

## TECHNIQUES AND QUALITY OF *CIVIL WAR: WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?* COMIC TRANSLATION

**Rifqi Hanif Barezzi**

rifqibarezzi@gmail.com

**MR Nababan**

amantaradja@gmail.com

**Riyadi Santosa**

riyadisantosa1960@gmail.com

Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta

**Abstract:** The objectives of this study were to know the translation techniques and the assessment translation quality of Marvel comic series entitled *Civil War: Whose Side Are You? (Part 1 and 2)* in terms of accuracy, acceptability, and readability. This was a descriptive qualitative research and focusing on a single case as well as holistic research involving documents, i.e: the original and the translation books as the objective data and informants who gave assesment on the quality of the translation. The techniques of collecting data were document analysis, questionnaire distribution, and focus grup discussion. Total sampling was applied in this research. The research findings show that there were 12 types of translation techniques applied by the translator, namely established equivalent, borrowing, variation, modulation, explication, discursive creation, literal translation, reduction, transposition, addition, adaptation, and implication. The impact of the application of those techniques toward the translation quality was good enough. The scores indicate that the translation has good quality in terms of accuracy, acceptability, and readability. It also shows that background of the translators influenced the techniques chosen.

**Keywords:** translation, translation technique, translation quality, comic

### INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process of how a person or group of people uses information to connect with others. In general, communication can be understood as verbal language that is used visually with body movements such as smiling, shaking head, shrugging and etc.

In communication, language has an important role to the process of interaction. Gombrich (1982) in Young & Fitzgerald (2006, 169) states that visual image context in conveying meaning is not important without verbal texts, because, the scheme of communication can be understood deeply with text.

Meanwhile, other linguists such as Kress & Leeuwen (1996, 122) state that different meanings can alas by the text

and its relation to the context. For this understanding, it can be understood that there is a tendency of the public to enjoy communication visually than to understand the verbal presentation. Furthermore, a verbal expression without motion, sound, color and material objects will be less understood in communication.

In addition of that, there are three important elements taking part in communication, namely: verbal (sound, voice, oral), graph (writing) and visual (Sinar 2012, 131)

From the opinions above, it can be understood that the form of communication is usually conveyed through the three elements of interaction, they are: (1) elements of verbal (sound and oral); (2) elements of graph (writing); and (3) elements of

visual (gesture, body language, image, or motion picture). These three elements of interaction mentioned above sometimes have different levels of role, however, all three also have a balanced level of role in the delivery of messages.

Today comic has grown in society, not only just for children but also teenagers and even adults read comic. Comic becomes one of the visual works that combines several elements. It has various definitions; where experts still do not agree on to define it.

The origin of the word 'comic' in English means 'funny'. It aims to tell the funny thing of the pictures. (Badudu 2003, 156).

Comics as the compilation of images in a deliberate sequence are intended to deliver the message and an aesthetic value on its appearance (McCloud 2008, 12). Meanwhile, Eisner (in Darmawan, 2005, 242) suggests that comics are sequential arts which composite images and words to tell an idea.

From some definitions above, it can be concluded that comic is generally easy to digest funny story on the motion and action displayed in a sequence of typically created drawings with a blend of words to tell an idea.

As the visual product, comic also has function as medium to deliver information. Comic as the communication medium is usually used for some objectives such as education (Boneff in Lubis 1998, 99).

Nowadays, literary works are not only written in the form of poems or drama, but also written in comics which are originally not from Indonesia and then they are translated in Bahasa Indonesia. This thing of course causes some complexity of the problems in translating the source text (SL) to the target one (TL); considering that text in comics need the understanding of semiotics so that can be understood easily in the target one.

Rota (2008, 87) in *The Translation Comics Formats*, states that in

translating comics there are two strategies, namely domesticating and foreignizing. Domesticating strategy is a strategy of translating comics by changing the format of comic publishing. For example, changing the form of writing in comics or changing the picture in comics. Foreignizing strategy is a comic translation strategy that aims to maintain the original cultural and editorial characteristics. Usually this strategy only makes small changes because in foreignizing strategy it is very much trying to maintain the authenticity of the comic format.

