



## The Impact of Transposition on Grammatical Metaphor A Study of Translation from the Perspective of SFL Theory



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### Article history:

Received: 25 June 2016

Revised: 26 July 2016

Approved: 18 August 2016

Published: 1 September 2016

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### Keywords:

*Adaptation;*

*Modulation;*

*Equivalence;*

*Transposition;*

*Grammatical Metaphor;*

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### Abstract

There are five major translation procedures generally adopted for translation practice: transposition, modulation, adaptation, equivalence with context, and equivalence with a note (Machali, 2009:92). Transposition or shift (Catford, 1965), however, is one of the translation procedures unavoidable to attain the equivalence between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). It is a procedure of changing grammatical forms from SL to TL. This paper is aimed to explore the impact of applying transposition viewed from Systemic Functional Language (SFL) Theory (Halliday, 1994) by which language is considered as designed: (i) to understand the environment or build experience, and (ii) to act on the others. Here the clause plays a central role where the reality is made up of processes: material, mental, and relational. Based on the notion of metaphor as the variation in the expression of meanings, metaphorical variation is lexicogrammatical rather than simply lexical (Halliday, 1994:341). This analysis shows that adoption of transposition has potential to change such processes. Consequently, a metaphorical clause may change into a congruent (non-metaphorical) one due to such a translation procedure. The examples of clauses with grammatical metaphors used in this study are taken from The Book of Psalm (Kitab Mazmur): English version is considered as SL and Indonesian version as TL. The result of the analysis is that: (i) all procedures have potential (not always) to change a metaphorical clause in SL into congruent one in TL, (ii) transposition has a great potential to change metaphorical clauses into congruent ones. Based on the result of this study, it may be concluded that SFL theory can be adopted as a theoretical ground for translation study, and so as a tool of analysis in the praxis of translation. Transposition, from the view of SFL, not only the shift of structure but also the change of grammatical process.

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**1. Introduction**

In the practice of translation, the application of the transposition procedure is inevitably used by translators to achieve equivalence between the meaning of the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) due to the structural differences in language patterns. Transposition is the process of replacing the structure of the SL text with a different structure of the TL, yet retains meaning (Wilss, 1980). According to Machali (2009) there are four kinds of transposition or shifting forms, namely (i) a shift in the form of compulsory caused the system and rules of language so the translator does not have any choice; (ii) a shift is adopted because the grammatical structure of the SL does not exist in the TL, (iii) a shift for reasons of fairness or flexibility in the TL, and (iv) a shift to fill lexical gap in the TL.

Since the transposition target is a clause by changing its grammatical structure, while from the perspective of systemic functional theory the meaning process actually occurs within clauses, so it is necessary to assess whether the application of the transposition procedures has an impact on the grammatical process. This paper would like to convey the impact of the application of the transposition based on the analysis of clauses containing grammatical metaphors. The data are taken from *The Book of Psalm* as the SL (English), and *Kitab Mazmur* as the TL (Bahasa Indonesia).

**2. Research Method**

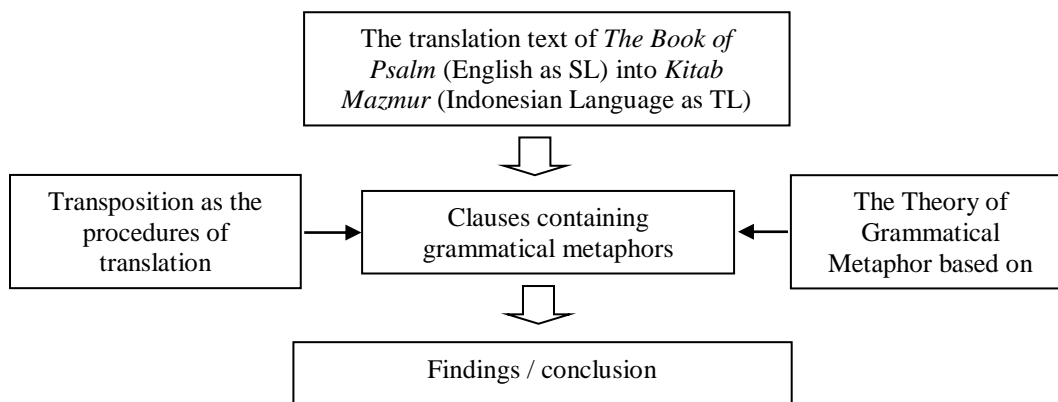
This research is descriptive qualitative with the phenomenological approach by which the data are considered as emerged phenomena. Theory of Systemic Functional Language is used to be a tool of analysis. The steps of research are as follows:

**2.1 Data Collection**

Target Language data are taken from Indonesian texts *Kitab Mazmur*, and Source Language data are taken from English text *The Book of Psalm*. By reading and examining thoroughly these two texts, some clauses containing grammatical metaphors are noted. Examination of such clauses is done to identify the adoption of transposition procedure on them.

