

**TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES AND ACCEPTABILITY OF METAPHORS
LEILA S. CHUDORI'S *LAUT BER CERITA* AND ITS ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

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Abstract: This study investigated the translation techniques and acceptability of metaphor translation in Leila S. Chudori's *Laut Ber cerita* and its English translation, *The Sea Speaks His Name*. The novel was selected because it contains rich metaphorical. The study aimed to identify the types of metaphors, examine the translation techniques employed, and analyze the acceptability of the translated metaphors. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed using document analysis of the source and target texts. The data consisted of 77 metaphorical expressions and their English translations, whose acceptability was evaluated through expert judgment by a university lecturer specializing in Translation Studies using Nababan et al.'s (2012) acceptability assessment model. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that stock metaphors constitute the predominant metaphor type, while established equivalent is the most frequently employed translation technique. Furthermore, 59 of the 77 translated metaphors were categorized as acceptable, indicating that most translations conform to the linguistic and cultural conventions of the target language. The findings also demonstrate that translation techniques based on culturally established conceptual equivalence contribute significantly to producing natural and acceptable metaphor translations while preserving literary style and figurative meaning. Overall, the findings demonstrate that successful literary metaphor translation depends on preserving conceptual and cultural equivalence alongside linguistic meaning, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of metaphor translation quality in literary translation.

Keywords: cultural equivalence; literary translation; metaphor translation; translation acceptability; translation techniques

INTRODUCTION

Literary translation plays a crucial role in introducing culturally embedded narratives to broader international audiences. Beyond transferring linguistic meaning, it serves as a medium for conveying historical experiences, cultural values, ideological perspectives, and aesthetic qualities embedded in literary texts. As Indonesian literature continues to gain international recognition, the translation of literary works into English has become increasingly important in facilitating intercultural communication. However, literary translation involves more than linguistic transfer; it requires translators to preserve the cultural and artistic meanings that shape readers' interpretation of the source text (Newmark, 1988).

Among the various elements of literary language, metaphor is one of the most challenging to translate because it conveys meanings that extend beyond literal expression. Rather than functioning merely as a stylistic ornament, metaphor represents a conceptual mechanism through which people understand abstract experiences by relating them to more familiar concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Recent studies further demonstrate that the translation of literary metaphors influences readers' perceptions of metaphor quality, familiarity, and stylistic effectiveness, highlighting the importance of preserving figurative meaning across languages (Milenković et al., 2024).

The complexity of metaphor translation has long been recognized in Translation Studies. Newmark (1988) argues that metaphors are among the most problematic linguistic elements because they combine semantic, cultural, and stylistic dimensions within a single expression. Accordingly, translators may reproduce the same metaphorical image, replace it with a culturally equivalent expression, convert the metaphor into sense, or apply other translation procedures depending on the communicative purpose of the text. These translation decisions influence not only meaning equivalence but also the acceptability of the translated metaphor in the target language.

This challenge is particularly evident in Indonesian literary works that are deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts. One such work is *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori, which portrays the experiences of political activists during Indonesia's New Order era while exploring themes of trauma, memory, resistance, and identity through rich metaphorical expressions. Its English translation, *The Sea Speaks His Name*, introduces these culturally embedded metaphors to international readers, making it an appropriate object for investigating how metaphorical meanings are translated while preserving literary style and cultural significance.

Translation quality is commonly evaluated through three dimensions: accuracy, acceptability, and readability (Nababan et al., 2012). Among these dimensions, acceptability is particularly significant in literary translation because it reflects whether a translated expression conforms to the linguistic conventions and cultural expectations of the target language. A metaphor may successfully convey the intended meaning yet still sound unnatural if its figurative expression fails to correspond to the target readers' cultural and linguistic norms. Therefore, examining metaphor acceptability provides valuable insights into how effectively literary meaning is reconstructed across languages.

Previous studies have extensively investigated metaphor translation from different analytical perspectives. Several studies primarily examine the translation techniques employed to render metaphorical expressions in literary works. Melliana et al. (2021), Cahya and Setyaningsih (2024), Suriadi et al. (2024), NoerSyafa'ah et al. (2024), and Dewantari et al. (2024) consistently report that established equivalent, literal translation, and modulation are among the most frequently employed techniques because they preserve metaphorical meaning while maintaining linguistic naturalness. Nevertheless, these studies primarily focus on describing translation procedures rather than investigating how those techniques influence the acceptability of translated metaphors.

Other studies have focused on translation quality assessment. Ningtyas et al. (2021), Hanivah et al. (2024), and Fathiya et al. (2024) demonstrate that successful metaphor translation depends not only on semantic equivalence but also on producing translations that are linguistically natural and culturally acceptable. Their findings suggest that maintaining metaphorical meaning often requires balancing fidelity to the source text with the expectations

of target-language readers, particularly in literary works containing culturally specific expressions.

