An Analysis of Cultural Specific Items Classified as Social Culture Found in *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien And Strategies Utilized to Translate The Indonesian Version

Maria Seannovika
Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana
Salatiga

(**392019095@student.uksw.edu**)

Abstract: Cultural Specific Item is said to be one of the hardest concepts to translate by many researchers. One of them, Baker (1992:23-44) presented eight translation strategies for translators to consider when they encounter difficult issues such as CSIs. On the other hand, Newmark (1988:94-103) composed five taxonomies of cultural words by adapting Nida. Out of five taxonomies, social culture was the most predominantly found in the object of research with more than 300 data and 46% overall. The purpose of this research is to find the most applicable translation strategy to translate CSIs in the social culture category. Methods that were applied in the process of this research are the comparative model in translation studies (Williams and Chesterman, 2002) and comparative research (Mills, 2008). Data were obtained from the source text, *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien, and the target text, *The Things They Carried: Kenangan Sang Prajurit* translated by Hendrayatna. The researcher has reached several conclusions, for instance, only seven out of eight translation strategies were utilized to translate social culture in the target text. Second, translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words was the most applicable strategy with a huge margin of 38% compared to other strategies with a percentage below 20%.

Keywords: cultural-specific items, csis, social culture, translation strategies

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Culture and language are intertwined through a long course of history. The linguistic relativity theory or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that due to the habitual use of a language, its structure influences one's thought process and behavior (Kramsch, 1998: 11). Hence, the value of a culture runs through its people's thought process by the use of language, which then affect their behavior. This behavior then constructs the collective way of life peculiar to a group of people. The previously mentioned description is similar to Newmark's definition of culture, he defined it as the way of life and the manifestations of it are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression (Newmark, 1988: 94). Therefore, language and culture are inseparable from each other.

Cultural-specific item (CSI) is born from the correlation between language and culture. A concept that is as diverse as the number of cultures on the earth, and as the name suggests,

specific to a particular culture. In *Culture-specific Items in Translation,* Javier Franco Aixelá stated the following sentence, "The main difficulty with the definition lies, of course, in the fact that in a language everything is culturally produced, beginning with language itself." (Aixelá, 1996: 57). Translators and researchers often find this concept to be challenging to translate as it commonly poses translation issues. For instance, Baker (1992: 18) included culture-specific concepts as one of the common problems of non-equivalence. In addition, Newmark (1988: 94) stated that foreign cultural words will be a translation problem due to the cultural gap or distance between the source and target languages.

Many researchers and translators have proposed many translation techniques and strategies to find a way around translation issues such as CSIs. For example, Newmark (1988) proposed 16 translation procedures, whilst Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) introduced 7 translation procedures. Alternatively, Molina and Albir (2002) mentioned 18 translation techniques. However, this research is based on eight strategies used by professional translators stated by Mona Baker (1992:23-44). Hence, the purpose of this research is to find the most applicable strategy to transfer the meaning of CSIs in the source text (ST) to the target text (TT), particularly in the social culture category.

The object of this research, *The Things They Carried* is a collection of connected short stories written by an American novelist, Tim O'Brien (2009). Whereas the Indonesian translation called *The Things They Carried: Kenangan Sang Prajurit* is translated by Hendrayatna. The main theme of the book is telling stories about post-war Vietnam War veterans. Since in one of his interviews, O'Brien stated that he had indeed drafted and served in the Vietnam War as a soldier, this piece of literature was chosen as the research object. Therefore, the content of the book as well as the CSIs in it could be said to not be entirely fictional.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Cultural Specific Item

According to Aixelá (1996), CSI is an element of the text connected to certain concepts in the foreign culture which might be unknown to the readers of the target text. Further, Aixelá stated that the definition could be more flexible. "Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text," (Aixelá, 1996:58). In other words, any item in the ST which does not exist in the TL, or if the SL textual and cultural systems pose translation problem in the process of transference, that item could be considered as a CSI.

Social Culture

According to Newmark, the more specific a language is, the more it is ingrained in the culture. Hence, foreign cultural words will pose a translation issue related to cultural gaps or distance between the SL and TL (Newmark, 1988:94-95). In terms of how this concept is tied to specific items, culture, and translation problems, it is similar to what Aixelá refers to as

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CSI. Therefore, this research uses one of five taxonomies of foreign cultural words that Newmark (1988) adapted from Nida to identify CSIs in the ST. The five taxonomies are ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations (customs and ideas), as well as gestures and habits.

Social culture is said to be CSIs that have denotative and connotative meanings. Hence, it often poses translation problems as the connotative meaning is oftentimes different or nonexistent in the TL. For example, 'the hoi polloi' is an expression meaning 'the many' in Greek. But, it has a negative connotation in modern days meaning 'the plebs.' Other CSIs included in the social culture are related to work and leisure activities. Such as games, sports, and occupations that some cultures have, but not in other cultures. For instance, *patisserie, chocolaterie,* cricket, squash, and soccer (Newmark, 1988:98-99).

