

# Metaphor Translation in English and Indonesian Version of Surah Ali Imran

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**Abstract**— One of the messages which need to have the right understanding is the Moslem Holy Scripture, the Quran. It is the final divine revelation provides mankind guidelines in every part of life. The message in the Quran sometimes is stated explicitly, but sometimes implicitly by using figurative language. The most figurative language that occurs in the Quran is a metaphor. This study used descriptive qualitative approach because this analysis had done something with language research. The data were collected from the English and Indonesia translation of surah Ali Imran. The result of this study showed that there are ten metaphor expressions in Surah Ali Imran. There are two metaphor translation strategies applied in English and three strategies in Indonesian.

**Keywords**—*semantic; metaphor; language translation; al quran;*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Translation has an important role as a bridge between different languages. As proposed by Nida and Taber (1982: 12), that the translation “consist of reproducing in the receptor language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style”. So, the point of translation is an attempt to re-express the message from one language into another language.

The process of translation is slightly complicated because it has to explain and retain the original meaning, form and sense of the message. However, translation is more challenging in the area of religious texts. Generally, religious texts have their characteristics which distinguish them from other texts. Aziz and Lataiwish (2000: 134) believe that religious texts have “the characteristics of sacredness, which is based on faith. Either the message or the word or both are believed to be holy”.

The translation of the Quran is considered a complicated task for translators because they need to reproduce the words of Allah as accurately as possible. This is mainly due to the fact that Quran contains special and unique expressions that, at times, are hard to be achieved in other languages. Abdul-Raof (2001) affirms this by stressing that Quranic language is affected largely by the product of any Quran translation.

Metaphor is used to make people understand more easily what is meant and make them believe what we mean. In using metaphor, we have to use an effective word in order to give clear understanding on what we say. Therefore, it is important to use good language when we use metaphor because the

quality of our language when we speak may lead to the hearer’s personal impression and emotion that will help them to understand the message correctly.

One of the messages which need to have the right understanding is the Moslem Holy Scripture (Quran). This holy book is read by almost every Moslem in the world because it is an order from the God. However, the majority of Muslims in the world are non-Arabic speakers which make it a necessity to deal with the Quran and its meaning. The message in Quran is sometimes stated explicitly and sometimes implicitly by figurative language. Metaphor, as one of the figurative language, is used to beautify sentence, create more sense and more esthetic in a discourse.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher assumes that analyzing metaphor translation is very useful and appropriate to be used. Because by using translation analysis the interpretation of understanding the translation will be deeper and richer.

## II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

### A. Translation

There are many definitions of translation from experts. Larson (1998: 3) stated that translation consists of transferring meaning from the source language into the receptor language. It is done through changing from one form of the first language to the form of the second language by way of semantic structure. Catford (1965: 20) defined translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language”. There are also other definitions about translation from experts, but the main discussion is transferring meaning from a language to another language. According to Nida and Taber (1982: 12), “translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style”. From the definition above, it can be understood that a translator should adjust the message in the source language same as the one in the target language.

### B. Metaphor

In his book, Weiss (2006: 1) stated “The word metaphor comes from Greek *Metaphora*, derived from *meta* meaning ‘over’ and *pherein* meaning ‘to carry’. The study of metaphor

customarily begins with Aristotle and his statement in the *Poetics* that “metaphor is the transference of a term from one thing to another. Aristotle uses the term metaphor in an expensive manner, encompassing four varieties of transference under the rubric of metaphor. As a branch of figurative language, metaphor is frequently used by people in some utterances.

According to Lakoff (1992: 1), metaphor expressions were assumed to be not used in ordinary everyday language: everyday language had no metaphor, and metaphor used mechanism outside the realm of everyday conventional language. The word *metaphor* was defined as in novel or poetic linguistic expression when one word or more are used outside of conventional meaning. However, the generalizations governing poetic metaphorical expressions are not in language, but in thought. Moreover, these general principles which take the form of conceptual mappings, apply not just to novel poetic expressions, but too much of ordinary everyday language.

