A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS ON THE TRANSLATION OF SCHLEIFER'S *MARY THE BLESSED VIRGIN OF ISLAM* INTO PRIHANTORO'S *MARYAM SANG PERAWAN SUCI*

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Abstract

This paper is a result of a mixed method research of untranslatability phenomenon in translation, aimed at identifying the classification of untranslatability based on linguistic units, knowing the causing factors of the untranslatability, describing the approaches used by the translator to solve the untranslatability problems, and measuring the readability of the translation.

Using contrastive analysis method, the researcher analyzed the data collected using content analysis on the objects of the research, an English book by Aliah Schleifer and its Indonesian translation by Agung Prihantoro. Questionnaires were distributed to some respondents to know the readability of the translation.

Based on the results of the analysis, it is known that the untranslatability phenomenon occured in the level of word, phrase and clause. The untranslatability was caused by two factors: linguistic equivalence absence and cultural equivalence absence. The cultural factor was dominant since the source book mostly discusses about Arabian culture and religion matters.

In solving the untranslatability problems, the translator applied contrastive principles, by (1) italicizing the untranslatable concepts, (2) changing the words with the similar ones in the target language, and (3) giving explanation or meaning description for the concepts with annotations, descriptive phrases and/or other supportive explanations.

The result of analysis on the distributed questionnaires shows that generally, the translation is quite understandable, or it has a quite good readability. But, there is a tendency that the book is more suitable to be read by those who are accustomed to religious terms. It is a bit inappropriate for common readers.

Keywords: untranslatability, contrastive analysis, linguistic units, linguistic factor, cultural factor, readability

Introduction

Translation plays an important role in improving the understanding of people on many sciences. Translation widens the spread of sciences from the source language, to many other languages of the science users. The activity of translation dated back first from 3000 BC. It reached its peak in the twentieth century, which is known as the "age of translation" (Jumpelt, 1961) or "age of reproduction" (Benjamin, 1923) (Newmark, 1988).

The importance of translation for developing countries, including Indonesia is very obvious, since not all people in the country master the foreign language in which information, science and technology are written. In this condition, to absorb information, science and technology which are very crucial for the country's development, translation is the best way.

For Indonesia, as a multi religion country, good relationship among religions is absolutely important. A good understanding among different beliefs would strengthen the unity in the country. One way to improve the inter-religion understanding is by spreading right information and issues of each religion through books, either in original languages or in translation versions.

The presence of the book "Mary the Blessed Virgin of Islam" by a Cairo writer Aliah Schleifer is a valuable contribution for positive inter-religion relationship. Gray Henry of Fons Vitae, the publisher of the book stated that this work could be not only of help in the Christian-Muslim dialogue,

but an inspiration to women in general. He added, very few Christian have any idea of the importance of the Virgin Mary in Islam, and Islamic doctrine maintains that Jesus and Mary are the only two in all eternity to have been born without sin and that Mary is considered the purest woman in all creation. She is considered to be an example for both men and women.

The translation of the book by Agung Prihantoro is aimed at giving opportunity to the readers who do not have enough ability of English, to understand Schleifer's book. As the book deals with specific terms, that is religion and foreign cultures, there are some words or expressions in the book that have no exact equivalences in Bahasa Indonesia. The phenomenon that is called untranslatability, may cause some problems for the readers.

Translating does not mean only to transfer a message of a source language (SL) into a target language (TL) by changing the words or sentences in SL with the equivalence in the TL. Translation involves a transfer of culture, concept, style and other elements of the SL text as well. Therefore, the translator has to do some approaches to solve the problems, to ensure that the readers would get equal understanding of the translation texts, as good as those who read the original one.

This study was aimed at identifying the untranslatability phenomenon in the translation of the book in discussion, the approaches used by the translator to solve the problems, and measuring the readability of the translation texts as well."

The followings are some relevant researches previously conducted by other researchers. An error analysis on a book entitled "*Sang Nabi*" by AE Cahyono translated from "The Prophet" by Kahlil Gibran" was done by Juni Efendi in 2005. The research tried to find out the translation errors in the level of lexical and contextual meaning in the book "*Sang Nabi*", as well as the influence of the errors to the loyalty of meaning of the TL to the SL. Efendi concluded that errors found in the analysis

arose because the translator did not want to reduce the esthetic-poetic nuance of the story, an important aspect to maintain in such kind of literary work. He also stated that the translator did not just transfer the information, but also the impression, emotion and feeling while maintaining the beauty of the target language. Furthermore, he added, these facts caused the tendency of errors in the level of contextual meaning. At last he concluded that the problems in the level of lexical were caused by the errors relating to the carefulness and exactness of the translator himself in translating.

