

## A Critical Review of the Indonesian Translation of "Be a Coronavirus Fighter"

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to offer criticism on an Indonesian translation of "Be a Coronavirus Fighter." The book is one of the children's literature collections that discusses how children should view the pandemic and protect themselves from the virus. The study employed a systematic evaluation based on Berman's methods by comparing the English and Indonesian text versions. The Indonesian translation was done by Emil Salim, a well-known figure in the translation industry. At a macro level, high adherence was found in text function consistencies, catering to educating young readers about the virus and its effects. At a micro level, however, some expressions were translated in adult-level and less-contemporary language. A conclusion can be drawn that it should use a more contemporary children's language level to represent the original text better.

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**Keywords:** children's literature translation; COVID-19; critical review.

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### 1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the pandemic, children literary authors have written numerous books on the virus and how it affects people's lives globally. Most of the books maintain the standard requirements of children's books, which are, among others, to educate and entertain the audience. Various institutions, including UNICEF and WHO, collaborate to produce informational texts that would teach the children about better self-care against COVID-19 through various children's literature and activity books. Moreover, collaborations among the established institutions and volunteers increase to expand the works into different languages due to the pandemic's global impact.

One of the concerns in translating children's literature is maintaining the same reading experience for the audience in their respective languages. The works should not lose any information in the reading process and simultaneously create the same nuance familiar to the readers. Thus, there seem to be three fundamental issues to address for a translated children's book to be successful: intent, information, and nuance. A critical review may provide insight into the issues, and the research assumes that Berman's translation criticism methodology would serve effectively to analyze the Indonesian translation of "Be a Coronavirus Fighter."

### 2. Literature review

#### Berman's Methodology of Translation Criticism

According to Berman (in Davies, 2013), translation criticism methods might be equal in numbers as translation theories. To distinguish his method from the others, he referred to it as "an analytical course," emphasizing that it can be "modulated according to the immediate objectives of a research and adapted to all structured text styles."

He further recommended engaging in the following steps to generate a practical translation critique. The critic should first "read and re-read the translation," deferring judgment until they have seen the original text. The critique should treat the translation as an individual text, attempting to decide its purpose, meaning, and style. Then, the latter should be read objectively to discover problematic "textual segments" worthy of discussion. The reading process should provide adequate content for the translation's strengths and weaknesses compared to the original text.

The second stage entails the reading of the source text. The criticism should provide an alternative way to investigate the translator's actions with a clearer perspective by maintaining the translation in mind. It should be able to evaluate the features of the former to compare the text's relationships within the culture in which it was formed and the formal elements that may trigger conflicts in the translation process, stylistic features, and the contextual elements it conveys. The critique would be able to make a detailed review and assessment after this pre-analysis is done.

The third step is to retrace the steps of the translator. From whatever source they may find (translator's prefaces, posts, interviews, readers' or critics' views on the translator), the criticism should have a clear understanding of the translator's education, cultural history, the languages he or she works with, his or her previous works, the system he or she uses, his or her ideological standpoint, and previous experiences. This knowledge will assist the criticism in better understanding the translator's choices and method of translation (whether he or she chose to translate faithfully, literally, or openly, as well as his or her intentions to be invisible or visible, and so on), as well as the translation project and process as a whole.

