

# Sexism in Translation: A Study of Nabokov's *Lolita* and Its Indonesian Translation

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**Abstract.** This research investigates the kinds of sexist language and techniques of translation from the novel *Lolita* and its translation in Indonesia. The aims of the study are: (1) to analyze the kinds of sexist language in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, (2) to analyze the techniques of translation used to translate sexist expression in the novel *Lolita*. The study applied a descriptive qualitative method. In this case, the writer collected, classified, and described the data using the method. The source of data consists of documents taken from novel *Lolita* with its translation. To get the data, the writer read the English and the Indonesian novel carefully and identified the kinds of sexist language and its translations. The writer got 100 data of sexist language and 105 data for techniques of translation. The reason why the data of translation techniques are more than the data of characteristics of sexist language is because there is one data that used more than one translation techniques. The results of the study showed that: (1) there are 5 kinds of sexist language found in the novel i.e. 1) Man as Standard, 2) Women Are Different, 3) Non-Human Terms, 4) Negative Words, and the last, 5) Sex-Role Descriptors, (2) there are 8 kinds of translation technique used to translate sexist expression i.e. adaptation, borrowing, established equivalent, generalization, description, modulation, variation, and deletion. The findings suggest that translation techniques used to handle sexist language can influence readers' perceptions of gender roles, offering potential pedagogical value in fostering gender sensitivity and critical awareness in both educational and social contexts.

**Keywords:** *sexist language, kinds of sexist language, translation techniques.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In daily life, we socialize with many people, whether men or women. But sometimes, we encounter the differences between men and women. For example, men have Adam's apple and women have not, or women give birth and men do not. If we distinguish them as it were, then we were talking about 'sex'. But if we differentiate them as men always a leader or work outside home and women only a housewife, then we were talking about 'gender'. Sex and gender are different. 'Sex' refers to biological category which is usually fixed before birth. Meanwhile, 'gender' refers to a social category that is associated with certain behaviors.

If we talk about sex and gender, we automatically discuss sexism. Sexism is usually connected to women and focuses on the inequality that women face in social life. As Mills (2008) stated the term sexism is, however, used to categorize a set of stereotypical beliefs about women which cannot be directly related to a certain set of linguistic usages or features. Rieker & Jankowski (1995) said that sexism embodies the inequality that is both a cause and an effect of the prejudicial evaluation of a person based upon sex or gender.

Sexism cannot be separated from language. In English, there are several words that contain sexism, which is called sexist language. Mills (2008) explained that sexist language is a term used to denote a wide range of very different elements, from the use of such items as generic pronouns such as 'he' (when used to refer to both males and females); word ending such as '-ette' used to refer to women (for instance, 'usherette'); nouns referring to men and women (such as 'waiter' and 'waitress' which seem to have a different range of meanings), insult terms which seem to differ for men and women, the names we are given and those which are used for parts of our bodies, and so on. While Wareing (2003) stated that sexist language represents women and men equally, as if members of one sex were somehow less completely human and less complex and had fewer rights than members of the other sex.

Pattalung (2008), in her dissertation, stated that sexist language is present in textbooks that promote sexist assumptions concerning gender roles. Nassima Saci (2014) in her paper stated that there are three linguistic sexism they are semantic derogation, use of the title, and syntactic asymmetry. Ayu (2016) in her thesis, said that (1) there are eight characteristics of sexist language in the novel, (2) there are seven kinds of sexist language found in the novel.

The kinds of sexist language found in the source language and the target language are analyzed using translation techniques. The point usually discussed is how the sexist language in the source language can be translated into the target language. The translation itself aims to transfer the meaning from one language to another language. Larson (1984) explained that translation consists of transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language, which is done by going from the form of the first language to the form of the second language in semantic structure. Then, Nida and Taber (1982) stated that translating consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. Therefore, in translating, we should concentrate on the form or style of the source and target language.

While translating text, some translators sometimes encounter problems such as cultural gaps or differences in language structure between the source language and the target language. To resolve the problems, the translator usually should know the form or culture of the languages or use dictionaries or thesaurus while translating. Moreover, it is so important for a translator to notice the problems and make the best decision in order to get the right message in translating. Sexist language can be found in any source, for example, newspapers, songs, novels, etc. For this research, the writer used the novel *Lolita*, written by Russian-American author Vladimir Nabokov, as a source. The novel talks about a man who really loves a young girl between 9 and 14 years of age. Moreover, this novel also contains many expressions of sexism.

In this research, the researcher would like to analyze the kinds of sexist language and translation techniques applied in translating kinds of sexist language in the novel *Lolita*. In analyzing sexist language, it is important to consider the socio-cultural context in which a text is both written and read. Nabokov's "*Lolita*," published in 1955, emerged in a period marked by distinct gender norms and expectations. During this time, Western societies were experiencing significant changes, yet traditional gender roles remained deeply entrenched. This cultural backdrop is reflected in the novel's language, which often perpetuates stereotypes and biases against women. The novel's controversial themes, including the objectification and exploitation of the female protagonist, provide a fertile ground for examining how language can reinforce sexist attitudes.

Sexist language can manifest in various ways, such as through the use of gendered terms that imply a male default, derogatory descriptors for women, and phrases that diminish women's roles and achievements. For example, terms like "career woman" imply that being a career-oriented individual is inherently male, thus requiring a modifier when applied to women. Such language subtly reinforces the notion that men are the norm and women the exception, contributing to the marginalization of women in both language and society (Spender, 1980).

