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Translating Historical Novel for 21st Century Readers¹
Terjemahan Cerita Novel bagi Penulis pada Abad 21

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ABSTRACT

Pramoedya Ananta Toer is one of greatest novelists in Indonesia. Many of his works are translated into English and become world's collection. One of his renowned works is Arok Dedes, one of his Buru tetralogy describing the life of Indonesia as a country. Arok Dedes novel is written with 13th century Java as the background and employs many cultural bound words, especially related to Sanskrit and Javanese. Translating cultural bound words poses its own challenge since the target readers of the translation is different, both in the language communication and culture. Mona Baker offered certain strategies in translating cultural bound words and this study is using them in analyzing the most preferred strategies applied in translating cultural bound words found in the footnotes the novel in order to convey the message clearly to the target readers.

Key words: cultural bound word, footnotes, source language, target language, translation strategies

ABSTRAK

Pramoedya Ananta Toer merupakan salah satu novelist besar di Indonesia, Banyak dari karyanya yang telah diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Inggris dan menjadi salah satu koleksi terbesar di dunia. Salah satu karyanya adalah Arok Dedes, yang merupakan tokoh dalam novel tetralogi di Buru, sebuah gambaran realitas kehidupan mengenai negara Indonesia. Novel Arok Dedes ditulis pada abad ketigabelas (ke-13) dengan latar belakang Jawa dengan banyak menggunakan istilah-istilah budaya di dalamnya, termasuk yang berhubungan dengan budaya Sanskrit dan orang Jawa. Ada tantangan yang berbeda saat proses penerjemahan dengan menggunakan istilah-istilah budaya, terutama dalam bahasa komunikasi dan budaya. Mona Barker menawarkan strategi tertentu di dalam penerjemahan yang berkaitan dengan bahasa (kata-kata) budaya. Oleh karena itu analisa dalam studi ini juga lebih memilih menggunakan strategi apa yang digunakan dalam menemukan bahasa-bahasa (kata) budaya apa yang digunakan dalam catatan kaki di dalam novel, sehingga pesan yang ada dapat tersampaikan dengan jelas kepada pembaca.

Kata kunci: kata budaya, catatan kaki, sumber bahasa, target bahasa, strategi terjemahan

The American theorist Lawrence Venuti defines translation as “a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation” (Venuti 1995:17). Venuti sees the aim of translation is:

To bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and this aim always risks a wholesale domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self conscious projects, where translation serves an appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, and political (Venuti 1995:18).

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On the other hand, Lambert states that literary translation is generally a goal-oriented activity in order to fulfill a need in the target literary culture, “an analysis of these needs and the strategies employed to address them may help us explain the dynamics of literary relationships and traditions, and hence of literary translation.” He also asserts the necessity of taking into account the influence of translated literature on shaping the dynamics of discourse, communication and culture. Further, he argues that the need for serious, descriptive research in this area cannot be overestimated (Lambert 1998:132-3).

In translating literary work, the process of transmitting cultural elements is indeed a complicated and important task. Schmitt states that culture is a complex collection of experiences which condition daily life. It includes history, social structure, religion, traditional customs and everyday usage (Schmitt cited in Gambier 2004:33-4). Further, Newmark defines culture as “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (1988:94), thus acknowledging that each language group has its own culturally specific features. He further clearly states that operationally he does “not regard language as a component or feature of culture” (Newmark 1988:95).

The object of this paper is a literary work titled *Arok Dedes* written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, an Indonesian renowned novelist. First published in 1999, *Arok Dedes* tells about Ken Arok, a sudra-caste rebel, who organized and led a coup d’état against a 13th-century ruler, Tunggul Ametung. Arok and Dedes, the daughter of a brahmin whom was kidnapped and wed by Tunggul Ametung, were the ancestors of future kings of the once famed kingdoms of Singasari and Majapahit. Pramoedya created his fictional version of this part of history as one way of finding “true” account of Indonesia’s remote past, since each monarch usually assigned a scholar to write a ruler-endorsed history.

