sebelumnya* and *pernah* that means 'have been' or 'have become' due to their misinterpretation of the sentence.

Only two out of 12 translations which well transfered the meaning from English into Indonesian, although they also used reproducing the same image in the TL procedure like the other versions. The translations are: *"Aku seorang balerina mungil berdiri di balik tirai, menunggu musik yang akan mengiringiku mengambang di ujung jari kakiku"* and *"Aku seorang ballerina cantik yang sedang berdiri di balik gorden, menunggu suara music yang akan membuatku menari menjinjitkan kakiku"*.

Metaphor 2
I was Cinderella stepping from her pumpkin carriage with sparkly cartoon music filling the air.

Object : I
Image : Cinderella
Sense : a kind, gentle, sweet girl who is ready to get her dream comes true

Cinderella is portrayed as a girl with a down-to-earth attitude, but she is also a daydreamer. She maintains hope through her dreams and remains a kind, gentle and sweet person. She has faith that someday her dreams of happiness will come true and her kindness will be repaid. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinderella_%28Disney_character%29#Characteristics).

To translate to be 'was' six out of 12 students chose to use *seperti*, one used *seperti seorang*, another used *bagaikan*. It is surprising that there are four students who translated 'was' into *pernah menjadi seperti*

due to the misunderstanding of the sentence. Two out of 12 translations are considered equivalent in meaning with its source text, i.e., *"Aku adalah Cinderella yang melangkah keluar dari kereta labunya dengan gemerlapan musik kartun mengalun diudara"* and *"Aku adalah Cinderella yang keluar dari labu ajaibnya dengan iringan musik gemerlap mengelilinginya."*

Similar with the metaphor 1 above, this metaphor was also translated well by those three students by using reproducing the same image in TL procedure. The misinterpretation of the sentence structure has led most student translators failed to translate the metaphors.

The tendency of student translators to maintain the images, i.e., ballerina and cinderella, in their translations might be because those images were familiar enough for them as well as for Indonesian people as the target readership of the translation.

Simile
The source text author seemed prefer to use 'like' to indicate similes found in the source text instead of choosing other words with the similar meaning.

Simile 1
"You look like a Negro Chinese," she lamented, as if I had done this on purpose.

Object : You
Image : Negro Chinese
Sense : white complexion with curly hair

The classification of three main divisions of mankind may be distinguished into the Negroid,the Caucasoid, and the Mongoloid. According to Ashey (1951), "the classification is made based on the skin form and character of the hair and its distribution, form of the head and proportions of the body."

The Chinese character in the story is definitely different with Negro based on her physical characteristics. The author of the short story compared the main character with Negro only because of her new curly style hair to show her disappointment.

The phrase 'look like' in the simile was translated into Indonesian become *terlihat seperti* by eight students, *tampak seperti* by two students, *seperti* by one student, and another with *kayak* as the informal form of *seperti*.

Most students translated the simile using reproducing the same image in TL procedure, except three of them who were using the simile plus sense procedure. "Negro" as the image used by the author was translated by those three students by adding its sense become *Cina-Afrika*, *orang Cina setengah Negro*, *orang Cina berkulit hitam*.

Simile 2
I was like the Christ child lifted out of the straw manger, crying with holy indignity.

    Object : I
    Image : the Christ child
    Sense : holy, majesty, indignity

'The Christ Child' was depicted as holy indignity to represent the situation where Christ who is majesty in nature should be placed in an unrespected situation. The image was used to compare the main character's feeling with the Christ condition.

'Was like' in the simile was translated by six students with *seperti*, one with *seperti seorang*, one with *bagaikan*, and four students with *pernah menjadi seperti*.

Most students used reproducing the same image to translate the metaphor but they still challenged to produce the natural translation. Although it also used reproducing the same image procedure, the translation of one student was more natural than other, by

transferring the metaphor into Indonesian become *"Aku seperti bayi Kristus yang diangkat keluar dari palungan dari jerami, lalu menangis."* The image "the Christ Child" was translated using translation of simile by simile plus sense procedure become *Anak Allah* and *anak Tuhan* in order to give the sense of "Christ".

Simile 3
The girl had the sauciness of a Shirley Temple. She was proudly modest, like a proper Chinese child.

    Object : She was proudly modest
    Image : a proper Chinese child
    Sense : a Chinese child is modest in general

The word 'modest' is defined by Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) as the characteristic of a person who unwilling to talk proudly about their abilities and achievements because they are easily embarrassed. As a Chinese origin, the mother of the main character is really proud about the Chinese girl on television who could show her Chinese identity well. The girl even can be compared with Shirley Temple, an American film and television actress, singer, dancer, and public servant who was famous as Hollywood's number one box-office star from 1935 through 1938 in her very young age.

Some students tried to translate the simile with simile plus sense procedure. Nevertheless, there are two translations which can be considered as the most natural one by using reproducing the same image in TL. The translations are: *"Dia rendah hati, seperti anak-anak Cina pada umumnya"* and *"Dia sederhana, seperti seorang anak Cina pada umumnya."*

'Like' in this simile was translated into Indonesian become *seperti* by 11 students and *sebagaimana* by another.

