
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Domestication Strategy in the English Target Novel *the Red Bekisar*

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ABSTRACT

This research article is about the translation of culture-specific items or cultural words from Indonesian into English. It focuses on the Domestication strategy and the procedures of oblique translation applied in the translation. The data source is an Indonesian novel entitled *Bekisar Merah*, which is translated into English, *the Red Bekisar*. The novel involves the Javanese cultural background, where Islam religion becomes one of the influential settings. This research was conducted with a qualitative-descriptive approach by adapting the concept of oblique translation from Vinay and Darbelnet, the domestication strategy by Venuti, and the culture-specific items by Newmark. The objectives are to reveal the type of cultural words that are domesticated and to locate the procedures of oblique translation applied in translating the cultural words. The results show that the cultural words which are translated with the domestication strategy are of two kinds: material culture and organizations, customs, and ideas; from 61 data on domestication strategy, all four procedures are identified: transposition, modulation, adaptation, and equivalence; and the most frequent procedure found is modulation.

KEYWORDS

Bekisar Merah 'the Red Bekisar', culture-specific items, domestication strategy, modulation, oblique translation

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1. Introduction

One of the complicated situations faced by any translator is to deal with cultural words or culture-specific in their work. Mostly the cultural words are unique and have very specific meanings or information that do not exist in the culture of the target language. It needs the effort to provide the information written in the source text similarly natural in the target text as the equivalent. Some concepts have been proposed to overcome this, and it is up to the translator which one is going to be applied: strategies for translating non-equivalent at the word level (Baker, 1993); techniques of translation (Molina & Hurtado Albir, 2002), and procedures of translation in oblique translation or indirect translation (Jean-Paul Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). And which one is suitable for what situation or function, like whether the translation is made for source-text oriented or foreignized or it is made for target-text oriented or domesticated or both, is provided in the Translation Studies. The situation is observed in the Indonesian novel *Bekisar Merah* and its translation.

The novel *Bekisar Merah* is one of the Indonesian novels which is rich in cultural information covering Javanese ways of life in their religious belief as Muslims as well as the local wisdom Javanese people need to obey. The uniqueness of the Javanese culture in the novel is expressed in the Javanese language in word forms, *suluk* 'Muslim verses recited' and Javanese philosophy (Saputri & Nurhayati, 2019). Some cultural words which are written in the Javanese language are followed by an explanation, but some are not. The translator chooses both strategies (domestication and foreignization) to provide the equivalent of the cultural words. However, the use of the foreignization strategy is less frequent than the use of the domestication strategy. Due to the finding, this research focuses on the use of the domestication strategy only.

To show the position of this research, there is some previous research referred to. The first one is about the domestication strategy in translating lexical and phrase units in a novel from English into Ukrainian. The study focuses on the stylistic aspects of the domestication strategy (Masanovets, 2021). This previous research is chosen as it involves the use of a domestication strategy, and the data source is novel. The second previous research is about the use of domestication strategy in the translation of religious, cultural elements in the Quran into English (Ramli & A. Bakar, 2021). It is chosen for this research as religious elements are involved in the novel *Bekisar Merah*. And the last previous research which is referred to is about the translation of an Indonesian novel into English involving both strategies or ideologies domestication and foreignization, and the translation analysis is studied by the concept of translation method of Newmark's (Cindy Aprilia Devi et al., 2021). One of the results shows that foreignization is applied more than domestication. Based on the three previous researches, it can be observed the position of this research that the translation analysis used a different concept (oblique translation), and the data source is the Indonesian novel *Bekisar Merah* and its translation into English, the *Red Bekisar*. Besides, it is also used in the category of cultural words. To show the position of this research, there are some previous research referred to. The first one is about the domestication strategy in translating lexical and phrase units in a novel from English into Ukrainian. The study focuses on the stylistic aspects of the domestication strategy (Masanovets, 2021). This previous research is chosen as it involves the use of a domestication strategy, and the data source is novel. The second previous research is about the use of domestication strategy in the translation of religious, cultural elements in the Quran into English (Ramli & A. Bakar, 2021). It is chosen for this research as religious elements are involved in the novel *Bekisar Merah*. And the last previous research which is referred to is about the translation of an Indonesian novel into English involving both strategies or ideologies domestication and foreignization, and the translation analysis is studied by the concept of translation method of Newmark's (Cindy Aprilia Devi et al., 2021). One of the results shows that foreignization is applied more than domestication. Based on the three previous researches, it can be observed the position of this research that the translation analysis is used a different concept (oblique translation) and the data source is the Indonesian novel *Bekisar Merah* and its translation into English, the *Red Bekisar*. Besides, it is also used in the category of cultural words from Newmark.