Despite these valuable contributions, several research gaps remain. First, previous studies tend to investigate metaphor classification, translation techniques, or translation quality as separate aspects rather than integrating them within a single analytical framework. Second, existing studies have not comprehensively integrated metaphor classification, translation techniques, and acceptability assessment to examine metaphor translation in *Laut Bercerita* and its English translation. Third, although *Laut Bercerita* has attracted scholarly attention, existing studies primarily discuss translation strategies and thematic representation without exploring how translation techniques influence the acceptability of metaphorical expressions. Consequently, the relationship between metaphor types, translation techniques, and acceptability remains insufficiently explored.

To address these gaps, the present study integrates Newmark's (1988) metaphor typology, Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques, and Nababan et al.'s (2012) acceptability model within a unified analytical framework. Specifically, this study aims to identify the metaphor types found in *Laut Bercerita*, examine the translation techniques employed in translating them into *The Sea Speaks His Name*, and analyze the acceptability of the translated metaphors. Furthermore, the findings are expected to support future studies on literary translation quality by demonstrating how translation techniques influence the acceptability of culturally embedded metaphors. In addition, the findings provide practical insights for translators, editors, and literary publishers in preserving metaphorical meaning, literary style, and cultural values across languages.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What types of metaphors are identified in *Laut Bercerita* based on Newmark's (1988) metaphor classification? (2) What translation techniques are employed in translating metaphors from *Laut Bercerita* into *The Sea Speaks His Name*? (3) How acceptable are the translated metaphors in *The Sea Speaks His Name* based on Nababan et al.'s (2012) acceptability model?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the translation of metaphorical expressions and their acceptability in a literary work. A qualitative descriptive approach was considered appropriate because the data consisted of textual units requiring interpretative analysis rather than statistical measurement. According to Sandelowski (2000), qualitative descriptive research aims to provide a comprehensive and straightforward description of a phenomenon while remaining close to the original data. Therefore, this design was suitable for examining how metaphorical expressions were translated and how acceptable the translated metaphors were within the target-language

The primary data sources were the Indonesian novel *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori, published by *Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia* in 2017, and its official English translation, *The Sea Speaks His Name*, translated by John H. McGlynn and published by Penguin Random House SEA in 2020. The data consisted of metaphorical expressions at the word, phrase, and clause levels. Data were obtained through a comprehensive close reading of both novels. All figurative expressions were identified contextually and subsequently classified according to Newmark's (1988) metaphor typology. Only expressions that fulfilled the characteristics and had corresponding translations in the English version were included in the analysis. Through this procedure, 77 metaphorical expressions were identified and selected as the research data. The novel was selected because it contains rich metaphorical language representing political,

emotional, and cultural experiences, making it an appropriate object for investigating literary metaphor translation.

Data collection was conducted through document analysis using systematic procedures. First, the researcher repeatedly examined both the source text and the target text to identify metaphorical expressions and their corresponding translations. The identification process relied on contextual interpretation guided by Newmark's (1988) metaphor typology rather than the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), because the objective of this study was to classify literary metaphors according to Newmark's functional categories instead of identifying metaphorical expressions through a cognitive-linguistic procedure. Each identified metaphor was systematically recorded in a data sheet together with its contextual information, page reference, metaphor type, and corresponding translation. Subsequently, the translation technique applied to each metaphor was identified using Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques, providing the basis for further analysis of the relationship between metaphor types, translation techniques, and translation acceptability.

The acceptability assessment was conducted through expert judgment involving one translation expert who is also a university lecturer specializing in Translation Studies. The expert was selected purposively based on academic expertise and professional experience in translation. The translated metaphors were evaluated using Nababan et al.'s (2012) three-point acceptability scale, which categorizes translations as acceptable, less acceptable, or unacceptable. During the evaluation process, the researcher and the expert discussed translated metaphors by considering its linguistic naturalness, cultural appropriateness, and contextual meaning before determining the final acceptability score. This expert judgment procedure enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the acceptability assessment.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data condensation stage, the researcher selected relevant metaphorical expressions, paired them with their English translations, classified the metaphor types based on Newmark's (1988) typology, identified the translation techniques using Molina and Albir's (2002) framework, and compiled the acceptability assessments obtained through expert judgment. The condensed data were subsequently organized into analytical tables to facilitate systematic comparison across metaphor types, translation techniques, and acceptability levels. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying recurring patterns and interpreting the relationship between metaphor types, translation techniques, and translation acceptability. The integration of Newmark's (1988) metaphor typology, Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques, and Nababan et al.'s (2012) acceptability model enabled a comprehensive analysis of literary metaphor translation from linguistic, translational, and translation-quality perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings obtained from the analysis of metaphor translation in *Laut Bercerita* and its English translation, *The Sea Speaks His Name*. The discussion is organized into three interrelated aspects: (1) the types of metaphors identified in the source text, (2) the translation techniques employed to translate these metaphors into English, and (3) the acceptability of the translated metaphors in the target language. Together, these aspects provide a comprehensive understanding of how metaphor types influence translation choices and how those choices affect the acceptability of metaphorical expressions.

The analysis was conducted by examining metaphorical expressions in the source text

and their corresponding translations in the target text, followed by an acceptability assessment through expert judgment. Rather than merely describing the distribution of metaphor types and translation techniques, this discussion interprets the relationship between metaphor characteristics, translation decisions, and translation quality by drawing on Newmark's (1988) metaphor typology, Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques, and Nababan et al.'s (2012) acceptability model. The findings are also compared with previous studies to demonstrate the contribution of the present study to literary metaphor translation, particularly in translating culturally embedded figurative expressions.

