



**EnJourMe (English Journal of Merdeka):  
Culture, Language, and Teaching of English**

Journal homepage: <http://jurnal.unmer.ac.id/index.php/enjourme/index>

## Challenges in translating English wordplays into Indonesian: An annotated translation of Paperboy novel by Vince Vawter

Adani Nur Sabrina\*

Department of English Literature, Faculty of Letters and Cultures, Gunadarma University, Jln. Margonda Raya No. 100, 16424, Depok, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author: [adaninursabrina@staff.gunadarma.ac.id](mailto:adaninursabrina@staff.gunadarma.ac.id)

### ARTICLE INFO

Received 22 February 2024

Accepted 14 March 2024

Available online

Available 31 July 2024

#### Keywords:

*Annotated translation, puns,  
translation strategies, wordplay*

**DOI:** 10.26905/enjourme.v9i1.12446

#### How to cite this article

**(APA Style):**

Sabrina, A. (2024). Challenges in translating English wordplays into Indonesian: An annotated translation of Paperboy novel by Vince Vawter. *EnJourMe (English Journal of Merdeka): Culture, Language, and Teaching of English*, 9(1) 1-17, doi: <https://doi.org/10.26905/enjourme.v9i1.12446>

### ABSTRACT

Wordplays are fun and pleasurable, yet challenging for translators. The researcher translated the Paperboy novel by Vince Vawter and found many wordplays in it. In this research, the researcher aims to find the various wordplays contained in the novel, determine at what level of language the wordplays are, classify the wordplay into the appropriate taxonomy, and find out the most suitable translation strategy for each wordplay. The methods used are introspective and retrospective. The results of this research show that there are 26 data of wordplays that cover 3 lexical plays, 19 sound plays, and 4 visual plays. In terms of taxonomy, those data cover 7 homonyms, 7 paronyms, 5 malapropisms, 6 rhymes, and 1 eggcorn. The translation strategies used are 19 wordplay to wordplay, 3 wordplay ST to wordplay TT, 1 wordplay to non-wordplay, 1 non-wordplay to wordplay, and 2 editorial techniques. Based on the most used translation strategies, i.e. wordplay to wordplay, it can be seen that even though wordplays are challenging, they are not totally impossible to translate.

© 2024EnJourMe. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

In language, both spoken and written, wordplay plays an interesting role. By using wordplay, language becomes more fun and, in some cases, humorous. ʔyœko (2017) stated that wordplay has been around for a long time, even as old as the existence of language itself. He also added that, as time goes by, wordplay is known in two terms, namely *traductio* and *adnominatio*. *Traductio* here can be seen as a form of repetition, and according to Kjerkegaard (2011, as cited in ʔyœko, 2017), *traductio* does not resemble the wordplay we understand today. On the other hand, it is *adnominatio*

that represents our understanding of wordplay which is also known as *paronomasia* or *pun* (Baldick 1954 as cited in Yœko, 2017). The use of wordplay can be found in a wide variety of situations, from literary texts to messages in advertising (Winter-Froemel et al., 2018) .

Culler (ed., 2005) also used the terms *paronomasia* and *adnomination* to refer to figures closely related to modern puns:

... a figure in which, by means of a modification of sound, or change of letters, a close resemblance to a given verb or noun is produced, so that similar words express dissimilar things ... (p. 5)

The *Paperboy* novel by Vince Vawter (2013) contains a lot of wordplay because the main character, Victor Vollmer the Third, who was more often called the Little Man, suffered from a stutter when speaking. This often required him to look for other words that were easier to pronounce.

Word games were not only played by the Little Man himself, but also by several other characters, such as the Little Man's best friend who liked to change terms, the Little Man's mother who often had difficulty in finding the right words, and the housemaid of the Little Man's family who had a dialect typical of her native region.

Although pleasurable, wordplay is a real challenge for translators because as Bassnett (2002) pointed out, translation does not only involve transferring meaning or message but also conveying it with a similar structure. The problem is, that the source language does not always have the same structure as the target language. What is more, in translating wordplay, the translator must also convey it in the form of wordplay as much as possible. Newmark (1988) stated that the more wordplay (and other language sources), the more difficult the text is to translate. However, Delabatista (1997, as cited in Mustonen, 2016) argued that even though many authors state that wordplay translation is impossible, in fact, many translators have succeeded in doing so. Wedhowerti et al. (2020) also cited Delabatista that wordplays are inclined to untranslatability. To translate wordplays, one should pay attention to a manifold of linguistic features, the kind of text, the cultural background, and the context of the text itself (Prihatini, 2022). Translating wordplay is indeed intricate, but it is significant to endeavour for the sake of the reader's enjoyment (Kembaren, 2020), the message of the author's work, as well as the translator's credibility.

In this research, the researcher also acts as the translator for the *Paperboy* novel which was published in 2021 by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama. Even though there are many challenges faced by the researcher during the translation process, the researcher limits the scope to only wordplay translation because it is the most difficult problem. Therefore, this study aims to find the various challenges of wordplay contained in the novel, determine at what level of language the wordplays are, classify the wordplays into the appropriate taxonomy, and find out the most suitable translation strategy for each wordplay.

The researcher considers this research necessary because wordplays are prevalent in various English texts which require translators to convey messages with the same meaning and style. By examin-

ing as well as providing plausible identification and strategies to this matter, the researcher hopes to provide alternative approaches or resources for translators specifically or the readers in general who are also interested in similar topics.

