

# Indonesian Translation of French Pronominal Verbs: Procedures and Shifts

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**Abstract**— The French version of *Tintin en Amérique* was translated into its Indonesian language counterpart. In the process of translating, however, it is inevitable that the translator will find difficulties since the languages are different. One of the most distinctive differences is that French has pronominal verbs. This research covers procedures used in translating French pronominal verbs based on Newmark's translation procedures approach (1988) and Catford's translation shift theory (1965). The result shows that only 4 out of 15 procedures were used, all of which support the hypothesis of using communicative translation to translate a comic book because it has to be focused on the readership itself. The modulation procedure is the most used to translate the verbs, and because of that, this shows that the translation of this comic book is focused on the target language culture rather than the culture of the source language. Unit and class shifts help in improving the effectiveness of the sentence and can give a precise meaning of the pronominal verb that does not exist in Bahasa Indonesia. The absence of passive pronominal verbs in the comic might be due to Tintin's characteristics as he is a detective that is constantly active in every situation.

**Keywords**— *French Comic, reflexive verbs, reciprocal verbs, subjective verbs, Translation procedures, Translation shifts*

## I. INTRODUCTION

French has a particular type of verb: pronominal. Grevisse [9] stated that these are verbs that add a special pronoun: *me, te, se, nous, vous, ils, and elles*. Each of the pronouns are used according to the subject itself, that is *je, tu, il/elle, nous, vous, or ils/elles*. He divided the verbs into 4: (1) *les réfléchis* or reflexive (used to explain an action that is done for the subject itself); (2) *les réciproques* or reciprocal (used to explain a reciprocal action); (3) *subjectifs* or subjectives (the special pronouns do not represent anything because it is one with the verb; without it, the verbs have no meaning or do not have the same meaning); (4) *Passifs* or passives (subject experiences an action without doing it itself, or in a passive form). Bahasa Indonesia does not have pronominal verbs and therefore, reflexive verbs will become a problem in translating French pronominal verbs since it is almost impossible to translate them literally. This is more concerning than how reciprocal verbs will be translated, because in the target language (TL) the translator can use the only word *saling* (reciprocally). It is also the same issue with subjective and passif verbs.

In writing, especially in comics, language can be seen and felt after we read it within the context and the situation. To deliver the message from the source language (SL) to TL, translation is needed so that the TL reader with a different language background can understand the message. Newmark (1981) stated that translation is changing the same

message from SL to TL. In translating, a sentence has to be delivered without changing the meaning. From the explanation above and compared to Bahasa Indonesia verbs, it is found that there are no pronominal verbs in Bahasa Indonesia.

Several studies on pronominal verbs have been done, for example by Joffre (2018) who studied pronominal verbs across European languages while Sembiring (2016) studied French pronominal verbs in literature translation works. Other studies on French verbs were made more for teaching French as a second language i.e. Liu, and Moura & Badaracco.

In translation study, Tobing and Laksman-Huntley analyzed translation strategies in Disney musical film songs using two theories of translation strategies: Lefevere and Baker. This study concluded that various translation results were heavily influenced by interpretation, but that no non-equivalence problem was found. Meanwhile, Igareda (2017) studied approaches to the translation of sound in comics, and Sell (2011) analyzed the entire translation and cultural exchange in Japanese Manga.

Some researchers have studied Tintin comic books for classroom teaching (2017) or for medical purposes by comparing Haddock's and Tintin's health (2016). On the other hand, Nursabrina and Laksman-Huntley (2017) studied French interjection equivalence in Tintin comic series titles. While translating, there might also be changes in the TL sentence. This is called a shift in translation. Study of shifts in translation was done by Akbari (2012) who analyzed shifts from English into Persian in - children's literature. He concluded that the occurrence of structural shifts affects translator's awareness of structural discrepancies between SL and TL. Later, Thawabteh (2018) found three strategies for gender translation shift from English into Arabic.

The translation of French pronominal verbs having particular characteristics into Bahasa Indonesia in comics such as Tintin that are full of conversation rather than narration is considered interesting to study. The aim of this analysis is to find and describe the procedures used to translate this type of verb that conveys the meaning in the TL, including the changes that happen in the translated version. This will also show whether the translation is communicative or not.

*Les Aventures de Tintin* comic series is a comic book originating from Belgium and is one of the most popular comic books in the world and has been translated into more than 100 languages and has sold more than 200 million copies worldwide. Lechner stated that the popularity of Tintin comics was due to the characters that are simply drawn. Aside

from the graphics, the stories of Tintin's adventures are also always interesting from start to finish. The dialogs in the comics are also considered long, and can also be said to be very detailed in explaining what is happening in each of the panels. Even so, the average minimum age able to read the Tintin comic series is 7 years old, as seen from a forum in Tintin's official fanbase. They admitted that they started reading Tintin comics from around 7 to 8 years old, the age which is also considered to be an A1 level in the French language.