In telling the story, Pramoedya is very meticulous in using 13th century socioculture as the background. Therefore, it is not surprising that many Sanskrit and old Javanese words appeared in the novel. In addition, Hinduism and Buddhism are the religious backgrounds in the novel so that many Sanskrit words and terms related also appeared as the consequence. Further, Ken Arok lived in Java island and the whole story took place in the very island. It is also not surprising that Pramoedya cited old Javanese terms and words in the novel as well. In fact, Pramoedya provides footnotes on many of those terms employed such as *Saga*, a unit of weight for gold $\pm$ 1 gram (2001:40) and *Catak*, a unit of weight for silver $\pm$ 20 gram (2001:40). This indicated that Pramoedya realized the ‘foreignness’ of his work, even for Indonesians so that he provided ‘explanation’ for his future readers to whom historical knowledge is not an advantage.

Nida (1964:237-39) advocates the use of footnotes to fulfill at least the two following functions: to provide supplementary information and to call attention to the original’s discrepancies. Thus, the analysis of this paper is limited to footnotes provided in the source text (ST), *Arok Dedes*, and in the target text (TT), *Arok van Java*, in order to see the translation strategy applied in translating cultural specific terms.

Culture-bound Words

Newmark (1988) introduced the term ‘cultural word’ that refers to words in which the readership is unlikely to understand. He also categorized the cultural words as follows: 1) Ecology: flora, fauna, hills, winds, plains; 2) Material Culture: Food, clothes, houses and towns, transport; 3) Socio Culture: work and leisure; 4) Organization’s Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts: political and administrative, religious, artistic; and 5) Gestures and Habits.

In addition, Baker (1992) includes cultural bound words into non-equivalence at word level and she suggests some strategies in translating this kind of terms. In her book, *In Other Words*, she argues about the common non-equivalents to which a translator come across while translating from SL into TL, especially when both languages have their distinguished specific culture. Baker put them in the following order:

First, culture specific concepts. Baker mentions that the source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as ‘culture-specific’.

Second, the SL concept which is not lexicalized in TL. The source-language word may express a concept which is known in the target culture but simply not lexicalized, that is not 'allocated' a target language word to express it.

Third, the SL word which is semantically complex. The source-language word may be semantically complex. It is usually unrecognized until there is a need to translate the term into a language which does not have an equivalent for it.

Fourth, the source and target languages make different distinction in meaning. It often happened that what one language regards as an important distinction in meaning another language may not perceive as relevant. Mona Baker gave an example of the term *kehujanan* and *hujan-hujanan* in Bahasa Indonesia which differs in a sense that *kehujanan* refers to an accident, in which the actor has no knowledge that rain falls, while *hujan-hujanan* is an intended activity to enjoy the rain. On the other hand, English does not differentiate the prior knowledge. Thus, a sentence *going out in the rain* may translate into *kehujanan* or *hujan-hujanan*, depends on the provided information whether the doer knows that it is raining or not.

Fifth, the TL lacks a superordinate. Mona Baker explains that the target language may have specific words (hyponyms) but no general word (superordinate) to head the semantic field.

Sixth, the TL lacks a specific term (hyponym). In contrast with the category above, languages tend to have general words (superordinates) but lack specific ones (hyponyms), since each language makes only those distinctions in meaning which seem relevant to its particular environment.

Seventh, differences in physical or interpersonal perspective. One language may emphasize more on physical perspective than another language. Physical perspective is related to where things or people are in relation to one another or to a place, as expressed in pairs of words such as *come/go*, *take/bring*, *arrive/depart*, and so on. Further, perspective may also include the relationship between participants in the discourse (tenor). For example, Javanese has three equivalents for *give*, depending on who is the receiver: *ngekei*, *menahi*, *maringi*.

