

TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE READABILITY OF TRANSLATED BIBLE STORIES FOR CHILDREN

TEKNIK PENERJEMAHAN DAN DAMPAKNYA TERHADAP KETERBACAAN TERJEMAHAN CERITA ALKITAB ANAK

Herianto¹, Mangatur Nababan² & Riyadi Santosa³

Doctoral Degree Program in Linguistics, Graduate School of Universitas Sebelas Maret
Jl. Ir. Sutami No. 36A, Kentingan, Surakarta 57126
Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

Submitted: 2018-12-30
Accepted: 2019-01-14

Published: 2019-01-15

DOI: 10.24036/humanus.v17i2.102729

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24036/humanus.v17i2.102729>

Abstract

Literatures for children are regarded as fictions. Research on translation of literatures for children ranging from comics and fairytales to short stories has much been done. Meanwhile, research on translation of bible stories for children, which are listed in the non-fictions and belong to sensitive texts has not so far been conducted. This research aims at investigating the impact of translation techniques on the readability of 43 translated bible stories for children. It employed the qualitative research method. Content analysis, focus group discussion, and questionnaire were used to collect its data. The data were qualitatively analyzed. The research findings show that the translator tended to use translation techniques oriented to target language (TL), indicating that the translator strives to domesticate the translations so ideologically that they are high readable. The dominance of established equivalent, explicitation, variation, transposition translation techniques is proof to the high readability of the translations. However, few of the data did not have a high readability due to the use of technical terms and new vocabulary. Thus, prior to publication of a translation work, it should be read by ideal target readers as to deal with the two factors and other inhibiting ones.

Keywords: *Translated bible stories for children, translation technique, translation method, translation ideology, readability*

Abstrak

Karya sastra anak digolongkan sebagai cerita fiksi. Penelitian terjemahan karya sastra anak seperti komik, legenda, dan cerita pendek telah banyak dilakukan. Sementara itu, penelitian terjemahan cerita alkitab anak yang digolongkan dalam cerita non-fiksi dan teks sensitif sejauh ini belum pernah dilakukan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui dampak teknik penerjemahan pada keterbacaan 43 cerita alkitab anak. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui analisis isi, fokus

group discussion, dan kuesioner. Data dianalisis secara kualitatif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerjemah cenderung menggunakan teknik penerjemahan yang dekat dengan bahasa sasaran, artinya penerjemah berusaha membuat terjemahan secara ideologi penerjemahan terdomestikasi dengan tujuan keterbacaannya tinggi. Dominasi teknik penerjemahan padanan lazim, eksplisitasi, variasi, dan transposisi merupakan bukti tingginya keterbacaan terjemahan itu. Namun demikian, ada beberapa data cerita tidak memiliki keterbacaan yang tinggi karena penggunaan istilah dan kosa kata baru. Oleh karena itu, sebelum karya terjemahan diedarkan, karya itu sebaiknya dibaca oleh pembaca target yang ideal dalam rangka mengatasi kedua faktor itu dan faktor penghambat lainnya.

Kata Kunci: *Cerita alkitab anak terjemahan, teknik penerjemahan, metode penerjemahan, ideologi penerjemahan, dan keterbacaan*

Introduction

Literature for children is literary work which primarily plays role to entertain or amuse children. According to Puurtinen (1998), literature for children is literary one, which serves as a didactic means of reading skill development in children and plays a manipulative role that is manifested in educative, social, and ideological instruments contained in its message. However, such literature is not so appealing to authors and translators if compared to the adult one due to the low appreciation adhered to it by society that they often use pseudonym rather than their own to respond such a negative reception. Haranath indeed (in Thomson-wohlgemuth, 1998: 3) complained that translators of literature for children including stories for children have not been well-paid, which in turn generate impacts on their translation quality that such works are seldom reviewed, and the translation processes, including the translators and their products, are often ignored. As a result, the translations of literature for children are often exposed to deletions, additions, didactic remarks, lecturing, and trivialization (Thomson-wohlgemuth, 1998, p. 3).

