Negotiating Cultural Translation in
The Gift of Magi

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Abstract—Translating a text, literary or non-literary text, is always concerned with culture, writer's and readers' culture. Consequently, the translation process is inevitably involved in adjustments, changes, agreements, and cultural activities that can influence a translator's decision. On the one hand, a translator probably wants to introduce the source language culture to readers' culture, just like sending readers abroad. On the other hand, a translator has to change the foreign culture in order to be accepted by readers' culture. The decision that has been made by the translator, according to our opinion, is considered as negotiation. Therefore, this article endeavors to discuss the translator's strategy to negotiating cultural translation aspects, particularly the culture-specific concept (items), such as names of the characters, place or setting, food, and lifestyle of the story in The Gift of Magi and its Indonesian translation *Pemberian Sang Majus*. The discussion of the translator's negotiation, however, is focused on the translation as a product, not as a process. The data is qualitatively analyzed by using the concept of Translation Ideology as well as the concept of Foreignization and Domestication. In general, it can be concluded that the negotiation of cultural translation is preferably oriented to source language culture or foreignizing rather than domesticating.

Keywords—Culture, negotiation, translation, ideology, foreignization, domestication.

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation and culture have been defined innumerably hundreds of ways by many scholars. Some opinions preferably shed light on the linguistics rather than cultural equivalence [1, p. 79]; Another one likely focuses on translation strategies whether to be loyal to the source language (SL) or target language (TL) culture [2, p. 11], and so on. Such problems have posed long-lasting debates among scholars that are naturally unstoppable. The different perspectives become the important factors to look at something. Translation seems to be what Vameer resumed as involving linguistic as well as cultural phenomena dealing with specific cultures because language is part of the culture" [3, p. 37]. The translator who transfers information from one language to another language can be considered as the intermediator or what Tymoczko said translating yourself across space [4, p. 191]. As the message

carrier, a translator will always involve with self-negotiation to conforming the cultures, SL and TL. The ideology and the decision of the translator, to what we call it here as 'negotiation', may be influenced by many factors, norms, values, and so on [5]. In other words, a translator has to deal with self-negotiation where the translator mediates between culture [4, p. 196].

There had been a long-lasting debate among translation scholars around 1980s where scholars, for example in China, preferred foreignization over domestication [6, pp. 175–179]. The debate continued to pose a stirring reaction which supported the domestication or foreignization concept [7, p. 177]. Some considered it as a new trend in translation and some of them preferred the cultural aspects of target readers [1, p. 79].

This article, therefore, endeavors to investigate the translator's negotiating cultural translation strategy or ideology in The Gift of Magi (TGM)—*Pemberian Sang Majus* (PSM) by Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2012. Furthermore, this article also seeks to propose a new perspective in translation ontogenic "negotiation" or developmental reason for a phenomenon [8, p. 187]. This article seeks to answer questions: How does the translator negotiate culture-specific items from SL (English) into TL (Indonesian)? and why cultural translation is important to be discussed here? While the term 'negotiation of cultural translation' propose here is intended to focus on the translation strategy foreignization and domestication as well as the ideology.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The foreignization strategy proposed by Venuti has SL oriented while domestication has TL oriented [9]. Both strategies are deeply rooted in specific social and cultural circumstances where the choice of domestication and foreignization is not only made by the translator but more importantly, by the specific social situations and cultural traditions [6]. It is possible to domesticate (or foreignize) anything; "names, the settings, genres, historical events, cultural or religious rites and beliefs" [10, pp. 42–43]. Not many translators are aware of the aspects of the text they translate, such as the cultural and social condition of the source text as

well as the political and legal aspects of their work. Foreignization strategy in translation was first formulated in German culture during the period of interest in classical and Roman cultures by philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher [11].

Translators' position as intermediators between the SL and TL may employ several methods to produce the eloquent translation. Translators usually also negotiate the forms of the structure, meaning, linguistic codes, ambiguity, idiomatic expression, word choice, and sound between the SL and TL. Translators similarly cannot avoid self-negotiation in conducting their translation process. They may apply different strategies to confirm the cultural difference of the SL by rendering every aspect in order to accepted by readers' culture. Therefore, cultural translation usually connected with translation to ensure the readers [12].