In the same year, Nur Afiyah conducted a research entitled "The Translation Omission in the Story of *Pisau Ajaib* Sangwana-Sangwana's Magic Knife." The research was aimed at investigating what kind of translation omission was used in the story, and finding out the effect of the omission to the story. She found 20 sentences of omission, divided into 35% of grammatical cause, 15% of socio cultural and 50% of language variety. The omission affected the understanding of the readers. It caused difficulty for the readers to get full imagination of the story.

A contrastive study was done by Setiyaningsih in 2002, on the book entitled "The Forgotten Queens of Islam" by Fatima Mernissi. It was aimed at classifying the linguistics units of SL that were untranslatable in TL, describing the factors causing the untranslatability, and describing the effect of untranslatability on the understanding toward the whole meaning. She found that: First, untranslatability occured in the level of lexical, phrase and clause. Second, untranslatability was caused by linguistic factor and cultural factor. Based on the perception of the readers, it could be known that it was easy for them to understand the untranslatable text. Besides, the readers would not be confused by the untranslatable texts since they are written in italic and are accompanied with explanation. Untranslatability did not affect the readers' understanding, since the terms are of common issues.

Methodology

This study used a mixed methodology between qualitative and quantitative methods. As stated by Kriyantono (2006, p. 88), a combination of qualitative and quantitative research is possible to obtain a more complete research results. In practice, qualitative methodology remains a dominant part in the study, while quantitative methods are used as a complement, especially at the stage of collecting data.

Based on Moleong (2006, p. 6), a qualitative research is a research procedure resulting descriptive data in the form of written or oral words about the characteristic of something (individual or group) and phenomena that are observable.

Seen from the depth of analysis, this research is mainly categorized as descriptive research since it tries mainly to describe the facts of the analysis systematically so that it can be easier to understand and to conclude.

The object of the research was mainly divided into two kinds. The internal obects were data collected from the book "Mary the Blessed Virgin of Islam" by Aliah Schleifer as the original version written in English, and the translation version of it, the book "Maryam Sang Perawan Suci" by Agung Prihantoro that was written in Bahasa Indonesia. The two main sources were used as the objects of the research to draw the conclusion about the phenomena of untranslatability as stated in the research problem. While, the external objects were comments, inputs, impressions and other data collected from questionnaires. These data were used to draw research conclusion on the level of readability of the translation.

The population of this research was all words or utterances in the book Mary the Blessed Virgin of Islam and Maryam Sang Perawan Suci that contained the phenomena of untranslatability. The samples were taken using purposive sampling technique. The population was in the same time the sample of the research, with the criteria of the words or expressions that belonged to the phenomena of untranslatability, in the forms of concepts that kept being in foreign language (source language), with or without modifications.

The technique of data collecting firstly used was content analysis─scientific analysis on the message content of information (Muhadjir, 2000, p. 68). This instrument resulted qualitative data of untranslatability phenomenon. Secondly, researcher also used questionnaires as the instrument to collect quantitative data in the form of number, to measure the readability of the translation.

Content analysis was done in the following steps: a) reading all pages of the two books carefully and comprehensively, b) comparing the information of the original book and the translation, c) noting all the data of untranslatability in the translation book, d) underlining and giving codes on each data of untranslatability found and classifying them based on the types of its translation, and e) analyzing the data or problem found.

Questionnaires were distributed to 20 respondents. The respondents were divided into two groups, the first, a group of readers who are familiar with religions tems or those who have sufficient knowledge on religion, and the second, common readers who are not really accustomed to religious terms or those who have less knowledge on religion. To the two groups, some copies of the original texts consisting untranslatability phenomena, as well as the translation were enclosed.

The data obtained were then analyzed in the following steps:

1. data were identified based on the problem found. These identified data were then classified based on linguistic units. To make it easy for the researcher to classify and analyze the data, each data was coded in index card with the following form: 002/MBVI-22/MSPS-33/WLU/LEA/M

Explanation :

002　　　　 : number of data

MBVI-22　 : data was found in the book Mary the Blessed Virgin of Islam page 22

MSPS-33 : data was found in the book Maryam Sang Perawan Suci page 33

WLU : Word Level Untranslatability

LEA : Linguistic Equivalence Absence

M : text was modified

2. All data were then analyzed by comparing the texts of SL language to those of TL in using contrastive analysis approach based on the category of each data. In this step, the researcher also analyzed the approach used by the translator to solve the problem of untranslatability.

3. Data obtained from questionnaires were also analyzed to know the influence of the untranslatability phenomena on the readability of the translation text. It was done by totaling the score given by the respondents, and calculating the percentage of the total sum of each answer of each category of respondents.

