
An Analysis of Similes Translation in *The Scarlet Letter* Novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the similes used in *The Scarlet Letter* novel, analyze the translation strategies applied by the translator based on Pierini's (2007) theory of simile translation, and evaluate the acceptability of the simile translations among the target readers. It employs qualitative methods to analyze the phenomenon of simile translation as a type of figurative language in *The Scarlet Letter* novel. The presence of various markers such as *like*, *as*, *as if*, and *resemble* demonstrates the richness of imagery in literature. The results reveal that 32 data points are classified as similes based on the simile marker words according to Pierini's theory that is preposition *like* (17 data), followed by *as* (9 data), *as if* (5 data), and the verb *resemble* (1 datum). In other words, the author prefers to use *like* simile markers in the source language, which are mostly translated into *seperti* in the target language. Only three out of six simile translation strategies were found in this study: literal translation (27 data), replacement of vehicle with a different vehicle (3 data), and reduction of the simile to its sense (2 data). The survey on the acceptability of simile translations shows that 29 out of 32 data points are acceptable, while 3 translations are deemed less acceptable. In conclusion, the translation of the simile in *The Scarlet Letter* novel often uses a literal translation strategy and produces good acceptability from the perspective of Indonesian target readers.

INTRODUCTION

Translation is more than just converting words from one language to another. That's why the translator needs to understand the simile first before translating it, as the translator must transfer and retain the original text's sense and nuance within the text into a different cultural background. Similes have a crucial function in increasing the imagination and attractiveness of a literary text, therefore understanding how to translate similes properly is critical to ensuring that the message and meaning are transmitted effectively. It is believed that by analyzing the translation of similes in this novel, we can better understand literary translation and how similes affect reader comprehension. Criticizing a translated work is not easy, this is because the purpose of this criticism itself is to realize an improvement in the translation in question so that it can produce a better and quality translation of literary works and can be justified, although it may not be perfect one hundred percent because back again to the culture and also the uniqueness of each language, which if translated there will still be a shortage or not one hundred percent transcribed. Translation criticism in literature is important and helps writers create better literary works based on existing criticisms. Speaking of translation criticism, Newmark (1988, p.185) explains that the biggest challenge for a translation critic lies in his ability to state the

principles of translation that he believes in clearly and with certainty, and at the same time being able to review the principles used by the translator in the translation, both those that are in line with the principles of translation. In this regard, a good translation should be historical and dialectical, even Marxist (Newmark, 1988, p.185).

Nathaniel Hawthorne, an American novelist known for his dark and romantic short stories, often explored themes of history, morality, and religion in his works. One of his famous works, *The Scarlet Letter* was translated into Indonesian by Rina Buntaran, a writer and translator at Gramedia Pustaka, who translated literary works such as the *Disney Family Story Collection*. *The Scarlet Letter* is set in 17th-century Boston and tells the story of Hester Prynne, a beautiful woman who gives birth to a daughter, Pearl, after her husband, Roger Chillingworth, disappears for two years. During his absence, Hester falls in love with a clergyman, Arthur Dimmesdale, resulting in her pregnancy. Hester is accused of adultery and forced to wear a scarlet "A" on her chest as a mark of shame. Chillingworth, secretly returning to Boston, disguises himself as a doctor and seeks revenge on the man responsible for Hester's pregnancy. Despite public humiliation, Hester never reveals Arthur as Pearl's father. After years of guilt, Arthur confesses publicly, showing a scarlet letter he carved on his chest. He dies shortly after, asking Pearl for a kiss as he takes his last breath. This dark romantic story filled with conflict was initially challenging for the researcher to understand due to its use of uncommon English words. This sparked their interest in analyzing the Indonesian translation, especially the similes since the novel contains many.