One of Tintin's comics, *Tintin en Amérique* or *Tintin di Amerika*, is interesting to study considering the cultural difference between the East (Indonesia) and West (Belgium and America). The differences also concern how the two cultures use their language in daily use. The same message can be interpreted in different ways, depending on the language culture. In 2015, Kim Wheeler, a journalist for CBC (*Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*) wrote that *Tintin en Amérique* portrayed violence linked to Indians, consequently forcing the Winnipeg Library system to remove it from public availability (2015). This removal was also because of the complaints received from the comic in 2006 accusing it of having many pictures showing negative stereotypes and racism toward Indians, and that it was therefore not suitable for children.

This research uses qualitative method in analyzing the data. The data taken from dialogs in the comic are interesting to analyze in how they convey the SL message in the TL, considering that a translator needs to understand the context and then try to make the TL version as TL speakers would say so that the conversation flows naturally. Changes in sentences are considered important to be studied because it can determine the quality, efficiency, and the accuracy of the sentence. To achieve these goals, we began the analysis by comparing the sentences in the SL and TL using Newmark's theory of translations and examined the changes using Catford's theory of shifts. Additionally, this analysis showed why pronominal verb translation is considered a communicative translation that is focused on the readership, and which includes shifts in the sentence as well. Based on Grevisse, there are 55 pronominal verbs found in the *Tintin en Amérique* comic series published in 1945: 33 *réfléchis*, 2 *réciproques*, and 20 subjective verbs. These data are compared to the Bahasa Indonesia version *Tintin di Amerika* published by PT Indira.

## II. TRANSLATION PROCEDURES

Most pronominal verbs are translated using modulation, then synonymy, literal translation and couplet. The first procedure is found in reflexive and reciprocal pronominal-verb translation (26 data) while synonymy is used to translate reflexive and subjective (12 data) verbs. As *réfléchis* are the most pronominal verbs used, they are also translated using couplet (4 data) and literal translation procedures (7 data). The remaining 6 subjective verbs cannot be categorized based on Newmark's translation procedures theory.

### A. Literal Translation

This is a procedure that makes a literal translation of a word or sentence. The verb that is translated literally is *s'ecraser* in the sentence *elle va s'ecraser* into *kereta itu akan menabrak batu* (the train will hit the rock). The verb itself has the meaning of crashing (itself) into something. The translation correlates with the context in the dialog: a train carrying Tintin and Milou is about to crash into a giant rock in the middle of the railroad. The rock was going to be destroyed by a bomb. The ones saying the dialog are characters named Slim and his friend, who were still on the train track noticing that the train Tintin was on was going fast toward the said rock. The translation is also similar in form to the TL counterpart, that is a verb with the prefix *me-* and suffix *-kan* which have the same referent, also called a reflexive verb.

### B. Modulation

This procedure is used by translators when the TL rejects literal translation, and delivers a message from the SL by using a different perspective in the TL. Example: *il n'a pas hésité* → 'he acted at once' and can also be used by the translator to adjust a word that might lack natural motion or be stiff in the TL. Therefore, to avoid these difficulties adjustments to the sentence with the problematic pronominal verb is important. In this comic, modulation, the most common procedure used, shows a difference in the SL and TL language cultures when reading the same sentence containing the same message. The cultural difference can be overcome by reformulating the sentence so the TL readers are able to grasp immediately the message without difficulties. Modulation might also result in discrepancy of the TL's sentence structure from its SL version, so it can be said that modulation is also a form of free translation. If there is a deficiency in meaning in the TL text, the context and images in the comic can help readers to understand what it is trying to say. The examples of modulation found in this research are as of below.

TABLE I. MODULATION ON REFLEXIVE VERB

Pg	SL	TL
2	<i>Bon voyage, mon ami! Il en fera une tête, quand il verra que j'ai scié une portière et que je me suis échappé!</i>	<i>Selamat jalan! Untung aku bawa alat yang tepat... dia akan kelabakan kalau melihat pintunya sudah bolong!</i>

In Table I, the reflexive pronominal verb found is *je me suis échappé* which should be translated to I have escaped, or *saya telah melarikan diri*. However, the translation in the TL does not even mention anything about escaping. In Bahasa Indonesia (Table I), Tintin says: "he will panic if he sees that the door was pierced". The absence of the translation in the TL shows the modulation procedure. (The context of this dialog is that Tintin managed to escape by cutting through the car door using a saw). The procedure used correlates with the context itself which contains the message that Tintin was able to get out of the car that kidnapped him, but is delivered using different perspectives in both the SL and TL.

C. Synonymy

This procedure is used when an SL word does not have a precise equivalent in the TL, and also if the literal translation is not possible. Newmark does not regard this procedure as useful since it may show the translator’s lack of translating skills. He considered synonymy a flawed procedure. The verb found can be seen from the table II below.