According to Casanova [13], Radway [14], and Morely [15], the cultural translation concern with the ways in which the meanings of the translated text are constructed and negotiated by the translators. While Marinetti and Rose present conflicted negotiations between the translator, author and theatre director over vocabulary choices are as evidence of the way multiple agents mediate the reception of intercultural theatre [16].

Translation as an activity of transferring a message from one language to another language involves transposition of cultures into another. The translated text brings some meanings and values which do not affect just to the language, but many aspects involve in the process of negotiation. Negotiation is a process by virtue of which, in order to get something, each side abdicates one thing, as the result the other one feels comfortable [17, p. 6].

Based on Tymoczko's and Ireland's opinion, translation is about a text that is put in another way through interpreting the SL. Accordingly, the SL ascertains the ideology of translation, which is not merely in the translated text, but translators' sound and position as well as the relation to readers' acceptance which were influenced by many aspects, such as culture, ideology, and position of translators [8, p. 201]. According to Toury translated texts are languages fact in the target culture and the translators are 'persons-in-culture' in target language systems [18, p. 40].

Translators are just like mediators who can negotiate a place or space in between SL and TL space and culture. The position in 'between' becomes an influential and elusive place for a writer to fill. According to Tymoczko and Ireland, however, translators function as space between or mediators are debatable because translation may have the variety of purposes from writer's culture, readers', or some other third culture [8, p. 201]. However, they were wondering about Pym's schema – where translators are placed between two coinciding circles - that describes translators between two linguistic and cultural systems as mediators. In other words, the translators' position to build the ideology of translation is very important. The problem is whether translators move personally, or collectively as the evidence that ideology and other aspects will always involve and unavoidable. That is why the negotiating process of translation is very important [12].

III. METHOD

This qualitative research is to discover the negotiation of cultural translation strategy and ideology in TGM–PSM. In general, the data were collected based on the following steps: First, we read each paragraph of the story, underlined and listed the cultural words. Then we selected the data through cultural word, ideology as well as foreignization and domestication concept. The data were analyzed qualitatively by presenting the English and Indonesian. The culture-specific concept of translation was discussed randomly. In the analysis of data, we explained whether the data were foreignized or domesticated and described the reasons. The domestication and foreignization, as well as translation ideology concept, were employed in order to reinforce the analysis of cultural translation strategy negotiation done by the translator. After all, the analysis of the data was interpreted subjectively based on the provided theory to support the argument and overview of the problem that wanted to be discussed. Finally, we also reflected our personal views on the translation and on how and what course it should take in order to have a better result.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The translation of TGM- PSM was analyaze in terms of the following categories: names, food, location, clothes, and activities (lifestyle). Each category is discussed randomly where both English and Indonesian translations seem to apply or negotiate the strategy of domestication, foreignization, ideology, or probably combined.

A. Names of the characters

There are several names mentioned in the story, but only three major names that are mentioned very often in the story, particularly, Mr. James Dillingham Young called 'Jim,' Mrs. James Dillingham Young called 'Della,' and Madam Sofronie called Madame. These are the names that are translated as the original names in the translation from English into Indonesian. In the Indonesian translation, all the characters' names were not translated into Indonesian names. In the Indonesian version, the people's names were translated as the original and they are likely not familiar to readers' culture. For example, the name of Della, was translated into Della in the target language. The translations of characters' names in SL that have been translated by using foreignization and domestication strategy in TL can be seen in the following sentences:

SL: Three times Della counted it.
TL: *Tiga kali sudah Della mempermalukan diri.*

SL: Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."
TL: Di *atas kotak surat milik Della terselip sebentuk kartu bertuliskan* "Tn. James Dillingham Young."

SL: "Mme Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds."
TL: "Ny. Sofronie. Menyediakan Hiasan Rambut Macam Apa Saja."

SL: The Magi, as you know, were wise men–wonderfully wise men who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger.

