Translation of Indonesian Cultural Terms in Rainbow Troops Novel: Investigating Translation Procedures

Yesi¹, Yudi Juniardi², Akhmad Baihaqi³
¹,²,³ Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa
yesi.idris@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study is to identify the Indonesian Cultural Terms (ICTs) in Rainbow Troops as the English translated novel by Angie Kilbane from Laskar Pelangi original Indonesian novel by Andrea Hirata and to analyze the translation procedures of ICTs. A qualitative approach is applied in this research by using the content analysis. The result shows that there are five categories of cultural terms such as ecology; material culture; social culture; organizations/customs/ideas/activities/procedures/concepts, and; gestures and habits. Their highest percentage of ICT’s is 28.13% which is categorized into organizations, customs, ideas, activities, procedures, concepts. It is a novel with an educational background because it illustrates a lot of activities of teachers and students at school. The translation procedure mostly uses borrowing with 54.17% which proves some vocabulary deficiencies in translated novel since the translator could not find the equivalent cultural terms from the original novel.

Keywords: cultural terms, novel, translation procedures

Introduction

Translation can be interpreted as a transfer of meaning. In their book, Hatim & Mason (1997) stated that Audience Design is an act of estimating who is our potential reader of the translation. Different prospective readers will differ how to translate it. So before translating, translators must determine who the intended target reader of the text is. Thus, the translator can decide to be oriented to the SL or TL. Translation is basically an act of meaning, so the TL can understand the meaning of SL.

In the translation process, translators must be able to deal with cultural differences between the SL and the TL. Cultural translations can be found in the translation of literary works. One difficulty in translating literary works is the difficulty in expressing cultural terms of SL that do not have equivalent terms in TL. This often in messages from SL was not being delivered to the TL.

In the literature on translation that we can read, good translations have several characteristics. Some of them are; (1) Messages from the translated text faithfully to the messages contained in the source language text; (2) the results of the translation revealed to the target language must be in accordance with the accepted rules of the target language; (3) the results of the translation must look like original and reasonable. It can be said that ‘right-wrong’ results are determined by the ‘for whom’ and ‘for what purposes’ the translation is made.
Venuti (2000) said that language is a part of thought which is the place of various determinations, so that the foreign language text looks like it has a domestic meaning.

However, this cultural difference between SL and TL often becomes a problem for translators when translating literary works. That's because every language has special characteristics in terms of its own culture. Newmark in Hatim & Munday (2004) stated the problem of translating cultural terms is due to the cultural gap between SL and the TL. Baihaqi (2017) issued the situation as cultural asymmetry. The cultural differences can also occur in various aspects, for example, customs, traditions, beliefs, religions, social organizations, economics, politics, and education systems. All of these aspects can be difficult in the translation process. Therefore, in translating cultural terms, translator competence is needed.

This work hopefully can enrich the scientific literature of translation study for literary works. As previously discussed by Pahamzah & Syariifah (2019) which focused on how translation theories used for translating movies’ subtitles and poems.

Several previous works had discussed this issue. Amelia & Firdaus (2016); Fedora (2015); and Mahmud et al. (2020) who had investigated the translation procedures of the novel based on several translation theorists. These works, meanwhile, investigated the translation procedures which specified to the theories of Vinay and Derbelnet of direct and oblique translation.

The purpose of this study was to find out: (1) Indonesian cultural terms of Andrea Hirata’s *Laskar Pelangi* in Angie Kilbane’s The Rainbow Troops; (2) The translation procedures were used by translator in translating Indonesian cultural terms of Andrea Hirata’s *Laskar Pelangi* in Angie Kilbane’s The Rainbow Troops.

**Theoretical Review**

**The Term of Translation**

Translation has been defined in many ways by experts with different approaches and ideas. Catford in Hatim & Munday (2004) stated that translation as a substitute for textual material in one language as SL by equivalent textual material in another language as TL. This definition implies that translations use two or more languages, one is SL and the other is TL. Catford also emphasized equality in translating SL text becomes TL.

