Translation in Movie Subtitles: Foreignization and Domestication

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ABSTRACT

Translation not only concerned with the transfer of languages but also the cultural aspect of language. This study aims to investigate the treatment -foreignization, and domestication- and to find the pattern concerning the treatment in two movie subtitles, one from Bahasa Indonesia to English and from English to Bahasa Indonesia. This study is conducted through a qualitative approach to the theory proposed by Venuti (1995): foreignization and domestication focusing on cultural specific items (CSIs) as categorized by Espindola (2005). The result of this study shows that foreignization and domestication, as well as a mix treatment, are found to be employed by the translator. The translator tends to favor foreignization and only used domestication if the CSIs already have an equivalence in the target text culture. Furthermore, a mix treatment will be applied if the CSIs are in the form of a phrase containing a general or familiar word and a specific or unfamiliar word.

Keywords: Foreignization, Domestication, Culture-Specific Items (CSIs).

ABSTRAK

Translation is an activity that transfers source language (SL) into a comprehensible target language (TL). This definition is in line with Larson (1984) that states "Translation means an activity that converts written information, idea and thought expressed in one language or source of language (SL) to target language (TL)". The essence of translation is to transfer the information or meanings of one language to another language in a way that will make the target readers/audiences get the information correctly. However, the process of translation is not simply about transferring the words from the SL into words from the TL. Such a thing cannot be done because "languages are not nomenclatures and the concepts of one language may differ radically from those of another" (Culler in Ordudary, 2007). It means that the more different one language to another more difficult it is for the translator to translate.

Another difficulty that the translator may face when doing translation is cultural factors. As stated by Zhang, Feng and Wang (2018, p. 20) “the process of translation is not only the process and practice of exchanging and transmitting languages, but also the spread of culture”. This statement is also supported by Aixela (1997, p.52), "translation is a complex rewriting process". Not only the translator has to translate the linguistic units of a language, but they also have to translate the culture-specific items (CSIs) of a language. As said by Venuti (2000, p. 468) "translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text". CSIs are hard to translate because of the relation with the source culture (SC) of the language which not all items are understood by the target culture (TC) audience. Most translators agree that translating CSIs is more difficult than translating linguistic units.

Culture-specific items (CSIs) are a term proposed by Aixela (1997) to describe the culturally bound words of a language. Culture-specific items are words and phrases which are determined by cultural diversity. Espindola (2005) has classified CSIs into ten categories, there are (1) Toponym (name of place), (2) Anthroponym (People name), (3) Form of entertainment, (4) Means of transportation, (5) Fictional Characters, (6) Local Institution, (7) Measuring System, (8) Foods and Drinks, (9) Scholastic Reference, (10) Religious Celebration.
In order to answer the problem that the translator face when facing CSI, many translation strategies had been proposed by many linguists. Two of them are foreignization and domestication by Venuti (1998). Foreignization and domestication mainly focused on cultural items than linguistic units. When foreignization is used, the CSIs of the SL will be preserved when it is translated to the TL. This strategy retains the "foreignness" of the source culture (SC). While domestication emphasizes an easy understanding of the target audience. Domestication will translate CSIs into the equivalence in the target culture. In doing so, this strategy will erase any "foreignness" of the source culture. These strategies can be applied in any mode of translation; one of them is film translation in the form of a subtitle.

Subtitle is "transcription[s] of film or TV dialogue, presented simultaneously on the screen" (Gottlieb 2001, p. 244-5). Subtitle is a translation from a spoken utterance into a written form; it is usually placed on the bottom of the screen and only seen for a few seconds. According to Carvalho (2005) cited in Matielo and Espindola (2011, p. 73), the number of characters per line in a subtitle depends on some factors, such as the means (cinema, VHS, or television), the target audience, and preferences established by clients. A subtitle ranges from 32 to 40 characters 3 per line (cinema) and 30 to 35 per line (VHS and cable TV). The duration of the subtitles on the screen may last up to 6 seconds only. So, these are the constrains that the translator must follow to translate the film's subtitle. In this study, the researcher chose two sets of subtitles as the object of the study. The first subtitle is an English to Indonesia subtitle from Grown up 1 (2010) movie and the second subtitle is Indonesia to English subtitle from Laskar Pelangi (2008).

