
Untranslatability in the Book the Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fu*K and Strategies Used to Overcome

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Abstract: *This research aims to explore the untranslatability of book The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fu*k by Mark Manson and its Bahasa Indonesia translation by F. Wicakso and how to overcome them. This research is a descriptive qualitative research which discussed the untranslatability in the book and overcome solutions to each of phenomena. The data in this research is the untranslatable expressions in in the book. The collected data is classified into the types of untranslatability which is proposed by Catford (1965). To overcome untranslatability, this research offers solutions that are proposed by Baker (2018).*

INTRODUCTION

With the exposure to media and technology, exposure to literature has become more accessible. Works of English literature, both classic and modern, can be easily enjoyed by readers, whether in the original language or in translation into local languages. In addition, book genres other than literature also have great appeal. Various genres of manuals, self-help, religious books from the original language have been translated into Indonesian. In the process of translating English literary works into other language versions, there are often many problems and challenges.

In the process, the translator must not only translate the original content, but also express the themes and emotions of the work completely and accurately so that the author's message can be understood by the reader. The translator's ability to put himself in the position of the original author will make the translated book no different from the original book, both in message and language structure.

However, due to cultural or linguistic differences in the source language (SL) and the target language (TL), there are often difficulties in translating literary works, such as different ways of expressing language and different customs of society. It is often the case that language concepts that are commonplace in one community are not commonplace in another, such as the use of taboo words. If the translator does not take these factors into consideration, an inaccurate translation may occur, resulting in the original meaning being changed.

Due to the exposure of digital media and technology, a literary writing can be rapidly known by readers in the whole world. Consequently, as what is observed in Indonesia, a rapid flow of translated literary works publication from English to Bahasa Indonesia has become a trend. Almost all famous English literary works have been translated into several editions by now. However, there is still potential section that may require development or review, especially in assisting the readers with the cultural context of the original text and facilitating cross-cultural reading dialog.

Mark Manson's book is chosen as the sample of this research. The Subtle Art of Not Giving

a Fu*k is a self-help book that has been translated to many languages, including Bahasa Indonesia. Originally, this book is written in English. In the book, Mark Manson shares his life experiences as a Native American who lives in American society to illustrate how life's struggles often give it more meaning. The cultural value of American and terminologies of local Americans are also inserted in his book, as basically it could be understood by Native Americans. The written language is original and authentic, which can better reflect the social environment and living conditions of American communities. Moreover, as a translated self-book book, this book is likely to have difficulties in translation. Differences in associations and imagination result from different writers with different cultural environments can result to different ways of explanation. To add, it is expected that when it is translated, the book still maintains the message that the writer is delivered to it.

Futhermore, this research aims to explore the untranslatability of book *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fu*k* by Mark Manson and its Bahasa Indonesia translation by F. Wicakso and how to overcome them.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

As many people understand, translation involves an exchange between languages, in which units of meaning that exactly match the units of meaning expressed in the source language are selected and translated in the target language. However, the translation process itself requires several efforts such as reflection, deduction, and creation so as to obtain a translation that matches what has been said in the first language into the second language. This is so that the meaning contained in the utterances of the first language and the second language does not shift.

In the translation process, when encountering an untranslatable word or phrase, a translator usually has to use their creativity and judgment to find the best way to convey its meaning in the target language. The techniques commonly used to solve problems in this regard are paraphrasing, equivalence, adaptation, modulation, transposition or borrowing. But if there is not equal meaning of a language to a target language, untranslatability may result. This is in line with what has been proposed by Catford (1965), "if the target language has no equivalent register, untranslatability may result."

Previously, Eugene Nida claimed that the existence of linguistic universals ensure translatability (Nida : 1964). This means that a term can be expressed in different languages or that there is an equivalent substitute for a word in another language. Translation, however, is not only about language, but also about all the things that language can imply, such as culture, history, power relations or national/personal identity. Since the things that language implies are varied and unique, it is possible that what is intended in the source language is not available in the target language's implications. This is in line with Edward Sapir's theory "each language community interprets reality in its own way and this jeopardizes translation" (Sapir: 1921). This difference in interpretation of reality will lead to untranslatability.

The notion of what is considered untranslatable goes beyond simple linguistic or cultural distinctions between two languages. For instance, if a literary work author writes it in his original language before translating it into another, there are more aspects to take into account in order to ensure a successful and palatable translation. Linguistic differences between two languages, and the lack of equivalent terms could make translation a very complicated process. Translation could be feasible, nevertheless, if the translator is experienced in applying different approaches to these issues.

