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## **POETRY TRANSLATION ACCEPTABILITY ON *THE TRIALS OF APOLLO: THE HIDDEN ORACLE* NOVEL**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to find out the extent of the acceptability of the poetry translation in the novel. One research question is formulated: To what extent is the poetry translations in *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle* acceptable based on Larson's criteria of an acceptable translation. Qualitative research by using the text analysis was conducted. The data of this research were taken from both the English and Indonesian version of *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle* novel. In order to answer the research question, the researchers compared the translation between the English and Indonesian poetry using the theory of acceptability by Larson. The results show that there are 36 poetry translations which are categorized as acceptable and three poetry translation which are unacceptable. The 36 poetry translations incorporate at least two out of the three poetry translations acceptability criteria, while the three poetry only fulfil one poetry translation acceptability criterion.

Keywords: poetry translation, acceptability, *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle*

### **Introduction**

Translation does not merely mean changing the source language into the target language, especially in literary works (Newmark, 1988). Some aspects need to be considered in order to have an acceptable translation. An acceptable translation will make the readers not only understand the meaning, but also obtain the appropriate meaning of the literary works. The form of an acceptable literary work translation, especially poetry, has not been exposed clearly because some experts even believed that poetry cannot be translated. Therefore, poetry translation needs to be analyzed.

Poetry is the freest type of literature works whose words have powerful meaning (Newmark, 1988). Since the words have powerful meaning, poetry is more difficult to understand compared to other literary works. In order to make poetry easier to be understood, poetry should be translated. However, translators cannot simply translate poetry. It is due to the 'powerful words', which are often being represented in the form of morpheme or idiom. In translating, the source

language meaning and style should be able to be delivered into the target language as natural as possible (Nida, 1974, p. 12). It means that the translators should be able to find the same ‘powerful words’ with the context of the target language.

Novel translation is the second most difficult literary works to be translated after poetry because it has lots of metaphors and idioms (Newmark, 1988). Metaphors and idioms cannot be translated word-for-word. Translators should know the equivalent metaphors and idioms in order to make the translation acceptable. Hence, when translating poetry in a novel, someone should consider more aspects rather than translating a poem or a novel alone. Thus, this study is expected to be able to explore more about translating poetry in a novel.

The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle novel was chosen because the poetry translation in that book is different from the translation of poetry in an anthology book. The poetry in that novel has restricted context. The poetry is written in every chapter, under the chapter number. It is a summary of the story in the books. In an anthology book, the poetry translation acceptability can be analyzed directly, but in this novel we should read the chapter first before we can determine whether the translation of the poetry is acceptable or not. Therefore, the poetry translation in this novel needs to be analyzed.

#### ***The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle***

The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle is the first part of pentalogy novel, The Trials of Apollo, by Rick Riordan. This novel was first published in 2016 in the United States by Disney Hyperion and in Great Britain by Puffin Books. The Indonesian version was first published in 2017 by Penerbit Naura Books. This novel contains 39 chapters. In the beginning of every chapter, there is a poem which summarizes the events that happen in that chapter.

#### ***Translation Acceptability***

Translation acceptability is the measurement of whether a translation can be categorized as a good translation or not. According to Larson (1984), a translation should firstly, use the natural form of the target language, which means the translation is not stiff. In other words, it uses the daily language of the target language. Secondly, it should deliver the same meaning from the source language into the target language, which means it does not change the meaning or lose its’ essential meaning (p. 6). Lastly, it should maintain the dynamic of the original source language text, which means that the translation can give the same feeling to the receptor in the target language with the receptor in the source language (Larson, 1984, p. 6). Related to the theory of translation acceptability, a poem should focus more on the meaning of the word rather than focusing to find the same word. It means some words may be very different after being translated into the target language. In other words, to get an acceptable translation, translators should prioritize some things over the others. According to Nida (1974), “Contextual consistency has priority over verbal consistency, dynamic equivalence has priority over formal correspondence, the aural form of language has priority over the written form, and forms that are used by and acceptable to the audience for which a translation is intended have priority over forms that may be traditionally more prestigious” (p. 14).

## Method

This study used the text analysis method. A text analysis method is a type of content analysis in which the researcher analyzes and interprets documents to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Neuendorf, 2002). The type of this research data was literary works. The data were 39 poems from the English version of *The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle* novel and 39 poems from the Indonesian version. Purposive sampling was used because only the poetry in the beginning of the chapter were analysed. The poetry inside the chapter were not analyzed because they have different forms from the poetry in the beginning of the chapter. The poetry in the beginning of the chapter is haiku, while the poetry inside the chapter are free poems, limerick, and pantun.

