

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Translation is the process of rendering written text from one language into another (Oxford Dictionary, 2019). According to Catford (1965, p. 20), it involves replacing the textual material of the source language (SL) with its equivalent in the target language (TL). Although this definition may appear broad, it is intentionally structured to encompass various aspects of translation. Key terms in this definition include "textual material," which can be interpreted as "text," and "equivalent," which refers to the aim of achieving similarity in meaning and function between the two languages.

Translation encompasses various types, one of which is literary translation. This branch focuses on rendering fictional texts such as novels, dramas, and poetry into another language. Literary translation requires specific competencies, including stylistic awareness, emotional sensitivity, creative thinking, and an appreciation for artistic expression. In highly skilled translators, these qualities often resemble innate creative talent, which Gouadec (2007, p. 29) describes as appearing more like natural brilliance than acquired skills.

Residents nowadays actively enjoy poetry, performs, songs, short stories, novels, that the literary works. These things are really influence people's life. The most popular literary work which is often translated is novel. A novel is a made writing tale that is typically extensive and complicated dealing According to

Merriam-Webster, a narrative typically conveys human experiences through a logically connected sequence of events.

Reading books obviously novel is a universal human activity nowadays in this era. Each country in this world, the novel has published in their native or national or official language. The main reason people love to read a novel is because they feel happy and satisfied to know the story in the novel. Some stories in the novel are really good and interesting. As the result, the novel become so popular and bestseller. This achievement makes some publishers from other countries want to publish the novel in their own countries. But then, language becomes a problem.

Given the vast diversity of languages worldwide, with most countries having their own native languages, a novel that gains popularity and becomes a bestseller in one language often needs to be translated into others to reach a broader audience. Translation thus serves as a bridge across linguistic boundaries. However, the process of translating novels presents internal challenges.

The obstacles are having problems locating equivalent terms in the target language, which often stems from semantic differences between the source and target languages. This form of untranslatability commonly occurs in instances involving ambiguity, wordplay (such as puns), or polysemy, where a single word may hold multiple meanings. These linguistic characteristics frequently lack direct equivalents, thereby complicating translation.

Part of culture has a big impact on human life, one of them aspect that have a cultural sense is food. Certain of food is often consumed by a particular

society, then they will have many words for that kind of food. For example, rice is a staple food in Indonesia. People eat it every day. This makes Indonesian people have many words for rice, padi, gabah, beras, nasi. The other example is the words for pig in Western and Chinese societies. Western people have pork, swine, bacon, ham, hog, boar, sow, lard, etc.

Chinese people have cha sao, kourou, wanshanti, zhurou dun fentiao, shanxi, roujiamo, etc. It is really different with Indonesian society in general, that only know the word pig because most people in Indonesia are Muslims, who are forbidden to consume pig.

Even with meticulous effort during the translation process, instances of failure or untranslatability may still occur. As noted by Cui (2012), source language untranslatability arises when a word, phrase, has no direct. Catford (1965, p. 94) classifies untranslatability into two main categories: **linguistic untranslatability**, which results from structural differences between languages, and **cultural untranslatability**.

According to Catford (1965), linguistic untranslatability refers to the inability to convey an expression in grammatical structures, semantic systems through target language. This often becomes evident in cases involving ambiguity, wordplay such as puns, or polysemous terms words that carry multiple meanings where a direct translation becomes problematic. Such linguistic elements typically lack precise equivalents in the target language, thereby creating challenges for the translator.

The challenges concept or element that this typically arises with culturally specific items such as institutional names, traditional clothing, local cuisine, or abstract cultural ideas that do not exist or have counterpart in translation. In such cases, the cultural meaning and the connection between the concept and its linguistic form that consequently, of original cultural nuance may be lost or misrepresented in translation.

