

Adaptation of Maritime Cultural Elements for Maintaining the Characterization in the Translation of Swearing in *Tintin* Comic from French to Indonesian

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ABSTRACT

The Belgian French comic *Tintin* has been known in Indonesia since the 1970s. The comic series has been translated into Indonesian by Indira Publisher and Gramedia publisher. The characters in this comic are unique and witty. One of the protagonists is Captain Haddock, a unique character due to his unusual swearing. This study aims to examine how the Indonesian versions of the comic maintain the characterization of Captain Haddock through the choices of swearing words. The data source is the series *L'affaire Tournesol*, written and published by Hergé (1956), and the Indonesian translations, *Penculikan Kalkulus* (1980), published by Indira and *Penculikan Lakmus* (2008) published by Gramedia. This study is descriptive qualitative with a translational and literary approach. The theories applied are Nida (1964) and Larson's theory (1998) of equivalence translation and Viala and Schmitt's (1982) characterization theory. The translational approach compared the syntactic and semantic structure of Captain Haddock's swear words found in the source text and their counterparts in the two target texts. The theory of characterization is applied for examining to what extent the translations of swearing maintain the uniqueness of Captain Haddock. The findings reveal that both translations applied the principle of dynamical equivalence in the translation of swearing. The Gramedia version maintained the maritime element in Captain Haddock's swearing by using the names of animals and natural phenomena in the sea. Indira's version maintained its humorous aspect through the use of unusual swear words. This study highlights the importance of maintaining characterization in literary translation.

Keywords: *Characterization, formal and dynamical equivalence, maritime cultural element, swearing*

1. INTRODUCTION

In literary works, characters play an essential role in “developing fictional incidents and themes and affecting how the story is received” (Lee 2018, p. 283). Fictional characters are always connected to the cultural setting in the story, such as life views, habits, speaking style, etc. (Kos-Lajtmán & Slunjski, 2017). This cultural element makes a story seems real and alive.

Characterization in picture books, including comics, is built through the interconnection of two main elements, verbal and visual elements. The verbal elements are the character dialogue and onomatopoeia, and the visual elements illustrate characters and their surrounding environment (Oittinen, 2003). The visualization gives the readers a closer understanding of the depicted character. A doctor who is a fan of *Tintin* comics can even diagnose the illness of the characters in the comic through visual

and verbal depictions. One of his favorite characters is Captain Haddock, a former sailor who drinks much. His moody character can be assumed as “anosognosia,” a behavioral disorder caused by alcoholism (Castillo, 2011). Captain Haddock is one of the protagonists in *Tintin*, who is described as a kind but temperamental character. The hallmark of this character is his swearing which is always related to the sea.

The Adventures of *Tintin* is a comic series created by Hergé and Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper (2015). Since its inception, this French-language comic has grown its popularity worldwide and attracted markets to other countries like Indonesia. This comic is translated into Indonesian by two different publishers, namely by Indira in 1996 and 2008 by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama. In the original French version, the story's main protagonist is a young Belgian journalist named *Tintin* and his dog, Milou. Another protagonist is Captain Haddock.

According to Tintin.com, Captain Haddock is the most popular character in the *Tintin* family. He has always been a bit naive and is a man of good and bad moods, which is part of his charm. The name “Haddock” comes from the kind of sea fish popular on both sides of the North Atlantic. Captain Haddock was a seafaring captain and is the archetypal sailor, depicted with a hot temper and capable of infuriating actions. He sailed for over twenty years. He is a character who often wears a sailor’s outfit comprising of black trousers, a sailor’s hat, blue pullover with an anchor on it, and we often see him with a pipe in his mouth and holds a bottle of alcohol. Captain Haddock uses various forms of swear words to convey his feelings of being upset or angry. His swear words are also unique and unusual, always related to the maritime world. The two Indonesian versions’ attempt to maintain the characterization of Captain Haddock through the translation of swearing is the focus of this study.

This research is basically in the field of translation studies, especially literary translation. Literary translation is a kind of cross-cultural communication, which demands creativity (Chaal, 2019). Nida (1964) admitted that literary translation is a nearly impossible mission. Many factors are involved, such as two different language systems, different cultural backgrounds, source-language text writers with different views on life, and target language translators with different cultural, ideological, and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, it is challenging to investigate how the Indonesian translations of Captain Haddock’s swear words can fulfill cross-cultural communication and maintain the Characterization.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Translation

According to Nida (1964), translation is an attempt to reproduce equivalence. He classified the equivalence into two types: formal equivalence and dynamical equivalence.

