Trust Exercise by Susan Choi: An annotated translation

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ABSTRACT

This study presents an analysis of annotated translations focusing on the novel "Trust Exercise" by Susan Choi, published in 2019. The objective of this study is to identify suitable translation strategies for effectively translating cultural-specific terms encountered in Choi's novel. Specifically, the annotations in this report pertain to Part 1 of the novel. The researchers identifies eight translation problems encountered in this section, the first being comprehension of the source text, including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. To address these challenges, the researchers employed a simultaneous understanding and transferring approach, utilizing online dictionaries as translation aids. Moreover, the researchers adopted the most suitable translation strategy to enhance text comprehensibility. Semantic strategies were predominantly employed by the researchers, considering meaning at various linguistic levels, including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences.

1.   Introduction

Translation, as the bridge connecting diverse cultures and languages, has long been a subject of profound scholarly inquiry. The field of Translation Studies offers a comprehensive framework for investigating the intricacies of this transformative process, unveiling a dynamic realm where linguistic, cultural, and cognitive dimensions converge. With its interdisciplinary nature, Translation Studies unravels the complexities of translation by delving into linguistic, literary, sociocultural, and cognitive aspects, providing valuable insights into the theories, practices, and challenges associated with the art of translation (Levý, 2011; Rojo & Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2013). Therefore, translation plays a vital role in bringing literary works to a broader audience (Bassnett, 2007; Bassnett & Trivedi, 2012),

transcending language barriers (Baker, 2019; Malhotra, 2023), and allowing readers from different cultures to engage with the text (Billiani, 2014; Scammell & Bielsa, 2022). In essence, Translation Studies goes beyond the mere act of transferring words from one language to another. It delves into the nuances of cultural expression, the subtleties of linguistic adaptation, and the intricate decisions made by translators to faithfully convey the original message. By delving into the theories, models, and strategies that underpin the practice of translation, scholars in this field strive to uncover the complexities involved in the negotiation between languages, cultures, and worldviews (G³az, 2019).

However, the process of translating a literary masterpiece involves numerous challenges, particularly in capturing the nuances, cultural context, and emotional depth of the original work. Thus, an annotated translation offers a valuable resource for both scholars and readers, providing a deeper understanding of the author's intentions and the intricate layers of meaning within the text.

Williams and Chesterman (2014) mentioned annotated translation as a type of translation that includes additional explanatory notes, comments, or annotations alongside the translated text. Other than that annotated translation is research that provides notes on one of the words chosen in translating as a form of responsibility of the translator (Wijaya, 2019). These annotations serve to provide further context, clarification, or insights into the translation choices made by the translator. Therefore, annotated translations is a valuable tools that not only facilitate comprehension and appreciation of the translated work but also provide readers with a more enriched understanding of the cultural and linguistic nuances embedded within the text.

The object of discussion in this analysis is the novel "Trust Exercise" written by Susan Choi. Published in 2019, this fictional romance novel explores themes of trust, power dynamics, and the manipulation of emotions. Susan Choi, the author, had a diverse upbringing, spending time in Houston, Texas, and South Bend, Indiana, where she was born. During her studies in literature at Yale and writing at Cornell, she worked as a fact checker for The New Yorker.

"Trust Exercise" gained significant recognition, receiving the US National Book Award for Fiction in 2019 and being selected as one of former US President Barack Obama's favourite books of the year. Set in 1980, the novel takes place at the Citywide Academy for the Performing Arts (CAPA) and revolves around the coming-of-age journey of two theatre students, Sarah and David.

The narrative primarily focuses on Sarah and David's passionate relationship amidst the theatrical world and their personal ambitions. Divided into three parts, the novel offers different perspectives on the events that unfold. The first part delves into the dynamics of Sarah and David's relationship, exploring themes of trust, power, and emotional manipulation. The introduction of Karen, a captivating new student, challenges their bond and alters the dynamics between the characters.

As the story progresses, the second part presents a shift in perspective, casting doubt on the reliability of the previous narrative. The true nature of the characters and their relationship becomes uncertain as layers of deception and ambiguity are unveiled. This engenders introspection within readers, encouraging them to question their assumptions about the characters' motivations and actions.