Literary works for children such as comics, fairy tales, and short stories have widely been circulated in Indonesia. They include local works, foreign works, and their translations. Their existence offers help to parents to educate their children for one hand, and children have various choices and opportunities to enjoy the works on the other hand. Market has seen this opportunity and has done some efforts to satisfy the need for such reading texts. One of which to provide diverse reading texts is translation of literary works from foreign languages into Indonesian. This is successful that many children's literatures are products of translations, and even they dominate the market. Rahman (2010) said that a large portion of children's literatures in Indonesia unfortunately are not original works from Indonesia but translations of foreign literary works. This is worsened that Indonesian children's literatures have been sub-ordinated by translated literatures as claimed by Asrori (in Rahman, 2010). Even, publishers prefer translated works to original ones due to their economic values. Some of the works circulated Indonesia are translations of bible stories for children. Their publication is related to the demand, although they are minority, of Christians. The translated bible stories for children are utilized as reading sources in addition to the existing bibles either in Indonesian or local languages. Their presence particularly has given more reading choices for Christian families and churches.

Research related to translation of literature for children has thus far been done by many experts in the field. Puurtinen (1998) in her study entitled *Syntax, Readability, and Ideology in Children's Literature* claimed that certain linguistic forms which bear ideological meanings could lower the readability of books for children. Ideology and readability are interrelated at the extratextual and sociocultural levels. Therefore, in Finland, literature for children including translated one was expected to be linguistically simple so that the readers could comprehensively understand the contents and moral values of the literary works they read. Furthermore, Mazi-Leskopar (2003) studied domestication and foreignization in translating American prose for Slovenian children. She concluded that both foreignization and domestication principally should keep entertaining and pleasing target readers (acceptability and readability). Similarly, Stolze (2003) studied translation of a novel from Italian to German. She concluded that a translator should aware about problems existing in translating literatures for children and consciously reflect decisions on formulation of coherence, style, and ideology. The translator must consider ease of reading of translation (readability) and ideology through linguistic simplicity and explicitation.

Meanwhile, the research held by Mdallel (2003) on the translation of children's literature in Arab world had a different result. The children's literature in Arab world is full of moralities, didactics, and strong ideological bias so that something culturally taboo to the Arab world such as sex education which is introduced early to nursery school and masturbation and homosexuality which are frequent topics in a magazine that is read by elementary school children will not be allowed to be rendered. Thus, the translations of literatures for children put emphasis on acceptability rather than on accuracy and readability.

In Indonesia unfortunately there has not so far been any research which investigates the readability of translation of bible stories for children but others. One of the latter for example is the study conducted by Ardi (2016). In term of readability, one of the three aspects of quality he studied, he found that the translation was quite good, but a small number of data were quite difficult or difficult to read due to the use of long sentences and new vocabulary and the different background knowledge of the raters about the cultural background of the text translated. Translating religious literatures (non-fiction) such as bible stories for children otherwise known as children's bibles (Beard, L. & du Toit, J. (2005), however, cannot be treated the same as translating other literatures for children (fiction) such as comics and fairy tales. A translator should position accuracy, acceptability, and readability as equally as possible so that his or her translation is accurate in term of meaning and message, linguistically and culturally acceptable, and readable or easy to understand. The translator is not expected to sacrifice one aspect for others as frequently found in translation of literature for children where readability and acceptability become top priorities to meet the expectation for amusement and entertainment as well as for cultural appropriateness. If he or she on purpose prioritizes acceptability and readability, it is not impossible the children who read the translation of bible stories for children will be "lost" in faith from early age. Conversely, if the translator only gives emphasis on accuracy, it is probable that the children will meet difficulties in understanding what they read, and thereby they will probably avoid reading the stories. In order to gain a high readability therefore, translator is expected to simplify his or her translation linguistically as to respond the claim that children are inexperienced, and probably,

they are still uncritical readers (Thomson-wohlgemuth, 1998: 3-4). When the translations are easy to read, the children are allegedly interested in reading such works and others. Thus, readability becomes the key point to their interest in reading.

Based on the explanations above, the objective of this article is to investigate the translation techniques used in rendering 43 bible stories for children from English to Indonesian and their impact on the quality, particularly the readability, of the translations.

Method

This research was product-oriented, which is not related the process of translation conducted by translator but is focused on the translation as product. Ideally, a translation product research is holistic in nature, which studies genetic aspect (translator), objective aspect (translation), and affective aspect (target reader). However, this research was only focused on the second and last by firstly investigating the translation techniques applied the translator.

This research used the descriptive qualitative method in attempt to describe the translation techniques, translation methods, translation ideologies and their impact on the readability of the 43 translated bible stories for children, which were applied by the translator when rendering 43 bible stories for children entitled Classical Children's Bible into Indonesian.