2. Literature Review

When talking about domestication strategy or foreignization strategy, it will directly lead to the translation of cultural words or culture-specific items. The domestication strategy refers to the strategy involving the translation of cultural words or culture-specific items that are target-text oriented (Venuti, 2017). One of the functions of the domestication strategy is to give the target readers a better experience while having the same feeling as the source readers (Zhuo, 2022). Through the domestication strategy, the cultural words which are considered to be unusual are made familiar in the target text to the target readers so the text will be easily understood (Ahmadi & Nosrati, 2012). For the sake of easiness in understanding the target text, the same strategy, the domestication strategy, is used in translating the *Al-Nissa* sura of the Holy Quran (Ahmed & Shammala, 2020). The domestication strategy is also studied in translating subtitling like in the news, as there are two options that can be chosen; when the news is intended to be closer to the domestic audience, the domestication strategy is applied (Yonamine, 2022).

Cultural words or culture-specific items are words or items which are unique that they do not have direct equivalent or one-to-one equivalent (Baker, 2011). There are several taxonomies regarding cultural words, and they are based on different perspectives or concepts, including Newmark's. According to Newmark, the cultural words are classified into five categories: (1) ecology, covering, among others, plants and animals; (2) material culture, for example, food and fashion; (3) social culture: work and leisure; (4) organizations, customs, ideas, for example, political social, legal, including religion; (5) gestures and habits: non-linguistic feature (Newmark, 1988a). The category of cultural words used in this research is Newmark's category.

The domestication strategy involves some procedures of translation under oblique translation or indirect translation. In other words, the oblique translation focuses on the domestication strategy only as it does not keep the sameness of the data in the forms of cultural words like borrowing or calque in the target text. It is, therefore, oblique translation, also called indirect translation, where cultural words cannot be translated directly. The oblique translation or indirect translation consists of four procedures or techniques, namely transposition, modulation, adaptation, and equivalence (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). Using a different concept, the techniques used under the domestication strategy involving the translation of the greatest Urdu's stories are omission, neutralization, and cultural substitution (Nasir et al., 2023). And more different techniques under the domestication strategy are found in the translation of an English novel into Indonesian involving transposition, omission, addition, and adaptation (Zuhaerana et al., 2021). While in the translation of risk and safety phrases, the techniques under the domestication strategy are recategorization, modulation, and adaptation (Vasyilivna, 2022).

The procedures or techniques of translation as parts of oblique translation that are under the domestication strategy in this research are taken from Vinay and Darbelnet. According to them, there are four procedures, namely (1) transposition dealing with the shift of part of speech, like from adjective into adverb; (2) modulation referring to the change of viewpoint including from negative to positive and vice versa; (3) adaptation involving paraphrasing, cultural substitution, and omission, and equivalence or reformulation involving the replacement of elements in the source text with corresponding elements in the target text (Jean-Paul

Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). To study more about modulation covering the type of it: one part for another, part for the whole, active to passive, negative to positive, Newmark's procedure with the same term, modulation is applied (Newmark, 1988b).