**2.2 Technique of Analysis**

Based on metafunction of language (SFL theory), the analysis is conducted to know the process of meaning formation taken place in a clause. The core process takes place in prediction: material, mental, and relational process. By comparing TL and SL texts, the analysis is done to identify the change of meaning process due to the adoption of transposition as translation procedure.

**2.3 Model of Research**

### 3. Results and Analysis

#### 3.1 Meta Function of Language

As the theoretical ground of this study, it is necessary to see an outline of ideas in the Systemic Functional Language theory (SFL) introduced by Halliday (1980) in which language is comprehended in relation to its function for human life. Halliday argues that the language has three metafunctions, namely *ideational*, *interpersonal*, and *textual* functions. Tavernier (2004) explains these three metafunctions of language as follows:

- a) *Ideational meta function* is relating to the language as representation, whose role is to shape reality. This function is fulfilled by breaking reality into the processes that take place with the participating entities. The participants can be a living creature, abstract or concrete objects.
- b) *Interpersonal meta function* is relating to language as interaction, namely the role of language that allows interpersonal relationships. This process is also called relational. One of the grammatical components in this process is the use of interpersonal modality to express evaluation of something that will happen in reality, for example about certainty, possibility, and so forth. This modality is expressed with the use of modal such as *may*, *must*, *maybe*, *surely*, *certainly*, and so forth. Another component is the interpersonal *mood* revealed through the interrogative and imperative forms. The choice of the respective type of mood indicates the position. For example, by choosing interrogative mood indicates the position of the party as one requesting information.
- c) *Textual Meta functions* relating to the organization of textual discourse. The third function is not used in this study because only ideational and interpersonal meta functions occur in clauses relating to grammatical metaphor.

From the perspective of the theory of SFL, the term "process" is concerning with ideational metafunction, namely the processes of representing and shaping reality. The process is normally expressed through the clause called *congruent*, but it could be differently expressed through a noun phrase. Here is an example of changing a clause into a noun phrase, *John's writing a letter to his sister surprised me*. From the perspective of SFL, a process consisting of a verb (*write*), and participants (*John*, *letter*, and *his sister*) must be congruently constructed in a clause, *John wrote a letter to his sister*. Thus, the noun phrase of *John's writing a letter to his sister surprised me* is metaphorical because of the shift process of clause into a noun phrase.

As already mentioned, interpersonal metafunction is expressed through the use of modality and mood. The congruent form of this function is signalled by the use of modal such as *you may go home* or *he will certainly arrive here*, while the metaphorical forms may be as in *I think John has already left*; *It is very likely that John has already left*; *Everyone believed that John had already left*; *It is clear that John has already left*.

In connection with the mood, Halliday distinguishes three types of interactive functions normally or congruent: (i) expressions (declarative form) is a phrase to provide information, (ii) the question (interrogative form) to request information, and (iii) commands (imperatives) to ask for something to happen. Correspondence between function and form are called *congruent*, whereas shift between function and form is called *metaphorical*. For example, congruent command expressed through imperative, *send your proposal by email, please!* This command can be expressed metaphorically as *could you send your proposal by email, please?* (function for imperative but the form in interrogative) or *I would advise you to send it by email*. (function for imperative but the form of declarative) .

#### 3.2 Grammatical Metaphor

Halliday & Martin (1993: 79) state that grammatical metaphor is the substitution of one grammatical class or structure by other grammatical class or structure. For example, the process of departing (verb) is converted into a noun in *he is departing* into *his departure*. Thompson (1996: 165) states that grammatical metaphor is an expression of meaning through the lexicogrammatical form by which the original meaning can be expressed differently. Thus, the grammatical metaphor is a way in which the same meaning can be expressed metaphorically as well as congruent with the grammatical process. Since metaphor is variation in the expression of meanings, so metaphorical variation is lexicogrammatical rather than simply lexical (Halliday, 1994:341).