Nida & Taber (1982) stated that translation is reproducing the source language into the target language with the closest equivalent natural meaning, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style. Translation should be easily understood by the target reader and messages from the source text (ST) should be equivalent to the target text (TT).

Meanwhile, according to Venuti, (1995) translation is a process in which the
chain of signifiers which are the source language text is replaced by signifiers in TL provided by the translator based on the strength of interpretation. He considers that translation is a language change that is done to interpret the cultural differences of foreign text with language that can be understood by the target reader.

From the opinions explained above, it can be concluded that translation is a process that aims to find equivalence of meaning in the target text by considering not only the meaning but also the style, form, culture, and norms in the TL.

The Translation Process

Translation is not only about changing SL to TL. An interpreter should know what a translation is and what should be produced in a translation. There is a process that includes several activities. Nida & Taber in Munday, (2001) defined that there are three steps of translation, they are; analyzing, transferring, and restructuring. Analyzing is used to identify the target message and contents. It includes the grammatical and semantic analysis, transferring deals about how analysis result to be transferred from SL into TL with someone applying of meaning and connotation, but the reaction is equivalence, and restructuring is used to make certain in the re-establishing text which had been translated.

The term translation has several different meanings. Munday (2001) stated that translation can refer to general subject field, product or process which is the act of producing translations. According to Levy in Venuti (2000), translation is a process communication: the purpose of translation is to provide knowledge about source text to foreign readers.

The Translation Procedures

Based on Vinay and Darbelnet in Munday (2001) there are two general translation procedures; direct translation and oblique translation. Direct translation includes three translation procedures are borrowing, calque, and literal translation. While, oblique translation includes four translation procedures are transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. They are described as follows.

Borrowing is SL words are transferred directly to TL, this is done for fill the semantic gap in TL. Sometimes borrowing is also used to add local colors. Borrowing can be pure borrowing without adjustment or naturalized borrowing with adjustments on spelling or pronunciation. In other words, SL words or expressions are taken directly and used in TL. The following is the example of borrowing.

ST: Nampak dari batik di bawah baju putihnya.
TT: You could tell from the batik below their white shirts.

Calque is special type of borrowing in which SL expression or structure is transferred in literal translation. The following is the example of calque.
Literal translation is word for word translation, this procedure becomes the most commonly used translation procedures between the same language family and culture. The difference is in the SL grammatical construction that tries to change approaching the grammatical construction in TL. The example of literal translation as follows.

ST: Semua makanan disajikan di dalam wadah takir daun pisang.
TT: All food is served in a banana-leaf container.

Transposition is a translation process where parts of a speech change their order when translated. This is a word class shift. Each language has a grammatical structure that often differs from one another. The following is the example of transposition.

ST: Dan istri saya member contoh anak cacat lagi yang menurut dia adalah akibat tidak di-tingkebi.
TT: She didn’t have the ceremony either.

Modulation is translation procedure that’s applied by changing the point of view, focus or cognitive categories in relation to SL. The change in perspective can be lexical or structural. The following is the example of modulation.

ST: Setiap gerak-gerik Kerajaan Mangkunegaran dan Kasunanan
TT: Every gesture of the prince; and, for that matter, of the sultan of Solo.

Equivalence is a case where languages are similar in meaning, style and structure. The example of equivalence as follows.

ST: Bahkan juga letak serbet dan kobokan, serta letak gelas dalam lapisan pembungkus perak tidak ada cacatnya.
TT: From everything I had read, even the position of the napkins and the finger bowl and the position of the glasses in their silver cases could not be faulted.

Adaptation is a procedure by changing cultural reference in SL with cultural reference that is similar and present in TL. This is because the cultural references in SL are not found in TL. The following is the example of adaptation.

ST: Malah duduk di pendopo aku tak diperkenankan.
TT: I wasn’t even allowed to sit on the porch.

The Culture

Haviland (1999) stated that culture consists of abstract values, beliefs, and perceptions of the world contained in human behavior and reflected by their behavior. Newmark (1988) defined culture as a way of life and the manifestation of life of communities that use certain languages as expressions. Therefore, he recognizes that every language group has its own specific cultural features. Newmark (1988) distinguishes cultural words from universal languages. Translating universal words usually does not cause problems, such as the words 'die', 'live', 'star', 'swim', 'mirror', and...
‘table’. Universal words usually have universal functions. However, in contrast to the word culture, there will be translation problems unless there is a cultural overlap between SL and TL. In conclusion, culture is a complex collection that covers almost everything in the world.

