LOSS AND GAIN IN TRANSLATION OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS IN AHMAD TOHARI'S *LINTANG KEMUKUS*: A SEMANTIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Culture-specific items (CSIs) are difficult to translate since they are related to cultural knowledge and cultural background of the given culture. The distance and differences between two different cultures determine the extent of the gain or loss that will be exprienced by the CSIs as they are translated. From Indonesian into English The purposes of this research were to identify the translation procedures applied in translating CSIs which caused loss and gained in the translation process and to identify how the translator compensated the loss in translating CSIs. The method used was qualitative descriptive method. The result shows that loss is more prevalent than gain although the translator has enough knowledge on the source text culture as he has spent some years doing some researches in Banyumas society. There are two kinds of losses found in this research; inevitable and avertable losses. Translation procedures used which result in loss in translation are translation by a more general word (subordinate), translation by a more neutral/less expressive word and translation by cultural substitution. Gain is realized mostly through the creativity of the translator when they are able to explain the culture-specific items for effective communication. In order to compensate the loss that might have occurred, translator uses some translation procedures. They are translation by loan word with explanation, translation by paraphrase using related word, and translation by paraphrase using unrelated word. In short, gain in translation for better communication is not easy to achieve especially in the case of translating CSIs.

Keywords: loss in translation, gain in translation, culture-specific items, semantic study

INTRODUCTION

One of translators' main problems is finding the equivalence of culture-specific items (CSIs) as they contain cultural information which needs special considerations since they are related to cultural knowledge and cultural background to the background culture. The meaning of culturally dependent words is difficult to transfer into another language, particularly when the words are linked to cultural domains (Nida, 2015). Take the word nasi, and beras which are closely related to Indonesian culture as they are familiar terms that deal with Indonesian staple. We may have the word 'rice' to be said the equivalence. Yet, the word 'rice' shows loss in translation as it refers to both nasi and beras in Indonesian. English speaking speakers only know that the word 'rice' refers to the concept on small seed of a particular type of grass, cooked, and eaten. There are some dictinctions on terms as given by the Indonesian. Things like this do not only happen between Indonesian language and

English, but also happen between many other languages which have different cultural backgrounds.

The words 'rice', '*beras*' and '*nasi*' belong to CSIs. CSIs are words and phrases conditioned by the cultural diversity. According to Lewis (2010) "We readily accept that cultural diversity is vast and formidable". Dizdar (2014) refers to cultural entities as cultural words, Gambier (2007) named the culture-specific references, however, the most widely accepted term is culture-specific. Chesterman (2012) defines CSIs as:

> "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'"

Different theorists have provided different procedures of translating CSIs. For instance, Padmavathy & Thangavel (2011) suggested for making up a new word or explaining the meaning of the source language expression in lieu of translating it. However, the translator may also choose to preserve the source language term intact or to opt for a word in the target language which seems similar to or has the same 'relevance' as the source language term. Chesterman (2012) proposed eight translation procedures in translating CSIs. They are translation by a more general word (superordinate), translation by a more neutral/less expressive word, translation by cultural substitution, translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation, translation by paraphrase using a related word, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, translation by omission and translation by illustration.

The distance and differences between two different cultures determine the extent of the gain or loss that will be exprienced by CSIs as they are translated. The greater the cultural distance and differences, the greater the need for translators to use their creative skill to find the acceptable translation, which will eventually please both sides. For the purpose of translation, translators need to understand the customs and other cultural aspects that lie between the two different languages (Davies, 2003). Bassnett (2006) pointed out:

> "The translator can at times enrich or clarify the source language text as a direct result of the translation process. Moreover, what is often seen 'as lost' from the source language context maybe replaced in the target language context."

Translators can produce rich explanation of the unknown concept of the source language text (ST) in the target language text (TT) by focusing on their creativity. They merely need to focus on the central meaning and bring the acceptable and well-chosen equivalent concept or terminology. This is in line with Steiner (2006) whose concept states that a translator must invade the text, extract it and bring home the central meaning. It is at this point, we relate the matter with the concept that we refer as 'gain' and 'loss' in translation.

Loss is the disappearance of certain features in the target language text which are present in the source language text. Translation loss refers to, "The incomplete replication of the ST in TT" (Dizdar, 2014) when a translator fails to render the entire CSIs and linguistic features of the TT." In translation practice, there is more probability CSIs to experience loss than gain.