TABLE II. SYNONYMY ON REFLEXIVE VERB

Pg	SL	TL
37	<i>Aïe! Ça y est! Ils se sont aperçus de ma fuite. Ils me donnent la chasse!</i>	<i>Celaka! Mereka sudah tahu saya lari... Sekarang mereka datang mengejar!</i>

The pronominal verb *ils se sont aperçus* in the dialog above is translated into the TL as *mereka sudah tahu* (they already knew). It refers to the third plural subject *ils* in French. The meaning of *s’apercevoir* according to *Le Robert* is *prendre conscience*, or *menjadi sadar* (become realize) or *menyadari* in Bahasa Indonesia. Both *tahu* and *sadar* in the TL have similar meaning, but, if it is translated according to the dictionary, it might not sound natural in the translation. Therefore, synonymy is deemed a correct procedure to translate the verb above.

D. Couplets

This procedure combines two or more of the above-mentioned procedures for dealing with a single problem. Example: Menu in English is also translated to *menu* in Bahasa Indonesia using transference and naturalization. In the research, this procedure is used to translate *je m’appelle* in the sentence *aussi vrai que je m’appelle Pietro, je vais prendre ma revanche!* in the comic. The translation of the sentence is *Saya harus balas... kalau tidak, namaku bukan si Pietro!* The translation is considered a couplet because it uses literal translation first and modulation second. If it is translated literally, *je m’appelle* means *aku memanggil diriku sendiri*, which is modulated into *namaku* in the TL. Both have the same meaning, and the only difference is the perspective—how the message is conveyed to the TL

E. Unidentified

The lack of procedures that can be used to analyze several data shows that this research needs another approach, not just using Newmark’s theory, to help in identifying and describing the process of the translation. The data translated cannot be identified because of the unsuitable equivalent in the TL so that the translation has a different meaning from the SL, even when using a literal translation is considered possible and will not show any unnaturalness in the TL text. The particular case found in this comic, is in the form *que se passe-t-il*. This is an inanimate pronominal verb which Grevisse states that its use is only when the third person subject *Il* is a subject that uses *se* as the special pronoun in front of the pronominal verb. In this sense, *il* does not refer to any living object, and is the equivalent of *it* in English, for example, as in ‘what time is it’: *it* does not refer to a person or an animal. In Bahasa Indonesia, this type of impersonal term does not exist. Thus, there is no precise equivalent for

translating the pronominal verb. *Que se passe-t-il* translates in English to what is happening or what is going on, or *apa yang terjadi* in Bahasa Indonesia. It has the sense of expressing confusion or questioning something that is happening that the speaker does not understand. This type of verb often appears when the characters in *Tintin en Amérique* are experiencing a confusing situation and figuring out what is happening in each situation, all of which are translated into *ada apa ini, apa yang terjadi, kenapa, and kamu mendengar sesuatu* (what is this, what is happening, why, did you hear something, respectively). These translations cannot be categorized to any of Newmark’s procedures. In the translation explained above, it is shown that an impersonal verb cannot be translated literally into Bahasa Indonesia; one has to see the context first to translate it correctly.

III. SHIFTS IN TRANSLATION

There are only 2 of 5 types of shifts suggested by Catford found in this comic: unit and class shift. From both types there are 8 changes in total in the pronominal verb translation.

A. Unit Shift

This shift involves the changes of rank from SL to TL. This can happen from word, phrase, clause, to sentence, and can also occur in a paragraph. 7 data experienced unit shift in this analysis. An example found in the comic:

SL: *‘Je me présente: Mike Mac Adam, détective de l’hôtel.’*

TL: *‘Saya Mike Mac Adam, detektip hotel ini.’ (p. 45) (I Mike Mac Adams, this hotel’s detective)*

The unit shift in the example above is shown on the clause *je me présente* that is shifted into a word, *saya* (I in English). Another one found is when Pietro, a subordinate of Al Capone, woke up after he fainted when Milou dropped a vase on top of his head. Here is another one of the data we found in the research:

TABLE III. UNIT SHIFT

Pg	SL	TL
6	<i>Aussi vrai que je m’appelle Pietro, je vais prendre ma revanche!</i>	<i>Saya harus balas... kalau tidak, namaku bukan si Pietro!</i>

In the table above, *je m’appelle* is translated into *namaku* (my name) in Bahasa Indonesia. The french clause *je* (noun) + *m’appelle* (verb) shifts into *namaku*, which is a noun in the TL.