Several researchers have carried out research on the topic of wordplay, one of them is Sulistyowati (2017). Quite similar to the current research, she also analyzed the translation strategies for wordplays, but she did not classify the wordplay levels of language. She also categorized the types of wordplays, but the theory she used was different from the current research. Her research applied Delabatista's wordplay types, while the current research implemented the taxonomy suggested by ŷyœko (2017). The reason why the researcher used ŷyœko's theory is that it has a broader categorization and is more up-to-date. In addition, the source of data she used was Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* novel, meanwhile, the researcher used a novel titled *Paperboy* by Vince Vawter. Setyaningsih and Antaniami (2019) discussed the translation of wordplays in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*. Similar to Sulistyowati's, they also used Delabatista's theory added with Leech's. Fithri (2019) conducted similar research to previous two pieces of research with the same theories of wordplay classification and translation strategies. Fithri's source of data was taken from subtitles of television series which is different from the current research that used written text in a novel. Moreover, Dwipuspita & Wediyantoro (2023) also conducted a research on translation strategies in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* translated drama script viewed from the romance perspective. Dwipuspita & Wediyantoro analyzed the translation strategies used by the translator to translate the figurative language. The major difference between this research and the three previous research is while the other researchers analyzed the translation that has been done by other people, the current research analyzed the researcher's translation herself; therefore, the reason for choosing the Indonesian equivalents will be accurately discussed without any presumption.

### Wordplay Taxonomy

According to Pope (2002) , wordplay can be found at five levels of language. The first level is *sound play*, which is related to phonology. At this level, the sound of a word or phrase becomes "a source of pleasure", for instance, repetition or variations of other sounds, such as rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and so on. The second is *visual play*. At this level, wordplay occurs within the scope of letters, shapes, spaces, or colors. The pleasure can be seen in punctuation, font type, font size, or other patterns. Next, there is the *lexical play* that occurs when a word game happens within the lexical or word scope. Lexical plays are often found in word games, such as scrabble and crosswords. The next level is in the realm of grammatical structure, which is referred to as *structural play*. This kind of play provides a pleasure that occurs in a broader linguistic structure; it can even cover the entire text. The fifth level is *contextual and intertextual play*. The pleasure plays based on the context or when a text is sited and differently cited.

Wordplay can also be classified in a taxonomy range. Various experts put forward different categorizations. This study will use the categorization initiated by ŷyœko (2017) , which divided wordplay into eight (8) taxonomies.

1) Polysemy

Polysemy is when a word or phrase has more than one meaning but is still related in senses. Schroter (as cited in Primanda et al., 2021) defined polysemy as a play on words that leads to the acquisition of other meanings, expanding the word's initial and fundamental meaning.

2) Homonymy

Homonymy refers to words that have the same spelling and pronunciation, but different meanings. Related to homonymy, there are homophones and homographs. Homophones are words that have identical pronunciation but have different spelling and meaning, while homographs are identical in spelling but different in pronunciation and meaning. De Vries and Verheij (edited by Delabatista, 2014) suggested another subtype i.e., paronymy, which means “the use of words with only a slight difference in the surface form”. Schröter (2005) also said that paronymy is one of the puns whose items are similar, but not identical whether on the phonetic or graphemic level. Thus, we can say that paronymy is in contrast with homonymy which is identical both in spelling and pronunciation.

3) Parody

Parody is the use of a saying, proverb, or idiom by making it have a new meaning. An example of a parody is a snowclone, which is a template of words that can be adapted to the context in which it is being discussed. Hornby stated that parody which is derived from Greek *parodia* means a written work intentionally crafted to amuse by taking a pattern of the writing style previously made by other people (as cited in Humanika et al., 2020).

4) Malapropisms

Malapropism is an error in using a word or phrase that is similar to the word or phrase actually meant. According to Ritchie (2004, as cited in ꞑyøeko, 2017), malapropisms are generally not intentional humor but are uttered out of ignorance or slip of the tongue. This term is derived from Mrs. Malaprop character in Sheridan's play with the title of *The Rival*. Mrs. Malaprop tended to say the incorrect forms of the words that sounded akin to the one she intended to say (Wang & Chen, 2021).

5) Eggcorns

Eggcorns are somewhat similar to malapropism, which is using words or phrases that sound similar to the original. The difference is that eggcorn is related to the speaker's dialect, and, although the meaning of the word used may differ, the word is still acceptable in the intended context. Geoffrey Pullum coined the term *eggcorn* to make reference to a particular form of the linguistic slip where a word or phrase is switched to another that has similarity in phonetics yet still semantically makes sense (Reddy, 2009).

6) Rhymes

A rhyme is a series of two or more words that sound alike or identical. Rhyme is usually found at the end of a word, like okey-dokey, but alliteration can also be considered a form of a rhyme. Furthermore, Lethbridge and Mildorf (as cited in Anggraheni, 2023) categorized rhymes into three forms: *full rhyme* (bright/sight), *rich rhyme* (stick/fantastic), and *half-rhyme* such as in consonance, assonance, and eye-rhyme.

#### 7) Spoonerisms

A spoonerism occurs when a person switches the sounds of two different words, such as *a blushing crow* becoming *a crushing blow*. Al-Ezzi (2024) argued that spoonerism is categorized as a type of paronymy.

