



International Journal of Research Publications

The Translation Shift of Euphemism with Reference to the Short Story *Biangkeladi* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer

I Gusti Ayu Dwi Dharma Yanti

Master Study of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Udayana University, Bali

Abstract

In translation, shift is a part that cannot be separated because the purpose of the translation is the transfer of the meaning from source language into target language. Shift can occur when translating figures of speech such as euphemism. The objectives of this paper are; (1) to find out the types of euphemism and (2) to describe kinds of translation shift occurs when translating euphemism from Indonesian to English. The data collecting was done by using library research and documentation method. Qualitative method was used in the analysis and it was descriptively presented. This result showed that from 46 data (including phrases and words) found, there are seven types of euphemism found according to Kaosa-Ad (2009) theory. Those types are: Indirection (21 data), Understatement (13 data), Reduplication (4 data), External borrowing (3 data), Litotes (1), Clipping (1 data) and Abbreviation (1 data). Related to the translation shift, only category shift was found in the data. Category shift that occur when translating euphemism in the short story *Biangkeladi* according to Catford (1965) are Structure shift (12 data), Class shift (3 data), Unit shift which is divided into lower-higher rank (19 data) and higher-lower rank (2 data) as well as intra system shift (10 data).

© 2019 Published by IJRP.ORG. Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of International Journal of Research Publications (IJRP.ORG)

Keywords: euphemism; translation; translation shift

I. Introduction

Translation remains an important part of communication. It has a big role as a bridge between different

languages, culture and background. In the process of translation, there will be missing elements. It means that a translation cannot be exactly the same as the original, there will always be a shift. Catford (1965:73) stated shift means the departure from formal correspondence in the process of going from source language to target language. Further, he stated that basically, in shift translation, or transposition, it is only the form that is changed. In addition, he argued the translation shifts is done to get the natural equivalent of the source text message into the target text. Catford (1965:78-80) divides the shift in translation into two major types, they are level shift and category shift (structure shift, unit shift, class shift and intra system shift). Shift can occur when translating figures of speech such as euphemism, softer and more polite expressions or words used when speaker want to refer to things which are socially considered sensitive or tabooed to be discussed.

Since euphemism can be easily found in many kinds of translation works, it is not difficult to find many short stories which use euphemism. As one example of short story which contains many euphemism expressions is the short story *Biangkeladi* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (2000). There are many types of euphemism can be found in the short story *Biangkeladi* according to Kaosa-Ad's classification of the types of euphemism. Those are related to politics, law and sexual issues. In additional, shift that occurs when translating euphemism can also be analysed using translation shift proposed by Catford (1965). The writer is interested in investigating about the types of euphemism as well as the translation shift occurs when translating euphemism in Indonesian and English short story because both of these languages have different form from each other.

There are two problems formulated as follows: a) what types of euphemism are found in the short story *Biangkeladi* and b) what types of translation shift applied when translating Indonesian euphemism into English in the short story *Biangkeladi*. Based on the aforementioned problems, the purposes of this study are a) to find out the types of euphemism, and b) to describe kinds of translation shift applied when translating euphemism from Indonesian to English. This study is only investigating the translation shift (category shift) applied when translating Indonesian euphemism into English in the short story *Biangkeladi* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (2000).

II. Theoretical Framework

A. Euphemism

Euphemism is a softer and more polite expressions or words that used to refer to things which are socially considered to be sensitive or tabooed to discuss. Kaosa-Ad (2009: 15-21) summarizing five main types of euphemism and those types are described as follows:

1. Shortening

This type is divided into five types, namely:

- a) Abbreviation is formed by combining the first letters of two or more words to form a single word. The letters of the abbreviations are pronounced individually and are typed or written by using capital letters (Meyer, 2009: 181-182). For example, BAB is an abbreviation used to euphemize the expression *Buang Air Besar* (which is also a euphemism that indirectly means to defecate).
- b) Backformation can be regarded as words which are formed by deleting affixes or parts assumed as affixes according to Meyer (2009: 182) and Fromkin et al. (2003: 97). For example, the word *burgle*, which is an example of a backformation derived from the word *burglar*, can also be used as a euphemism for the word *rob* (Kaosa-Ad, 2009: 15).
- c) Diminutive can be defined as the shortening of a word done by adding a suffix which indicates affection or smallness (Kaosa-Ad, 2009: 16). In English, the suffixes forming diminutive are -let, -kins, -ie, -y, etc.