3. Methodology

This research uses the descriptive-qualitative method. The data discussed are words dealing with phenomena in everyday life, not numbers, and the results and the finding are described naturally the way it is. The method is divided into two sections. The first section is about the steps of collecting data, and the second section is about the steps of analyzing the data. The steps of collecting the data began with (i) reading the source novel, then (ii) locating the culture-specific items in it. The next step was (iii) to read the target novel and (iv) to locate the equivalent of the culture-specific items collected. After the data have been collected, the research went on with the second section of methodology: the analysis data. The steps of the analysis data are as follow. (1) It began with the study of the category of culture-specific items using Newmark's concepts : (i) ecology, (ii) material culture, (iii) social culture, (iv) organizations, customs, ideas, and the last category is (v) gestures and habits. Then (2) the data in the source text which have been translated were studied whether they were domesticated or foreignized by applying four procedures of oblique translation: transposition, modulation, adaptation, and equivalence. When they were not included in the four procedures under oblique translation, then the data were eliminated because this research focuses on the domestication strategy only, and when they were not domesticated, that means they are under the foreignization strategy. The next step was (3) to study the characteristics of each procedure of translation shown in the data and put them in tables. They are four tables representing each procedure of oblique translation. The last step is to describe the characteristics of each procedure of oblique translation in the article involving the finding of the most frequent procedure found in the translation of the novel.

4. Results and Discussion

The number of data regarding cultural words or culture-specific items found is sixty-one data. This quantity covers all four procedures under oblique translation: transposition, modulation, adaptation, and equivalence. The most frequent procedure found is modulation involving Part for the Whole, One Part for Another, and Positive to Negative, while the least frequent procedure is transposition. The cultural words having domesticated are of two categories out of five: material culture dealing with food, organizations, customs, ideas dealing with the Javanese philosophy, including local wisdom, and religious belief on how Javanese people perform their daily activities as Muslims. The representation of data discussed here is organized based on the frequency of its existence: Table 4.1 consists of data on the modulation procedure in the domestication strategy; it is put at the beginning as it is the most frequent procedure; Table 4.2 consists of the adaptation procedure in the domestication strategy. It is put directly after the modulation as the frequency of this procedure is less than the modulation procedure; then it is followed by the data about the use of equivalence procedure in the domestication strategy, which is put in Table 4.3; and the last one, Table 4.4 consists of the data involving transposition procedure in the domestication strategy.

Table 4.1 Modulation Procedure in the Domestication Strategy

| No. | Source Text | Target Text |
|-----|---|--|
| 1 | <i>Dan hanya Eyang Mus yang berkata penuh yakin bahwa tangan Tuhan sendiri yang mampu menyelamatkan Darsa.</i> | Grandfather Mus declared with full conviction that God himself had saved Darsa. |
| 2 | <i>Orang-orang tak henti menyuruh Darsa nyebut, menyerukan nama Sang Mahasantun.</i> | The others tried to get Darsa to pray and invoke the name of the All Merciful. |
| 3 | <i>Gusti Allah jembar pangapurane, sangat luas ampunan-Nya.</i> | The Almighty's mercy knows no bounds. |
| 4 | <i>segala hal sudah ada yang mengatur, "Manusia mung saderma nglakoni;" katanya</i> | everything is predestined. " Man can't explain why things happen, " he said. |
| 5 | <i>"Cobalah, sesekali kamu datang kemari dengan nasi hangat dan gulai ikan tawes,</i> | Bring some warm rice and silver barb fish stew. |

The clause *tangan Tuhan sendiri yang mampu menyelamatkan Darsa* in data no.1 can be literally translated into 'It's the hand of God itself which is capable to save Darsa'. It is a part of the organizations, customs, and ideas category. It refers to the religious belief in Islam that Muslims should have faith that nothing, nobody in this world can help humans if it is not under the permission of Allah. The phrase *tangan Tuhan* 'the hand of God', which is considered a part of the body that usually does things, is domesticated using a modulation procedure, part (the hand) for the whole (God). This equivalent does not show the loss of meaning, and the translator has made it easier for the target text readers to comprehend. While the second cultural word in data no.2, *Sang Mahasantun* 'The Subtle One, The Most Gentle', deals with one of the *Asma'ul Husna*, the 99 names of Allah. It is domesticated using a modulation procedure, one part (The Subtle One, The Most Gentle) for another, The All-Merciful, as The All-Merciful shows different characteristics of Allah represented in His Names. The third cultural word in data no.3 is given in clause

