

UNTRANSLATED INDONESIAN WORDS IN THE TRANSLATION OF EKA KURNIAWAN'S NOVEL "BEAUTY IS A WOUND"

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Abstract

This research was a descriptive qualitative study that aimed to investigate the untranslated Indonesian words found in the English translation of "Cantik itu Luka" novel, which is "Beauty is A Wound". The analysis was done using comparative method to find out how the translator convey the meaning of the untranslated words intended by the author to the readers of the target language. In this study, it was found that cultural-bound words referring to ecology; material culture such as food and drink; social culture, custom and religious activities; and gestures and habits were left untranslated. The finding showed that in conveying the meaning, the translator used amplification and transposition translation techniques... It was also found that some words were left untranslated without further descriptions which caused meaning to be untransferred.

Keywords: Translation; Novel; Cultural Words

INTRODUCTION

Translation is not an easy task because it is not merely a work of shifting the language but also transmitting meanings. Translation transmits the culture from the source language to the target language readers. This has become a rather difficult challenge to translate because some words might not have one-to-one equivalence words in the target language. Therefore, cultural-bound words might be left untranslatable. One of Indonesian Literatures which has been translated into 30 languages is a novel by Eka Kurniawan entitled "Cantik itu Luka". This novel has been translated into English by Anne Tucker with a title "Beauty is A Wound". Several studies of translation on this novel, Husba, Yassi, & Saleh (2020) focus on the cultural words based on the five categories of cultural terms by Newmark (1988), which include the category of ecology; material culture (food, clothes, houses and towns, and transport); social culture; organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts (political and administrative, religious, and artistic); and gestures and habits. This study, however, has not presented the result using linguistic approaches in analysing the translation. Meanwhile, Wijaya, Gede Sosiowati, & Widhiarcani Matradewi (2020), who focus on the loss and gain, has presented the data using linguistic approaches concept proposed by Larson (1998), Bell (1993), and Catford (1965), however in collecting the data, the authors do not refer to the five categories of cultural terms by Newmark (1988). Another study by Kinasih (2019) analyses the translation of Indonesian figurative languages presented on the novels using the translation techniques by Molina and Albir (2002). This study aimed to fill the gap in the several studies of the English translation of "Cantik Itu Luka" which is "Beauty is a Wound". The researcher focused on finding the untranslated cultural-bound words in the novel and examining the motivation of the translator in leaving the cultural-bound words untranslated. Beside that, this study also aimed to find out what technique was used to convey the meaning of the untranslated words. Similar research has been done by

Wijana (2021), who investigated the untranslated Javanese words in the translation of Okky Madasari's novel *The Years of Voiceless*. In the study, Wijana (2021) proved that the Javanese words are left untranslated because they are culturally-bound words which would lose their meanings if they were fully translated into target language.

To guide the readers of this study, several definitions of translation are provided. For Catford (1978), a text is called a translation when it has the equivalence of the original text. This implies replacing the language elements from a source language with a target language by considering the relevance. According to Newmark (1988), translation is a work of interpreting meaning intended by the author of one language to be understood by the receptors of another language. Align with Newmark, Larson (1988) defines translation as a change of form from the source language (SL) to target language (TL) with the purpose of conveying meaning. In addition, Nida and Taber (1982) argue that beside the changes of structures, translation must deliver the meaning or the message of a text from the SL to the receptor of TL whose cultures are different by respecting the TL. This implies that a translation should make the receptors of the TL have the same understanding of the meaning as the receptors of the SL. In translating, not all words may have a one-to-one TL equivalence because of the different contextual situations between SL and TL. According to Catford (1978), there are two ways of translation according to the extent, which are *full* translation and *partial* translation. In *partial* translation some elements are left untranslated because of two possible reasons: first, it is because the word is simply untranslatable and secondly, it is because the translator intends to introduce the 'local color' to the TL readers. Whereas in *full* translation, all of the SL elements are rendered into the TL. *Merriem-Webster dictionary* provides several definitions of culture, such as "the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time" and "a particular society that has its own beliefs, ways of life, art, etc". Therefore, cultural terms are any words that are closely associated with a particular society. These cultural words are often difficult to translate because they carry different cultures, making precise translation unattainable. Newmark (1988) categorizes cultural terms into five categories as follows:

- a. Ecology
Cultural terms of ecology related to the environment and its organisms. This includes the flora, fauna, plains, and hills.
- b. Material culture
The items that are included in the material cultures are any human products made by matters that represent a particular culture, such as food, clothes, houses and towns, and transport.
- c. Social culture
This is related to work and leisure.
- d. Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts
This category is divided into three focus, which are the politic and administration, religion, and art.
- e. Gestures and habits
This category refers to gestures and habits of people in a particular culture do which is distinct from other cultures.

