HOLY BOOK OF *BHAGAVAD GITA* "A CASE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL TERMS IN TRANSLATION"

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang penerjemahan istilah-istilah agama budaya dalam bahasa Sanskerta (bahasa sumber) kedalam bahasa Inggris (bahasa sasaran 1) dan Bahasa Indonesia (bahasa sasaran 2). Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis bagaimana istilah agama budaya dalam Bhagavad Gita tersebut diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia.

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini adalah *Bhagavad Gita* dalam bahasa Sanskerta dan terjemahannya ke dalam bahasa Inggris "Bhagavad Gita As It Is" dan dalam bahasa Indonesia "Bhagavad Gita Menurut Aslinya". Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori dari Newmark (1988) tentang kategori istilah budaya dan prosedur penerjemahan, teori dari Bell (1991) tentang pendekatan arti kata serta teori dari Nida (di Venuti, 2000) tentang kesepadanan dalam penerjemahan. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa istilah-istilah agama budaya dalam *Bhagavad Gita* bisa diklasifikasikan berdasarkan kategori budaya dari Newmark yaitu istilah agama budaya yang berkaitan dengan ekologi, budaya material,sosial budaya, organisasi, tingtkah laku dan kebiasaan. Prosedur penerjemahan yang diterapkan oleh para penerjemahan dalam menerjemahkan istilah-istilah agama budaya dalam *Bhagavad Gita* adalah: penerjemahan secara lansung (literal), prosedur pemindahan (transferrence procedure), kesepadanan budaya, naturalisasi and kesepadanan deskriptif. Hasil penelitian yang terakhir adalah bahwa ada informasi yang hilang dalam penerjemahan istilah-istilah agama budaya dalam Bhagavad Gita ke dalam Bahasa Inggris dan Bahasa Indonesia. Hilangnya informasi ini dikarenakan oleh prosedur penerjemahan dan orientasi penerjemah yang dipilih oleh penerjemah disamping adanya perbedaan latar-belakang budaya.

Kata kunci: *istilah agama budaya, prosedur penerjemahan*.

ABSTRACT

This research concerns with the translation of religious-cultural terms found in the *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit (SLT) into English (TLT1) and Indonesian (TLT2). The aims of this study is to investigates how religious-cultural terms in *Bhagavad Gita* are translated into English and Indonesian.

This study applies qualitative research approach. The data source were taken from *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit and the translation in English: "*Bhagavad Gita As It Is*" and in Indonesia: "*Bhagavad Gita Menurut Aslinya*". The theories used in this study are from Newmark (1998) about cultural word categories and translation procedures, theory from Bell (1991) about word meaning approach and from Nida (in Venuti, 2000) about equivalence in translation. The result of the analysis shows that the types of religious-cultural terms found in Bhagavad Gita can be catagorized based on Newmark cultural word categories, namely religious cultural terms related to ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations, gestures and habits. The translation procedures applied by the translators in dealing with the translation of religious-cultural terms from Sanskrit into English (TLT 1) and Indonesian (TLT 2) are literal translation, transferrence procedure, cultural equivalent, naturalization and descriptive equivalent, and lastly there are some losses of information occured in the translation of the religious cultural terms from Sanskrit (SLT) into English (TLT1) and Indonesian (TLT2). These losses of information are due to the procedures applied and the orientation chosen by the translators besides the cultural differences among Indian culture (SLT), English culture (TLT1) and Indonesian culture (TLT2).

Keywords: *religious-cultural terms, translation procedures*.

INTRODUCTION

Translating religious cultural terms are interesting for number of reasons. Deep understanding concerning the meaning of religious-cultural terms in the source language text is greatly required in order to accurately translate those terms into the target language text. Newmark (1988:95) categorizes cultural terms into five categories: (1) ecology; (2) material culture (artifacts); (3) social culture; (4) organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts and (5) gesture and habits. According to his classification, religious cultural term belongs to the fourth

category namely organization, customs, activities, procedure and concept.   As part of the culture, the religious aspect has important influences on human behavior. A religion functions as a moral and spiritual resource. Most religions have a holy book or scripture that is used as a guidance by their adherents.

Apart from the *Vedas*, the *Bhagavad Gita* is also considered as one of the important holy books in Hindu religion. It is a sacred text which is believed to be a holy scripture for Hindu People that is revealed from *Lord Krishna* to his devotees named *Arjuna* as guidance for religious and social life. The *Bhagavad Gita* contains many religious-cultural terms therefore it is used as the data source in this study.