Dickin, Sandor and Higgins (2005: 147) defined metaphor as a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used in a non-basic sense, this non-basic sense suggesting a likeness or analogy with another more basic sense of the same word or phrase.<sup>13</sup> There are other definitions from some experts.

Knowles and Moon (2005:2) stated that metaphor is the use of language to refer to something other than what it was originally applied to, or what it literally means, to suggest some resemblances or make a connection between the two things.

### C. Translation Strategies

Dickin, Hervey and Higgins (2005: 147) divided metaphor translation into two basic distinction, lexicalized and non-lexicalized metaphor. Lexicalized metaphors are uses of language which are recognizably metaphorical, but whose meaning in a particular language is relatively clearly fixed; or metaphors whose meaning is given in dictionaries. For instance, ‘rat’ means a person who deserts his friends or associates. Whereas non-lexicalized metaphors are metaphors whose meaning are not clearly fixed, but will vary from context to context, and has to be worked out by the readers on particular occasions (Dickin, Hervey & Higgins, 2005; 147). Furthermore, lexicalized metaphor is distinguished to three types of lexical metaphors (Dickin, Hervey & Higgins, 2005; 149). First, dead metaphor is one which one does not normally realize is a metaphor because it has been frequently treated in everyday language. For instance, ‘talented’ man and the ‘arm’ of a chair have been frequently used even though they are unusual collocation. Second, stock or standard metaphor is one that is widely used as an idiom, as in ‘keep the pot boiling’ and ‘throw a new light on’. Third, recent metaphor is a metaphorical neologism describing new objects or processes, often anonymously coined, which has spread rapidly in the source language. For example, ‘groovy’ which means good, ‘with it’ means fashionable. Non-lexicalized metaphor is also divided into two types, conventionalized and

original metaphor. Conventionalized metaphors are not provided in dictionaries, but do draw on either cultural or linguistic conventions. For example, the concept of argument is a war, which includes battle of wits, counter attack, bombard and win. Original metaphors are not simply relatable to existing linguistic or cultural conventions, and they are difficult to interpret, as in ‘Tom isa tree’. Newmark (2001: 88) stated his strategy to translate metaphor that almost always been taken up by the researchers and which are considered here. They are: 1. Reproducing the same image in the TL. This is the best way to translate stock metaphors, most frequently, idioms. 2. Replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image, or translating a metaphor to another metaphor in TL with the same sense. It is used when there is no image that corresponds exactly to the one in the SL and which does not clash with the TL culture, but which, like most stock metaphors, proverbs, and others, are presumably coined by one person and diffused through popular speech, writing and later the media. 3. Translating metaphors by simile. This strategy modifies an emotive metaphorical expression to suit the TL if that context is not as emotive in character as the SL.

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3. Translating metaphors by simile. This strategy modifies an emotive metaphorical expression to suit the TL if that context is not as emotive in character as the SL. For example (Pardede, 2013: 7) “He is hanging on a thread in the coming competition”, it is translated into Indonesian language “Nasibnya bagai telur di ujung tanduk dalam kompetisi mendatang”.
4. Translating metaphor by simile plus sense. This strategy is suitable to use when the SL has no equivalent image in TL. For example (Pardede, 2013: 7) “I read you like a book”, translated to “aku memahami kamu semudah memahami buku”.
5. Converting a metaphor to its sense. This is a strategy where the image of the SL is reduced to its sense and rewritten to suit the TL. For instance (Pardede, 2013: 7), “His business continues to flourish”, it translated into Indonesian “Bisnisnya terus maju pesat”.
6. Deleting. It is used when the metaphor is redundant. For instance, “He is a snail; he always walks slowly”, translated to become “Dia berjalan lambat sekali” (Pardede, 2013: 7).

7. Combining metaphor with the sense. Occasionally, the translator an image may wish to ensure that it will be understood by adding a gloss. For instance, “The tongue is a fire”, is translated by combining with sense to become “A fire ruins things; what we say also ruins things”.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study uses descriptive qualitative method because it investigated some metaphor translations of Holy Quran and described the collected data as well as its analysis. The subject of this study is the translation of Quran in *Surah Ali Imran* translated by Yusuf Ali and Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The researcher analyzed the data by comparing the translations with the interpretations, then he classified the strategies of metaphor translation based on Newmark’s theory.

### IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In Ali Imran 54:

وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

English translation (Yusuf Ali ) : “*And (the unbelievers) plotted and planned, and Allah too planned, and the best planners is Allah.*”

Indonesian translation (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia) : “*Dan mereka orang-orang kafir membuat tipu daya, maka Allah pun membalas tipu daya. Dan Allah sebaik-baik pembalas tipu daya.*”

#### Context of the verse:

Jews planned to catch out and crucifix prophet Isa, but Allah planned a different and even greater plan, He planned to lift prophet Isa up onto Allah’s side, and to replace Isa’s place with someone whose face is made same as Isa’s face. That is Allah’s plan, the best planners (Al Jawi: 100).

#### Translation analysis

The word *Makara* literally means deceive, delude, or cheat (Wehr, 1976:917). This word has different meaning with its commentaries. Moreover, deceiving, deluding and cheating do not deserve to be based on Allah. Therefore, it is used metaphorically. Whereas the intended meaning is planning, whether the plan of the Jews or the plan of Allah. This utterance is a kind of metaphor which substitutes the meaning plotting and planning.

In English translation (Yusuf Ali) translated the word by converting to its sense, using plotted and planned. He makes the translation easy to understand and resolve a question among the target readers. It is better than translating the word literally because it still needs to deep reading and thinking to the context.

Differently, in Indonesian translation (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia) translated the

word by producing the same image in the target language. They translated literally with *membuat tipu daya* which is difficult to understand the meaning as the commentaries. Moreover, it perhaps brings to misunderstanding as if the unbelievers and Allah deceive and delude each other. Whereas Allah does not deserve doing this activity to the unbelievers.

In Ali Imran 177

وَاللَّهُ شَنِئًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّ

English translation (Yusuf Ali) : “*Those who purchase Unbelief at the price of faith, not the least harm will they do to Allah, but they will have a grievous punishment.*”

Indonesian translation (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia): “*Sesungguhnya orang-orang yang membeli kekafiran dengan iman, sedikitpun tidak merugikan Allah; dan mereka akan mendapat azab yang pedih.*”

#### Context of the verse

People who purchase unbelief at the price of faith are those who apostate after their faith to Islam. And they do not harm Allah at all. Instead, Allah will give them painful punishment to them (Al Jaziri, 2007; 264).

#### Translation analysis

The word *Isytara Yasytari* literally means selling or buying. This word is used metaphorically since this word does not apply the real meaning that people buy unbelief like they sell something using money. In this case, selling belief /faith (*iman*) and unbelief (*kufur*) is compared with something can be sold by money, such as fruit, house, foods and others. The word *Yasytari* is different from the actual meaning when it is combined with belief and unbelief. Therefore, its intended meaning becomes exchanging belief with unbelief (Al Jaziri, 2007; 263). The connection between the word ‘buy’ and ‘exchange’ is both of them take and give each other, whereas buying uses money and thing; and exchanging uses thing and another thing.

In English translation (Yusuf Ali) translated it to English using word ‘purchase unbelief at the price of faith. He translated by producing the same image in the target language. It is used because the word ‘purchasing’ is commonly used in daily conversation and it has been easy to understand the intended meaning of the verse.

In Indonesian translation (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia) translated the metaphor using word *membeli kekafiran dengan iman*. They also translated the metaphor by producing the same image in the target language. The same reason as in English, commonly used and easy to understand only by producing the same image, perhaps underlies why Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia translated with the same vehicle.

## V. CONCLUSION

In translating holy Qur'an, it is not an easy enterprise because one should be able to maintain its language beauties and convey its meanings clearly.

From this study, it is known that there are two strategies used for translating metaphor into English, namely producing the same image in the target language and converting the metaphor to its sense. The first strategy is commonly used to translate verb phrase metaphors, it is because some verbs are not realized as metaphor and the metaphor element is weak. Whereas the second strategy is frequently used to translate utterances which resemble idioms. In Indonesian translation, strategies that are frequently used to translate metaphor are converting the metaphor to its sense, combining metaphor with sense and producing the same image in target language.

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