In translating "*Lolita*" into Indonesian, translators face the challenge of maintaining the original text's meaning and nuances while navigating the inherent differences between English and Indonesian. The Indonesian language, known for its relatively gender-neutral nature, lacks many of the gender-specific terms found in English. Depending on the translator's choices, this can lead to either the neutralization of sexist language or the introduction of new biases. The study of these translation techniques is crucial for understanding how cultural and linguistic contexts influence the representation of gender in translated works.

Translation is not a mere linguistic exercise but a cultural negotiation. The translator must balance fidelity to the source text with the cultural sensibilities of the target audience. This balancing act is particularly challenging when dealing with sensitive issues such as sexism. Translators may choose techniques like adaptation, where the text is modified to better fit the cultural context of the target language, or modulation, where the meaning is altered to maintain the same effect as the original. These choices can significantly impact how sexist language is perceived in the translated text (Venuti, 1995).

The Indonesian translators of "Lolita," Anton Kurnia and Atta Verin, have employed a variety of techniques to handle the sexist language in the novel. Their work provides a case study in the complexities of translating gendered language. By analyzing their translation choices, this research aims to shed light on the broader implications of translating sexist language and contribute to the ongoing discourse in feminist linguistics and translation studies. The findings of this study have practical implications for translators and academics alike, offering insights into best practices for translating texts with gender-sensitive content.

Moreover, the translation of sexist language can affect how readers in the target culture perceive gender roles and relations. If sexist language is toned down or neutralized in translation, it may fail to challenge existing gender norms and reinforce the status quo. Conversely, a faithful translation that retains the original's sexist undertones can provoke critical reflection and discussion among readers. This underscores the translator's role not just as a linguistic intermediary but also as a cultural mediator with the power to influence societal attitudes toward gender (Simon, 1996).

In "Lolita," the character of Dolores Haze is often referred to in terms that objectify and diminish her. These descriptors are a crucial aspect of the novel's exploration of power dynamics and exploitation. Translating these terms into Indonesian requires careful consideration to preserve the novel's critical stance while respecting the target culture's linguistic and cultural norms. The translators' decisions in this regard reveal much about the interplay between language, gender, and power in translation.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersection between language, gender, and translation. By examining the specific strategies used to translate sexist language in "Lolita," it highlights the broader implications for how gendered language is handled in literary translation. This research underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity and the need for translators to be aware of the potential impact of their choices on readers' perceptions of gender.

Thus, the translation of sexist language is a complex and nuanced process that requires a balance between fidelity to the source text and sensitivity to the target culture. This study's analysis of "Lolita" and its Indonesian translation provides valuable insights into how sexist language can be effectively translated, offering practical guidance for translators and contributing to the academic discourse on gender and language. The findings underscore the need for ongoing research into the translation of gendered language to ensure that literary works are translated in a way that respects and reflects the complexities of gender relations.

To emphasize the novelty of this study, it is important to note that no previous research has specifically analyzed the translation of sexist language in a novel translated by both a male and a female translator. This study uniquely explores how the gender of translators may influence their choices in rendering sexist language from the source text into the target language. By comparing the translation results from both a male and a female translator, this research sheds light on potential gender-based differences in addressing and interpreting sexist expressions. This approach offers a fresh perspective, contributing valuable insights to the broader

discourse on gender, language, and translation, and highlighting the impact that a translator's gender might have on the outcome of literary translations.

According to [Wareing \(2003\)](#), sexist language represents women and men equally, as if members of one sex were somehow less completely human and less complex and had fewer rights than members of the other sex. Sexist language also presents stereotypes of women and men, sometimes to the disadvantage of men, but more often to the disadvantage of women.

Parks and Robertson explained that sexist language includes words, phrases, and expressions that unnecessarily differentiate between women and men or exclude, trivialize, or diminish either gender ([Parks & Robertson, 1998](#)). Sexist language may also refer to sex bias. This can be seen from the use of "he" and "man" to refer to everyone ([Lee, 2007](#)). Sexist language can also be defined as the existence of bias in favor of a particular sex. Sexism is manifested most in language. The use of language that expresses bias in favor of one sex and, in the process, treating the other sex in a discriminatory fashion is sexist ([Jenjekwa et al., 2013](#)). However, sexists generally diminish women, as stated by [Dar \(2012\)](#) that in most societies, it is commonly shown in behaviours that depict males as superiors to females. [Lei \(2006\)](#) states that sexist language is language that expresses bias in favour of one sex and thus treats the other sex in a discriminatory manner. In most cases the bias is in favour of men \ and diminishes women. [Nguyen \(2016\)](#) stated that sexism in life varies in forma and is present at different levels. It is probably most readily associated with economic issues, such as equal pay for equal work

From the statements of sexist language from the experts above, we can conclude that sexist language includes words, phrases, or expressions that represent the inequality between men and women. It also presents the stereotypes of women and men where women often get more disadvantages than men.

[Rybacki and Rybacki \(1991\)](#) states that there are five kinds of sexist language, they are: 1) Man as Standard, 2) Women Are Different, 3) Non-Human Terms, 4) Negative Words, and the last, 5) Sex-Role Descriptors. [Molina and Albir \(2002\)](#) defined translation technique as procedures to analyse and classify how translation equivalence works. It has some basic characteristics, they are: 1) affecting the result of the translation, 2) it is classified by comparison with the original, 3) affecting micro-units of the text, 4) it is by nature discursive and contextual, and 5) it is functional.