Grown Up 1 (2010) is an American comedy film directed by Dennys Dougan. It depicts about five friends of a middle school basketball team and their families reuniting for a July Fourth weekend after learning that about the sudden death of their basketball coach. The researcher chose this film to represent the English to Indonesia translation because this film contains American characters in their daily American life and because of that this film contains many English languages (America) CSIs.

The second film is Indonesian entitled Laskar Pelangi (2008). This film is adapted from the novel of the same title written by Andrea Hirata. The film is one of the highest-grossing in Indonesian box office history and won several local and international awards. The researcher chose this film to represent Indonesia to English translation because this film shows many CSIs from Indonesia, especially from Bangka Belitung that was spoken by the characters.

Foreignization and domestication are very popular topics among researchers. Over the year, many researchers have tried to choose which is the most appropriate form of translation between foreignization and domestication. One of those researchers is Matielo & Espindola (2011) in their study entitled Domestication and Foreignization: an Analysis of Culture-
Specific Items in Official and Non-Official Subtitles of the TV Series Heroes. 

The initial analysis of the data found that when foreignization has used the feeling of strangeness decrease significantly and when domestication has used the feeling of foreignness that was created will impact the time processing and acceptance of the audience. In this study, the translators both employed foreignization and domestication.

In the case of foreignization and domestication in their relation to culture, Wang (2014) come to a similar conclusion that the choosing of foreignization and domestication is not fixed, and the two methods should supplement and complement each other. Though, there also a dissimilarity as in the object of the study which is novels in which he concludes that in literature translation, translators should mainly apply foreignization, and don't hesitate to choose domestication when it is necessary.

Another similar finding is found by Harared (2018) in his study on foreignization and domestication focusing on two categories of CSIs which are household goods and house surroundings in a translated novel. Foreignization and domestication are both used by the translator in translating the novel.

The gap and the significance of the study is there still little study that compares how English to Indonesia subtitles differ from Indonesia to English subtitles regarding the foreignization and domestication of culture-specific items (CSIs). Whether any patterns can be found in the subtitles or not.

This research is aimed at finding out: (1) the treatment—domestication or foreignization— given to the CSIs in the two types of subtitles, Bahasa Indonesia (Laskar Pelangi) and English-Bahasa Indonesia (Grown up). (2) the pattern in term of the treatment given to the CSIs in the two types of subtitles, Bahasa Indonesia (Laskar Pelangi) and English-Bahasa Indonesia (Grown up).

Cultural Specific Items

According to Wang (2014, p. 2424) "Translation process involves both the transfer of language and culture". The definition clearly stated that culture and translation are something cannot be separated. As is said by Munday (2009, p. 179) translation is "a more complex negotiation between two cultures". This definition is supported by Shirinzadeh and Mahadi (2015) that states "culture and language cannot be separated from translation" the translator must not only understand the source culture but also the target culture. Especially, the translator must be able to recognize and understand the culture-specific items (CSIs) of the target culture.

The translation of CSIs is context-oriented thus; the translator must be able to recognize the context surrounding the CSIs if they want to successfully translate CSIs. This kind of translation is called contextual translation. Contextual translation is dependent on (dis)similarly to the source culture and the target culture. The more similar the culture the less problem
translator will face when translating the CSIs.

