

TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE FOR TRANSLATING CHILDREN'S SONGS IN COCOMELON YOUTUBE CHANNEL

¹**Nurdin Bramono**

¹Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum, Indonesia

¹nurdinbramono@fbs.unipdu.ac.id

²**Muhammad Fa'iz Hasan**

²Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum, Indonesia

²faiskerpangan123@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

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Abstract: Translating children's songs requires specific techniques to convey the lyrics accurately because of their linguistic features. This study examines translation strategies for four songs on the Cocomelon YouTube channel in Indonesia. The four songs are *Twinkle-Twinkle Little Star*, *The Wheels on the Bus*, *Sick Song*, and *Finger Family*, as it is a descriptive qualitative study that applied Molina and Albir's (2002) concept of translation techniques. The result reveals that two variants of the translation technique are found. They are single and couplet techniques. In the single technique, the three most commonly used of the five are adaptation, modulation, and literal. Meanwhile, in the couplet technique, there are eleven found, which are the couple of amplification and reduction translation techniques most commonly used. The strategies found in this study show that the translation technique used contributes to the development of similar language characteristics in children's songs, in terms of simple language and repetitive words, between the source and target languages.

Keywords: *children song, cocomelon, simple language, song translation, translation technique*

INTRODUCTION

One of language's primary purposes is to enable people to communicate with one another and describe the world (Khotimah, 2025). This study aims to examine the English-to-Indonesian translation strategy of the Cocomelon channel. Furthermore, this study will investigate the translation techniques used in children's songs and nursery rhymes on the Cocomelon channel.

A nursery rhyme is a customary poem or song written specifically for young children in countries such as Britain and many others to aid in learning songs, support music education, or increase their cultural awareness (Kelsy, 2016). This kind of song is necessary for children. There is much more to nursery rhymes than just amusement. They enhance language development, foster social skills, and introduce infants and kids to the concept of storytelling.

There are some characteristics of nursery rhymes to understand. As mentioned on the website (B&G-Marketing, 2019). The first is language. Nursery rhymes were composed in an understandable and basic form of English. The second is repetition, which is the use of a word or phrase more than once in a written work. It is applied to achieve the purpose. Repetitive songs are better at being retained in memory. The third is rhyme. It is a mechanism that follows the principles of repetition, but rather than utilizing words or sentences, it uses sounds. While the fourth is tension and resolution. Nursery rhymes tell a story. Often, there is an arch in the rhyme's narrative that has the main character at a point of tension or struggle. The fifth is music links. Nursery rhymes are a particular kind of poetry that are frequently connected to music or a song. The sixth is entertaining. Children are meant to be entertained with nursery rhymes. Rhyming stories and music create a delightful game. Morality comes in seventh. Many well-known rhymes contain moral lessons that can be gently imparted. Therefore, when translating nursery rhymes, it is essential to understand the characteristics of these lyrics to decide which strategy to use.

Translation is a bond between one language and another. It includes communication, there are source and target languages (Nida & Taber, 1982). Since it conveys the meaning of the languages and the cultural aspect of both, it should never be lost (Nida & Taber, 1982). The translator must choose the appropriate words to convey the source-language meaning while paying attention to the cultural aspects of the target language. Translating nursery rhymes or songs for children is different from translating for another audience. The difference lies in the language of the lyrics used. The lyric is fit to the music (Low, 2003). The children's song lyric is repetitive and uses simple language. Therefore, choosing an appropriate technique is essential for conveying the same meaning in a different form in the target language, so that it can be well understood by children in that language. Below is the example:

SL: “Twinkle, twinkle, little star.”

TL: “*Bintang-bintang di langit.*”

Twinkle, twinkle, little star is a children’s song or nursery rhyme. The lyric “*Twinkle twinkle little star*” is translated into Bahasa Indonesia, becoming “*Bintang-bintang di langit*”. It is interesting to consider which strategy to use for translating English lyrics into Indonesian. There is no information about “sky” in the source language, but the translation result shows the difference. Hence, it is essential to determine which technique it is.