According to Cui (2012), cultural untranslatability may emerge from two primary sources: **cultural gaps** and **cultural conflicts**. Cultural gaps refer to the absence of parallel elements in the target culture, such as material objects, customs, or religious practices unique to the source culture. Cultural conflicts, on the other hand, arise when a word or concept carries different associations or connotations in the target culture, potentially leading to misinterpretation or misunderstanding. These challenges highlight how deeply embedded cultural differences can impede accurate and meaningful translation.

In translation novel there is identify to order the instances of cultural untranslatability within a novel, it is essential first to categorize the cultural terms present in the text. Nida, as cited in Newmark (1988), classifies foreign cultural terms into several specific categories. These include: (1) **Ecology**, encompassing elements such as local flora, fauna, landscapes, and climate for example, honeysuckle, pampas, selva, or paddy fields; (2) Material culture encompasses tangible cultural artifacts such as traditional foods (e.g., zabaglione, sake), clothing items (e.g., sarong, dhoti), types of housing (e.g., kampong, chalet), and modes of transportation (e.g., rickshaw, cabriolet). (3) Social culture refers to

aspects of daily life related to work and leisure activities, which may include roles such as *ajaki* and *amah*, physical practices like *raga*, and musical genres such as reggae and rock. (4) Cultural elements also include organizations, customs, and abstract concepts, covering areas such as political structures and religious beliefs. Also, artistic terms such as *dharma*, *karma*, and *temple*; and (5) **Gestures and habits**, which refer to culturally specific actions like *cocking a snook* or spitting. Recognizing these categories helps in analyzing how cultural meanings may be lost or distorted during translation.

Existence cultural untranslatability does not only find in the written texts, but also in the real life. Western people nowadays, especially Americans, using the phrase “karma is real” or “karma is a bitch”. This phrase is used when they see someone who has done something bad to someone else, experiencing the same badness as he/she did to that someone else. The term *karma* is a fundamental concept found in several Eastern religions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism. While interpretations may vary depending on the specific religious context, *karma* is generally understood as the principle of cause and effect where every action an individual performs will eventually have consequences, either in this life or in the future. Nida in Newmark (1988) categorized ‘karma’ as a foreign cultural concept. The reason why Western people using the word ‘karma’ is because there is no such concept in western society.

A variety of translation strategies have been developed to address issues of cultural untranslatability. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) proposed seven primary strategies: (1) Borrowing, (2) Calque, (3) Literal Translation, (4) Transposition, (5)

Modulation, (6) Equivalence, and (7) Adaptation. Building on theory, Newmark (2000) introduced a more comprehensive framework consisting of sixteen translation procedures: (1) Transference, (2) Naturalization, (3) Cultural Equivalent, (4) Functional Equivalent, (5) Descriptive Equivalent, (6) Neutralization, (7) Componential Analysis, (8) Synonymy, (9) Through-Translation, (10) Shifts or Transpositions, (11) Modulation, (12) Recognized Translation, (13) Compensation, (14) Paraphrase, (15) Couplets, Triplets, or Quadruplets, and (16) Notes, Glosses, and Additions.

Selecting the appropriate translation strategy is crucial when dealing with culturally untranslatable words in literary texts. An incorrect choice of strategy or distortion of the original meaning target language, leading to awkward or unnatural expressions. Consequently, visitor may struggle to comprehend intended message, which can hinder their overall comprehension and enjoyment of the narrative.

In the study of cultural untranslatability, numerous studies have addressed various issues concerning the differences. strategies translation.

Tri Apriyani and Jaulfillaili (2020), in their study on cultural untranslatability in Sidney Sheldon's novel *The Stars Shine Down* and its Indonesian translation *Kilau Bintang Menerangi Bumi* by Drs. Bujianto T. Pramono, identified 190 culturally untranslatable terms. These classified various cultural strategy translation including (such as food, clothing, housing, and transportation); social culture; organizational domains (encompassing artistic, political, and administrative aspects); as well as gestures and customs. Interestingly, no religious cultural terms were found within the data. In terms of translation

strategies, the researchers observed the use of borrowing, calque, literal translation, and transposition. However, other common strategies like modulation, equivalence, and adaptation were notably absent from the translation process.

