

Literary Translation Agents in the Space of Mediation: A Case Study on the Production of *The Pilgrimage in the Land of Java*

M. Yuseano Kardiansyah^{1,*} Aprinus Salam²

¹*Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, Bandarlampung, Indonesia*

²*Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

*Corresponding author. Email: yuseano@teknokrat.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the emergence of mediation space as a consequence upon the practice of translated literary production by its particular agents. Inspired by Michaela Wolf's thought – that is influenced by the Bourdieusian field concept and Bhabhasian third space concept – the study is focused on tracing the mediation space in the production of the poetry anthology “Pilgrimage in the Land of Java” from Indonesian into English and all main agents involved inside. Related to that, this study aims to examine the social interaction among all agents during the production process by analyzing their roles and positions possessed by each of them. Thus, the structure of the mediation space is possible to be comprehensively described. Besides library research, for collecting the data, the interview is the primary technique in this qualitative research. All data are analyzed thoroughly to reach a valid result of the analysis. In the end, this study proves that the production of the mentioned poetry anthology has opened up a specific yet temporary alternative space amid two existing fields (Yogyakarta and world literary field). A site whereas the agents turn into hybrid subjects.

Keywords: *Field, Literary Translation Agents, Mediation Space, Third Space, The Literary Production*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Frankfurt Book Fair (FBF) 2015 has brought a cultural implication toward literary production in Indonesia. Because Indonesia was appointed as the ‘*guest of honor*’ in that international event, many programs were conducted by the Indonesian government. One of them was the Translation Funding Program (TFP). A program that granted translation funds for works considered qualified to be exhibited before the international public.

Among hundreds of literary books being selected by the National Book Committee (KBN), a poetry anthology entitled “*Ziarah Tanah Jawa*” (firstly published in 2013 by Intan Cendekia, then republished by Interlude in 2015) authored by a Yogyakarta prominent poet Iman Budhi Santosa was also chosen and given funds to later be translated into the English version. The book was then translated into “*The Pilgrimage in the Land of Java*”, in which all the texts inside the book were translated by Chrysogonus Siddha Malilang. Then, it was firstly published by Interlude – a Yogyakarta independent (indie) publisher – in 2014 and sent to KBN to be exhibited at FBF 2015.

From the production of *Pilgrimage in the Land of Java*, it can be seen how the Indonesian-English literary translation is produced by literary agents that practice in the field of Indonesian literature, or more specifically Yogyakarta literature. As *Ziarah Tanah Jawa* was published independently, Iman – as the one who held the right for the translation funds, thus standing as the main agent – must manage the production his way. Of course, the production was run in cooperation with the publisher and translator mentioned previously. In this case, how Iman practiced producing his Indonesian-English work becomes an interesting fact to be explored further. An exploration that can potentially reveal socio-cultural factors that influence the production of an Indonesian-English literary work, and social interaction pattern during the production of such a work.

To examine the practice of literary translation production from a sociological perspective, Wolf [1] insists that the main characteristic of translation as an intercultural mediation activity cannot be put aside. For her, the way to study the translation field is by closely observing the practice of transferring work between two different literary fields – in the Bourdeausian view –, the source field and the target field. Interestingly, Wolf believes that such a transferring practice is located neither

at the source field nor at the target field, but the 'mediation space' instead.

Mediation space – by borrowing Bhabha's concept of third space – is a space where two cultures are encountered and negotiated with each other. Thus, Wolf's idea in this context is logical for the social interaction among literary translation agents is exclusively occurred and separated from the dichotomy of two existing autonomous literary fields. It is a kind of alternative space in-between two existing spaces. The location where literary translation practice is conducted and experiencing the production process.

Wolf believes that the mediation space is temporal or non-permanent so that its existence tends to be forgotten. It only emerges when the translation practice is on the process and dismissed when the process has over. Different from Bourdieu's concept of field, the condition of the space is capricious due to different agents who practice in different literary translation production. That happens because of the interest that is carried out by different agents involved in different translation production. In the end, the social interaction and power relation in this kind of space are determined by which agents who practice in a particular translation process.