Several previous studies investigated the research gap. The first is a study written by Pratama (2017). Pratama’s (2017) study does not discuss the translation technique. She analyzed the meaning and accuracy. She applied Nababan’s concept of translation quality assessment. Therefore, this present study is absolutely different than Pratama’s. In this case, the data source differs: Pratama’s study used the lagu anak Indonesia channel, while the present study uses the Cocomelon YouTube channel. The second is conducted by Zakiyah (2020). This is a qualitative study that applies Cresswell’s theory. She investigated the translation difficulties senior high school students face when translating songs. In this study, she applies Molina & Albir (2002) and Lefevere (1992). However, this study does not account for the fact that translating a song requires more experience. Although it is involved in the 21st-century curriculum, there is no information about how to assess the student’s translation capability. The third is a study by Terayanti et al. (2023). It focuses on the translation technique used to translate Sapardi Djoko Damono’s poetry from Indonesian into English. The poetry and the lyrics of the song may be the same, but the end purpose is different. Poetry is not meant to be sung. However, the characteristic language of poetry differs from that of children’s songs. Therefore, there is a gap for this present study.

The fourth is a study by Baihaqi and Subianto (2022) on the translation of children’s songs. Their study analyzes the challenges and successes in translating eight English-Indonesian nursery rhymes from the ABC Song. This study focuses on different songs and sources, which may constitute a research gap. Another study by Ayuningtyas et al. (2024) examines translation strategies in nursery rhymes on the Pink Fong YouTube channel. They focused on the translation “*Cicak-Cicak di dinding*” and “*Pok Ame-Ame*” from Indonesian into English. This study applied Akerstorm (2009) and Lefevere (1975)

in examining translation strategies. However, there is disinformation about an important aspect of this study. The writer does not discuss rhyme, but the table mentions syllables, which deal with rhythm. Moreover, she did not examine how the quality of the message can be conveyed in English in terms of linguistic and cultural aspects.

Regarding the example of the lyric and previous study that none of them discuss about children's songs (nursery rhymes) from the Cocomelon channel, but the ABC song, the present study focuses on examining the translation techniques in English to Indonesian lyrics of four songs: *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, *The Wheels on the Bus*, *Sick Song*, and *Finger Family*. The Cocomelon channel is chosen because it has millions of viewers and is popular in Indonesia. Furthermore, those songs are chosen because they have not yet been discussed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nursery Rhymes

Songs sung for children are called nursery rhymes. Martinez (2017), as cited in Mello (2022), explains that Nursery rhymes are simple traditional songs or poems composed by anonymous poets, with highly rhythmic verses and tightly rhyming lyrics for children to listen to, sing along to, and enjoy. Nursery rhymes are songs or poems for children, with highly rhythmic verses and tight rhyme schemes, that help them learn about culture and language. Also, they can understand this kind of song because the lyrics are clear and do not have an ambiguous meaning.

Translation Techniques

The processes for evaluating and categorizing how translation equivalency functions are what Molina and Albir (2002) identify as the translation technique. Stated differently, the approach refers to the method by which a translator determines the equivalent of a source text in a target-language text. Molina and Albir have proposed 18 translation techniques for translating a text. Translators may use these techniques in translating many kinds of text.

METHOD

It is a translation study that focuses on identifying translation techniques. Therefore, the writer applied a qualitative study. Qualitative approaches often rely on

inductive design to generate new insights and to collect rich descriptive data (Leavy, 2017). The data source for this study is the Cocomelon YouTube channels, in both English and Indonesian. Furthermore, the data of this study are four song lyrics: 1) Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, 2) The Wheels on the Bus, 3) Sick Song, and 4) Finger Family. They are downloaded from both English and Indonesian YouTube channels. In addition, these songs are chosen for three reasons: first, they are well-known in Indonesia; second, they have high viewership; and third, they have been translated into Indonesian. Each nursery rhyme was examined to identify the specific translation techniques used, based on the classification by Molina and Albir (2002). Furthermore, the writer chooses the data in the form of lyrics from YouTube channels. Here is an example of the data:

SL : “The doors on the bus go open and shut.”