For example, as mentioned by KaosaAd (2009: 16) the word *hienie*, which is a diminutive of the expression *hind end*, can be used as a euphemism to mean *buttock*.

- d) Omission is done by deleting some letters of a word, usually by replacing them with dashes (Allan & Burridge, 1991 in Kaosa-Ad, 2009: 16). However, it is also common to replace the words with asterisk. For example, *b*b** is an omission which is usually used to euphemize the Indonesian swear word *babi* (literary means *pig*).
- e) Clipping can be described as the shortening by omitting some part of the word. For example, Indonesians usually use the word *njing*, which is the clipping form of the word *anjing* (means *dog*), as a euphemism.

2. Circumlocution

This type of euphemism can be explained as a phonological modification which uses many words to explain an expression by widening its meaning (Allan & Burridge, 2006: 128). For example, an Indonesian expression *masyarakat berpenghasilan rendah* (means *low-income people*) can be categorized as a circumlocution which serves as a euphemism that is used to actually refer to the expression *masyarakat miskin* (means *the poor*).

3. Remodeling

This type is divided into three more types, namely:

- a) Phonological distortion is done by intentionally distorting the original pronunciation of words (Burridge, 2005: 125). For example, in Indonesian, the word *bencong* is formed as a phonological distortion which is used as a euphemism of the word *banci* (means a *transsex*).
- b) Blending is done by combining two or more words to cause a phonological and orthographical change (Williams, 1975 in Kaosa-Ad, 2009: 17). In the process of creating blends, there are deletions of some parts of the words and the parts left are combined to form new words. For example, the word *tamping* is a blend of the expression *tahanan pendamping* (*fellow inmates*).
- c) Reduplication is the attachment of a complete or partial copy of the base as a prefix or a suffix. For example, the word *pundi-pundi* as a reduplication of *pundi* (small pocket) and can be used to euphemize the word *duit* (*money*).

4. Semantic Change

This type is divided into seven types, they are:

- a) Semantic shift which is divided also into two parts: general-for-specific and part-for-whole. General-for-specific uses a more general expression to substitute an expression having a more specific meaning. For example, *pergi ke belakang* (means *go to the bathroom*) for the word *kencing* (means *urinate*). It serves a more general meaning used to state the specific meaning. Meanwhile, part-for-whole uses a part of an expression to indirectly state the whole expression. For example, *spend a penny* for the expression *go to the lavatory* (Kaosa-Ad, 2009: 17).
- b) Metaphorical transfer refers to the using of an expression which is used to euphemize something by metaphorically comparing it with something else which has a (or some) similar characteristics (Prayogi, 2008: 8). For example, the expression *kaki tangan* (literary means *legs and arms*) serves as the metaphorical transfer form which is used as a euphemism of the word *bawahan* (means *subordinate* or *servant*) as it does not literary mean legs and arms but indicates someone or people who serve(s) someone well just like his/her legs and arms.
- c) Widening can be described as the act of shifting the meaning of an expression into one having a more general or abstract meaning. For example, the word *penggelapan* (which literary means *the process of*

darkening something) is usually used as a euphemism to blur the meaning of the expression *pengkorupsian uang* (which means *money corruption*).

- d) Litotes is an expression used to state something by using its negative form. Litotes can be used to make euphemistic expressions by replacing an offensive word with its negative opposite. For example, the word *bodoh* (means *stupid*) can be euphemized by the expression *kurang pandai* (means *less intelligent*) which serves as the litotes of the word *bodoh*.
- e) Understatement is the presentation of something as being smaller or less good or important than it really is. This type is used to degrade the real meaning of the expression being euphemized. It is changing words into milder words in order to make the situation seems not too bad. For example, *sleep* means *die*.
- f) Indirection can be described as the using of another word referring to the same object or thing with the word euphemized to substitute the dispreferred one. For example, the expression *jeruji besi* is usually used as an indirection to euphemize the word *penjara* (means *prison*).
- g) Abstraction refers to the use of pronouns and words such as *it*, *problem*, *situation*, *thing* or *hal/masalah ini* (means *this matter/problem*) in Indonesian to abstractly euphemize words or expressions that may contextually refer to issues such as disaster, economic crisis, etc.