According to Catford (1965), "untranslatability occurs when it is impossible to incorporate

the functionally relevant features of the situation into the contextual meaning of the target language text," audience design (by determining or designing who the potential readers of the translation are and what the purpose of translating the text is), selection of methods and techniques, and appropriate decision-making (by involving intelligence, sensitivity, intuition). Before beginning to translate a work, a translator should comprehend the genre of the text to be translated. This covers both the context of the content and the intended audience. By taking these three factors into account, the translation will be accurate and on target, as well as avoid misleading the readers.

Moreover, she categorized untranslatability can be divided in two categories: *linguistic and cultural untranslatability*. Linguistic untranslatability frequently occurs when an ambiguity characteristic of the source language text is a functionally important element. When the target language does not have a corresponding language item, the text cannot be translated. Linguistic untranslatability is prevalent, particularly with source language objects that toy with words. Linguistic untranslatability also addresses linguistic systems, tenses, and creation. *Linguistic untranslatability also deals with a linguistic system, tenses, formation.* by Palmer (1964) to make boundaries with cultural untranslatability. According to Baker (2018) It deals with gender, number, person, tense, mood, voice and case.

Cultural untranslatability occurs when a situational aspect that is functionally significant for the source language text is not present in the target language culture (Catford, 1965). Certain phrases and expressions that are not familiar to the target culture, such as the idea of "couch potato" has no relevant translation in Bahasa Indonesia. Newmark (1981) categorized the cultural word into these categories:

1. Ecology
2. Material culture (Artifacts); Food, Clothes, Houses and towns, and Transport
3. Social culture - work and leisure
4. Organisations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts
5. Political and administrative
6. Religious
7. Artistic
8. Gestures and habits

Baker (2018) states, emphatically, the most likely thing to do to deal with untranslatable cultural terms is to suggest some strategies to achieve equivalence in some contexts. Moreover, Functional theory of translation suggested that one way of gaining insights into audience expectations and knowledge presuppositions is the analysis of authentic target-cultural parallel texts, since the characteristic features of these texts shape or even determine the expectations of their users (Nord 2000).

Specifically, the causes of untranslatability are culture-specific concept, the source-language concept is not lexicalized in the target language, the source-language word semantically complex, the source and target languages make different distinctions in meaning, target language lack of superordinate, target language lacks a specific term, differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, differences in expressive meaning, differences in form, differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms, and the use of loan words in the source text. (Baker, 2018).

There are strategies proposed by Baker in solving the problem of untranslatability: translation by a more general word (superordinate), translation by a more neutral or less expressive word, translation by cultural substitution, translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation, translation by paraphrase using a related word, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, translation by omission and translation by illustration. (Baker, 2018).

Previous research by Susanti & Novalinda (2017) discussed about the problem of untranslatability in the translation of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone's novel. They discovered that the translator tends to use the loan word or loan word plus explanation strategy to deal with the problem of untranslatability. Furthermore, Apriani and Jaulfilayli (2020) examined the translatability of Sidney Sheldon's work "The Star Shine Down" as translated into Bahasa Indonesia as "Kilau Bintang Menerangi Bumi." The book has 190 culturally untranslatable terms organized into categories such as ecology, material culture (food, clothes, house and hometown), transportation, social culture, organizations (artistic, political, and administrative), and gesture and habit. The writer could not find any religious culture words. Borrowing, calque, literal translation, and transposition are the most common translation procedures used to overcome untranslatable content.

Ma'sumah and Sajarwa (2020) discussed solutions to overcome untranslatability in Burnett's novel 'Secret Garden'. As a result, to address the issue of cultural untranslatability, translators typically use transference, naturalization, and other processes. Retaining the SL's cultures in the TL prevents mistranslation due to the lack of a formally analogous feature. Naturalization is accomplished by converting SL culturally distinctive words to the TL's typical sound and morphology, as both languages share many commonalities. Meanwhile, comments such as in-text annotations and footnotes were employed to enhance the translator's position.

All prior investigations have determined that the term "untranslatability" in this context does not indicate that specific terms cannot be translated. Certain translation solutions have been discovered to address the issue of untranslatability. It is up to the translation to convey the author's intended meaning in Second Life. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of analyzing the translator's judgment or process for converting untranslatable phrases into the TL. Based on the aforementioned studies, this study will determine whether certain strategies are useful in solving the problem of untranslatability by focusing on cultural differences and language words in this self-help book.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative descriptive research. Documentary method is applied in order to get qualified data. The data of this research are The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fu*k by Mark Manson and its Bahasa Indonesia translation by F. Wicakso. Cambridge English Dictionary and Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia are used as instruments to confirm the meaning of each term.