Nevertheless, it does not mean the mediation space is impossible to study. Although it is temporary, the mediation space still leaves the 'footmark' attached to the cultural product (the translated work) resulted from it. The translated version of the original work can be used as the starting point where the study is begun. The study on the mediation space is important in the context of the sociology of literary translation since the social interaction that occurs in this space potentially opens up the table of negotiation through the interagent connection that can influence each other. On this point, Wolf views the involved literary translation agents as the hybrid subjects that are resulted by the cultural overlapping at the 'in-between' space.

In the domain of literary translation studies, sociological perspective has been adopted and developed by scholars around the world. Yu [2] and Abdolmaleki [3] conduct studies on motives or purposes of translation practice. Some other develop studies that explore the role of the translator (Liddicoat [4]; Tekgül [5] and Zahrawi [6]), the role of the translation institution (Daldeniz [7]; Harding [8]; Milani [9] and Marin-Lacarta [10]), and the relation between patron and translator [11]. Even more specifically, the Bourdieusian sociological approach has been discussed and applied by some scholars (Gouanvic [12] and [13]; Inghilleri [14]; Hanna [15] and [16]; Sapiro [17] and Xu [18]).

Unfortunately, the study that attempts to apply Wolf's framework of thought is still hard to find, even though the study on it can offer a fresh way to understand the process of literary translation production and the social interaction pattern among translation agents who are involved during the production. In response to that, this present study is intended to investigate the mediation space that emerged during the production of *Pilgrimage in the Land of Java* and the practice of agents inside. This study aims to describe the mediation space that emerges because of the social interaction pattern among those agents.

2. METHODS

2.1. *The Material and Formal Objects*

Based on the definition, the material object is a particular object to be investigated or observed in research and the formal object is an aspect to be studied from the material object [19]. Hence, in this present study, the material object is the production of Indonesian-English translated works entitled "*Pilgrimage in the Land of Java*". Meanwhile, the formal object is the mediation space that is emerged due to the interaction among the writer, the publisher, and the translator.

2.2. *Data Collection and Analyzing Technique*

As it is qualitative research, this present study intends to figure out any relevant data related to the social interaction of related literary translation agents during the production of *Pilgrimage in the Land of Java* was processing, especially among Iman Budhi Santosa (Iman), Interlude publisher (Interlude), and Crysogonus Siddha Malailang (Siddha). The data are collected by interviewing two agents (i.e. the poet and the publisher) and comparatively reading the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). Besides, other supporting information is also taken from the written sources, i.e. scientific articles from journal and conference proceedings. Those data are selected and classified to be analyzed for reaching the aim of the study.

The mediation space that is emerged during the production process of *Pilgrimage in the Land of Java* is analyzed by analysing the data from interview transcriptions and journal articles that explain the social interaction during the production of the translated work. It is implemented to understand the interaction pattern, power relation, and how such a condition can happen in the production of literary translation. More than that, the analysis is also conducted by analyzing data from ST and TT that reflect the agents' literary production vision that is

influenced by cultural overlapping inside the mediation space.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To describe the mediation space in the production of literary translation, Wolf emphasizes that Bourdieu's field concept is adopted as a basic approach. However, this concept becomes problematic when it comes to the conceptualization of dynamics during the transferring of a literary work from a source field into a target field. In this particular study, the case happens between Yogyakarta literary field and the world literary field. The first field is where Iman – including his works – practices as a literary agent, while the latter one is where his work – as his literary manifestation – will be transferred into.

The problem is the background of this theory that was not developed under the study of literary translation. For Bourdieu, every cultural production practice is done in an autonomous field as a social space. Indeed, he can comprehensively describe the structure of a literary field and how the agents practice inside, but it never pays attention to an alternative social space such as the mediation space. Thus it is less capable to explain the nature of such a space and what sort of agents that practice inside.