1. Formal equivalence or equivalence oriented to the source language to display as much form and content of the original text, so it is more or less literal, and
2. Dynamical equivalence is more directed at the effect on the recipient than the expected response’s equivalence. Forms may change, but as far as possible equal.

Larson (1998) states that there are two main kinds of translations. One is form-based, and the other is meaning-based. Form-based translations attempt to follow the form of the source language and are known as literal translations. Meaning-based translations make every effort to communicate the meaning of the source language text in the natural conditions of the receptor

language. Such translations are called idiomatic translations. Theoretically, these versions from Nida (1964) and Larson (1998) are pretty similar. But Larson (1998)’s performance is directly said to the meaning of the sentences. If Larson (1998) said idiomatic translations are closes to natural forms of the receptor language, Nida (1964) also said nearly the same thing. He stated that “basically, the word natural applies to three arms of the communication process, for a natural rendering must fit the receptor language and culture as a whole, the context of the particular message, and the receptor language audience” (Nida 1964, p. 166). Due to the specific character of literary works, the dynamical equivalence seems the appropriate approach for literary translation.

There is no specific strategy in translating comics. However, a translator must still pay attention to the characteristics of a comic. Koponen (2004) stated that translating comics is easy since the language of comics rarely has complex or poetic sentence structure, specialized terminology, or highly abstract concept. However, comic books and comic strips do have specific characteristics that make them much more demanding for the translator than one might think.

Some studies have been conducted on the translation of swearing in the *Tintin* comics. Rochmania (2011) examined the procedures and effects of translating swear words in *The Prisoners of the Sun* series and the Indonesian version of the publisher Indira *Tawanan Dewa Matahari*. According to the results, the adaptation technique is the most widely applied. It causes the accuracy of the translation results high, but the level of acceptance is low. Research with the same data source was also conducted by Septyaningrum (2015). She compared the English version of *The Prisoners of the Sun* with two Indonesian versions, namely from Indira publishers and Gramedia. Her research results show many similarities in the translation methods used by the two versions, but only in the Gramedia version, naturalization and functional equivalence techniques are used. The fundamental difference between the two studies and this research lies in the selection of data sources. The formers used the English version of *The Prisoners of the Sun* series as the source text. In contrast, this study used the original language version, namely French, from the *L'affaire turnesol* series.

2.2. Characterization

Characters and characterizations are fundamental elements in a literary work, including comics. They build the uniqueness of the text and become an attraction for the reader. The difference between character and characterization lies in their function. Character plays an essential role in a story, while characterization is a clear description of a person (Viala & Schmitt, 1982). Significant differences occur in the characterization in

novels and comics. In novels, characterizations are often misunderstood as characters. Why did this happen? Because the justification of character traits has only one aspect. Namely dialogue and narration in the story.

Meanwhile, comics with their essence as picture books add points to the character analysis process. Oittinen (2003) explains that, as a whole, illustrations are never relatively straightforward but always elaborate, complement, and amplify the verbal narration. Therefore, we can conclude that there is always a connection between narrative and image in comics and picture books.

2.3. Swearing

Jay and Janschewitz (2008) explained that the primary purpose of swearing is to express emotions, especially anger and frustration. However, they both argued to any possibilities that swearing can be polite, impolite, or neither and one may use it with any emotional state, and they never witness any form of physical aggression as a consequence of swearing. Speaking of rudeness, one cannot justify it as impolite or polite based on the propositional content of swear words, but it depends on a particular situation. In other words, swearing is human nature.

Andersson and Trudgill (Susetyaningsih, 2014) categorized swearing into four types: expletive, abusive, humorous, and auxiliary. Expletive swearing is emotional expressions, such as anger and shock, not directed to others (“damn!”). Abusive swearing is addressed to other people to insult verbally (“Go to hell!”). Humorous swearing is also directed towards others but not abusive, mere playful (“Get your ass in gear!”). Auxiliary swearing is not addressed to others. It is commonly called “lazy speaking” (“The bloody heat!”). Suganob-Nicolau (2016) classified swear words into themes. They are: sexual (“fuck!”), animal (“turtle!”), racism (“negro!”), gender (“bitch!”), intellectual (“geek!”), and religious (“Oh My God!”). The examples show that swear words cannot be comprehended through the grammatical or semantics structure. They are situation and context depended (Ljung, 2010). While from an ethno-pragmatic perspective, swearing is seen as culture-bound (Goddard, 2015). The solidarity-building function of swear words embraces a myriad of possible roles that these words can acquire, including emphasizing positive emotions, a testament to community membership, and social bonding, praising, or humor (Dyner, 2012).

