

## STRATEGIES IN THE TRANSLATION OF REFUSAL EXPRESSIONS IN JOHN GREEN'S *PAPER TOWNS*

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**Abstrak.** This article examined about translation from English to Indonesian related to non-equivalence words on expression of refusal either directly or indirectly, and the using of translation strategies in adjusting non-equivalence. This study focused to expression of refusal either directly or indirectly in English on *Paper Towns* novel by John Green (2008) as a source of data. There are 33 total data, consists of 22 of expression of indirect refusal and 11 expression of direct refusal. Those data are analysed by descriptive qualitative method. The result shows that strategy used for solving non equivalence problem in this translation are seven (7): (1) translation by more general word, (2) translation by more neutral word, (3) translation by cultural substitution, (4) translation using a loan word, (5) translation by paraphrasing using a related word, (6) translation by paraphrasing using an unrelated word, and (7) translation by omission. From all those strategies, strategies five (5) is often used in the translation because there is no suitable expression in Indonesian from English.

**Keywords:** *non-equivalence, translation strategies, expressions of refusal*

### INTRODUCTION

Translation, a general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language to another, whether the language is in written or total form, whether the languages have established orthographies or not, or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with signs of the deaf (Brislin, 1976:1), is one of the most critical jobs in modern society. It is no longer just the process of translating words, but it has involved the transformation of meaning and intentions which leads to equivalence and non-equivalence as the translators may face different norms, cultures, settings, and traditions. Therefore, translating kinds of texts is a sort of challenge for the translators due to the difference matters between source language and target language. This occurs in

translating a novel in which translators face specific expressions as it is a creative writing.

In the aspect of equivalence, Baker (1992: 6-12) addresses the vexing issue of equivalence by adopting a more neutral approach when she argues that equivalence is a relative notion because it is influenced by a variety of linguistic and cultural factors. In particular, there are kinds of equivalence, that is, at the level of word, phrase, grammar, text and pragmatics. Hence, terms such as grammatical, textual and pragmatic equivalence come up. Furthermore, a distinction is made between word-level and above-world-level equivalence. However, in term of non-equivalence, she says that different kinds of non-equivalence require different strategies for some common problem, such as culture-specific concepts;

the source-language concept is not lexicalized in the target language; the source-language words is semantically complex; the source and target languages make different distinctions in meaning; the target language lacks a super ordinate; the target language lacks a specific term (hyponym); differences in physical or interpersonal perspective; difference in expressive meaning; differences in form; differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms; the use of loan words in the source text (Baker, 1992:20).

To solve the problems of non-equivalence, there are some strategies which can be used by translators. These strategies are proposed by Baker (1992: 26-38) through translation by more general word; translation by a more neutral/ less expressive word; translation by cultural substitution; translation using a loan word plus explanation; translation by paraphrase related word; translation by unrelated word; translation by omission; and translation by illustration.

The topic of the present study is translation of refusal from English into Indonesian. Refusal expressions are chosen as the subject because refusal in English can be in many forms, and this will be interesting to find the non-equivalence translation of English refusals, direct or indirect, into Indonesian. For the purpose of this study, the data are taken from John Green's *Paper Towns* (2008) and the Indonesian translation *Kota Kertas* (translated by Angelic Zaizai, 2014). Problems of the study are: (1) What are the types of refusal expressions which can be found in the English text of John Green's *Paper Towns*?, (2) What strategies are used to translate refusal expression in John Green's *Paper Towns*? This study is expected to be useful in giving some additional information about types of refusal expression, and the

translation strategies of refusal expressions from English into Indonesian.

Translation with equivalence means that parts of the source language correspond to the target language. This equivalence can be at different levels (Bakers, 1992: 12). Equivalence is one important key concept in translation, and awkwardness or miscommunication in TL (target language) text may be an indication of non-equivalence in the translation. Non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the SL (source text) (Baker, 1992:21). Different kinds of non-equivalence require different strategies, some very straightforward, and the other is more involved and difficult to deal with. Baker identifies some strategies used by professional translator for dealing with various types of non-equivalence.