Loss can also be related to the failure of the translator to convey an element of meaning such as expressiveness. If the translator is not competent in the target language, some words and phrases might be deleted and unfortunately loss occurs. The other cause of loss occurs due to the linguistic and extralinguistic differences between the source language and target language. These linguistic differences hold back the translation process because each language has its ways in expressing the same concepts in different system. Another fact that causes loss is extralinguistic discrepancies. This includes the cultural and religious discrepancies between these languages which hinder the translation process. It is the extralinguistic factors that become the major reason behind the incapability of a translator to produce an equivalence in the target text (Alwazna, 2014).

Gain is a concept that focuses on the enrichment or clarification of the source language text. Bassnett (2006) defined gain as, "The enrichment or clarification of the source language text in the process of translation." The same concept is also proposed by Nozizwe & Ncube (2014) where they stated that gain in translation on the one hand refers to the enrichment or clarification of the source text which enables language and the target text to be flexible and usable in any social circle. Gain in translation will help languages to adapt themselves to their speakers. There will be chances for them to adapt when two different languages interact. Eventually, they will complement each other. Therefore, the development of new terminology is possible to happen in any language because language itself is not static but dynamic. Gain is possible due to the dynamism of language (O'Neil, 2006).

Gain is possible when a new communication acts were made to create a new thing out of a previously existing one. Relative expressional abilities and creativity enable someone to create something new. In translation, gain depends on the relative expressional abilities of the translators. Translators are always in the situation where they are subjected to the pressure to negotiate the differences in meaning that languages entail. Translators need to analyze the relationship between a language and the social context in which it is used. Once translators manage to present a new terminology or concept which can give clarity of the message and surely enrich the target language, the target language will gain something. Gain enable us to the assumption that translator can sometimes produce target text which is far better from the source text by making it clearer and more legible to the readers, for instance, by making "unexpressed situational element expressed" (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2004). Gain will eventually enable the text to be self-sufficient.

Translators need to consider any loss or gain in translation. Loss and gain can be in semantic or syntax level of a text. Sholikin (2013), in his thesis on the translation of bilingual book, stated that loss is shown on word class loss and phrase class loss. Gain is also shown only on word class gain and phrase class gain. The loss is made in order to make the TT acceptable and easily to read and understand. Gain process is taken in order to deliver the whole messages of the ST in the TT perfectly. Agustina (2013), in her thesis on the translation of comic, pointedout that loss and gain are found in some words, phrases or even clauses. Loss and gain are applied to make the translation works acceptable, readable and natural to the target readers.

From the theories and research results mentioned, this study sees the importance of analyzing the loss and gain in translation semantically as previous researches only investigate loss and gain syntactically. Furthermore, the data analyzed are focused only on CSIs. It means that the analysis focused on any loss or gain in the meaning transferred in translating CSIs. Research on loss and gain in translating CSIs needs to be conducted as there are many of Indonesian novels or other literary works are translated into English. Translators should be aware of the possible loss and gain that will occur in translating the CSIs.

METHODS

The object analyzed in this research is the novel entitled *Lintang Kemukus* by Ahmad Tohari and its English Version entitled *A Shooting Star at Dawn*, one of the trilogy in the novel *The Dancer* which is translated by

Rene T. A. Lysloff. The novel has been choosen because of its historical and cultural background. *The Dancer* is set in the tumultuous days of the mid 1960s. It describes a village community in Banyumas, Central Java which struggles to adapt to a rapidly changing world under the Communist coup. Readers will be entertained not only with a political turmoil and human tragedy but it also provides many Indonesian cultural dynamics. As a literary work, the novel is considered as the right source of CSIs.