The explanations about swearing strengthen the purpose of this research. This article discusses the adaptation of cultural elements to the character of Captain Haddock in two versions of the *Tintin* comic translation as an effort for the translator to maintain the characterization.

2.4. Maritime Culture

The definitions of maritime culture include social, economic, geographic, and linguistic aspects. Janiszewski (1991) postulated that maritime society is a society that has norms and social obligations from its relations with the sea. Their identity is formed from the social process of experience and links with the sea.

Furthermore, Westerdahl (1992) defined maritime culture as human activities at the shore and on the water, related to maritime economies gained by fishing, hunting, and shipping. Maritime culture exists in maritime space, the world of seafaring, the shipping industry, cargo, crew, and global citizens (Borovnik, 2005). Other definition of maritime culture is good communication between the captain and the co-workers on board a ship for safety (Carol-Dekker, 2018).

Concerning this research, it is interesting to observe the linguistic aspects of maritime culture. Besides being used for good communication between the captain and the crew, language in maritime culture is also very closely related to the typical swearing and cursing of sailors (Borovnik, 2005). The character Captain Haddock in *Tintin* is the appropriate representation of such as stereotyping.

3. METHOD

This research is descriptive qualitative in nature—namely, research on various phenomena related to human uniqueness or social phenomena. The result is in the form of a description of the case being studied. This study intended to reveal the phenomenon of the translation of the swear words of Captain Haddock, a character in the *Tintin* comic, from French to Indonesian. The study applied a translational and literary approach. The translation theories used in this study are the Nida’s (1964) and Larson’s (1998) theory of equivalence. Viala and Schmitt’s (1982) theory of characterization was referred to examine the shift in the characterization caused by the translation.

The data source of this study is *Les Aventures de Tintin* comics by Hergé. The comic series used in this research is the original French version *L’Affaire Tournesol* (1956) as the source text, the translated version by Indira *Penculikan Calculus* (1980), and the Gramedia version *Penculikan Lakmus* (2008). The selection of data sources was based on the results of initial observations, which showed a significant difference between Captain Haddock’s swear words in the source language and the two translated versions. This phenomenon became the motivation for investigating the linguistic shift and the implications on Captain Haddock’s characterization.

The object of this research is the swear words found in the source text (ST) and their translations in the two target texts (TT). There are six swearing expressions

found in ST, which are translated into eight versions of cursing in *Penculikan Calculus* and eight in *Penculikan Lakmus*.

The translational approach examined the syntactic and semantic structures of swearing found in the ST and their equivalents in the two TTs. The ST and the TTs data are arranged in a parallel table to compare the structure, word choice, and meaning. The results of the linguistic analysis are then examined following Viala and Schmitt’s (1998) characterization theory. The analysis is aimed at finding out which version is closest to Captain Haddock’s characterization.

The results of the translation analysis were further studied by using the theory of formal and sense-based theory by Larson (1998), and the formal-dynamic equivalence theory by Nida (1964). Both approaches were applied to determine the extent to which the position of the translation results in reproducing equivalence.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Maritime Culture Background in Captain Haddock

Based on how Captain Haddock is illustrated in the comic *Tintin*, it can be concluded that he has a maritime background. He has sailed for more than 20 years, making him an experienced sailor. The famous sea fish inspires the name itself in the North Atlantic of the same name. The influence of maritime culture is visible in the dialogue, namely in the swear words. There are six swearing expressions of Captain Haddock found in *L’Affaire Tournesol*, related to the maritime world. They are:

- a. “*Tonnerre de Brest!*”
- b. “*Mille millions de mille sabords!*”
- c. “*Mille sabords!*”
- d. “*Chauffard!Ecraseur!Ivrogne!...Moule à gaufres!*”
- e. “*Moules à gaufres!*”
- f. “*Mille milliards de mille millions de mille!*”

The curses are clauses built from word combinations, translated into eight versions of swear words in *Penculikan Calculus* and eight in *Penculikan Lakmus*. The data in Table 1 show the repeated use of some clauses. “*Tonnerre de Brest!*” And “*Mille sabords ...*”, which became the most frequent with their other variations.

