Loss and Gain in the Translation of Indonesian Novel Entitled "Cantik itu Luka" into "Beauty is a Wound"

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Abstract

The change of meaning in translation, either in the form of loss or gain, is inevitable. The change is influenced by several factors. This study aims to examine two problems concerning the matter of change of meaning in translation, especially in information loss and gain, by using Kurniawan's novel, *Cantik itu Luka*, and its English version, *Beauty is a Wound* as the reference. The first problem is about the loss and gain occurred in the translation, and the second is about the contributing factors. Both of the problems are analysed by using theory of translation. The first problem is analysed through the conception of loss and gain formulated by Larson (1998); the second is analysed with the conception of translation factor from Catford (1965). In collecting the data, the method used was documentation method, with note-taking technique. The comparison method is used in analysing the data. Based on the analysis that has been done, it can be concluded that loss appears mainly because of the replacement of the source language units with a cultural substitute or related equivalent that cannot represent the whole meaning components. Information gain appears from the change of implicit nuance of the source language unit into explicit, like in the modification of loan word. The contributing factors are both linguistic and cultural. The two factors intertwine with one another in influencing the loss and gain.

Keywords: *translation, change of meaning, information loss, information gain, untranslatability*

Abstrak

Perubahan makna entah itu dalam bentuk penghilangan atau penambahan informasi adalah sesuatu yang tak terelakan dalam penerjemahan. Perubahan itu bisa terjadi karena pengaruh dari sejumlah faktor. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji masalah perubahan makna dalam penerjemahan, terutama menyangkut penghilangan dan penambahan informasi dengan menggunakan novel karangan Kurniawan, yang berjudul *Cantik itu Luka,* dan terjemahan bahasa Inggrisnya, *Beauty is a Wound* sebagai rujukan. Masalah pertama mengenai penghilangan dan penambahan informasi yang terjadi di dalam terjemahan; masalah kedua mengenai faktor-faktor penyebabnya. Kedua masalah dalam penelitian ini dikaji dengan teori terjemahan. Masalah pertama dikaji dengan konsep dari Larson (1998); masalah kedua dianalisis melalui konsep dari Catford (1965). Dalam mengumpulkan data, studi ini menggunakan metode dokumentasi yang disertai dengan teknik pencatatan. Metode komparasi digunakan dalam menganalisis data. Berdasarkan analisis yan

257

telah dilakukan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penghilangan informasi sering kali terjadi karena penggantian unit bahasa sumber dengan substitusi berupa kata kebudayaan atau ekuivalen terkait yang tidak dapat merepresentasikan keseluruhan makna dari unit tersebut. Penambahan informasi terjadi karena perubahan dari nuansa implisit unit sumber menjadi eksplisit, salah satunya dikarenakan modifikasi kata pinjaman. Faktor yang berpengaruh adalah faktor linguistik dan budaya. Kedua faktor saling terkait satu sama lain dalam memengaruhi penghilangan dan penambahan informasi yang terjadi.

Kata kunci*: terjemahan, perubahan makna, penghilangan informasi, penambahan informasi, ketakterjemahan*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the translation industry is experiencing great development, especially in the realm of fiction (Venuti, 2004: 2). In Indonesia, many translations begin to be conducted on several literary works. It is done to make Indonesian literature available for the foreigners who speak other languages. One of Indonesian literary works that have been translated into English is a novel entitled *Cantik itu Luka* written by Eka Kurniawan.

However, apart from the quality of the novel and the positive feedback it has received, the English translation of this novel, like other works, is still vulnerable to the fundamental problems of translation. Mainly because its nature is strongly bound to the conventions of the Indonesian language and culture, the change of information either in the form of loss or gain frequently appears in the translation.

Catford (1965: 94) asserts that because of the difference between the languages involves in the translation, either the one caused by linguistic or cultural convention, such problems indeed become inevitable. He (1965: 93) states that a translator cannot achieve a perfect translation, bearing in mind that there will always be some parts in the text that can be translated without being separated from the nature of formal correspondence, while some other parts are untranslatable. Larson (1998: 169) also states almost the same thing by arguing that the number of vocabulary a language has might be different from the other language. One language may share a similar concept to the others, but without the label used to represent it. Moreover, it might be that the concept is indeed totally unknown in one language, and therefore, in that language, there is no label to represent it. Nida (1959: 150), this phenomenon is inevitable in the translation; thus, it becomes the basic principle of the translation itself.