The instrument used was a checklist on poetry translation acceptability. It consisted of two parts, namely the theory of poetry translation acceptability by Larson and the poetry in the beginning of each chapter inside the book. The data were analysed in three steps as proposed by Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) namely organizing and familiarizing, coding and reducing, and interpreting and representing (p. 481). In the first step, the literal and connotative meaning of each word or phrase used in the poetry were identified and organized by listing them from chapter one until chapter 39. The second step was coding every line of the poetry depending on the existence of metaphors. The last step was interpreting and representing, which was conducted by comparing the English with the Indonesian version to find out whether the translation was acceptable or not based on Larson's theory of an acceptable translation in the checklist. The poem is considered as acceptable if there are at least two criteria of acceptability translation by Larson present. After that, the results were presented using a pie chart.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Acceptable Poetry Translation in The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle*

Referring to Larson's translation acceptability theory (1984), a translation should use the natural form of the target language, deliver the same meaning to the target language, and maintain the dynamic of the source language (p. 6). There are 36 poetry translations which are categorized acceptable. The first example of acceptable poetry translation is found in Chapter 1, which is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Acceptable Poetry Translation in Chapter 1**

Line	Code	Meaning in Indonesian	Code
Hoodlums punch my face	E1.L1	<i>Mukaku kena hajar</i>	I1.L1
I would smite them if I could	E1.L2	<i>Si preman pantas binasa</i>	I1.L2
Mortality blows	E1.L3	<i>Nahasnya aku fana</i>	I1.L3

If the first line is translated literally, it will be *Preman menghajar mukaku*. Meanwhile, the second line will be *Aku akan menghantam mereka jika aku bisa*, and the third line will be *Kefanaan meniup*. However, as shown in Table 1, the translation of E1.L1, E1.L2, and E1.L3 are not literal. In I1.L1, the word "Hoodlums" is not translated. It is put on the second line. It is similar to the translation of E1.L2. The subject "I" is not translated on the second line.

However, if it is read as one unity, it delivers the same meaning that is Apollo wants to take revenge for the hoodlums. It is not translated literally because the translator wants to maintain the dynamic of the source language. Thus, the translator uses the word *preman* in the second line and the word “I” which should become a subject is changed into clitics *-ku*, which has a role as possessive pronoun, in the first line. E1.L3 is also not literally translated because in the second word there is a metaphor, that is “blows”. The word “blows” in that context means *mengacaukannya* not *meniup*. After finding the appropriate meaning of the metaphor, the translator paraphrases the phrase to make the translation become more natural in the target language. It is not translated as *kefanaan mengacaukannya* but *nahasnya aku fana*.

**Table 2. Acceptable Poetry Translation in Chapter 2**

Line	Code	Meaning in Indonesian	Code
A girl from nowhere	E2.L1	<i>Anak perempuan entah dari mana</i>	I2.L1
Completes my embarrassment	E2.L2	<i>Menggenapkan aibku</i>	I2.L2
Stupid bananas	E2.L3	<i>Dasar pisang celaka</i>	I2.L3

The second example of acceptable poetry translation is found in Chapter 2. In this poetry, the first line is translated literally, which becomes *Anak perempuan entah dari mana*. The second line has the same case. However, the third line is quite different. When E2.L3 is translated literally, it becomes *Pisang bodoh*. Though it is not translated literally, “stupid bananas” is not a metaphor. It is weak swear words. Hence, in order to make the translation of the swear words becomes natural in Indonesian, it becomes *Pisang celaka*.

The third example of the acceptable poetry translation is also not translated literally. The first line is a Spanish phrase which means *Rumah Jackson*. However, it is translated into *Di Istana Jackson*. The Spanish phrase is actually a slang which is derived from borrowed words. Apollo uses Spanish language as a slang because he wants to make a glorious image of Percy Jackson’s house which is actually a sarcasm. Therefore, it is translated into *istana*. The second line is translated literally, but it is simplified. The word *tiada* replaces the words *tidak ada* and the word *emas* is deleted. Hence, instead of writing *tidak ada takhta berlapis emas untuk tamu*, it is translated into *Tiada takhta emas untuk tamu*. The last line is also not translated literally because it is slang. The word “dude” means *bung* in Indonesian. The word “dude” also has the equivalent one in Indonesian that is *bro*. Thus, when it is translated literally, it becomes *Yang benar saja, bung?* or if the slang wants to be kept, it can be translated as *Yang benar saja, bro?* However, both options do not maintain the dynamic of the source language as well as *Terlalu!* Therefore, to fulfil the three criteria of acceptable poetry translation, E4.L3 is translated into *Terlalu!* The complete list is presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Acceptable Poetry Translation in Chapter 4**