“*Tonnerre*” is the sound of lightning, an electrical discharge whose flash is the manifestation (“*Tonnerre*”, 2020). *Brest*, a city located in western France, has a long maritime history. During World War II, Brest was occupied by the Germans and was part of the coastal defences known as the Atlantic Wall. In 1945, the city was destroyed by repeated bombs. Since then, the shipbuilding industry has declined to become a ship

Table 1. List of swear words in ST and TT

<i>L’Affaire Tournesol</i>	<i>Penculikan Calculus</i>	<i>Penculikan Lakmus</i>
“ <i>Tonnerre de Brest!</i> ”	“ <i>Setan belang !</i> ”	“ <i>Kepiting kurus!</i> ”
“ <i>Mille millions de mille sabords!</i> ”	“ <i>Sejuta topan badai!</i> ”	“ <i>Sekarang keping kurus kering!</i> ”
“ <i>Mille millions de mille sabords!</i> ”	“ <i>Sejuta kerbau dan topan badai!</i> ”	“ <i>Segunung keping kurus kering!</i> ”
“ <i>Mille sabords...</i> ”	“ <i>Setan belang...</i> ”	“ <i>Kepiting kurus...</i> ”
“ <i>Chauffard!...Ecraseur!...Ivrogne!...Moule à gaufres!...</i> ”	“ <i>Babon!...Kunyuk!...Kutu busuk!...Sinting!...Edan!...</i> ”	“ <i>Keledai buta! Gilingan! Bandit! Otak udang!...</i> ”
“ <i>Moules à gaufres!</i> ”	“ <i>Monyong kompret!</i> ”	“ <i>Otak udang!</i> ”
“ <i>Mille millions de mille sabords!..</i> ”	“ <i>Sejuta kampret belang!...</i> ”	“ <i>Kepiting kurus kering!..</i> ”
“ <i>Mille milliards de mille millions de mille!</i> ”	“ <i>Sejuta kampret dan setan belang!</i> ”	“ <i>Sejuta keping kurus kering!</i> ”

repair shop and one of France’s most important naval bases. Today, every four years, *se* hosts a week-long maritime festival where hundreds of ships from around the world fill the harbor (France-Pub.com).

“*Mille sabords*” is a familiar curse of sailors. “*Mille*” is a number made up of one thousand units. “*Sabord*” is a quadrangular opening made in the wall of a ship and serving either as an on-the-fly passage of parts or as an air intake for the chambers and batteries (Larousse Dictionnaire de Français, 2020). “*Tonnerre de Brest*” translates literally to “*Thunder Brest*”, “*Hurricane Brest*”. Meanwhile, “*Mille sabords*” translates literally to “*a thousand peepholes*” or “*a thousand ship holes*”. From this analysis, swear words are not just thrown out without the influence of Captain Haddock’s character background. To quote Jay and Janschewitz (2008), sociocultural influences on swearing vary from culture to culture and take some time and experience within a culture to be fully appreciated. His experience as a sailor inspires Captain Haddock’s way of swearing.

4.2. Maritime Cultural Elements in Target Texts

Before discussing the translation of swear words in the target texts, it is necessary to clarify the definition of adaptation. Adaptation in this context is adjusting the source language text with the target language text, which gives a similar but not the same picture (Cattrysse, 2019).

Table 2. Comparison 1

<i>L’Affaire Tournesol</i>	<i>Penculikan Calculus</i>	<i>Penculikan Lakmus</i>
“ <i>Tonnerre de Brest!</i> ”	“ <i>Setan belang!</i> ”	“ <i>Kepiting kurus!</i> ”
“ <i>Mille sabords...</i> ”	“ <i>Setan belang...</i> ”	“ <i>Kepiting kurus...</i> ”