Simile 4
And she also did a fancy sweep of a curtsy, so that the fluffy skirt of her white dress cascaded to the floor like petals of a large carnation.

    Object : the fluffy skirt of her white
              dress cascaded to the floor
    Image : petals of a large carnation
    Sense : elegant and innocence

According to the information on http://www.auntyflo.com/flower-dictionary/white-carnation, because of its pure color, white carnations mostly mean innocence. The image of white carnations was compared with the Chinese girl's performance.

The attraction of the Chinese girl on television was very impressive especially to the main character and her mother. That is why the main character could understand if her mother admired the girl so much.

By using the reproducing the image in the TL procedure, one student translator had managed to translate the metaphor into Indonesian become *"Dan dia membuat gerakan membungkuk, sehingga gaun putihnya jatuh ke lantai seperti kelopak bunga anyelir."*

Similar with simile 3 above, the number of students who translated the word 'like' into *seperti* in this context was also 11 and only 1 student who chose to use *terlihat seperti*.

Simile 5
She had a peculiar smell, like a baby that had done something in its pants, ...

    Object : Old Lady Chong's smell
    Image : a baby that had done
              something in its pants

    Sense : bad odour

All 12 student translators translated the word *like* in this simile with seperti.

To translate the image "a baby that had done something in its pants", most students prefered to tanslate the simile by replacing the image in the source language with a standard target language image which does not clash with the TL culture procedure. To apply the procedure, one student chose to soften the expression, perhaps for the sake of politeness in the target culture, by translating the simile become *"Dia memiliki bau yang aneh, seperti bayi yang ada sesuatu di celananya."* For the same purpose, another student translated it become "*Dia memiliki bau yang khas, seperti bau seorang bayi yang celananya kotor*".

Simile 6
... and her fingers felt like a dead person's, like an old peach I once found in the back of the refrigerator: its skin just slid off the flesh when I picked it up.

    Object : Old Lady Chong's fingers
    Image1: a dead person
    Sense : cold
    Image2: an old peach whose skin just slid
              off the flesh when it was picked
              up
    Sense : too old

The word 'dead' which is used to refer to a part of body means that the certain part of body has no feeling or energy in it. The image 'dead person' is attached to the Old Lady Chong's fingers to impress the reader about how old she is. The second image to describe her, more obviously clarifies how 'fragile' or weak she is.

All students used reproducing the same image in the TL procedure to translate the simile. The most natural translation among others are *"Jari-jarinya seperti jari-jari orang mati, seperti buah persik tua yang dulu*

aku temukan di belakang lemari es, yang kulitnya mengelupas dari dagingnya ketika kuangkat" and *"Jemarinya terlihat seperti jemari orang mati, mirip seperti buah persik yang telah membusuk yang pernah aku temukan di dalam lemari pendingin: kulitnya melorot dari dagingnya ketika hendak kuambil."*

Although the phrase 'felt like' is literally more close in meaning with *terasa seperti*, there was only one student who chose that Indonesian phrase in their translation. Most students, i.e., seven out of 12, translated it become *terlihat seperti* and four of them used *seperti*. Whereas, the word 'like' in the second simile was translated into Indonesian become *seperti* by nine students, *mirip seperti* by two students, and the rest 1 student by *berwarna seperti*.

Simile 7

I would play after him, the simple scale, the simple chord, and then just play some nonsense that sounded like a rat running up and down on top of giraffe cans.

> Object : the sound of some nonsense scale and chord
> Image : the sound of a rat running up and down on top of giraffe cans
> Sense : to bang out, to play a tune or song loudly and badly on a piano

In describing how loud and bad is the sound, the author compare it with the sound of a rat running up and down on top of giraffe cans. Students applied various procedures to translate the simile. Most of the students applied reproducing the same image in the TL procedure, three with translation of simile by simile plus sense, and one with deletion procedure. Two most equivalent translations made by the students are: *"Aku bermain setelahnya, skala sederhana, kord sederhana, kemudian hanya memainkan nada kosong*

yang terdengar seperti seekor tikus berlari kebawah dan keatas di atas kaleng yang besar" and *"Aku akan main setelah dia, skala yang mudah, kunci yang mudah, dan kemudian memainkan musik seperti tikus yang sedang berlari naik turun di atas atap."*

'Sounded like' was translated into Indonesian with *terdengar seperti* by seven students, *seperti* by four students, and *bunyinya seperti* by only one student.

Simile 8

He had me curve my hand around an apple and keep that shape when playing chords. He marched stiffly to show me how to make each finger dance up and down, staccato, like an obedient little soldier.

> Object : each finger dance up and down, staccato
> Image : an obedient little soldier
> Sense : neatly arranged, orderly, controlled

Staccato in this simile is compared to an obedient soldier to describe the way the main character's fingers play the piano. Staccato is a form of musical articulation to signify a note of shortened duration separated from the note that may follow by silence. (https://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Staccato). Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary, defines staccato as short and not sounding connected (in music) or sudden and brief. (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/staccato). It is like the way an obedient soldier does their job as their commander told them.

