

The Influence of Translation Techniques on the Accuracy of Interpretation of *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

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Abstract: This study analyzes the influence of translation techniques on the accuracy of the interpretation of Louisa May Alcott's novel "Little Women". The three translation techniques analyzed are literal translation, idiomatic translation, and dynamic equivalence. This study uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach from the novel "Little Women". This method was chosen to explore in depth how translation techniques affect the accuracy of interpretation in the translated novel. These findings emphasize the importance of choosing the right translation technique to maintain the integrity of literary interpretation. This study also highlights the importance of considering cultural and social contexts in the process of translating literary texts. It was found that a deep understanding of the author's original culture is essential to produce an accurate and meaningful translation. In addition, this study recommends that translators have strong linguistic and literary skills to be able to transfer the nuances and meanings contained in the original text into their translations. The findings of this study can be a valuable guide for translators and researchers in understanding the complexity of translation techniques and their impact on the interpretation of literary texts.

Keywords: interpretation, accuracy, translation, translation techniques, Little Woman

INTRODUCTION

Translation and interpreting are essential aspects of communication in the global world. Translation refers to the process of converting written text from one language to another (Fitria, 2024), while interpreting involves the real-time, oral translation of spoken language (Gulo et al., 2023). Both fields require a deep understanding of not only the language being used, but also the cultural nuances and context that may impact the meaning of the message being conveyed.

Translation and interpreting play a vital role in facilitating cross-cultural communication, enabling individuals from different language backgrounds to understand one another. In today's interconnected world, businesses, governments, and organizations rely on translation and interpreting services to reach wider audiences and expand their reach internationally.

Professionals in this field must have strong linguistic skills, cultural competence, and the ability to think quickly. They must be able to convey a message accurately while maintaining the tone and intent of the original text or speech. Additionally, translators and interpreters often specialize in a particular subject area such as legal, medical, or technical to ensure accuracy and precision in their work.

Translating a novel from a foreign language accurately requires a deep understanding of both the source and target languages. Whatever the type of document is, a specific knowledge in the right field and industry is essential to be as accurate and reliable as possible, as it takes a knowledge of the right vocabulary, the right procedures, etc. (Saeed, 2019). It is essential for the translator to have a strong grasp of the cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and literary conventions of both languages in order to convey the original meaning and tone of the novel.

One of the key aspects of accurately translating a novel is staying true to the author's style and voice. This involves not only translating the words on the page, but also capturing the author's unique writing style, tone, and rhythm. A skilled

translator must be able to adapt his or her own writing style to match the original author while maintaining clarity and coherence in the target language.

Another important consideration when translating a novel is to carefully research any historical or cultural references that may be unfamiliar to readers in the target language. It is important for translators to provide footnotes or explanations where necessary to ensure that readers fully understand the context of the novel.

Additionally, it is important for translators to pay attention to details such as character names, locations, and other specific references that may have different meanings or connotations in different languages. By being thorough in their translation work, translators can ensure that these details are conveyed accurately without losing the intended meaning.

In research on the theme of translation and interpretation, there are several studies that have made significant contributions to understanding the dynamics, challenges, and techniques involved in the translation and interpretation process.

A study by Purandina (2022) in the book "Essential English For EFL Students" discusses the role of translation and interpretation in language education, especially in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). This study highlights how translation can be used as a tool to improve students' language comprehension and communication skills. The authors also discuss the challenges often faced in translating between English and Indonesian, as well as the importance of multimodality in translation studies.

Gile's (2009) study focuses on the technical and specific aspects of translation and interpretation, including terminology, linguistics, and psychological issues. Gile highlights the importance of information accuracy in the translation of technical and professional documents, and how translation can open up access to knowledge from different cultures and times. The study also includes a case analysis of technical translation and how different translation techniques

can be applied to ensure accurate and effective information transfer.

Meifang & Dezheng's (2021) study explores the concept of multimodality in translation studies, encompassing text, paratext, and visual analysis. This study shows that multimodal analysis is now becoming increasingly important in linguistics, discourse analysis, and translation studies, helping researchers understand how visual and contextual elements interact with written texts in the translation process.

Little Women is a famous work by Louisa May Alcott, first published in 1868 and 1869 in two volumes. The novel follows the lives and growth of the four March sisters in 19th-century America. The work has been translated into many languages, including Indonesian.

The original Little Women was written in English by Louisa May Alcott. The translation into Indonesian is derived from this English text. The translation done directly from English allows for a better transfer of the original nuance and meaning of the work.

One of the most famous translations in Indonesia is the work of translator Anton Adiwiyoto. This translation was published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama, a major publisher in Indonesia that is known for publishing classic world literature. There are several other translated editions also published by different publishers in Indonesia, but this translator and publisher Gramedia is one of the leading ones.