Refusal expression in English is divided into two, direct refusal and indirect refusal. The direct refusal can be performative such as "I refuse...", and non-performative such as "no", "I can't...", "I don't think so ..." (Leech, 1996:215) Indirect refusals use statement of regret, wish, excuse, reason, explanation, statement of alternative, condition, and promise of future acceptance. (Arum: 2012)

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses qualitative research as the research produces the descriptive data (Cresswell (2008: 173). The data are taken from the novel entitled *Paper Towns* written by John Green (2008), and its Indonesian version with translated title *Kota Kertas*, translated by Angelic Zaizai (2012). There are 33 data and they are classified into 2 parts, 22 data of indirect refusal and 11 data of direct refusal.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Indirect Refusal

*Strategy 1: Translation by More General Word*

SL: Quentin : "We gotta go home,"

Margo : "I thought you closed your eyes when you died,"

TL: Quentin : "Kita harus pulang," (5, 18-19)

Margo : "Ku pikir kita memejamkan mata ketika mati,"

This data is a flashback when Quentin and Margo are still children. They find a man lying in Jefferson Park. The two of them try to assure whether he is already dead or still alive, but Quentin is not as brave as Margo, so he asks him to go home while Margo is trying to touch the blood in the man's body. Instead of listening to his command, she refuses him indirectly. Quentin's command to ask her to go home is a declarative command. Then, the way Margo to refuses his request by changing the topic of the conversation. She talks about how she thinks about when people die.

In the refusal expressions in SL, the text says "I thought you closed your eyes when you died" and the TL says "Ku pikir kita memejamkan mata ketika mati,". In this case the translation strategy which applied is translation by more general word. It can be seen that you as object changes to be more general object which can be referred to "kita". This kind of changing is considered as acceptable because it is not objective which only point on Quentin "you", but the translator shows that human beings close their eyes when they die. The translation of the whole sentence is lexically translated.

*Strategy 2: Translation by less expressive word*

SL: Radar : "Can we brainstorm over video games?"

Quentin : "I'm not really in the mood."  
(31, 7-11)

TL: Radar : "Yeah, oke. Apa kita bisa membahasnya sambil menonton video game?"

Quentin : "Aku tidak terlalu kepengin."

In the above conversation, radar asks Quentin to play the video game, but he says that he is not really in the mood. It shows that Quentin refuses Radar's request to play video game. He refuses it indirectly by describing his mood that time.

In the TL says "Aku tidak terlalu kepengin." "In the mood" is an idiomatic expression. According to Idiom dictionary "in the mood" means "dalam suasana hati yang cocok". In this case, the translator uses less expressive word strategy. The translator translates "in the mood" into "kepengin". The word "kepengin" is a colloquial since it is not formal. In Indonesian, the word "kepengin" comes from the word "menginginkan". According to KBBI, the word "menginginkan" means having a desire to do something. The word "kepengin" is more acceptable by the reader in the TL.

*Strategy 3: Translation by cultural substitution*

SL: Quentin : "If you don't like them anymore, just hanging out with me. My friends are actually, like, nice."

Margo : "I'm afraid it's not possible,"  
(81, 25-28)

TL: Quentin : "Kalau kau tidak suka pada mereka, nongkrong saja denganku. Teman-temanku baik kok."

Margo : "Sayangnya itu tidak mungkin"

This data shows the situation in which Margo will come back to her house.

The illocutionary in Quentin's imperative expression is that he wants Margo to hang out with Quentin's friends instead of her friend. He says the possibility that Margo will stop liking her friends anymore is a manner to ask her. He also emphasizes that his friends are actually nice.

In the TL says "I'm afraid it's not possible" in the sentence is translated to be "*Sayanganya itu tidak mungkin*". The translator translate "I'm afraid" to be *sayanganya* rather than "*saya takut*". In Indonesian, the words "*sayanganya*" and "*takut*" show that those mean the impossibility to do something. Further, the word "*sayanganya*" is a common expression in Indonesian to express impossibility. So, the translation strategy which is used by translator is translation by cultural substitution since the word "*sayanganya*" is commonly used by Indonesian. The translation is equivalent since it is translated with the same meaning. Then, "it's not possible" is equivalently translated because in the TL, the meaning does not change.