This is a descriptive qualitative research. This research uses descriptive qualitative method because this study relies on opinion and belief rather than statistical data which are inclined to quantitative research. The data are CSIs in the form of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences of the original and its translation that contained loss and gain. It is descriptive qualitative in which the researchers examine loss and gain in the translation of CSIs from Indonesian into English. To collect the data, both of the novels are read thoroughly to find all the CSIs and its translations. After the data are collected, the next step taken is analysis. The CSIs from both Indonesian version and English version are compared to find the loss and gain in translation. Thus, the main focus of the analysis is of loss and gain. Loss and gain are classified according to the semantic level loss and gain. First the data are analyzed based on loss and gain occured. After that, loss will be analyzed based on two categories; inevitable and avertable. On the other hand, gain will be analyzed based on the compensation method applied. For this purpose, the data are analyzed based on the meaning by consulting dictionaries. The results show that there is more loss than gain in the translation of CSIs from Indonesian into English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Rene T. A. Lysloff is an Associate Professor of Music (Ethnomusicology) and came to UCR in the fall of 1996 after teaching two years at the University of Pittsburgh. Before that, he was a Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at Grinnell College (1992-1993) and also taught at Oberlin College and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His dissertation explores local expressions of cultural universals in rural Javanese. His most recently completed project is translating a contemporary Indonesian novel (in three volumes) by Ahmad Tohari entitled *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* [A Dancer of Paruk Village]. The novel explores the lives of a rural dancing girl and her childhood sweetheart as they experience the tumultuous changes in Indonesia from 1946 to 1971. The English translation, entitled *The Dancer*, is published as a single volume through the Lontar Foundation (Jakarta) and distributed worldwide. Based on his familiarity with Indonesian culture, we can expect his ability to find the equivalence for the Indonesian CSIs into English.

There are two kinds of losses. The first one is inevitable loss. It occurs because of the divergent systems of the two languages regardless of the skill and competence of the translator. In this case, translators usually can not establish equivalence and therefore resorts to compensatory strategies. The second loss is an avertable loss attributed to translator's failure to find the appropriate equivalence. Each of them will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Indonesian culture is different from American culture or any other English speaking countries. Therefore, there will be inevitable loss occur in translating the Indonesian CSIs into English. The source language CSIs may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target text readers' culture. Such cause is also known as extralinguistic discrepancies. The data shows that there are some CSIs which experience loss in the translation process, they may relate to ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs and pursuits, and private passions. Table 1 provides some examples of inevitable loss found in the novel.

Table 1 Inevitable Loss by A More General Word

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
... tidur dalam posisi miring ke arah tepi *balaibalai, ...* (p.3)	..., lay on a bed on the other side of the room, ... (p.118)	Translation by a more general word

The data show how the CSI *balai-balai* is translated into *bed*. The translator uses a more general word as the equivalence of the word *balai-balai*.

Balai-balai refers to seat or bed made from bamboo or wood and bed means a piece of furniture which is used as a place to sleep or relax. Semantic loss is on two concepts. First is on the function. The English translation seems to create a concept that *Balai-balai* is used both as a seat and as a bed. However, any Indonesian people use it as a seat during the day or sleep at night. Therefore, loss in meaning occurs. The second one is loss in the material. *Balai-balai* is usually made from bamboo or wood. Bamboo is very useful and mostly found in Asia, therefore it is commonly used in making furnitures.

In the example, loss in translation on CSI is inevitable because there are cultural background differences between the ST and the TT and this lead to the fact that the TT readers do not recognize the ST CSI, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Inevitable Loss by Translation by Cultural Substitution

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
... dan membantu anak-anak gembala membuat layang-layang dari daun *gadung* (p.7)	..., and help them build kites from the leaves of the turnip plant (p. 123)	Translation by cultural substitution

Table 2 shows how the CSI *gadung* is translated into *the turnip plant*. The translator uses cultural substitution for the CSI.

Although both *gadung* and *the turnip plant* are root vegetables, they are basically different entities. Both have more differences than similarities. *Gadung* is an edible vegetable root which actually can be poisonous if it is cooked incorrectly, while *turnip plant* is a vegetable root commonly growing in temperate climates worldwide for its white, bulbous taproot with round shape and non poisonous. In the text, the focus lies on the leaves. *Gadung* has broad leaf which is divided into three parts enabling us to make a kite out of the leaf. On the contrary, turnip plant leaf has different shape which is impossible to use as a kite. Consequently, there will be confusion on how to make kites from the substitution.

This loss in translation belongs to inevitable loss because there are extralinguistic discrepancies which make it difficult for the translator to give the exact equivalence, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3 Inevitable Loss by using
A More Neutral/Less Expressive Word

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
"Lho, bukan. Kalung ini bukan buat upahmu menari atau *bertayub*," ujar Marsusi (p.41)	"No. That's not what I want. This necklace isn't payment for you to perform or for you to dance with me. (p.160)	Translation by using a more neutral/ less expressive word

Table 3 shows that the CSI *bertayub* is translated into *perform*. The translator chooses to apply translating by using more neutral/less expressive word.