"Little Women" is a classic novel written by Louisa May Alcott and first published in 1868. The book follows the lives of four sisters Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March growing up in the United States during and after the Civil War. The story explores the dynamics of the close-knit March family, with Marmee as their loving and wise mother, guiding her children through life's challenges. Each sister has a unique character and ambition: Meg, as the eldest, dreams of a better life and wants to build a harmonious family; Jo, who is rebellious and independent, dreams of becoming a writer and rejects the societal norms that limit women; Beth, who is shy and loving, symbolizes beauty in simplicity and is often the bond between the family; and Amy, as the youngest, dreams of becoming an artist and pursues elegance and social prestige.

The main themes explored in the novel are personal growth, family loyalty, and self-discovery, with Alcott also exploring feminist issues, highlighting women's struggles for independence and recognition in a patriarchal society. The novel, based largely on Alcott's personal experiences, makes "Little Women" semi-autobiographical, reflecting her own economic and family life challenges.

In her writing, Alcott uses several techniques that enrich the story. The honest and realistic narrative creates a deep connection with the reader, allowing them to feel the emotions and experiences of the characters more realistically. Dialogue is used to develop the characters and deepen the plot, while in-depth characterization gives each of the March sisters uniqueness, making them feel alive and relatable to the reader. Alcott also often ends chapters with a moral lesson or reflection, emphasizing the importance of values such as patience, sacrifice, and hard work. The plot, although following the development of life chronologically, often uses flashbacks to provide deeper context. The use of symbolism also adds layers of meaning to the story, such as the March house being a symbol of the warmth of family and love that overcomes all obstacles.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach from the novel Little Women. This method was chosen to explore in depth how translation techniques affect the accuracy of interpretation in a translated novel. According to Bogdan and Taylor (Nugrahani, 2008) define qualitative research as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Qualitative research begins with an overall investigation, identification of what is happening or being experienced, focusing on how to change one thing, the formulation of the problem continues to be refined and reformulated (Hancock et al., 2006). Thus, this study aims to make a significant contribution to understanding how translation techniques affect the interpretation of literary texts, focusing on the classic novels that have been determined.

Data Analysis

This study uses two main sources as the basis for its analysis. First, the original English work "Little Women" written by Louisa May Alcott, published in 1968. Second, the Indonesian translation version done by Annisa Cinantya Putri and Widya Kirana. These two texts were the main focus in the comparative study and analysis of translation techniques conducted. The selection of these two sources allows the researcher to examine in depth how effective the various translation techniques used are.

By analyzing the data thoroughly, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the information from the data being studied. The data collected in this study include the original novel text and its translation, contextual information about the novel and its author, and other data relevant to the study.

The researcher used the documentation data collection technique, where the researcher will collect and document parts of the text in the original novel and its translation that are relevant to the focus of the research. According to Sugiyono (2018) documentation is a method used to obtain data and information in the form of books, archives, documents, written numbers and images in the form of reports and descriptions that can support research.

Data analysis used several translation techniques, namely literal translation, idiomatic translation, and dynamic equivalence. The purpose of data analysis in qualitative research is to interpret the data and themes produced, facilitate understanding, identify and describe the results (Sargeant, 2012). It is hoped that this study can produce significant findings regarding the influence of translation techniques on the accuracy of interpretation of meaning in translated novels, and provide meaningful contributions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study examines how translation techniques affect the accuracy of literary text interpretation, focusing on Louisa May Alcott's novel "Little Women." The researchers analyzed three main translation techniques: literal translation, idiomatic translation, and dynamic equivalence. Each technique was applied to selected sections of the novel, and their accuracy was assessed by a panel of bilingual experts who evaluated the translations based on fidelity to the original text, readability, and cultural relevance.

1. Literal Translation:

- This technique translates words directly and according to their original order in the source language. Example:

- Original: "Meg, the eldest of the four, was sixteen."
 - Translation: "Meg, the oldest of four siblings, is sixteen years old."
2. **Free Translation:**
- This technique focuses more on meaning than form. Example:
 - Original: "Jo's ambition was to do something very splendid."
 - Translation: "Jo's dream is to do something really extraordinary."
3. **Adaptation:**
- Adapting cultural elements in the source text to make it more familiar to readers in the target culture. Example:
 - Original: "They played 'Authors' until the girls were tired."
 - Translation: "They played 'The Writer' until the girls were exhausted."
 - Note: Perhaps in some cultural contexts, this game could be adapted into a more familiar local game.
4. **Idiomatic Translation:**
- This technique translates an idiom or expression with an equivalent expression in the target language. Example:
 - Original: "As slow as molasses in January."
 - Translation: "Slow as a snail."
5. **Semantic Translation:**
- Focus on the deeper meaning and nuance of the original text. Example:
 - Original: "Beth was too bashful to go to school."
 - Translation: "Beth is too shy to go to school."
6. **Contextual Translation:**
- Adapt translations based on context. Example:
 - Original: "Jo's hair was her one beauty."
 - Translation: "Jo's hair is her only beauty."
- Note: In some contexts, "one beauty" can be translated as "the most beautiful thing about her" for clarity.