In this study, the researcher will use the CSIs category from Espindola (2015). Espindola (2015) cited in Matielo & Espindola (2011, p.78) categorized CSIs into 10 parts, there are:

1. Toponyms: a place name, a geographical name, a proper name of locality, region, or some other part of the Earth’s surface or its natural or artificial feature (http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-toponym.htm);
2. Anthroponyms: ordinary and famous people's names and nicknames and names referring to a regional background which acquires identification status
3. Forms of entertainment: amusement or diversion including public performances or shows, it also encompasses hospitality provided, such as dinners, parties, business lunches, etc (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2003);
4. Means of transportation: the facilities used for the movement of people and goods from one place to another; the term is derived from the Latin trans meaning across and portare meaning to carry, such facilities are, many times, associated with specific cultures;
5. Fictional character: a person in a novel, play, or a film who is related to fiction, works of imagination;
6. Local Institution: an organization that helps or serves people in a certain area - health, education, work, political, administrative, religious, artistic;
7. Measuring system: units used in the determination of the size, weight, speed, length, etc;
8. Food and Drink: any solid or liquid substance that is used by human beings as a source of nourishment (www.cogsci.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/webwn);
9. Scholastic reference: related to school or studying.
10. Religious celebration: something special which marks a religious occasion;

Foreignization and Domestication

Translation is an act that closely related to culture, therefore culture becomes a common problem when a translator comes across a text to translate. Thus, Venuti (1995) in his book The Translator's Invisibility proposed two possible procedures to solve the problem, there are foreignization and domestication. Schleiermacher (1813, in Venuti, 1995, p. 19), states that "either the translator leaves the author in peace and moves the reader towards him, or he leaves the reader in peace and moves the author
towards him". Foreignization, according to Venuti (1995) must preserve the 'foreignness' of the source culture text and only disturb the culture words if they already exist in the target culture language even when the end product will look strange to the target audiences/readers. In other words, when foreignization is applied the translator becomes 'visible' thus, the target audiences/readers are forced to move toward the translator.

Meanwhile, domestication value the transparency of the translation which means that the cultural item of the source text will be reduced significantly as was stated by Munday (2001) “domestication refers to translating in a transparent, fluent and invisible style to minimize the foreignness of the target text”. This also means that the end product of domestication will be more comprehensible to the target audiences/readers.

Foreignization and domestication both have their advantages and disadvantages. According to Yang (2010) foreignization may introduce source text culture to the target text readers but the foreign word/style may overload the readers. While domestication may make it easier for the readers to understand but at the expense of source text culture and messages. This part is written in English.

METHOD

This study is conducted through a qualitative approach to the theory proposed by Venuti (1995): foreignization and domestication focusing on cultural specific items (CSIs) as categorized by Espindola (2005).

Data for this study are the translated subtitles from the two movies: Bahasa Indonesia-English (Laskar Pelangi) and English-Bahasa Indonesia (Grown Up) containing cultural specific items (CSIs) as categorized by Espindola (2005). The data source of this study is the Bahasa Indonesia-English and English-Bahasa Indonesia translated subtitle from Laskar Pelangi (2008) and Grown Up movie (2010). The data were collected by reading and note taking the downloaded subtitles. The CSIs were then noted and categorized using Espindola's (2005) theory. Then, the categorized data were analyzed to find the treatment used (foreignization and domestication). After that, the data from Laskar Pelangi (2008) and Grown Up (2010) movie were analyzed carefully to find the pattern. The data were then compared. At last, the researcher concluded the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

CSIs are mainly foreignized in both movies. Grown Up (2010) consists of 78 foreignized items, 22 domesticated items, 9 mixes (foreignized and domesticated) items, and 2 omitted. While *Laskar Pelangi* (2008) consists of 40 foreignized items, 22 domesticated items, and 14 mix (foreignized and domesticated) items.

### Toponym

#### Grown Up

**Original version**

1. I am the biggest agent in Hollywood and you just pissed me off.

**Indonesia version**

Aku agen terhebat di Hollywood dan kau membuatku kesal.

2. It's up the street from Lake Como, where George Clooney has a villa.

**English version**

Di jalan menuju Danau Como, dimana George Clooney punya villa.