4. All data were then combined and analyzed together as the considerations to draw conclusion of the research.

Findings and Discussion
Findings
Based on the content analysis on the book "Mary the Blessed Virgin of Islam" and the translation version "Maryam Sang Perawan Suci", the researcher found 96 types of untranslatability data with the total data of 154 items. The untranslatability data were classified based on the source language, with the following detils:

- English = 6 types (7 items in total)
- Spanish = 4 types (4 items in total)
- Arabic = 86 types (143 items in total)

All the above data were then recorded in data cards to be analyzed based on the classification of linguistic units, the causing factors, and the modification of the text in relation to the influence of the text of the understanding of the readers of the book.
Classification of Untranslatability Data in Linguistic Unit
a. Word Level Untranslatability (WLU)

The untranslatability in this level covers words of concepts or terms in the form of lexical items of the SL that do not have direct equivalence in the TL, or by certain reason are not translated.

The researcher found 63 types of untranslatability data in total of 112 items that belong to this category, covering: English = 5 types (5 items), Spanish = 3 types (3 items), Arabic = 55 types (104 items).

Example: *enigmatic* (002/MBVI-22/ MSPS-33/WLU/LEA/M)

SL : At the present, however, our concern is to document traditional Sunni Islam's view of the events of Mary's life. The data has been sifted by traditional scholarly discussions about **enigmatic** or extra-Qur'anic data—details about her background ...

TL : Namun, kita akan memfokuskan diri pada pandangan-pandangan Islam Sunni tentang peristiwa-peristiwa dalam kehidupan Maryam. Data-datanya telah teruji dalam pembahasan-pembahasan para ulama tentang data-data yang **enigmatik** atau ekstra-Qur'anik—detail-detail mengenai latar belakang Maryam, ...

b. Phrase Level Untranslatability (PLU)

The researcher found 23 types of data from the total of 30 items that belong to the category, namely : English data (1 types 2 items), Spanish data (1 type 1 items), Arabic data (21 types 27 items).

Example : *por la dateilera de Mary* (092/MBVI-98/MSPS-162/PLU/CEA/ NM)

SL : God is asked to accept their gratitude for His blessings upon them. Amongst the detailed blessings mentioned is: '***por la dateilera de Mary***' (for the date palm of Mary), the hope being that God will be as clement, merciful, and generous to them as He was to the Virgin.

TL : Allah dimohon menerima syukur mereka atas rahmat-Nya kepada mereka. Dalam doa ini disebutkan: '*por la dateilera de Mary*' (atas pohon kurma Maryam), permohonan agar Allah memberi ampunan, kemurahan dan kepada mereka sebagaimana yang dilimpahkan-Nya kepada Maryam.

c. Clause Level Untranslatability (CLU)
The researcher found 10 types of data from the total of 11 items that belong to the category. All data are Arabic.
Example : *wa'Llahu a'lam* (009/MBVI-28/MSPS-44/CLU/CEA/NM)
SL : Such accounts are either concluded with a prudent '*wa'Llahu a'lam*' ('and God knows best') or prefaced with the words 'it is said', or 'they say' (the identity of the source being left unspecified) or, at times, 'Christian source say'.
TL : Risalah-risalah tentangnya selalui diimbuhi dengan kata-kata *wa Allah a'lam* (Allah lebih mengetahi) atau diawali dengan kata-kata "disebutkan" atau "mereka mengatakan" (tidak jelas identitas orang yang berkata) atau, saat itu, "Sumber-sumber Kristen mengatakan."

Classification of the Factors Causing Untranslatability
a. Linguistic Equivalence Absence (LEA)
Untranslatability is caused by the fact that there are always differences among one language and others, either in the system, structure, as well as the rules of the languages. This condition causes some difficulties to the translator to find the exact equivalence of the source language in the target language. Through the analysis there were 4 types of untranslatability of the total of 4 items, found in the translation. All of these 4 types of untranslatability occured in word level.

b. Cultural Equivalent Absence (CEA)
Language and culture are inseparable. Even, in essence, language is a part of culture, as language exists as the result of cultural contacts among human. Since the life of human are not always the same regarding the difference of geographical conditions, their languages will of course strongly be influenced by their cultures, thus, cultural non-equivalence in language is very possible. Untranslatability phenomena caused by cultural factor in the translation were found in 92 data from the total of 150 items. The untranslatability occured in the level of word, phrase and clause.