The word 'like' was translated into Indonesian by 10 students become *seperti*, one student with *seperti seorang* using reproducing the same image in the target language procedure, while one student omitted the image of this simile in the target text.

Simile 9
I kept thinking my fingers would adjust themselves back, like a train switching to the right track.

    Object : my fingers would adjust
              themselves back
    Image : a train switching to the right track
    Sense : placed in proper order
    All 12 student translators translated 'like' in this simile with *seperti*.

The position of a pianist's fingers while playing notes in this simile is compared to the position of train on its right track. Most students applied the reproducing the same image in the TL procedure to translate the simile. However, there were two students with identical translation who translated the simile with translation of simile by simile plus sense procedure become *"Aku terus berpikir dan mengatur tanganku agar mau menyesuaikan kembali, seperti kereta kembali ke jalurnya yang benar".* The most natural translation of this simile is *"Aku terus berpikir jari-jariku akan menyesuaikan permainan mereka kembali, seperti kereta kembali ke jalur yang benar."*

Simile 10
And the eleven-year-old boy who was first prize playing a tricky violin song that sounded like a busy bee.

    Object : a tricky violin song
    Image : a busy bee
    Sense : buzz, a continuous noise like
              the sound of bee

The way a bee produces sound is compared to the sound of a violin song played by the boy according to the main character, that might be refer to the unclear sound produced by the violin. In translating the simile, most students used reproducing the same image in the TL procedure. There were four students who translated the simile with translation simile with simile plus sense procedure. The translation which has the closest meaning with the source text is *"Dan anak laki laki berumur 11 tahun mendapatkan juara pertama dengan memainkan teknik biola yang terdengar seperti suara lebah."*

Different from the simile 7 above, the phrase 'sounded like' in this simile was translated into Indonesian with *terdengar seperti* by 10 students and *yang menyerupai* by two students.

Simile 11
*It felt like worms and toads and slimy things crawl*ing out of my chest, but it also felt good, that this awful side of me had surfaced, at last.

    Object : feeling
    Image : worms and toads and slimy
              things crawling out of my chest
    Sense : a very bad feeling, disgust,
              filthiness, anger

To describe the very bad feeling and anger of the main character, the writer used some animals that usually make people in general felt disgusted. All students chose reproducing the same image in the TL procedure to translate the simile. From 12 versions of translation, the translation which has the closest meaning to the source text is *"Aku merasa seperti ada cacing, katak, dan benda-benda berlendir merangkak keluar dari dalam dadaku, tapi aku juga merasa senang karena sisi burukku akhirnya terungkap."* *Benda-benda berlendir* is actually best translated with *hal-hal menjijikkan*. But considering that the things are 'crawling', it might be also translated into *binatang*.

The phrase 'felt like' is also used in simile 6 but its Indonesian translation varies in number and word choices. Seven out 12 students translated it become *rasanya seperti*, two of them with *merasa seperti*, one with

seolah seperti, one with *merasa seolah-olah*, and one with *seolah-olah*.

Similes 12

... *she backed out of the room, stunned, as if she were blowing away like a small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless.*

  Object : she were blowing away
  Image : a small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless
  Sense : shock, disappointed

Indonesian translation for the phrase 'blowing away like' in this simile has many variations. Three students translated it become *melayang pergi seperti* and two students used *bagaikan*. The rest seven students have seven different ways of translation, i.e., *sedang meniup seperti*, *tertiup angin layaknya*, *sedang tertiup seperti*, *seperti*, *diterpa angin seperti*, and *tertiup seperti*.

"She were blowing away" is actually a metaphor because the subject is described using the qualities of wind that is 'blowing away'. The author compares the character's feeling and reaction with a small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless to show how depressed the character at the time. All students used reproducing the same image in the TL procedure to translate the metaphor and simile.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from this study that students had some difficulties to interpret and identify the sentence structure of source language. It has become the main reason why student still struggled to transfer the metaphors and similes into more idiomatic expression in target text as figurative languages.

Both metaphors found in the source text were translated into the target text using reproducing the same image in the target language procedure. All but simile 5 were translated also using reproducing the same image procedure. In translating 'like' as a signalled word to indicate a simile, student translators mostly used *seperti*. Students might be more familiar with the word, although there are other alternative words could be used, such as bagaikan, bak, laksana, etc.

The number of students who applied reproducing the same image in TL procedure is always higher than other procedures in each metaphor and simile. Besides, students also applied translation of simile plus sense. Replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image which does not clash with the TL culture and deletion procedures were applied once each. While, procedures of translation of metaphor by simile, conversion of metaphor to sense, and same metaphor combined with sense were not applied by students.

This finding hopefully can give worth contribution to the researchers and readers to improve their skill in translating figurative languages, especially similes and metaphors in literary works. It is also expected that teachers would be inspired by the result of this preliminary study to guide their students either in doing their translation projects or in conducting the further research on this field.

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