This study aims at identifying the types of religious-cultural terms found in *Bagavad Gita* and investigating the translation of the religious-cultural terms into English and Indonesian, identifying the translation procedures applied by the translators in translating the religious-cultural terms found in *Bhagavad Gita* into English and Indonesian and analyzing the effect of loss or addition of information to the meaning in the target language texts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study belongs to qualitative research approach in which the data were analyzed descriptively. This present study was conducted by observing the translation of religious-cultural terms in the holy book of "Bhagavad Gita" in Sanskrit into English and Indonesian as the data source.

The data source of this study were the forms of religious cultural terms taken from *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit and the translation in English: "*Bhagavad Gita As It Is*" and in Indonesian: "*Bhagavad Gita Menurut Aslinya*".

The method and technique of collecting data in this study is documentation technique as part of the qualitative method. This method was conducted by reading attentively the data source with the focus on the religious-cultural terms and their translation in TLT texts.

The method of analyzing data was qualitative-descriptive method that aimed to describe systematically, factually, and accurately the characteristics and correlations that occur among the phenomena (Djajasudarma, 1993:10).

The result of analysis in this study is presented formally and informally as proposed by Sudaryanto (1993:145). The analyses of the data or the explanation were presented in descriptive sentences.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of religious cultural terms are limited to the level of words and phrases found in verses of Bhagavad Gita. All the religious-cultural words found are classified by using Newmark's cultural words category, namely, ecology, material culture, social culture (work and leisure), concepts, as well as gestures and habit.

Religious Cultural Terms Related to Ecology

Açvatthaù (AìTQa") is one of the religious cultural terms related to ecology. *Asvatthah* can be categorized as religious cultural terms since this plant

mostly grow in India and reflect the Indian culture. The verse in Sanskrit containing the term *Açvatthaù and* its translation into English and Indonesian are presented below:

SLT : **açvatthaù** *sarva-vrksanam devarsinam ca naradah,*
gandharvanam citrarathah siddhanam kapilo munih
(BG,10:26)
TLT1 : Of all trees I am the banyan tree, and of the sages among the demigods I am Narada. Of the Gandharvas I am Citraratha, and among perfected beings I am the sage Kapila
TLT2 : *Di antara semua pohon, Aku adalah pohon beringin. Di antara resi-resi di kalangan para dewa Aku adalah Narada. Di antara para Gandharva Aku adalah Citraratha, dan di antara makhluh-makhluk yang sempurna Aku adalah resi Kapila*

Açvatthaù tree is a huge tree with very extensive branches and it is a native tree of India. According to Sankrit English Dictionary **açvatthaù** is the holy fig tree, *Ficus Religiosa* (William,2004:115). According to Subhas (2012), this tree is representing the growth stability, continuity and knowledge of Eastern Indian old tradition. This tree is also very important to other religions in India such as Buddhism and Jainism since this is as a symbol of continuous flow of the emanating knowledge.

The term "**açvatthaù** " was translated directly into "banyan tree" in TLT1 and "*pohon beringin*" in TLT2. The translators in translating the term **açvatthaù** (SLT) into "banyan tree" in TLT1 and "*pohon beringin*" in TLT2 both applied the literal translation procedure since the term above is literary translated into TLT1 and TLT2. The translation in TLT1 and TLT 2 both reflect formal equivalence in translation since it is a word by word translation. By applying the formal equivalent orientation, the translators may believe that the

result of translation can reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message to the target reader.

Below is the componential analysis of the word "***açvatthaŭ***' which is translated into 'banyan tree' in English (TLT1) and '*pohon beringin'* in Indonesian (TLT2)

Features	***açvatthaŭ*** (SLT)	banyan tree (TLT1)	*pohon beringin* (TLT2)
Plant	+	+	+
Belong to the genus *Ficus*	+	+	+
Can live for many years	+	+	+
Has many aerial roots	+	+	+
Considered as sacred tree	+	+/-	+

Based on the semantic features above we can see that both ***açvatthaŭ*** (SLT), and *pohon beringin* (TLT2) share all the features. In Bali which mostly inhabited by Hindu followers, *pohon beringin* is respected by the people due to its sacred and ritual value, namely the value related to the supernatural power called *tenget*. The Balinese people believe there is a supernatural power inhibits *pohon beringin*. In this belief, *pohon beringin* functions as one of the attributes used by the Hindu followers in Bali in several ceremonies. In addition, many Indonesian people consider *pohon beringin* as special tree different from common trees. Even, *pohon beringin* is used as the symbol of unity in the *Pancasila* (state ideology of Indonesia). Since there is no loss of information found in the translation of the term ***açvatthaŭ*** into Indonesian, the translation is considered equivalent to *pohon beringin*.