Research about similes used in translation critique or analysis in novels has been conducted many times. In this study, the author found six previous studies related to this research. These six studies used qualitative methods to analyze the translation of figurative language and similes in literary works also most of them shared Pierini and Newmark's theory with each a different unique focus. Almost all of these studies use Pierini and Newmark's theory to analyze translation strategies, except the study by Devi et al. (2018) who used Zhang Xiu Guo's (2005) theory. Widya (2017) focused on the novel "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children" and found that the most common translation strategy was the reproduction of the same image in the target language, while Devi et al. (2018) analyzed similes in "Looking for Alaska" and classified the types of similes into open and closed and different theory than other that is from Zhang Xiu Guo (2005). Widowati (2013) used Pierini's theory to evaluate translation strategies in "Wuthering Heights," showing the dominance of literal translation and assessing the accuracy and readability of the translation. Fadilah (2017) discussed figurative language in "The Scarlet Letter," while Setyawati (2012) identified simile translation techniques in "The Old Man and the Sea" using descriptive and qualitative methods. Fauziah (2017) also applied Pierini's theory to analyze the translation strategies of figurative language in the poem "A Song of the Sea," finding the use of replacement and literal translation strategies. Thus, all these studies have similarities in methodological approaches and focus on analyzing similes and metaphors, although their research objects and methodological details are different.

There are three research questions guiding this study, what similes are found in *The Scarlet Letter* novel, what strategy the translator used to translate the similes in *The Scarlet Letter* novel, and how acceptable the translation of the similes is in the TT reader. This research aims to enrich the knowledge of readers and other researchers about similes, especially how to analyze a literary work like the novel and to enhance readers' understanding of the complexities involved in translating similes in literary texts. Furthermore, it illustrates how translation strategy impacts the acceptability of the translated work within a different cultural text. As a translator be even better by having the right strategies through the criticisms made so that better quality literary works can be created.

Translation is a crucial aspect of any text, as it serves as the key to comprehension for the target readers, according to Newmar (1988, p. 5) expresses that translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another

language in the way that the author intended the text. Similes are a form of figurative language that is frequently employed in both literary and ordinary contexts. Figurative language is a language expression technique, a style of discussion whose meaning does not always refer to the literal meaning of supporting words, but to the added meaning, the implied meaning. According to M.H Abrams (1999:96), figurative language is a conspicuous departure from what users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words. Figurative language is often used in literature such as in poetry, drama, and song lyrics. There are more than hundreds of types of figurative language, but those that often appear in almost every language in everyday life or literary works are metaphors and similes. Simile helps to clarify or strengthen an object to be explained by comparison with other objects. Keraf (1984) defines simile as an explicit comparison. What is meant by an explicit comparison is that he directly states something is the same as another thing. Similes not only serve to clarify something to be explained but also add depth to the expression and style of writing. According to Pierini (2007, p. 23), A simile can be defined as the statement of similarity relation between two entities, essentially different but thought to be alike in one or more respects, or a non-similarity relation. A simile consisting of a topic, vehicle (or image), and point of similarity. The topic refers to the subject being compared, the vehicle is the object or thing used to make the comparison, and the point of similarity is the characteristic or trait shared by the topic and vehicle, which makes the comparison possible. According to Pierini (2007, p. 27-28), similes are marks by verbs such as *seem, look like, act like, sound like, resemble, and remind*. In addition, there are adjectives like *similar to* and *the same as*, and nouns like *a sort of* or *some kind of*. Furthermore, the most common prepositions are *like* and *as*, and last but not least are conjunctions like *as if, though, and as when*. In the TT the words Indonesia that signify the simile are *seperti, bak, bagai/kan, laksana, layaknya, serupa, ibarat, umpama*, and also the prefix addition *se-* followed by verbs and others serves as a description or becomes a measuring tool for the word followed. It takes skill to translate similes in a way that keeps them alive and relevant for the reader, this involves using the appropriate translation strategy. Pierini (2007, p. 31) presented six strategies to translate similes as follows:

1. Literal Translation (retention of the same vehicle).
It is a translation strategy that preserves the meaning and structure of the original text so simile in the TL is possible to have the same meaning in the TL. The vehicle here is referred to in the image.
2. Replacement of vehicle with a different vehicle.
A strategy that replaces the original comparison with one that is more relevant to the target reader. When the image of the simile does not clash with the TL culture, the translator may replace the image in the SL with the standard in the TL image.
3. Reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense.
Reduce or remove other elements to further simplify the translation to make it more natural to the target reader. If the simile is idiomatic, the translator may delete it.
4. Retention of the same vehicle plus explicitation of similarity feature(s).
This strategy maintains the same vehicle but also adds additional explanations to provide more explanation which aims to help the target reader in understanding the translation of the simile. In translating simile, a translator can add any information or make the translation explicit to make it understandable to the target reader.
5. Replacement of the vehicle with a gloss.
This strategy can be applied to make the image if it is added with gloss - a note or comment added to a piece of writing to explain a different word or phrase - more understandable in the TL.
6. Omission of the simile.
It is a translation strategy when a simile is omitted to avoid an unnatural translation. This strategy also allows the translator to delete a simile only if it is considered unnecessary. The omission, however, retains the meaning of the SL.