This is the very basic reason why Wolf eventually proposes Bhabhasian third space concept to strengthen field concept, then make it more philosophically probable to be utilized in literary translation study. As explained previously, it enables the conceptualization of the mediation space as a site where two cultures are encountered and negotiating each other, yet it must be – once more emphasized – differentiated with the literary fields that surround it. In this context, it can be seen in the case of Pilgrimage in the Land of Java, the literary standing before and after it is translated.

As informed already, before being translated into an English version, this work is originally an Indonesian work entitled Ziarah Tanah Jawa written by a Yogyakarta poet Iman Budhi Santosa and distributed for Indonesian target readers. By this, it can be understood if Ziarah Tanah Jawa is a product of Iman's literary practice in the field of Indonesian literature. If the Indonesian literary field is considered too wide, then at the very least Yogyakarta literary field will be fair enough. Iman's position in Yogyakarta literary field is even clearly categorized by Salam [20], as a legitimate literary man, due to his reputation and contribution to the field.

However, once the work has been translated into English and exhibited (or potentially distributed in the future) overseas, then Iman has transformed into one of

the world literary agents since his work can be accessed by the international readers. The condition that makes Iman and his work belong to the World literary field. It reminds us of the case that also happened to Pramoedya Ananta Toer after his Bumi Manusia was translated into The Earth of Mankind in 1983. Until now, Pramoedya's works even being studied by scholars overseas and translated into more than 40 languages in the world.

From the explanation, it can be seen that a literary work stays in two different fields before and after being translated. Then there is one big question after all, where is the location of literary translation agents practicing when the ongoing process of translation? This is exactly the point why mediation space really important to be spotlighted. In the context of this present study, the mediation space during the production process of Pilgrimage in the Land of Java exists in-between the two mentioned fields, i.e. Yogyakarta literary field and the world literary field. It can be portrayed as follow:



Figure 1 The position of mediation space

Figure 1 adopts general flowchart symbols in which the terminal symbols in the right and the left side symbolize where the start and the end of the production process are located all at once, while the process symbol in-between symbolizes where the ongoing process of translation production is located. Here, Iman and his Ziarah Tanah Jawa stand on the right side. On the other side, Iman and his Pilgrimage in the Land of Java stand on the left side. At last, it can be seen that the process of transferring the Indonesian version into the English version exists amid both sides. This is where Iman, Interlude, and Siddha practicing and related to each other. Committing certain kinds of social interaction that finally shapes the structure of mediation space.

The arrows symbolize the flow of the production process. The back and forth flow implies that there is an interplay relation among the mediation space and the two fields being mediated by it. In accordance, Wolf views the mediation space as a submissive subject that tends to be influenced by the external forces, so that it lacks autonomy (yet what happens in this space will also be influential to both source field and target field). Its dynamics depend on the literary agents that involve along with their capitals and habitus. Besides, the literary values from each existing field are also crucial since they are different from one to another, what is ideal in Yogyakarta literary field can be unacceptable in the

world literary field, and vice versa. Therefore negotiation is inherent due to the cultural overlapping. A cultural factor that causes literary translation agents to become hybrid subjects.

3.1. Agents' Interaction and Negotiation

To understand more the practice of the literary translation agents in the space of mediation, it is necessary to know the way all involved agents interact and negotiate during the production process of *Pilgrimage in the land of Java*. As informed previously, three agents involved in the production, i.e. Iman, Interlude, and Siddha. Based on the interview conducted to Iman and Interlude, some conditions must be outlined as follow:

- (1) As the one who was granted the translation funds by the government, Iman coordinated the agents that would be involved in the production. Based on the social network that had long maintained, he chose Interlude and Siddha as the co-agents.
- (2) During the production process, Iman communicated to Interlude's editorial board and Siddha separately. In this case, Interlude's management informed that they never had direct communication with Siddha as the translator. Interlude only communicated with Iman, so did Siddha.
- (3) Both Iman and Siddha preferred in readers oriented translation. Iman told that once Siddha ever expressed his view, in which translation must be oriented to the target readers. On this point, Iman confirmed his agreement upon such a view.
- (4) Related to translation orientation, Interlude's management claimed that they negotiated to Iman whether or not some Javanese expressions in the original work must be translated into English. They believed that those expressions were the strength of the work and suggested to use the footnotes to explain instead of translating them into English. However, as the decision-maker, Iman decided to translate those expressions into English.