Eighth, differences in expressive meaning. A target language may have the same propositional meaning as the source language word but the expressive meaning may be different. A neutral word in the ST may have negative equivalence in the TT.

Ninth, differences in form. Particular forms in the ST text may differ in the TT. Mona Baker gave examples such as suffixes *-ish* and *-able* which in Indonesian may not present, so that there is a need for paraphrasing when translating the suffixes.

Tenth, differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms. There may be a difference in the frequency on using certain forms. For example, English uses the continuous form *-ing* more frequently than other languages which have equivalents for it.

Eleventh, the use of loan words in the source text. The extensive use of loan word in the ST may mean as adding the air of sophistication or showing exquisite quality of the ST. This is often lost in because it is not always possible to find a loan word with the same meaning in the target language.

Baker (1992:12-20) also believes that it is necessary for a translator to have knowledge about semantics and lexical sets. Because in this case: S/he would appreciate the "value" of the word in a given system knowledge and the difference of structures in SL and TL. This allows him/her to assess the value of a given item in a lexical set. S/he can develop strategies for dealing with non-equivalence semantic field. These techniques are arranged hierarchically from general (superordinate) to specific (hyponym).

In the same book, Baker also proposes strategies in dealing with non-equivalence at word level which are: 1) Translation by a more general word; 2) Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word; 3) Translation by cultural substitution; 4) Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation; 5) Translation by paraphrase using a related word; 6) Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words; 7) Translation by omission; 8) Translation by illustration (1992: 26-42).

Arok Dedes as one of great literary works presents problems related to cultural bound words when translated into English. The ST itself already attached footnotes in some of its pages. It is assumed that those notes are explanations for cultural words, such as name of holy book, caste, material, status, etc. At the same vein, the TT also included footnotes in its pages both as the translation and as explanation for words considered as having no equivalence in the target language. Yet, the number of footnotes in the ST and TT are not similar as some footnotes in the ST are not

present in the TT and vice versa. Therefore, this study is looking at that feature to reveal the literary translation strategy applied.

It is already stated that there are Sanskrit and Javanese words in the novel which may be believed as common terms in the 13th century. Those words are generally related to culture, Javanese culture in the 13th century. Larson defines culture as “a complex of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules which a group of people share” (Larson 1984:431). He notes that the translator needs to understand beliefs, attitudes, values, and the rules of the source language audience in order to adequately understand the ST and adequately translate it for people who have a different set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules. In addition, Newmark (1988) also states that the translators of literary works mainly have difficulties in translating the linguistic aspects, socio-cultural aspects, and moral aspects implicitly stated in the literary works (e.g. novels). Thus, the translator should be familiar with the culture employed in the source language in order to create similar meaning in the target language.

Discussion

Baker (1992) proposes eight strategies in dealing with non-equivalent words. She points out that these are strategies often used by professional translators, and it ranges from general to specific. These strategies will be used to analyze the translation related to footnotes on cultural specific terms found in Arok Dedes. As a term, 'strategy' is conceptually broader than 'procedure', for its use here to refer to a method employed to translate a given element/unit (including a whole text) making use of one or more procedures selected. It can be either ad hoc, and be restricted to a specific context, or more general, and be reusable in a range of contexts, the latter type being naturally of greater interest to TT (Mailhac 2007). Thus, an approach involving a global decision about a text is defined here as a strategy.

In the ST (table 1), there are 70 footnotes provided to explain terms considered difficult or unrecognized by readers. Those terms mostly are cultural words such as name of weapon, profession, ritual, animals, etc. In the ST, there is also a list of glossary that consists of 32 Sanskrit and Javanese words along with its explanation in common Indonesian language. On the other hand, in the TT, there is no glossary provided but it includes cast of characters, names of people inhibit the story. Another difference is that the TT only has 37 footnotes out of 70 included in the ST. In addition, some footnotes placed in the TT are different from the ones in the ST.

