



**TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES AND READABILITY  
OF THE CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEMS IN THE 2007  
INDONESIAN TRANSLATION OF ALICE'S  
ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND**

**Martinda Intan Permatahati, Mohamad Ikhwan Rosyidi** ✉

English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

**Article Info**

*Article History:*

Received in October  
2017

Approved in November  
2017  
Published in  
December 2017

*Keywords:* culture-specific  
items, translation  
technique, readability,  
Alice's Adventures in  
Wonderland

**Abstract**

*Translation techniques poses somewhat of challenge. Addressing the potential problems existing in translation between English and Indonesian, culture specific item (CSI) is used to translate the untranslatable words in the process of translation into target language. The technique that is used to translate will affect to the readability level. This research has an objective to find and describe the translation techniques that are applied in translating culture-specific items (CSI) in Sri Haryanto's Indonesian translated novel of Alice's Adventure in Wonderland entitled Petualangan di Negeri Ajaib dan Dunia di Balik Cermin by Windi A in 2007 and to explain the readability of culture-specific items (CSI) in this translated novel. Qualitative method is used in observing and analyzing the phenomenon which affected as an impact of the readability of culture-specific items in the translated text that had found in the Indonesian translated novel of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and also making interpretations of the meaning of the readability level of culture-specific items in its Indonesian translated novel through the readability rating-sheet. From this research, the researcher finds 16 translation techniques that are applied in translating the culture-specific items from Alice's Adventure in Wonderland novel into its 2007 Indonesian translated novel by Sri Haryanto. Established equivalent translation technique is the highest frequency of translation technique that is applied in this novel. It can be concluded that the readability of culture-specific items in Sri Haryanto's Indonesian translated novel of Alice's in Wonderland is readable.*

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✉ Correspondent Address:  
B3 Building FBS Unnes  
Sekaran, Gunungpati, Semarang, 50229  
E-mail: unnes\_english@yahoo.com

ISSN 2252-6706

## INTRODUCTION

Translation of Culture-Specific Items (CSIs), which becomes problems for translators, has been and still a largely debatable issue in translation study. Since the concept of culture is essential to understanding the implications for literary translation and culture-specific items in translation, many translation theorists have dealt with the definition of culture. In 1984, Larson defines culture as "a complex of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules which a group of people share" (Larson, 1984: 431). He notes that the translator needs to understand beliefs, attitudes, values, and the rules of the source language (SL) audience in order to adequately understand the source text (ST) and adequately translate it for people who have a different set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules. In 1998, Newmark remarks that culture is "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (Newmark, 1998: 94). Here, he asserts that each language group has its own culturally specific features.

There are so many different cultures in the world that the exact number is impossible to declare (O'Neil 2006). In other words, there are no strict boundaries within the melting pot of the world's cultures. To find the best equivalent for culture specific items (CSIs) in translation is, thus, one of the main concerns and the hardest part for each translator. The translators need to find an equivalent with the same context in the target text (TT). One of the most difficult problems is how to find some words or sentences that are not known in the target text (TT). A translator should be able to find some possibilities that include the diversities of translation strategies which can solve the problem of translating CSIs.

The cultural diversity may be noticeable in literary writings. In fiction, the created characters originated from certain culture. This is expressed it through various culture-specific items. Fictional characters from different cultures may confront, and then, certain misunderstanding can occur due to the differences in cultures. Moreover, the work of fiction is available for a multicultural society due to the numerous translations into other languages, which cause a clash between cultures because a reader with his/hers own cultural identity reads the book from a different perspective. Hence, the writer choose *Alice in Wonderland* which will be compared with Indonesian translation novel *Petualangan di Negeri Ajaib dan Dunia di Balik Cermin* by Winda A in 2007 in order to identify culture-specific items in a literary text and be able to analyze them.

There are so many fiction novels for children. One of them is *The Little Prince*. The two books are based on the concept of the naïveté and innocence of the minds of young children. The two novels are comparable to each other in many different ways. Several of the notably comparable aspects of the two stories are detectable in the themes, writing style, character development, and voice or tone of the novels. Other aspects include the "hero cycle" and symbolic elements of the two books. Though the two stories are completely original in their own right, both authors have either similar mindsets or similar inspirations when writing the books.

Compared to *The Little Prince*, the symbolic representations of certain aspects of life is more prominent in *Alice in Wonderland*. In the story, most characters represent characteristics of *Alice's* personality. For example, such character as The Caterpillar not only acts as a mentor, but also represents the part of *Alice's* mind that is wise and can make good decisions.