*Strategy 4: Translation using a loan word*

**SL:** Mom : "Well, there's no harm in just going with a friend. I'm sure you could ask Cassie Hiney."

Quentin : "It's not just that I don't like prom. I also don't like people who like prom," (11 (22-23), 12 (3-4))

**TL:** Mom : "*Yah, kan tidak ada ruginya pergi bersama seorang teman. Aku yakin kau bisa mengajak Cassie Hiney.*"

Quentin : "*Aku bukan saja tidak suka prom. Aku juga tidak suka orang menyukai prom.*"

The context of the above datum is about Quentin and his mom who have a small

conversation while driving him to school. His mom asks him to attend the prom with a friend and she indirectly suggests him to ask Cassie to go with him. On the contrary of his mom's request, he says that he does not like the prom, but also does not like people who like prom. The illocutionary of his answer is that he refuses his mom's suggestion. The indirect refusal is applied to refuse his mom's suggestion. His indirect refusal is followed by the explanation.

In the TL, the refusal says "*Aku bukan saja tidak suka prom. Aku juga tidak suka orang menyukai prom.*" The translation of the text is equivalently translated but the translator uses loan word in this translation too. The loan word which is applied by the translator is "prom". According to online KBBI, the word "prom" means "*pesta dansa*", but the translator still uses the word "prom" because it is more acceptable since it is a young-adult novel and the word 'prom' is commonly used by the teenager in Indonesia.

*Strategy 5: Translation by paraphrase using related word*

**SL:** Quentin : "No, don't blow the air horn,"

Margo : "I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you. What was that?"

**TL:** Quentin : "*Jangan bunyikan klakson angin,*" (34, 13)

Margo : "*Sori, aku tak bisa mendengarkanmu. Apa katamu?*"

In the conversation, Quentin Jacobsen gives Margo a command not to blow the air horn, but Margo refuses it plays the one who refuses' it. The conversation happens when they are shopping some stuff to fulfill Margo's plan in Wal-Mart. And then, in boating supplies, Margo finds an air horn. She takes it out of the box and holds it up in the air. Quentin tries to stop her by requesting to

not blow it but Margo refuses indirectly. Margo absolutely knows that Quentin commands her not to blow the air honk, but she cuts his command off by honking the air honk while he is talking. Right after it, she pretends that she does not hear what Quentin is talking to refuse his command. It can be seen that Margo refuses Quentin's command through indirect way.

In the TL, the refusal is "*Sori, aku tak bisa mendengarkanmu. Apa katamu?*" The translator uses loan word strategy. "I'm sorry" is translated into "*sori*" only. *Sori* is a loan word from English. "*Sori*" according to KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia) means "*maaf*". The pronunciation of the word "sorry" and the word "*sori*" is similar, but the spellings are different. Refusal I'm sorry should be translated to be "*Aku minta maaf*", but the translator makes it simpler because it is informal conversation. Then, the expression "What was that?" means "*apa itu*", but the translator translates it to be "*apa katamu?*" because the word "itu" can refer to an object. So, it can be concluded that the translator uses paraphrase using related word since it is still related to the context. This translation is more acceptable in the TL.

*Strategy 6: Translation using an unrelated word*

- SL:** Ben : "Quentin ... I'm not asking you to abandon the search. I'm asking you to come to a party with your two best friends who you have known for half your life. I'm asking you to spend two to three hours drinking sugary wine coolers ..."
- Quentin : "I've got to go to this last place and then I'll be over." (210 (29-30), 211 (1-8))

**TL:** Ben : "*Quentin .. Aku bukan memintamu meninggalkan pencarian itu. Aku memintamu datang ke pesta dengan dua sahabat yang kaukenal selama separuh hidupmu. Aku memintamu melewati dua sampai tiga jam menenggak wine cooler manis ...*"

Quentin : "*Aku harus pergi ke tempat terakhir ini dulu, setelahnya aku mampir.*"

The above conversation is when Ben is in the prom, but Quentin is too busy to look for Margo. Ben calls him and invites him to come to the party. He says that he just wants Quentin to attend the party with Radar and him. Quentin does not care Ben's request. He says that he should go to the last place and promise him that he will come there later. Quentin refuses to come and prefers to find Margo rather than go to prom. His promise does not mean he will come, but it is expressed to support his refusal and the promise he says in order to not hurt Ben's feeling.

In the SL says "I've got to go to this last place and then I'll be over." Then the TL says "*Aku harus pergi ke tempat terakhir ini dulu, setelahnya aku mampir.*" In the translation of refusal expression above, there is an addition the word "dulu". According to online KBBI, the word "*dulu*" is based on the word "*dahulu*" which is used to sequence of activity. Then, the word "over" is translated into "*mampir*". Accordance with Echols and Shadily, the word "over" (adv) means *menuju ke/di sisi lain; di atas; lebih; selesai; sisa; lagi; sudah*. The translator uses paraphrase using unrelated word because the word "over" and "*mampir*" are not related.