On the other hand, there is one semantic feature lost in the translation of *asvattha* (in SLT) into "banyan tree" (in TLT1). In SLT, **açvatthaù** is considered as a sacred tree but in TLT1, banyan tree is considered as an ordinary tree. There is no specific belief whether this tree is a sacred tree in western culture and in other cultures that are not related to Hinduism.

Loss of information especially an implicit loss occured in the translation of the term **açvatthaù** into"banyan tree" in TLT1 since the sacred value of **açvatthaù** is not transferred into TLT1. This loss is probably due to the procedure applied by the translator and the orientation of the translator in translating the term.

Therefore, to retain all the meaning components in TLT, the following suggested translation by applying a transferrence procedure with an addition of information in the form of a note added next to the term borrowed from the SLT is worth considering so the target readers may notice that banyan tree is not an ordinary tree but it is a sacred tree in Hinduism.

Based on the description suggested translation for TLT1 as follows**.**

.........açvatthaù *(a banyan tree that is considered as a sacred tree in Hinduism)*.....

Religious Cultural Terms Related to Material Culture

One of the religious cultural terms related to material culture found in the Bhagavad Gita is **saìkhaà (Xa«&).** The verse containing the term **çaìkhaà** and its translations into TLT 1 and TLT 2 are presented below.

SLT : *tasya saïjanayan harñaà kuru-vàddhaù pitämahaù siàha-nädaà vinadyoccaiù çaìkhaà dadhmau pratäpavän* (BG,1:12)

TLT1:Then Bhéñma, the great valiant grandsire of the Kuru dynasty, the grandfather of the fighters, blew his <u>conchshell</u> very loudly, making a sound like the roar of a lion, giving Duryodhana joy

TLT2: *Kemudian Bhisma, leluhur agung dinasti kuru yang gagah berani, kakek para kesatria, meniup <u>kerang</u>nya dengan keras sekali bagaikan suara singa   sehingga Duryodhana merasa riang.*

The term **çaìkhaà** in SLT refers to a typical of blowing instrument made of the shell skeleton and used for a religious or important occasion. According to the dictionary meaning, **çaìkhaà** literary means relating to or made of a conch or shell, the sound of a conch-shell (William: 2004,1063). The **çaìkhaà** is a symbol of auspiciousness. The componential analysis of the term çaìkhaà, conchshell and *kerang* is as follow:

	*Çaìkhaà***(SLT)**	Conchshell (TLT1)	*Kerang(TLT2)*
Solid	+	+	+
Made of shell skeleton	+	+	+
Has a special shape	+	-	-
Dedicated for religious purposes	+	-	-

From the meaning components above, the term in the source language and the translation in the target language have different features in terms of the purpose and shape. In SLT, the term çaìkhaà is dedicated for religious purpose. Meanwhile, in the target language, "conchshell" in TLT 1 and and *"kerang"* in TLT 2 mainly function as decoration. In terms of the shape, çaìkhaà has a

special shape. It has a big conchshell with a hole in it that enables people to blow it and to produce a special sound. Meanwhile, conchell and *kerang* may have various forms. The differences in terms of the semantic features among the terms *çaìkhaà*, conchshell and *kerang* present due to differences in cultures.

Saìkhaà was translated into "conchshell" in TLT1 and into "*kerang*" in TLT 2. The procedures applied by the translators in translating the term *saìkhaà* into English (TLT1) and Indonesian (TLT2) is literal translation. This procedure rendered equivalence only on the surface level and failed to account for equivalence on the deep level. There is loss of information occuring in the translation of the word *çaìkhaà* into English (conchshell) and Indonesian (*kerang*) since the translation of *çaìkhaà* from the source language is not the exact equivalence in the target language. The word *çaìkhaà*, conchshell and *kerang* do not share the same semantic feature especially in term of shape and function. The following suggested translations can be taken into consideration to retain all the meaning components in TLT. Regarding to those explanation suggested translation for TLT1 **:** .... ***çaìkhaà*** (a special conchshell used for Hindu rituals) ..... and for TLT 2**:.....** ***çaìkhaà*** (kerang khusus untuk upacara suci)..........