Sutopo (2002: 35) claimed that qualitative research is holistically emphasized on data in the forms of words, sentences, or pictures which have meanings. In addition, Sutopo (2006: 40) also said that in the descriptive qualitative approach, the research is emphasized on the in-depth, detailed, and complete study and description of research data so that the real situation based on the research data can be explored and the objectives of the research can be attained through real understanding. Similarly, Moleong (2010: 6) suggested that qualitative research is a descriptive one as the data analyzed and the results of analysis are descriptions of phenomena not those of numbers or coefficient of intervariable correlation.

Table 1. Instrument of translation readability rating

Translation Category	Score	Qualitative Parameter
High readable	3	Words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences, or text of translation can easily be understood by readers
Moderate readable	2	The translation can by and large be understood by target readers; however, some parts of the texts need to be read more than one time so that they can be understood by readers.
Low readable	1	Translations are difficult to be understood by readers.
Average Score	$= \frac{\text{Total number of scores}}{\text{Total number of data}}$	

The design of the research was an embedded case study in which its problem statements were determined first. According to Sutopo (2002), in an embedded case study, the research problems have been determined in the research proposal prior to the in-depth exploration of research problem in the field. The data of the research were collected through content analysis, focus group discussion with three experts in translation, and questionnaire which was filled out by three Sunday school target readers. The data of the research obtained from content analysis, namely: linguistic data both in the SL and TL were analyzed so as to investigate the translation techniques used, which refer to the translation techniques claimed by Molina & Albir (2002). Then, those gained from questionnaire were analyzed by identifying which factors and how the translation techniques used contributed to the readability of the translations. The quality of the translations was rated based on the following translation instrument of translation readability rating offered by nababan et.al. (Nababan, Nuraeni, & Sumardiono, 2012) in Table 1.

When the target readers filled in the questionnaire by putting a tick to one of the boxes provided of each datum, they were accompanied so as to anticipate if they needed further explanations on how to fill in the questionnaire correctly and accurately. When a respondent scored 2 or 1 to the data they read, he or she was asked to underline the data which were regarded to contribute to moderate or low readability level (moderate readable or difficult to understand). It was done in order to easily trace and convey why such data were moderate readable or difficult to understand. The following table is the model of the questionnaire in Table 2.

Table 2. Model of Readability Questionnaire

No.	Teks Sasaran	Keterbacaan		
		3	2	1
1	<i>KETERATURAN</i>			
2	<i>Kisah Penciptaan</i>			
3	<i>Maka Allah melihat segala yang dijadikan-Nya itu, sungguh amat baik. (Kejadian 1: 31)</i>			
4	<i>Pada mulanya, dahulu sekali sebelum dunia diciptakan, Allah sudah ada.</i>			
5	<i>"Jadilah terang!" Allah berfirman.</i>			