*Strategy 7: Translation by omission*

**SL:** Margo : "I need your car,"  
 Quentin : "I don't have a car," (25,13)  
**TL:** Margo : "Aku butuh mobilmu,"  
 Quentin : "Aku tidak punya X, "

In the above data, Margo asks Quentin to lend her a car, but she does not use a question. She tries to borrow a car by saying that she needs a car. The way she expresses her want is indirectly. Quentin refuses what Margo wants because he does not have a car. The car is owned by his parents. He expresses it directly. Quentin says "I don't have a car" to tell Margo that he definitely does not have a car. Refusal strategy which is used by Quentin is based on reality that the car is not his, but his parents'.

In the SL, Quentin says "I don't have a car," but in the TL the words "a car" are not translated, so the refusal in target language changes into "*aku tidak punya.*" Translation strategy which is applied by the translator to translate the refusal expression is omission. The object is omitted in the sentence because it has already known that the two of them are talking about car. And in Indonesian, it is common not to state the object.

### Direct Refusal

Direct refusal is expressed by the speaker by using a refusal expression which has function as the main refusal. In this study, it is found 11 data of direct refusal. The data is non-performative expression which formed of expression by saying "no" followed by the reason or explanation from the speaker. In this part, there are 4 strategies used; those are strategy 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

*Strategy 2: Translation by less expressive word*

**SL:** Margo : "No, it's not a felony or no you won't help?"

Quentin : "I won't help. Can you enlist some of your underlings to drive you around?" (26, 16-18)  
**TL:** Margo : "*Tidak itu bukan kejahatan atau tidak takkan membantuku?*"  
 Quentin : "*Tidak aku takkan membantu. Tidak bisakah kau menyuruh beberapa asistenmu untuk mengantarmu kemana-mana?*"

The context of the above conversation is when Margo wants Quentin to help her to complete her mission. That conversation can show that Margo assures Quentin that it is not kind of crime, and she asks him whether he wants to help him or not. Quentin directly says that he will not help her, and he offers another to Margo in order to ask her others friends.

In this datum, the translation strategies of the refusal expression used are paraphrase using related word and translation by less expressive word. There is significant difference when it is translated to Indonesia. In the SL, Quentin just says "I won't help" to shows his direct refusal, but there is an addition in his refusal. In the TL, it changes to be "*Tidak aku tidak akan membantu.*" The addition of the word "*tidak*" is kind of emphasizing that he refuses her. Then, the translation of alternative statement which is said by Quentin is literally translated but there is a little change. In the SL says "Can you enlist some of your underlings to drive you around?", and in the TL changes to be "*Tidak bisakah kau menyuruh beberapa asistenmu untuk mengantarmu kemana-mana.*" The word "Can" which has positive meaning is translated into "*Tidak bisakah*" that changes to have negative meaning. According to Echols and Shadily "underlings" means "*bawahan*", but he translator translates it into "*asisten*". Both the words have related meaning but the word

"*bawahan*" is more general than the word "*asisten*". In this case, the translation strategy used is less expressive meaning because of using more specific word. And the rest of the sentence is equivalently translated.

*Strategy 3: Translation by cultural substitution*

**SL:** Mom : "Want to watch?" "They're about to crack the case."

Quentin : "No, thanks," (133, 22-25)

**TL:** Mom : "*Mau ikut nonton?*" "*Mereka hampir menyelesaikan kasusnya.*"

Quentin : "*Tidak, trims,*"

The above conversation is when Quentin about to go bed, but his mother asks him to watch the television. His mothers talks about investigation drama series. But Quentin refuses her directly by saying no and it is followed by thanking. In the SL, the refusal expression is "No, thanks," and it is translated into "*tidak, trims*" The translator tries to follow the writing style of "thanks" and tries to resemble the function of the colloquial, so it is translated to be "*trims*" instead of "*terima kasih*". The word "*Trims*" is a colloquial in Indonesia and it is commonly used by teenager, so the choice of the word is right because it is young-adult novel. So, the translation strategy which applied is cultural substitution which focuses more on sub-culture.