Some experts in the field of translation states that translating literary works especially comic is more crucial than translating any other texts. Zanettin (2004, 2) states that: "Comics are a semiotic system and therefore the translations of comics should be seen as intercultural translation between semiotic environments". Comics are also supported by other important elements such as typographical signs (type of letters, lay-out, format), signs (colors, lines of action, sketches, perspectives), and linguistic signs (Kaindl in Zanettin 2008).

Because of that difficulty, translating literary works must be careful. In a manner of linguistic, translating can only be accurate, but in the aspect of culture a translation perhaps cannot be acceptable. Translating literary works constitutes efforts to bridge two different cultures, with two different languages. The characteristic of translating literary works should be: expressive, connotative, symbolic, focus to the form and content, subjective, having multi interpretation, and universal. For that reason, a translator is demanded to use method and special approach to increase effect of communication also having rules of language that is appropriate and acceptable (Robinson 1977, 17).

One of the most popular comics known to comic fans today is the Marvel comic series entitled *Civil War: Whose Side Are You On?*. *Civil War* is one of the crossover stories on Marvel comics published during 2006 to 2007. The author of the comic is Mark Billion, who is assisted by several comic artists such as Steve McNiven, Dexter Vines, and MorryHoolwell.

*Civil War* tells a story where the superheroes on the Marvel comics fight each other. This happened after the enactment of the superhero registration law by the United States government, which was implemented as the impact of public facilities damages caused by the war between the superheroes and the super villains. The climax occurs when Hulk rampaged in Las Vegas; that resulted 26 lives died. In addition, the failure of the superheroes is their failure in stopping Nitro who devastated Connecticut with a powerful explosive and could make a negative sentiment of society to the performance of superheroes.

At that time, there was a contra opinion between Tony Stark and Steve Rogers. Tony approved the enrollment laws, while Steve rejected them outright. Tony has the support of Hank Pym and Mr. Fantastic because in their view the superheroes needed a regulation to have special training and oversight. But Falcon backed Steve Rogers's argument that the identity of superheroes needed to be kept secret for the safety of those around them.

Finally, the War took place between superheroes. The war grew heated after Captain America deliberately destroyed Iron Man's armor and formed Secret Avengers to destroy pro-party superhero registration laws. That's why the comic is entitled *Civil War* for dragging superheroes to fight each other in order to fight for what they think is most true.

The objectives of this research were to know the translation techniques and the translation quality of *Civil War*:

*Whose Side Are You On? (Part 1 and 2)* comic.

## METHODS

This was qualitative-descriptive research that describes translation techniques and the translation quality of *War: Whose Side Are You On? (Part 1 and 2)* comic. According to Sutopo (2002, 111) description study leads readers to the description in detail and in depth about the portrait of conditions about what happens to the field of the study. In this study, the researcher not only attempts to describe the data, but also forms concepts based on observation, classifying, labeling which then attempts interpreting the collected data (Straus & Corbin in Santosa 2010).

This research belonged to qualitative research since the data collected were in the form of sentences, pictures than just numbers (Sutopo 2002). The researcher attempted to know the translation techniques and the translation quality of the *comic*.

In addition, it is said that qualitative research is a type of research that does not include numbers and calculations. In this study the data were the results of observation, interviews, writer's observation of the translation techniques and the assessment of translation quality of the the comic. The numbers that appear in this study were not benchmarks, but as a supporting tool to obtain data.

This research was also referred to a case study in which the researcher had determined the problem and focused its formulation. Concerning on this, he then did not object to generalize the results of the research. Meanwhile, the approach used in this research is translation. In this case, the researcher has explored of how the translation techniques and the assessment of translation quality of comic.

According to Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997, 131-132), such a research is included in the product-oriented translation because it used source language texts (English) and target

language texts (Indonesia) which already existed for analysis. In other words, product-oriented research is a kind of study that focuses attention on translation work (Nababan, 2007, 16).