#### Laskar Pelangi

**Original version**


4. Surat dari pengawas sekolah Sumatera Selatan ini

5. Kau bisa jadi istri saudagar di tanah Jawa

**English version**

3. Belitong is one of Indonesia's richest islands

4. The South Sumatera School Supervisor's letter

5. You would've been a merchant's wife in Java by now.

Foreignization dominated the category of Toponym. If the target text culture does not have the equivalent word for the term then foreignization is the favorite choice of translation. Like for example, Hollywood (occurrence 1) and Indonesia (occurrence 3) are both translated into the target text culture without changing anything. Some toponymic occurrences employ both foreignization and domestication when there is a general term followed by the name of the place, for example, Lake Como (occurrence 2) and Sumatra Selatan (occurrence 4). The general term lake and Selatan are domesticated as they have already an established term in the target text culture, while the actual name of the place is foreignized to add the feeling of 'foreigness' and to introduce the term to the target text reader.

Other occurrences are domesticated if the toponymic term in source text culture already has an equivalent term in target text culture. One of the domesticated toponymic terms is Jawa (occurrence 5) which acquired another written form in target text culture because Java is the established term of Jawa.
Anthroponym

Grown Up

Original version           | Indonesia version
---                        | ------------------
7. I'm sorry, Mr. Feder, I don't know. | Maaf, Tn. Feder, aku tak tahu
8. No, honey.              | Tidak, sayang

Laskar Pelangi

Original version           | English version
---                        |------------------
9. Lintang, anak pesisir    | Lintang, a boy from the coastal area
10. Apa kabar, Pak Mahmud?  | How are you, Mr. Mahmud?
11. Kumohon, Yong.          | Help me, Kiong

Anthroponym represents the most frequent CSIs to appear in both movies where almost all of the data presented are foreignized. In occurrence 6, the translator chose to omit the specific word (Bank). This action can lead to a shift in meaning from the source text to the target text reader. The phrase 'Bank's open' indicates that the player holding the ball (basketball) should give the ball to Bank, while in the target text 'Peluang terbuka' only indicates that there is a chance. Some confusion might occur in the target text reader because of this. The occurrence 7 and 10 where the title is followed by the name of a person (Mr. Feder and Pak Mahmud) both foreignization and domestication are used. The actual name of the person is foreignized, while the title is given the domestication treatment Tn and Mr respectively. This leads a question on the correct usage of Tn and Mr, as in Indonesia, the term Tn can be used to either first or last name so, occurrence 1 translation is correct, while in English, the term Mr is followed by a person's last name. So occurrence 10 translation can be considered incorrect. Another occurrence where there is a term of endearment honey (occurrence 8) is being domesticated for easier comprehension even though the term honey itself is familiar in Bahasa Indonesia.

The Occurrence 11 involves the translation of nickname Yong which is a shorter version of Kiong. The translator chose to use the full version (foreignized) of the name probably to reduce the unfamiliarity of Bahasa Indonesia's nickname.

Form of Entertainment

Grown Up

Original version           | Indonesia version
---                        | ------------------
12. You guys ever hear of a game called Chutes and Ladders? | Pernah dengar permainan yang namanya Ular Tangga?
13. PlayStation 3 in every room, | PlayStation 3 di setiap kamar
Laskar Pelangi
Original version

English version
The Independence Day's carnival contest.

Domestication is the most selected treatment for the category form of entertainment. Chutes and ladders (occurrence 12) are translated into the Indonesia equivalent *Ular Tangga* because the game itself has already an established name in Indonesia. However, Playstation 3 (occurrence 13) is foregnerized probably because of Indonesian people already very familiar with the term. Another domesticated term happens in occurrence 14 where the culture-specific item is translated into the English equivalence to reduce the unfamiliarity of the term.

Mean of Transportation
Grown Up
Original version
15. Hey, Rob's car is an Oompa Loompa too.

Indonesia version
Hei, mobil Rob juga Oompa Loompa

Laskar Pelangi
Original version
16. pembuat perahu kayu terbesar yang pernah dibuat oleh manusia?

English version
making the biggest manmade ark ever?