Table 1.
The categories of the cultural words in the footnotes in the ST

Category	ST	TT
Ecology	12	4
Material	13	6
Social Culture	8	11
Organization	24	14
Gesture and Habits	13	2
Total	70	37

Pramoedya employs many Sanskrit and old Javanese terms in the novel and as a consequence he explains terms he deemed unfamiliar to his readers by using footnotes. It clearly indicates that there are many load words in the ST. According to Venuti's major work, *Translator's Invisibility* (1995), translation of text from one culture into another usually requires more than a simple choice of what gets translated or what does not, thus it requires a choice between two translation procedures, namely foreignization and domestication. In broad sense, the TT employs foreignization, maintaining the foreign sense of the ST through its translation strategies.

It is already mentioned that Nida states the function of footnotes are to provide supplementary information, and to call attention to the original's discrepancies (1964:237-39). In the ST, terms related to organization are given footnotes the most and then followed by materials and gesture and habit. In this term, the author of the ST seemed to prepare the readers with necessary information to enable them in following the story as well as to introduce concepts from the 13th Century. Some examples are illustrated in the table 2.

Table 2.Examples to follow the story and introducing concepts from the 13th Century

ST	TT
<i>Kama</i> , nafsu (p.28, p. 187)	"Everything evil comes from the Sivaites. They worship abandonment in lust."
<i>Nagabanda</i> , tali berbentuk naga, pengikat mayat sebelum dibakar (p.39)	...had been bound and burned alive (p.28)
<i>Sikara</i> , bagian atap candi (p.52)	...the top part of a temple shrine. (p.37)
<i>Najako</i> , wanita yang dipergunakan dalam upacara maithuna (p.174)	The women at the ritual had been laid down on the mattress of leaves and fornication was taking place. (p.125)

On the ST, the word *kama* first appeared in a conversation between kitchen maids. "*Semua yang jahat berasal dari orang-orang Syiwa yang memuliakan kama tanpa batas itu*" (2009:28). At the bottom page, the author of ST provides information about the term *kama*. The translation for that sentence is "*Everything evil comes from the Sivaites. They worship abandonment in lust*" (2007:21). *Kama* is a noun in Sanskrit and the meaning is *cinta*; *asmara*; *nafsu keduniawian* (KBBI 2005:496) while in English it is defined as *the Hindu god of love* (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 1998:637). The TT did not borrow loan word *kama* and placed a footnote as in the ST. The TT use a noun *lust* which means *intense or unbridled sexual desire* (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 1998:694) instead of the archaic term as the one in the ST. The translation strategy applied is generalization, using more neutral and common word which has no specific or implied meaning.

The second example, footnote for *nagabanda* appeared on page 39 and the ST is ... *Kalau tidak mana mungkin rumah Tiwan, hanya karena atapnya lengkung berbentuk tanduk Nandi, kendaraan Hyang Maha dewa Syiwa itu, dibakar, dan Tiwan sendiri dengan anak bininya diikat dengan nagabanda dan dipaksa masuk ke dalam api?* (2009:39). This is showing the intention of Pramoeद्या to introduce the term *nagabanda* and the culture as well which proposed a nuance of tragic fate. On the other hand, the translation of this concept is not conveyed in the TT for *nagabanda* is equalized with a verb *bound* (2007:28) which means *fastened by or as if by a band* (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 1998:135) Once again, the translator uses generalisation strategy since *nagabanda* which is not regular tie or rope is treated as a common rope. The concept related to death is not present, and further, the verb *bound* is a neuter word without any relation to death or dragonlike shape.

For the third and fourth examples, the translator simply turns the term into logical explanation, such as *sikara* which is not given footnote or mentioned in the TT but simply explained in the body of the TT as follow: *...the top part of a temple shrine* (2007:37). Thus the target readers do not learn about a term, *sikara*, but they could understand and imagine scenes involving *sikara* in the TT. Similar situation happens when translating the term *Najako*. Since in English there is no label for certain woman on certain occasion such as *Najako*, the translation is simply 'women' and the sentence is "The women at the ritual had been laid down on the mattress of leaves and fornication was taking place" (2007:125). So that once again the target readers missed a cultural term but they still understand the main story.