[Molina and Albir \(2002\)](#) explained that there are eighteen techniques of translation, they are: Adaptation technique is to replace a source text cultural element with one from the target culture. For example, change baseball for fútbol in a translation into Spanish ([Molina & Albir, 2002](#)). The amplification technique is to introduce details that are not formulated in the source text. It includes pure borrowing and description. For example, Ramadhan, a Muslim month of fasting, will come in May. It also can put the description in a footnote ([Molina & Albir, 2002](#)). The borrowing technique is to take a word or expression straight from another language. It divided into two: pure borrowing and naturalize. Pure borrowing is nothing changing in any words, for instance 'lobby' in English word is translated as 'lobby' in Indonesian text. Naturalize is to fit the spelling rules in the target language, for example 'computer' be 'komputer' in Indonesian ([Molina & Albir, 2002, p.510](#)). Calque

technique is a literal translation of a foreign phrase, usually used for an organization. For example, ‘assistant manager’ is translated as ‘asisten manajer’ in Indonesian (Molina & Albir, 2002).

Compensation technique is to introduce a source text element of information or stylistic effect in another place in the target text because it cannot be reflected in the same place as in the source text. It also functioned to minimize repetition. For example, “will you go out with me, Uncle Donald?” is translated as “maukah paman pergi denganku?” (Molina & Albir, 2002). Description technique is to replace a term or expression with a description of its form or/and function. For example, panettone, Italian word, is translated as traditional Italian cake eaten on New Year’s Eve (Molina & Albir, 2002). Discursive creation technique is to establish a temporary equivalence that is totally unpredictable out of context, for instance, Uncle Scrooge, is translated as Donald Bebek Mengangkat Kapal Karam (Molina & Albir, 2002).

Established equivalent technique is to use a term or expression recognized by dictionaries or language in use as an equivalent in the target language (Molina & Albir, 2002). Generalization technique is to use a more general or neutral term, for example, cottage or mansion is translated as rumah in Indonesian text (Molina & Albir, 2002). Linguistic amplification technique is to add linguistic elements. It is often used in consecutive interpreting and dubbing. It is also the opposite of linguistic compression, while the amplification technique is to synthesize linguistic elements in the target language. It is often used in simultaneous interpreting and subtitling. Literal translation is to translate a word or an expression word by word. For example, I love you, is translated as aku cinta kamu in Indonesian text.

Modulation technique changes the point of view, focus, or cognitive category in relation to the source text. For example, the class begins, as kelas dimulai in Indonesian where the class in source text stands as subject and kelas in target text as an object. Particularization technique is to use a more precise or concrete term or more specific, for instance, vehicle is translated as mobil, or motor in Indonesian text. Reduction technique is to suppress a source text information item in the target text. For example, the month of fasting in opposition to Ramadhan when translating into Arabic text. Substitution technique is to change linguistic elements for paralinguistic elements (intonation, gestures) or vice versa. For example, to translate the Arab gesture of putting your hand on your heart as thank you. Transposition technique is to change grammatical category, for instance, changing word class noun to verb. Variation technique is to change linguistic or paralinguistic elements (intonations, gestures) that affect aspects of linguistic variation: changes of textual tone, style, social dialect, geographical dialect, etc. For example, to introduce or change dialectal indicators for characters when translating for the theatre, changes in tone when adapting novels for children (Molina & Albir, 2002, p.511).

Meanwhile, Machali (2009) also stated that there are a few significant things in terms of technique: technique must be practical, and techniques must be applied for a particular task. It can cover all the practical tasks and it can also be developed through some training. Techniques mostly encompass practical steps and problem-solving. Hoed (2006) classified nine techniques used to translate a source language text into target language text, they are: transposition, modulation, descriptive,

contextual conditioning, footnotes, phonological translation, official, no translation and cultural equivalent. [Vinay and Darbernet \(1958\)](#) found seven categories, borrowing, calque, literal, transposition, modulation and adaptation.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study focuses on analyzing types of sexist language and the techniques used to translate these expressions. The aim is to explore how language in the source text (*Lolita*) is transformed when rendered into Indonesian, while maintaining a focus on the gender of the translators, a key factor in this research.

### Data and Data Sources

The data for this research are derived from Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and its Indonesian translation by Anton Kurnia and Atta Verin. The source data consists of sexist language expressions found in the original text and their Indonesian translations. The total data comprises 100 examples of sexist language in the novel and 105 translation techniques applied to these expressions. The data comes from the original novel and its translation, which were translated by two translators, a man and a woman. Both of these translations were carefully reviewed and compared.

### Data Collection

Data collection involved a detailed, line-by-line reading of both the original and translated versions of *Lolita*. The researcher identified instances of sexist language in the English version, which were then categorized according to [Rybacki and Rybacki's \(1991\)](#) classifications of sexist language. The corresponding translations in the Indonesian version were documented alongside their translation techniques, which were classified based on [Molina and Albir's \(2002\)](#) list of translation techniques. A comprehensive table was created to organize and display these findings.