Types of Metaphors in the Novel *Laut Bercerita*

Based on Newmark's (1988) metaphor typology, metaphors can be classified into six categories: dead, cliché, stock, adapted, recent, and original metaphors. However, the analysis of *Laut Bercerita* revealed only four of these categories. Of the 77 metaphorical expressions identified, stock metaphors were the most dominant with 45 occurrences, followed by dead metaphors (13), original metaphors (13), and adapted metaphors (6). No clichés or recent metaphors were identified in the data.

Table 1. Types of Metaphor in the Novel *Laut Bercerita*

No.	Types of Metaphor	Frequency
1.	Dead Metaphor	13
2.	Stock Metaphor	45
3.	Adapted Metaphor	6
4.	Original Metaphor	13
Total		77

As shown in Table 1, stock metaphors account for more than half of all identified metaphorical expressions, indicating that Leila S. Chudori predominantly employs culturally familiar figurative language to communicate complex emotional, political, and social experiences. Although these metaphors remain figurative, their conventional nature enables readers to interpret abstract meanings through images that are already well established in Indonesian discourse. By contrast, original metaphors occur less frequently but demonstrate the author's creativity in representing trauma, resistance, surveillance, and personal identity through distinctive figurative expressions. Meanwhile, the relatively limited occurrence of dead and adapted metaphors suggests that the novel balances conventional metaphorical language with stylistic innovation, allowing figurative expressions to remain both accessible and aesthetically expressive.

This distribution is consistent with previous studies reporting that stock metaphors frequently dominate literary texts because they facilitate communication while preserving figurative meaning (Sembiring & Sigit, 2020; Melliana et al., 2021). At the same time, the presence of original metaphors reflects the important stylistic function of literary metaphor in constructing emotional intensity and cultural meaning rather than merely ornamenting language (Kövecses, 2010; Milenković et al., 2024). Consequently, the metaphorical patterns identified in *Laut Bercerita* demonstrate how conventional and creative metaphors complement one another in conveying the novel's historical, ideological, and emotional dimensions. Each metaphor category is discussed in the following subsections through representative examples.

Dead Metaphor

Among the 77 metaphorical expressions identified, 13 were classified as dead metaphors. Although this category does not dominate the findings, its presence demonstrates that *Laut Bercerita* employs conventional figurative expressions alongside more creative metaphors. Because dead metaphors have become lexicalized through frequent use, their figurative meanings are readily understood without requiring readers to reconstruct the original imagery (Newmark, 1988). As a result, these expressions generally present fewer translation difficulties and tend to achieve higher acceptability, since their meanings are already familiar within both linguistic and cultural contexts.

Excerpt 1: “*Sebuah pertanyaan yang kelak kusadari menjadi titik perputaran hidupku yaitu:*” (p. 23)

The expression “*titik perputaran hidupku*” (the turning point of my life) is categorized as a dead metaphor because its figurative meaning has become conventional in Indonesian. Rather than evoking the literal image of physical rotation, the expression is immediately interpreted as referring to a decisive moment that fundamentally changes a person's life. The metaphor therefore functions as a lexicalized expression whose figurative origin is no longer consciously recognized by readers, allowing the intended meaning to be conveyed efficiently without ambiguity.

This finding is consistent with Sembiring and Sigit (2020), who identified expressions such as “fall into a trap” as dead metaphors because their figurative meanings have become conventional through repeated use. In both studies, the metaphors no longer rely on vivid imagery but instead function as established conceptual expressions that facilitate comprehension. The occurrence of dead metaphors in *Laut Bercerita* suggests that, despite the novel's rich literary style, Leila S. Chudori also employs familiar figurative expressions to ensure that important narrative moments remain accessible to readers. Consequently, such conventional metaphors are less likely to create translation problems because equivalent conceptual expressions are commonly available in the target language, thereby contributing to higher translation acceptability (Newmark, 1988; Nababan et al., 2012).

Stock Metaphor

Stock metaphor constitutes the most dominant metaphor type identified in this study, accounting for 45 of the 77 metaphorical expressions. This finding indicates that *Laut Bercerita* predominantly employs conventional figurative expressions that remain culturally recognizable while retaining their metaphorical meaning. Unlike dead metaphors, stock metaphors still preserve their expressive and imaginative qualities, enabling the author to communicate political, social, and emotional experiences through images that are already familiar to Indonesian readers (Newmark, 1988). Their predominance suggests that Leila S. Chudori intentionally balances literary expression with readability by relying on culturally established metaphors to convey complex ideological issues.

Excerpt 2: “*Mereka ingin mencari bukti bahwa Kinan dan kawan-kawan adalah ‘dalang’ unjuk rasa itu.*” (p. 92)

The term “*dalang*,” which literally refers to the puppeteer in traditional Javanese

wayang performances, functions metaphorically in this context to describe the person who secretly orchestrates or controls a political demonstration. Rather than referring to its literal cultural meaning, the expression has become a widely recognized metaphor in Indonesian political discourse to denote an unseen actor who manipulates events behind the scenes. Its figurative meaning remains highly familiar to Indonesian readers while still preserving its cultural symbolism, making it a representative example of a stock metaphor.