Based on those conditions, it can be seen that Iman is the main agent during the production process. He stands in-between Interlude and Siddha as if he is the mediator of the table of negotiation. The interaction among all agents is started and ended by him inside the space of mediation. He directly interacts with Interlude to manage how the book will be presented, while with Siddha he deals with how the texts should be translated. However, there is no direct interaction between the publisher and the translator. Even

though Interlude and Siddha have discretion during the production process, in certain cases, such as the negotiation on translation orientation between Interlude and Iman, the poet still acts as the decision-maker.

3.2. The Structure of Mediation

For describing the structure of mediation space being studied here, it must be reemphasized that the Bourdieusian concept of field is pivotal to be understood. For Bourdieu [21], the field is a site where social interaction happens. The field is specifically structured by the objective relations caused by different positions possessed by all agents concerning their fight for achieving the goal of practice. In the end, the force that is utilized in the practice depends on the position of each agent upon the power relation inside of the field. This is to say that in every field – including the space of mediation – every agent will attempt to seize the authority. Here, the authority becomes a socio-cultural factor that influences the correspondence between two homologous structures, i.e. the work's structure, and the field's structure.

In the context of mediation space during the production of *Pilgrimage in the Land of Java*, the authority lies in a term of domination. As explained before, Iman is seen as a dominant agent since the beginning until the end of the translation process. As a consequence, the other agents becoming subordinated during the translation process in mediation space.

Iman's domination in this particular context is inevitable. The literary capitals – cultural capital, social capital, economic capital, and symbolic capital – that he carries out from Yogyakarta literary field into the mediation space are completely sufficient. Meanwhile, the other agents that relatively far younger than him still struggling to accumulate the necessary capitals as an indie publisher and a translator. Even the owner of Interlude confessed that he has learned a lot from Iman and admire him as a literary figure in Yogyakarta.

This is reasonable if an agent like Interlude is being submissive to the decision taken by Iman during the negotiation. Moreover, by co-working with Iman, both Interlude and Siddha can take benefit in the form of cultural capital in which they learn more how to produce an English translated work that will be internationally exhibited at the FBF 2015. In this case, they act more like the members of a team, while Iman as the dominant agent acts as the coordinator who leads the process of translation production. Thus, based on the positions possessed by those three agents, the structure of mediation space from this study can be portrayed as follow [Fig. 2]:

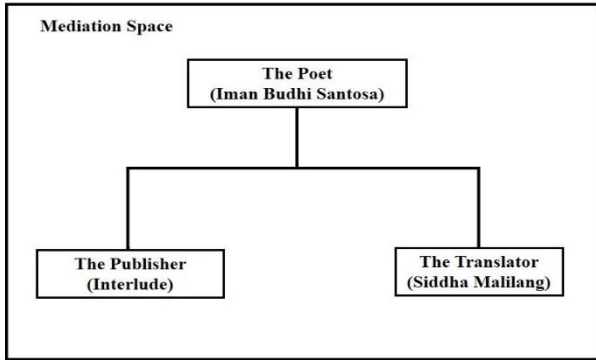


Figure 2 The structure of mediation space

3.3. The Hybrid Subjects

After discussing the interaction, negotiation, and the structure of mediation space, this section will explain why the agents in such a space are believed as the hybrid subject. As a space in which two cultures are encountered, the mediation space enables the literary translation agents to have hybrid nature. Accordingly, Wolf even clearly categorizes every agent involved in such a space as the hybrid subjects. It indeed refers to the Bhabhasian concept of third space. In line with that notion, Sara Upstone [22], an expert in postcolonial theory, explains that this concept underlines ‘a place of hybridity’ which can surpass the dichotomy of existing grounds and disclose the space of translation. Therefore hybridity is something inherent upon the existence of the mediation space along with all practices inside it.