The CSI *bertayub* actually generated from the words *ditata* (arranged) and *guyub* (harmonious). All together, *bertayub* means dancing together in such an arrangement to make harmonious movement accompanied by musical instrument as the background. The equivalence *perform* lack the richness contained in the word *bertayub* which imply the concept of arranged and harmonious.

Therefore, from the explanation above, loss in translation occurs. This kind of loss belongs to inevitable loss as the CSI is culturally bound with the people in Banyumas. Again, extralinguistic discrepancies cause inavertable loss in translation

Avertable los**s** is attributed to either the translator's incompetent in one or both languages or the translator's deficiency and failure in finding the correct and accurate equivalence of the CSIs in the TT. Table 4 shows some examples found in the data.

Table 4 Avertable Loss by using Loan Word
Without Explanation

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
Dan *ronggeng* itu merasa heran mengapa ada seorang lelaki dari jenis lainnya (p.4)	The *ronggeng* felt surprised that there existed one man who felt different to her (p.120)	Translation by using loan word without explanation

Table 4 is closely related to the world of Banyumasan people. The CSI *ronggeng* is a custom that had existed for years. The word refers to traditional dancers who perform traditional dances. They, in return, will get some money from the audiences. Yet, there is a sense of prostitution related to the performance and the ronggeng themselves.

The translator simply uses translation by using loan word to evoke the traditional atmosphere of the source text culture. However, there is loss in the translation as the translator only uses loan word without any explanation to compensate the loss.

The loss is avertable as the concept is actually can be best enriched with more explanation. Lysloff may have some other consideration that he decided not to give further explanation.

Table 5 Avertable Loss by using More General Word

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
Biasanya Srintil bergadang dalam suasana gairah dengan *ciu*, dengan uang, dan dengan berahi (48)	Chatting through hr night in passionate encounters involving drinking, money, and sexual desire .... (166)	Translation by using a more general word

The data in the table 5 shows how the CSI *ciu* is translated into *drinking*. The translator chooses to use translation by using a more general word.

The word *ciu* refers to alcoholic traditional drink in Banyumas which is made of fermented cassava, palm sugar and some other ingredients. However, the word *drinking* means consuming or having the habit of consuming alcohol, especially to excess. The TT is more general than the ST as it only conveys the habit. The type of alcoholic drink is not conveyed.

The loss shown in the data above is avertable as the translator can actually use another translation procedure which will convey the acceptable CSI of the ST better. The translation does not reflect any concept of the kind or any further explanation on the kind of alcoholic drink. Although there is extralinguistic discrepancy, the translator can still have a way to find the closest equivalence by giving more explanation. Therefore, we can classify the loss above as avertable loss, as seen in table 6.

Table 6 Avertable Loss by Paraphrase
using Unrelated Word

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
Srintil sesudah berusia delapan belas adalah Srintil yang telah mengalami perihnya upacara *bukak-klambu* (p. 81)	Srintil at eighteen was a woman who had already experience the pain that came with the opening of mosquito netting. (p.200)	Translation by paraphrase using related word

Discussion:

Table 6 shows how the CSI *bukak klambu* is translated into *the opening of mosquito netting*. The translator chooses to translate the ST by using related word to paraphrase.

As seen in the TT, the translator uses the concept of mosquito netting which is the equivalence of the concept *klambu*. However, the phrase *bukak klambu* represents a figurative meaning which refers to a ritual where a *ronggeng*, a traditional dancer, gives her virginity to any man who can pay the highest for the ritual. In the translation, the concept is far different and even does not have any relation at all. In this case, the translator should have used something that can represent the concept.

Based on the analysis above, this is another example on avertable loss. The translator should have recognized the ST figurative language so that he can convey the implicit meaning of the ST correctly and find the closest equivalence.

Although no theory indicates directly the factors that may create and enhance the gain within the target text, it

can be concluded that gain occurs due to linguistic causes, cultural causes and personal causes. In the English version of the novel, we can see how Lysloff's experience and familiarity with Indonesian culture after spending some years in Java, allow him to translate the Indonesian version in such a creative way. He frequently gives explanation on any CSIs included in the novel. Here are some data showing gain in translation found the English version of the novel.