In addition to paying attention to the message of the source text being conveyed to the target text, its acceptability also needs to be considered. According to Nababan et al. (2012), the term acceptability

refers to whether a translation has been expressed by the rules, norms, and culture that apply in the target language or not, both at the micro and macro levels. Nababan et al. (2012) also explained that one of the parameter concepts is a translation that follows the grammatical rules of the target language, so three important indicators of acceptability are natural language, appropriate to the culture of the target language, and reader with the rules in the target language.

METHOD

The method used in this analysis is qualitative research. The data collection and analysis steps are as follows: First, the researcher conducted close readings of the novel in English (the source text) several times and took notes on the parts that exhibit simile characteristics. Next, the researcher read the novel in the target text and identified simile translations in the source text. After finding and listing similes in both texts, the researcher examined the simile content, focusing on the topic, vehicle (image), and point of similarity, and then compared the translations with the source text (ST). Furthermore, the researcher identified and classified them, analyzing the similes using Pierini's theory according to the research question. Finally, to evaluate the acceptability of the data, the researcher surveyed three respondents from the target reader who can understand both languages well by distributing a questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section will discuss the findings of this research about what similes are found in the novel, the simile translation strategy used by the translator, and the acceptability of the translation.

1. The Similes in The Scarlet Letter Novel

In the novel, 32 similes are categorized by their use of markers such as *like*, *as*, *as if*, *similar to*, *a sort of*, and *resemble*. Some similes contain two images in one comparison, allowing for the use of different markers. Among the 32 data, eighteen use *like*, nine use *as*, five use *as if*, and one use *resemble*. Two examples from each category will be presented as representatives.

a. Like

These are examples of two out of seventeen data that use *like*.

Datum 1

[Pearl] dancing up and down, like a little elf. (p. 73)

The use of the preposition *like*, as a simile marker in datum one above compares two distinct things—*Pearl* as the topic and *a little elf* as the vehicle—makes the simile (*Pearl*) *danced like a little elf* obvious. These two topics and vehicles share the similarity of being energetic and agile, similar to the popular perception of small fairies frequently depicted in mythology and stories. By explicitly comparing her dancing steps with something that shares such characteristics, the simile seeks to highlight the energy and agility of her movements. Thus, this simile supports the reader in imagining and experiencing the mood or feelings that the author is trying to express in addition to providing a bright and clear description of the dance moves.

b. As

Two data will be analyzed to represent the total nine data using *as* similes. The two data are as follows:

Datum 2

She resisted the impulse and set erect, pale as death (p. 73)

In the simile *She resisted the impulse and sat erect, pale as death*, we can identify that this is a simile because of the use of the preposition "as" which compares two different things: the physical condition "she" of a person as the topic with "death" as the vehicle. This comparison describes how pale her face is as the point of similarity, giving a strong visual impression of the emotional and physical intensity she is experiencing. This simile is used to emphasize extreme fear, shock, or stress that makes it seem as if she has lost all color in her face, like a dead person. By using this comparison, the author helps the reader

imagine how drastically her appearance has changed, emphasizing the severity of her situation and the feelings that come with it.

c. As if

In this part, five similes using the conjunction *as if* are identified. Two of these examples will be presented as representatives to illustrate how this conjunction is used as follows.

Datum 3

The minister started to his feet, gasping for breath, and clutching at his heart as if he would have torn it out of his bosom. (p. 144)

In this simile "The minister started to his feet, gasping for breath, and clutching at his heart as if he would have torn it out of his bosom," the topic described is "the minister," while the vehicle is "he would have torn it out of his bosom." The point of similarity describes the intensity and depth of feelings experienced by the minister, which shows a very strong pain or panic as if he would have torn out his heart because of his emotions. The conjunction that functions as a simile marker in this sentence is "as if," which shows a direct comparison between the minister's actions and more extreme ones, thus creating a strong image of his emotional and physical state.

d. Resemble

The following is simile data that uses the word *resemble* as a simile marker as well as a conjunction.