Halliday distinguishes two main types of grammatical metaphors in the clause based on metafunction of language: *ideational metaphor* (transitivity) and *interpersonal metaphor* (mood and modality). As ideational function, a clause contains participants (actor, goal), process (material, mental, relational), and circumstance

(adverbial). For example, *Mary saw something wonderful* (congruent) may be expressed as *Mary came upon a wonderful sight* (metaphorical).

- a) Mary saw something wonderful  
**Actor Mental Process Goal**
- b) Mary came upon a wonderful sight  
**Actor Material Process Goal**

Comparing the clauses above, the *mental process* of *saw* in (a) is replaced by a *material process* of *came upon* in (b) and turned into the participant or goal of *sight*. In such way, the same meaning can be expressed in a different form by changing the process.

### 3.3 Transposition and Grammatical Metaphor

The following clauses are taken from *The Book of Psalm* as the SL and *Kitab Mazmur* as TL in which the transposition procedure is applied in the translation process.

#### 1) Psalm 31: 25: *Let your heart take courage*

The clause is metaphorical for as Actor, *your heart* is not a conscious being that can take action (material process), as well as *courage* is an abstract thing.

SL	your heart ACTOR	Take MATERIAL PROCESS	Courage GOAL
TL	Dia ACTOR	akan menguatkan MENTAL PROCESS	hatimu GOAL

Transposition is applied by shifting the imperative form *let* into declarative by adding *Dia* as an Actor, turning Actor *your heart* into Goal *hatimu*, and changing Material Process of *take* into Mental Process of *menguatkan*. Transposition, thus, can change metaphorical clause into congruent one, and material process into the mental process.

#### 2) Psalm 91: 9: *For thou, hast made the LORD who is my refuge*

The clause may be paraphrased into congruent form *You are my refuge because You have become the LORD*.

SL	For thou ACTOR	hast made MATERIAL PROCESS	the LORD who is my refuge GOAL
TL	Sebab Tuhan IDENTIFIED	Ialah RELATIONAL PROCESS	Tempat perlindunganku IDENTIFYING

Transposition is applied by changing verb *hast made* into be *ialah*, and replacing Goal of *Lord* as Actor. Verb *make* is the process of doing (material process), while *ialah* is the *process of being* (relational process), so in such a way transposition can change the grammatical process.

#### 3) Psalm 23: 2 *He maketh me to lie down in a green pasture*

*Maketh* here is not the same as in *he is making a kite*, but it has a semantic component of "cause" called causative verb (Halliday 1994: 350), so the grammatical process is not material but relational.

SL	He INITIATOR	Maketh RELATIONAL PROCESS (causative)	me ACTOR	to lie down MATERIAL PROCESS	in a green pasture CIRCUMSTANCE
TL	Dia ACTOR	Membaringkan MATERIAL PROCESS	aku GOAL		di padang rumput hijau CIRCUMSTANCE

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Transposition applied by replacing *maketh* with *membaringkan* (to lie down) changes the grammatical process from relational into the material. From SFL view, some changes occur e.g. Initiator → Actor, Actor → Goal, and Relational → material. The metaphorical clause in the SL, then, changes into congruent one in the TL.

#### 4. Conclusion

A translation product is the result of the translation process in which the translator has chosen and made some decisions, starting from the ideological partiality oriented to the TL or the SL, until the applied specific procedures. The main purpose of those policies is to attain the meaning equivalence between the SL and the TL. Transposition, by the structural view, is a shift of grammatical form without changing the meaning e.g. word to phrase, noun to verb, etc. From the SFL view, however, transposition can be understood as the changing of the grammatical process such as material to relational, and the form of a clause from metaphorical to congruent. This finding could be used by the translator in making the decision to choose the right procedures and their impacts, particularly the transposition. Moreover, the study of translation from the perspective of SFL theory can enrich both the theoretical and practical domains of translation.

#### Acknowledgments

I would like to give high appreciation for some persons with their contribution in completing this article: firstly, Mr. Prof. Dr. Ida Bagus Putra Yadnya, M.A. as my super advisor due to his guidance and kindness, secondly Mr. Prof. Dr. Aron Meko Mbete as my co-promotor 1 with his patient and motivation, and the last but not the least, Mr. Dr. Frans Made Brata, M.Hum as my co-promotor 2 with his input and correction. Their great contribution is very meaningful for completing this article.

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