Religious Cultural Terms Related to Social Culture(work and leisure)

One of the religious cultural terms related to social culture (work and leisure) found in *Bhagavad Gita* is *yoga* (YaaeGa)**.** The verse containing the term *yoga* and its translation into TLT1 and TLT2 are presented below:

SLT : *Yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya*
     Siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva Samatvam <u>yoga</u> ucyate (BG,2:48)

TLT1: Perform your duty equiposed, O Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to
     success or failure. Such equanimity is called <u>*yoga*</u>

TLT2: *Wahai Arjuna, lakukanlah kewajibanmu dengan sikap seimbang,
     lepaskanlah segala ikatan terhadap sukses maupun kegagalan. Sikap
     seimbang seperti itu disebut <u>yoga</u>*

The term *yoga* refers to application or concentration of the thoughts, abstract contemplation, meditation,self-concentration, abstract meditation and mental abstraction practised as a system as taught by Patanjali and called the Yoga philosophy (William, 2004: 856).

In translating the term *yoga* into English (TLT1) and Indonesian (TLT2) the procedure used by the translator is transference procedure since lexical item in SLT is used both by TLT1 and TLT2. One of the initial reasons for using this procedure is because among those three languages (Sanskrit,English and Indonesia) there are semantic gap in its lexicon, meaning that there is no existing word in the TLT 1 and TLT2 which has the same meaning with word in SLT. This procedure also used to maintains the cultural effect of the SLT. The translators chose not to paraphrase or provide extra information to the target readers because of the familiarity reason. The translators of TLT1 and TLT2 assume that the word *yoga* has been known by target reader in TLT1 and TLT2 since *yoga* has been practiced by people all over the world. The use of transference procedure to translate the term *yoga* into TLT1 and TLT2 show the formal equivalence orientation because it is basically source oriented, it is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original

message. There is no loss or addition of information found in the translation of the term *yoga* into TLT1 and TLT2.

Religious Cultural Terms Related to Concepts

The term *amåtam*-**(AMa*Ta Ma)** is one of the religious cultural terms related to concepts. The verse containing the term *amåtam* and its translation into TLT1 and TLT2 are presented below:

SLT : *vistareëätmano yogaà vibhütià ca janärdana*
      bhüyaù kathaya tåptir hi çåëvato nästi me
'måtam (BG,10:18)
TLT1: O Janardana, again please describe in detail the mystic power of your opulences. I am never satiated in hearing about you, for the more I hear the more I want to taste the <u>nectar</u> of your words

TLT2: *O Janardana, mohon menguraikan sekali lagi secara terperinci kekuatan batin kehebatan anda. Hamba tidak pernah kenyang mendengar tentang anda, sebab makin hamba mendengar makin hamba ingin merasakan manisnya <u>minuman kekekalan</u> sabda anda.*

The sanskrit word '*amåtam*'in SLT refers to spirituous liquor (William, 2004:82). According to Hindu philosophy *amåtam* is a spiritual or auspicious drink which was believed to bestow immortality. Meanwhile the word nectar in TLT1 refers to a sweet liquid that is produced by flowers and collected by bees for making honey (Hornby,2012) . In Indonesian language (TLT2),the word *minuman kekekalan* has a connotation meaning. It refers to a type of liquor consumed to gain immortality.

The meaning components among *amåtam*, nectar and *minuman kekekalan* can be elaborated by using componential analysis as follow:

	amåtam (SLTT)	nectar (TLT1)	*minuman kekekalan* (TLT2)	
Liquid	+	+	+	
Produced by plant	-	+	-	
Functioned as immortality drink	+	-	+	

From the meaning component above we can see that between *amåtam* (SLT) and *minuman kekekalan* (TLT2) share the same features, namely liquid and functioned as immortality drink. On the other hand, in the translation of the term *amåtam* into nectar (TLT1) there are different features in term of functions and the source of this liquid.

The procedure used by the translator to translate the word *amåtam* into English (TLT1) is translation by cultural equivalent. It happens since the concept of *amåtam* does not occured in the target language culture. The word *amåtam* in SLT text does not refer to a concreate object, it mostly refers to the symbol of immortality. Due to this differentiation the translator use the word nectar to cover the idea of *amåtam* as something sweet and giving enjoyment. In Indonesian language there is no word equivalence with the word *amåtam*. Therefore the translators paraphrases the term to make the target reader understand about the term. The translation of *amåtam* (SLT) into *minuman kekekalan* (TLT2) represents the propositional meaning of the term. Then, in this translation the functional equivalent strategies is used.