Line	Code	Meaning in Indonesian	Code
Casa de Jackson	E4.L1	<i>Di Istana Jackson</i>	I4.L1
No gold-plated throne for guests	E4.L2	<i>Tiada takhta emas untuk tamu</i>	I4.L2
Seriously, dude?	E4.L3	<i>Terlalu!</i>	I4.L3

The last example has a slang which is modified into someone's nickname. The nickname is "Hunk Muffin". Literally, hunk means *bongkahan*. In slang dictionary hunk (hunk of a man) means a well-built, sexually attractive man. Muffin refers to a kind of small cake. In Indonesian, muffin is still named muffin, but it will be added *kue* as modifier, so it becomes *kue muffin*. Some also removes one of the "f", so it becomes *kue mufin*. Hence, when it is translated literally, the third line becomes *bongkahan kue muffin*, or when it is translated using the slang definition it becomes *laki-laki seksi yang seperti kue muffin*. It can be seen that "Hunk Muffin" does not has an equivalent word in Indonesia. Therefore, the translator should make a new nickname which can represent "Hunk Muffin". In order to do that, the translator should think of the person who obtain this title, Leo. Leo is a small but attractive boy. The word *kakanda* is used to call a brother in a kingdom or a lover sweetly. It means that the one who is called *kakanda* is charming like a prince or a boyfriend. Meanwhile, the word *imut* is the same with "cute" in "Peter is cute, isn't he?" Hence, *Kakanda Imut* could represent Leo and give the same vibes with "Hunk Muffin", which is a small but attractive boy. The next phrase "earned" is quite literal. It only specifies the "it". It in E39.L3 refers to the word "hit" in E39.L1. The second line and the first line are also literal. However, in I39.L1, there is a word *katamu*. The addition of this word does not change the meaning at all. It is only used to make the translation more natural. Table 4 describes the content clearly.

**Table 4. Acceptable Poetry Translation in Chapter 39**

Line	Code	Meaning in Indonesian	Code
Want to hit Leo?	E39.L1	<i>Ingin memukul Leo, katamu?</i>	I39.L1
That is understandable	E39.L2	<i>Bisa dimaklumi</i>	I39.L2
Hunk Muffin earned it	E39.L3	<i>Kakanda Imut patut ditinju</i>	I39.L3

#### ***Unacceptable Poetry Translation in The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle***

There are three poetry translations which are categorized as unacceptable. These poetry translations are unacceptable because the meaning and dynamic of the source language, which are included as the second and third criteria of acceptable poetry translation, are changed. The first example of unacceptable poetry translation is found in Chapter 3. When the first line is translated literally, it is good. It uses the natural language of the target language, delivers the same meaning from the source language, and maintains the dynamic of the source language. However, the second line does not maintain the dynamic of the source language because the diction in I3.L2 is just the core of the E3.L2. It does not deliver the sadness Apollo feels. When E3.L2 is literally translated, it becomes *Sekarang di tengah kota merasa sedih*. It is definitely not natural, so the translator decides to take the substance of the line which is Apollo is very sad. *Merana* is

equivalent to “very sad”. It means that it delivers the meaning of the content from the source language. The translator could simply say *merana* instead of *sekarang di tengah kota merasa sedih*. However, if he or she just uses the word *merana*, it makes the source language loses its feeling. Therefore, the translator should have made a new sentence which is poetic enough to deliver the sorrow Apollo feels. The third line also does not deliver the same meaning and does not maintain the dynamic of the source language. Of course “Bah, haiku don’t rhyme” could not be translated literally because it will become unnatural in the target language. Therefore, the translator decides to take the core of line and change the diction. However, the translator may get the meaning wrong. Poetry which is not rhymed is bad. In Indonesian, “bad” is *payah*. Hence, it is translated into *Ah, payah*. However, haiku is not necessarily rhymed. In fact, most haiku are not rhymed. *Ah, payah* is more natural and be easier to understand than *Ah, tak berima*, which fulfils the first and second criterion of acceptable translation. However, the meaning is distorted. Though Nida (1974) states that a good translation should be easily understood, but it is useless if the meaning misleads the reader (p. 173). Moreover, this poetry translation only uses the correct punctuation principle. Hence, this translation is unacceptable because it only preserves the natural form of the target language and ignores the other aspects and principles. The details are presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 5. Unacceptable Poetry Translation in Chapter 3**