METHOD

This research was conducted using qualitative method. The source of the data was in the form of documents which are the novel "*Cantik itu Luka*" by Eka Kurniawan, which is first published in 2002, and its English translation version "Beauty is A Wound" which is translated by Annie Tucker in 2015. In collecting the data, the researcher read both source text (ST) and target text (TT) and focused on finding the cultural words in the Indonesian context from the source

language and how the translator interpreted the text and brought the meaning into the target language to reach the readers from wider culture. Upon findings, the researcher used note-taking technique to gather the information. According to Sudaryanto (1986) quoted in Ardiansah (2008), there are three types of linguistic analysis methods, they are descriptive, structural, and comparative method. In this study, the researcher used the comparative method to analyze the data. The researcher documented all cultural words found in ST and compared it with the TT. Then, the researcher categorized the cultural words found into five categories of cultural terms by Newmark (1988). After the cultural words were categorized into five categories of cultural terms by Newmark (1988), the researcher analyzed the cultural words to see translation techniques by Molina and Albir (2002) used by the translator to convey the meaning of the text intended by the author.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A total of 29 untranslated culturally-bound words were discovered in the translation work “Beauty is A Wound”. The number of occurrence of each category of cultural terms by Newmark (1988) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Category of Untranslated Cultural Words in “Beauty is A Wound” Novel

| Category | Number | Percentages |
|--|--------|-------------|
| Ecology | 1 | 3.5% |
| Material Culture | 10 | 35% |
| Social Culture | 3 | 10% |
| Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts | 14 | 48 % |
| Gestures and Habits | 1 | 3.5% |
| Total | 29 | 100% |

Table 1 shows that untranslated words are found in all five cultural terms categories by Newmark (1988). The majority of the untranslated cultural words are under organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts category and material culture category. Table 2 shows the translation techniques used by the author to convey the meaning of each sample word of the cultural terms category.

Table 2. Translation Techniques

| Category | Translation Technique |
|--|------------------------------|
| Ecology | Amplification |
| Material Culture | Amplification |
| Social Culture | Amplification, Transposition |
| Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts | Amplification |
| Gestures and Habits | Reduction |

From the data sample, it can be seen that amplification is the most used translation technique to convey the meaning of the untranslatable words.

Discussion

After comparing the source text “Cinta itu Luka” and the translated text “Beauty is A Wound”, the researcher found some untranslated words. The researcher then chose one sample of the words under each of the five categories of cultural terms by Newmark (1988). The discussion of each sample is presented as follows:

Ecology – Fauna

Table 2. Untranslated Word Sample in Ecology Category

| ST | TT |
|---|---|
| <i>Ajak-ajak melolong di bebukitan, dengan suara melengking mengalahkan muadzin.. (p. 18)</i> | The wild ajak dogs howled in the hills with shrill voices that drowned out the muadzin.. (p. 25) |

The word *ajak* refers to a particular species of dog from Indonesia. According to KBBI (2016), which is *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia or Indonesian Dictionary*, *ajak* means *anjing hutan* (dogs that live in the wood). The translator left the word untranslated, but she also added explanation in the ST which helps the readers to gain understanding that *ajak* is a kind of wild dog that lives in the natural environment. By leaving the word *ajak* untranslated, the author has educated the readers that there is an originated fauna, particularly, a wild dog from Indonesia. In conveying the meaning in TT, the translator used amplification technique of translation by Molina and Albir (2002) by providing explanation of the cultural word *ajak*.

Material Culture – Food

Table 3. Untranslated Word Sample in Material Culture Category

| ST | TT |
|---|--|
| <i>Ibunya membuat semacam pesta kecil atas kesembuhan yang mendadak tersebut, berupa nasi kuning tumpengan dan seenggok ayam yang disembelih secara baik-baik. (p. 36)</i> | His mother had a small party to celebrate his sudden recovery, with a yellow cone of tumpengan rice and a chicken that had been slaughtered the proper way. (p. 39) |

In Indonesia, especially within the Javanese society, it is very common to have *tumpengan* served in special occasions. *Tumpengan* or *tumpeng* refers to yellow rice which is served in cone shape. It is usually served with other condiments such as chicken, potato cakes, eggs, etc. *Tumpengan* is a strongly Indonesian cultural-bound word that does not have direct equivalence with the TL. The translator is wise in leaving the word untranslated while also providing an explanation that gives the readers a mental image of how *tumpengan* looks like. Here, the translator applied amplification technique. By leaving the word *tumpengan* untranslated, the translator has implicitly shared the knowledge about Indonesian’s tradition of having *tumpengan* for a celebration. If the ST were fully translated into TL without leaving the word *tumpengan*, the ST culture of this specific food would not be transmitted to the TT readers; it will not show special correlation between the “small party” with the “yellow cone rice”.