#### 8) Neologisms

Baldick (2001, as cited in ʻyœko, 2017), defined neologism as “a word or phrase newly invented or newly introduced into a language”.

### Translation Strategies for Wordplay

During the translation process, the researcher who is also the translator cognitively looked for appropriate strategies to produce a good translation. According to Jääskeläinen (1993, as cited in Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014), strategy is a series of rules or principles that are formulated, which are used by translators to achieve their aims and objectives in the most effective way.

This research used the strategy proposed by Delabatista (1996, as cited in Korhonen, 2008 ) for translating wordplays. Delabatista suggested eight ways of doing it:

#### 1. Wordplay to Wordplay

In this strategy, a translator will translate the wordplay in the source language into wordplay in the target language. The translation may be similar or slightly different from the original, due to the differences in grammatical structure, semantic structure, or lexical function.

#### 2. Wordplay to Non-Wordplay

Another strategy for translating a wordplay is by transferring it to a non-wordplay. This may occur when the wordplay is not found in the target language or the reader does not recognize the translation of the wordplay.

#### 3. Wordplay to Related Rhetorical Device

When there is no exact or similar wordplay in the target language, a translator may use some other rhetorical devices that are still related to wordplay, such as alliteration, rhyme, etc.

#### 4. Wordplay to Zero

This strategy is quite radical as it omits the text in the source language that contains the wordplay.

#### 5. Wordplay ST to Wordplay TT

When a translator applies this strategy, he or she borrows the wordplay in the source text without actually translating it. For example, proper names that are not necessarily translated.

#### 6. Non-Wordplay to Wordplay

A translator may also bring up a wordplay in the target text whereas there is none in the source text. This was done as compensation because maybe previously the translator had removed wordplay in other portions of the text, or for other reasons.

7. Zero to Wordplay

Contrary to the Wordplay-to-Zero technique which removes wordplay, this strategy actually adds new text containing wordplay which does not exist in the source text.

8. Editorial Techniques

This technique is to provide notes regarding wordplay translations, in the form of footnotes, additional explanations, and so on.

All of the above methods offer a way to translate wordplay. However, as stated by Gottlieb (edited by Delabatista, 2014), “nothing maintains the verbal style of the original wordplay than wordplay in the target language”. In other words, the translator must use the first of the eight strategies as much as possible in order to fulfill the acquisition of meaning and sensation that is felt and received by the readers.

## 2. Method

Since the researcher also acted as a translator, this research was not only oriented to the product (translation results) but also to the process. This study used introspective and retrospective methods. According to Saldanha and O’Brien (2014), the introspective method means that the translator observes himself/herself, reports, or expresses what he/she thinks. While retrospectives, although generally in the form of verbal reports, can also be in written form. In the written report, the researcher recorded introspectively the various processes she experienced during the process of translating.

Saldanha and O’Brien (2014) cited Gile (2004) and Pavlovic (2009) that a written introspection is a collection of notes that contain information about the difficulties encountered in translating, solutions to these problems, various supporting sources, and the final solution. The notes can be written retrospectively while doing the work. Nunan (1992) also stated that the introspective method is the process of examining and reflecting on thoughts, feelings, reasoning processes, or mental states which then determine the results of our decisions.

This research only used primary data i.e. *Paperboy* novel written by Vince Vawter which was published by Delacorte Press in 2013. The story was taken from the author’s real-life experience as a little boy who stutters and received a Newbery Honor award in 2014 (Vawter, 2022). This novel was then translated into Indonesian by the researcher herself, and published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2021. Since the data were at the level of words or texts, this research used micro-level data, as Saldanha and O’Brien (2014) suggested that micro-level data concern “the use of specific strategies in a translated text” (p. 24). The data were analyzed by using stratified sampling which ensured that each group in the collected data was presented.

## Research Procedure

In conducting this research, the researcher did the following procedure:

1. Read the whole text thoroughly so that the researcher completely understands the idea of the story, as well as the style of the author.

2. Independently translated the source text into Indonesian (the novel is in English).
3. Marked down any wordplay that occurs in the source text, as well as in its Indonesian translation.
4. Categorizing each wordplay based on the level of language, taxonomy, and translation strategy.
5. Analyzed the data and provided plausible reasons for each data.

### Collection of the Data

After translating the source text, the researcher collected 26 data of wordplay with categorization as follows:

