

## The Translation of *Laskar Pelangi* into *The Rainbow Troops*

Ida Ayu Made Chintya Prema Saraswati<sup>1</sup>, Julia Eka Rini<sup>2</sup>

English Department, Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, Petra Christian University, Siwalankerto 121-131, Surabaya 60236, INDONESIA  
Email: al1200014@john.petra.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, jerini@petra.ac.id<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the translation of metaphors in the Indonesian novel *Laskar Pelangi* (*The Rainbow Troops*) by Andrea Hirata and its English translation by Angie Kilbane. The primary objective of this research is to analyze the translation from Indonesian into English and to determine whether the meanings are preserved across both versions. AI was used to look for the data containing metaphorical expressions, but the result obtained was that not all sentences contained metaphorical expressions. The data consist of both sentences containing metaphorical expressions and without ones. The data were analyzed using a qualitative approach. The analysis is guided by the meaning in the translation framework proposed by Bowker (2023) and supported by Harris's (2018) theory of metaphor. The finding is that the sentences without metaphorical expressions are translated with and without changes without significant loss of meaning. The metaphors are translated into metaphor-to-metaphor translation, metaphor-to-non-metaphor translation, and metaphor-to-simile translation.

**Keywords:** meaning, metaphor, source text, target text

### INTRODUCTION

Many people read physical books or digital books, especially novels, as a source of entertainment and a hobby. To enjoy the novel, the first thing was to be able to understand them. Considering the fact that people worldwide do not share the same language, translation is often needed to understand novels in other languages. According to Catford's (1965) definition, translation refers to the act of substituting text in a source language (SL) with text in a target language (TL) that conveys an equivalent meaning. Larson (1984) provides a comparable definition of translation, where the act of translation involves modifying the arrangement of words, clauses, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and other linguistic elements from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL).

Translating a novel is considered to be one of the most challenging tasks. This is because an inaccurate translation of a text into the target language can make the readers confused. In the best-case scenario, the style or expression should be rendered in culture-neutral languages as they are comprehensible when translated into such languages. Consequently, the translator is required to locate the appropriate vocabulary or style from the source text and employ it proficiently in the target language.

The writer of this study decided to analyze the novel *The Rainbow Troops*. It is an Indonesian fiction novel that was written by Andrea Hirata. The novel was produced in Indonesia. The novel was released to the public for the first time in 2008 in Yogyakarta. This novel has 329 pages. This is the Indonesian novel that tells about a group of 10 students and their two inspirational teachers as they struggle with poverty and develop hopes for the future in Gantong Village, located in Belitung. The writer of this study analyzes the English translation of this novel. The translated

novel was translated by Angie Kilbane in 2009. This translated novel has 307 pages (Hirata & Kilbane, 2009).

The writer uses *The Rainbow Troops* novel as the source of data because, first, the writer finds many valuable lessons in this novel that contain moral and entrepreneurship lessons. Second, the writer finds many metaphors in this novel. Furthermore, this novel has won a lot of awards and is a best-selling book. This novel won the first prize of the New York Book Festival 2013 in the General Fiction category and the first winner at Buchawards 2013 for the German edition *Die Regenbogen Truppe*. The writer analyzes the meaning in the source text and target text as found in Indonesian and English translation in the novel *The Rainbow Troops* using Bowker's (2023) Theory. "The equivalence of meaning is usually understood to be the relationship between the original text and its translation. Whenever we translate a text, we always start with a message in one language and end with a message in another language." (Bowker,2023, p.10).

## METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research approach. The data source consists of sentences identified by *ChatGPT* in the Indonesian *Laskar Pelangi* and their corresponding translations in *The Rainbow Troops* were manually searched. The researcher serves as the main instrument in data collection and analysis. The analysis focuses on determining the meaning in the source text and target text.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data consists of the sentences taken from the novel *The Rainbow Troops* in its Indonesian version and its English translation by Angie Kilbane (2009). Each sentence is classified and analyzed according to Bowker's (2023).

Here are the examples that are translated with exactly the same meaning, without change.