The process of document analysis in this research was conducted by in-depth reading and analyzing the data; whether there were the relevant information available to the objectives of the study (Sutopo 2002, 70). In this study, analyzing document was conducted through some steps, as follow:

1. Reading the entire comics both in English and Indonesian version.
2. Analyzing texts using multimodal approach. In this step, he attempts to find some relevant dialogues in text with the five multimodal elements; namely linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial.
3. Analyzing the techniques of translation and the assessment on the translation quality, including aspects of accuracy and acceptability by involving expert readers in assessing it.

## ANALYSIS RESULTS

### Translation Technique

There were several translation techniques applied in translating the dialogues of *Civil War: Whose Side Are You On? (Part 1 and 2)* comic as can be seen on Table 1.

#### *Established Equivalent*



SL : Okay, How many supervillains are we talking here, Speedball?

TL : *OK, Berapa banyak penjahat super yang kita bicarakan di sini, Speedball?*

In example above, the dialogue is translated using common matching techniques because it uses terms or expressions that have been recognized.

Table 1: Translation Techniques Applied

Technique	Total	Pctg
Established equivalent	1134	67.5%
Borrowing	193	11.5%
Variation	157	9.3%
Modulation	59	3.5%
Explication	47	2.8%
Discursive Creation	43	2.6%
Literal translation	15	0.9%
Reduction	9	0.5%
Transposition	8	0.5%
Addition	7	0.4%
Adaptation	5	0.3%
Implication	4	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1681</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### *Borrowing*



SL: GO!

TL: *GO!*

In the example above the translator takes a word directly from GO! in the source language to be the same GO! in the target language.

#### *Variation*

SL : I can handle it, Scott.

TL : *Aku bisa tangani ini, Scott*



The utterance is an example of variation translation techniques where the translator replaces linguistic or paralinguistic elements (intonation, gesture) that have an impact on linguistic variation. The utterance 'I can handle it, Scott., is translated into *Aku bisa tangani ini, Scott.* The word *aku* in Indonesian language has several variants of words such as: *saya*, *gue*, and *ana*. This translation is a form of variation of the first person pronoun in Indonesian language.

### Modulation



SL : Everyone in costume! It's a raid!  
 TL : *Semuanya gunakan kostum! Ada serangan!*

Here the translator changes the perspective, focus or cognitive category in relation to the SL text. It can be on a lexical or structural level. The expression 'Everyone in costume! It's a raid!' translated into *Semuanya gunakan kostum! Ada serangan!*

### Explicitation



SL : I hope you're getting all this, Parker.  
 TL : *Aku harap kau dapat foto semua ini, Parker.*

This technique introduces detailed information that is not contained in the SL text. In the utterance above the object that is made explicit is 'photo'. Thus, the expression 'I hope you're getting all this, Parker' is translated into *Aku harap kau dapat foto semua ini, Parker.*

### Discursive Creation



SL: I'd heard that clothes make the man, Speedfreak ...  
 TL: *Aku lihat pakaianmu itu membuatmu terlihat seperti pria, Speedfreak ...*

Discursive creation determines a temporary equivalent that is out of context. This technique is used if the source language is translated into target language that has no connection at all. The utterance 'I'd heard that clothes make the man, Speedfreak ...' is translated into *Aku lihat pakaianmu itu membuatmu terlihat seperti pria, Speedfreak ...*

### Literal translation



SL: **On your feet**, Nitro. And don't try any of your stupid explosions because that's only going to make me hit you harder.

TL : *Tepat di kakimu*, Nitro. Dan jangan coba-coba melakukan ledakan bodoh apapun karena itu hanya akan membuatku meninjumu lebih keras.

Literal translation is translating a word or phrase verbatimly (word for word). In the dialogue 'On your feet, Nitro'. And don't try any of your stupid explosions because that's only going to make me hit you harder' is translated into *Tepat di kakimu*, Nitro. Dan jangan coba-coba melakukan ledakan bodoh apapun karena itu hanya akan membuatku meninjumu lebih keras.

### Reduction



SL:I want to be somewhere else. I want to be **somewhere else**

TL: *Aku mau ke suatu tempat*. *Aku mau ke suatu tempat*.

Reduction technique is done to compress the SL text information feature into the TL text. Part of the dialogue 'I want to be somewhere else. I want to be **somewhere else**' is

translated into *Aku mau ke suatu tempat*. *Aku mau ke suatu tempat*.