Result and Discussion

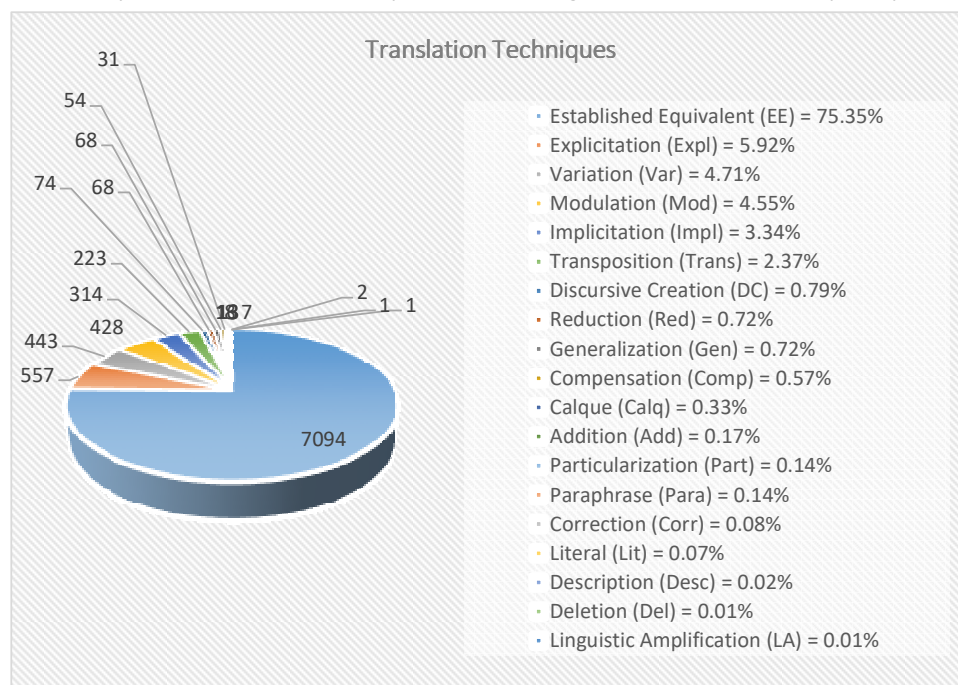
Translation Techniques

The parts of the stories in the ST and TT, namely readers' character building, titles of stories, and bodies of stories were constructed with three grammatical units. There were 1,296 data in the ST and 1463 in the TT. In the former, the parts were constructed with 43 words in the readers' character buildings, 38 phrases and 5 sentences in the titles, and 1, 215 in the bodies respectively whereas in the latter, the parts were composed of 28 words and 15 phrases in the readers' character building, 38 phrases and 5 sentences in the titles, and 1,376 sentences in the bodies respectively. The

translator used 19 translation techniques: 18 translation techniques and their sub-categories proposed by Molina & Albir (2002) plus one new technique, namely: Correction (Corr). The translation techniques alphabetically included addition (Add), calque (Calq), compensation (Comp), correction (Corr), deletion (Del), description (Desc), established equivalent (EE), explicitation (Expl), generalization (Gen), implicitation (Impl), linguistic amplification (LA), literal (Lit), modulation (Mod), paraphrase (Para), particularization (Part), reduction (Red), transposition (Trans), and variation (Var). The total number of translation technique frequencies was 9, 415. The translation techniques varied in each story. The highest and lowest frequencies of translation techniques were found in Stories 39 with 293 frequencies and 24 with 153 frequencies respectively.

In term of frequency of occurrence of each translation technique in the translated bible stories for children 1- 43, the EE translation technique had the highest with 7,094 frequencies (75.35%). While the DEL and LA translation techniques occupied the lowest, each consisting of one frequency (0.01%). For detail, see the following graph:

Graph 1. Translation techniques from the highest to the lowest frequency



Translation Method and Ideology

Translation method is a certain translation process conducted by a translator in accordance with his or her translation purposes, namely: a global option that affects the translation thoroughly (Molina & Albir, 2002: 507). The global option is reflected by the choice of translation techniques applied at the microtext units. If a translator decides to choose a translation method which is close to the source language (SL), he or she will apply borrowing, calque, and literal translation techniques. Conversely, if he

chooses a translation method which is close to the target language, he or she will use other than the three techniques.

Translation method chosen by the translator is affected by his or her ideology. If his or her ideology is oriented to SL (foreignization), he or she will choose word for word, literal, faithful, and/or semantic translation methods. Conversely, when he or she has ideology oriented to target language (domestication), he or she will choose adaption, free, idiomatic, and/or communicative translation methods (Newmark 1988: 45-48). The translation techniques dominating each story were those close to the target language. Even, the established equivalent amounted to 7, 094 frequencies (75.35%). Thus, the translation method chosen by the translator was communicative and his ideology was domestication.

Translation Quality

Translation quality according to Nababan et.al. (2012) includes three aspects, namely: accuracy, acceptability, and readability. The order shows level of importance. Accuracy occupies the first priority, which is then followed by acceptability and readability respectively. The average quality of each story is presented in the following table:

Table 3. Average Quality of Translation
(Accuracy, Acceptability, and Readability)

Stories	Aspects of Translation Quality		
	Accuracy	Acceptability	Readability
1	2.84	2.96	2.96
2	2.82	2.93	3.00
3	2.97	3.00	3.00
4	2.96	3.00	2.99
5	2.93	3.00	3.00
6	2.91	3.00	2.92
7	2.89	3.00	3.00
8	2.95	3.00	2.99
9	2.94	3.00	3.00
10	2.92	3.00	3.00
11	2.96	3.00	3.00
12	2.91	3.00	3.00
13	2.86	3.00	3.00
14	2.87	3.00	2.98
15	2.87	3.00	3.00
16	2.83	3.00	3.00
17	2.88	3.00	3.00
18	2.97	3.00	3.00
19	2.90	3.00	3.00
20	2.86	3.00	3.00
21	3.00	3.00	3.00
22	2.81	3.00	3.00
23	2.88	3.00	3.00

Cont. Table 3.