**The Cultural Terms in Translation**

In referring to terms of culture, many experts have their own terms. Baker (1992) stated that the SL may express completely unfamiliar concepts in the TL. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete. This may be related to religious beliefs, social custom, or even types of food. Such a concept is often referred to as special culture. Therefore, Baker called it as a culture-specific concept.

According to Newmark (1988), cultural terms referred to as ‘culture of words’, are easily detected because they are associated with certain languages and cannot be translated literally. However, many cultural terms are translated with literal translation which will make a distortion with the real meaning. He explains clearly that the word "culture" is a word in a particular language that carries the same or different cultural values from one language to another. When the word culture is translated, it is possible that cultural values will change. Newmark (1988) proposed categories of cultural terms, they are: (1) Ecology; (2) Material culture; (3) Social culture; (4) Organizations, customs, ideas, activities, procedures, concepts; (5) Gestures and habits.

Ecology relates to air, soil, water, animals, plants, etc. Extremity of ecological variation from one region to another often become a major difficulty in finding equality for terms that designate the same ecological features. The example of ecological term as follows.

**ST:** Dan sawah, tanpa air, ditanami palawija menjelang panen.  
**TT:** A paddy fields, unirrigated, planted with corps, but no rice, almost ready to be harvested.

Material culture is things that reflect cultural values created by the community’s culture. Material culture is an important issue in translation. The example of material culture as follows.

**ST:** Apakah mereka berkemban juga di balik baju blacu itu?  
**TT:** Were they wearing breast-cloths too under their calico shirts?

Social culture is a culture that is owned by a certain community that is different from other communities. This is also often a problem of translation because of the difficulty of finding equivalent terms for social culture. The following is the example of the issue.

**ST:** Aku mengangkat sembah sebagaimana biasa aku lihat dilakukan punggawa terhadap kakekku dan nenekku dan orang tuaku waktu lebaran.  
**TT:** I raised my hands, clasped in obeisance, as I had seen the court employees do before my grandfather, and my grandmother, and my parent at the end of Ramadan.
Organizations, customs, ideas, activities, procedures, and concepts is the names of organization, each country has its own organization to regulate every business in that country. The following is the example.

ST: _Katanya: ahli-ahli Eropa tentang Jawa banyak cenderung untuk menilai tinggi kehidupan demokratis di desa-desa di Jawa._
TT: He said there were many European experts on Java who tended to think highly of the level of democracy achieved in Java's _villages._

Gestures and habits, these often become matter of translation. The following is the example.

ST: _"Bukanbegitu. Bersila yang baik."_ 
TT: _“Not like that. Sit properly, cross-legged.”_

**Method**

This study used the qualitative research. The method of this research used content analysis. It was conducted by analyzing from two novels. The data was analyzed by address the issues of translation of Indonesian cultural terms into English on terms of literal translation.

According to Emzir (2019), observation, interview and document are three sources of qualitative data that are commonly used. In this study, the researcher used two data sources: interview and documentation. Researchers interviewed an expert in translation. She is a freelance translator who has joined _Himpunan Penerjemah Indonesia_ since 2007. Her name is Lucia Aryani. Currently, she has translated six fiction books, two nonfiction books, 4 recipe books and others. In documentation, the researchers have collected data from _Laskar Pelangi_ novel as source text and the translated novel _The Rainbow Troops_ as target text. The researchers are the main research instrument. The researcher is placed as the main instrument because of its role as the main data collector and data analyzer.

This study developed peer discussion and multiple data sources to achieve credibility of the data. The peer discussion involved several different researchers in the analysis process. The concrete form is usually an evaluation team consisting of colleagues who master specific methods into group discussion. Multiple data sources means getting data from different sources.