5. Borrowing

There are two types of borrowing, namely:

- a) Internal borrowing can be done by substituting an expression with sublanguages, such as jargons and technical terms. For example, the word *pesakitan* (means *convict*) which serves as a term used in court is usually used to euphemistically refer to the word *tahanan* (means *prisoner*).
- b) External borrowing as Williams (1975 in Kaosa-Ad, 2009: 20-21) describes, can be done by using loan words to substitute the dispreferred local words since loan words usually have less negative connotational meaning with the words that want to be replaced. For example, the words *kolonialisme* (from the English word *colonialism*) is an external borrowing word from English which is usually used to euphemize the Indonesian word *penjajahan*.

B. Translation Shift

According to Catford (1965) there are two types of shift: level shifts and category shifts. Level shifts consists of upward and downward rank shifts. Meanwhile, category shift means change from the formal correspondence in translation. It is divided into four, they are: structure shift, class shift, unit shift, and intra shift.

1. Structure-shift involve a grammatical change between the structure MH (modifier + Head) into HM (Head + Modifier). For example: *black box* which is translated into *kotak hitam*.
2. Class-shift occur when the translation equivalent of a source language (SL) item is member of a different class from the original item. For example: *annual report* which is translated into *laporan tahunan*. It can be seen in the TL *annual* (adjective) is translated into TL become *tahunan* (noun).
3. Unit-shift (involve changes in rank) is departures from formal correspondence in which the translation equivalent of unit at one rank in the source text (ST) is a unit at different rank in the target text (TT). In additional, it can occur from low level to higher level or vice versa. It is due to the differences of the amount of meaning component in different concept.
 - a) Low Level to Higher Level
For example: *Posh* which is translated into *Kaya raya*. In the SL there is only one word *posh* but after it translated into target language, it became more than one word.

b) High Level to Lower Level

For example: *Dead body* which is translated into *Mayat*. In the source language, it consists of more than one word *dead and body* then it is translated becoming just one word *mayat*.

4. Intra-system shift is a shift that occurs when the SL singular becomes a TL plural. For example: *the thugs* which is translated into *para berandalan*.

III. Methods

This research was conducted by using the qualitative research method. The discussion of the research design includes the selection of: (1) the main data source in the forms of printed materials concerning Indonesian euphemism, (2) method and technique of collecting data, (3) method and technique of analyzing data, and (4) method and technique of presenting data.

The data used in this research were taken from the short story entitled *Biangkeladi* by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (2000) It tells about the other side of a bureau chief's life named Mr. Kariumun. This short story was translated into English *The Mastermind* by Gary Nathan Gartenberg (2000). It becomes the source of the data of this research because there are many euphemisms were found in this short story.

The data collecting of this study was done by using library research and documentation method. The following procedures are: 1) identify the SL data which is consist of Indonesian euphemism then underline them, 2) collects the euphemism expression found in the short story, 3) identify the SL data which is consist of Indonesian euphemism as well as the TL which consists of English translation and then underline them in order to find out the translation shift applied when translating euphemism.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the following steps: identifies the expressions which are considered and categorized as euphemistic expressions, then categorized and analyzed them based on their type of euphemism using Kaosa-Ad's types of euphemism. Then, analyze the translation shift occurs when translating euphemism from Indonesian into English based on Catford's translation shift. Finally, drew conclusion from the analysis. The analyzed data presented in narrative text.

IV. Findings and Discussion

1. Types of Euphemism

From 46 data found, there are several types of euphemism in the short story *Biangkeladi* and presented in the following table.