Other characters like the Queen, Duchess, Cook, represent the parts of *Alice's* personality that are not as helpful, such as greed, anger, jealousy, sadness, and worry. These feelings are usually hidden away in a child, as they really do not have any cause to feel them, not until they get older. In *The Little Prince*, the symbols serve a similar purpose to represent aspects of the mind. However, instead of a child's mind, the traits are of an adult mind, and rather than focusing on one individual, the traits are of all adult minds in general. Each trait is represented as a much exaggerated form of what that trait should be, and those individuals, for the most part, do not really have any other

unique personalities. The flower represents vanity and self-importance, characteristics that are found more in the minds of adults than children. All of the men on the planets represent other parts of the mind: excess vanity and self-importance, distraction from important matters, making bad choices, unfriendliness and, in the Prince's words, "strangeness" overall.

After reading both stories, it is possible to view *The Little Prince* as having been inspired by *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Both novels center on growing older, and more cynical and aware of the world's surroundings. They both state that childhood must be preserved, and not tarnished by the adult world until it is time. These two classic novels are turning points in the literary genre; classic examples of books that will be remembered for their wise and thoughtful insights into the minds of children, and how the rest of the world is affected by them.

Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was mathematician, photographer, Anglican deacon, and also logician (as cited from: [www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-344300011/caroll-lewis-1832-1898.html](http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-344300011/caroll-lewis-1832-1898.html)). He lived in religious family. His best seller novel was dedicated for his childhood, Alice Liddell. Carroll mentioned that naturally his novel made reference to bible. He wants to educate moral toward the children but in simple way through story. It claimed that some parts of the novel remind the reader toward bible. This rumor attracts the research to analyze this novel compare to others to prove the CSI that Lewis brought in his writing.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher had identified and analyzed the data from the novel and found 413 culture specific-items in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Those culture specific-items were divided into six categories based on Newmark's categorization. Those are: ecology, material culture, social culture, organization, gesture and habits, and proper name.

Based on those research result and analysis, 115 culture-specific items words categorized as ecology, 141 in material culture, 31 in social culture, 21 in organization, 49 in gestures and habits, and 56 from proper name. From these categories, the most frequent occurrence is the material culture with 141 data. In contrast to material culture category, organization is the fewest categories found with 20 data.

The first research question of his study was what translation techniques were applied in translating the culture specific items (CSI) in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* into the 2007 Indonesian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. To answer the first research question, besides providing the result of categories and sub-categories of culture-specific items used in this research, the researcher also provided the complete result of what translation techniques that were used by Khairi Rumantati in translating the *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. In this research, the researcher used eighteen translation techniques proposed by Mollina and Albir in analysing them.

Out of eighteen translation techniques proposed by Mollina and Albir, the researcher found that Sri Haryanto just applied fifteen of them in translating 413 culture-specific items in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel into the target language. The results of translation techniques applying classifications are: 30 data were translated using adaptation (7.21%), 17 data were translated using amplification (5.05%), 59 data were translated using borrowing (14.18%), 13 data were translated using calque (3.13%), one data were translated using compensation (0.24%), 3 data were translated using description (0.72%), 15 data were translated using discursive creation (3.61%), 211 data were translated using established equivalent (50.72%), 13 data were translated using generalization (3.13%), 7 data were translated using literal translation (1.68%), 7 data were translated using modulation (1.68%), 2 data were translated using particularization (0.48%), 21 data were translated using reduction (5.05%), 2 data were translated using transposition (0.48%), and one data were translated using variation (0.24%), 13 data were deleted (3.13%). The researcher found that

the most used translation technique in translating culture-specific items in the 2007 Indonesian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*; *Alice in Wonderland* is the established equivalent technique.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research result showed that the translation technique that was mostly used by Sri Haryanto in translating culture-specific items in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* into the target language was established equivalent technique with 211 (50,72%) of applying. While the most infrequently used were compensation and variation with one (0.24%) applying for each.

In this research, material culture is the highest number of culture-specific items category with 34.14% and established equivalent translation technique is the most frequently used to translate the culture-specific items with 50,72%.

Established equivalence got the first position and became the most frequent translation technique to translate *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel. Established equivalence occurs when the translator adapting the text to the target language syntactic rules, with minimal adjustments, so that it sounds both correct and idiomatic. The researcher found 211 (50.72%) in 2007 version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Petualangan di Dunia Ajaib dan Dunia di Balik Cermin* by Sri Haryanto. The highest number was from ecology category. There were 73 out of 211 culture specific items, eleven from flora, forty from fauna, eleven from plants, eight from geography, two from geology and one from winds. The second number was from material culture category. Fifteen from food, eleven from clothes, twenty three from artifacts, and fifteen from houses and three from places sub-category. From social category, there were 15 culture specific items that translated using established equivalence. Nine from education and 5 from occupation sub-category. Ten out of 211 were from organization. There were one from customs, two from religious, and seven from institutional terms. 33 out of 211 were from gestures and habits category, 26 from gestures and the rest were from habits. Proper name also translated using established equivalence technique. There were eleven from proper name.