This study is attempted to contribute to the knowledge base of loss and gain of information by discussing the points overlooked by the other previous studies. Some previous studies (e.g. Puspitasari, 2016; Setiawan, 2017; Utamayasa, 2017; Yasin, 2018) do not elaborate the discussion of the phenomenon of loss and gain by identifying the factors contributing to the occurrence of these phenomena. Instead, the studies only analyze the types of loss and gain and the number of the occurrences in the translation. Unlike those studies above, there is another study that has elaborated, though not directly, the factors that cause this phenomenon (e.g. Tiniwiyanti, 2017). Nevertheless, even though it also appears as one of a few translation studies analyzing the phenomenon of Indonesian-into-English translation, it still has deficiencies since it does not use any linguistic approaches, such as the semantic approach, to further examine the gap between the meaning components

of the source and target language units. As a result, the discussion of the study comes to a stop at the level of recognizing. In fact, given the fact that it analyzes the loss and gain on the translation of culture-specific items, the use of approaches such as the semantic approach are needed because translators, in translating the unit, tend to use cultural substitution which seems to signify the same thing yet has several points of difference. In addition, although there are also studies discussing the factors (e.g. Pascarina, 2017; Nozizwe & Ncube, 2014), they do not even present the data analysis by displaying the examples of the source and target language unit undergoing the loss and gain. Furthermore, similar to the other studies mentioned above, these studies only give an explanation of the phenomenon in general without further examined it with semantic approaches.

Based on the foregoing introduction, this study aims to analyse the kinds of loss and gain in the English translation of lexicons in Kurniawan's novel by using the semantic approaches, such as componential analysis and referential theory in order to elaborate the discussion. Moreover, in this study, the factors contributing to the occurrence of loss and gain were identified.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The data source of this study are an Indonesian novel written by Kurniawan, Eka entitled *Cantik itu Luka* and its translation in English entitled Beauty is a Wound translated by Annie Tucker. The Indonesian version of the novel (fifth edition) was published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2015 with 494 pages, while the English version was published by New Directions in 2015 with 360 pages. This novel tells a chronicle of an Indonesian family from the colonial until the modern period. As a literary work,

this novel strongly demonstrates the complexity of Indonesian language, and the culture in which the language belongs. Thus, it is assumed that this novel contains many Indonesian language units which have a great possibility to undergo loss and gain in the translation. It is the reason why the novel is used as the primary data source.

In collecting the data, this study used documentation method, accompanied by the note-taking technique. The data was collected systematically (non-random) by using the first eight chapters of the novel as reference.

Both of the novels were skimmed and scanned in order to find out the source language units and their translation in the target text. The translations that were not equivalent (showing change of meaning) were then collected in order for them to be further analyzed.

This study used comparison method in analyzing the data.

The steps were as follows. Firstly, the data collection was examined in depth by comparing the source language units to their translations in the target text. If the units undergo loss and gain, then they were further analyzed by using the concept proposed by Larson (1998). In order to provide more detailed information, the semantic approaches were used. These approaches were proposed by Bell (1993), consisting of referential theory, meaning postulate, and componential analysis.

Furthermore, the factors that contribute to the occurrence of loss and gain were identified by using the concept proposed by Catford (1965).

Since this study involves the meaning components of words in the source language (SL) and TL, the KBBI (fifth edition), the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries Online, offline or online

encyclopedias, and articles are used as the source of information.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The first discussion concerns with the loss and gain occurred in the translation of several lexicons in the novel and the second discussion concerns with the contributing factors to the occurrence of the loss and gain.

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In this section, several lexicons that undergo loss and gain in their translation are presented as the sample.

a. Loss of Information

Loss of information is said to appear in the translation when the target language unit cannot represent the whole meaning components of the source language unit (Larson, 1998).

The example of this phenomenon can be seen below.

[3-1]

SL: *… begitu buruk rupanya sehingga **dukun bayi** yang membantunya merasa tak yakin itu seorang bayi* (2015: 2).

TL: ... so hideous that **the midwife** assisting her couldn't be sure whether it really was a baby (2015: 2).

In a text, it is often found a word that carries a concept unknown to the target reader (Larson: 1998: 179). Because of this reason, a translator should find the closest natural equivalent to translate that word in order to mitigate the gap of meaning that may occur. According to Larson (1998: 188), the type of equivalents frequently used in translation is a cultural substitute or a target language word that is quite similar to the source language word due to the component of meaning it contains.

Still, the use of a cultural substitute cannot set the translation apart from information loss. The phenomenon can be seen in datum [3-1] above, in which the loss of information appears when the SL unit "dukun bayi" is translated by using a cultural substitute "the midwife".

The comparison of meaning components between the word "dukun bayi" and "the midwife" can be seen in the following table.