No.	Types of Euphemism	Frequency
1	Indirection	21
2	Understatement	13
3	Reduplication	4
4	External borrowing	3
5	Litotes	1
6	Clipping	1
7	Abbreviation	1
total		46

Based on the table above, the types of euphemism found in the short story *Biangkeladi* have can be further discussed as follows:

1. Indirection

There are many examples of indirection. One of them is stated in the sentence “*sebagai pegawai negeri pada Gubermen Hindia Belanda, ia berhasil menduduki **tempat yang tinggi** di kurun masa itu*”. The expression *tempat yang tinggi* literally means high place. This expression is used to replace the word *jabatan* (means position) which can directly express the message. Therefore, the expression *tempat yang tinggi* is categorized as an indirection used as a euphemism.

2. Understatement

For understatement, one of the examples found in the data is stated in the sentence “*sebagai orang yang tidak resmi, Tuan Kariimun sebenarnya mempunyai banyak **keberatan** juga terhadap dirinya sendiri*”. The word *keberatan* literally means objection. By using this word to substitute the word *masalah* (problem), the author wants to deflate the meaning. In other words, it softens the word *masalah* (means problem) by understating its meaning. Thus, the word *keberatan* is defined as a euphemistic expression creating by substituting an expression with the one having more plain meaning.

3. Reduplication

Among four examples of reduplication found, one of them is stated in the sentence “*ia juga ingat kepada orang-orang yang telah diberinya sugesti agar ia dapat menerima **bintang-bintang** itu*”. *Bintang-bintang* is considered as a reduplication of the word *bintang* (means an award or honors given to someone). It can be used as a euphemism for the word *medali* (means medal).

4. External borrowing

In the sentence “*ia dapat menguasai suatu kedudukan yang amat baik di jaman **kolonial** Belanda dahulu*”, one example of external borrowing can be described in the expression *kolonial*. The word *kolonial* (from the English word colonial) is an external borrowing word from English which is usually used to euphemize the Indonesian word *penjajahan*.

5. Litotes

The example of this type can be described in the sentence “*alangkah heran Mas Kariimun waktu mengetahui bahwa ketiga pemuda itu **tidak bangkit dari tempat duduk***”. In the expression *tidak bangkit dari tempat duduk* (means sit still) the expression *tidak* give the opposite meaning for *bangkit dari tempat duduk* (means stand). Thus, it serves as a litotes.

6. Clipping

The example of clipping can be described in the sentence “*perasaan **nasionalnya** tumbuh dengan mendadak, meluap, terbakar dan berkobar-kobar*”. The word *nasional* is considered as a euphemism in the type of clipping. This word actually serves as a shortening form of the word *nasionalisme*.

7. Abbreviation

The example of this kind of euphemism is the using of the expression *pemilu* in the sentence “*masa kampanye **pemilu** merupakan masa yang kerasukan baginya*”. The expression *pemilu* is an abbreviation used to euphemize the expression *Pemilihan Umum*.

2. Translation Shift

Based on the data, only category shift was found. Types of category shifts that occur when translating euphemism in the short story *Biangkeladi* were presented in the following table.

Translation Shifts	Frequency
Structure shift	12
Class shift	3
Unit shift	
- Low to High	19
- High to Low	2
Intra system shift	10
total	46

Based on the analysis, shift that occurs when translating euphemism expressions in the short story *Biangkeladi* have can be further discussed as follows:

1. Structure shift

Structure shift is the shift that happen when the source language structure and target language structure are different. For example:

SL: *ia menjadi kepala dari beberapa pegawai tinggi.*

TL: he is the supervisor of several high officials.

One of the examples above shows that the target language has different phrase structure from the source language. The noun phrase structure *pegawai tinggi* composed by the head *pegawai* and post-modifier *tinggi* is translated into high official in English. The noun phrase high official is formed by pre-modifier high then followed by the head officials. Considering the different structure between the phrase of the source language and the phrase of the target language, it can be stated that there is structure shift in phrase level. It happens because the basic structure of the source language noun phrase is the inverse of target language noun phrase structure. The structure of Indonesian noun phrase above is head-post modifier meanwhile English noun phrase structure is pre modifier – head.

2. Class shift

Class-shift occur when the translation equivalent of a source text item is member of a different class form the original item. For example:

SL: *ia dan pasukannya bergerilya.*

TL: he and his troops became guerrilla fighters.