Line	Code	Meaning in Indonesian	Code
Used to be goddy	E3.L1	<i>Dahulu dewa</i>	I3.L1
Now uptown feeling shoddy	E3.L2	<i>Sekarang merana</i>	I3.L2
Bah, haiku don’t rhyme	E3.L3	<i>Ah, payah</i>	I3.L3

In the second example of unacceptable poetry translation, E7.L1 and E7.L2 have been translated into I7.L1, I7.L2, and I7.L3. It is translated literally and naturally into the target language because it does not contain any metaphor. The problem is the last line is missing or not translated. It is different from the seventh example. The seventh example also has a line which does not exist in the other language, but the missing one is the line in target language. However, in this translation the missing one is the line in the source language or deletion. Addition is better than deletion if the addition does not change the core of the source language such as in the poetry chapter 22. On the other hand, deletion is not acceptable because it eliminates the meaning and may influence the dynamic of the source language. In this example, “Have fun with that, LOL” is a sarcasm for the Apollo’s condition. In that condition, Apollo is desperate but he does not look miserable. Instead, he is still able to make fun of them. It changes the meaning and the dynamic of the source language when the line is deleted because it makes Apollo seem miserable. In addition, this poetry translation only uses the first principle; correct punctuation. Hence, this poetry translation is unacceptable because it only fulfils one criterion and uses only the correct punctuation principle. The analysis of the poetry is presented in the following table.

**Table 6. Unacceptable Poetry Translation in Chapter 7**

Line	Code	Meaning in Indonesian	Code
Tag with plague spirits	E7.L1	<i>Kejar-kejaran dengan roh wabah penyakit</i>	I39.L1
You're it, and you're infectious	E7.L2	<i>Jangan sampai tertangkap</i>	I39.L2
Have fun with that, LOL	E7.L3	<i>Kalau tidak mau sakit</i>	I39.L3

In the third and last example of unacceptable poetry translation, only E14.L1 which is translated properly in I14.L2. E14.L2 and E14.L3 are nowhere to be found. As a consequence, I14.L1 and I14.L3 also do not exist in the source language when it is back-translated. When E14.L2 is translated literally, it becomes *Hei, sialan, apa yang baru saja terjadi?* or, if it is changed into a more natural form, it becomes *Apa? Sial. Apa yang terjadi sih?* However, as mentioned before, there is no sentence similar to that in the Indonesian version. The last line has a similar case. When E14.L3 is translated literally, it becomes *Aku kehabisan ka-*. There is no similar sentence existing in the Indonesian version. This is the thing that should not be done by the translator. The translator should have translated it literally if there is no metaphor. Moreover, these lines can easily look natural when it is translated literally. As mentioned above, the translator takes the core and remakes the lines. It is in line with what Newmark (1988) suggested about translating a poem by taking the core and then making a new poem (p. 70). However, it does not need to be done if it changes the meaning rather than translating it word-for-word. It is different from the poetry in Chapter 17. In chapter 17, the translator also only takes the core but it is necessary to be done because it contains metaphors which do not have equivalence in Indonesian. Moreover, this poetry translation does not use any principle. Hence, this poetry translation is also unacceptable because it completely changes the meaning and the dynamic of the source language and does not use any poetry translation principle. The details are presented in the following table.

**Table 7. Unacceptable Poetry Translation in Chapter 14**

Line	Code	Meaning in Indonesian	Code
You've got to be kid-	E14.L1	<i>Kamu anak siapa?</i>	I14.L1
Well, crud, what just happened there?	E14.L2	<i>Apa, bercanda, ya?!</i>	I14.L2
I ran out of syl-	E14.L3	<i>Wah, gawat ini</i>	I14.L3

## Conclusion

There are four points that can be concluded from the study. First, to decide the acceptability of the poetry, the interpretation method should be used to find the core of the poetry. Second, the poetry translation is influenced by the content of the chapter or the context. Third, syllable does not influence the acceptability because Indonesian tends to have more syllables than English. In other words, preserving the meaning is more important than following the syllable rule. Fourth, to get an acceptable poetry translation, translators do not always need to follow the poetry translation principles but still need to consider the poetry translation principles.

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