Loss of information implicitly occured in the translation of the term *amåtam* (SLT) into nectar (TLT1) since the idea of this liquid as a symbol of immortality does not wholy cover in the translation of this term into TLT1. Therefore the suggested translation for TLT1is presented as follow:

.....nectar ; spiritual liquid as a symbol of immortality......

Religious Cultural Terms related to Gestures and habit

     Praëamya `(Pa[<aMYa )`is one of the religious cultural terms related to gestures and habit. The verse containing the term *praëamya* and its translations into TLT1 and TLT2 are presented below.

SLT : *tataù sa vismayäviñöo håñöa-romä dhanaïjayaù*
         <u>*praëamya*</u> *çirasä devaà kåtäïjalir abhäñata*
   (BG,11:14)

TLT1: Then, bewildered and astonished, his hair standing on end, Arjuna bowed his head to <u>offer obeisances</u> and with folded hands began to pray to the Supreme Lord.

TLT2 :Kemudian Arjuna kebingungan dan kagum, dan bulu romanya tegak berdiri. Arjuna menundukkan kepalanya untuk <u>bersujud</u>, lalu mencakupkan tangannya dan mulai berdoa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa.

     In SLT text *praëamya* is understood as one of the postures or act to offer obeisance to God or respected person. It is done by bowing down and kneeling in front of the other person with head touching the ground and saying *praëam* (greeting). Thus, when we bow down with head touching the ground we actually see the Lord in the other person and believe that God is present everywhere (Subash, 2012).

     The phrase offering obeisances refers to one of the posture to show respect to someone by bending our head or the upper part of our body (Hornby,2012). Meanwhile, *bersujud* in TLT2 means kneeling and placing our forehead to the floor (as when we do a prayer), a respectful statement performed by kneeling and bowing our head until touching the ground (KBBI,2011:1348).

The componential analysis among *praëamya*, offering obeisances and *bersujud*, can be elaborated as follow:

	praëamya	offering obeisances	*bersujud*
Types of posture	+	+	+
Head touching the ground	+	-	+
Performed to adore God and to show respect to someone	+	+	+

From the meaning components above, we can see that *praëamya* (in SLT) and *bersujud* (in TLT2) share the same features. Meanwhile, *praëamya* and offering obeisances (in TLT1) do not share the same feature since *praëamya* is only done by kneeling with head touching the ground but offering obeisances is performed in more various ways. The procedure used to translate the word *praëamya* (SLT) into offer obeisances (TLT1) is functional equivalent since the translation of the word *praëamya* into offer obeisances (TLT1) uses a cultural free word " offer" and the translation give a new specific term. Meanwhile, in the translation of SLT term into TLT2 (*bersujud*) the cultural equivalent procedure is applied by replacing a cultural word in the SLT with a TLT one.

Loss of information implicitly occured in the translation of the word *pranamya* into offering obeisances (TLT1). The following suggested translations for TLT1can be taken into consideration to retain all the meaning component in SLT:

Then, bewildered and astonished, his hair standing on end, Arjuna bowed his head to offer obeisances by kneeling with head touching the ground and with folded hands began to pray to the Supreme Lord.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion, the conclusion was drawn out as follows . First, the types of religious-cultural terms found in the translation of *Bhagavad Gita* into English (TLT1) and Indonesian (TLT2) are religious cultural terms related to ecology, material culture, social culture (work and leisure), concepts, gestures and habit. Second, The translation procedures applied by the translators in dealing with the translation of religious-cultural terms from Sanskrit into English (TLT 1) and Indonesian (TLT 2) are literal translation, transferrence procedure, cultural equivalent and functional equivalent. Third, There are some losses of information occured in the translation of the religious cultural terms from Sanskrit (SLT) into English (TLT1) and Indonesian (TLT2). These losses of information are due to the procedures applied and the orientation chosen by the translators. In addition, the cultural differences among Indian culture (SLT), English culture and Indonesian culture are considered as other factors causing loss of information in the translation. The effects of these losses of information are the loss of sacred value in the translation of the religious cultural terms in TLT and different interpretation regarding the form and function of a certain term in TLT.

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