B. Class Shift

In class shift, a word in the SL can be translated into a different part of speech in the TL. There is only one data found in this research:

TABLE IV. CLASS SHIFT

Pg	SL	TL
2	<i>Le plus vexant, c’est de se trouver au pays de l’automobile et de devoir faire 10 milles à pied!</i>	<i>Gila! Di negeri penghasil bermacam-macam mobil saya harus berjalan kaki sepuluh kilometer!</i>

Class shift in translation appears in table IV. It can be seen from the verb *se trouver* in the SL that is translated into *di* which is a preposition. This shift is used to reach the right accuracy in delivering a message using a different language. The shift here is a great example: Tintin who is currently in America is conveyed correctly.

Shifts in translation occur because of the different usage in the SL and TL so the translation must be focused on TL readers. The changes found also helped improve the effectiveness of the TL sentence. There are not many shifts in translating pronominal verbs in this comic. This might be because most of the pronominal verbs translated used modulation that is considered a free translation, so that the TL readers can understand all of the message contained in each dialog without difficulty. Because of the reasons stated above, the translation of French pronominal verbs in *Tintin en Amérique* proves the hypothesis that this is, in fact, a communicative translation.

#### IV. COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION

Newmark in Shakernia stated that communicative translation is a method focusing on the readership that does not expect any difficulties or challenges in understanding the text. This method tries to translate the SL sentence so that it is easy to digest and understand in the TL sentence. This is supported by Chen (2017). It tends to under translate (the message delivered in the TL is not as complete as in the SL one), and simplifies the TL thereby making it smoother, more direct, and easier to read. The syntax is reformed and the translation uses more common words. Naturalness is the most important of these methods. Therefore, the translator can't translate the text correctly if the TL isn't a language with which they are familiar. Even so, this translation still needs to pay attention to the context of the SL.

As shown from the analysis above, we can safely say that the translator used a communicative method when translating French pronominal verbs. This was shown from how the verbs are mostly modulated so that the TL readers can easily understand the message the dialog is trying to deliver. Aside from modulation, the synonyms used also help to convey the meaning in TL. Synonyms are mostly used according to the context in this comic. The same goes for the shifts in translation. The translator uses the shifts to make the TL readers understand the text easily because it's shifted to adjust the SL to the TL.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Different types of French pronominal verbs are translated using certain procedures mostly according to the context rather than their construction in the sentence. Modulation focuses on the readership that has a different language culture from the SL. This result supports Dennis (2019) and Oyeniyi (2016) which states that a translation can add more meaning in the TL culture by reducing or discounting the SL culture. Therefore, a message has to be reformulated in the TL text using the reader's perspective so they can understand and grasp it immediately. Synonymies used in this research contradict Newmark's statement as they can help delivering accurate messages in TL. In general, all procedures used are considered to be very compatible with the translator's focus on the TL readers. The procedures are considered to be accurate because the translations sound natural to the TL readers. However, to further prove the credibility and accuracy, an assessment might be needed, as

done by Barezzi et. al. (2018), and Meyer et. al. (2013). Even so, the lack of meaning in the translated version also proves that this is a communicative translation, because it is one of its characteristics. On the other hand, the data unidentified using Newmark's theory might need to be analysed differently. A comparative study of French verbs and other languages with a different language system can be done to further improve translations, as done by Nita (2009).

The lack of message delivered in the TL can be overcome by paying attention to the context of the dialog, so that the message can still be received and understood. Context here does not only refer to one or two image panels, but the event that is currently happening or something that triggers an event to happen. Context in this comic is also very influential in translating same pronominal verbs, thus making each of the translations different from one other. This differs from de Assis' (2016) research in which the author suggested that non-linguistic elements such as the layout, typography, and image positioning may affect the translation. Therefore, translating pronominal verbs in comics does not have to refer to non-linguistic elements.

Unit shift is most often found in translating pronominal verbs in this comic. This happens because of different ways in conveying the same message in a dialog, so changes in the sentence are bound to happen. If translation shifts are not used, a sentence is more likely to be ineffective. Therefore, shifts in translation help in making a sentence more effective and easier to understand in the TL, since the readers have a different language background compared to SL readers. Shifts can also help in giving the precise meaning of a pronominal verb that does not exist in the TL (Bahasa Indonesia).

The Tintin comic series is about an adventure of a detective whose job it is to actively try and solve problems. Tintin himself is personally active as he always gets himself out of the trouble caused by his enemies. The Tintin comic series is always about adventure. Therefore, it can be said that the lack of passive pronominal verbs correspond to the adventurous characteristic of the comic itself.

This study supports the research of Abraham, Liu, and Mourra and Badaracco, and also Sembiring. This might be useful as a reference in French language teaching: by using the original and translated version one might understand more in learning French pronominal verbs. In translation classes, this study can be used as a reference in effectively translating a special phenomenon of foreign languages. As seen from the examples provided in this analysis, one word or phrase can be translated into different words depending on the context. Continuing Igareda, Sell and Akbari studies, this research could also help future French language translators, especially comic translators, to translate different language phenomena in dialogs into natural-sounding, fluid TL versions.

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