Translation with the same meaning

Table 1. Translation without change

No	Indonesian	English	Same meaning
1	Hari itu adalah hari yang agak penting: hari pertama masuk SD	It was an important day: the first day of elementary school	V
2	Harun tersenyum lebar memamerkan gigi-giginya yang kuning Panjang-panjang	Harun smiled widely, showing his long, yellow teeth.	V
3	Pelajaran moral nomor tiga: Jika Anda cantik, hidup anda tak tenang	The third moral lesson: If you are beautiful, your life will not be peaceful	V
4	Di batang pohonnya kami menuliskan janji setia persahabatan	On its trunk we wrote our pledge of loyal friendship	V
5	Ia menatap Bu Mus dengan mata nanar tapi pandangannya ke arah gambar R.H. Oma Irama Hujan Duit	He stared at Bu Mus, but his gaze fell on the Rhoma Irama Rain of Money poster	V
6	Samson melolong-lolong seperti kumbang terperangkap dalam stoples	Samson howled like a beetle trapped inside a jar	V

7	"Gila itu ada 44 macam," kata ibuku seperti seorang psikiater ahli sambil mengunyah gambir dan sirih	"There are forty-four kinds of crazy," my mother said like an expert psychiatrist while chewing gambir and betel leaf	V
8	Ia pintar bermain kata-kata	He was good at playing with words	V
9	Harun dan Sahara memiliki kaitan emosi yang unik, seperti persahabatan tupai dan kura-kura.	Harun and Sahara shared a unique emotional bond, like the friendship between a squirrel and a turtle.	V

The examples above are classified as translations with the same meaning because the English version fully preserves the semantic content, communicative purpose, and contextual meaning of the Indonesian source text. There is no missed or lost, addition, or distortion of meaning, even though minor structural adjustments are made to conform to English grammar and style. According to Bowker's framework, this type of equivalence occurs when the target text conveys the same message as the source text naturally and accurately, without any change.

- a. "Hari itu adalah hari yang agak penting: hari pertama masuk SD" translated to the English version as "*It was an important day: the first day of elementary school*"; this sentence has the same meaning as the English translation. Because the message is completely preserved, the structure is similar, and there is no figurative language involved in the sentence.
- b. "Harun tersenyum lebar memamerkan gigi-giginya yang kuning panjang-panjang" translated to English version as "*Harun smiled widely, showing his long, yellow teeth.*" This sentence has the same meaning;

Table 2. Translation with change

NO	INDONESIAN	ENGLISH	Same Meaning	Notes
1	Seluruh kehidupannya seolah terinspirasi lagu Wajib Belajar karya R.N. Sutarmas	Everything in Trapani's life seemed to be inspired by the song Wajib Belajar, <b>a song about battling illiteracy</b> , by R.N. Sutarmas.	V	There is an additional explanation (in bold)
2	Semangat besarku untuk sekolah perlahan-lahan runtuh	My overwhelming enthusiasm for school dwindled away	V	"Runtuh" changes into dwindle
3	Beliau berwajah muram Beliau bersiap-siap memberikan pidato terakhir	He looked devastated as he prepared to give his final speech.	V	"muram" is replaced with <i>devastated</i> "Hancur Lebur"
4	Titik-titik keringat yang bertimbulan di seputar hidungnya menghapus bedak tepung beras yang di kenakannya, membuat	The sweat beading around her nose smudged her powder makeup, streaking her face and making her look like the queen's servant	V	Coret moret is not translated