Table 1 Componential Analysis Between "Dukun Bayi" and "The Midwife"

	Dukun Bayi	**The Midwife**
Helping the process of babies delivering	+	+
Expert in their work through a process of learning in a certified institution	-	+
Using mantras, and other spiritual things in the process of helping a woman to give birth	+/-	-

According to the KBBI (2008: 368), a "dukun" is a person whose job is to heal their patients by using mantras, herbal medicines, or even some kinds of incantations. On the other hand, the word "midwife" refers to a nurse who, before

they can assist the process of giving birth, has gone through a lengthy process of education and training in an institution. In contrast to a "dukun", a "midwife" does not use any traditional tools, spells or incantations. Instead, she will use modern medical equipment.

Looking at these facts, it can be stated that the loss of information has occurred in the translation. The word "midwife" cannot represent the whole meaning component of the word "dukun bayi". The use of that word changes the nuance of the story. It makes as if the character had been helped by a professional medical staff in the process of delivering her baby. This certainly tunes out the original impression of the story that wants to illustrate how the character, in the middle of the countryside, underwent a modest birth process assisted by a traditional healer who has an expertise on the herbal as well as spiritual matters, rather than on the modern medical sciences.

Besides the examples above, there is the other kind of information loss. It can be seen in the datum below.

[3-2]
SL: *Alamanda tertawa melihat foto tersebut, menciumnya dengan **gemas** sebanyak delapan kali* (2015: 203).

TL: Alamanda laughed to see the photo and kissed it **affectionately** (2015: 157).

According to Larson (1998: 170), because each language has a different way of grouping or classifying components of meaning, even though a concept involved in the translation is actually shared from one language to another, it does not necessarily mean that a total matching can be assumed. A language may have a different way of

conveying the same concept or even do not have a way of conveying the concepts they basically familiar with.

That phenomenon is represented by the translation of the word "gemas" to "affectionately" that generates loss of information.

According to the KBBI (2008: 458), the word "gemas", which belongs to an adjective, means a feeling of love or fondness mixed with exasperation. On the other hand, the word "affectionately", which belongs to an adverb, means in a way that shows caring feelings and love for somebody. Indeed, the word "affectionately" cannot represent the whole meaning components of the word "gemas".

The concept of the word "gemas" is universal. In other words, the concept of "love with exasperation" can be understood, or in this case, felt by almost everyone in this world, including the target reader. It is only that the target language does not have any expressions that are as specific as the source language to convey that concept. Therefore, a literal equivalence cannot be used.

The translation of the word "gemas" with "affectionately" is an adjustment of the translation of an unknown concept by using related equivalents, namely synonyms (Larson, 1998: 172).

Still, information loss occurs in the translation, because, even though both expressing the feeling of love, the word "affectionately" can merely represent an abundance of affection, whereas, "gemas" has a component of "exasperation". Brata (2012), that loss of information can hinder the target reader from experiencing the same impression as the source language reader.

b. Gain of Information

Gain of information occurs when something that is not expressed in the source language text appears in the target

language text. It related to the translation of an implicit-SL-unit into an explicit-TL-unit (Larson, 1998).

The example of this phenomenon can be seen in the datum below.

[3-3]
SL: ***Ajak-ajak** melolong di bebukitan, dengan suara melengking mengalahkan muadzin memanggil-manggil orang untuk salat Maghrib* (2015: 17).

TL: **The wild *ajak* dogs** howled in the hills with shrill voices that drowned out the *muadzin* who was calling people to Maghrib prayer (2015: 14)

The gain of information occurs in the translation of the phrase "ajak-ajak" into "the wild ajak dogs". It is because there is a change from the implicit nuance brought by the source language unit to something explicit by the target language unit. The source reader will be able to associate the meaning of the word "ajak" to the typical Indonesian wild dogs who usually live in the middle of the forest (KBBI, 2008: 23). However, on the other hand, if there is no co-text, the target reader will not be able to understand it.

Picture 1 The Reference of the Word "Ajak"

Source: *https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajak*
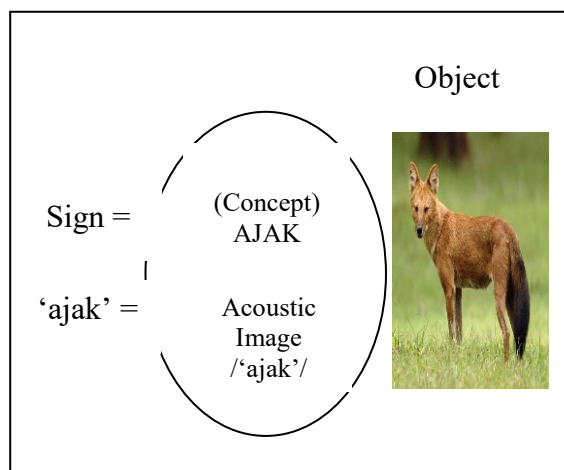
Even though, causing information gain, a co-text is needed in this translation. The concept of "ajak" is unknown to target readers. Therefore, as said by Larson (1998: 186), in translating it, a translator can do modification of loan words to compensate for the information loss that may appear.

