

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introductory section of this study. It consists of the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Translation is culture-bound (Alvarez et al, 1996). When translating a text, it is not simply finding the equivalent word or finding the right meaning. A translator must consider the cultural differences between the source language and the target language for the readers to understand the text. By considering the cultural differences, there would be some necessary changes in meanings and those changes might be drastically different from what the author intends. Therefore, the translator has the power to alter or manipulate the text. The translator's power to alter a text gives him a difficult task, translating without any bias to his culture.

In general, bias might be perceived as something negative. If a work being labeled as bias, it could be seen by some people as something that is 'unneutral', 'one-sided', or 'conveying some personal agenda'. Oxford dictionary (2020) defines the word bias as "a strong feeling in favour of or against one group of people" so it is no wonder that people could see bias as something to be avoided.

However, according to Ghazala (2002) it would be near impossible for a translator to be completely impartial whether he likes it or not because he is a human being after all, who has some sense of belonging to a certain culture with an intricate background. This inability to be unbiased might be a good thing as translators are demanded to be aware of their culture so that they can transfer meanings properly to their target language, but they also have to be meticulous.

According to Ghazala (2002), bias is not necessarily a bad thing. Some intrusions are needed in translating certain parts of the novel. Therefore, he divided bias into two, negative and positive bias. Negative bias is an unjustified translation

on the SL text that “might result in a harmful considerable loss of meaning, caused by changing, adding, or dropping something out for personal reasons.”(Ghazala, 2002, p.154), while positive bias is “the translator’s justifiable bias to show respect to the readership, avoid insulting them, explain ambiguities, glorify or euphemize for social purposes, correct blunders and printing mistakes, dropout unnecessary, trivial or taboo words.” (Ghazala, 2002, p.156). In short, bias in this context is any alteration made in the translation process that could either be positive or negative.

Therefore, Ghazala’s study on bias is used to unveil the bias that occurs in the English translation of *Saman*. Both version of *Saman* are compared in order to reveal the bias. By conducting this study, the researcher hopes to show that some bias are understandable and some even needed because of cultural differences.

As mentioned before, translation is culture-bound. When conducting a translation process, a translator has to bridge the cultural difference between two languages, hence becoming bias to his own culture. The most significant difference that could be analyzed is their use of language. The use of language in a particular culture could be very specific that every cultures have their own cultural words. “The more specific a language becomes for a natural phenomenon, the more it becomes embedded in cultural features, and therefore creates translation problems.” (Newmark, 1988, p.95). Therefore, it would a take a considerable amount of precision in order to translate cultural words.

To further support this study, Newmark’s translations studies and procedures (1988) are also referred, to identify the cultural words in the novel and how it is translated. In his book entitled *A Textbook of Translations*, Newmark explains that there are five types of cultural words, they are ecology; material culture, social culture, organization; and gesture and habits. Besides, he also explains that there are 11 translation procedures that translators could use, they are transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, synonym, through-translation, shifts and transpositions, modulation, recognized translation, and couplet.

First published in 1998, *Saman* sets during the last period of Soeharto's totalitarian 'new order' regime so the anti-government sentiment is apparent throughout the novel. It tells a story where four women who come from different backgrounds and cultures, whose lives somehow entangled with a pastor turned activist named Saman. Despite being published in 1998, this novel is still being talked about by many scholars and still can be found in bookstores across Indonesia.

This phenomenal classic has been translated to eight languages and one of them is English. The English version is translated by Australian author Pamela Allen. Supported by Australian Society of Authors, this version is the one that is distributed worldwide.

Since *Saman* is considered one of Indonesia's influential contemporary works, there are already tons of research conducted on this book. However, most of them focus on the socio-cultural aspects of the novel such as the one conducted by Listyowulan (2010), which shows how Utami is able to integrate her own opinions that might be seen as controversial during that time into her works and Putri (2019), that discusses the gender perspective depicted in the novel.

Although there are not many studies on bias in translation, there are several similar studies that still relate to this research such as Boase-Beier (2014) on how translators make changes in structures of narratives and perspectives while translating the works of Nobel-prize-winning German-Romanian writer Herta Muller. In addition, Noortatik's (2016) study on the translation of cultural words in Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol* and Bielsa's study (2011) on how translations could dramatically alter the content of reference book, also helps the researcher to conduct this study.

This study is expected to reveal the bias in the English translation of *Saman* using Ghazala's and Newmark's studies on translation.

1.2 Research Questions

To limit the scope of the research, the study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of cultural words found in the novel?
2. What kind of biases are found in the English translation of *Saman*?
3. How are the biases translated in the novel?

1.3 The Aims of the Study

This research aims to reveal the types of cultural words in the novel, determine the types of bias found in the novel, as well as find out the way those biases were translated.

1.4 Significance of the Study

From this research, the researcher expects to be able to come up with a description of the bias that occur in the novel. In addition, the researcher also expects to unveil how bias is translated in the English version of *Saman*. Therefore, this study hopefully will help readers be aware that bias is bound to happen in translated work since translation is not merely transferring meaning from one language to another, but also ideas and culture that might not be easily accepted by other groups of people.

1.5 Clarification of the Terms

1. Bias in Translation

According to Ghazala (2002), bias in translation is intrusions made in translation process by the translator, whether deliberately or not. There are two major types of bias, positive and negative.

2. Unbias

A state where the translator able to not apply any bias during the translation process. However, according to Ghazala (2002), it is near impossible to do so.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This research is organized in the following structure:

1. CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the basis of the research. It offers the foundation of the research while also provides the limitation of the research. This chapter consists of several sub-chapters; background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, clarification of the terms, as well as organization of the paper.

2. CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

This chapter features the theories used for this research. It discusses the theoretical frameworks needed for this research as well as previous studies that help this research.

3. CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology

This chapter explains what methods are used in this research and how the research is conducted.

4. CHAPTER 4: Findings and discussions

This chapter contains discusses the findings of the research. It provides answers to the research questions of this research.

5. CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

This is the chapter that concludes the research. It gives conclusions based on the findings and discussions. In addition, this chapter also gives suggestion for future research