24	2.91	3.00	3.00
25	2.96	3.00	3.00
26	2.95	3.00	3.00
27	2.96	3.00	3.00
28	2.94	3.00	3.00
29	2.97	3.00	2.98
30	3.00	3.00	3.00
31	2.86	3.00	3.00
32	2.92	3.00	3.00
33	2.90	2.97	3.00
34	2.94	3.00	3.00
35	2.88	2.94	2.92
36	2.93	3.00	3.00
37	2.93	3.00	2.99
38	2.94	3.00	3.00
39	2.89	2.95	3.00
40	2.94	3.00	3.00
41	2.91	3.00	3.00
42	2.85	3.00	3.00
43	3.00	3.00	3.00
Average	2.91	2.99	2.99
Average Score of Translation Quality	= $(2.91 \times 3) + (2.99 \times 2) + (2.99 \times 1)$		
	6		
	= 2.95		

Table 3 shows that the average score of the translation quality was 2.95. Individually the score of the aspects of readability (2.99), acceptability (2.99), and accuracy (2.91) was almost perfect (3.00). This indicates that the translator strived to gain the translations of bible stories for children with high readability, acceptability, and readability as signified by the gap of scores between the aspects, which is below 0.10.

Impact of Translation Techniques on Translation Readability

Crawley & Mountain (1995: 22) claim that readability refers to the reading difficulty of printed media. A book with a high readability is easy to read while a book with a low readability is difficult to read. Tabel 3 shows that the readability of the 43 translated bible stories for children rated with the instrument of translation readability rating proposed by Nababan et. al. (2012) was nearly high readable with the overall average of 2.99. Of 43, 35 stories (81.40%) were high readable, and the rest 8 stories (18.60%), namely: Stories 1, 4, 6, 8, 14, 29, 35, and 37 were nearly high readable. The stories which had the lowest readability were Stories 6 and 35 with the average score of 2.92. The factors which caused the readability of the whole stories not to be high readable were the use of specific terms and that of new vocabulary in a small portion of data. Overall, the target readers did not have any difficulty in understanding all of the stories.

Likewise, endeavors were done by the translator of the classical children's bible to make the translations high readable. He applied translations techniques that are close to target language. Of 19 translation techniques he used, 17 were oriented to the target language. For instance, established equivalent was used up to 75.35% in which translator used terms or expressions that are recognized by dictionaries or language in use as equivalents. For instance, in Story 2, Datum 11, the sentence in the ST **When God came to talk with them in the garden, they were ashamed and hid in the trees** was rendered to *Saat Allah datang untuk berbicara dengan mereka di taman, mereka malu, dan bersembunyi di pepohonan* in the TT by using the EE translation technique. All of the micro texts there were rendered by using their equivalents that are known in the dictionary or language in use. The target readers rated that they are high readable. Even, this kind of datum, which was singly rendered with the EE translation technique occurred in 248 data out of 1,296.

Furthermore, he also employed explicitation, the second highest frequency (5.92%), in an attempt to introduce information from the source text (ST) that is implicit to be explicit in the target text (TT). For example, the sentence *And God shut the door (of the ark)* whose object is exposed to elyipsis was rendered with explicitation translation technique as *Allah menutup pintu kapal itu*. The implicit meaning and message were made explicit in the TT so that the readers would easily understand the equivalent.

Similarly, variation translation technique was employed with the frequency of 4.71% as to bring the translations close to target readers through the use of variations, namely: textual tone, style, social dialect that are commonly recognized by them. For example, the predicate of *had* in the sentence **They had another son whom they named Seth, and then more sons and daughters** was rendered as *punya* instead of *mempunyai*. *punya* is a variation which is commonly used in the spoken language in the TL. Thus, the translator tried to "bring" the information that it contains as close as possible to the readers by using variation which is commonly heard by them so that the readers would easily catch it.

The intention to make the translations readable was also attempted through transposition translation technique with 314 frequencies (2.37%). He transposed 148 (12.18%) of 1,215 sentences by down-ranking complex sentences or compound sentences to compound sentences and/or to simple sentences in the TT and 10 sentences in the ST into 5 sentences in the TT. This indicates that the translator was inconsistent. Yet, both were intended to make the translations readable. The former endeavor was done as an effort to deal with lexical density or density of information in one sentence. Fragmentation of long sentences both compound and complex sentences into several simple sentences and/or compound sentences respectively is one way of helping young readers to easily understand what they read. The decision to employ the transposition technique by the translator has to do with the fact that children are inexperienced, and probably, they are still uncritical readers (Thomson-wohlgemuth, 1998: 3-4).