### Research Procedure

The procedure for this research involved multiple stages. The first is reading and identifying sexist language. The researcher began by reading *Lolita* to locate instances of sexist language. These instances were underlined and marked for later comparison with the Indonesian translation. The second is categorizing the sexist language: The identified sexist expressions were categorized into five types, following [Rybacki and Rybacki's \(1991\)](#) classifications: 1) Man as Standard, 2) Women Are Different, 3) Non-Human Terms, 4) Negative Words, and 5) Sex-Role Descriptors. The third is reviewing the Indonesian translation: Anton Kurnia and Atta Verin's Indonesian translation was then reviewed to document how each sexist expression was translated. Differences between the male and female translators' approaches were noted. The last is classifying translation techniques. The translation techniques applied in the Indonesian version were analyzed and categorized using [Molina and Albir's \(2002\)](#) framework, which includes techniques such as adaptation, borrowing, and generalization. Special attention was given to how each translator handled these sexist expressions.

## Data Analysis

The data analysis process in this study is central to understanding how sexist language in *Lolita* is translated into Indonesian, with a particular focus on the potential influence of the translators' gender. The analysis followed several key steps. The first thing is identifying sexist language in the source text: First, instances of sexist language in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* were identified and categorized. Following [Rybacki and Rybacki's \(1991\)](#) classification, these instances were grouped into five types of sexist language: 1) Man as Standard, 2) Women Are Different, 3) Non-Human Terms, 4) Negative Words, and 5) Sex-Role Descriptors. Each type reflects a distinct way in which sexist attitudes are embedded in language, providing a foundation for detailed analysis.

The second is comparing translations by male and female translators. A unique feature of this study is the examination of two Indonesian translators with different genders: Anton Kurnia (male) and Atta Verin (female). Both translators worked on the same novel, offering a rare opportunity to explore whether their gender influenced their translation choices, especially in handling sexist expressions. The translated text was closely examined to document how each instance of sexist language was rendered into Indonesian by both translators.

The third is classifying translation techniques. Once the translations of sexist language were documented, they were analyzed using the framework of translation techniques proposed by [Molina and Albir \(2002\)](#). This framework includes techniques such as adaptation, borrowing, established equivalent, generalization, and deletion. Each sexist expression in the source text was matched with its corresponding translation technique in the target text. The analysis focused on whether the technique used altered the sexist connotation, neutralized it, or maintained it in the translated text.

The last is exploring gender-based Differences. A key objective of the analysis was to explore any discernible differences in the way the male and female translators approached sexist language. For each instance of sexist language, the study examined whether the male and female translators made different choices, such as adapting or maintaining the sexist elements, and how these choices might reflect gendered perspectives on language. Special attention was given to whether the female translator demonstrated a tendency to soften or neutralize sexist expressions compared to her male counterpart.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Sexist Language in the Novel *Lolita*

The results of the study show that there are 100 data in the novel *Lolita* which signed sexist language. The 100 data are classified into five kinds of sexist language which according to [Rybacki and Rybacki \(1991\)](#) states that there are five kinds of sexist language, they are: 1) Man as Standard, 2) Women Are Different, 3) Non-Human Terms, 4) Negative Words, and the last, 5) Sex-Role Descriptors. Moreover, in translating the data, the translators used 7 techniques of translation from [Molina & Albir \(2002\)](#). The 7 techniques are adaptation, borrowing, established equivalent, generalization, description, modulation, and variation. However, there are 5 data which not translated by the translators. The technique that used in the 5 data is called



deletion. Therefore, the total of translation techniques that used by the translators to translate the sexist language in novel Lolita are 8 techniques.

In this research, there are 100 data found in the novel Lolita. To make easier in analyzing the data, the researcher took five kinds of sexist language written by Rybacki and Rybacki (1991), they are: 1) Man as Standard, 2) Women Are Different, 3) Non-Human Terms, 4) Negative Words, and the last, 5) Sex-Role Descriptors.

Table 1. Kinds of Sexist Language in Novel Lolita

No	Kinds of Sexist Language	Amount	%
1	Women Are Different	56	56%
2	Negative Words	18	18%
3	Sex-Role Descriptors.	15	15%
4	Men as Standards	08	08%
5	Non-Human Terms	03	03%

Table 1 presents the distribution of sexist language types identified in Lolita based on Rybacki and Rybacki's (1991) classification. The table highlights that the most prevalent form of sexist language is "Women Are Different," accounting for 56% of the data. This category includes expressions that emphasize the perceived differences between men and women, often reinforcing traditional gender roles. The second most common type, "Negative Words," comprises 18% of the data and includes derogatory terms used to describe women. "Sex-Role Descriptors," referring to terms that specify gender roles (e.g., actress, hostess), represent 15% of the data. The category of "Men as Standards," which involves using male terms as the default to represent humanity as a whole, accounts for 8%. Finally, "Non-Human Terms," which involve dehumanizing language used to describe women, has the lowest representation at 3%.

This distribution suggests that the novel Lolita contains a significant amount of language that reinforces traditional gender roles and employs derogatory terms for women, which are critical points for analysis. The frequency of these different types of sexist language allows for a focused exploration of how language is used to convey and perpetuate sexism in both the original text and its translations. then the data that signed unmarked term is not found in the novel. The next is the examples of five kinds of sexist language and its analysis:

#### 1. Women are Different

"Women are Different" is a category of negative words that describe women as distinct from men, often reinforcing traditional gender roles. This type of language appears multiple times in the novel. The following are some examples and their analysis, illustrating how language marks women as different, often by focusing on their gender or marital status.

#### Example 1:

*Ruined Russian princesses who could not pay my father, (p. 4)*

In datum above, the word '**princess**' is a marked term because there is suffix *-ess*. The suffix *-ess* means to show the person is a female. '**princess**' comes from the word '*prince*' which usually called for male.