TL : “Pintu-pintu bis buka tutup.”

The writers figure out the translation technique for the above lyric. It is conducted by comparing the English and Indonesian lyrics based on the YouTube video. The last part is deriving a conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The following are the results of the data analysis. The analysis focuses on identifying the translation techniques used in the selected nursery rhymes and how these techniques help convey the meaning, style, and cultural nuances of the original English versions in the Indonesian translations. It is necessary to understand that this analysis was conducted by examining the lyrics while watching the video on the YouTube channel. Four children’s song lyrics were examined to identify the specific translation techniques used, based on Molina and Albir’s (2002) classification. The discussion included examples from the lyrics to illustrate the application of these techniques. Based on the data, this study found five types of translation techniques, including those described in Table 1.

The study analyzed translation techniques used in nursery rhymes from Cocomelon’s YouTube channel, translated from English into Indonesian. The findings revealed two types of translation techniques: single and couplet. The data in Table 1 above represents the frequency of various translation techniques used in a given set of

translations. The most commonly employed technique is adaptation, with 15 occurrences. In addition, Modulation, with 14 techniques, involves changing the form of the text by altering the perspective or point of view to make the translation more natural in the target language. In addition, there is a literal translation with 12 occurrences of the technique. This technique involves translating the text word-for-word, preserving the original meaning as closely as possible. However, a reduction technique with four occurrences is applied to simplify the target-language lyrics. Besides, linguistic compression occurs twice. Linguistic compression involves condensing the source text by merging several words or phrases into fewer words in the target language.

Table 1. Frequency of Translation Techniques

No.	Translation Technique	Total
Single Technique		
1.	Adaptation (ADP)	15
2.	Modulation (MLN)	14
3.	Literal Translation (LIT)	12
4.	Reduction (RC)	4
5.	Linguistic Compression (LCM)	2
		47
Couplet Technique		
1.	Natural Borrowing + Literal Translation (LIT)	2
2.	Amplification (AMP) + Pure Borrowing	1
3.	Literal Translation (LIT) + Adaptation (ADP)	1
4.	Substitution (SUP) + Pure Borrowing	1
5.	Particularization + Literal Translation (LIT)	1
6.	Description (DSP) + Pure Borrowing	1
7.	Literal Translation (LIT) + Natural Borrowing	1
8.	Amplification (AMP) + Modulation (MLN)	1
9.	Literal Translation (LIT) + Amplification (AMP)	3
10.	Literal Translation (LIT) + Reduction (RC)	3
11.	Amplification (AMP) + Reduction (RC)	5
		20
	Total	67

In total, there are two variant techniques, single and couplet techniques, with 67 translation techniques in total. The single translation technique has 47 in total, while the couplet translation technique has 20. Both are used to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps in the translation of lyrics. The characteristics of children's song lyrics have also been a consideration for the translator when deciding on the various techniques used. Hence, the result can be seen in the channel.

Single translation techniques

Five types of translation techniques are used in the nursery rhymes of the Cocomelon YouTube Channel. Those are adaptation, literal translation, modulation,

reduction, and linguistic compression. The following are the explanations and examples for each translation technique.

Adaptation

This technique swaps the cultural element from the source language into the target language (Molina & Albir, 2002). The following is an example from the data on the use of the adaptation translation technique in translating the nursery rhyme lyrics.

SL : “Twinkle twinkle little star.”

TL : “*Bintang-bintang di langit.*”

The above lyric is translated by using the adaptation technique. Here, the translator sees the context of the lyrics as ‘flickering stars are in the sky’. However, as it is the first lyric in the stanza, this translation indicates that ‘stars are in the sky,’ which will influence the translation of the next line. Therefore, “*bintang-bintang di langit*” does not need to show the flickers of the stars, but provides information ‘where the sky is’. Thus, the result shows simple language understanding and can be understood by Indonesian children listeners more easily than “*kerlap-kerlip bintangnya*”, raising the question: “*nya*” refers to what? This, of course, will be confusing for the listeners.