Other translation techniques although in small frequencies also contributes much to the readability of the translated 43 bible stories for children. For instance, the description translation technique which was only 0.02% found in the whole stories replaced terms or expressions with descriptions of their forms and functions (Molina & Albir, 2002). Description is by and large applied to technical terms or expressions which

are regarded as ones conceptually difficult to understand even though they are rendered with established equivalent. Similarly, addition translation technique was also other device utilized by the translator to make terms or expressions easily understood.

The result of this research is somewhat similar to that of Ardi (2016: 149-152) and that of Rosita (2018: 123) in such a way that the translation of this non-fiction literature had a high readability level. Parts of the data were regarded as difficult to understand merely due to the target readers' different background knowledge of textual, contextual, and cultural aspects of the SL and TL. As a result the readers were a little bit difficult in understanding several vocabularies or expressions. For example, the word **bundle** in the sentence **My bundle stood up straight, and yours bowed down before mine!** was rendered as **berkas** in the TT. This word was not understood by the readers. They thought it was a new word, and they were absolutely right. We think it is a new word for children. The word is admittedly found in the Indonesian bible, and it is difficult for them to understand its meaning. It would be easy if the word is rendered as **timbangan** with the EE translation technique. What Ardi (2016) and Rosita have claimed (2018) that non-fiction text requires highly accurate translation is definitely true. Non-fiction text gives true pieces of information. Therefore, accuracy becomes the top priority. However, for certain non-fiction works such as translation of sacred text (bible stories for children), the three aspects of quality should be treated equally.

Conclusion

To conclude, translation techniques affect the readability of translation. When the translator intends to "bring" the translation close to target readers or to domesticate the translation, he or she will tend to use translation techniques oriented to target language. The use of translation techniques is determined by the translation method chosen by a translator and the ideology he or bears. Translator when translating a non-fiction text should attempt to reach the three aspects of quality equally. Novice translators or even experienced ones need to explore what translation techniques, translation methods, and translation ideologies are as to improve their quality of translations, and schools of translation, especially vocational ones, need to include them in their curriculum as a basic shape learners' translation skills.

References

- Ardi, H. (2016). The impact of translation techniques toward the quality of translation: A case study on a social text. *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-ilmu Humaniora*, 15(2), 142-153. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jh.v15i2.6564>.
- Beard, L. & du Toit, J. (2005). A Proactive approach to the translation of bible stories for children. *Meta*, 50(4).
- Crawley, S.J. & Mountain, L. (1995) *Strategies for guiding content reading*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc.
- Mazi-Leskovar, Darja (2003). Domestication and foreignization in translating American prose for Slovenian children. *Meta XLVIII*, 48 (1-2), pp. 250-265

Herianto¹, M.R. Nababan² & R. Santosa³, Translation techniques and readability

Mdallel, S. (2003). Translating children's literature in the Arab world: The state of the art. *Meta: Journal des Traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal* XLVIII, 48 (1-2), pp.298-306

Moleong, L. J. (2010). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosda karya

Molina, L & Albir, A.H. (2002). Translation techniques revisited: A dynamic and functionalist approach. *Meta: Journal des Traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, XLVII (4), pp.498-512.

Nababan, M.R., Nuraeni, & Sumardiono (2012). Pengembangan model penilaian kualitas terjemahan. *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra*, 24 (1), 39-57.

Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of translation*. Singapore: Prentice Hall International (UK) Limited.

Puurtinen, T. (1998). Syntax, readability, and ideology in children's literature. *Meta: Journal des Traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal* 43 (4), pp.524-533.

Rahman, F. (2010). Sastra Anak Dalam Persimpangan. *Jurnal Lensa Budaya* Vol 5 No 1, April 2010 (ISSN 0126 - 351X).

Rosita, N. (2018). Accuracy, clarity, and readability in (ACR) in historical romance novel translation. *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-ilmu Humaniora*, Volume 17 No. , 2017, 109-125. <https://doi.org/10.24036/humanus.v17i1>

Stolze, R. (2003). Translation for children-world view or pedagogics? *Meta: Journal des Traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal* XLVIII, 48 (1-2), pp. 208-221.

Sutopo, HB. (2002) *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Surakarta: UNS Press.

Sutopo, HB. (2006). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Surakarta: UNS Press.

Thomson-Wohlgemuth, G. (1998). *Children literature and its translation: An overview*. Dissertation: Postgraduate Diploma/MA in Translation, School of Language and International Studies, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey.