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The Evolution of *Ber-* Verbs in Indonesian and English: A Morphological and Translation Analysis

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate how Indonesian verbs prefixed with 'ber-' are translated into English, focusing on their semantic and grammatical transformations as part of a broader evolution of verbs across the two languages. It revealed how 'ber-' verbs, shaped by affixation in Indonesian, evolved into structurally different forms in English, reflecting each language's grammatical tendencies. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the research analyzed a bilingual corpus derived from the Indonesian fairy tale 'Burung Hantu dan Putri Rajawali' and its English translation 'The Owl and the Eagle's Daughter'. The data were collected through purposive sampling, comprising all 'ber-' prefixed verbs in the source text. These verbs were analyzed based on their morphological forms, syntactic roles, and semantic shifts in translation. The analysis shows that most 'ber-' verbs, such as 'berpikir' (thought), 'bertemu' (met), and 'berjuang' (struggled), were translated using various English verb forms, including past tense, gerunds, and progressive aspect. Some verbs, such as 'berterima kasih' (grateful) and 'berhadapan' (ventured out), demonstrated more distinctive shifts, indicating cultural or idiomatic adaptation. Reduplicated forms like 'berkomat-kamat' (muttered) and 'berjam-jam' (for many hours) emphasized repeated or prolonged action, while the verb 'bekerja' illustrated phonological alteration of the prefix. These findings highlight the translator's strategies in rendering ber-verbs not only semantically but also functionally accurate in English, revealing the complex relationship of morphology, syntax, and meaning in cross-linguistic verb evolution.

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1. INTRODUCTION

An examination of verb forms in Indonesian reveals distinct structural characteristics. This language frequently employs prefixes and suffixes to modify verbs, illustrating a distinctive morphological process. In contrast, English verbs typically change to reflect different tenses and grammatical aspects, as demonstrated by the variations of the verb ‘sing’, which can become ‘sang’, ‘sung’, and ‘singing’. While verbs in Indonesian also undergo morphological changes, the nature and implications of these transformations differ significantly from those in English. The Indonesian language shares similar grammatical units with English, including sentences, clauses, phrases, words, and morphemes. This aligns with Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004) assertion that there are five hierarchical units in language, namely clauses, phrases, groups, words, and morphemes, each possessing distinct, meaningful, and grammatically ordered patterns at each level. Constituency represents the compositional structure of language, demonstrating a hierarchical order where larger units are composed of smaller ones. For example, a clause consists of smaller units such as phrases and groups, which are further composed of words. This hierarchical organization is known as a rank scale, with each level in the hierarchy representing a distinct rank. Clause is at the top level; phrase/group is directly below, showing it is a constituent of a clause; word is beneath phrase/group, indicating it is a constituent of a phrase or group, while morpheme is at the bottom, showing it is a constituent of a word.

In Indonesian, many verbs are derived from base forms, such as adjectives, verbs, and nouns, through the addition of affixes. Understanding these forms and their functions is crucial, especially when translating texts to convey meaning accurately across languages. Translation is often perceived as a straightforward task; however, it is a complex process requiring considerable skill and effort. As noted by Mohammed (2021), translation functions both as a process and a product. It is not merely a linguistic activity but also a cultural one, bridging communication across different cultures. According to Qawasmeh (2021), translation inherently involves both language and culture, as these two elements are inseparable. Alrumayh (2021) further elaborated that translation varies in its approach, ranging from a focus on the source culture to an emphasis on the target culture. When translating from one language to another, achieving equivalence is a crucial aspect that must be considered (Sofiyanti & Nababan, 2022). Linguistic elements, such as the appropriateness of word choice and grammatical structures, often determine the coherence of a translated text. Munday (2000) explained that text coherence is significantly influenced by the correct use of grammatical and lexical cohesion, which helps link sentences and paragraphs within a text. Moreover, translation plays a vital role in intercultural communication, particularly in translating culture-specific items, which are essential for conveying the distinctive qualities of a particular culture (Ettehad, 2021).

Translation plays a critical role in interlingual communication, particularly in developing countries (Putra et al., 2022). Interlingual translation refers to a bilingual-mediated process of communication that primarily focuses on producing a target language (TL) text that is functionally equivalent to the source language (SL) text. This includes transliteration, also known as ‘transcription’, which refers to the conversion of words from the original language into a form that is phonetically represented in the target language (Zepedda, 2020). In a specialized context, the translation process refers to what is termed the basic translation process, which includes the following steps: (1) analyzing the original text, (2) converting the source language into the target language, (3) restructuring the translation, and (4) having representative readers review the translated text (Wang, 2023). Translation is perceived differently by various groups. From the client’s or external user’s perspective, translation is viewed from the outside. However, from the translator’s perspective, it is seen from the inside. Robinson (2003) noted that translators approach translation with an insider’s knowledge, understanding the practical challenges, potential solutions, and the inherent limitations of the translation process, for example, the recognition that

no translation can serve as a perfectly reliable representation of the original text. In contrast, non-translators, such as monolingual readers in the target language, often engage with translation from an external perspective. They typically do not understand the intricacies of the translation process but rely on the outcome, such as clients or book-buyers who evaluate the final product. [Samuelsson-Brown \(2010\)](#) further clarified that for a translator, the source language (SL) refers to the language from which the text is being translated. Meanwhile, the target language (TL) is the language into which the text is translated, often the translator's habitual language of use.

A translator must possess a deep understanding of the source language and substantial knowledge of the subject matter. During the translation process, achieving equivalence in meaning between the source and target languages is crucial. Translators should be aware of the different types of translation to produce an effective translation product. According to [Lestari et al. \(2021\)](#), translation is categorized into two primary types: form-based and meaning-based translation. Form-based translation seeks to preserve the grammatical structure of the source language while conveying its message in the target language. In contrast, meaning-based translation focuses on communicating the message by restructuring the source language's grammatical patterns to make the translation sound as natural as possible in the target language.

Additionally, [Khan \(2021\)](#) identified eight types of translation strategies, namely word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation. Word-for-word translation is an interlinear approach that closely follows the sentence structure of the source language. Literal translation captures the surface meanings of words while adhering to the target language's sentence structure. Faithful translation seeks to convey the author's intended meaning within the linguistic context as closely as possible. Semantic translation focuses on maintaining the author's intended meaning and aesthetic sense, sometimes at the expense of precise meaning. Adaptation is considered the freest form of translation, often used in films and dramas, where the source language's cultural elements are adjusted to fit the target culture without altering the original themes, characters, or plot. Free translation reproduces the core concept of the source text without strict adherence to its original sentence structure, a technique often employed in news production. Idiomatic translation rephrases the source text in a way that reflects the target language's idiomatic style while preserving the original concept, adding a literary flair. Finally, communicative translation aims to render the text in a manner easily understood by the general public, using language familiar to the target audience.

[Bowen \(2021\)](#) argued that translators can only convey meanings that are provided or approved by their clients. Determining which rights information must be communicated falls to legal authorities, not translators. By acknowledging the complexity of intercultural legal translation, translators can better apply their understanding of legal meanings to enhance communication with target audiences. As mediators of language and culture, translators play a vital role in familiarizing target readers with foreign languages and cultures. According to [Abdi \(2021\)](#), the translator must not only be proficient in the target language (TL) but also be familiar with the target culture (TC), as translation occurs within the context of the interchange between two cultures, two cognitive worlds, and divergent perceptions. To achieve high-quality translation, especially in terms of accuracy, acceptability, and readability, a translator must adapt the source language (SL) structures to align with those of the target language (TL). This adaptation ensures that the translation is both comprehensible and acceptable to the intended audience. [Hatim and Munday \(2004\)](#) emphasized that equivalence is fully achieved when the words in the SL and TL share similar orthographic or phonological features. This represents the ultimate form of formal equivalence, wherein a specific SL form is precisely mirrored by an identical TL form. The choice of forms in translation often depends on the translator's judgment. Since each language has distinct patterns and structures, producing a natural translation with identical meanings to the source language is not a straightforward task. [Baker \(2001\)](#) noted that every translation has its strengths and weaknesses, and all translations are inherently open to improvement.

In translation, affixation is a critical aspect that translators must consider. [Abeyweera \(2020\)](#) defined an affix as a bound morpheme that attaches to a root, stem, or base and cannot stand alone. Affixes, including prefixes and suffixes, are bound morphemes that form new words

by attaching to other linguistic units. Al-Timen (2018) stated that bound morphemes, such as prefixes, suffixes, or word roots, are context-independent and have specific meanings that are often universal, making them generally translatable. According to Broukal (2003), prefixes are added to the beginning of words to change meaning, while suffixes attach to the end to form new words or mark grammatical function. Both prefixes and suffixes modify the word's meaning and its grammatical category when added. Igaab and Kareem (2018) identified various types of affixes in Indonesian, such as prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and combinations of affixes, among others. Prefixes in Indonesian, such as *ber-*, *men-*, *per-*, and *ter-*, attach to the beginning of a base word, similar to English prefixes like *un-*, *re-*, and *dis-*. Suffixes in Indonesian, such as *-kan*, *-in*, *-i*, and *-an*, attach to the end of a base word, analogous to English suffixes like *-en*, *-er*, and *-ed*.

A verb is a part of speech that in syntax represents an action (e.g. bring, read, walk, run, learn), an occurrence (e.g., happen, become), or a state of being (e.g. be, exist, stand) (Betti, 2022). Additionally, there are four types of verbs, namely intransitive, transitive, linking, and passive. Intransitive and transitive verbs are used in the active voice, whereas passive verbs are used in the passive voice (Ne'matullayevna et al., 2020). In standard English grammar, the base form of a verb, with or without the particle 'to', is known as the infinitive. In Indonesian, the verbs often derive from bases such as adjectives, verbs, and nouns through the process of affixation. Generally, the verbs are less numerous and specific compared to the nouns and are more influenced by a linguistic context than by cultural factors. Verbs often form specific collocations and can vary significantly across languages. Hudcovičová et al. (2021) divided collocations into two groups: grammatical and lexical. Grammatical collocations consist of a dominant lexical word paired with a grammatical word, such as 'interested in', 'afraid of', and 'graduate from'. Lexical collocations, on the other hand, involve at least two lexical components of equal status, such as 'shooting star', 'high school', and 'deadline'.

This research examines the differences between the Indonesian and English verb structures by focusing on the hierarchical units of language. The data for this research includes the fairy tale *Burung Hantu dan Putri Rajawali*, as the source language (SL), and its English translation, *The Owl and the Eagle's Daughter*, as the target language (TL). This selection provides a practical and literary context for investigating how Indonesian morphological processes, particularly those involving the *ber-*prefix, impact translation accuracy, syntactic adaptation, and semantic coherence.

This research is essential due to the fundamental morphological differences between Indonesian and English, especially in the use of affixation to form verbs. While previous studies such as those by Djenar (2003) and Sneddon et al. (2010) have explored the semantics of Indonesian affixes like *ber-*, they primarily focus on internal language features without systematically comparing their English equivalents. Similarly, most existing translation studies tend to emphasize lexical equivalence or syntactic shifts (Hatim & Mason, 1997; Nida, 1964), rather than the morphological evolution of affix-based verbs across languages. The current linguistic approaches generally address affixation in isolation or focus on one-to-one lexical mapping, lacking a contrastive morphological framework that accounts for how affix-derived meanings shift in translation. Therefore, this research fills a critical gap by offering a contrastive morphological analysis of *ber-*verbs and their English translations, demonstrating how these forms are restructured across languages with distinct morphological typologies (agglutinative vs. analytic). The novelty of this study lies in its cross-linguistic, corpus-based comparison that reveals patterns of semantic retention, grammatical transformation, and cultural adaptation in the translation of *ber-*verbs. Unlike previous work, this study systematically categorizes translation outcomes such as the use of tense variation, verb nominalization, and functional substitution based on real language data from literary texts. This approach contributes to both theoretical models of morphological translation and practical strategies, including informed decision-making in tense selection, the use of nominalization to mirror morphological complexity, and functional paraphrasing to bridge structural gaps between source and target languages for professional translators handling structurally divergent languages. To guide this inquiry, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How are Indonesian *ber-* prefixed verbs translated into English in the selected bilingual text?

2. What morphological and semantic shifts occur when *ber-* verbs are transferred across languages with different grammatical typologies?
3. To what extent do these shifts affect the equivalence, readability, and functional intent of the translated verbs?

The present study builds upon the morphological theories of Indonesian affixation and the structural shifts outlined in translation models to analyze how *ber-* verbs are rendered into English specifically. This fills a theoretical and practical gap in cross-linguistic verb analysis by addressing the relationship of meaning, form, and function in translating morphologically complex verbs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Prefix *Ber-* in Indonesian: Formation, Meaning, and Usage

According to [Burhanuddin \(2019\)](#), the prefix *ber-* is often termed a verbal prefix because most words containing this prefix are verbs. However, they can also originate from nouns, verbs, or other sources. In terms of spelling, when *ber-* attaches to certain base words, the 'r' in *ber-* may be replaced by another letter or omitted if the base word itself begins with 'r'.

Table 1. Examples of *ber-* verb formation and their English equivalents.

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> verb	English meaning
<i>Rencana</i>	to plan	<i>berencana</i>	to plan
<i>Rasa</i>	to feel	<i>berasa</i>	to feel

In some cases, words with the prefix *ber-* share the same meaning as their counterparts without the prefix. In spoken Indonesian, speakers often use either form interchangeably. However, words with the *ber-* prefix are considered more formal and are the preferred choice in written contexts, adhering to the standard conventions of formal Indonesian language usage.

Table 2. Examples of *ber-* verb formation and their English equivalents.

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> verb	English meaning
<i>Tanya</i>	to ask	<i>bertanya</i>	to ask
<i>Piker</i>	to think	<i>berpikir</i>	to think

The prefix *ber-* in this category generally conveys the meaning of 'to have'. However, when translating it into English, it may correspond to various forms such as the suffix '-ed', the preposition 'of', or the verb 'have', depending on the context. Therefore, the exact translation significantly depends on how the word is used in a sentence.

Table 3. Possessive *ber-* verbs and adjectival translations.

<i>Ber-</i> verb	English meaning
<i>bersayap</i>	winged
<i>berkapas</i>	made of cotton
<i>bertopi</i>	to have a hat

Table 4. *Ber-* verbs formed from nouns indicating possession ('to have').

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> verb	English meaning
<i>Mata</i>	eyes	<i>bermata</i>	to have eyes
<i>Warna</i>	color	<i>berwarna</i>	to have a color
<i>Nama</i>	name	<i>bernama</i>	to have a name

This group includes words related to items associated with wearing or using, such as articles of clothing or specific vehicles, including cars and bikes. These words usually describe everyday actions involving things people commonly use. They help express what someone has on or what they are using at a particular time.

Table 5. *Ber-* verbs indicating the use or wearing of objects.

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> verb	English meaning
<i>Sepatu</i>	shoes	<i>bersepatu</i>	to wear shoes
<i>Motor</i>	motorcycle	<i>bermotor</i>	to ride a motorcycle

The following verbs are examples of a few verbs that use the *ber-* prefix. These verbs demonstrate how the prefix *ber-* can alter the meaning of a base word to describe actions or states. By examining them, readers can understand how this prefix functions in daily language.

Table 6. *Ber-* verbs expressing actions or states.

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> word	English meaning
<i>Bicara</i>	talk	<i>berbicara</i>	to talk or speak
<i>Sekolah</i>	school	<i>bersekolah</i>	to attend school or be in school

When attached to a numeral, the prefix *ber-* conveys the meaning of ‘in + number’. It is often used to indicate the number of people involved in an action or to group things. For example, it can describe people moving in pairs, threes, or larger groups, depending on the number used.

Table 7. *Ber-* verbs with numerals expressing grouping or unity.

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> word	English meaning
<i>satu</i>	one	<i>bersatu</i>	to unite or to become one
<i>sepuluh</i>	ten	<i>bersepuluh</i>	a group of ten people (literally: in ten)

When the suffix *-an* is added to a *ber-* verb, it denotes either ‘reciprocity’ or ‘irregularity’ of action or motion. Reciprocity refers to verbs that indicate mutual actions or relationships between two or more people, animals, or inanimate objects, such as vehicles. This suffix often indicates verbs as mutual actions, highlighting repeated interactions between people.

Table 8. *Ber-* verbs expressing reciprocity and interaction.

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> word	English meaning
<i>Salam</i>	greeting	<i>bersalaman</i>	to greet or shake hands
<i>Diskusi</i>	discussion	<i>berdiskusi</i>	to have a discussion (with)

Meanwhile, irregularity of action or motion refers to actions that occur in a scattered, unsteady, or unpredictable manner. It often describes movements that do not follow a clear pattern. This type of verb expresses actions that occur in an irregular or disorderly way.

Table 9. *Ber-* verbs with the suffix *-an* indicating irregular or scattered motion.

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> word	English meaning
<i>Jatuh</i>	to fall	<i>berjatuhan</i>	to fall one after another
<i>Muncul</i>	to appear	<i>bermunculan</i>	to appear one after another

When the prefix *ber-* is reduplicated, the resulting word can indicate repeated or extended action, or action occurring over an extended period. Reduplicated *ber-* may also denote plurality. In everyday use, this form often describes people repeating actions or many people performing the same task simultaneously. It conveys a sense of collective action in a natural, flowing way.

Table 10. Reduplicated *ber-* verbs indicating repetition or collective action.

Reduplicated <i>Ber-</i> word	English meaning
<i>berbincang-bincang</i>	to chat or have a casual conversation
<i>bermain-main</i>	to play around or engage in playful activity

2.2 Translating Indonesian *Ber-* Verbs: A Morphological and Theoretical Perspective

The translation of verbs from Indonesian to English is a complex linguistic process influenced by morphological structures, semantic roles, and syntactic configurations. Theoretical

foundations for this study draw upon both morphological theory and translation studies. In Indonesian, verb formation often relies on affixation, particularly the use of the prefix *ber-*, which indicates various meanings, such as intransitivity, habitual actions, states, or reflexive and reciprocal relationships (Djenar, 2003; Sneddon et al., 2010). According to Dardjowidjojo (2000) Indonesian verbs are highly productive through affixation, and the prefix *ber-* contributes to verb derivation from both noun and verb roots.

From a translation studies perspective, this research is informed by Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation procedures, particularly modulation and transposition, which account for structural and grammatical shifts that occur when translating between languages with differing morphologies. Modulation is particularly relevant in translating *ber-*verbs that lack direct English equivalents and require semantic or grammatical transformations to preserve meaning. Similarly, transposition is applied when syntactic categories must be altered, for example, from a verb to an adjective or a gerund. Moreover, Nida's (1964) concept of dynamic equivalence is central to this study, emphasizing the importance of preserving the intended meaning and effect of the original, especially when dealing with morphologically rich languages like Indonesian. The challenges in translating *ber-*verbs lie not only in word-for-word equivalence but in maintaining the contextual, cultural, and functional aspects of the original verb usage.

Previous studies have explored various translation strategies in other linguistic contexts, but mainly focus on lexical, cultural, or functional translation issues without exploring into morphological transformation, particularly affix-based verbs, such as those derived from the prefix *ber-*. For example, Mansour (2014) discussed the use of domestication and foreignization in translating culture-specific terms from English to Arabic, while Chishiba and Mvula (2017) analyzed translation strategies in official documents using Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) framework. Zekri and Shahsavar (2016) applied House's quality assessment model to Persian translations of pharmaceutical texts, identifying frequent overt and covert errors. Nurkhalisah and Mustapa (2013) compared English and Malay translations, finding that genre and linguistic similarity were key factors influencing the comparison.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the morphological and semantic transformation of Indonesian *ber-* verbs in English translation, capturing shifts in meaning, function, and structure beyond numerical representation (Bogdan & Taylor, 2000). This method allowed the researchers to explore patterns and exceptions more deeply, especially in how meaning is shaped across languages. It also provided space to interpret context and usage more flexibly. This approach reveals both the mechanics of translation and the cultural and linguistic subtleties involved.

3.2 Research Data and Sources

The data for this study consisted of *ber-* prefixed verbs found in the Indonesian fairy tale *Burung Hantu dan Putri Rajawali* (as the source language/SL text) and their equivalents in its official English translation *The Owl and the Eagle's Daughter* (as the target language/TL text). This bilingual narrative was selected through purposive sampling due to its consistent narrative style and its rich occurrences of affix-based verbs.

3.3 Research Instrument

The main instrument used in this study was the researcher as a human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wa-Mbaleka, 2019), supported by a structured data matrix developed to document each verb pair. The matrix included the Indonesian *ber-* verb, its English equivalent, contextual

sentences from both texts, page and line references, verb categories (e.g. intransitive, reduplicated, reciprocal), and translation strategies observed. This tool helped ensure that the analysis stayed organized, consistent, and grounded in real examples from the data.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out through a systematic series of steps. The process began with the identification of *ber-* prefixed verbs in the source language (SL) text through careful close reading. Once identified, their English equivalents were located in the target language (TL) text. Each pair of corresponding verbs was then recorded in a bilingual comparative matrix to facilitate analysis. To maintain accuracy and consistency, all pairings were verified, and the data transcription was carefully checked. Finally, the collected *ber-*verbs were classified according to their morphological forms and functions, including features such as reduplication, reciprocity, and phonological alteration.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis applied a contrastive linguistic approach, comparing each *ber-* verb in the SL with its English translation in the TL to identify patterns of semantic equivalence, grammatical restructuring, and translation procedures. The theoretical framework was informed by Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model of translation strategies, particularly modulation, transposition, and literal translation. Each verb pair was analyzed to determine how its core meaning and grammatical role were preserved or modified in English.

3.6 Trustworthiness and Validation

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the research, several validation strategies were employed. Repeated readings of both texts ensured consistency in identifying the data. Peer debriefing sessions with linguistics and translation experts were held to validate the classification and interpretation of verb forms. Additionally, member checking was conducted with bilingual reviewers to confirm contextual accuracy. An audit trail was maintained throughout the research process to provide transparency and enable replication of the study.

4. RESULTS

This study examines the translation of *ber-* prefixed verbs from Indonesian to English, with data from the bilingual fairy tale *Burung Hantu dan Putri Rajawali* and its English counterpart, *The Owl and the Eagle's Daughter*. The analysis focuses on how *ber-* verbs are constructed in the Indonesian language and the strategies used to translate them into English. The findings are categorized into six main groups: (1) direct base-aligned translations, (2) aspectual variation, (3) word class shift, (4) morphophonemic changes, (5) reciprocal constructions, and (6) reduplication-based semantics.

4.1 Direct Translation of *Ber-* Verbs Aligned with Their Base

Many *ber-*verbs maintain meanings closely aligned with their root/base forms. These verbs are often translated into English in the simple past tense to indicate completed action.

Table 11. *Ber-* verbs with direct past tense equivalents in English.

Base word	English meaning	<i>Ber-</i> verb	English translation
<i>pikir</i>	to think	<i>berpikir</i>	thought
<i>temu</i>	to meet	<i>bertemu</i>	met
<i>Kata</i>	to say	<i>berkata</i>	said

These translations reflect the simplicity and transparency of *ber-* verbs when used in conventional, action-focused contexts. They demonstrate how Indonesian utilizes the *ber-* prefix to form intransitive or stative verbs that correspond relatively directly to English action verbs. This makes many *ber-* verbs easy to recognize and translate, especially when they describe clear, everyday activities. These verbs demonstrate minimal semantic shift from the base word and allow for straightforward translation into the English past tense. This category is significant as it shows when source-language morphology requires little adaptation in the target language.

4.2 Aspectual Shifts: Gerund and Progressive Forms

Other *ber-* verbs suggest an ongoing or durative aspect. They often describe actions that unfold over time, giving a sense that something is continuing or in progress rather than occurring all at once. In English, they are translated using gerunds or progressive tenses.

Table 12. *Ber-* verbs indicating ongoing or durative actions.

Base word	English meaning	Ber- verb	English translation
<i>buru</i>	to hunt	<i>berburu</i>	hunting
<i>gerak</i>	to move	<i>bergerak</i>	was moving
<i>kedip</i>	to blink/flash	<i>berkedip</i>	blinking

In these cases, the Indonesian form implies a continuous or habitual action, which in English is typically captured through aspectual variations, such as progressive ‘-ing’ or past continuous structures. This category highlights the differences in aspectual encoding between the two languages. While Indonesian often relies on context and verb form, English tends to be more explicit with tense and aspect. Understanding this allows translators to select the appropriate verb forms that more accurately reflect the original meaning. Verbs in this category highlight the flexibility of the *ber-* prefix in conveying aspectual meaning. English progressive or gerund forms reflect the temporal nature of these actions, making aspect key to accurate translation.

4.3 Lexical and Grammatical Modulation: Shifts in Word Class

Certain *ber-* verbs involve semantic or grammatical transformations during translation. In these cases, a direct word-for-word translation does not always work; hence, the meaning needs to be adjusted to sound natural and accurate in English. These shifts include modulation (change in meaning or emphasis) and transposition (change in grammatical category).

Table 13. *Ber-* verbs requiring lexical or grammatical modulation in translation.

Base word	English meaning	Ber- verb	English translation
<i>terima kasih</i>	to be thankful/grateful	<i>berterima kasih</i>	grateful
<i>juang</i>	to fight/struggle	<i>berjuang</i>	struggled
<i>istirahat</i>	to rest	<i>beristirahat</i>	rested

From Table 13, *berterima kasih* is translated not as a verb but as an adjective ‘grateful’, which reflects both a semantic and syntactic shift. Such examples emphasize the translator’s need to prioritize meaning and tone over direct morphological correspondence. In these cases, translators must make strategic adjustments, such as converting verbs to adjectives (*berterima kasih* → grateful), or shifting emphasis to preserve the intended tone. These examples illustrate how linguistic and structural differences between Indonesian and English require modulation or transposition for accurate, idiomatic translation. Such examples highlight the importance of focusing on the intended message rather than sticking rigidly to word structure.

4.4 Morphophonemic Variation: Internal Evolution of *Ber-*

In some cases, the *ber-* prefix undergoes phonological adaptation due to morphophonemic rules, particularly when combined with root words beginning with certain consonants. This shift

helps maintain a natural flow in pronunciation, making the word easier to say in everyday speech. One prominent example is shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Morphophonemic variants of the *ber-* prefix.

Base word	English meaning	Ber- verb	English translation
<i>kerja</i>	to work	<i>bekerja</i>	work

The ‘r’ in *ber-* is dropped before the root word *kerja*, resulting in *bekerja*. This change shows how the prefix evolves phonologically without altering the word’s core meaning. It subtly reflects how language adapts to the rhythm and ease of everyday speech. These changes occur not due to a shift in meaning, but to maintain phonetic ease and euphony. In *bekerja*, the ‘r’ from the original *ber-* is dropped because of the consonant cluster at the start of the root word (*kerja*), illustrating how Indonesian morphology is sensitive to phonological constraints.

4.5 Reciprocal Verbs: Mutual and Bidirectional Actions

The tale also contains *ber-* verbs that indicate reciprocal or mutual actions, which often involve interaction between two or more participants. These verbs add social context by showing how characters interact, as illustrated in Table 15.

Table 15. *Ber-* verbs denoting bidirectional or reciprocal actions.

Base word	English meaning	Ber- verb	English translation
<i>hadap</i>	to face	<i>berhadapan</i>	ventured out/faced each other

The *ber-* prefix in *berhadapan* signals a reciprocal relationship, namely ‘to face each other’ which in English requires syntactic rephrasing rather than morphological encoding. This translation shows a functional adaptation based on meaning rather than form. It highlights how different languages package the same idea in their unique ways. Reciprocal *ber-* verbs such as *berhadapan* enrich narrative texts by signaling interaction, confrontation, or cooperation between characters. These verbs do not simply describe actions but encode social dynamics and mutual involvement, making them semantically rich and crucial in translation.

4.6 Reduplication: Emphasis, Intensity, and Duration

Reduplication in Indonesian often emphasizes repeated or extended action. It brings a sense of rhythm and emphasis to the sentence. Several reduplicated *ber-* verbs appear in the table, signaling habitual or intensified states.

Table 16. Reduplicated *ber-* verbs expressing emphasis, repetition, or duration.

Reduplicated Ber- verb	English meaning	English translation
<i>berkomat-komit</i>	to mumble repeatedly	muttered
<i>berkedip</i>	to blink continuously	blinking
<i>berjam-jam</i>	for hours	for many hours

The *ber-* prefix here works in tandem with reduplication to add emphasis or duration. English, lacking morphological reduplication, conveys these meanings through adverbials or contextual expansion. For instance, *berjam-jam* translates as for many hours, where reduplication in *ber-* verbs conveys repetition, habituality, or duration, often enriching narrative vividness and rhythm of the sentence.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm the crucial role of the *ber-*prefix in shaping Indonesian verb meanings, aligning with Djenaar’s (2003) and Sneddon et al.’s (2010) assertion that *ber-*

contributes significantly to both semantic and grammatical development in Indonesian verbs. However, unlike earlier works that discuss *ber-* primarily within monolingual contexts, this study adopts a bilingual comparative approach that reveals how *ber-* verbs are translated into structurally and typologically distinct English equivalents. This contrastive perspective enriches the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on how the semantic functions of Indonesian affixes are redistributed across a language that lacks comparable morphological markers.

Several *ber-*verbs in the fairy tale were rendered into English using a variety of verb forms, including past tense (e.g. *berpikir* → ‘thought’), gerunds (e.g. *berburu* → ‘hunting’), and past continuous verbs (e.g. *bergerak* → ‘was moving’). These translation strategies reflect Vinay and Darbelnet’s (1995) notions of modulation and transposition, where shifts occur not only in meaning but also in grammatical categories. For instance, *berterima kasih* (a verb phrase denoting gratitude) is translated as ‘grateful’ (an adjective), illustrating a modulation in semantic perspective and a transposition in syntactic function. These examples reveal how translators address the structural differences between agglutinative Indonesian and analytic English by prioritizing functional meaning over formal equivalence.

Furthermore, this analysis supports Nida’s (1964) principle of dynamic equivalence, which emphasizes preserving communicative intent rather than surface forms. This is especially evident in the treatment of *ber-* verbs indicating reciprocal or durative actions, such as *berhadapan* ‘to face each other’ and *berjam-jam* ‘for hours’. The English translations of these expressions tend to emphasize the relational or temporal aspect rather than reproducing morphological complexity, demonstrating a shift toward reader-centered interpretation rather than linguistic fidelity.

Compared to previous studies, such as Nurkhalisah and Mustapa (2013), who examined general translation issues between Malay and English, or Zekri and Shahsavar (2016), who focused on quality assessment in Persian translations, this study takes a more micro-level morphological focus. It contributes a typology of *ber-* verb translations that reveals patterns not previously mapped in detail, especially regarding reduplication (*berkomat-kamit*, *berjam-jam*) and phonological adaptations (e.g., *bekerja*, where the ‘r’ in *ber-* is elided). These findings extend the theoretical discussion around Indonesian affixation by demonstrating how morphological encoding of aspect, manner, and reciprocity interacts with grammatical structures in English.

From a practical translation standpoint, this study highlights the importance of translator awareness in handling morphologically complex forms, such as *ber-* verbs. These affixes often carry nuances that lack direct lexical counterparts in English such as habituality, politeness, or mutuality, which must be interpreted in context. The classification of *ber-* verb types and their typical English realizations in this research can serve as a practical guide for professional translators, particularly in literary or culturally embedded texts, where form and function are closely intertwined. For example, understanding that *berkomat-kamit* implies more than simply ‘mumbling’, potentially ‘muttering repeatedly or ritualistically’, can lead to more accurate and context-sensitive translation choices.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings offer significant implications for translator training and linguistic education. The patterns identified in this study can be integrated into classroom materials that enhance student awareness of cross-linguistic morphological contrast. Tasks involving the identification and translation of *ber-* verbs can help students recognize that translation is not merely a mechanical act, but a series of interpretive decisions guided by linguistic, functional, and cultural knowledge. Furthermore, exposing students to phenomena such as reduplication, phonological alternation, and affix-driven grammatical shifts may deepen their understanding of both languages’ structural logic and promote better translation output.

In sum, the *ber-*prefix not only encodes a range of grammatical and semantic functions within Indonesian verbs but also poses unique challenges in translation. This study not only confirms and builds upon prior linguistic theories but also contributes a novel, structured account of how these forms behave in cross-linguistic contexts. Its implications span theoretical refinement, practical application, and pedagogical innovation, demonstrating the value of integrating morphological analysis into both translation studies and professional translation practice.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study contributes practical insights into teaching translation, particularly for Indonesian-to-English contexts. By understanding the multiple functions of *ber-*, including action, aspect, reciprocity, and iteration, translators and language learners can better handle the challenges posed by affixation and morphological richness. Educators are encouraged to integrate explicit instruction on affix functions, equivalence strategies, and contrastive grammar into translation training curricula to enhance students' linguistic sensitivity and decision-making skills.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined how Indonesian *ber-*prefixed verbs are translated into English, using the bilingual fairy tale *Burung Hantu dan Putri Rajawali* and its English counterpart *The Owl and the Eagle's Daughter* as a case. The findings reveal that although most *ber-* verbs retain their core semantic values, they often undergo grammatical shifts during translation, appearing in the form of English past-tense verbs (e.g., 'thought', 'said'), gerunds (e.g., 'hunting', 'blinking'), or past-progressive verbs ('was moving'). This indicates that the *ber-* prefix carries tense and aspectual implications that require functional and contextual adaptation in English.

The translation of these verbs shows that while English lacks a direct morphological equivalent of *ber-*, translators employ various syntactic strategies to convey similar meanings. In some instances, *ber-* verbs are translated using lexical modulation (e.g. *berterima kasih* as 'grateful') or through word class shifts, as in the conversion from verb phrases to adjectives. Furthermore, reduplicated *ber-*verbs, such as *berjam-jam* or *berkomat-kamat*, add layers of repetition and emphasis, which are expressed in English through adverbials or expanded phrases rather than through morphology. These findings illustrate the evolution of verb expression Indonesian and English, moving from morphological encoding in the source language to syntactic and lexical strategies in the target language.

However, the study has several limitations. It focuses on a single genre, a literary fairy tale, which may not fully represent how *ber-* verbs function across other text types, such as academic, legal, or journalistic writing. In addition, the study isolates the *ber-* prefix without considering its interaction with other affixal forms (e.g., *ber-an*, *ber-kan*, or compound affixes). Furthermore, the qualitative approach, while rich in contextual insight, could be complemented by a corpus-based analysis to observe broader usage patterns. Future research could expand this investigation by including a wider range of texts and affix types or by comparing *ber-*verb translations across different genres and cultural contexts. Quantitative corpus analysis may also help identify frequency, collocational patterns, and translational tendencies on a larger scale, offering a more comprehensive view of verbal morphology in cross-linguistic translation.

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