The use of “*dalang*” also illustrates how literary metaphors can simultaneously convey linguistic meaning and cultural identity. Because the metaphor originates from Javanese cultural tradition but has been widely adopted in contemporary political discourse, its interpretation depends on readers' shared cultural knowledge. Consequently, translating this expression requires more than lexical equivalence; translators must preserve its political implication while maintaining its cultural resonance for target-language readers. This finding supports Kövecses (2010), who argues that many conventional metaphors are deeply rooted in cultural conceptualization, making their interpretation inseparable from the cultural experiences of their speech community.

While this finding supports the observation of Melliana et al. (2021) that stock metaphors dominate literary discourse because of their familiarity, the present study extends this finding by demonstrating that their prevalence also contributes to higher translation acceptability. Because stock metaphors are grounded in culturally familiar conceptual mappings, translators can more readily reconstruct their figurative meanings without sacrificing literary style or cultural nuance. This finding suggests that Indonesian literary discourse frequently relies on shared cultural schemas to communicate complex historical and ideological experiences. Preserving these conceptual schemas in translation is therefore essential, as metaphors function not merely as stylistic devices but also as carriers of collective memory, cultural identity, and ideological meaning. Accordingly, these findings reinforce the important role of conventional metaphors in maintaining literary aesthetics, preserving cultural identity, and enhancing cross-cultural comprehensibility

Adapted Metaphor

Adapted metaphors are conventional metaphors that have been modified to suit a particular communicative context, stylistic purpose, or cultural setting (Newmark, 1988). Unlike stock metaphors, adapted metaphors retain recognizable metaphorical imagery while introducing contextual modifications that create new interpretative meanings. In the present study, six adapted metaphors were identified, indicating that this metaphor type is used less frequently than stock or dead metaphors but plays an important role in expressing ideological and socio-political meanings. One representative example is presented below.

Excerpt 3: *"Hanya saja kami memang belum meluncurkan strategi ini ke kampus-kampus karena kami sedang menyusun kompi-kompi ke berbagai kampus."* (p. 47)

The expression “*menyusun kompi-kompi*” is classified as an adapted metaphor because it transfers a military concept into the context of student activism. Literally, “*kompi*” refers to a military company; however, in this context it metaphorically represents organized groups of student activists assigned to different universities. Rather than describing military operations, the expression conceptualizes political organization through military imagery, emphasizing discipline, coordination, and strategic planning.

This finding illustrates how adapted metaphors reshape familiar conceptual domains to

express new contextual meanings while preserving their figurative effect (Newmark, 1988). Similar observations were reported by Sembiring and Sigit (2020), who found that adapted metaphors often require contextual modification to maintain both semantic meaning and literary effect across languages. In *Laut Bercerita*, the military metaphor reinforces the political atmosphere of the novel by portraying student movements as coordinated resistance against an authoritarian regime. Consequently, translating this type of metaphor requires preserving not only the lexical meaning but also the ideological and cultural associations embedded in the source text. As argued by Schäffner (2004), metaphor translation involves transferring not only linguistic forms but also the conceptual and cultural meanings that shape readers' interpretation. Therefore, maintaining the metaphorical function is essential to preserving both the literary style and the ideological message of the source text. This finding further indicates that adapted metaphors enable authors to reinterpret familiar conceptual domains in ways that reflect specific socio-political realities, making their preservation particularly important in literary translation where ideological meaning is inseparable from artistic expression.

Original Metaphor

Original metaphors are creative and context-specific expressions coined by the author to convey meaning in a novel and imaginative way (Newmark, 1988). Unlike conventional metaphors, original metaphors are not lexicalized in everyday language but are intentionally created to produce aesthetic effects, evoke emotional responses, and reinforce the literary style of the text. In this study, thirteen original metaphors were identified, demonstrating Leila S. Chudori's creative use of figurative language to represent political oppression, fear, and psychological experiences. One representative example is presented below.

Excerpt 4: "*Rasanya para lalat itu akan sukar menemukan desa ini.*" (p. 16)

The lexical item "*lalat*" (flies) is classified as an original metaphor because it functions as a context-specific figurative reference to state intelligence agents rather than referring to insects literally. The metaphor creatively associates intelligence officers with flies: small, persistent, intrusive, and difficult to eliminate. Thereby conveying the constant surveillance experienced by political activists during Indonesia's New Order era. The expression is neither conventional nor widely recognized in Indonesian, making it a distinctive literary construction that relies heavily on contextual interpretation.

This finding is consistent with Newmark's (1988) view that original metaphors reflect an author's creativity and present greater translation challenges because both the conceptual imagery and literary effect should be preserved. Likewise, Schäffner (2004) argues that translating metaphors requires transferring not only linguistic meaning but also the ideological and cultural perspectives embedded in figurative expressions. In *Laut Bercerita*, the metaphor "*lalat*" symbolizes more than surveillance; it represents the pervasive atmosphere of fear and political repression that shapes the characters' lives. Consequently, translating this metaphor demands careful consideration of its symbolic, cultural, and ideological functions so that target readers can experience an interpretation comparable to that intended in the source text. More importantly, preserving such original metaphors allows translated literary works to retain their emotional intensity, ideological perspective, and aesthetic uniqueness, thereby enabling international readers to engage with the historical experiences represented in the source culture more authentically.