The Influence of Untranslatability Phenomena to the Understanding of Meaning
Directly or indirectly, the phenomena of untranslatability influenced the readers' understanding toward the content of the book. Mary the Blessed Virgin of Islam is a book mainly talking about religious issue, in this case Islam, and therefore contains many concepts dealing with Islamic terms.
a. The approach of translator in solving the problem of untranslatability
Based on the analysis, it can be said that basically, the translator has applied the principle of Contrastive Analysis well. The approach of the translator in solving the problem of untranslatability was done in the following steps :
1) Italicizing the untranslatable terms,
2) Giving annotation or writing the terms in target language spelling,
3) Giving explanation (in the form of descriptive phrase following the untranslatable words or footnote in the bottom of the page to give more easy access for the readers to find explanation of the untranslatable concepts in a glance [in the same page], while in the original book, the notes are put in the back part of the book making it a bit difficult for reader to access immediately or it is not practical).

b. The influence of untranslatability phenomena to the level of radability

Based on the analysis, the translation book has a quite good readability. This is indicated by the understanding of the researcher on the content of the book that has reached a quite good level just on the first reading. Supporting data was obtained from 20 questionnaires distributed to the respondents. The result of the analysis on the questionnaires is shown in the following table :

Table 1. The Influence of Untranslatability Data on the Readability of MSPS
(Based on respondents readers)

Group A		Ttl	Group B		Ttl
	Item tested			Item tested	
1	Influence of the Untranslatibility data A. Very disturbing B. Quite disturbing C. Not disturbing	1 6 3	1	Influence of the Untranslatibility data A. Very disturbing B. Quite disturbing C. Not disturbing	1 8 1
		10			10
2	Readability of the text A. Very good B. Quite good C. Less good	1 7 2	2	Readability of the text A. Very good B. Quite good C. Less good	0 4 6
		10			10

Based on the table, the majority of respondents considered that the existence of untranslatability data was quite disturbing as said by 14 respondents (70%). Meanwhile, the readability of the text was quite good, as shown by the answers of 11 respondents (55%). However, the respondents who considered that the readability of the book was less good amounted 8 (40%), a quite significant number. It indicates, as shown in the responses of group B, that for common readers, those who are not really accustomed to religious (Islam) terms, the book tends to be less readable. On the contrary, it is quite readable for group A readers (those who has sufficient knowledge of Islam or who are quite accustomed to Islamic terms) with the fact on the answer for 70% of respondents (7 or 10).

Discussion

Untranslatability starts from the difficulty in finding the language equivalence of SL in TL (Catford in Setiyaningsih, 2002:31). The difficulties are mainly caused by linguistics and cultural factors, since language is tightly related to culture or human interactions; even it is in essence, a product of culture.

Through the objects of the analysis, the research found 96 types of untranslatability data occuring in three languages: English, Spanish and Arabic. The untranslatability data occured in three level of linguistics, namely word, phrase and clause.

The untranslatability phenomena logically influenced the understanding of the readers to the book, that in turn influenced their judging on the readability of the book. A translation book that contains many unknown terms is hard to understand and therefore has a low readability, and vice versa. On the other hand, a good translation is the one that is easy for readers to read, as if they read the original version.

One way to solve the problem of untranslatability is by using the approach based on the principle of contrastive analysis, as the analysis mainly works by comparing two or more languages to find the similarities and differences. Through the analysis, the untranslatability phenomena

was identified easily. On this stage the tanslator could immediately decide how to solve the problem.

Contastive analysis approach is quite suitable to apply in the process of translation. It helps the translator mainly in overcoming the problem of untranslatability. In the analyzed translation book, the translator has applied this principle in transfering the meaning of the SL (English) into the TL (Bahasa Indonesia) in quite good way, so that in general it is understandable.

Conclusion

As the result of the analysis on the translation of Mary the Blessed Virgin of Islam, 96 types or 154 items of untranslatability data were found. The untranslatability phenomena occured in three languages, namely : 6 types in total 7 items of English, 4 types in total 4 items of Spanish, and 86 types of total 143 of Arabic.

Based on the research finding and discussion and the basic problem of the research, it can be concluded that :

1. Viewed based on the language classification, the untranslatability phenomena occured in three levels namely word, phrase and clause.
2. The existence of untranslatability phenomena was caused by linguistic and cultural factor. The untranslatability data which belong to linguistic factor were caused by the different scoope of meaning between the SL and the TL. The one caused by cultural factor appeared in the level of word, phrase and clause, and was dominant. This kind of untranslatability occured dominantly because the book mainly discussed about Arabian culture and religion issues (Islam), while language and culture are inseparable. In some cases, the translator also regarded some words as untranslatability data and thus maintained the original form, as he wanted to maintain the scientific nuance of the text.

3. The translator used the approach of Contrastive Analysis in solving the problem of untranslatability, by applying the contrastive principles.
4. The effect or influence of the untranslatability to the readers' understanding and the level of readability of the book was based on the analysis of the researcher, supported with comments from some respondents readers. The result of the analysis and the questionnaires interpretation shows that basically, the book is quite understandable and that it has a quite good readability. But, it is most suitable to read by readers who are accustomed to religious terms. For common readers, it is a bit inappropriate.

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