Table 7 Gain in Translation
by using Paraphrase with Related Word

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
Martabat mereka sebagai *dukun ronggeng* berada dalam taruhan (P.6)	Their status as *ronggeng* trainers, as traditional healers, and as experts on village female dancer was at stake... (p.122)	Translation by using paraphrase with related word

The first data of the Table 7 shows gain in translation process as a result of applying paraphrase using related word to compensate the possible loss. The paraphrase conveys explanation on the CSI *dukun ronggeng* of the ST.

In Banyumas society, *dukun ronggeng* refers to someone who teaches a traditional dance and decides who can be a *ronggeng* (a traditional dancer) in the society. Once a person has made choices, he or she can promote the dancer to perform a dance performance based on someone's request who is willing to pay some amount of money. The translator applies translation by using paraphrase with related word. He uses loan word, ronggeng, with more generic term trainer for the word *dukun*. Yet, he continues adding enrichment to the term by giving further explanation on any skills that *dukun* can posses. The translator chooses to use the phrase *ronggeng* trainers, as traditional healers, and as experts on village female dancer.

The translator's experience gained while living in Banyumas society can well shape his concept of *dukun*. The translator feels the need to compensate the possible loss by enriching the term as the target text readers' concept on *ronggeng* and *dukun ronggeng* is the focus of the novel. The translation helps the TT readers to gain more information on the CSI.

Table 8 Gain in Translation by using Paraphrase
with Unrelated Word

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
Istrinya selalu muncul dengan *kain kebaya* lengkap dengan selendang.... (p.21)	His wife was wearing awrap around skirt, and a embroidered blousewith a sash.... (136)	Translation by using paraphrase with unrelated word

Discussion:

The data of Table 8 shows how skillful the translator is to build an equivalence that can best describe the CSI of the ST *kebaya* which is a traditional dress in Indonesia. The translator uses paraphrase with unrelated word to compensate the possible loss.

In this data the translator replaces the CSI *kebaya* with *a wrap around skirt, and an embroidered blouse*. *Kebaya* is unknown to the TT readers; therefore, the translator decides to paraphrase the CSI in order to better understanding.

The translator manages to bring gain in translation as the CSI *kebaya* can now be understood by the target text readers. Therefore, Table 9 shows what we call as gain in translation process.

Table 9 Gain in Translation
by using Loan Word with Explanation

Source Text	Target text	Translation Procedure
Melihat keadaannya dua di antara mereka tentulah tengkulak *terasi*,.... (p,62)	Two of them were traders of *terasi*, a pungent spice made from shrimps, crabs and other seafood. (181)	Translation by using loan word with explanation

The data above also show gain in translation process. The procedure used to compensate the possible loss is translation by using loan word with explanation.

The CSI *terasi* is translated into *terasi*, *a pungent spice made from shrimps, crabs and other seafood*. The translator borrows the CSI *terasi* and adds some enrichment by giving the substitution that almost has similar concept.

The translation enables the TT readers to be familiar with the CSI *terasi* and understand the concept of the CSI as it provides further explanation. The translator's creativity is required to find the equivalence which can enrich and clarify the CSI of the ST.

CONCLUSIONS

This research examines loss and gain in the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs) from Indonesian into English. Both languages are from different language families. Differences exist between both languages make CSIs as untranslatable. The result shows loss is more prevalent than gain although the translator has enough knowledge on the ST culture as he has spent some years doing some research in Banyumas society.

Loss occurs because a cultural gap lies between the two respected languages. Many source language CSIs of the source text are unknown to English speakers. There are two kinds of loss found in this study; inevitable and avertable losses. Inevitable loss is a result of the extralinguistic discrepancies between the two languages which even skillful translator sometimes cannot manage to avoid. The second one is avertable loss which a result of the translator's deficiency and failure in finding the correct and accurate equivalent term to replace the CSIs in the TT.

Translation procedures used which commonly cause loss in translation are translation by a more general word (subordinate), translation by a more neutral/less expressive word and translation by cultural substitution.

Gain was realized mostly through the creativity of the translators when they were able to provide enrichment or clarification on the CSIs for effective communication. The creativity of the translator accompanied by knowledge on the source text culture enable the translator to bring gain in translation which will create better communication. In order

to compensate the loss that might have occured, translator uses some translation procedures. They are translation by loan word with explanation, translation by paraphrase using related word, and translation by paraphrase using unrelated word.

In conclusion, gain in translation for better communication is not easy to achieve especially in the case of culture-specific items. Translator should have enough skill and knowledge to enable them to bring enrichment to the translation. In addition to that, translator's creativity is also needed as it will help producing better translation.

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