Translation Techniques of Metaphors in the Novel *Laut Bercerita*

Molina and Albir (2002) define translation techniques as specific procedures applied to linguistic elements to address problems encountered during the translation process. Although they identify eighteen different techniques, the findings of this study show that only a limited number of techniques are employed in translating metaphors in *Laut Bercerita* and its English version, *The Sea Speaks His Name*. These techniques reflect the translator's strategies in dealing with metaphorical expressions that involve linguistic, cultural, and contextual challenges. The application of these techniques demonstrates how metaphor translation is negotiated to achieve naturalness and acceptability in the target language. A summary of the translation techniques identified in this study is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Translation Techniques of Metaphors in the Novel *Laut Bercerita* (The Sea Speaks His Name)

No.	Translation Techniques	Frequency
1.	Established Equivalent	44
2.	Amplification	2
3.	Modulation	10
4.	Adaptation	2
5.	Reduction	2
6.	Calque	7
7.	Literal Translation	7
8.	Borrowing	1
9.	Transposition	1
10.	Particularization	1
TotalR		77

Established Equivalents

Established equivalent refers to the use of a recognized and commonly accepted translation for a specific term or expression in the target language. According to Molina and Albir (2002), this technique is applied when a source language expression has a standard and culturally familiar counterpart in the target language, often found in dictionaries, idiomatic usage, or conventional expressions. The primary function of this technique is to maintain naturalness and fluency by employing expressions that are already established within the target language system.

Excerpt 5

Source Language: "*Dia lebih mirip sosok stereotip mahasiswa kutubuku yang lebih nyaman melekat di perpustakaan kampus...*" (p. 27)

Target Language: "He looked more like a bookworm, who would be more comfortable spending his hours in the campus library..." (p. 17)

An example of the established equivalent technique can be seen in the translation of the Indonesian metaphor "*kutubuku*" into "bookworm." In the source language, the term "*kutubuku*" metaphorically refers to someone who prefers reading and spending time with books rather than engaging in social activities. This expression is translated as "bookworm" in the target language, which is a widely recognized and idiomatic metaphor in English. Rather

than reproducing the source-language lexical form, the translator selects a culturally established metaphor that conveys an equivalent figurative meaning and communicative function. Consequently, the translation preserves not only the semantic content of the metaphor but also its naturalness and readability for English readers.

This finding is consistent with Melliana et al. (2021), who reported that established equivalent is among the most frequently employed techniques in literary translation because it enables translators to preserve figurative meaning while producing linguistically natural expressions. However, the present study extends this observation by demonstrating that the predominance of established equivalent also contributes to higher metaphor acceptability, as culturally familiar metaphorical expressions are more readily recognized and interpreted by target-language readers. The frequent use of this technique further suggests that preserving metaphorical meaning does not necessarily require literal reproduction of lexical forms; rather, employing culturally conventional equivalents can effectively maintain literary style, communicative effectiveness, and cross-cultural accessibility. Accordingly, established equivalents play a crucial role in balancing semantic fidelity, cultural familiarity, and literary aesthetics in the translation of literary metaphors.

Modulation

Modulation involves a shift in perspective or cognitive category when translating from the source language to the target language. Rather than translating the message literally, the translator changes the point of view, focus, or conceptual framing to produce a more natural and idiomatic expression in the target language (Molina & Albir, 2002).

Excerpt 6

Source Language: “*Mengapa aku merasa ada semacam benang merah antara Asmara, Kinan, dan Anjani?*” (p. 106)

Target Language: “And why did I feel that there was some kind of invisible thread that linked Asmara, Kinan, and Anjani?” (p. 83)

The expression “*benang merah*” is translated as “invisible thread,” illustrating the use of the modulation technique. Rather than transferring the metaphor literally as “red thread,” the translator shifts the conceptual perspective by selecting a metaphor that is more readily understood within the cultural and linguistic conventions of English. In Indonesian, “*benang merah*” is a stock metaphor referring to an underlying connection or common thread linking different events or ideas. Although a literal rendering “red thread” would preserve the lexical image, it may not communicate the intended figurative meaning effectively to readers unfamiliar with this Indonesian expression. By choosing invisible thread, the translator retains the metaphorical concept of an unseen connection while adapting its expression to better suit the expectations of the target audience.

This finding supports Cahya and Setyaningsih (2024), who argue that modulation is frequently employed when literal translation fails to convey the intended conceptual meaning naturally in the target language. However, the present study further demonstrates that modulation functions not only as a linguistic adjustment but also as a strategy for preserving metaphor acceptability by reconstructing culturally appropriate conceptual mappings. Rather than reproducing the source-language imagery, the translator prioritizes the communicative function of the metaphor, enabling target readers to interpret the relationship among the characters without experiencing cultural ambiguity. Consequently, modulation

plays an important role in balancing semantic equivalence, cultural appropriateness, and literary readability, particularly when translating culturally embedded metaphors in literary texts.