In the final section, the narrative jumps to the future, unveiling the consequences of the characters' choices and the lasting impact of their experiences. Throughout the novel, the exploration of

trust, betrayal, and the blurred boundaries between reality and performance remains constant, leaving readers with a sense of ambiguity and prompting contemplation. "Trust Exercise" delves into the complexities of adolescence, power dynamics within relationships, and the enduring effects of emotional manipulation. Through skilful storytelling and an examination of memory and perspective, the novel challenges readers to re-evaluate their own perceptions of truth and the intricate nature of belief.

For the purpose of this analysis, the researchers focuses solely on the first part of the novel, which centres around the teenage love story of Sarah and David. These two 15-year-old characters, with their contrasting personalities and backgrounds, form the core of this intense and fleeting romance. The researchers specifically selects this section as it serves as an introduction to the novel and lays the foundation for the overarching story.

The study of analyzing literary works is not a new phenomenon. Previous studies, such as the research conducted by Maghfira and Lailiyah (2021) and Lailiyah and Yustisia (2019), have focused on analyzing memoirs and novels. Moreover, there have been previous studies specifically addressing the annotated translation of novels. For instance, Adnyana (2021) conducted a study on the annotated translation of a novel titled "The Great Patriotic War of The Soviet Union." Putri and Bangun (2014) analyzed an annotated translation of the novel "Love is A Frenzy" by Charlotte Lamb, while Pravitha (2014) examined the annotated translation of the novel "The Day Boy and The Night Girl" by George Macdonald.

These earlier studies have contributed to the field of annotated translation by providing insights into the challenges and strategies involved in translating literary works. By building upon the foundations laid by these previous researchers, the current study aims to contribute further to the understanding of annotated translation within the context of the chosen novel. Differently, the "Trust Exercise" Chapter 1 novel was chosen as the research source text in this study because the novel had never been translated into Indonesian before. In this connection, this present study aims:

- to identify the translation strategy which suitable to translate in cultural word found of Choi's Trust Exercise novel.

2. Method

This research employs a qualitative approach to investigate the annotated translation of the novel "The Awakening" by Kate Chopin. The qualitative methodology allows for an in-depth exploration of the translation strategies employed and the effectiveness of these strategies in capturing the nuances and meaning of the source text.

In annotated translation, the translator marks up the source text and adds comments. Translation with commentary is useful for facilitating the analysis of problems encountered during the translation process by utilizing relevant theories and strategies. Furthermore, it serves as a valuable tool for incorporating additional information during the translation process. To determine the appropriate translation approach, translators engage in introspective research, delving into their thoughts and emotions. Retrospective research is conducted by reflecting on translation theory and strategy using their memories to assess the issues that arose.

In general, a translation strategy refers to the approach employed by translators to render words, groups of words, or even entire phrases when they cannot be segmented into smaller translation units (Suryawinata & Hariyanto, 2003). As such, translation strategy serves as a means to convey the meaning of a linguistic unit in another language, and it encompasses the methods employed by translators to address translation challenges. In the present study, the researchers utilized two specific translation strategies, namely syntactic and semantic strategies, in order to resolve the identified prob-lems.

Haya and Djohan (2022) have highlighted the significance of the syntactic strategy in translation, which focuses on the syntactic elements of the text, including its units. Additionally, Mizher (2016) emphasized that this strategy primarily involves manipulating the form and necessitates certain syntactic modifications. When employing the syntactic strategy, the translator must alter the original structure of the source language to achieve equivalence in the target language. In the present study, the researchers utilized the syntactic strategy, specifically the addition strategy, to address the iden-tified problems. According to Suryawinata and Hariyanto (2016), addition refers to the inclusion of words in the target language, which is deemed necessary for the text to be well-received by the target audience.

Meanwhile, in defining semantic strategies, one researcher emphasized that semantic translation aims to closely align the semantic and syntactic structures of the target language with the same contextual meaning as the source language text. In addition, according to Suryawinata and Hariyanto (2016), a translation technique that prioritizes meaning is known as a semantic strategy, which operates at the word, phrase, clause, or sentence level.