The above explanations illustrate the use of general words (superordinate) to substitute lack of specificity in the target language compared to the source language. "Women" is a word to identify certain gender regardless of their situation or position while "Najako" is a special term for virgins who are sacrificed for a certain ritual. Despite similar gender, not all women want to be a *najako*, but they may not refuse to be called a woman. From the table it can be seen that the TT provides no footnotes nor mention the original terms. Instead, the TT employs common words to convey the meaning of the term. Thus, there is a tendency to omit the loan words from the ST and substitute them with common or general words.

Another significant translating strategy applied in the translation of Arok Dedes is by paraphrase using unrelated words. Some examples of this strategy are illustrated in table 3.

Table 3.
Significant translating strategy applied in the translation of Arok Dedes

ST	TT
<i>Mabasan</i> , membaca bersama (p.183)	...and then the ritual recitations began. (p.131)
<i>Mabasangama</i> , aturan membaca bersama (p.183)	Arok had mastered the art of declamation. (p.131)

Pramoedya put footnotes for terms *Mabasan* and *Mabasangama* which related to reading activity. The term *Mabasan* and *Mabasangama* do not exist in the KBBI but from the footnotes provided it is clear that they are related to reading. Reading activity is not a foreign concept for English people but certain activities in reading may not have specific terms in English. It can be said that the problem of translating this terms is that the TT does not have specific terms (Baker 1992:23). Once again, in the TT, those terms did not appear in the footnote nor in the body. The translator paraphrase the meaning of those terms as indicated in the table above.

It is obvious that the essence or core meaning of *Mabasan* and *Mabasangama* is reading together. Yet, this does not appear in the translation for the translator differentiates those two terms into *recitation and declamation*. Recitation is defined as *the act or an instance of reading or repeating aloud esp. publicly* (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 1998:976). Thus, it is similar to the meaning of *Mabasan* in the footnote, while declamation is stated as *to recite something as an exercise in elocution* (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 1998:299). It is assumed that the translator, when dealing with loan words prefers to omit them and substitute them with common words. As Bassnett points out, "the translator must tackle the SL text in such a way that the TL version will correspond to the SL version... To attempt to impose the value system of the SL culture onto the TL culture is dangerous ground" (Bassnett 1980:23). Thus, when translating, it is important to consider not only the lexical impact on the TL reader, but also the manner in which cultural aspects may be perceived and make translating decisions accordingly. In fact, the translator strategy to omit and substitute the terms with common phrases reduced the exquisite quality of the TT as well as information for target readers. Still, the meaning is not entirely lost due to the complete explanation in the body of the TT.

It is noted that using general word and paraphrasing are not the only strategies in translating specific terms found in the ST. Sometimes, the terms are semantically complex so that footnotes are provided in the ST as well as in the TT. The examples are illustrated in table 4.

Table 4.
Semantically complex terms so that footnotes are provided in the ST as well as in the TT

ST	TT
<i>Maithuna</i> , upacara persetubuhan untuk memuja kesuburan (p.175)	<i>Maithuna</i> , ritual of fornication as praise for fertility (p.125)
<i>Muncukunda</i> , seorang tokoh yang dengan pandangan matanya telah membinasakan raksasa Kalayawana dalam peperangan melawan Kresna (p.119)	<i>Muncukunda</i> – a figure who, with just a gaze from his eyes, was able to destroy the ogre demon Kalayawana in the battle against Kresna. (p.85)
<i>Yama</i> , larangan; didewakan jadi Yama (dipati) dewa pencabut nyawa (mereka yang melanggar Hyang Yama) (p. 88)	<i>Yama</i> , that which is forbidden; later deified to become Yama (dipati), the God that takes souls (of those who defy Lord Yama) (p.62)
<i>Matsiya-manyta-madya-mutra</i> , ikan-daging, arak-wanita (p.178)	<i>Matsiya-manyta-madya-mutra</i> , meat-flesh, rice whisky woman, united in the maithuna ritual. (p.128)