Calque

Calque is a translation technique that transfers a source-language expression into the target language by preserving its lexical structure and conceptual imagery (Molina & Albir, 2002). This technique is commonly employed when the metaphorical concept can be understood across languages without substantial cultural adaptation, even though the resulting expression may sound less idiomatic in the target language.

Excerpt 7

Source Language: “*Dia ingin Bram dan adiknya hidup tertata rapi dan ‘steril dari kuman’, demikian Bram membahasakan pemikiran orangtuanya di masa lalu.*” (p. 28)

Target Language: “His father wanted Bram and his younger siblings to lead neat and regulated lives that were ‘free from bacteria,’ said Bram, quoting his father.” (p. 18)

The metaphorical expression “*steril dari kuman*” is translated as “free from bacteria,” illustrating the use of the calque technique. Rather than replacing the metaphor with a more idiomatic English expression, the translator preserves the original lexical structure and biomedical imagery. In the source text, “*steril dari kuman*” functions as an adapted metaphor (Newmark, 1988), portraying the parents' desire to protect their children from negative social influences through the conceptual metaphor of physical cleanliness. Although the expression literally refers to the absence of bacteria, its figurative meaning extends to moral purity, discipline, and protection from ideological contamination.

This finding is consistent with Schäffner (2004), who argues that calque may be appropriate when metaphorical imagery is sufficiently universal to be interpreted across cultures without substantial conceptual change. However, the present study further demonstrates that preserving the original metaphorical imagery through calque also helps maintain the ideological perspective embedded in the source text. Rather than domesticating the metaphor, the translator retains the biomedical image to preserve the parents' worldview and the symbolic representation of moral discipline constructed by the author. Although the resulting expression may appear slightly less idiomatic to English readers, it successfully maintains the literary tone, conceptual coherence, and cultural authenticity of the original narrative. Consequently, the use of calque illustrates how preserving source-language imagery can contribute to semantic fidelity while allowing international readers to engage more closely with the cultural and ideological dimensions of Indonesian literary discourse.

Literal Translation

Literal translation involves transferring a source-language expression directly into the target language while preserving its lexical form, grammatical structure, and basic meaning (Molina & Albir, 2002). This technique is generally applied when the linguistic forms and conceptual meanings of both languages are sufficiently similar to allow a direct transfer without substantial modification.

Excerpt 8

Source Language: “*Aku menciut mendengar suara Bram yang menggelegar dan mengucapkan nama Tama dengan lengkap.*” (p. 48)

Target Language: “I shrunk somewhat when I heard Bram address Tama by his formal name, a sure sign that he was angry.” (p. 35)

The expression “*aku menciut*” is translated literally as “I shrunk,” illustrating the application of the literal translation technique. According to Newmark's (1988) classification, “*menciut*” is a stock metaphor that metaphorically describes a sudden feeling of fear, intimidation, or loss of confidence rather than physical reduction in size. By translating the expression directly, the translator preserves the original lexical image without introducing additional interpretation or stylistic modification. By translating the expression directly, the translator preserves the original lexical image without introducing additional interpretation or stylistic modification. Although the literal translation successfully preserves the source-language imagery, differences in metaphorical conventions between Indonesian and English may influence how naturally the expression is interpreted by target-language readers. As a result, the metaphor remains semantically transparent but may exhibit a lower degree of acceptability in terms of naturalness.

This finding contrasts with Cahya and Setyaningsih (2024), who demonstrate that literal translation can effectively preserve metaphorical meaning when equivalent conceptual mappings are shared across languages, as illustrated by the translation of “Maybe we all are pawn” into “*Mungkin kita semua adalah pion.*” In contrast, the present study shows that literal translation may produce less-natural expressions when the metaphor relies on language-specific figurative conventions rather than universally shared conceptual metaphors. This comparison indicates that the effectiveness of literal translation depends not merely on lexical correspondence but also on the degree of conceptual and cultural equivalence between the source and target languages. Accordingly, although literal translation contributes to semantic fidelity, translators should carefully consider its potential impact on metaphor acceptability, literary naturalness, and readers' interpretation of the intended emotional effect.

Besides the four dominant techniques discussed above, six other translation techniques were identified in the data: amplification (2), adaptation (2), reduction (2), borrowing (1), transposition (1), and particularization (1). Their relatively low frequencies indicate that these techniques were employed only in specific translation contexts rather than representing the translator's general approach to metaphor translation. Instead, they functioned as context-dependent strategies for resolving particular linguistic, cultural, or stylistic challenges that could not be adequately addressed through more frequently used techniques such as established equivalent, modulation, calque, or literal translation.