*Strategy 4: Translation using a loan word*

**SL:** Quentin : "Then I'll come over to your house. How soon?"

Ben : "Bro, you can't come over here ... I'll just see you tomorrow at school." (190, 19-22)

**TL:** Quentin : "*Kalau begitu, aku ke rumahmu. Seberapa cepet?*"

Ben : "*Bro, kau tidak boleh kesini ... Kita bertemu besok saja di sekolah.*"

The context of datum DR8 is that Quentin asks Ben to come to his house because he finds some new clues from Margo, but it is rejected by Ben in the previous conversation. Then, Quentin says that he will come to Ben's house but Ben is too tired that he directly refuses Quentin's will. Ben makes a promise to meet him in the school in the next day.

Ben's refusal expression is translated by applying loan word and general word strategies. The loan word is "bro". "I'll just see you tomorrow at school". In the TL, it is translated to be "*Kita akan bertemu besok di sekolah*". The word "I" is translated into the word "*kita*". It means the translator simplifies the subject "I" and the object "you" to be the word *kita* (we).

*Strategy 5: Translation by paraphrasing using a related word*

**SL:** Margo : "Everything's uglier close up,"

Quentin : "Not you," (57, 16-17)

**TL:** Margo : "*Semuanya terlihat jelek dari dekat,*"

Quentin : "*Tapi kau tidak,*"

The above conversation is when Quentin and Margo in SunTrust building see their city in the night. Margo says that everything in this world is made from paper. She has opinion that the city looks beautiful because it is far away from their eyes. Margo believes that everything is uglier when it is close up. Soon, Quentin refuses her opinion by saying that she is the only exception.

The refusal expression in the SL says "Not you" and it becomes "*Tapi kau tidak,*" According to online KBBI, the word "*tapi*" is

used to express something which is contradicted against other's opinion. In this case, the translation strategy used is paraphrase using related word because the translator adds the word "tapi" to emphasize the refusal.

*Strategy 6: Translation by paraphrasing an unrelated word*

**SL:** Margo : "We gotta check on our progress. And the best place to do that is from the top of the SunTrust Building."

Quentin : "Nope. No. No way. You said no breaking and entering." (54, 17-21)

**TL:** Margo : "Kita harus memeriksa kemajuan pekerjaan kita. Dan tempat terbaik untuk melakukannya adalah dari puncak SunTrust Building."

Quentin : "Enak saja. Tidak. Tidak. Katamu tidak ada membobol masuk."

In the above datum DR1 describes about Margo's plan to check their progress in doing their 11 missions in the top of SunTrust Building which is the highest building in Orlando. Indirect request is implemented by Margo to ask Quentin to go to the SunTrust Building. Her command is considered as declarative command. Her will does not run well because Quentin refuses what she wants. In this case, he refuses her in direct way. He says "Nope. No. No way. You said no breaking and entering.", this direct refusal is non-performative but it is followed by a reason. He emphasizes that he refuses Margo's idea by expressing "no" for three times; nope, no and no way and in the last is the explanation of his reason.

In this case, the refusal expression is translated by applying paraphrase using

unrelated word strategy. It can be seen how the translator transfer the word "nope" to be "enak saja". According to Echols and Shadily, "nope" means *tidak*, *nggak*, and *kagak*. Expression "enak saja" shows an unwillingness to do something which has strong refusal. Indonesian young-adult people usually use that expression to refuse the addressee instead of "tidak." This datum is taken from young-adult novel, so it can be the reason why the translator finally decides to use that. Then, Quentin's reason which is attached in the refusal expression is translated by using the word paraphrasing.

### CONCLUSION

The research shows that there are seven (7) strategies used to translate the non-equivalence in the Indonesian translation of English refusal expression in John Green's *Paper Towns* (2008), especially for indirect refusal, and five (5) for direct refusal. The strategies are: (1) translation by more general word which is used when the translator might think that general word is more appropriate and acceptable in the target language as the translation refers to a common opinion. (2) translation by more neutral or less expressive word, which is used when the translator found that there is no similar word in target language but equivalent in different expressive meaning. (3) translation by cultural substitution, that is the use of word in target language showing the culturally common expression. (4) translation using a loan word, that is the word in source language having been used in target language. (5) translation by paraphrasing using a related word, that is the use of different form but has the similar meaning. (6) translation by paraphrasing using an unrelated word, that the use of words in the target language which are not lexicalized but understood. (7) translation by omission, that



is when the word is unnecessary to be translated but does not change the sense in the target language. In this research, it seems the translator uses translation by paraphrasing using related word frequently.

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