**Result**

**Indonesian Cultural Terms**

The process of identification of cultural terms is based on the five categories which are proposed by Newmark (1988). The table below shows further explanation of the finding of the categories of cultural terms existing in _Laskar Pelangi._

| No | Categories of Cultural Terms | Σ | % |
|----|------------------------------|---|---|
| 1  | Ecology                      | 24| 25.00 |
| 2  | Material Culture             | 25| 26.04 |
| 3  | Social Culture               | 16| 16.67 |
| 4  | Organization, Customs, Ideas, Activities, Procedures, Concepts | 27| 28.13 |
| 5  | Gestures and Habits          | 4 | 4.17 |
| n  |                              | 96| 100 |

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This result shows that the novel Laskar Pelangi contains ICTs which often become one of the problems faced by the translator. The researcher provides an example for each category of cultural terms that have been found in the novel Laskar Pelangi as follows;

The first is ecology. In this research, the researcher identifies 24 ecological terms. The example below is described from the data:

ST: ...pohon gayam itu adalah satu-satunya pohon di tengah lapangan sekolahku yang sangat luas dan aku duduk sendiri di bawahnya, kesepian. (LP. P299. L20)

TT: ...the gayam tree bordering the northern end of our schoolyard. (TRT. P238. L10)

Gayam is a tree whose leaves are thick and can be used as a wrapper. Therefore gayam is categorized into ecological term of flora.

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Table 2. The Ecological Terms Existing in Laskar Pelangi

| No | SL   | TL   | Translation Procedures |
|----|------|------|------------------------|
| 1  | Cemara angin | Pine | Adaptation             |
| 2  | Aichang | Aichang | Borrowing            |
| 3  | Kopra | Copra | Calque            |
| 4  | Gani tri | Gani tri | Borrowing         |
| 5  | Ser indi | Parakeets | Adaptation  |
| 6  | Melava | Jalak Kerbau | Borrowing  |
| 7  | Cinenen | Cinenen | Borrowing          |
| 8  | Jawi | Jawi | Borrowing             |
| 9  | Mirang | Mirang | Borrowing            |
| 10 | Meranti | Meranti | Borrowing       |
| 11 | Papilio | Papilio | Borrowing          |
| 12 | Blumei | Blumei | Borrowing          |
| 13 | Filici um | Filici um | Borrowing  |
| 14 | Santigi | Santigi | Borrowing         |
| 15 | Pinang hantu. | Pinang hantu | Borrowing |
| 16 | Baring pelintang pulau | Island crossing birds | Translation |

The second is material culture. In this research, the researcher identifies 25 material culture terms. The example taken from the data is explained below:

ST: ...rumah panjang suku Sawang. (LP. P50. L23)

TT: ...longhouse of the Sawang Tribe. (TRT. P26. L19)

Rumah panjang is traditional Kalimantan house that is long. Therefore rumah panjang is categorized into material culture term of house.

Table 3. The Material Cultural Terms Existing in Laskar Pelangi

| No | SL   | TL   | Translation Procedures |
|----|------|------|------------------------|
| 1  | Berjilbab | Headscraft | Equivalence |
| 2  | Dul Muluk | Dul Muluk | Borrowing             |
| 3  | Pasar Pagi | Morning | Literal                |
| 4  | Cunghai | Cunghai | Borrowing            |
| 5  | Atap Sirap | Roof | Adaptation           |
| 6  | Terindak | Banana leaf | Equivalence |
| 7  | Phok | Phok | Borrowing             |
| 8  | Kiaw | Kiaw | Borrowing             |
| 9  | Khaknai | Khaknai | Borrowing            |
| 10 | Warung kopi | Traditional roadside stalls | Adaptation |
| 11 | Rumah panjang | Longhouse | Literal Translation |
| 12 | Toko Sinar Harapan | Ray of Hope Shop | Literal Translation |
| 13 | Jengkol | Jengkol | Borrowing             |
| 14 | Sempoa | An old wooders abacus | Equivalence |
| 15 | Sarung | Sarong | Calque            |
The third is social culture. In this research, the researcher identifies 16 social culture terms. The example from the data is described below:

ST: ...warga suku Sawang yang menjadi buruh-buruh **yuka** penjahit karung timah. (LP. P41. L12)

TT: …**hard laborers sifting tin**, or daily paid laborers. (TRT. P21. L1)

**Yuka** is a term used to describe a laborer who has the lowest job. Therefore, *yuka* is categorized into social culture term of work.

| No | SL                  | TL                  | Translation Procedures |
|----|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 16 | Manggar            | Manggar             | Borrowing              |
| 17 | Tabla              | Traditional drum    | Equivalence            |
| 18 | Sate               | Skewered meat       | Equivalence            |
| 19 | Simbal             | Cymbals             | Calque                 |
| 20 | Trombon            | Trombon             | Borrowing              |
| 21 | Jadam              | Jadam               | Borrowing              |
| 22 | Sungai Liat        | Sungai Liat         | Borrowing              |
| 23 | Zaal Batu          | Stone room          | Literal                |
| 24 | Sambar             | Sambar              | Borrowing              |
| 25 | Piring piala ginjal| Trays of Revenol    | Adaptation             |

**Table 4. The Social Cultural Terms Existing in Laskar Pelangi**

The fourth is organizations, customs, ideas, activities, procedures, concepts. In this research, the researcher identifies 27 organization, customs, ideas, activities, procedures, concepts terms. The example below is taken from the data:

ST: **Di tengahnya tertulis:** **SD MD Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah.** (LP. P19. L2)

TT: Written in the middle was: **SD MD Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah.** (TRT. P13. L15)

**SD MD Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah** is one of the primary schools in Belitong. This school is the place where *Laskar Pelangi* appears. Therefore, **SD MD Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah** is categorized into organization term.

| No | SL                  | TL                  | Translation Procedures |
|----|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 16 | Bodenga             | Bodenga             | Borrowing              |

**Table 5. The Organizations Cultural Terms Existing in Laskar Pelangi**

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| No | SL                  | TL                  | Translation Procedures |
|----|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 16 | Bodenga             | Bodenga             | Borrowing              |

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The last is gestures and habits. In this research, the researcher identifies 4 gestures and habits terms. The example from the data is described below:

ST: *Cinta benar-benar menyusahkanku, Ketika kita saling memandang saat sembahyang rebut.* (LP. 280. L22)

TT: Love has truly been troubling me. The moment you glanced my way. At the **snatching ritual** on that fateful day. (TRT. P147. L4)

*Sembahyang rebut* is a Chinese ritual is performed so that the devil does not disturb the society. In other words, *sembahyang rebut* is categorized into gestures and habits term.

| No | SL | TL | Translation Procedures |
|----|----|----|------------------------|
| 1  | Terceput-cepuk | Stumbled | Adaptation |
| 2  | Cakar ayam | Chaotic chicken-scratch | Equivalence |
| 3  | Salat maghrib | Maghrib prayer | Literal Translation Adaptation |
| 4  | Sembahyang rebut | Snatching Ritual | Borrowing |

Most categories of cultural terms are found in organizations, customs, ideas, activities, procedures, concepts. It because *Laskar Pelangi* is a novel with an educational background. Therefore, there are many activities of teachers and students at school.

In the novel *Laskar Pelangi*, the author is always able to describe the setting of a place that feels very real by giving details of ecological cultural terms such as the surrounding animals and plants. This is why, researcher also found many ecological categories in cultural terms in the novel.

**Translation Procedures**

The table below shows the finding of the translation procedures were used by the translator in translating cultural terms in *The Rainbow Troops*.

| No | Translation Procedures | Total |
|----|------------------------|-------|
| 1  | Borrowing              | 52    | 54.17 |
| 2  | Calque                 | 6     | 6.25  |
| 3  | Literal Translation    | 17    | 17.71 |
| 4  | Transposition          | 2     | 2.08  |
| 5  | Modulation             | 1     | 1.04  |
| 6  | Equivalence            | 10    | 10.42 |
| 7  | Adaptation             | 8     | 8.33  |

| Total | 96 | 100 |

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Table 6. The Gesture and Habit Terms Existing in Laskar Pelangi

Table 7. The Finding of Translation Procedures in The Rainbow Troops
The first is borrowing. There are 52 terms which are identified using borrowing procedure. Following is the example of borrowing found in The Rainbow Troops.