Modulation

Molina and Albir (2002) explain that the modulation technique alters the perspective, translating from direct into indirect speech, and adjusts the tone and style of the translation. Below is an example of translating the lyrics of a nursery rhyme using the modulation technique.

SL : “Like a diamond in the sky.”

TL : “*Indah bagai permata.*”

The above lyric is the last part and continuation of the first stanza. The result, of course, is a continuation of the previous. The translator intends to describe the star’s beauty from a different perspective while preserving the meaning by shifting the point of view. Therefore, if the above lyric is translated literally, it will become “*seperti permata di langit*”. It does not match the previous. The translator omits the information about ‘the sky’ in the target language. Hence, the Indonesian children will understand that ‘a star is beautiful like a diamond, but a diamond itself has a different form from a star’. Stars will flicker at night.

Literal translation

This technique adheres to the target language grammatical structure and preserves the original meaning (Molina & Albir, 2002). Below is an example of how this technique is used to translate nursery rhyme lyrics.

SL : “Where are you?”

TL : “*Dimana kamu?*”

The above lyric is considered a literal translation because it translates each word from the source language directly into the target language without altering the sentence’s structure or meaning. The phrase maintains the same word order and grammatical structure, preserving the interrogative form and the positioning of the subject and interrogative adverb. Considering Indonesian, the translation must be “*Kamu di mana?*”, but it is not an erroneous translation, since it does not change the original meaning.

Reduction

This translation technique keeps things simple by reducing the amount of information (Molina & Albir, 2002). Below is an example from the data, showing how this technique is applied to translate the lyric.

SL : “Play with friends, play with friends.”

TL : “*Bermain, bermain.*”

This technique involves omitting certain elements of the source text that are either redundant in the target language. In this lyric, the phrase “with friends” is omitted in the translation because of the context of ‘playing’. The context on the screen reveals that the singer is playing together with their friend. Therefore, it is not necessary to include ‘*dengan teman*’ in the target language. It will confuse listeners and may affect the tone.

Linguistic compression (LCM)

This technique combines linguistic elements in a target language (Molina & Albir, 2002). Below is an example from the data, showing how this technique is applied to translate the lyric.

SL : “Building things, building things”

TL : “*Merakit, merakit*”

This technique involves synthesizing linguistic elements to make the translation more concise while retaining the original meaning. On the screen, the children are building a toy plane. Therefore, the translator does not need to mention ‘*merakit sesuatu*’,

which is not clear enough, or ‘*merakit pesawat*’, which would also make the lyric not good to sing. It can be said that “*merakit, merakit*” is the simple lyric available.

Couplet translation techniques

The couplet technique combines two translation techniques, as proposed by Peter Newmark. There are twelve found in the nursery rhymes of the Cocomelon YouTube channel.

Literal Translation + Reduction

Example from the data:

SL : “The wheels on the bus go round and round”

TL : “*Roda-roda bis berputar*”

The translation of the lyric “The wheels on the bus go round and round” to “*Roda-roda bis berputar*” employs literal translation and reduction techniques. Each word is translated directly (literal translation) without altering the original structure or basic meaning. Additionally, the phrase “go round and round” is reduced to “*berputar*” (reduction), to simplify how the wheel move around. The result shows Indonesian children how the wheel on a bus moves. Moreover, the translation’s language is easy to understand.

Amplification + Reduction

Example from the data:

SL: “You have a cold, oh, Daddy can tell”

TL: “*Batuk dan pilek, Ayah tahu*”

On the screen, the child is shown to have “a cold”. In this lyric, amplification is achieved by explicitly naming both “*batuk*” (cough) and “*pilek*” (cold) to convey the symptoms clearly, whereas the original mentions only “cold”. Furthermore, the translator deleted “you” and “oh” in the target language, and the phrase “can tell” was converted to “*tahu*”. However, the translator thinks it is unnecessary to include the words “*kamu*” or “*engkau*” in the target language, since the video shows that daddy understands his child is sick.