Gusti Allah jembar pangapurane 'Allah's forgiveness is densely vast'. It is translated using oblique translation, modulation from positive to negative. **Gusti Allah jembar pangapurane** in the positive form is domesticated into 'The Almighty's mercy knows no bounds' negative in the negative form. The modulation from positive to negative in this context does not involve the loss of meaning; it strengthens the meaning of how Allah's forgiveness is a never-ending blessing for humans. Then the next cultural word in data no.4, still in the form of a clause dealing with Javanese philosophy about the faith and devotion to Allah's greatest power, "**Manusia mung saderma nglakoni**," is domesticated using modulation positive for negative similar to the cultural words in data no.3. This clause can be translated literally into 'Humans are only to carry out' while in the target text, it is shifted into the negative also in the same form, a clause. This does not change the message it is trying to express in the source text. And the last cultural words in data no.5 deal with material culture: food, **gulai ikan tawes**, 'silver barb fish curry', but it has been domesticated using modulation, one part for another, the part refers to the way it cooks: in the source language, the word 'gulai' is when you cook using coconut milk and usually a bit spicy while in the target text it is shifted into another way of cooking, stew. There is a loss of meaning in the context though the fish in the target language is the same kind of fish as in the source language, and although both gulai and stew refer to a certain kind of meal yet the specific way of cooking is different.

Table 4.2 Adaptation Procedure in the Domestication Strategy

| No. | Source Text | Target Text |
|-----|---|---|
| 1 | Lasi masih mendengar emaknya terus nyapnyap dengan ledakan kata-kata yang sangat pedas dan tajam | Lasi listened to her mother's explosion of sharp, biting words. |
| 2 | Pada saat seperti itu yang bisa dimakan adalah apa yang bisa diutang dari warung | During those times, he had to put his meals on credit at the local food stall. |
| 3 | Kita percaya, bila mau menurunkan welas-asih Gusti Allah tak kurang cara. | Allah has no shortage of ways to show His Compassion. |
| | | |

There are three key factors that indicated adaptation: cultural substitution, paraphrasing, and omission. The cultural word in data no.1 of Table 4.2 in the form of a word unit, **nyapnyap**; it is a verb that refers to the activity of speaking fast and emotionally, and it is a part of customs. One of the ways the Javanese people express their anger is by speaking fast, loud, and emotionally or nyapnyap. This cultural expression is made implicit by omission as a part of adaptation. This equivalent shows a loss of the detailed meaning though the rest of the information in the data supported the act of nyapnyap. Then in data no.2, the cultural word is **warung** which refers to a traditional stall selling not only cooked food, as in the food stall abroad, but also basic needs like rice, sugar, egg, and salted fish. The word warung is domesticated using adaptation as a cultural substitution. There is no loss of meaning in this context. And the cultural words in Table 4.2 are an expression of devotion to Allah, **welas-asih Gusti Allah** written in the Javanese language. This expression shows the characteristic of Allah as mentioned in HIS 99 names, that HE has all love and compassion to be blessed to Humans. It is translated using the adaptation procedure, paraphrasing into **Allah has no shortage of ways to show His Compassion.** This equivalent shows no loss of meaning, and it has made it easier to comprehend.