The category of the mean of transportation is dominated by domestication because the term use in the source text is easily recognizable in the target text culture. For example, Car (occurrence 15) is translated as Mobil in target text culture because the term itself is a direct translation of Car. While *Perahu Kayu* (occurrence 16) is a little harder to recognize by some people because of the religious context presented in source text culture. The term Ark is chosen to ‘domesticate’ the unfamiliarity of *Perahu Kayu* of Prophet Nuh.

Fictional Character
Grown Up
Original version
It's like if Elvis was an Oompa Loompa, There's no Tooth Fairy

Indonesia version
Seperti Elvis yang mirip Oompa Loompa Peri gigi itu tak ada?
As for fictional characters, foreignization is the one that dominated this category. Foreignization is employed to avoid confusion because the term does not exist in the target text culture. Because of the exposure of technology especially the internet and TV, some of the terms in fictional characters are known to the target audience, so the term is domesticated, as in the case of the translation from 'tooth fairy' to 'peri gigi' in occurrence 18.

As for the category of a local institution, the data are only found in Laskar Pelangi (2008) movie. The treatment given to this category is mainly a mix of foreignization and domestication. For example, SD PN Timah (occurrence 20) in which the type of institution 'SD' is domesticated into the English equivalence while the name of the institution 'PN Timah' is foreignized. Another occurrence such as occurrence 21 is foreignized because the term itself does not have equivalence in English. Domestication also occurs in a term that already has equivalence in target text culture such as 'puskesmas' that is translated into 'clinic' in occurrence 22.

With corn, either on the cob or whatever you got.
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Laskar Pelangi

Original version
Gangan yang enak itu dibuatnya memakai ikan ilak.
Sebentar lagi nasi matang.
Kau angkat, ya?

English version
I told you, gangan soup is best cooked with ilak fish.
Once the rice is cooked, get it off the stove.

Foreignization dominated the category of food and drink but only for Grown Up (2010) movie, while Laskar Pelangi (2008) has an equal number of domestication treatment and the foreignization-domestication treatment. The translator chooses to foreignized the term even though the term can be domesticated is probably because the target audience is already familiar with the term presented as in occurrence 23. The mix treatment of foreignization-domestication happens when the term is in form of phrase where the type of food is foreignized (sauce-saus and sup-soup) while the actual name of the food is domesticated (marinara into marinara) because the term is already familiar and (gangan into gangan) to introduce the foreign term to the target text reader.

Scholastic Reference

Grown Up

Original version
It's taking a piss, not the SATs.

Indonesia version
Kau cuma pipis, bukan tes SAT.

Laskar Pelangi

Original version
Kenapa mereka mengenakan sandal saat ulangan?

English version
Why are they wearing sandals to an exam?

In the case of Grown Up movie, foreignization is the preferred treatment, the term presented in occurrence 28 is unfamiliar in Indonesia because Indonesian does not have the 'SAT' test. The opposite happens in the Laskar Pelangi movie where the CSI 'ulangan' is given the domestication treatment 'exam'. The general term in the source text culture already has equivalence in the target text culture.

Now, regarding the treatments applied to the translation of the subtitles, three patterns can be seen. Firstly, both translators seem to favor foreignization as the treatment of the translation in almost all of the CSIs' categories. Secondly, domestication will become the preferred treatment if the CSIs already have an equivalence in the target text culture. Thirdly, the least favored treatment, the mixed treatment -foreignization and domestication- will be applied if the CSIs are in the form of phrase. In this case, foreignization will be used
into the word that does not have an equivalence in the target text culture as in 'PN Timah' and domestication will be applied into the familiar word or have equivalence in the target text culture as in 'SD become Elementary' in the phrase ‘SD PN Timah’.