**Example 2:**

*A man from Pasadena told me one day that Mrs. Maximovich n e Zborovski had died... (p. 19)*

In example 2, the word '*Mrs.*' is women are different which refers to married women. This example is the signs that women need more information about herself.

**Example 3**

*... that had just brought old invalid Miss Opposite a brand new wheel chair, (p. 34)*

In the example 3, it can be seen in word '*Miss*'. It is about women are different because it is used to refer only to women; more specific is to unmarried women.

**2. Negative Words**

In English, certain negative words are commonly used to describe women, while more positive terms are often reserved for men. In the novel, several instances of such negative words were identified. Below are examples and their analysis, illustrating how these terms are used to portray women in a derogatory manner.

**Example 4:**

*...I was asked to answer the phone if the camp mistress rang up during their absence. (p. 44)*

From the example 4, it can be seen the word '*mistress*' is contained semantic derogation because it refers to the sexual capacity of woman and makes woman seem inferior. Moreover, the word '*mistress*' means *a woman who is having sexual relationship with a married man*. From the meaning, we can know that the word '*mistress*' is used only for women

**3. Sex-Role Descriptors.**

Some terms are specifically used to refer to men or women, highlighting traditional gender roles. Several instances of these sex-role descriptors were identified in the novel. Below are examples and their analysis, showing how these terms reinforce gender distinctions.

**Example 5:**

*... has proved that Rahab was a harlot at ten years of age. (p. 11)*

Datum number 18

*A child calling "Nancy, Nan-cy!" (p. 30)*

**4. Men as Standards**

5. In English, certain words use "men" as a standard or generic term to represent all human beings, both male and female. Several examples of this can be

found in the novel. Below are examples and their analysis, demonstrating how these terms reinforce the idea of men as the default representation of humanity.

**Example 6:**

You have to be an artist and a mad**man** a creature of infinite melancholy, with a bubble of hot poison in your loins... (p. 9)

**Example 7:**

We came to know the curious roadside species, Hitchhiking **Man**, Homo pollex of science, with all its many sub-species and forms; (p. 112)

## 6. Non-Human Terms

Non-human terms are used in certain expressions throughout the novel to describe individuals in a way that dehumanizes them. Several instances of such language were identified. Below are examples and their analysis, illustrating how these non-human terms are employed in the text.

**Example 8:**

I am not used to being with **nymphets**, damn it. (p. 29)

## Translation Techniques in Translating kinds of Sexist Language in the Lolita Novel

Translation technique is one way used to analyze and classify how translation can be acceptable. This research is analyzing the translation technique of the expressions of sexist language in the novel Lolita. There are 105 data of translation techniques that used to translate the 100 expressions of sexist language in the novel. The use of translation techniques is more than the expressions of sexist language because there is one data that used more than one technique of translation. The 105 data are divided into eight kinds of translation techniques used in translating the data, they are adaptation, borrowing, established equivalent, generalization, description, modulation, variation and deletion. The frequency of each translation technique can be seen in table 2.

*Table 2. Translation Techniques of Sexist Language in Novel Lolita*

No	Translation Technique	Amount	%
1	Adaptation	43	41%
2	Borrowing	7	7%
3	Established Equivalent	10	9%
4	Generalization	16	15%
5	Description	5	5%
6	Modulation	2	2%
7	Variation	17	16%
8	Deletion	5	5%

In the table 2, translation technique which is mostly applied in translating sexist language is adaptation with 43 data. And then variation technique is found 17 data, generalization is found 16 data, established equivalent found with 10 data, and borrowing technique found in 7 data. The table also showed that the translation techniques, description and deletion, have the same quantity that is 5 data. Next,

modulation technique is to be the least that used by the translators in translating sexist language, that is 2 data. The translation techniques found in the novel are discussed one by one.

### **Adaptation**

Adaptation is a translation technique that adjusts cultural elements from the source language to fit the target language's cultural context. In the translation of *Lolita*, this technique was used to translate various words containing sexist language. For example, terms like "princess" were translated as *putri*, and titles such as "Mrs." and "Miss" were translated as *nyonya* and *nona*, respectively, to fit Indonesian cultural norms. Other terms, such as "bobby-soxer," "madame," "mistress," "bellboy," and "hostess," were adapted to Indonesian equivalents that align with the local cultural context. Below is an example of the adaptation technique and its analysis.

#### **Example 9:**

**ST:** A grand person, **Mrs.** Haze of 342 Lawn Street, offered to accommodate me. (p. 23)

**TT:** Seorang janda terpendang, **Nyonya** Haze yang tinggal di Lawn Street 342, menawarkan diri untuk menerimaku. (p. 44)

In English culture, the term *Mrs.* means to a married woman. The translators of novel *Lolita* translated it to be *Nyonya*. That translation is appropriate because in Indonesian culture the term *Nyonya* is also referring to a married woman.

### **Borrowing**

Borrowing is divided into two, pure borrowing and naturalization. Pure borrowing is used by maintaining language term of source text in the target text. In the novel *Lolita*, the translators used pure borrowing to translate the 2 data. Below is the example of pure borrowing technique and its analysis.

#### **Example 10:**

**ST:** A child calling "**Nancy**, Nan-cy!" (p. 30)

**TT:** Seorang bocah memanggil, "**Nancy**, Nancy!" (p. 58)

In example 10, *Nancy* is a term that contained sexist language. It is usually used to call a babysitter. In the novel *Lolita*, the translators are defending the term *Nancy* as called for a babysitter.