As referred in Table 2, *Penculikan Calculus* translates “*Tonnerre de Brest*” to “*Setan belang*”. The noun “*Setan*” means an evil spirit who always tempts humans to act evil and has an awful temper (Tim Penyusun, 2016). The adjective “*Belang*” means coloured stripes or bad behaviour (Tim Penyusun, 2016.). Indira’s version did not reproduce the equivalence of the specific maritime word. Meanwhile, *Penculikan Lakmus* translated the expression to “*Kepiting Kurus*”. “*Kepiting*” is a crab that lives on the beach, ten legs, two of which are sharp chopsticks, hardback blackish-green as wide as the palm, edible (Tim Penyusun, 2016). “*Kurus*” is less flesh, not fat. Gramedia’s version reproduced the equivalence of the maritime elements by choosing a coastal animal to substitute the maritime nuance embedded in the swear phrase “*Tonnerre de Brest!*”.

Unlike the previous comparison in Table 2, the Table 3 shows the translator’s efforts to adapt maritime culture elements into Captain Haddock’s dialogue. “*Moules à gaufres*” means literally “*waffle molds*”, is an insult to smallpox patients in the past who experienced pockmarks all over their bodies, especially in the face Le Petit (Manege de Carozine a Bordeaux, 2010). According to Australian researchers, smallpox was brought by Makassar sailors who traded with indigenous Australians (Hobbins, 2017). Gramedia’s version translates to “*Otak Udang*”. “*Otak Udang*” means stupid. “*Udang*” is an animal without bones, living in water, hard-skinned, ten-legged, short-tailed, and has two pincers on its legs (Tim Penyusun, 2016).

Table 3. Comparison 2

<i>L’Affaire Tournesol</i>	<i>Penculikan Calculus</i>	<i>Penculikan Lakmus</i>
“ <i>Chauffard!...Ecraseur!...Ivrogne!...Moule à gaufres!...</i> ”	“ <i>Babon!...Kunyu k!...Kutu busuk!...Sinting!...Edan!...</i> ”	“ <i>Keledai buta! Gilingan! Bandit! Otak udang!...</i> ”
“ <i>Moules à gaufres!</i> ”	“ <i>Monyong kompret!</i> ”	“ <i>Otak udang!</i> ”
<i>L’Affaire Tournesol</i>	<i>Penculikan Calculus</i>	<i>Penculikan Lakmus</i>
“ <i>Tonnerre de Brest!</i> ”	“ <i>Setan belang!</i> ”	“ <i>Kepiting kurus!</i> ”
“ <i>Mille sabords...</i> ”	“ <i>Setan belang...</i> ”	“ <i>Kepiting kurus...</i> ”

From the two comparisons, it can be concluded that Gramedia’s version has considered adapting elements of maritime culture, as evidenced by the use of marine animal names. Based on Nida’s theory (1964), both TTs are more about the expected effect and response on the recipient or reader. However, Indira’s version does not adapt elements of maritime culture. Does this statement remove the essence of the relationship between verbal and visual aspects of characterization in picture books? No. Oittinen (2003) argues that illustration is never relatively direct but always outlines, complements, and reinforces verbal narratives.

4.3. *The Importance of Maintaining Characterization in Translation*

Maintaining the characterization is the responsibility of the translator. Even though a picture book is a combination of illustration and dialogue, which is considered easier to maintain its description because illustrations support it, it does not mean that we leave the essence of dialogue from the characters. In the case of Captain Haddock, swear words are a fundamental core of his dialogue. His strong background from the seafaring social group is reflected in his conversation. Some swearing has its meaning and background that do not exist in other social groups. It is also crucial for translators to be more aware of the cultural elements in the source text and rebuild them so that readers know the characters’ uniqueness.

5. CONCLUSION

Verbal and visual elements are essential in character building in picture books. Illustrations from Captain Haddock show that he was an experienced sailor. His characterization as a product of maritime culture is also shown in the dialogue. The results of the analysis of the adaptation of elements of marine culture in The Adventures of *Tintin* comics by Hergé and Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper (2015) show that the two translations applied the principle of dynamic equivalence in swearing translations. However, only Gramedia’s version applied maritime culture elements by using the words of marine animals in the swearings, which also build the character of Captain Haddock and awareness for translators to be more careful in the translation process. Rebuilding a character from the source language to the target language is a complex task due to the cultural differences between the two languages. Gramedia’s version proves that equivalence can still be achieved. This study provides an overview for translators of how important it is to maintain characterization as a form of responsibility to the vision of the character creator.

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