Datum 4

Excitement in her mood, resembling nothing so much as the shimmer of diamond, that the sparkles and flashes with the varied throbbing of the breast on which it is displayed. (p. 171)

The simile "Excitement in her mood, resembling nothing so much as the shimmer of diamond" uses the verb "resembling" as a sign word that signifies the comparison between "excitement in her mood" (topic) and "the shimmer of diamond" (vehicle). The point of similarity lies in the characteristic that both "sparkle and flash with varied throbbings", describing a bright and changeable mood similar to the sparkle of a diamond that shines with varying intensity as if following the rhythm of a heartbeat or deep feeling.

2. Simile Translation Strategy in The Scarlet Letter Novel

By focusing on these 32 data and then analyzing them from six strategies, only three strategies were found in the total data. 32 data with the most dominating ones using literal translation continuing with three replacements of a vehicle with a different vehicle and two reductions to its sense. Each strategy will be discussed with the respective data to represent the strategies used.

a. Literal translation by retention of the same vehicle

Similes from the source language are translated exactly as they are into the target language and for this strategy, twenty-two data were found and hence two of those data will be discussed:

Datum 5

ST: She was fair and pure as a lily that had bloomed in Paradise. (p. 165)

TT: *Gadis itu amat cantik dan murni seperti bunga lili yang mekar dikayangan.* (p. 176)

In the simile *She was fair and pure as a lily that had bloomed in Paradise*, which translates to "*Gadis itu amat cantik dan murni seperti bunga lili yang mekar di kayangan*," the translation strategy used is Literal Translation (Retention of the Same Vehicle). The strategy used can be identified as literal translation because the vehicle *lily that had bloomed in Paradise* is translated directly by keeping the same vehicle in the target language, which is "*bunga lili yang mekar di kayangan*." The translator retains the vehicles *Lily* and *Paradise* without major changes, which shows that the original imagery used by the author is retained. The structure of the original simile that uses explicit comparison with the preposition "as" is translated into *seperti*, showing that the comparative relationship between the two elements in the simile remains the same. By keeping the same vehicle, the aesthetic and figurative effect of the original simile is maintained, so that the target language reader can understand and imagine the same image as the reader of the original text. This literal translation shows loyalty to the original text by minimizing unnecessary interpretations or changes, ensuring the accuracy and authenticity of the source text is maintained in the target language.

b. Replacement of vehicle with a different vehicle

An attempt to maintain the desired effect, even if the specific comparison changes. Replace the vehicle from the source language with a different simile in the target language that has the same meaning or effect and is more suitable and two of the three data sets found using this strategy will be discussed.

Datum 6

ST: She resisted the impulse, and set erect, pale as death (p. 73)

TT: *ia menahan keinginannya, dan duduk tegak, sepucat mayat* (p. 65)

The strategy of replacing vehicles with different vehicles applied in the parable, it can be observed in the simile that *She resisted the impulse, and set erect, pale as death*, which translates to *ia menahan keinginannya, dan duduk tegak, sepucat mayat*. The focus of the translation of the image is *death* which is translated into *mayat* which is actually in Indonesian. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *death* means the process or act of dying, so the more appropriate translation in Indonesian is *kematian*. Meanwhile, in the translated text, *death* is translated as *mayat*, which in English is known as *corpse*, and according to the Cambridge Dictionary, it means a deceased body. Despite the change in figurative vehicle, this choice is still equivalent in conveying the meaning very pale appearance and is relevant in the cultural and visual context of the target language. Thus, this strategy allows the target language reader to get an aesthetic effect similar to that intended by the author, even though the vehicle used is different. This shows that the translator makes adaptations to maintain the clarity and relevance of the meaning in the target language without losing the essence of the figurative comparison.

c. Reduction of the simile to its sense

The simile is changed into a direct statement that conveys meaning or message without using figurative comparisons and in this strategy one datum out of two data were found which will represent this strategy as follows.

Datum 7

ST: You carry it off like an old hand. (p. 166)

TT: *Kau benar-benar mahir melakukannya*. (p. 179)

The translation strategy used is the reduction of the Simile to its Sense. This strategy reduces the elements of the original simile to simplify the comparison and convey the core meaning of the simile. In English, the comparison *like an old hand* (like an expert) is used to describe someone very experienced and skilled in doing something because they have done it often or repeatedly. The translator omits the *like an old hand* element of the comparison and directly states the core meaning with the sentence *Kau benar-benar mahir melakukannya*. Although the simile structure is removed, the meaning that someone is highly skilled is retained. This simplification helps maintain clarity and directness of meaning without losing the essence of the original simile, so this adaptation retains the figurative meaning in the cultural context of the target language.