DISCUSSION

Foreignization seems to be the most preferred treatment in the subtitle translation, whether it is from English to Indonesia or from Indonesia to English. According to the data of Grown Up (2010), foreignization consists of 75.28% of all the data in which foreignization dominate almost all of the CSIs categories, except two: forms of entertainment and means of transportation. These two categories favor domestication for the former and equal amount of domestication and the mix treatment. The result is unlike the result found by Judickaite (2009) who stated that domestication is much more dominant than foreignization. Another thing, in the case of the translation from Indonesia to English in Laskar Pelangi (2008) subtitle, Bahasa Indonesia which is considered as a minority to English, foreignization still manages to dominate. This finding broke the finding from Tiwiyanti (2016) who states "the minority position of the source text culture of does not allow foreignization to be applied in a greater extent". This difference in finding could be because of the difference in the object of the study, which is novel, as opposed to the current study which is movie subtitles. In this case, the translator of Laskar Pelangi (2008) subtitle applied foreignization to a greater extent and manage to introduce Indonesian culture to the English speaking country. In this regard, When foreignization is used, the source text manages to maintain the 'strangeness' and introduce the culture, in this case, the culture-specific items, to the target text reader. In line with the finding from Matielo and Espindola (2011) who states "by foreignizing, a feeling of strangeness or foreignness might have been created, possibly impacting the processing or acceptance towards these elements".

From the analysis of the data, not only foreignization the translators of subtitles from the two movies seem to also apply domestication and the mixed treatment -foreignization and domestication- when translating the subtitle. This in line with Wang (2014) who states that "the two methods (foreignization and domestication) should supplement and complement each other". because it will be hard for the target text readers to understand the movies if all of the CSIs are translated only with foreignization (to many unfamiliar words are confusing to the target text readers) and it will also put the source culture at a disadvantages if all of the CSIs are translated using domestication (the source culture will disappear completely eventhough the target text readers will have easier in understanding the movies)

Another treatment that is applied to both subtitles is domestication. Domestation will be applied if the CSIs are already had an equivalence in the target text culture. This treatment used mainly to reduce the feeling of
'foreigness' and for easier understanding of the target text reader. By ‘foreigness’, it means the possible cultural words that may confuse or make the target reader uncomfortable because of the unfamiliarity of the foreign culture to the target readers. Even though using domestication helps the target readers immensely, the foreign culture will be put at a disadvantage like stated by Venuti, using domestication diminishes the importance of the foreign culture presented in source text. But, since the percentage of the data of the current study is quite small (14.61% for the Grown Up and 24.56% for *Laskar Pelangi*), the importance of the foreign culture can still be preserved. Unlike the previous finding, this finding agreed with Tiwiyanti (2016) who states "Domestication is preferred as it will allow target text readers to understand the text easily". Regarding the uses of domestication, the difference in the object of the study between the previous study and the current study is insignificant.

The mixed treatment of foreignization and domestication also appears in some data of the study. According to the data, the Grown Up (2010) consists of 10.11% and *Laskar Pelangi* (2008) consists of 26.42% of all the data. This treatment will be used if the data is in the form of a phrase containing a general word that is familiar in the target text culture (domestication) and specific word that is unfamiliar to the target text word (foreignization). The mix treatment most often used if the translator are unable to convey the meaning of the CSIs by only using one of the treatments. This finding is in line with Putrawan (2018) that also finds "some Indonesian cultural terms are also partially foreignized (partial foreignization) and partially domesticated (partial domestication)". Such finding is also supported by other researcher such as Judickaitė (2009). In this case, even though the present study and the previous study used different objects of study (novel), the finding of the two studies are similar. So regardless of if the object of the study is movie subtitle, novel or any others, mixed treatment sometime can be found as one of the treatment chosen by the translator.

CONCLUSION

Foreignization and domestication are applied in the subtitle translation, furthermore, the researcher also found a mix treatment where foreignization and domestication are used together. The dominating treatment of the subtitle, whether it is from English to Indonesia or from Indonesia to English, is foreignization. Domestication will become the preferred treatment if the CSIs from the source text already has its term in the target text culture. Furthermore, the mixed treatment of foreignization-domestication will be applied if the CSIs are in the form of a phrase containing a general of a familiar word and a specific or unfamiliar word.

In the process of analyzing the data, the researcher found that when translating the subtitle the feeling of politeness sometimes does not come across culturally. So, for the future study, the researcher suggests studying the
cultural translation involving politeness. How politeness will translate across culture.

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