Data above shows that the expression *bergerilya* is a verb. The equivalent expression in English is *guerrilla fighters* which is a noun phrase. It means that there is class shift from verb to noun phrase.

3. Unit shift

Unit shift occurs when unit at one rank in the source text (ST) is differ from rank in the target text (TT). Unit shift occurs includes changes from a lower into a higher rank and vice versa. The followings are the examples of unit shift.

SL: *kemudian Jepang pun berkuasa.*

TL: then Japan took control.

The example above is a unit shift that occurs from a lower rank becomes a higher rank. The sentence shows that there is a change from word to phrase. The word *berkuasa* is the verb in the SL and it translated into *took control* as a verb phrase in the TL. It is done to keep the meaning constant, thus the message can be

conveyed naturally and communicatively.

Another example of unit shift also presented below.

SL: *otot-ototnya tak pernah di latih lagi sehingga menjadi bergumpulan sebagai Hercules dalam format kerdil.*

TL: he no longer trained his muscles, so that he began to swell up like a Hercules in *miniature*.

On the contrary, the example above shows a unit shift that occurs from a higher rank to a lower rank. The sentence shows that there is a change from phrase to word. The phrase *format kerdil* is the noun phrase in the SL and it translated into *miniature* as an adjective in the TL.

4. Intra system shift

Intra-system shift occurs internally within the system of a language, for example the system of singular-plural form in both languages. The example below occurs when the SL singular changed into TL plural. This change occurs because of the differences of grammatical system between the SL and TL. For example:

SL: *sekali saja dia dan anak buahnya pernah terlibat dalam pertempuran dengan musuh.*

TL: only once were he and his *followers* drawn into battle with the enemy.

In the example above, the Indonesian singular noun is translated into English plural noun. In the SL, *anak buah* is Indonesian singular noun which is translated into *followers* in English plural noun. The noun *followers* is English plural noun, however, there was no change for the message from the source language. Therefore, there is intra-system shift happened on this sentence.

V. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, there are some conclusions that can be formulated and presented as follows: From 46 data (including phrases and words) found which is contain expressions of euphemism, there are seven types of euphemism found according to Kaosa-Ad (2009) theory. Those types are: Indirection (21 data), Understatement (13 data), Reduplication (4 data), External borrowing (3 data), Litotes (1), Clipping (1 data) and Abbreviation (1 data). This indicates that in delivering his story which also include some sensitives issues related to politics, war, and sexual, Pramoedya also tries to make his story socially acceptable by using many types of euphemism. Related to the translation shift, only category shift was found in the data. Category shift that occur when translating euphemism in the short story *Biangkeladi* are Structure shift (12 data), Class shift (3 data), Unit shift which is divided into lower-higher rank (19 data) and higher-lower rank (2 data) as well as intra system shift (10 data).

The present researcher hopes the next researcher can use the result of the current study to enrich their knowledge in translating not only euphemism expression but also the opposite of euphemism expression, dysphemism, which is also interesting to be analyzed.

VI. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank to Udayana University as well as all the colleagues for supporting the researcher in conducting this research.

Bibliography

- Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (1991). *Euphemism and dysphemism: Language used as shield and weapon*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Allan, K., and Burridge, K. (2006). *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Booij, G. (2007). *The Grammar of Words: An Introduction to Linguistic Morphology*. (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burridge, K. (2005). *Weeds in the Garden of Words*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Catford, J.C. 1965. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R. and Hyams, N. (2003). *An introduction to Language*. (7th ed.). Boston, Mass.: Heinle.
- Kaosa-Ad, R. (2009). *English Euphemism as Used by Native Speakers of English and of Thai*. Retrieved from [http://thesis.swu.ac.th/swuthesis/Eng\(M.A.\)/Rommayasin_K.pdf](http://thesis.swu.ac.th/swuthesis/Eng(M.A.)/Rommayasin_K.pdf) accessed on September 3rd, 2019.
- Meyer, C. F. (2009). *Introducing English Linguistics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Prayogi, F. (2008). *Euphemism Used in World View Section of Newsweek Magazine*. Retrieved from http://lib.uin-malang.ac.id/?mod=th_detail&id=03320098, accessed on September 3rd, 2019.