### Readability Level

In this research, the researcher used readability rating sheet to measure the readability level of the translated culture-specific items in the 2007 Indonesian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The readability rating sheet was filled by 20 respondents after reading *Alice in Wonderland*. They were from high school.

There were three indicators or more precisely the regulations of the readability rating sheet. If it was not difficult to understand the translated culture-specific items in *Alice in Wonderland*, they should give score 3 or give a sign of check in the column of number 3. If there was a little difficult to understand the translated culture-specific items in *Alice in Wonderland*, they should give score 2 or give a sign of check in the column of number 2. It meant that they did not really understand them. While if it was difficult to understand the translated culture-specific items in *Alice in Wonderland*, they should give score 1 or give a sign of check in the column of number 1 which meant that they did not understand at all. All of the respondents of in this research were asked to rate the translated culture-specific items in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Based on the readability rating sheet calculation result, the readability score of each culture-specific item category can be concluded as follows: ecology culture-specific item category got 1529 on high readability, 448 on the middle readability, and 243 on the low readability with 115 culture-specific items. By comparison, the material culture got 1837 on high readability, 615 on the middle readability and 368 on low readability with 141 culture-specific items. Furthermore, the third

category used in this study, the social culture got 411 on high readability, 120 on middle readability and 89 on low readability with 31 culture-specific items. The next category, the organization got 259 on high readability, 104 on middle readability, and 57 on low readability with 21 culture-specific items. The fifth category in this study, the gestures and habits got 604 on high readability, 210 on middle readability, and 106 on low readability with 49 culture-specific items. The last category, the proper name got 513 on high readability, 247 on middle readability, and 240 on low readability with 56 culture-specific items. The complete results can be seen in appendix 3.

Based on the research result above, each culture-specific items category got different readability level. It can be concluded that the culture-specific items in the 2007 Indonesian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Alice di Negeri Ajaib*, overall was readable.

### **Relation among Culture-specific items, Translation techniques, and Readability**

Based on the connection among culture-specific items, translation techniques and readability analysis, the researcher found that every culture-specific items category required different translation technique.

From the analysis, it can be found that established equivalent is more dominant and suitable in translating the items from ecology category, especially in fauna-sub category, and material culture category, especially in artifacts-sub category, there were also several word that the raters only gave one score. For example, the sentence in flora sub-category, "Did you say 'pig' or 'fig'?". The word pig and fig were almost the same when we heard it, but it had different meaning and Sri Haryanto only translated the word pig and fig into Bahasa. So the raters did not understand, thirteen person gave one score, five students gave two score and two students gave three scores. From this result, it can be concluded that using literal translation for the words "Pig and Fig" were not suitable and it was not readable.

Using established equivalence to translate institutional terms sub-category was suitable. The readers rated high readability for the institutional terms that translated using established equivalence. Another research finding showed that using adaptation technique to translate health was very suitable. The raters gave high readability rating for this. Three out of 4 borrowing technique were used to translate education sub-category used in translating the culture specific items from this category.

There were 56 culture specific items categorized as proper name. 30 out of 56 were translated using borrowing technique. The translator used borrowing technique in translating the CSI from this category, since it mostly consists of name of the characters.

From the explanation above, it can be summarized that the readability of culture specific items in the 2007 Indonesian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Alice di Negeri Ajaib* was measured by using readability rating sheet with total score 5153 on high readability, score 1744 on medium readability and score 1103 on low readability. Based on the score, it can be inferred that the culture specific items in the 2007 Indonesian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Alice di Negeri Ajaib* overall was readable. Moreover, from the research results, it can be inferred that each subcategory also had its own translation technique suitability.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the result of the research analysis, the researcher found 413 cultural-specific items from the *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* novel which were classified into six categories. Those item were translated eighteen translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir. The reseracher found that Sri Haryanto applied fifteen of them in translating those cuture-specific items into the

target language. The the mostly used translation technique in translating culture-specific items in the 2007 Indonesian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*; *Alice in Wonderland* is the established equivalent technique. Based on those research result and analysis, the material culture category got the highest frequency with 141 out of 413 items while the lowest frequency was from organization with 21 out of 413 items.

Based on the research result, the culture-specific items in the 2007 Indonesian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Alice di Negeri Ajaib* got a high readability score, 5153 on high readability, score 1744 on medium readability and score 1103 on low readability. It can be concluded that those items were quite readable.

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