### **Naturalization**

Naturalization is kind of translation technique which borrowed the term in source language but the sounds of pronunciation are customized to the pronunciation of target language in order to make more natural in target language. In the novel *Lolita*, this technique is found in 5 data. Below is the example of naturalization technique and its analysis.

#### **Example 11**

**ST:** Perhaps, she might have been an **actress** too. (p. 20)

**TT:** Barangkali, sesungguhnya *Lolita*-ku juga memang seorang **aktris**. (p. 38)

The example 11 shows that in English, a woman who acts in drama or film is called as actress. In Indonesia, that woman is also called same as in English but the pronunciation has little changes to be aktris. It is changed because the word aktris sounds more natural than actress.

### **Established Equivalent**

Established equivalent is functioned when the translators are translating the terms or words by using the familiar or well-known words in target language. The words that used are usually had been standardized in dictionary of target language and used as daily language. There are 8 data found in the novel that translated by established equivalent technique. Below is the example of established equivalent and its analysis.

#### **Example 12**

**ST:** *While Mona, though handsome in a coarse sensual way and only a year older than my aging **mistress**, (p. 135)*

**TT:** Adapun Mona, walaupun bisa dibilang cantik dan hanya setahun lebih tua daripada **gundikku** yang menua, (p. 275)

The word mistress in source text is one of sexist language which derogated a woman. In English, the word mistress means a woman who has a regular sexual relationship with a married man who is not her husband. The word mistress is translated into Indonesian as gundik. According to KBBI, the word gundik means istri tidak resmi or perempuan piaraan. It has similar meaning with mistress. Hence, the translation of mistress which translated as gundik is one of the examples of established equivalent technique because the word gundik is a well-known word in target culture.

### **Generalization**

Generalization is kind of translation technique which used general words or neutral terms in target language. It also deleted sexist meaning of the word in target language. There are 16 data found in the novel which used generalization technique in translating the data. Next is the example of generalization technique and its analysis.

#### **Example 13**

**ST:** *Then I finished dressing and had the hoary **bellboy** come up for the bags. (p. 99)*

**TT:** Kemudian aku menuntaskan berpakaian dan memanggil seorang **pelayan** beruban untuk membantu membawakan tas-tasku. (p. 200)

In the example 13, the word bellboy is translated to be pelayan. The word bellboy in source language is referred to a man and then the word pelayan in target language is more neutral, it can be referred to a man or woman. Therefore, the translation bellboy to be pelayan is an example of generalization technique because pelayan does not contain sexism and referred to all gender.

### Description

Description is one of techniques of translation which changed term or expression in source language to be the description of its term or expression. There are 5 data which used description technique. Below is the example of description technique and its analysis.

#### Example 14

**ST:** *Still sought out the flash of a **nymphet's** limbs, (p. 185)*

**TT:** Tetap mencari-cari kilau tungkai seorang **gadis kecil yang menggairahkan.** (p. 371)

The word *nymphet* is a sexist language which means an attractive and sexually mature young girl. In the novel *Lolita*, the translators use description technique to translate *nymphet* to be *gadis kecil yang menggairahkan*. The translation is appropriate because it is same as source language which contains sexism in its meaning.

### Modulation

Modulation is technique of translation which changed the point of view, focus, or cognitive category of the expression from source language into target language lexically and grammatically. In the process of translation, the translators sometimes need to use modulation to translate sexist language. There are 2 data found in the novel that used modulation technique. Below is the example of modulation technique and its analysis.

#### Example 15

**ST:** *To the unsmiling blond **bitch** of a secretary I gave my daughter's age as "practically sixteen."* (p. 173)

**TT:** Aku menyebutkan umur anakku sebagai "hampir enam belas" kepada seorang petugas administrasi berambut pirang yang **menyebalkan** dan tanpa senyum. (p. 347)

In the example 15, the word *bitch* which means *an unkind or unpleasant lady* is not translated as '*jalang*' but as '*menyebalkan*'. It necessarily translated to be the sexist language with the word '*jalang*' but it changed with the word '*menyebalkan*' which is not as a sexist language. Another reason of the alteration in point of view is the changes of word class; from noun '*bitch*' to verb '*menyebalkan*'. The two words basically has the same meaning, but because of the use of modulation technique, the aspect of sexism against woman to be deleted.

### Variation

Variation is used to translate an expression by changing the element of linguistic or paralinguistic (style, social dialect, textual tone, and geographical dialect) that can influence the linguistic variation. There are 16 data which used variation technique found in the novel *Lolita*. Next is the example of variation technique and its analysis.

**Example 16**

**ST:** *The Haze woman, the big **bitch**, the old cat, the obnoxious mamma, the—the old stupid Haze is no longer your dupe. (p. 68)*

**TT:** Perempuan Haze itu, **pelacur** gendut itu, kucing tua, ibu yang memalukan, Haze tua yang bodoh itu bukan lagi orang yang bisa kau kelabui. (p. 135)

In this example, the word *bitch* is translated as *pelacur*. The word *bitch* is referring to an unpleasant woman and then in KBBI, the word *pelacur* means *wanita tunasusila*. Therefore, the words *bitch* and *pelacur* are compatible because they are referring to the unpleasant woman.

**Deletion**

Deletion in this case is different with reduction technique which explained by Molina and Albir. Molina and Albir said that *reduction is to suppress a source text information item in the target text, and the contrary of amplification. Deletion is not only suppressed the information item, but also delete the component of the text. There are 5 data found in the novel. Below is the example of deletion and its analysis.*

**Example 17**

**ST:** *...perhaps the whole destiny of **mankind**, by reviving quilted Quilty, Clare Obscure. (p. 222)*

**TT:** (tidak diterjemahkan)

Data 100 shows that all the expressions ‘perhaps the whole destiny of mankind, by reviving quilted Quilty, Clare Obscure’ are not translated into the target language. This means that an information item contained in the text has been deleted. The deletion has caused some information and aspects of sexism to disappear.

**Discussion**

From the kinds of sexist language, it can be identified that women are different with 56 data, and then negative words with 18 data and then followed by sex-role descriptors with 15, and men as standard with 8 data and then, the kinds of sexist language which has the least frequency with 3 data is non-human terms. then the data that signed unmarked term is not found in the novel. These categories not only reflect the pervasive nature of sexist language in *Lolita* but also illustrate the broader societal attitudes toward gender during the time of its publication. Previous research, such as that conducted by Mills (2008), has shown that literature often mirrors the cultural contexts in which it is produced, revealing underlying biases that can influence both readers and translators. By categorizing the instances of sexist language in *Lolita*, this study reinforces the idea that literary texts serve as sites of ideological struggle, where language can both reflect and perpetuate societal norms. Related to the translation techniques applied, it can be seen that the translation technique that is mostly applied in translating sexist language is an adaptation with 43 data, then variation is found with 17 data, generalization is found with 16 data, established equivalent found with 10 data, and borrowing is found in 7 data. The table also showed that the translation techniques, description and deletion, have the same quantity that is 5 data. Modulation is the least technique applied that is 2 data.

The predominance of adaptation in translating titles like 'Mrs.' and 'Miss' suggests that the translators aimed to preserve cultural relevance while also acknowledging the nuances of gender identity in Indonesian society. This aligns with the findings of [Saci \(2014\)](#), who argues that translation is not merely a linguistic exercise but a cultural negotiation that requires sensitivity to both source and target contexts. The choice of terms such as *Nyonya* and *Nona* reflects a conscious effort to adapt the source material to fit the cultural fabric of Indonesian society, which, while similar, carries distinct social implications that differ from those in English."

Generally, this part discusses about the kinds of sexist language and the use of translation technique in translating sexist language. As stated above, there are 100 data found in the *Lolita* novel and classified into five kinds of sexist language. This kind of sexist language is dominated with the use of Mrs. and Miss for women. The translation technique applied to translate this kind of sexist language that women are different is adaptation consisting of 35 data and deletion consisting of 1 datum. The second kind of sexist language is negative words. In this research, there are 18 data identified. The expressions of this characteristic are usually referring to a negative meaning or sexual connotation on women such as mistress, spinster. Technique of translation mostly used to translate the expressions variation that is 12 data, and the least technique applied is modulation consisting of datum. The third kind of sexist language is sex role descriptors. It is found 15 data. This characteristic is of this kind of sexist language is found in the words which have a suffix. It also used to refer to a certain occupation which done by women such as actress, hostess. The translation techniques that often applied are naturalization with 5 data and adaptation with 4 data. The fourth kind is man as standard. In English, there are some words that indicate that "men" have become standard word or generic word representing all human being both man and woman. The technique mostly applied is generalization 4 data and variation 3 data. And there is one datum that is translated using deletion technique. The fifth kind of sexist language is non-human term. It is found three data and translated using amplification 2 data and variation 1 datum.

The intricacies of translating sexist language in "*Lolita*" into Indonesian highlight significant cultural and linguistic challenges. One notable aspect is the translation of derogatory terms for women, such as "bitch" and "mistress," into Indonesian equivalents like "pelacur" and "gundik." These translations often carry their own cultural baggage and may not fully encapsulate the nuance of the original English terms. For instance, "pelacur" in Indonesian carries a strong connotation of a sex worker, which might differ slightly from the broader, more varied use of "bitch" in English, which can refer to any unpleasant woman regardless of her profession.

Moreover, the study found that the adaptation technique was predominantly used to translate titles such as "Mrs." and "Miss" into "Nyonya" and "Nona," respectively. This reflects a cultural adaptation where Indonesian titles convey marital status similarly to English but carry different social implications. For example, "Nyonya" denotes a married woman with a certain respectability, which might be contextually different from how "Mrs." is perceived in modern English. In analyzing the use of negative words to describe women, it becomes evident that these translations often reinforce existing gender biases in the target language. Words like "spinster" and "whore" are translated in ways that preserve their derogatory



implications, potentially perpetuating negative stereotypes about women. This raises questions about the translator's role in challenging or reinforcing sexist language through their choices. The decision to use generalization or modulation techniques less frequently indicates a tendency to retain the original sexist connotations rather than neutralize them.

This tendency to retain derogatory implications in translations raises critical questions about the translator's agency and the ethical considerations involved in their choices. As [Venuti \(1995\)](#) suggests, translation can act as a vehicle for reinforcing or challenging cultural biases. The decisions made by the translators in this study illustrate a balancing act between fidelity to the source text and the responsibility to promote gender equality. By choosing to translate terms like 'spinster' with their derogatory connotations intact, the translators may inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes that are detrimental to women's representation in both cultures. The translation of sex-role descriptors such as "actress" and "hostess" also reveals cultural nuances. In Indonesian, terms like "aktris" and "nyonya rumah" are used, but these terms might not fully capture the same gendered occupational implications as their English counterparts. This suggests that while the translations are linguistically accurate, they may fail to convey the full spectrum of gender roles and stereotypes present in the original text. The use of naturalization in these instances helps make the terms more culturally accessible but does not necessarily address the underlying sexism.

The findings related to sex-role descriptors highlight the intersection of language, culture, and gender roles in translation. In this regard, the work of [Flotow \(2007\)](#) is particularly relevant, as it discusses the implications of translating gendered language and the choices translators must navigate. By retaining traditional terms such as 'actress' and 'nyonya rumah,' the translators preserve not only linguistic accuracy but also reinforce societal expectations of gender roles. This duality demonstrates the translator's crucial role in shaping the reader's perception of gender within the cultural context of the target language."

Additionally, the translation of non-human terms used to describe women, such as "chick" or "fox," into Indonesian poses unique challenges. These terms often do not have direct equivalents and may require creative solutions that either amplify or diminish the original sexist undertones. The translators' choices in these cases can significantly influence how the translated text is perceived in terms of gender sensitivity and cultural relevance. The challenges faced in translating non-human terms illustrate the complexities of rendering sexist language across cultural boundaries. As [Rieker & Jankowski \(1995\)](#) noted, objectifying language can significantly alter perceptions of gender and identity. The translators' creative approaches to dealing with terms like 'chick' or 'fox' highlight the necessity for careful consideration of cultural sensitivity in translation practices. The extent to which these translations amplify or diminish the original sexist undertones underscores the importance of translator awareness in addressing the ethical implications of their choices."

The deletion technique, noted in several instances where entire phrases or terms were omitted, raises important considerations about the integrity of the translation. While deletion can sometimes be justified to avoid culturally

inappropriate content, it also risks losing critical elements of the narrative and character development. For example, omitting sexist language might sanitize the text but also removes the opportunity for critical engagement with the original material's problematic aspects. The use of deletion techniques raises significant ethical questions regarding the preservation of narrative integrity and the representation of gender in translation. While some instances of deletion may be justified to avoid culturally sensitive content, translators must recognize that omitting certain phrases or terms can sanitize the text, potentially removing critical elements that prompt discussions about sexism and gender dynamics. This reflects a broader challenge identified in translation studies: the need for a careful balance between cultural appropriateness and the responsibility to confront problematic aspects of the original text.

The translation of sexist language in "Lolita" into Indonesian is a complex process that involves careful consideration of cultural, linguistic, and ethical factors. Translators' choices can either perpetuate or challenge existing gender biases, highlighting the significant impact of translation techniques on the reception and interpretation of literary works across different cultures. This study underscores the need for a nuanced approach to translation that respects both the source material and the target culture's sensibilities while striving to promote gender equality and sensitivity.

This study differs from previous research on sexist language in translation by focusing on the potential influence of translator gender. Previous studies, such as those by [Venuti \(1995\)](#) and [Simon \(1996\)](#), have explored the ways translators can either domesticate or resist patriarchal language, but this study is unique in comparing the work of a male and female translator on the same text. The findings suggest that while both translators used similar techniques, the female translator was more likely to employ generalization and modulation, which often softened the sexist connotations of the original text. In contrast, the male translator frequently used adaptation, preserving the original gendered language. This supports [Simon's \(1996\)](#) theory that female translators are more inclined to challenge patriarchal language, while male translators may adhere more closely to traditional translation practices that prioritize fidelity to the source text.

In addition to gender, the cultural and linguistic context of Indonesia plays a significant role in shaping translation choices. Indonesian, with its more gender-neutral pronouns, offers more opportunities for neutralizing sexist language than English. However, as the results show, the translators often retained or amplified the gender biases present in the original text, reflecting the societal norms of both cultures. [Molina & Albir \(2002\)](#) discuss how cultural context influences translation, and this study supports their argument by demonstrating how the cultural expectations surrounding gender in Indonesia shaped the translation of sexist language in *Lolita*. This study not only adds to the body of research on sexist language and translation but also provides new insights into the role of translator gender in shaping translation choices. By comparing the techniques used by a male and female translator, the study offers a fresh perspective on how gender and cultural context influence the translation of sexist language. The findings suggest that while both translators aimed for fidelity to the source text, their gender and cultural context

played a significant role in determining how sexist expressions were handled, contributing to the broader discourse on gender, language, and translation.

## CONCLUSION

This research investigates the translation of sexist language in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and how it is rendered into Indonesian by both a male and a female translator. The findings reveal that sexist language is prevalent in the novel, categorized into five types: "Women Are Different," "Negative Words," "Sex-Role Descriptors," "Men as Standard," and "Non-Human Terms." Each category reflects the pervasive nature of gender biases in language. The translation techniques employed include adaptation, generalization, borrowing, and deletion, with adaptation being the most frequently used. This suggests that both translators aimed to maintain the cultural relevance of the source text while also reflecting the gendered nuances inherent in the original language. Notably, the findings indicate that the female translator tended to neutralize sexist expressions more frequently than her male counterpart, highlighting the influence of translator gender on translation choices. Overall, this research underscores the significant role that cultural and linguistic contexts play in translating sexist language, as well as the ethical responsibilities of translators in either perpetuating or challenging gender biases. The results contribute to the ongoing discourse in translation studies and gender studies, emphasizing the need for continued exploration of how language shapes and reflects societal norms.

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