**Table 1** – List of the Data

No.	Source Text	Target Text	Level of Language	Taxonomy	Translation Strategy
1.	Rat	Rat	Lexical	Homonymy	Wordplay ST to Wordplay TT
2.	Rat	<i>rat</i> -tikus	Lexical	Homonymy	Wordplay to Editorial Technique
3.	Pitch	Palang	Sound	Paronymy	Wordplay to Wordplay
4.	Bitch	Jalang	Sound	Paronymy	Wordplay to Wordplay
5.	Wicked Furniture	Mebel Setan	Sound	Paronymy	Wordplay to Wordplay
6.	Private Hedges	Pagar Tamtama	Sound	Paronymy	Wordplay to Wordplay
7.	Pitcher	Pemain	Sound	Paronymy	Wordplay to Wordplay
8.	Player	Pelempar	Sound	Paronymy	Wordplay to Wordplay
9.	W-water	W-walet	Visual	Rhyme	Wordplay to Wordplay
10.	O-owl	O-orang utan	Visual	Rhyme	Wordplay to Wordplay
11.	S-snake	S-selendang	Visual	Rhyme	Wordplay to Wordplay
12.	H-house	A-atap	Visual	Rhyme	Wordplay to Wordplay
13.	generic	generik	Sound	Malapropism	Wordplay to Wordplay
14.	aurora	aurora	Sound	Malapropism	Wordplay to Wordplay
15.	aroma	aroma	Sound	Malapropism	Wordplay to Wordplay
16.	cycle	besikal	Sound	Eggcorn	Wordplay to Wordplay
17.	Unrepenting	Sepandang Waktu	Sound	Malapropism	Wordplay to Wordplay
18.	Segregated	tersegregasi	Sound	Malapropism	Wordplay to Wordplay
19.	merchant marine	pasukan pedagang	Sound	Rhyme	Wordplay to Wordplay
20.	Smashed Potatoes	Kentang Setumbuk	Sound	Paronymy	Wordplay to Wordplay
21.	Art	Seperti namanya <i>Art</i> yang juga berarti seni	Lexical	Homonymy	Wordplay to Editorial Technique
22.	Clarabell the Clown	Clarabell si Badut	Sound	Rhyme	Wordplay to Non-Wordplay
23.	Howdy Doody	Howdy Doody	Sound	Rhyme	Wordplay ST to Wordplay TT
24.	Buffalo Bob	Buffalo Bob	Sound	Rhyme	Wordplay ST to Wordplay TT
25.	Love Light	Cahaya Cinta	Sound	Rhyme	Wordplay to Wordplay
26.	dirt-clod fights	lempar lumpur	Sound	Rhyme	Non-Wordplay to Wordplay



### 3. Results and discussion

From the collection of data above, we can see that in terms of levels of language, there are 3 (three) lexical plays, 19 (nineteen) sound plays, and 4 (four) visual plays. There is no data at the structural nor at the contextual and intertextual plays. Moving on to taxonomy, the data cover 7 (seven) homonyms, 7 (seven) paronyms, 5 (five) malapropisms, 6 (six) rhymes, and 1 (one) eggcorn. Then, the translation strategies used in translating those data include 19 (nineteen) Wordplay to Wordplay, 3 (three) Wordplay ST to Wordplay TT, 1 (one) Wordplay to Non-Wordplay, 1 (one) Non-Wordplay to Wordplay, and 2 (two) Editorial Techniques.

#### Datum 1

ST : Mam is my best friend in all the world except when it comes to playing ball and then **Rat** takes over. His real name is Art (p. 3)

TT : *Mam adalah sahabat terbaikku di seluruh dunia kecuali ketika sedang bermain bola, Rat mengambil alih posisinya. Nama aslinya adalah Art* (p. 6).

Based on the story, the main character—the Little Man—stuttered when he talked. Therefore, he often changed or swapped letters so he could produce sounds from his mouth. In the data above, the Little Man changed the letter order of his best friend's name, which was actually Art to Rat because the pronunciation was easier for him. Thus, the level of language of this datum is lexical, as Pope (2002) stated lexical plays occur in word games such as scrabbles which also include changing the ordering of the letters in a word.

This datum is categorized as homonymy because the word Rat which is the name of the Little Man's best friend is spelled and pronounced exactly the same as *rat* which is a kind of animal. Even though *rat* actually has an equivalent in the Indonesian language, the researcher did not translate it because it is a proper name or an identity. Thus, the translation technique applied was wordplay ST to wordplay TT.

#### Datum 2

ST : He didn't even look like a **rat** but he understood quicker than most kids that Rat was the best I could do on his name because of the easy R sound (pp. 3-4).

TT : *Cowok itu sama sekali tak terlihat seperti rat-tikus, tetapi dia lebih cepat memaklumi daripada anak-anak lain kalau Rat adalah yang terbaik yang bisa kuucapkan untuk namanya karena kemudahan bunyi R* (p. 6).

Still related to the first datum, this datum also talks about the name of the Little Man's best friend. However, this time, the word *rat* here was more about *rat* which is a type of animal. Hence, similar to the previous datum, this datum is also categorized as lexical play and homonymy. The difference is, in this second datum, the researcher used editorial technique translation by adding an



explanation of the Indonesian meaning of the word *rat*, that is *tikus*, so that the readers can comprehend the message intended by the author.

### Datum 3

ST : I didn't want to take a chance on throwing the paper in the tall bushes so I walked up close to toss it underhanded and in a normal voice I said "Pitch" (p. 12).

TT : *Aku tidak ingin koran ini menyasar ke semak-semak tinggi jadi aku berjalan mendekat lalu melemparnya dan dengan suara normal aku berkata. "Palang."* (p.13)

The explanation of this datum will be combined with Datum 4 because they are related.

### Datum 4

ST : The lady walked down the porch steps. "I heard you call me a **bitch**." (p. 12)

TT : *Wanita itu berjalan menuruni undakan beranda. "Kudengar kau memanggilku jalang."* (p. 14)

The context of the Data 3 and 4 is the Little Man's speaking teacher gave him some drills to work on during the holiday, especially for words that start with *B* and *P* sounds because those sounds are the ones that are the hardest for the Little Man to produce. In the original book, the word that the Little Man chose is *Pitch* which starts with the *P* sound. However, the Indonesian equivalent of *pitch* is *lempar* which does not start with the *P* sound. Therefore, the researcher must look for a word that also starts with the *P* sound.

