

The Translation of Word Play in Children's Literature



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background

It has been mentioned by most experts that translating literary works is not an easy task and is more sophisticated than translating other kinds of texts. The main reason deals with the orientation: **foreignization or domestication**.

Other factor is that it involves complex emotional and associational elements dealing with the differences of the language styles: **the stylistic element of language**.

For these complex situations, translators of literary works have to be very careful. Meaning, literally, might be well delivered, but style might not.

Translated literary works are not something useless, even they do not really get serious attention.

Gifford in Sapardi (2008) states that translated literary works are no more than a monochromatic reproduction of any colourful paintings. The texture is changed.

He also adds that nothing can be more beautiful and complete than those found in the imagination of the author.

This is not very acceptable because translation should be considered as a re-expression of the original text capable to adapt what are 'alien' to the receptors' norms and culture.

In other words, literature has an important role in the development of literary system and at once it can be an evidence of the presence of its reception in the target culture.

Serious attention must be paid to children's
literature and its translation because ...

“Literature is a powerful vehicle for helping children understand their homes, communities and the world. Even before young children can read themselves, family members, childcare providers and teachers are reading them stories about other children in far away places, sometimes from the distant past, or about children whose lives are not unlike their own. The impressions and messages contained in these stories can last a lifetime.”

“And, if the titles reflect the diverse groups of people in the world around them, **children can learn to respect not only their own cultural groups, but also the cultural groups of others.** Children's literature serves as both a mirror to children and as a window to the world around them by showing people from diverse groups playing and working together, solving problems and overcoming obstacles. At its best, multicultural children's literature helps children understand that despite our many differences, all people share common feelings and aspirations.”

Case study

Roald Dahl's works are as examples. They have been familiar since 1960's but are not translated into Indonesian until 2000's.

Dahl is well known as a unique author of children's stories. From all of his works, **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** and **Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator** are the most popular.

The characters of the stories are hilarious and amusing which make them interesting, not only to children but also to adults.

Comic situations are found in almost all parts of the stories. **Wordplays**, which are sometimes sophisticated, are used to make them more humorous.

Examples ...

- “We must hurry! said Mr Wonka. “**We have so much time and so little to do!** No! Wait! **Cross that out! Reverse it!** Thank you! Now back to the factory!” he cried, clapping his hands once and springing two feet in the air with two feet. (Dahl, 1986: 11)
- “Kita harus buru-buru!” ujar Mr. Wonka. “**Begitu banyak waktu dan sedikit sekali pekerjaan!** Tidak! Tunggu! **Coret kata-kata itu! Harap dibalik!** Terima kasih! **Sekarang kembali ke pabrik!**” serunya sambil menepuk tangannya satu kali dan melompat ke udara dengan dua kakinya. (Dahl, 2003 :12)

Other Phenomena

- Mr Willy Wonka, chocolate-maker extraordinary.
- Mr. Willy wonka, pencipta cokelat yang luar biasa.
- The sky was brilliant blue.
- Langit berwarna biru cerah.

• 'Madam,' said Mr Wonka, 'it is not a lift any longer. Lifts only go up and down *inside* buildings. But now that it has taken us up into the sky, it has become an ELEVATOR. It is THE GREAT GLASS ELEVATOR.'

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• 'Madam,' jawab Mr. Wonka, 'ini bukan sekedar lift. Lift hanya bisa naik dan turun *di dalam* gedung. Tapi karena lift ini sekarang membawa kita jauh ke angkasa, ia berubah jadi ELEVATOR. Namanya ELEVATOR KACA LUAR BIASA.'

- ‘Every day,’ said Mr Wonka, ‘I get deaf and deaf. . . .’
- ‘Setiap hari,’ kata Mr. Wonka, ‘aku semakin tuli. . . .’
- ‘He’s cracked as a crab!’ said Grandma Georgina.
- ‘la sinting seperti kepiting!’ sembur Grandma Georgina.

- ‘Back we fly to the factory! But we must go *up* before we can come down. We must go *higher and higher!*’
- ‘Terbang kembali ke pabrik! Kita harus terbang lebih tinggi dan makin tinggi lagi!’

- Higher and higher rushed the Great Glass Elevator until soon they could see the countries and oceans of the Earth spread out below them like a map.
- Elevator Kaca Luar Biasa meluncur makin tinggi dan terus bertambah tinggi sehingga mereka bisa melihat negara negara dan lautan di bumi jauh di bawah mereka seperti kalau melihat peta.

- They gaped, they gasped, they stared, they stared. They were too flabbergasted to speak.
- Mereka menganga, terperangah; mata mereka melotot. Mereka terlungung untuk berbicara.

More phenomena
can still be explored
and this is NOT the
end of this paper.
Thank you.