Table 2 Componential Analysis of the Word "Ajak"

	Ajak
Animal	+
Dog	+
Live in the wild	+

The meaning components of the word "ajak", such as "dog" and "live in the wild" are unpacked to modify the borrowed word "ajak" in the target text. The addition of these meaning components as co-text makes explicit the attribute of "ajak" which ultimately results in information gain. The gain of information may clarify the meaning of an originally-unknown word. As one of the phenomenon of meaning changes, gain of information owes its occurrence on the technique used by the translator. Technique of translation strongly influences the change of meaning; it determines whether the translation is acceptable or not (Aresta, 2018).

Factors Contributing to the Occurrence of Loss and Gain

There are two factors that play an important role in the occurrence of loss and gain in the translation; those are linguistic and cultural factors. The two factors do not stand separately in generating the occurrence of loss and gain; instead they are interrelated to each other. Zequan (2003) states that the factors causing the changes of meaning,

such as loss and gain, do not necessarily have to relate only to mere grammatical problems, more than that, it can also involve issues of ideology. Ideology relates to the translator's decision to choose the translation unit to be displayed in the target text, a source language unit can be transformed into something closer to the life of the target reader rather than the source reader to make the text flows naturally, in order for it to be read as a new text.

a. Linguistics Factor

According to Catford (1965: 98), linguistic factors are said to generate the occurrence of loss or gain in the translation if the translator fails to find the TL equivalent because of the difference between the SL and the TL.

The examples of translation problems that occurred due to the linguistic factors can be seen in datum [3-2], in which the word "gemas" experiences information loss when translated into "affectionately". The information loss is solely caused by the difference between the SL and the TL system. One language has a label to state the concept specifically while the other does not, even though the concept is shared between the two.

Given the fact that when a concept that is shared between the two languages most likely has a label in both of the languages, linguistics factor can be said rarely influence the change of semantic component. On the other hand, linguistics factor has a strong degree of relation to the category and level shift (Sipayung, 2018). Instead of loss and gain, the difference only in the way of saying tends to generate the change in the domain of form, either in the level or category (Catford, 1965: 73) of a language unit, which is not the topic of this discussion.

b. Cultural Factor

The cultural factor is said to influence the occurrence of loss and gain, if "a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL text, is completely absent from the culture in which the TL is a part" (Catford, 1965: 99). According to

The changes in meaning caused by cultural factors can be seen in datum [3-1] and [3-3].

In datum [3-1] and [3-3], information loss and gain occur not solely because of the difference in the language system between the SL and the TL, but further than that, it concerns the cultural differences in which the languages belong. Cultural differences deal with broader matters, including the material, social, and ecological aspects of a place. In this translation, the cultural differences are represented by the non-existence of the feature of "dukun" and "ajak" in the target language culture, and therefore, it is unknown for the target reader.

This can also be seen in the following datum [3-5].

[3-5]

SL: *Di muka umum ia berpenampilan dengan cara yang sangat sopan, dengan sarung ketat serta **kebaya** dan rambut disanggul* (2015: 83).

TL: Her public presentation was incredibly proper, with a tight sarong and **a *kebaya* blouse** and her hair in a bun (2015: 66).

The translation of the word "kebaya" to "a kebaya blouse" causes information gain. The meaning component of "blouse" which is implicit in the source language unit becomes explicit in the target language. This happens because the feature of "kebaya", like "dukun bayi" and "ajak" above, is unknown in the target culture. Therefore, the translator

should make an adjustment in order to make the translation flows naturally and make sense for the target reader.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing discussion, the conclusion can be drawn as follows.

The replacement of the SL units with a cultural substitute can generate information loss, as well as the replacement with related equivalent, like synonym that cannot represent the entire meaning components of the unit. Gain of information appears when the implicit components of meaning carried by the SL unit are changed into explicit. It may appear as a result of translation by using loan word modification.

There are two underlying factors in the appearance of loss and gain, namely linguistics and cultural factors. The linguistics factor is said to affect the occurrence of loss and gain if those translation problem appear due to the difference between SL and TL. Thus, the concept of a particular thing is shared, but without its specific label used to refer to it. On the other hand, the cultural factor is said to underlie the loss and gain if those problems appear due to the difference in the source language culture (SC) and target language culture (TC). It means that it is not merely due to the non-existence of the label, but more about the non-existence of the feature itself.

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