Naturalized Borrowing + Literal Translation

Example from the data:

SL : “The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish”

TL : “*Wiper kaca bis Swis, swis, swis*”

The video screen shows the wiper on the mirror in front of the bus. Meanwhile, there is no word mirror in the source language. The translator watched a YouTube video explaining that the wiper is on the bus's front mirror. Furthermore, the onomatopoeic "swish, swish, swish" is borrowed as "swis, swis, swis". The result shows how the translator introduces the wiper and how it works through the simple lyric.

Literal Translation + Amplification

Example from the data:

SL : "The mommies on the bus go "Shh, shh, shh!"

TL : "*Ibu di bis bilang "Shh, shh, shh!"*"

Literal Translation is evident as the phrase is translated directly from English to Indonesian word-for-word, maintaining the original structure and meaning. Amplification is utilized to add clarity and context that may be implied in the source language but needs to be explicitly stated in the target language. This is seen in the translation of "the mommies" to "*ibu di bis*," where "*ibu*" (mother) is used in a culturally appropriate and contextually clear manner for the target audience.

Amplification + Pure Borrowing

Example from the data:

SL : "The signals on the bus go blink, blink, blink"

TL : "*Lampu sinyal di bis blink blink blink*"

On the video screen, the picture shows how the bus's lamp signals. It is blinking steadily. Furthermore, in translating the lyric, the translator used an amplification technique to render the phrase "the signals" as "*lampu sinyal*" in the target language, which shows children in Indonesia how the bus's signal lights blink. Furthermore, the translator also borrows the onomatopoeia "blink" to show how the lamp works. If the translator applied the literal translation technique, it may have "*sinyal di bus berkedip*", which will confuse the audience by thinking what is the difference between '*lampu*' and '*sinyal*'. The above translation result is a simple phrase "*lampu sinyal*" and highlights the repetitive word "*blink*".

Literal Translation + Adaptation

Example from the data:

SL : "The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep"

TL : "*Klakson di bis bunyi din, din, din*"

In the YouTube video, the picture shows the driver pressing the bus's horn. Adaptation is used in changing the sound "beep, beep, beep" to "*din, din, din*". The word "*din*" is introduced to Indonesian children as the sound of a bus or another wheeled vehicle. Furthermore, it is repetitive to explain what it sounds like.

Substitution Paralinguistic + Naturalized Borrowing

Example from the data:

SL : "The motor on the bus goes vroom, vroom, vroom"

TL : "*Mesin di bis bunyi brum, brum, brum*"

In the video screen, the engine gives the sound "*brum, brum, brum*". The onomatopoeic sound "vroom, vroom, vroom" is adapted into "*brum, brum, brum*". The translation of "brum" shows children in Indonesia that "the vehicle machine gives a sound". Thus, they will understand what it is like. If it is translated literally, the result will be "*motor di bus bunyi vroom, vroom, vroom.*" A question will arise: "*di dalam bus ada motor?*" In Indonesia, motor refers to a motorcycle.

Particularization + Literal Translation

Example from the data:

SL : "The people on the bus go up and down"

TL : "*Penumpang dalam bis naik turun*"

The term "*penumpang*" refers to people in mass transportation, specifically buses. It is more commonly used in Indonesia's transportation than "*orang-orang*". Additionally, the phrase "go up and down" is translated literally as "*naik turun*," preserving the source text's structure and meaning, which aligns with the technique of literal translation. Therefore, the translation result can teach Indonesian children the term "*penumpang*" as well as the activity involved in this mode of transportation. Moreover, the result is presented in the simple language.

Description + Pure Borrowing

Example from the data:

SL : "The babies on the bus go "Wah, wah, wah!""

TL : "*Suara bayi di bis "Wah, wah, wah!"*"

The description is used to adapt "the babies on the bus" into "*Suara bayi di bis*," which conveys the same meaning by describing the function or form in the target language. Pure Borrowing is evident in the untranslated onomatopoeic expression "*Wah*,"

wah, wah!”, which directly conveys the Indonesian way of saying “how the baby is crying in Indonesia”.

Literal Translation + Naturalized Borrowing

Example from the data:

SL : “Play guitar, play guitar”

TL : “*Main gitar, main gitar*”

The phrase “play guitar” is translated literally to “*main gitar*”, preserving the original structure and meaning word for word. Additionally, the term “guitar” is borrowed from English into Indonesian, a common practice known as natural borrowing, where the foreign word is adopted into the target language with minimal alteration.