The mediation space that is emerged during the production of *Pilgrimage in the Land of Java* enables two cultures (Indonesian and English) to be encountered and negotiated one to another. This is because Indonesian is the source language and English is the target language. There is a specific reason why English is taken as the target language. Despite because of the Indonesian language has not been globally familiar, while English is the most used one, the translation from Indonesian into English, in this case, is understood as the way to mimic the English literary works that have been recognized internationally.

It is known already that English translation can become a gate for the writers and also their work to be internationally recognized. In this case, Damrosch [23] takes Orhan Pamuk as an example to prove such a premise. Thus, it is reasonable if the Indonesian government runs a translation program for promoting Indonesian works in an international event such as FBF. However, a practice to transfer an Indonesian work into its English version leaves a trace of hybridity to all agents involved. The way they mimic the world literary agent

shows how hegemonic the use of English for world literary practice, but on the other side the agents’ nature as Yogyakarta literary agents remains noticeable.

It can be seen from their practice in translating the texts of *Ziarah Tanah Java* [24] into English. As informed previously, both all three agents agreed upon the target readers oriented translation so that text domestication must be applied for the target text. It can be seen in their decision to translate the Javanese expressions that have been mentioned earlier, although in the Indonesian version those expressions are written as they are. The English translation is committed toward two Javanese proverbs:

- (1) “*Karena wong Jawa nggone semu, sinamun ing samudana, sesadone ing adu manis*” which is translated into “*can you read the faces of Java? What lies under the masques and tongues?*”
- (2) “*Tak ada lagi sesanti: “bener durung mesthi pener, salah durung mesthi kalah, becik bisa kuwalik.”*” that is translated into “*there is no more saying: ‘being true may not be right, the wrong may not be lost, the righteous may be wronged.’*”

However, it turns out that text domestication could not be given to other texts. There is a mantra that was not translated in the English version, “*Cempe-cempe undangna barat gedhe, takopahi duduh tape, yen kurang golekka dhewe...*”. The same case also happens to some phrases such as “*bedhaya serimpi*” and “*serat babad*”. Seemingly, the equivalence could not be found upon those kinds of expressions. This condition potentially makes the English version not completely target readers oriented since some texts are unable to be domesticated. Moreover, without any use of footnotes or endnotes, the vision to serve a readable and understandable translation for the target readers becomes questionable.

From the analysis, it is found that on one side the literary translation agents in this present study attempt to mimic the world literary work by producing an English literary work and trying to serve a readers-oriented translation. Nevertheless, on the other side, they cannot fully transform the texts into English since it is hard to figure out the equivalence of cultural items such as mantra, traditional dance, and traditional writing. This makes the agents’ position ambivalent. On one side they want to become the international agents, on the other hand, they cannot escape from their local identity, being recognized along with being alien at the same time.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from this particular study, besides proving the significance of the mediation space in the production of literary translation, there are two major implications to be reemphasized:

First, the agent's capitals become the main factors that determine an agent's domination upon interaction and negotiation that happen in the space of mediation. In the context of "*Pilgrimage in the Land of Java*", the social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital of Iman as a Yogyakarta prominent poet can enable him to control every single process and decision taken on the table of negotiation. So that in the frame of power relation binary opposition, Iman stands in the superior pole, while the other agents stand in the subordinate pole.

Second, since the literary translation agents practice in a hybrid place, their characteristics will always be bound to both the source culture and the target culture. In this case, although the agents try to mimic what is done by the agents of the world literary field, their local identity lingers on. As a consequence, *Pilgrimage in the Land of Java* [25] also emerges as a hybrid work, an Indonesian-English literary work

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