Table. 4.3 Equivalence Procedure in the Domestication Strategy

| No. | Source Text | Target Text |
|-----|--|---|
| 1 | Ikhtiar harus tetap dijalankan. | Keep trying the best you can |
| 2 | " Innalillahi . . . ada-kodok-lompat?" | " Surely we belong to God. (R/E) Is there a frog jumping?" |
| 3 | Beduk kembali terdengar dari surau Eyang Mus. Magrib . | The prayer drum (R/E) sounded again from Grandfather Mus' surau at sunset (E) |

What happened in data 1-3 of Table 4.3 is that all of them have been reformulated in equivalence. The word **ikhtiar** in the context, which can be translated literally into the effort, is replicated into a new form of expression; **keep trying the best you can**. Though it looks different, the message is the same with the explicitation of how you do it, **the best you can**. The word **ikhtiar** is a part of religious teaching in Islam, so it is a part of cultural category, organizations, customs, and ideas. While in data no.2, the cultural word **innalillahi** is expressed in Arabic as it is an Islamic teaching that whenever you see or witness or experience it yourself misfortune or accident, you are religiously recommended to express this. It refers to the devotion to Allah that humans and all the creatures in this world belong to Allah and only to Him all will come back. And in the context of data no.2, it is followed by an expression of local wisdom of *nira* tappers that when they accidentally fall from coconut trees, nobody is allowed to say **he falls from the tree**. It is taboo to do that for the society there. And the last cultural words are two, **beduk** and **Maghrib**. **Beduk** refers to a kind of drum specifically designed and used in the mosque to begin the call for prayer, so it is domesticated using an equivalence to the prayer drum. And the word **maghrib** refers to the **sunset praying time**. The equivalence in Table 4.3 manages to express the equivalent, though in different wording, having the same message.

Table. 4.4 Transposition Procedure in the Domestication Strategy

| No. | Source Text | Target Text |
|-----|---|--|
| 1 | Mulut Lasi komat-kamit. Mangkat slamet ; bali slamet , bisik Lisi. | She mouthed a prayer. Go safely; return safely , she whispered. |
| 2 | Mungkin sudah jadi suratan | Maybe that's how it supposed to be , |

The cultural words discussed in the final table, Table 4.4, deal with the domestication strategy using transposition, the change of part of speech. Unlike the other three procedures, adaptation, modulation, and equivalence, which focus on the meaning of the cultural words domesticated, transposition focuses more on grammatical usage. On data no.1, the cultural words are the expression of *du'a*, **Mangkat slamet, bali slamet**, spoken in the Javanese language, which can be literally translated into go safe and come back safe. It is then translated into go safely; return safely based on the English grammatical rules that the part of speech following a verb in denoting how an activity is done is an adverb. It is then the equivalent involves a transposition procedure, the changing of part of speech, *slamet* as an adjective into safely, an adverb. The *du'a* was expressed in a whisper that Lasi hope that her husband goes in a healthy body and comes home is also in a healthy body, safe from any accident. The *du'a* or praying can be categorized as organizations, customs, ideas dealing with the use of the religious expression as a Muslim. This is in line with the second cultural word, *suratan*, which refers to the condition which is considered to be a destiny. It has already been regulated by Allah nobody can change it. The word *suratan* is a noun, and in the target text, it is transposed to a verb phrase **supposed to be**. The word **suratan** also belongs to the cultural category of organizations, customs, and ideas as it deals with religious belief in the context is Islam.

5. Conclusion

Based on the information described in all sections of this research, it can be concluded that the use of a domestication strategy depends on the preference of the translator. This may lead to three options; (i) whether the translator would like to make the target text more familiar to the target readers or (ii) to be more source text oriented, which means introducing the culture of the source text through borrowing with or without followed by explanation, or (iii) to mix the information equally by the use of both domestication strategy and foreignization strategy. Consequently, some detailed information is missing. The equivalent given in the target text covers the general information under the domestication strategy. The type of culture-specific items involves only two types: material culture (food) and organizations, customs, and ideas (religion, local wisdom), mostly given in the Javanese language, followed by its equivalent in the Indonesian language. Through this research, it can be informed that the strategy used in the translation of the novel *Bekisar Merah* into *the Red Bekisar* is more target text-oriented.

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