ST:  ...dan demi sediki taruhan harga diri dalam arena tarak. (LP. P168. L16)  
TT:  ...and increasing the worth of our bets in the tarak arena. (TRT. P79. L5)

*Tarak* is a legendary ancient game in Belitong where 2 pieces of rubber are piled up, hit by hand. The the term ‘tarak’ is kept in the TT. The translator does this since there is no similar game which is specifically expressed game in the TT.

The second is calque. There are 6 terms which are identified using calque procedure. Following is the example of calque found in The Rainbow Troops.

ST:  *Maka sekolah kami sangat mirip gudang kopra.*  
TT:  It resembled a copra shed. (TRT. P13. L26)  

It is the same as the meaning copra, dried coconut meat, usually used as raw material for making coconut oil. The term is translated by phonologically adapting it.

The third is literal translation. There are 17 terms which are identified using literal translation procedure. Following is the example of literal translation found in The Rainbow Troops.

ST:  *Rhoma Irama, Hujan Duit!*  
TT:  Rhoma Irama, rain of money!  

*Rhoma Irama* is the title of the song that is written by Latief M and popularized by Rhoma Irama. The translator translates *hujan duit* literally into *rain of money* in TT.

The fourth is transposition. There are two terms which are identified using transposition procedure. Following is the example of transposition found in The Rainbow Troops.

ST:  ...namun pembukaan wajahnya yang mirip orang *Bushman* (LP. P10. L5)  
TT:  ...but his face was like that of a kind shepherd (TRT. P8. L19)  

*Bushman* is a kind person. The term bushman in the ST has been omitted and not translated.

The fifth is modulation. There is a term which is identified using modulation procedure. Following is the example of modulation found in The Rainbow Troops.

ST:  *...menyanyikan lagu "Potong Bebek Angsa".*  
TT:  ...always singing the song "*Chop the Goose's Neck*". (TRT. P67. L30)  

*Potong bebek angsa* is a children's song created by Pak Kasur which is quite popular. This song comes from Nusa Tenggara Timur (Kompas.com). The translator translates *Potong Bebek Angsa* into *Chop the Goose's Neck*. Thus, the translator changes the mindset because she did not mention the “Duck” till the reader cannot know there are two animals in the song.

The sixth is equivalence. There are 10 terms which are identified using equivalence procedure. Following is the example of equivalence found in The Rainbow Troops.

ST:  *ditusuk seperti sate dengan tali rotan kecil.*  
TT:  strewn together like skewered meat on a rattan string. (TRT. P114. L7)
Sate is skewered and grilled small pieces of meat are given sauce. Therefore, the procedure of translation is categorized into equivalence.

The last is adaptation. There are 8 terms which are identified using adaptation procedure. Following is the example of adaptation found in The Rainbow Troops.

ST: ...menahan atap sirap yang berat. (LP. P19. L14)
TT: ...to endure the weight of the heavy roof. (TRT. P13. L26)

The roof is covering the top of a building. There is a difference between atap sirap and roof. Atap sirap is made of wood while the roof is including all materials.

In this study, borrowing is the translation procedure that most often used by translator in translating cultural terms. This is presumably because the translator had difficulty in finding the equivalent ICTs in the TL. This has proven the diversity of Indonesian culture which cannot be matched with foreign cultures especially in English. Therefore, the interviewee also emphasized that translator often maintains ICTs to spread knowledge of Indonesian culture. However, there are also several ICTs which are translated by writing their meanings in the TL side by side. This is done to make the novel comfortable to read by the target readers.

**Conclusion**

Based on the data, it can be established that the most translation procedure in translating Indonesian cultural terms in *Laskar Pelangi* are mainly borrowed in The Rainbow Troops. This proves that the target language (English) still has many vocabulary deficiencies in cultural terms. The translator could not find equivalent cultural terms then the translator had to borrow it from the source language (Indonesian Language).

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