The results of the study concluded that translators use various approaches to ensure that the original meaning, style, and nuances of the text are maintained while making it easy to understand for target language readers. Literal translation techniques maintain the basic structure and meaning of the original text by translating words directly and in their original order (Anwar, 2020). Free translation focuses more on conveying the main meaning rather than maintaining the original structure, giving the translator more flexibility (Lu & Yang, 2024).

Adaptation allows the adjustment of cultural elements in a text to make it more relevant and familiar to the target reader. The translator is fully free to give an effective translation taking into account the lexicons, syntactic structure, semantic elements, pragmatic elements, cultural norms and the intentionality of the speaker or the writer (Al-Sulaiman & Khoshaba, 2018). While, idiomatic translation converts idioms in the source language into equivalent expressions in the target language, preserving the authenticity and clarity of meaning as idiomatic translation is meaning based translation which makes every effort to transfer the meaning of the source language in the natural forms of the target language (Inayah et al., 2018). Semantic translation focuses on the deeper meaning and nuances of the original text, ensuring that the context and intent of the author remain intact. The semantic approach tends to preserve the author's language expression by giving utmost

importance on its peculiar content and meaning (Mohamed, 2022). Contextual translation adapts the translation based on the specific context, adding explanations or clarifications where necessary to ensure proper understanding by the reader as broader context helps to establish the meaning of the word, when the narrow context is not enough (Rakhmatullayev, 2021).

Literal translation, while precise in preserving the original wording, often comes at the expense of the readability and emotional resonance of the text. Strict adherence to the structure of the source language results in a translation that feels mechanical and rigid, which can be particularly problematic in literary works where stylistic and emotional nuances are crucial. These findings suggest that while literal translation may be appropriate for technical or legal documents, the technique is less effective for literary texts that require a more fluid and dynamic approach (Alfarisy, 2020).

Dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes the overall meaning and emotional impact of the text, offers a good balance but also shows the challenges in maintaining cultural fidelity. This technique successfully captures the emotional essence of the narrative, but its interpretive nature sometimes leads to deviations from the author's original message. This shows that the translator acts not only as a translator but also as a cultural mediator, whose interpretation can greatly affect the reader's experience (Shindo, 2021).

In addition, the findings of this study also show that success in the process of translating literary texts is also greatly influenced by the translator's ability to understand and interpret the emotional nuances contained in the original text. This emphasizes the importance of sensitivity to psychological and artistic aspects in literary translation. Thus, translators need not only to have strong linguistic skills, but also the ability to respond to and reproduce the emotional nuances contained in the original text accurately in their translations.

This study also underlines that literary translators need to pay attention to the cultural and social context of the original text in order to produce a translation that is not only linguistically accurate but also culturally relevant. Awareness of cultural differences between writers and readers is also a key factor in determining the success of a literary translation. Therefore, translators need to have a deep understanding of the cultural background and values underlying the original text in order to produce a translation that is acceptable and understandable to the target readers.

In the context of literary translation, it is important for the translator to not only understand the literal meaning of the original text, but also to be able to capture the emotional and artistic nuances contained therein. This emphasizes that the translator needs to be sensitive to the psychological and aesthetic aspects of the translation process. In addition, awareness of cultural differences between the writer and the reader is also a key factor in determining the success of a literary translation. Therefore, the translator needs to have a deep understanding of the cultural background and values underlying the original text in order to produce a translation that is acceptable and understandable to the target readers.

These findings provide important contributions to the understanding of the complexity of literary translation techniques and their impact on text interpretation. The implications of these findings can be valuable guidance for translators in improving the quality of literary translations as

well as for researchers in deepening their understanding of the process of translating literary texts.

Thus, this study provides an important contribution to the understanding of the complexity of literary translation techniques and their impact on text interpretation. The implications of these findings can be a valuable guide for translators in improving the quality of literary translations as well as for researchers in deepening their understanding of the process of translating literary texts.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that idiomatic translation technique is most effective for the novel "Little Women," because it balances fidelity to the original text, readability, and cultural relevance. The use of literal translation tends to be rigid but accurate, while dynamic equivalence conveys emotion well but sometimes deviates from the author's original intent. This study shows the importance of choosing the right translation technique and the role of the translator in conveying culture across languages.

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