	wajahnya <b>coret-moret</b> seperti peran emban bagi permaisuri dalam Dul Muluk	in Dul Muluk, an ancient play in our village.		
5	Aku sudah tak tahan, <b>Ibunda</b> , Aku menuntut pemungutan suara yang <b>demokratis</b> untuk memilih ketua kelas baru	I can't take it anymore. I demand a vote for a new class president	V	"demokratis", "Ibunda" are deleted
6	Hari ini kami mendapat pelajaran penting tentang demokrasi, yaitu bahwa ternyata prinsip-prinsipnya tidak efektif untuk suksesi jabatan kering.	Today we learn an important lesson about democracy, namely that it turns out the principles are ineffective for job succession.	V	"kering" is deleted
7	Duduk di pojok sana adalah tempat Trapani. <b>Namanya diambil dari sdebuah kota pantai di sisilia. Nyatanya ia memang seelok kota pantai itu.</b> Ia memesona sumpama bondol peking. Si raji jali ini adalah maskot kelas kami.	Sitting off in the corner was our prince, Trapani. He was as fascinating as the cinenen kelabu bird, and he was our class mascot.	V	Two sentences are deleted
7	Ia tipe pria yang langsung disukai Wanita melalui sekali pandang. <b>Jambul</b> , baju, celana, ikat pinggang, kaus kaki, dan sepatunya selalu bersih, <b>serasi warnanya</b> , dan licin	He was a perfectionist with a most handsome face, the type of boy girls fell in love with at first sight. His hair, pants, belt, socks, and clean shoes were always spotless and impeccable.	V	“, “ serasi warnanya”, is deleted licin, "Jambul" Changes
8	Isapan bola tenis itu laksana sengatan lebah tanah kuning yang berbisa	The hit of the tennis ball felt like the sting of a venomous yellow ground bee	V	"Isapan" is changed
9	Aku terperangkap seperti ikan kepuyu di dalam bubu	I was trapped like a climbing perch caught in a fish trap	V	"Ikan kepuyu" is different kind of fish
10	Yang kutahu pasti adalah selama tiga hari berikutnya ia ke sekolah dengan berjalan terkantang-kantang seperti orang pengkor, badannya yang besar membuat ia tampak seperti king kong	What I do know for sure is that for the next three days he went to school limping like a crippled person, and his large body made him look like King Kong.	V	"Terkantang-kantang" is changed
11	Air mata guru <b>Mud Aini</b> surut dan ia menyeka keringat di wajahnya yang belepotan karena bercampur dengan bedak tepung beras	The young teacher's tears subsided, and she wiped the sweat from her powder-smudged face.	V	"karena bercampur dengan bedak tepung beras" is deleted
12	Serindit Melayu terlebih dulu melakukan pengawasan dari	The Malay parakeet first surveyed from the high	V	

	dahan-dahan tinggi ganitri sambal jungkir balik seperti pemain trapeze	ganitri branches, flipping about like a trapeze artist.		
13	Di dadaku melingkar tanda bulat merah kehitam-hitaman, sebuah jejak <b>kemahadolanan</b>	On my chest circled a dark-reddish round mark, a trace of <b>divine command</b>	V	With change

Here is the explanation

- a. *“Ia tipe pria yang langsung disukai wanita melalui sekali pandang. Jambul, baju, celana, ikat pinggang, kaus kaki, dan sepatunya selalu bersih, serasi warnanya, dan licin”* and its English translation *“He was a perfectionist with a most handsome face, the type of boy girls fell in love with at first sight. His hair, pants, belt, socks and shoes were clean”* show a difference in expression but maintain the same general message. Both versions describe a man who is physically attractive and neat in appearance, making him appealing at first sight. However, the English translation shifts the perspective by introducing the abstract trait *perfectionist* and focusing on facial handsomeness rather than listing clothing details as extensively as in Indonesian.
- b. *“Isapan bola tenis itu laksana sengatan lebah tanah kuning yang berbisa”* and its English version *“The hit of the tennis ball felt like the sting of a venomous yellow ground bee”* also convey the same meaning. Both sentences use a simile to describe intense pain by comparing it to a bee sting. The metaphorical comparison introduced by *laksana* in Indonesian is directly transferred into English using *felt like*. Since the imagery and meaning remain unchanged,.

Here are the translations of metaphors.