Translation Strategies

In her translation course book titled *In Other Words,* Baker brought to attention ten common problems of non-equivalence, and culture-specific concept is one of them (Baker, 1992: 18-23). In addition, she also presented eight strategies used by professional translators to deal with said translation problems (Baker, 1992: 23-44). Baker (1992: 18) defined 'culture-specific' as a word from the source language (SL) which might express an abstract or concrete concept that is completely unknown in the target culture. This definition resembles Aixelá's description of CSIs, hence Baker's translation strategies were used to analyze how CSI in *The Things They Carried* was translated from English into Indonesian.
Eight strategies used by professional translators according to Baker 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 related words,
translation by paraphrase using unrelated words,
translation by omission,
and translation by illustration.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using comparative research to analyze data. Comparative research was utilized to analyze resemblances and differences between the objects of research (Mills, 2008). In this case, the objects of research were the ST in English and TT in Indonesian. The data were collected by using close reading and the comparative model in translation studies. The comparative model (Williams and Chesterman, 2002) was necessary to better analyze, comprehend, and construct images of the research objects. Any form of CSIs found in the ST, including words, phrases, and clauses were considered to be data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the process of research, the researcher proceeded with a few procedures. First, the

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researcher read the ST and collect data in the form of CSIs using close reading. Subsequently, the researcher read the TT and collect data, this time the comparative model in translation studies was applied along with close reading to identify the translated CSIs according to what had been found from the ST. Lastly, by putting the CSIs from the ST and TT side by side, comparative research was practiced to determine which strategies were utilized to translate said CSIs. From the proceedings above, the researcher managed to compile the percentages of each translation strategy.

Table 1 Translation Strategy Percentages

Translation Strategy	Percentage
Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words	38%
Translation by parahrase using related words	18%
Translation by a more general word (superordinate)	17%
Translation by cultural substitution	11%
Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word	7%
Translation by omission	5%
Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation	4%
Translation by illustration	0%

A total of more than 300 CSIs classified as a social culture were found in the process of this research. Out of eight translation strategies, only seven were identified in the TT except translation by illustration. As there was no illustration of any kind in both ST or TT, translation by illustration is written with 0%. On the contrary, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words had the highest percentage of 38% and with more than 100 CSIs recorded. The remaining strategies were sorted from the highest percentage to the least in the table above. As an example, the researcher will present one of each translation strategy and elaborate on the analysis that goes behind it.

Table 2 Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words

ST	TT	Translation Strategy
Football [45]	Pertandingan rugby Amerika [73]	Paraphrase using unrelated words

Football in the United States does not refer to the same sport as the rest of the world. Instead, the United States calls it soccer and on the contrary, American football can also be referred to as rugby. Hence, the TT paraphrased "football" into "American rugby competition." According to the Cambridge Dictionary, rugby is a game for two teams of eleven players in which an oval ball is moved along the field by running with it or throwing it. By paraphrasing a sport called "football" and looking at the context that the setting and author are American, the TT managed to elaborate more on the context and avoid ambiguity.

Table 3 Translation by paraphrase using related words

ST	TT	Translation Strategy
Deadweight [6]	Mati begitu saja [20]	Paraphrase using related words

The complete sentence in the ST is "He was dead weight." On one hand, it expressed the heaviness of a person that could not move by themselves. In addition, the connotation often related to a responsibility or a burden, his comrades felt the responsibility for his death. On the other hand, the TT illustrated the immediate circumstance that they were facing. Their comrade got shot and died all of a sudden, then and there, "dia mati begitu saja" or "he died just like that." Both the ST and TT used words related to "dead," hence it is classified as a translation by paraphrase using a related word.

Table 4 Translation by cultural substitution

ST	TT	Translation Strategy
Half-baked [101]	Dangkal [153]	Cultural substitution

The literal meaning of "half-baked" is not thoroughly cooked or baked. However, it is mostly known as an expression that conveys how something has not been planned or considered carefully enough. On the contrary, the TT substituted "half-baked" with an expression that is more familiar to Indonesian readers. "Dangkal" or "shallow" usually describes the water level. However, it can also be used to express someone's inadequate knowledge in a particular field according to KBBI.

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Table 5 Translation by a more neutral/less expressive word

ST	TT	Translation Strategy
Beat it [116]	Silahkan pergi [175]	Neutral/less expressive words

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, "beat it" is an idiom to tell someone to leave immediately. In addition, it has a more negative connotation as it is closer to a command such as "go away!" On the other hand, the TT translated it into "silahkan pergi"or "please leave." The translation added a polite expression "silahkan" or "please" at the beginning. Hence, the TT is more neutral or less expressive than the ST.

Table 6 Translation by Omission

ST	TT	Translation Strategy
Playing Sousa [137]	-	Omission

John Philip Sousa earned the title of "March King" in the United States Marine Band. The American bandmaster, composer, and conductor was born on 6th November 1854 and died on 6th March 1932. Until 1897, more than 400 different titles of his pieces were recorded by the Marine Band using the phonograph. These pieces are generally called Sousa's marches until this day. Therefore, the high school band in the ST must have played one of his march pieces. However, this phrase was omitted in the TT, as it only described the picnickers listening to the high school marching band on the stage.

Table 7 Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation

ST	TT	Translation Strategy
Grunts [3]	*Grunts* (pekerja kasar) [16]	Loan words plus explanation
Legs [3]	*Legs* (kaki) [16]	Loan words plus explanation

The denotative meanings of "grunts" and "legs" were stated in brackets and both were written in *italic*. These are the characteristics of translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation. However, even though the denotative meanings were provided, the TT does not elaborate on the connotation. "Legs" as well as "grunts" also refer to the United States soldiers who served in the Vietnam War.

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions have been reached through this research. First, out of eight translation strategies, only seven were applied to translate the research object, except translation by illustration. As for the most applicable strategy, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words had the most data with more than 100 data and 38% overall. Most data in the category of social culture were expressions that have both denotative and connotative meanings. Hence, the TT opted to paraphrase most social culture CSIs to elaborate on the meaning using a more familiar diction to the TT readers.

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