From the examples above it is obvious that certain terms considered unfamiliar both in the source and target culture but influential in the story are explained in footnotes. Those three terms above, *Maithuna*, *Muncukunda* and *Yama*, are concepts which are not present in the Western culture. Thus, the translator opted to use the loan words and translates the footnotes as well. Considering that the background of the story is the 13th century Java, as a consequence, the TT is colored with italicized words that sourced from loan words exist in the ST.

Besides, Indonesian and English are different language and they emphasis on different aspect of language. For example there is no plural suffix in Indonesian while it is present in English. It also goes in emphasizing meaning for certain words or terms. One significant example is in the ST the author detailed types of currency used and its worth in the footnotes while in the TT the translator simply added the type of materials used as illustrated in the table 5.

Table 5.
Differences in the typing of currency in ST and TT

ST	TT
<i>Saga</i> , ukuran berat untuk emas, ± 1 gram (p.40)	Saga of gold (p.29)
<i>Catak</i> , ukuran berat untuk perak, ± 20 gram (p.40)	Catak of silver (p.29)

The author of ST explains the value of the terms *saga* and *catak* introduced in the novel so that the readers are able to identify and imagine the exact worth of those materials. On the other hand, in the TT, there is no footnotes about *saga* and *catak*. The translator simply provides adverb following the term i.e. *saga of gold*, *catak of silver* with the nominal mentioned prior to the phrase to help the readers understand its worth. It indicates that in Indonesian, the exact value of *saga* and *catak* maybe considered important for readers understanding. On the contrary, in the TT the exact value of each currency is deemed unimportant, but the type of material use is important because it already determined its worth. In this case, the translator does not opt for using more general word or paraphrasing but translating using loan words plus explanation.

On the other hand, there is a significant phenomena in which in the TT there are footnotes which are not present in the ST. It seems that the author of the ST do not see any importance in providing information for those terms. Some of the footnotes are illustrated in table 6.

Table 6.
The differences in the using of footnotes

Tuan – a Malay word, similar to ‘sir’ and more egalitarian. The blacksmith and the sergeant do not use the hierarchical Hindu Javanese honorifics. (p.307)
Kakanda, literary ‘brother’ i.e. an elder guiding male (p.243)
Depa – the distance between the middle fingers of each hand when each arm is fully extended to the side (p.130)
Destar – Javanese headdress, a kind of turban-cap. (p.350)
Sut – fingers’ game similar to rocks and scissor (p.345)

Those examples above are cultural words commonly found and fully understood by Indonesians, especially Javanese. For example the term *kakanda* is a common calling among Javanese. On the other hand, those are new vocabularies and new concepts for Westerners or the target readers of the TT so that they are explained in the footnotes by the translator. Once again, the translation strategy used for this kind of words is using loan word plus explanation. This strategy is very useful when the words are repeated several times in the text (Baker 1992:34) so that the exoticism can be retained along the novel. This case is true for the words *kakanda* and *depa* which appeared many times in the course of the novel. As a consequence, there are many italicized words in the TT that indicated the general translation procedure is foreignization which entails choosing a

foreign text and developing a translation method along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language (Venuti cited in Munday 2001:145).

Conclusion

Understanding the target readers is very important in setting the strategies of translation. *Arok of Java* is intended for Western readers who may not have background knowledge so that there is the need to provide one. By observing the footnotes in both ST and TT it can be concluded that the translation strategies applied in the *Arok van Java* are translation by a more general word, translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation and translation by paraphrase. As a consequence, the target readers are able to understand the text despite their limited knowledge about 13th century Java as well as learning some archaic vocabularies that may encourage them to learn more about the story, in particular, and Indonesia in general.

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