Table 3. Translation of metaphors

No	Indonesian	English	Same meaning	Notes
1	Sebatang pohon filicium tua <b>yang riang</b> meneduhiku	The Branch of an old filicium tree shaded me	V	Metaphor to non-metaphor because “riang” is deleted
2	Pagi ini mereka terpaksa berada di sekolah ini untuk menghindarkan diri dari celaan aparat desa karena tak menyekolahkan anak atau sebagai orang yang terjebak tuntutan zaman baru, tuntutan <b>memerdekakan anak dari buta huruf</b> .	This morning they were forced to be at this school, either to avoid reproach from government officials for not sending their children to school, or to submit to modern demands to free their children from illiteracy.	V	Metaphor to metaphor
3	Ia saksi bagi drama masa kecil kami	She was the witness to the drama of our childhood	V	Metaphor to metaphor
4	Drama, opera, dan orkestra yang <b>manggung di dahan-dahan filicium sepanjang hari tak kalah</b>	The drama, opera, and orchestra performing on the filicium’s branches all day	V	Metaphor to metaphor

	seru dengan panggung sandiwara yang dilakoni sepuluh homo sapiens di bawahnya.	were no less exciting than the plays performed by the ten homosapiens below.		
5	Dunia baginya hitam putih dan hidup adalah sekeping jembatan papan lurus yang harus dititi	His world was black and white, and life was a straight plank bridge he had to walk across	V	Metaphor to metaphor
6	Kepalanya cepat juga menangkap ilmu	He was quick to grasp knowledge	V	Metaphor to non metaphor
7	Harun adalah anak kecil yang terperangkap dalam tubuh orang dewasa	His demeanor was very adult-like, but he truly was a child trapped in an adult's body.	V	Metaphor to metaphor
8	Gambar di kaleng itu memperlihatkan seorang pria berotot kuat bertulang besi	The picture on the can showed a muscular man with iron-like bones	V	
9	Lalu manusia Hercules itu pun tumbang berdebum diatas tanah	Then that Hercules-like man collapsed with a thud onto the ground	V	Metaphor to simile

Here is the explanation

- a. “Sebatang Pohon *Filicium* tua yang riang meneduhiku” translated to the English version as “*The Branch of an old *Filicium* tree shaded me*”, this sentence did not have the same meaning. Because the word “riang” should be translated into “cheerful or happy”, but in the English translation, the word “riang” is omitted and this sentence is translated from metaphor to non-metaphor.
- b. “Pagi ini mereka terpaksa berada di sekolah ini untuk menghindarkan diri dari celaan aparat desa karena tak menyekolahkan anak atau sebagai orang yang terjebak tuntutan zaman baru, tuntutan **memerdekakan anak dari buta huruf**.” Translated to the English version as “*This morning they were forced to be at this school, either to avoid reproach from government officials for not sending their children to school, or to submit to modern demands to free their children from illiteracy.*” This sentence has the same meaning because they had the same core ideas; they were forced to go to school or to avoid criticism from local officials, because of the new-era demands to free children from illiteracy. In this sentence, nothing important is removed, and the meaning is preserved. This is also translated from metaphor to metaphor; it is because there is a phrase, “memerdekakan anak dari buta huruf” – “to set free children from illiteracy,” this is a metaphor because there is the word “**memerdekakan** = “to liberate”, “to set free”, “to give independence.” “buta huruf = “illiteracy” (literally: “letter-blindness”), the phrase uses the language of political liberation or national independence (“merdeka”) and applies it to **education**. Children are not literally “prisoners,” and illiteracy is not a literal “oppressor.” But the sentence frames illiteracy **as if it were** something that enslaves children and education **as a form of liberation**.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the translation of metaphors in *The Rainbow Troops* can be classified as translation with no change and with change. The translator's strategy of translating metaphors successfully preserves most metaphorical meanings while adapting expressions to meet target-language norms. The results highlight the importance of cultural awareness and stylistic sensitivity in literary translation.

## REFERENCES

- Bowker, L. (2023). *De-mystifying translation: Introducing translation to non-translators*. Routledge.
- Catford, J. C. (1965). *A linguistic theory of translation*. Oxford University Press.
- Harris, J. (2018). *Writing with clarity and style*. Routledge.
- Hirata, A., & Kilbane, A. (2009). *The rainbow troops*. Bentang Pustaka.
- Larson, M. L. (1984). *Meaning-based translation: A guide to cross-language equivalence*. University Press of America.