Amplification was applied to clarify metaphorical expressions that contained implicit cultural or contextual meanings by providing additional explanatory information for target readers. Adaptation was employed when cultural substitution was necessary to preserve the communicative function of the metaphor in the target language, whereas reduction was used to omit metaphorical elements considered redundant without substantially altering the intended meaning. Meanwhile, borrowing, transposition, and particularization occurred only once each, suggesting that these techniques were selected selectively to address specific lexical, grammatical, or semantic constraints encountered during the translation process. Although these techniques occurred infrequently, their application demonstrates the translator's flexibility in responding to context-specific translation problems. This finding supports Molina and Albir's (2002) view that translation techniques are not applied uniformly but are

selected according to the communicative needs of individual translation units. Collectively, these less frequently used techniques complement the dominant translation strategies by ensuring that metaphorical meaning, cultural nuance, and literary readability are maintained whenever conventional procedures alone are insufficient.

Acceptability Level of Metaphors in the Novel *Laut Bercerita*

This section examines the acceptability of the translated metaphors using the translation quality assessment model proposed by Nababan et al. (2012). Acceptability refers to the extent to which a translation conforms to the linguistic norms, cultural conventions, and natural expression of the target language. In the present study, each translated metaphor identified in *Laut Bercerita* and its English translation, *The Sea Speaks His Name*, was evaluated using a three-point acceptability scale, where 3 indicates acceptable, 2 less acceptable, and 1 unacceptable.

The acceptability assessment indicates that the majority of translated metaphors are rendered naturally and appropriately in the target language. Of the 77 metaphorical expressions analyzed, 59 are categorized as acceptable, 11 as less acceptable, and 7 as unacceptable. These findings suggest that the translator generally succeeded in preserving the communicative function of the metaphors while adapting them to the linguistic and cultural conventions of English. The predominance of acceptable translations also corresponds with the frequent use of established equivalents, modulation, calque, and literal translation discussed in the previous section, indicating that these techniques contribute substantially to producing natural and culturally appropriate metaphor translations. Nevertheless, the presence of less acceptable and unacceptable translations demonstrates that certain metaphorical expressions remain challenging to translate, particularly when they are closely associated with culture-specific conceptualizations or context-dependent figurative meanings.

To illustrate the variation in translation quality, the following discussion presents representative examples of each acceptability category and examines how different translation techniques influence the naturalness and cultural appropriateness of the translated metaphors.

Table 3. Acceptability Level of Metaphors in the Novel *Laut Bercerita* (The Sea Speaks His Name)

No.	Types of Metaphor	Frequency	Acceptability		
			Acceptable	Less Acceptable	Unacceptable
1.	Dead	13	11 (84.6%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0%)
2.	Stock	45	37 (82.2%)	5 (11.1%)	3 (6.7%)
3.	Original	13	6 (46.1%)	3 (23.1%)	4 (30.8%)
4.	Adapted	6	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)
Total		77	59	11	7

Acceptable Translation of a Metaphor

A total of 59 metaphorical expressions were categorized as acceptable, indicating that most translations conform to the linguistic conventions and cultural expectations of the target language. These translations preserve both the communicative function and figurative meaning of the original metaphors while producing expressions that sound natural to English readers. One representative example is presented below.

Excerpt 9

Source Language: *"Dia lebih mirip sosok stereotip mahasiswa kutubuku yang lebih nyaman melekat di perpustakaan kampus..."* (p. 27)

Target Language: "He looked more like a bookworm, who would be more comfortable spending his hours in the campus library..." (p. 17)

The metaphor "*kutubuku*" is translated as "bookworm," receiving an acceptability score of 3 because the expression is both linguistically natural and culturally familiar in English. According to Newmark's (1988) classification, "*kutubuku*" is a stock metaphor whose figurative meaning is widely recognized in Indonesian. Rather than reproducing the lexical form, the translator employs the established equivalent technique (Molina & Albir, 2002), selecting an idiomatic English metaphor that conveys the same conceptual meaning and communicative function. As a result, the translation preserves the characterization of the source text while maintaining naturalness and readability for target-language readers.

This finding is consistent with Ramadhanti et al. (2022), who reported that translations receiving high acceptability scores commonly employ expressions that conform to the linguistic and cultural conventions of the target language. However, the present study further demonstrates that high acceptability is closely associated with the use of established equivalents in translating literary metaphors. Because this technique replaces source-language metaphors with culturally established counterparts rather than literal lexical forms, it enables translators to preserve figurative meaning, literary style, and communicative effectiveness simultaneously. This finding suggests that metaphor acceptability depends not only on semantic equivalence but also on the translator's ability to select expressions that are conceptually and culturally familiar to target readers.

Less Acceptable Translation of a Metaphor

A total of 11 metaphorical expressions were classified as less acceptable. Although these translations generally convey the intended meaning, they contain expressions that sound less natural or fail to preserve the full metaphorical nuance of the source text. In most cases, the reduction in acceptability results from partial loss of figurative meaning rather than grammatical inaccuracy.

Excerpt 10

Source Language: *"Bram mengaku terus-menerus dihantui pertanyaan mengapa Mbah Mien memilih untuk mati daripada menghadapi utang yang bertumpuk."* (p. 28)

Target Language: "Bram confessed that Mbah Mien's death had haunted him for years." (p. 18)

The source-language expression "*dihantui pertanyaan*" metaphorically describes the persistent psychological burden of an unanswered question. In the target text, however, the translator renders the expression as "Mbah Mien's death had haunted him for years," shifting the focus from the haunting question to the death itself. This translation illustrates the reduction technique (Molina & Albir, 2002), whereby part of the metaphorical meaning is omitted. Although the translation remains grammatically natural and the general context is preserved, the specific psychological nuance conveyed by the original metaphor is only partially transferred. Consequently, the translation receives an acceptability score of 2 because it sacrifices part of the figurative meaning while maintaining overall comprehensibility.