### Transposition



SL : We **volunteer** to help with a federal emergency and you're still following us around?

TL : Kami *sukarela* membantu bersama dengan pemerintah darurat dan kau tetap mengikuti kami?

Transposition is done by shifting or changing the grammatical unit from the source language into the target language. The expression 'We **volunteer** to help with a federal emergency and you're still following us around?' is translated into *Kami sukarela membantu bersama dengan pemerintah darurat dan kau tetap mengikuti kami?* The grammatical unit 'volunteer' in the sentence changes from verb to adjective *sukarela*.

### Addition



SL : Roger that. Foxtrot-Four. Permission to use tranquilizers and minimum force.

TL: Roger *diterima*. *Foxtrot-Empat*. *Izin untuk menggunakan tranquilizer dan perlawanan minimum*.

Addition technique is used to add terms outside the linguistic elements. In the dialogue, ‘Roger that. Foxtrot-Four. Permission to use tranquilizers and minimum force’ is translated into *Roger diterima. Foxtrot-Empat. Izin untuk menggunakan tranquilizer dan perlawanan minimum.* There is an addition of word ‘diterima’ in the TL text.

*Adaptation*



SL: You filthy **piece of crap!**  
 TL: *Kau bajingan kotor!*



This technique has almost the same with reduction techniques. Implication refers to compaction of information from SL in which the meaning and message remains similar to that of TL. In the dialogue, the expression ‘These guys are totally out of our league, Man’ is translated into *Mereka itu di luar perserikatan kami, Kawan.*

**Translation Quality**

The results of the translation quality assessment of *Civil War: Whose Side Are You On? (Part 1 and 2)* comic can be seen on *Table 2.*

*Table 2: Translation Quality*

Category	Quality	Total	Percentage	Value
Accuracy	Accurate	193	73.66%	2.7
	Less accurate	62	23.66%	
	Not accurate	7	2.67%	
Acceptability	Acceptable	230	87.78%	2.8
	Less accurate	29	11.07%	
	Not accurate	3	1.15%	
Readability	High	252	96.18%	2.9
	Average	10	3.81%	
	Low	0	0%	

Adaptation replaces the typical terms of SL text with other terms accepted and known in TL text. The swear phrase ‘piece of crap’ in the sentence is translated differently into *bajingan kotor.* Nevertheless, these change is acceptable.

*Implication*

SL: **These guys are totally out of our league, Man.** No way we should be going in there.

TL : *Mereka itu di luar perserikatan kami, Kawan. Tak ada alasan kami harus ikut masuk ke sana.*

In this study, the translation of dialogues in the comics has a good translation quality. This is evident from the table above that the value of each quality category is quite high based on a value scale of 1-3. The translation quality category for accuracy has a value of 2.7. It means that the translation of the dialogue is good enough or in other words the speech on source language is commensurate with the target language. Out of a total of 262 data, 193 data have been translated quite well according to the accuracy criteria, namely the meaning of words, phrases, or clauses in the sentence has

been transferred accurately. Next to the acceptability category, the quality value in this category is 2.8. Out of 262 data, 230 data have been translated in accordance with the rules, norms and culture of the target language. The last category is Readability, where 252 data from a total of 262 translation data are easy to read and understand. Furthermore, below are the three aspects of quality and instruments for measuring the quality of translation and the examples found in this study.

### Accuracy

#### Accurate

A translation is accurate is when the meanings of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses or sentences of the source language are transferred precisely into the target language; there is absolutely no distortion of meaning.



SL : ...And in your case it's totally true  
 TL : ...*dan dalam kasusmu itu sepenuhnya benar*

From the picture, '...And in your case it's totally true' is translated into ...*dan dalam kasusmu itu sepenuhnya benar!* Here the utterance in the source language is transferred accurately into the target language. There is absolutely no distortion of meaning.

#### Less accurate

A translation is less accurate when most of the meanings of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses or sentences of the source language have been accurately transferred to the target language. However, there is still

a distortion of meaning or translation of multiple meanings (taxa) or there is a meaning that is omitted, which interferes with the integrity of the message.



SL : He what?