The challenge did not stop there, though. In the next context (which can be seen in Datum 4), the word *pitch* will be mistaken as the offensive word *bitch*. Thus, the researcher must look for a word that starts with the *P* sound which also can be mistaken as an offensive word for women in Indonesian. Hence, the researcher chose the word *Palang* in Indonesian, because it sounds a bit similar to the word *jalang* which is the equivalent of the word *bitch*.

Since the wordplay in these two data deals with sounds, they are then categorized as sound play. In addition, the *pitch-bitch* forms are similar with only a slight difference. Thus, as suggested by De Vries and Verheij (edited by Delabatista, 2014), it is considered paronymy. In the Indonesian translation, the wordplay is retained even though there is little difference in meaning; therefore, the researcher used the wordplay-to-wordplay technique.

### Datum 5

ST : My favorite place to read in the summer is outside on the covered brick patio in our backyard sitting on the **Wicked Furniture** (p. 19).

TT : *Luar rumah adalah tempat favoritku untuk membaca ketika musim panas. Tepatnya di teras batu bata tertutup yang ada di halaman belakang rumah kami sambil duduk di Mebel Setan* (p. 20).

In the story, the real phrase is actually *wicker furniture*, but Rat (the Little Man's best friend) calls it *wicked furniture* instead. This *wicker-wicked* wordplay is also paronymy because it sounds and spells almost similar to each other, and this also makes the wordplay categorized as a sound play.

In the Indonesian language, the equivalent of *wicker* is *rotan*; therefore, the researcher must look for a wordplay that sounds slightly similar to *rotan*. The researcher then came up with the word *setan* for *wicked*. *Setan* actually means *devil* in English, and it is somehow still related to the word *wicked* which can mean evil or morally bad. Thus, the translation technique applied was wordplay to wordplay.

#### Datum 6

- ST : I remember the thick privet hedges around Mrs. Worthington's porch. That would be a good place to hide my bag. I could never get Rat to call them anything but **Private Hedges** even though I spelled out Privet for him (p. 49).
- TT : *Aku teringat pagar tanaman lebat di sekitar beranda Mrs. Worthington. Tempat itu bagus untuk menyembunyikan tasku. Aku tidak pernah bisa membuat Rat menyebut pagar tanaman. Ia biasa menyebutnya dengan pagar tamtama, meski sudah kueja kalau kata yang benar adalah tanaman (p. 49).*

In the datum above, Rat mistook *private* for *privet*. The equivalent of *privet hedges* is *pagar tanaman* in Indonesian; therefore, the researcher must translate the *private* paronym with a word similar to *tanaman*.

Even though *private* has several meanings, the researcher looked for a meaning whose translation can be used as a sound play for *tanaman*. The researcher decided to use the word *tamtama* in Indonesian which means the lowest rank in the army, just like one of the meanings of the English word *private*. That way, the researcher implemented the wordplay-to-wordplay translation technique.

#### Data 7 and 8

- ST : I started over so I could substitute the word *player* for *pitcher*. Even though both words were *P* words the *L* changed the way I made the first sound and that was all I needed sometimes to get started (p. 57).
- TT : *Aku mengulang lagi sehingga aku bisa mengganti kata pemain menjadi pelempar. Meskipun kedua kata itu berawalan P, huruf L mengubah caraku mengeluarkan bunyi pertama dan terkadang itulah yang dibutuhkan untuk mulai mengeluarkan kata (p. 58).*

In the story, the word *player* is chosen instead of *pitcher* because there is an *L* sound that makes it easier to produce by the Little Man. However, the Indonesian equivalent for *player* is *pemain* which does not contain any *L* sound. On the other hand, *pitcher* means *pelempar* in Indonesian which has an *L* sound in it. To overcome this sound play, the researcher exchanged the position of the equivalents

as they still mean the same thing for the story. Since the wordplay is retained in the translation, the wordplay-to-wordplay technique is applied here.

#### Data 9, 10, 11, and 12

ST : Does *W* remind you of **waves of water**? Does a **capital H** remind you of the columns of a **house**? Does an *O* resemble the face of an **owl**? Does an *S* look like a **snake**? (p. 65)

TT : “*Apa huruf W mengingatkanmu akan bentuk burung walet ketika terbang? Apa huruf kapital A mengingatkanmu akan atap rumah? Apakah huruf O menyerupai bentuk wajah seekor orang utan? Apakah huruf S terlihat seperti liukan selendang?*” (pp. 65-66).

These four data are categorized as visual play because each letter represents the shape of an object whose word starts with that particular letter. Datum 9 tells that *W* looks like *waves of water*; however, in Indonesian, the equivalent of *water* is *air* which does not begin with the letter *W*. To make sure the message is well-delivered to the readers, the researcher must look for an object that starts with the letter *W* and looks like it. Hence, the researcher—with help from the editors for this particular Datum 9—came up with *walet*. In English, *walet* means *swallow bird*. So, in this case, the researcher intended to show that the letter *W* looks like the shape of a swallow’s wings when it flies in the sky.