This finding supports Molina and Albir's (2002) observation that reduction may improve

textual economy but can also diminish semantic and stylistic richness when metaphorical elements are omitted. The present study further indicates that reducing metaphorical imagery may lower translation acceptability because target readers receive a less vivid representation of the character's emotional experience. Accordingly, preserving metaphorical specificity appears to be an important factor in maintaining both literary expressiveness and translation quality.

Unacceptable Translation of a Metaphor

Only 7 metaphorical expressions are categorized as unacceptable. These translations receive the lowest acceptability score because they produce expressions that sound unnatural or fail to convey the intended figurative meaning within the linguistic and cultural conventions of the target language. One representative example is presented below.

Excerpt 11

Source Language: "*Aku menciut mendengar suara Bram yang menggelegar dan mengucapkan nama Tama dengan lengkap.*" (p. 48)

Target Language: "I shrunk somewhat when I heard Bram address Tama by his formal name, a sure sign that he was angry." (p. 35)

The expression "*aku menciut*" is translated literally as "I shrunk," illustrating the use of the literal translation technique. According to Newmark (1988), "*menciut*" is a stock metaphor referring to a sudden feeling of fear, intimidation, or emotional withdrawal rather than physical reduction in size. Although the translation preserves the lexical form of the source-language metaphor, differences in metaphorical conventions between Indonesian and English make the expression sound less natural to target-language readers. Consequently, the metaphorical meaning is only partially conveyed, resulting in a lower level of acceptability.

A comparable observation was reported by Ramadhanti et al. (2022), who found that translations relying primarily on lexical correspondence may fail to preserve the intended pragmatic and stylistic effects of the source text. Similarly, the present study demonstrates that literal translation does not always produce acceptable metaphor translations, particularly when figurative expressions are closely tied to language-specific conceptualizations. This finding suggests that metaphor acceptability depends not only on preserving lexical meaning but also on reconstructing conceptual and cultural equivalence so that target readers can interpret the metaphor naturally within their own linguistic system.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the translation of metaphorical expressions in Leila S. Chudori's *Laut Bercerita* and its English translation, *The Sea Speaks His Name*, by examining the types of metaphors, the translation techniques employed, and the acceptability of the translated metaphors. The findings reveal that stock metaphors (45 of 77) constitute the dominant metaphor type, indicating that the novel predominantly conveys historical, political, and emotional experiences through culturally familiar conceptual expressions. Among the ten translation techniques identified, established equivalent was employed most frequently, followed by modulation, calque, and literal translation, suggesting that the translator primarily prioritized preserving metaphorical meaning while producing natural and culturally appropriate expressions in the target language. Furthermore, the acceptability assessment demonstrates that most translated metaphors (59 of 77) were categorized as acceptable, indicating that the

translator generally succeeded in maintaining the communicative function, literary style, and cultural resonance of the source text despite the challenges posed by culture-specific metaphorical expressions.

Beyond identifying metaphor types and translation techniques, this study contributes to literary translation studies by demonstrating the close relationship between translation techniques and the acceptability of metaphor. The findings indicate that techniques relying on culturally established conceptual equivalence, particularly established equivalent and modulation, tend to produce higher levels of acceptability because they preserve figurative meaning while conforming to the linguistic and cultural conventions of the target language. Conversely, techniques that retain lexical forms without sufficiently adapting underlying conceptual mappings may reduce naturalness and limit the successful transfer of metaphorical meaning. These findings reinforce the importance of considering conceptual and cultural equivalence, rather than lexical correspondence alone, when translating literary metaphors across languages.

In practical terms, the findings provide useful insights for literary translators, editors, and publishers involved in translating culturally embedded literary works. Translators should carefully consider not only the semantic meaning of metaphorical expressions but also their cultural, ideological, and stylistic functions to ensure that target readers experience interpretations comparable to those intended in the source text. Preserving metaphorical meaning therefore requires balancing semantic fidelity with cultural appropriateness and literary readability, particularly in literary works that contain strong historical and socio-political contexts such as *Laut Bercerita*.

This study is limited to the analysis of metaphor types, translation techniques, and acceptability in a single Indonesian novel. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all literary translations or language pairs. Future research is therefore encouraged to examine metaphor translation using additional dimensions of translation quality, such as accuracy and readability, or to investigate metaphor translation in other Indonesian literary works, different genres, or cross-cultural contexts. Employing complementary approaches from cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, stylistics, or corpus-based translation studies may also provide broader insights into how metaphorical meaning is negotiated across languages and cultures. Ultimately, the findings reaffirm that effective literary translation requires translators to balance semantic fidelity with cultural sensitivity in order to preserve both the artistic value and communicative impact of metaphorical expressions.

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