Amplification + Modulation

Example from the data:

SL : “Rest little baby, I’ll care for you”

TL : “*Tidurlah, Sayang, Ayah di sini*”

Amplification is evident in the phrase “I’ll care for you” being translated as “*Ayah di sini*,” which explicitly mentions “*Ayah*” (Father) to enhance understanding and emotional connection in the target language. The lyric is not necessary to translate as “*bayi kecil*”. Otherwise, it is supported by a YouTube video that shows “the baby has to rest and daddy near him”. The translation language version also shows parents taking care of their child. It is presented in an easily understandable way.

Discussion

Some studies have discussed the translation of songs, including children’s songs. This study discusses translation techniques as a strategy for translating four songs on the Cocomelon YouTube channel from English into Indonesian, based on Molina and Albir’s concept (2002). Based on the findings, two variants of the technique were found. These two variants consist of the single-technique and couplet techniques.

Among the techniques, adaptation is the most commonly used in translating children’s song lyrics. For example, in translating the onomatopoeia “beep”, the translator adapts it into Indonesian as “*din*,” which commonly happens. Although culturally different, the meaning itself represents the sound of a bus machine in English and Indonesia. This adaptation is appropriate, as Molina and Albir (2002) explained: “a shift

in cultural environment.” What is interesting is that the intended meaning of the translation lyric version is not lost.

Meanwhile, Pratama’s (2017) study shows that the understandable words are less accurate. This is questionable, since the characteristics of children’s songs are understandable to children. Therefore, it needs a certain technique to maintain the translation result. However, Pratama’s study shares a similar opinion with the present study regarding the use of the reduction translation technique. This technique can be applied to the video’s background. For example, the phrase “Play with friends, play with friends” was translated as “*Bermain, bermain.*” The reduction of the word “friends” does not change the meaning, as the picture shows a child playing with their friend.

In the meantime, in Ayuningtyas’s (2024) study, a similar occurrence is observed: the translation of onomatopoeia from Indonesian into English. In the analysis, the translator translated the word “hap” into “*hap*”. In addition, Ayuningtyas analyzed it by using literal translation, based on Åkerström (2009) and Lefevere (1975). The analysis shows that the translation source emphasizes the language culture more than the target culture, which means the word “hap” should be replaced with an equivalent English word. The meaning may be the same, but the target language’s culture should be taken into account. Therefore, the application of the right translation strategy determines the correct result. In this regard, the discussion does not address right or wrong but focuses on how the two languages’ cultures can be connected.

Meanwhile, in the couplet translation technique, the translator employed particularization and literal translation to render “The people on the bus go up and down” as “*Penumpang dalam bis naik turun*”. The word “people” is translated as “*penumpang*,” which shows the cultural transfer from English into Indonesian. In English, people in mass transportation are called “passenger”. However, the translator understood this and successfully shifted into “*penumpang*,” not “*orang orang*.”

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The findings and discussion reveal that two variants of translation techniques are used. First, it is a single technique, and the second is the couplet technique. In the single technique, five translation techniques are found: adaptation, modulation, literal,

reduction, and linguistic compression. Meanwhile, in the couplet technique, there are eleven techniques found (see Table 1). The techniques identified contribute to the development of similar language characteristics in children's songs, such as simplicity and repetition. In detail, the use of adaptation, modulation, and literal as the three most used in a single technique, as well as amplification and reduction, literal and reduction, natural borrowing and literal in the couplet technique, shows that these techniques are suitable for use in converting source language lyrics of children's songs into target language simple lyrics. The analysis of translation results above also provides Indonesian children with the simple language of children's songs in the Cocomelon Indonesia version and highlights the use of repetitive words.

Suggestions

This study is about the translation of nursery rhymes. A future study may focus on the impact of translation strategies on rhymes and rhythm across different song genres. Furthermore, the next researcher may use translation strategies other than those of Molina and Albir.

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