To collect and analyze the data, the researcher will go through the process of analyzing data proposed by Miles, Huberman dan Saldana (2014), that are data condensation, data display and conclusion drawing. The researcher will read the original English version book entitled The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fu*k by Mark Manson and will identify the untranslatable terms found in the book. The data will be categorized into two categories of untranslatability: **Linguistic and cultural untranslatability**. Moreover, all the data will be organized in a table. The next step is to compare the untranslatable terms with their Bahasa Indonesia translation in the book translated by F. Wicakso. The researcher, furthermore, will identify the translator's techniques to overcome the untranslatability according to the theory proposed by Baker (2018). The translation words will be confirmed using Cambridge English Dictionary and Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia to clarify the meaning. The last step is the conclusion drawing in which a general statement to accommodate the interrelationship in the data will be taken as a conclusion of this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After Identifying the data, the untranslatable terms were classified into the following categories:

1. Linguistics Untranslatability

‘Not giving a fuck’ is an expression in slang English to refer to a situation someone who doesn’t care about what happens. This expression is used in the book as a part of its title ‘the subtle art of not giving a fuck’. Grammatically, the preposition ‘of’, is followed by noun phrase. In English linguistic system, ‘not giving a fuck’ is expressed in a formula of noun phrase. However, it will be difficult to translate this expression to Bahasa Indonesia, as the preposition ‘of’ in the sentence is translated to ‘untuk’ is used to state an aim of something. In Bahasa Indonesia grammatical system, after the preposition ‘untuk’, a verb phrase will follow. As the result, ‘not giving a fuck’ is translated to ‘ bersikap masa bodoh’. This linguistic untranslatability is solved by the translator by changing the formation of the expression in Bahasa Indonesia.

2. Cultural Untranslatability

The cultural untranslatability data in this research is identified and classified according to the cultural word category by Newmark (1981) : Ecology, Material culture (Artifacts); Food, Clothes, Houses and towns, and Transport, Social culture - work and leisure, Organisations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts, Political and administrative, Religious, Artistic and Gestures and habit. The finding is shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1. Cultural untranslatability in the book The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fu*k by Mark Manson.

Category	Words
Ecology	Cannoli
Material culture	Hot tub, jacuzzi, whiskey, hall of fame, remote, treadmill, bathtub, sombrero, burrito, margarita
Social culture	Start-up, video games, salesman
Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts	Drop-out, couch potato, unicorn, boyfriend of the year, spoiler alert, hippies, self-help, go getter, hand sanitizer
Artistic	Heavy metal
Gestures & habits	Six pack, bench press

Cultural untranslatability occurs due to the absence in the target text culture of a relevant situational feature for the source text. This type deals with *word or expression which is functionally significant for the source language text, does not exist in the target language culture (Catford, 1965)*. Due to the absence in the target culture, the words which are shown in the table 1 are remained in English word/phrase.

For example, the word *hand sanitizer* is a substance for making hands clean and free from bacteria or viruses. This substance is more familiarly used during the Covid-19 period and becomes a term to refer to a product of sanitation. There has no translation for this word yet, although, equivalence can be the strategy used to solve this problem. Equivalence in translation means how the translator transfers the information conveyed from the source language into the target language that is similar to some degree (Munday, 2016; Panou, 2013; Pym, 2014). In other words, a translator should be able to find the closest equivalent in the source language to translate. In this case, hand sanitizer is equivalent to ‘pensanitasi tangan’.

Another example is ‘boyfriend of the year’ which literally translated as ‘kekasih terbaik tahun ini’. However, this terminology is not quite familiar in the culture of Indonesia, as such title is not given to an individual. This is the reason why it is maintained untranslatable. To overcome this problem, the translator could use some strategies, as proposed by Baker (2018), like translation by paraphrase using a related word, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, translation by omission and translation by illustration.

Additionally, the untranslatable words like ‘hippies’, ‘heavy-metal’, ‘Margarita’ and ‘burrito’ can use the strategies of translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation. Those words can come with explanation to get more clear information about its meaning/existence.

CONCLUSIONS

All the examples of cultural untranslatability might be caused by the absence of the concept in the target language, or might be caused the expressions are not relevant to the target language. The findings are in line with what is proposed by Catford (1965) that Cultural untranslatability occurs due to the absence in the target text culture of a relevant situational feature for the source text and deals with *word or expression which is functionally significant for the source language text, does not exist in the target language culture.*

According to Baker (2018), the untranslatability are caused by eleven reasons: culture-specific concept, the source-language concept is not lexicalized in the target language, the source-language word semantically complex, the source and target languages make different distinctions in meaning, target language lack of superordinate, target language lacks a specific term, differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, differences in expressive meaning, differences in form, differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms, and the use of loan words in the source text.

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