In Datum 10, it is said that a *capital H* looks like the columns of a house. However, in Indonesian, *house* means *rumah* and it does not start with the letter *H*. To solve this problem, the researcher looked for a part of a house whose first letter represents its shape. The researcher then decided to choose *roof*, because *roof* is *atap* in Indonesian. This is done because *atap* (roof) looks like the shape of *capital A*, and it also keeps the concept of a capitalized letter in the source text (*capital H*).

Datum 11 describes that the letter *O* resembles the face of an *owl*. Again, the same problem occurs because *owl* means *burung hantu* in Indonesian and it does not start with the letter *O*. Therefore, the researcher looked for an animal in the Indonesian language whose face resembles the letter *O*, and *orang utan* came up to solve the problem.

The last visual play in the source text is the letter *S* which looks like a *snake*. The equivalent of *snake* is *ular* and it does not start with the letter *S*. The researcher chose another word that represents the letter, i.e., *selendang* which means *shawl* or *scarf* in English.

These data are classified as rhyme because as ʔyocko (2017) said, rhyme also covers alliteration. In the process of translation, the researcher used the wordplay-to-wordplay technique to retain the visual play of the original text.

#### Datum 13

ST : “His therapist said that stammering is likely **generic** but no one in my family stammers.”  
“I think you mean *genetic*.” (p. 85)

TT : “*Terapisnya bilang, penyebab gagapnya kemungkinan bawaan generik, tapi tak satu pun di keluargaku yang gagap.*”  
“*Kurasa maksudmu genetik.*” (p. 83)

In the story, the Little Man's mother often produces malapropism. According to *Oxford Learner's Dictionary*, malapropism is "a mistake somebody makes when they use a word that sounds similar to the word they wanted to use, but means something different and sounds funny."

In this datum, the Little Man's mother said *generic* when what she actually meant was *genetic*. The researcher successfully translated this wordplay because the Indonesian equivalent is a calque of the English word, *genetik*, with only one letter difference. Therefore, the technique used is wordplay-to-wordplay translation. This wordplay is classified as sound play because as described in the definition, the mother chose this particular word because it sounds similar to the word she intended to use.

#### Data 14 and 15

- ST : "I don't know if I approve the *aurora* of the fair ... I mean *aroma* ... Oh I don't know what I mean." (p. 87)
- TT : "*Aku tak yakin apakah aku suka aurora pekan raya ... maksudku aroma ... ah, apakah yang kubicarakan.*" (p. 84)

These two data are also sound-play malapropism by the Little Man's mother. She was confused about using either *aurora* or *aroma* when what she actually meant was *aura*. The Indonesian equivalents of both *aurora* and *aroma* are loan words, so the researcher could translate the wordplays into wordplays.

It seems like the technique used is Wordplay ST to Wordplay TT because there is no difference between the English and the Indonesian words. However, in Wordplay ST to Wordplay TT, the translator does not translate the words; he or she simply just borrows the words. Meanwhile, in these data, the researcher did translate them, because *aurora* and *aroma* have already been recorded in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), the official monolingual dictionary of Indonesian.

#### Datum 16

- ST : "Who was at the s-s-s-s-back door?"  
"Nice man on a cycle."  
Mam always pronounced it Sickie like in Popsicle (p. 198).
- TT : "*Siapa tadi di s-s-s-s-pintu belakang?*"  
"Pria ramah naik *besikal*."  
*Mam selalu melafalkannya sikel seperti pada kata Popsicle* (p. 187).

Mam, the Little Man's housemaid, has a strong dialect from her native region. She pronounced the word *cycle* as *sickle*. Therefore, this wordplay is classified as an eggcorn and is categorized as a sound play.

The common equivalent of *cycle* is *sepeda* in Indonesian. However, if the researcher translated as such, there will not be any eggcorn wordplay. Thus, the researcher chose another word that is

actually uncommon, but means the same thing, i.e., *besikal*. This choice of uncommon word also implies that Mam has a different dialect. The researcher used the wordplay-to-wordplay translation technique for this data because she could retain the wordplay in the Indonesian translation.

#### Datum 17

- ST : She said the heat in New Orleans had been Unrepenting. I guessed she meant Unrelenting (p. 208).
- TT : *Dia bilang cuaca panas di New Orleans berlangsung sepanjang waktu. Kurasa maksudnya adalah sepanjang waktu* (p. 198).

The malapropism of the Little Man's mother also occurred in this seventeenth datum. She mistook *Unrelenting* for *Unrepenting* which is a sound play.

The Indonesian translation for *Unrelenting* is *sepanjang waktu*. Since there is only a one-letter difference between *unrelenting* and *unrepenting*, the researcher came up with also a one-letter difference phrase for *sepanjang waktu*, that is *sepanjang waktu*, to preserve the wordplay. Hence, the wordplay-to-wordplay technique was used for this datum.

#### Datum 18

- ST : My mother said it wouldn't be too long before all the schools in Memphis were Segregated. Rat's mother allowed as how she meant Integrated and my mother told her it was all the same thing (p. 217).
- TT : *Ibuku bilang tidak akan lama lagi seluruh sekolah di Memphis akan tersegregasi. Ibu Rat meluruskan bahwa maksudnya terintegrasi dan ibuku berkata kepadanya bahwa kedua kata itu sama saja* (p. 207).

Another malapropism and sound play from the Little Man's mother is *Segregated* when the actual word she meant was *Integrated*.