TL: *Sang Majus, seperti yang kalian ketahui, adalah orang-orang bijak—sangat bijak—yang membawa banyak hadiah bagi seorang bayi yang lahir di dalam kandang domba.*

SL: Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out of the window someday to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts.

TL: *Apabila Ratu Sheba* tinggal di sebuah flat tepat di seberang flat yang ia tempati bersama Jim, maka Della takkan sungkan-sungkan menggerai rambut panjangnya itu keluar jendela dan menyaingi semua kekayaan milik Sang Ratu.*

SL: Had King Solomon been the janitor…Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed….

TL: *Dan, apabila Raja Solomon adalah seorang pekerja kasar… maka Jim pasti akan mengeluarkan jam emasnya setiap kali ia melewati ruangan itu….*

The translator seems to use similar strategies to translate the names. Most of the names were translated using foreignization and few of them were translated using domestication strategy or semi-domestication, such as "The Magi" to *"Sang Majus"* and "King Solomon" to *"Raja Solomon."* There are still many other names and their translations that will not be discussed in more detail due to the fact that they were translated in a rather similar way in the translations. Besides, a detailed analysis of Della and Jim's names would require an entire section of the translation. Based on the translation names, there are a lot of similarities if they are compared between SL and TL. The translator mostly applied foreignization strategy to translate the names from SL to TL despite a few domestication strategies was applied. Moreover, the translator seems to have inconsistencies of an ideology of translation whether he/she utilizes foreignizing or domesticating orientation or it is just like sending readers abroad. In other words, the names which were translated literally implies the connotations that the translator does not consider TL readers culture by giving the original names.

The decision to keep the foreign names can be inferred as part of the strategy to help the Indonesian readers learn new things, names in this case, from a foreign culture to the domestic culture. The names used in the story, however, are not usual and popular names for Indonesian readers. It brings connotation that the readers are surely missing the culture too with the foreign names as they are the important part of the story. In addition, the foreignization strategy is considered as not effective if it is related with characters' names, clothes, places, foods, currency, sizes, yards, feet, inches and so on. The translations of those things are usually replaced with the metric system and sometimes measures are left out. The measures are sometimes not translated consistently. Such the inconsistence translation can be seen in the other data that will be explained in other parts of this article.

The translator probably assumes that the readers will know what is happening without changing the names of the characters and so on. The translator has kept the foreign names by leaving out the readers' culture through the unfamiliar names. The translator's decision could probably be based on the fact that there are many Indonesian people (actor and actress) whose names are Donny Michael, Baby Romeo, Marsha Timothy, Joanna Alexandra, to name a few. These Indonesian actors and actress' names, especially the newly born children today, are much more similar to the names of American, English, and other foreign countries. It is, therefore, a matter for the translator to apply only one strategy in translation.

In general, the translator seems to exchange his ideology while translating the source language into target language through foreignizing and domesticating translation strategy. Other changes, however, have also been made in both translations. The most common changes in the translation of TGM are the foreignizing. Accordingly, the translator should exchange SL to the TL in order to make the translation of the story acceptable and fun. The translator has often translated the names of the characters by removing and interpreting cultural aspects. The translator seems to conduct self-negotiation that is preferably oriented to the SL culture.

B. Setting and Lifestyle

Translating the lifestyles or outfits and foods can often pose problems for translators since they tend to be very culture-specific. In translating TGM, some of the lifestyle items and foods have been translated, mostly, by using foreignization. The translations of the lifestyles items and food in SL that have been translated by using foreignization and domestication strategy in TL can be seen in the following sentences:

SL: Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and vegetable…

TL: *Uang receh bernilai satu sen-an, hasil simpanannya selama ini—yang didapatnya dengan cara mendesak tukang sayur, tukang daging dan penjaga toko kelontong…*

SL: "And now suppose you put the chops on."

TL: *"Lebih baik sekarang kita makan dulu."*

SL: A furnished flat at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description

TL: *Sebuah flat berisi perabotan secukupnya dengan harga sewa $8 perminggu*

SL: He'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl.