Similarly, Gunathilaka D.D.I.M.B. and Ariyaratne W.M. (2019) conducted analysis cultural untranslatability in *Gamperaliya* by Martin Wickramasinghe English translation. Their findings revealed that translators employed a variety of strategies, both individually and in combination, to address cultural untranslatability. These included paraphrasing, borrowing (regular, annotated within sentences, and converted), loan blends, literal translation, calque, equivalence, and compensation. Furthermore, two innovative hybrid strategies were introduced: one combining borrowing with equivalence, and the other merging borrowing with literal translation. These combined methods provide more flexible and effective solutions for translating culturally specific elements into the target language.

The study conducted by Nur Via Pahlawanita, Rudi Hartono, and all (2019) cultural terms in Andrea Hirata's novel *The Rainbow Troops* 'Laskar Pelangi'.

*The Rainbow Troops* revealed several significant findings. A total of 168 cultural terms were identified and categorized based on Newmark's five cultural classifications: 48 terms related to ecology, 27 to material culture, 14 to social culture, 77 to social organization, and 2 to gestures and habits. Furthermore, the translator employed 12 distinct translation techniques throughout the novel. The findings also indicate a dominant use of target language-oriented strategies, reflecting the application of a domestication ideology. Regarding meaning

equivalence, 60.12% of the translated terms were fully equivalent, 31.55% partially equivalent, 5.95% non-equivalent, and 2.38% were not translated at all.

Various strategies can be applied to address cultural untranslatability in literary texts. Building upon this foundation, aims to examine *A Thousand Splendid Suns* from English into Indonesian. Specifically, it seeks to determine whether alternative strategies, beyond those proposed by Newmark, are utilized in rendering culturally untranslatable terms.

Published in 2007, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. Set in Afghanistan, the novel follows intersecting lives of two women, in year 1960s to the early 2000s. Through the series of life-changing events, their individual journeys converge, forming a profound bond of friendship and solidarity as they navigate the political and social turmoil of Kabul. Indonesian translation of the novel, carried out by Berliani M. Nugrahani, was published by Mizan in November 2007.

The researcher selected *A Thousand Splendid Suns* for analysis based on three main considerations. First, the novel offers a powerful and emotionally engaging narrative. It portrays the life of Mariam, an illegitimate child who suffers lifelong marginalization and domestic abuse. In contrast, Laila, born a generation later, initially enjoys a more privileged upbringing. Their lives ultimately intersect when Laila is forced to marry Rasheed Mariam's husband marking a critical turning point that unites the two women through shared suffering, resilience, and eventual sisterhood.

Secondly, this novel is rich of Afghanistan cultural terms. And most of these cultural terms can't be translated. Interestingly, there are many cultural terms that are influenced by Islamic teachings. It is same as Indonesia, which has many cultural terms that are also influenced by Islamic teachings.

Thirdly, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is both widely popular and critically acclaimed. Within its first week of publication, the novel achieved commercial success, with sales exceeding one million copies. Its literary quality has been recognized by numerous reviewers. Lev Grossman of *Time Magazine* described it as “dense” and “rich,” also it called “a powerful, harrowing depiction of Afghanistan.” *USA Today* praised the novel’s emotionally evocative style, referring to its prose as “achingly beautiful.” Another review characterized it as a “pressure-packed guide to enduring the unendurable,” highlighting the novel’s emotional intensity and powerful portrayal of resilience.

The researcher has read the novel Indonesian versions and English novel. Then, retrieve some translations results that feel wrong as preliminary data:

1) SL: *Even after Mariam put the rice and the lamb and okra qurma in front of him,.....*

TL: *Bahkan setelah Mariam menghidangkan nasi serta qurma domba dan okra di hadapannya,.....*

In this instance, the translator rendered 'lamb and okra qurma' from the source language (SL) as *qurma domba dan okra* in the target language (TL). However, a more accurate translation would be *domba dan okra qurma*, which better reflects the original structure and meaning.