The Indonesian language adopted the words *segregation* and *integration* into *segregasi* and *integrasi*. Thus, in this datum, the researcher could translate the wordplay of *segregated* into *tersegregasi* without changing any meaning.

#### Datum 19

- ST : "All over the world. At every port there are good books to be had for a pittance. Some merchant marines carve broom handles to pass the time at sea ..."
- I knew about regular marines but not the merchant kind. Asking the question was going to be hard because two words in a row with the same starter sound usually did me in (p. 104).
- TT : *"Dari seluruh dunia. Di setiap Pelabuhan ada buku bagus yang bisa kudapat dengan harga murah. Beberapa pasukan pedagang mengukir gagang sapu untuk menghabiskan waktu di laut ..."*

*Aku tahu beberapa hal tentang pasukan yang mengarungi laut, tetapi bukan yang jenisnya pedagang. Menanyakannya akan sulit karena dua kata dengan awalan yang sama selalu merepotkanku (p. 101).*

The case in this datum is *merchant marine* is an alliteration—which is part of rhyme (Yœko, 2017)—and the Little Man struggled with it. To translate this sound play, the researcher must also look for a phrase whose words begin with the same sound without losing the meaning.

The equivalent of *merchant marine* is *armada niaga*, but those words do not have the same starter sound. The researcher then came up with their synonym, that is, *pasukan pedagang*. This phrase fits the requirement needed for the wordplay. Even though they do not begin with the *M* sound, words that start with the *P* (and *B*) sound are actually the ones that make the Little Man struggle the most as stated by his speaking teacher.

#### Datum 20

- ST : Mam had a big plate of fried chicken on the table along with black-eyed peas and **Smashed Potatoes**. They were just regular mashed potatoes but I liked to get that good *S* in there for starters since it meant about the same thing (p. 114).
- TT : *Mam menyiapkan sepiring besar ayam goreng dan kentang setumbuk. Kentang itu merupakan kentang tumbuk pada umumnya, tetapi aku suka menambahkan S sebagai awalan karena maknanya sama saja (p. 111).*

Another sound play by the Little Man is *smashed potatoes* for *mashed potatoes* because he is a fan of the *S* sound as it is the easiest sound he could produce. This paronymy wordplay is also translated into paronymy.

*Mashed potatoes* is *kentang tumbuk* in Indonesian, and the researcher also added the *S* sound by changing *tumbuk* into *setumbuk* which is still grammatically correct in the Indonesian language. Therefore, the technique used is wordplay to wordplay.

#### Datum 21

- ST : Art was looking back at me and smiling from his desk in the front of the room. **The real live Art** (p. 220).
- TT : *Art menoleh ke belakang memandangkanku dan tersenyum dari mejanya di depan ruangan. Seperti namanya Art yang juga berarti seni, dia tampak seperti sebuah karya seni yang hidup (p. 210).*

This datum is a lexical play because the wordplay occurs within the word. It is a homonymy; the word *Art* in this context has two meanings: the first is the name of the Little Man's best friend, and the second is the expression of creativity.

Since the latter meaning translates into *seni* in Indonesian, which is totally different in spelling from the name *Art*, the researcher used the editorial technique to overcome this problem. The re-

searcher gave an explanation that *Art* means *seni*, so the readers can grasp the message intended by the author.

#### Datum 22

ST : My favorite person on the show was **Clarabell the Clown** (p. 45).

TT : *Tokoh kesukaanku dalam acara itu adalah Clarabell si Badut* (p. 45).

*Clarabell the Clown* is classified as rhyme because the phrase contains alliteration. However, this sound play is not translated into another wordplay in Indonesian. The researcher translated the word *Clown* literally into *Badut* because it is the most common one and there are no synonyms that start with the C letter.

Even though the wordplay is translated into non-wordplay, the message of the phrase is retained.

#### Datum 23 and 24

ST : When **Howdy Doody** was talking to **Buffalo Bob** I would forget what they were saying and start pretending that I was a puppet and wishing that somebody would pull the strings to make my mouth move so I didn't stutter (p. 45)

TT : *Ketika Howdy Doody berbicara kepada Buffalo Bob, aku akan lupa apa yang mereka katakan dan mulai berpura-pura kalau aku adalah boneka dan berharap seseorang akan menarik tali-tali yang membuat mulutku bergerak sehingga aku tidak tergagap* (p. 44).

Both *Howdy Doody* and *Buffalo Bob* are sound plays categorized as rhymes. The researcher used the technique of Wordplay ST to Wordplay TT in these two data because she kept using the original name of the characters.

#### Datum 25

ST : The record about the **Love Light** was still playing but everything else was quiet (p. 186).

TT : *Selain lagu Cahaya Cinta yang masih mengalun, segalanya hening* (p. 176).

*Love Light* is also an alliteration which is a sound play. However, in this datum, the researcher could preserve the wordplay by translating it literally into *Cahaya Cinta*.

#### Datum 26

ST : Rat told me about the **dirt-clod fights** with his cousins and trying to catch baby rabbits while his grandfather cut hay with the tractor (p. 205).

TT : *Rat bercerita tentang pertempuran lempar lumpur dengan para sepupunya dan berusaha menangkap bayi kelinci selagi kakeknya memotong jerami dengan traktor* (p. 195).