TL: "*Paling-paling ia akan menjulukiku si gadis nakal dari Pulau Coney Island.*

SL: They (The Magi) invented the art of giving Christmas presents.

TL: *Merekalah (Sang Majus) yang mempelopori tradisi pemberian hadiah di Hari Natal.*

The examples above would not be explained consecutively, but they would rather be discussed randomly as the purpose of the article is to provide a general example about the translator's strategy through unavoidable cultural self-negotiation in translation. One of the foods is described as only 'chops' in the SL which has functioned as a metonymic word for chops of meat. The important thing from this word is the metonymic function to replace the food function as the reference. The translator seems to translate it freely into *'makan'* even though the translated meaning does not correspond to the source language. In this case, the Indonesian readers' culture would not have understood if it is translated literally since a 'chops' in the SL culture is not popular for TL culture. This can be said as an instance where the translator has used domestication by replacing the chops with something more familiar to the readers' culture.

The negotiation that has been made by the translator is successful since it is acceptable for Indonesian culture. In here, the translator has come up with a different translation solution by changing the lexical meaning to the inferential meaning which can be understood by readers' culture. The chops mentioned in SL is probably something made of beef, pork, and something else made of animal meat. Regarding that chops of pork, bacon, or beef have never been a common thing to eat for dinner in Indonesia. The Indonesian readers might find it odd that the guests would be serving chops of beef, pork or bacon for dinner. That Indonesian would eat for rice and side dish *(pecel lele, ayam, nasi uduk)* rather than eating such uncommon food items, even though there have been the variety of western foods scattered around Indonesia, such as steak, hamburger, and the like, but they are still not common for Indonesian culture. The food items in the story that have been domesticated by the translator is to justify to the Indonesian readers' culture. These decisions are ones that Klingberg might see as "lack of cultural context adaptation"; and in the context of this translation, the translator has translated the food closer to domestication than foreignization [18].

The original story takes place in New York and the place of the story is not rendered in the Indonesian translation. The translator keeps the original name 'New York' in the translation to bring the readers abroad. In this case, the translator uses the foreignization strategy by keeping the original name of the place. The story was in Christmas event and in the Indonesian translation, however, the event of Christmas has been translated to Indonesian as *Hari Natal*. This is called domestication in Venuti's cultural context translation. The translation of 'Pennies' which is translated as *'uang receh bernilai satu sen-an'* is categorized as foreignization since the currency of cents or *sen-an* in Indonesian currency uses *'rupiah'* or *'perak'* to indicate the small number of currencies. The translator's strategy to foreignizing the story has caused the translation to be less realistic than the original text. Some of the descriptions of US currency has been translated rather directly, with the translation using *'sen-an'* in a way that does not accurately correspond to what is like in Indonesian rupiah today. Perhaps, this is not a matter for the Indonesian elders who used to live in the colonialism era, but for Indonesian children who live at the present, they do not know *'sen-an'* used to be like that well, it might seem strange for them, since they are more familiar to *'lima ratus rupiah* or *'lima ratus perak'* rather than *sen-an*. There may be arguable that realism is not important for children's literature, however, it does not mean that it can justify making the translation less realistic to the readers.

From the above examples, the translator mostly has kept the original names which obviously used a foreignizing strategy for negotiating acceptable translation. All the original source language cultures were transferred as they were unlikely familiar with the target language readers' culture.

V. CONCLUSION

The article concludes that the translator rarely translates the original text using domestication strategy. It is likely that the translator has been in a pinch of self-negotiation during the process of translation in order to adjust SL culture to TL culture. Consequently, the strategy of cultural translation undergoes some of the inconsistencies. The self-negotiation and inconsistencies of cultural translation strategy tend to bring a great influence to the translated story. The foreignization of cultural translation from the source language to the target language seems to be uncommon for Indonesian readers' culture, due to many culture-specific concepts, such as names, places, and lifestyle, that are unfamiliar to the readers' culture. In other words, the translator tends to bring something to the target language readers culture as well as to take away something else from them. Accordingly, it has become evidence that the negotiation of foreignization and domestication strategy done by the translator is to retain foreignness and to introduce the TL readers about the source culture.

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