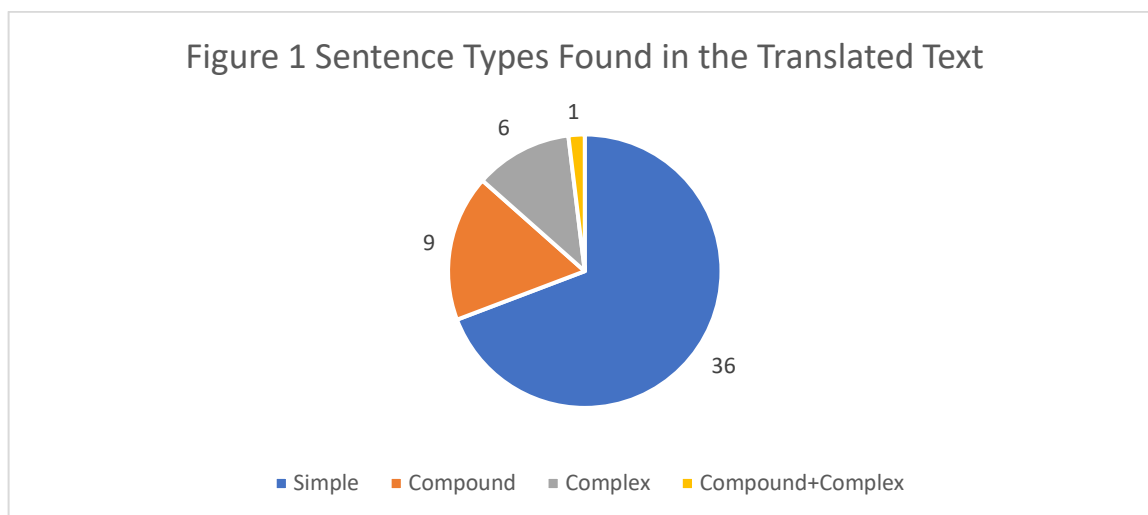
The next stage is the comparative analysis while highlighting the need to avoid "error search." Instead, it should focus on the 'problematic' and 'successful' textual elements in translation for suggestions for improvements. It is important to note that the critique's role is to provide an impartial and thorough analysis of the translation to give the reader an idea. The final step is to evaluate the translation's reception in the target culture and decide if it serves its purpose. Finally, the translation's success and acceptability or adequacy are mentioned, and if it is found to be insufficient, a better translation may be provided. Readers, translators, and translation researchers can gain a new viewpoint with the aid of such critique.

### 3. Analyses

The original and the translated books of "Be A Coronavirus Fighter" are made available for free by the Yeehoo Press, a book printing company based in Los Angeles, California, USA. The company partners with Shanghai Yihe Industrial Co, Ltd. Its bookstore website provides commercial and free books to download in PDF, offering the same layout as its printed counterpart.

#### 1. TRANSLATION

The storybook is easy to follow. Simple sentence type dominated the rest of sentence types found (36 sentences), with 9, 6, and 1 sentences belonging to compound, complex, and compound+complex constructions, respectively.



Most of the text allows literal translation since most of the terms are general and already have equivalents. However, some expressions required reconsideration of the method used for three frequent issues: contemporary versus conventional translation, faithful translation, and language level.

The first issue to address is the choice of expression to represent generalization related to how contemporary translation is. Some segments of the translation tended to use the conventional word repetition to indicate plural nouns, such as 'orang-orang' (people), 'perjalanan-perjalanan' (trips), and 'tetangga-tetangga' (neighbors). In the contemporary grammar of Bahasa Indonesia, general items are increasingly translated as singular nouns. Referring to the previous examples, an alternative to the stated translation would be 'orang,' 'perjalanan,' and 'tetangga.' This is a case of the loyal translation techniques that adhere to the equivalence of plural terms in the target language.

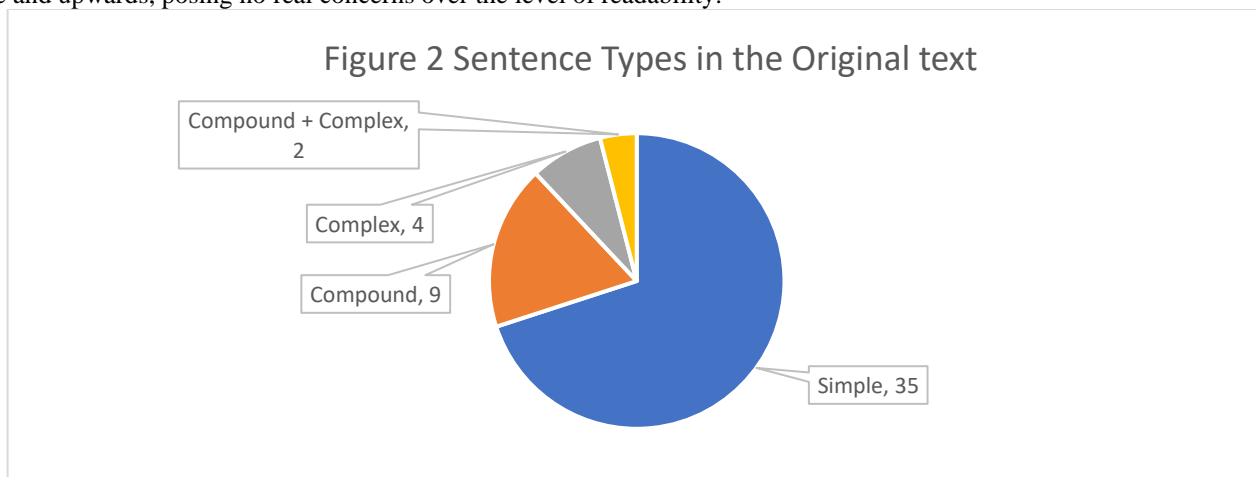
Another advancement in the Indonesian language is the effort to reduce redundancy. For example, the translation 'masih tetap' individually can have the meaning of 'still' and have no idiomatic meaning when combined.