*Dirt-clod fights* is a non-wordplay phrase, but the researcher translated it into *lempar lumpur* which is a sound-play wordplay classified as alliteration or rhyme. Therefore, the technique used in non-wordplay to wordplay.

### 3. Conclusion

When faced with wordplay, translators are expected to retain the wordplay in the target language to keep the style and the message intended by the author. The researcher who is also the translator of the *Paperboy* novel written by Vince Vawter found twenty-six wordplays. From the collected data, 19 were translated by using the wordplay-to-wordplay technique, 3 were using the wordplay-ST-to-wordplay-TT technique, 1 was using the wordplay-to-non-wordplay technique, 1 other was using the non-wordplay-to-wordplay technique, and the other 2 were using the editorial technique. Thus, the most used technique is wordplay to wordplay. This is in line with Delabatista's statement that even though many authors state that wordplay translation is impossible, in fact, many translators have succeeded in doing so.

Through this research, the researcher hopes to provide an alternative wordplay translation, especially in the English-Indonesian language pair. The researcher also hopes that the results of this study can be a reference for other researchers who wish to conduct similar studies.

### 4. References

- Al-Ezzi, R., & Al-Qudah, I. (2024). English translation of verbal humour in Egyptian comedy films. *World Journal of English Language*, 14(1), 157–169.
- Anggraheni, R. R. R. (2023). A study of rhymes in Pope's poems: a historical perspective. *MUKASI: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 2(3), 215–222.
- Bassnett, S. (2002). *Translation studies* (Third). Routledge.
- Culler, J. (Ed.). (2005). *On puns: The foundation of letters*. The Internet-First University Press. <http://dspace.library.cornell.edu/index.jsp>
- Delabatista, D. (Ed.). (2014). *Traductio: Essays on punning and translation*. Routledge.
- Dwipuspita, W., & Wediyantoro, P. (2023). Translation strategies in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* translated drama script viewed from the romance perspective. *EnJourMe (English Journal of Merdeka) : Culture, Language, and Teaching of English*, 8(2), 130–138. doi:<https://doi.org/10.26905/enjourme.v8i2.10950>
- Fithri, A. (2019). English wordplay translation into Indonesian in the subtitle of American television series. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 7(1), 1–10.
- Humanika, E. S., Pratolo, B. W., Radjaban, Y., & Hariyanti, T. (2020). The translation of parodies in *Alice in Wonderland* into Indonesian; either or of two extremes. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(13), 2781–2786.
- Kembaren, F. R. Br. (2020). The challenges and solutions of translating puns and jokes from English to Indonesian. *VISION JOURNAL*, 16(2), 14–23.
- Korhonen, E. (2008). *Translation strategies for wordplay in the Simpsons* [Pro Gradu Thesis]. University of Helsinki.

- Mustonen, M. (2016). *Translating wordplay: A case study on the translation of wordplay in Terry Pratchett's Soul Music* [Master's Thesis]. University of Turku.
- Newmark, Peter. (1988). *A textbook of translation* (First). Prentice Hall International.
- Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pope, R. (2002). *The English studies book: An introduction to language, literature and culture* (Second). Routledge.
- Prihatini, N. (2022). The translation of wordplay in The Amazing World of Gumball Cartoon Series. *LANGUAGE HORIZON: Journal of Language Studies*, 10(3), 42–47.
- Primanda, K. R., Setiawan, S., & Widyastuti. (2021). Revealing puns used in Spongebob Squarepants animated show. *LANGUAGE HORIZON: Journal of Language Studies*, 9(1), 63–69.
- Reddy, S. (2009). Understanding eggcorns. *Workshop on Computational Approaches to Linguistic Creativity*, 17–23.
- Saldanha, G., & O'Brien, S. (2014). *Research methodologies in translation studies*. Routledge.
- Schroter, T. (2005). *Shun the pun, rescue the rhyme?/: The dubbing and subtitling of language-play in film*. Department of English, Division for Culture and Communication, Karlstad University.
- Setyaningsih, R. W., & Antaniami, A. (2019). Wordplay or not wordplay (The Indonesian version of Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland). *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 257, 53–56.
- Sulistiyowati, H. (2017). The translation of wordplay in Lewis Carroll's through the looking glass and what Alice found there into bahasa Indonesia by Djokolelono. *Sastra Inggris - Quill*, 6(4), 365–375.
- Vawter, V. (2013). *Paperboy* (First). Delacorte Press.
- Vawter, V. (2022, November). *About Vince*. [www.vincevawter.com](http://www.vincevawter.com)
- Vawter, V. (2021). *Paperboy (Bocah Pengantar Koran, Trans.)*. PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama - M&C.
- Wang, X., & Chen, R. (2021). An analysis of figures of speech from the perspective of relevance theory-case study of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. *International Journal of Frontiers in Sociology*, 3(20), 14–25.
- Wedhowerti, Putri, A. W., & Rachmaputri, K. A. (2020). Cultural translation strategies in translating word-plays in a series of unfortunate events: Slippery slope. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)*, 3(8), 10–21.
- Winter-Froemel, E., Thaler, V., & Demeulenaere, A. (2018). The dynamics of wordplay and wordplay research: Approaches, contexts and traditions. In *Cultures and Traditions of Wordplay and Wordplay Research* (pp. 1–19). De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110586374-001>
- Yæoko, K. (2017). *A cognitive linguistics account of wordplay* (First). Cambridge Scholar Publishing.