TL : *Apa?*

In the dialogue here, 'He what?' is translated into *Apa?* It is an example of less accurate translation because there is a meaning that is omitted which interferes with the integrity of the message.

#### Not accurate

A translation is not accurate when the meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses or sentences of the source language is transferred inaccurately into the target language or deleted.



SL : I'd heard that clothes make the man, Speedfreak....

TL : *Aku dengar pakaianmu itu membuatmu terlihat seperti pria, Speedfreak....*

In the dialogue, 'I'd heard that clothes make the man, Speedfreak....' translated into *Aku dengar pakaianmu itu membuatmu terlihat seperti pria, Speedfreak....* Here the source language is translated



inaccurately into the target language that has no connection.

*Acceptability*

Acceptable

An acceptable translation means that the translation feels natural; the technical terms used are commonly used and familiar to readers; phrases, clauses and sentences used are in accordance with Indonesian language rules.



SL : The Blood of my little Damien is on your hand right now.

TL : *Darah dari Damien kecilku ada di tanganmu sekarang.*

The utterance ‘The Blood of my little Damien is on your hand right now’ is translated into *Darah dari Damien kecilku ada di tanganmu sekarang*. Here the translation feels natural and is in accordance with the target language.

Less acceptable

Generally, the translation feels natural; but there is a slight problem with the use of technical terms or there are a few grammatical errors.



SL : It’s just time you went legitimate like the rest of us, soldier.

TL : *Ini adalah waktu bagimu untuk disahkan seperti kami ini, Prajurit.*

In the dialogue, ‘It’s just time you went legitimate like the rest of us, soldier’ is translated into *Ini adalah waktu bagimu untuk disahkan seperti kami ini, Prajurit*. Here, the translation has grammatical errors dealing with active and passive form.

Not Acceptable

Not acceptable means non-natural translation; the technical terms used are not familiar to readers; phrases, clauses and sentences used are not in accordance with the target language rules.



SL : Go!

TL : *Go!*

In the picture, the translator takes a word directly from SL. The exclamation ‘Go!’ In the source language is the same with *Go!* in the target language.

*Readability*

High

In a high readability translation, the translated words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, and sentences can be easily understood by the reader.



SL : Take him down! Take him down!

TL : *Jatuhkan dia! Jatuhkan dia!*

The utterance **Take him down! Take him down!** which is translated into **Jatuhkan dia! Jatuhkan dia!** In the picture can easily be understood by the reader.

#### Average

In an average readable translation, the translation can generally be understood by the reader; but there are certain parts that must be read more than once to understand the translation.



SL : Tell me about it, Stumpy. You think Johnny would have ended up in the hospital last night if Moron's like you wasn't out there giving us a bad name?

TL : *Beritahu aku tentang itu, Bodoh. Kau pikir Johnny berakhir di rumah sakit semalam jika orang tolol spertimu tidak di luar sana memebri kita nama buruk?*

In the utterance above, 'Tell me about it, Stumpy. You think Johnny would have ended up in the hospital last night if Moron's like you wasn't out there giving us a bad name?' is translated into **Beritahu aku tentang itu, Bodoh. Kau pikir Johnny berakhir di rumah sakit semalam jika orang tolol spertimu tidak di luar sana memebri kita nama buruk?**

Here the translation can be understood by the reader; but there are certain parts that must be read more than once to understand the translation.

#### Low

A low readability makes a translation difficult to understand by the readers.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The research findings show that there are 12 types of translation techniques from 1681 techniques applied by the translator within 262 data. Based on their frequencies, the percentage of techniques applied in established equivalent is 67.5%, borrowing 11.5%, variation 9.3%, modulation 3.5%, explicitation 2.8%, discursive creation 2.6%, literal translation 0.9%, reduction 0.5%, transposition 0.5%, addition (0.4%), adaptation 0.3%, and implicitation as much as 0.2%.

The impact of the application of those techniques toward the translation quality is good enough, by the average score of accuracy 2.7, acceptability 2.8, and readability 2.9. Those scores indicate that the translation has good quality in terms of accuracy, acceptability and readability. It also shows that background of the translators influence the techniques chosen.

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