Another case of loyal translation and redundancy is found in sentence construction. For example, the translation ‘Pakai masker jika kamu pergi ke sebuah tempat dalam ruangan yang tertutup’ may be simplified to ‘Pakai masker saat kamu berada di dalam ruangan tertutup’ which provides a less complex comprehension process due to less words to deal with. Another example would be ‘memiliki banyak kesenangan’ when ‘bersenang-senang’ would suffice.

The next issue is the level of language used for translation. There are segments where the language could be more conversational than formal. An example is ‘Apakah virus corona itu?’ instead of ‘Virus corona itu apa ya?’

## 2. THE ORIGINAL TEXT

The original text is dominated by simple sentences (70%), followed by compound (18%), complex (8%), and compound-complex sentences (4%). All words besides "COVID-19" are daily words suitable for the pre-school age and upwards, posing no real concerns over the level of readability.



It starts the reading engagement by being more conversational in the delivery. For example, it used the informal 'mom' and 'dad' to refer to parents. The rest of the text emphasized its informational type, where scientific terms such as 'COVID-19' are introduced and given their definition at the beginning. The vocabulary is maintained primarily at familiar terms for the young reader age group.

Illustrations on each page also provide additional information to comprehend the text. For example, there are pictures of the virus that are representative of the actual images found under a microscope.

Each page contains no more than three sentences, which also contributes to the lower level of readability.

## 3. THE TRANSLATOR

Emil Salim is a senior lecturer in Philosophy at the Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Reformed Indonesia. Additionally, he is a recognized translator and writer in various fields such as Christian religious studies, economics, and politics. Most of the books he wrote or translated are for adult readers, which may explain a higher language style tendency than that of children.

He has also written books on various topics in his first language and translated them into English. It may also be the cause of the mature language level that infrequently appeared in the book's translation in question.

## 4. THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This section provides examples of successful and problematic text segments.

The translation plays the informative function, as does the original text.

Source	Target
..., hug our neighbors...	...memeluk tetangga-tetangga kita...

In the target text's culture, it is uncommon for neighbors who are not related to hug each other. An alternative translation would be "berkumpul dengan tetangga" ("to be with our neighbors"), which may be the generalized technique to include hugging (when appropriate) as part of the activities while being with neighbors.

Source	Target
...and <b>share</b> this beautiful world together with all people, <b>near and far</b> .	...dan <b>menikmati</b> dunia yang indah ini bersama semua orang, <b>yang dekat dan yang jauh</b> .

The above segments have two points for discussion. The first one is the use of 'menikmati' to translate 'share' instead of 'berbagi.' The technique used here is the specification of 'share' which the translator took the meaning a step deeper to the consequence of sharing, which in this case is enjoyment.

The second point is the irregularity in word order. The order of 'near and far' is commonly non-interchangeable, and the conventional Indonesian translation is 'jauh dan dekat.'

Source	Target
The new coronavirus disease is called COVID-19. 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease.	Penyakit virus corona baru ini disebut COVID-19. 'CO' adalah singkatan untuk 'corona', VI untuk 'virus', dan 'D' untuk <i>disease</i> (penyakit).

The segment above showed how the translator made the maneuver of using the term in the source language 'disease' and produced its equivalent 'penyakit' in brackets. The intention here was to maintain the spelling consistency and explain the step indirectly by introducing the target language word with the same meaning. Therefore, it did not evoke any discussion of how the disease's name should be spelled in the target language.

#### 4. Conclusion

The book "Be a Coronavirus Fighter" is a light but informative reading for children and early readers. The language used in the source text is adequately comprehensible, and there are almost no culture-specific words that may obstruct smooth transition into the target language. It may also contribute to equivalents' direct use in the target language since the terms and expressions used are common.

However, there is a need for extra care in choosing the expressions and vocabulary suitable for the readers in the target language. The translator needs to think and convey information like the intended audience so that, while maintaining the accuracy of the information, they can adhere to the text's entertainment purpose, which children's literary works entail.

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