Social Culture - Leisure

Table 3. Untranslated Word Sample in Social Culture Category

| ST | TT |
|---|---|
| <p>... akan pergi ke perkumpulan ibu-ibu untuk pengajian di malam Jumat dan bertemu di hari Minggu sore untuk arisan. (p. 400)</p> | <p>Maya Dewi went to the women’s Thursday night prayer meetings and to the arisan on Sunday afternoons, socializing and contributing money to the women’s lottery pool. (p. 301)</p> |

For this untranslated SL, *arisan*, the translator applied amplification technique by providing explanation of what *arisan* is, which is “socializing and contributing money to the women’s lottery pool”. In addition, the translator added transposition in the translation of the following phrase “*di hari Minggu sore*”. The literal translation of the phrase is “on Sunday afternoon”; suggesting that the event happens only in one specific time. By using transposition, the translator translated the word into “Sunday afternoons”. According to Molina and Albir (2002), transposition technique is done by changing grammatical category. In the translation, the translator changed the grammatical detail from singular to plural noun which contributes to conveying the meaning. The *arisan* gathering is usually done periodically every once a week or once a month until each of the members get the lottery. In the ST, the author does not explain it because the tradition is well-known by the ST readers, but in the TT, the translator added details which have successfully transferred the knowledge to the TT readers.

Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts

Table 4. Untranslated Word Sample in Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts Category

| ST | TT |
|--|--|
| <p>Pesta syukuran yang meriah tidak hanya dilakukan oleh para nelayan itu ... (p. 294)</p> | <p>The fishermen weren’t the only ones to hold a cheerful syukuran ritual of thanks. (p. 233)</p> |

Each culture has its own customs and traditions. These customs and traditions of a culture may have a cultural term that cannot be directly translated to other languages. One example of a cultural word that expresses a specific Indonesian tradition in this novel is *syukuran*. It is very common in Indonesia’s culture to hold *syukuran*. The tradition is usually held by a person or a family, or a group by inviting relatives to pray and/or eat together to express gratitude. In the TT, the author used amplification techniques by giving details that are not formulated in the ST, which is “ritual of thanks”, to help the TT readers to understand the word.

Gestures and Habits

Table 5. Untranslated Word Sample in Gestures and Habits Category

| ST | TT |
|---|--|
| <p>Tak tahan dengan provokasi kecantikannya, Sang Shodancho yang dilanda cinta membabi-buta menghampirinya. (p. 165)</p> | <p>Unable to resist the provocation of her beauty, Shodancho approached her. (p. 136)</p> |

In the ST, the author shows a gesture with Indonesia's idiom "*membabi-buta*" which means "doing something recklessly without considering the consequences". The translation "approached her" does not provide the equivalent meaning of "*membabi-buta menghampirinya*". The translator used a reduction technique to suppress a ST information. Though the reduction does not actually hid any cultural value, it has diminished the tension of the text. The dramatic tension of the ST would not be felt by the TT readers because of the reduction of the words. This one sample shows that there is a loss in the translation work, because the meaning intended by the author is hidden from the translation.

CONCLUSION

Cultural-bound words are difficult to be translated because they come from a distinctive cultural phenomenon. Despite being difficult to translate, some words are actually better left untranslated because they show the local color of a culture. In the translation of Eka Kurniawan's novel "Beauty is A Wound", several cultural words are found left untranslated. The untranslated words found are under the category of ecology (3.5%), material culture (35%), social culture (10%), Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts (48%), and gestures and habits (3.5%). In accord to Catford (1978), the translator left the culture-bound words untranslated because some of them are not translatable meaning they don't have any language feature equivalent with the TT. Some others are left untranslated to show the "local color" of Indonesian culture. From the sample words, it is found that the translator used amplification and transposition translation technique in conveying the author-intended meaning of the untranslated words to the TT readers. However, it is also found that a translation is not done at all, in other words, the meaning of the SL is hidden in the TT which caused the TT to have a different tension from the ST.

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