2) SL: They had Eid visitors at the house.

TL: Para tamu mendatangi rumah mereka.

In this translation, the translator chooses to don't translate the word *Eid* in SL into TL. But the most suitable translation should be Mereka kedatangan tamu hari raya dirumah mereka. Or Tamu hari raya mengunjungi rumah mereka.

3) SL: The muezzin's call for namaz rang out, and the Mujahideen set down their guns, faced west, and prayed.

TL: Azan berkumandang mengajak semua orang menunaikan shalat subuh, dan Mujahidin menurunkan senjata mereka, menghadap ke barat, dan bersujud dalam shalat.

In this translation, the right translation from SL into TL should be Seruan muazin untuk shalat terdengar, dan Mujahidin menurunkan senjata mereka, menghadap ke barat, dan bersujud dalam shalat.

4) SL: One mustn't speak ill of the dead much less the shaheed.

TL: Kita tidak boleh mengatakan yang buruk-buruk tentang orang yang sudah meninggal.

In this instance, the translator rendered the sentence inaccurately. A more appropriate translation would be: Dan di madrasah-madrasah Pakistan, di mana mereka dididik sesuai syariat oleh para Mullah.

5) SL: and in Pakistani madrasas, where they were schooled in Sharia by Mullahs.

TL: dan di madrasah-madrasah Pakistan, mereka diajar oleh mullah-mullah penganut syariah.

In this translation translated from SL into TL incorrectly. The right translation should be Dan di madrasah-madrasah Pakistan, dimana mereka dididik sesuai syariat oleh para Mullah.

6) SL: *drink cold ginger ale.*

TL: *menghirup ginger alesoda jahe dingin.*

In this translation, the translator SL into TL incorrectly. The right translation should be Minum bir jahe dingin.

From the six preliminary data above, it can be seen that the translation strategies proposed by Newmark. It stills a mystery so that the results became wrong.

Therefore, the researcher wants to analyze *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel English and Indonesia translation translator strategies to translate untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in the novel.

## **B. Problems of Study**

In line with the phenomenon above, research problems outlined as follows:

1. What are the categories of untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel?
2. How are the untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel being solved?
3. Why are the untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel translated as the ways they are?

### C. Objectives of Study

In relation to the research problems, the objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate the categories of untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel.
2. To describe the strategies that used to translate untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel.
3. To explain the reasons of untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel translated as the ways they are.

### D. Scope of the Study

This analysis with untranslatable cultural words in the original English version of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel by Khaled Hosseini that caused translation untranslatability Indonesian version and English novel that will be analyzed. The researcher will use the theories from Newmark (1988) to investigate the categories of untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel. And also, describe strategies translation that used to translate untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in the novel. The researcher will use the theory Chesterman (1997) to explain the reasons of untranslatable cultural words that caused cultural untranslatability in the novel translated as the ways they are.

### E. Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to hold theoretical significance.

1. Theoretically, this research contributes broader understanding cultural untranslatability in literary translation, enriching the academic discourse on the subject.
2. Practically, the study offers several valuable applications:
  - a) By identifying culturally untranslatable terms strategies used to address them, follow up the research is expected to guide translators in effectively handling similar challenges when translating English literary works into Indonesian or vice versa.
  - b) This study may provide a valuable reference for future researchers conducting related investigations. who are analyzing Indonesian translations of literary texts, particularly those originally written in English.
  - c) It also offers insights for translators working in related social and linguistic fields by highlighting the importance of cultural considerations in literary translation.
  - d) Furthermore, this research can provide valuable knowledge for applied linguists, professional translators, students in translation studies, and general readers with an interest particularly in the field of translation, with a specific focus on cultural untranslatability