3. The Acceptability of simile translation in The Scarlet Letter Novel

To find the acceptability of the simile data that has been collected, researchers have collected data through questionnaires that have been made and distributed to three respondents. With a rating scale of 3: Acceptable (translation that is deemed clear, culturally appropriate, and resonant with the target readers), 2: Less Acceptable (these translations, while linguistically accurate, may violate cultural norms or elicit discomfort), and 1: Not Acceptable (confusing translations, culturally inappropriate, or fail to convey the original meaning). Of the 32 data collected, the following is the percentage of acceptability:

Table
Translation Acceptability

Scale of Acceptability	Percentage of Acceptability	Frequency Percentage
Acceptable	29	90,6%

Less Acceptable	3	9,3%
Not Acceptable	0	0%
Total	32	100%

Here is some data as a form of interpretation that presents each assessment scale from three respondents.

a. Acceptable

As stated in the table above, 32 data points meet the acceptable level, and two of them will be described here as an example of the 30 data.

Datum 8

ST: She was fair and pure as a lily that had bloomed in Paradise (p. 165)

TT: *Gadis itu amat cantik dan murni seperti bunga lili yang mekar di kayangan* (p. 176)

This literal translation *Gadis itu amat cantik dan murni seperti bunga lili yang mekar di kayangan* is very accepted by the target reader's culture and it seems that not only in the target reader's culture because comparing the beauty or beauty of someone or something with a flower vehicle is common for many people, especially the use of the word *kayangan* which is very familiar to the target reader who is used to using it to describe the origin of beautiful things, so it is very acceptable and there are no words or phrases that are strange or violate the norms or culture of the target reader.

b. Less acceptable

From this scale, five data were found and the data will be discussed as a form of representation of this level of acceptability.

Datum 9

ST: Arthur Dimmesdale put forth his hand, chill as death (p. 143)

TT: *Arthur Dimmesdale mengulurkan tangannya yang sedingin mayat* (p. 150)

The translation *Arthur Dimmesdale mengulurkan tangannya yang sedingin mayat* may be common in Western culture. However, in Indonesian culture, this phrase is less acceptable. Comparing a living person to a dead person or a corpse is often seen as disrespectful and can cause discomfort. In Indonesian culture, death is a very sensitive topic that is treated with great respect, making such comparisons a violation of politeness norms. Therefore, while this translation is linguistically accurate, a more neutral phrase like *merasa sangat dingin* or *sedingin es* would be more appropriate. This choice demonstrates sensitivity to cultural norms, making it more acceptable to Indonesian readers.

CONCLUSION

The presence of various markers such as *like*, *as*, *as if*, and *resemble* demonstrates the richness of imagery in literature. Each simile creates vivid pictures, allowing readers to connect emotionally with the characters. Of 32 data found, four types were used as mentioned above. Of 32 data found, four types were used as mentioned above.

Translators generally use the strategy of literal translation by retaining the same vehicle to maintain the main meaning and image of the simile. With this strategy, the translator ensures that the essence of the original simile is maintained, even though the target language is adjusted. This helps to maintain the authenticity and impact of the simile in the translated text, not only through a literal translation strategy but also through the use of a replacement vehicle with a different vehicle strategy and reduction to its sense strategy.

Based on the analysis, the author frequently uses the simile marker *like* as a preposition to create explicit comparisons showing that the writer often prefers to use informal expressions that are easier to understand

but still possess strong emotional power, enhancing both imagery and emotional impact in the narrative. Translators frequently retain this feature by translating *like* into its Indonesian equivalent *seperti*, preserving the original intent and ensuring a smooth reading experience. The survey on the acceptability of these translations shows that they are generally well received; translations are deemed clear, culturally appropriate, and resonant with the target readers, as they maintain the core meaning and allow readers to experience similar effects as in the source text. However, three simile translations were found to be less acceptable to respondents due to being linguistically accurate but violating cultural norms or eliciting discomfort. To improve the acceptability of similes, translators may use paraphrasing to simplify the meaning and adjust the sentence structure to fit the target language pattern. Additionally, it is important to align the language style with the norms of the target language and apply adaptation strategies to overly complex similes, ensuring that the translation remains clear and easily accepted by readers.

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