In this study, the researchers utilized semantic strategies, including borrowing strategies, cultural equivalents, descriptive equivalents, and paraphrasing, to address the identified translation problems. Suryawinata and Hariyanto (2016) identified borrowing strategy as a translation strategy that directly incorporates source language terms into the target language. This strategy is used when no equivalent exists in the target language. It includes naturalization, where words from the source language are adapted to conform to the rules of the target language.

The cultural equivalent strategy, as defined by Suryawinata and Hariyanto (2016), involves replacing specific terms in the source language with words that are characteristic of the target language. It is important to note that this strategy may not fully preserve the accuracy of meaning due to cultural differences between the languages. However, it enhances the fluency and readability of the translated sentences. The descriptive equivalent strategy, as defined by Suryawinata and Hariyanto (2016), entails providing a detailed description of the meaning and function of a word in the source language. This strategy is employed when there is no equivalent term in the target language. The paraphrasing strategy involves rephrasing the source text by removing one or more word components to ensure that the meaning of the translation is conveyed effectively in the target text.

3.   Results and discussion

The result revealed that various challenges arise when translating a text, influenced by factors such as cultural disparities between the writers and readers of the text. In this research, the focus lies

on analyzing the problems encountered in Chapter 1 of Susan Choi's novel, "Trust Exercise." The data for analysis was derived from the translation of the source text in English into Indonesian.

Throughout the translation process, the researchers employed a combined approach of "understanding and "transfer" to overcome the encountered challenges. "Understanding" refers to the translator's grasp of the context, purpose, meaning, and related cultural aspects of the source lan-guage. On the other hand, "transfer" involves seeking equivalent expressions or phrases in the target language using appropriate translation strategies.

The researchers identified and analyzed a total of seven problems during the translation process. To address these issues, various suitable translation strategies has been applied, such as descriptive equivalents, borrowing, addition, cultural equivalents, and paraphrasing. The details of these translation problems are provided in Table 1, offering a comprehensive overview of the different categories encountered. However, only selected word, phrase, and sentence are discussed in this study.

Table 1. The categories of translation problems

No.	Categories	Number of annotated items
1.	Word	3
2.	Phrase	4
3.	Sentence	1
	Total annotation	8

The annotated items of word problem

Source text:

> *David, who had attended a theatre camp, had done Willy Loman from Death of a Salesman.* (Trust Exercise, Chapter 1)

Target text:

> *David, yang mengikuti sanggar teater, memerankan Willy Loman dari Death of a Salesman.* (Indonesian translation – the researchers)

To translate the word "camp", the researchers employed a semantic strategy known as the borrow-ing strategy, which included the technique of naturalization. Naturalization involves adjusting the pronunciation and spelling of words from the source language to fit the target language. It is impor-tant to note that naturalization can result in target language words having different meanings than their counterparts in the source language.

As highlighted by Newmark (1988), this strategy focuses on modifying the spelling and pro-nunciation to align with the target language. In the case of translating the word "camp" into Indone-sian, the researchers decided to use the term "sanggar." In Indonesian, "sanggar" refers to a place for artistic activities, such as dance, painting, and other creative endeavors (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indone-

sia [KBBI] Daring, n.d.). On the other hand, the word "kamp" in Indonesian typically signifies tents constructed as temporary shelters for soldiers, scouts, or travelers, but not specifically for artistic activities (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia [KBBI] Daring, n.d.).

By choosing the term "sanggar" as the translation for "camp," the researchers aimed to capture the contextual relevance and convey the intended meaning in the target language. It is crucial to consider the sound and contextual associations when determining the appropriate translation for a given term.

Source text:

> *They lacked the word for it, but intuition supplied the frisson: Mr. Kingsley was not just gay but an* **iconoclast***, the first such they'd ever encountered.* (Trust Exercise, Chapter 1)

Target text:

> *Mereka kekurangan kata-kata untuk itu, tetapi intuisi memberi sensasi tersendiri. Pak Kingsley bukan hanya gay, tetapi juga seorang* **ikonoklas** *yang pertama kali mereka temui.* (Indonesian translation – the researchers)

To address this issue, the researchers employed a semantic strategy known as descriptive equivalent. This strategy was chosen because the words in the source text were closely tied to the cultural context of the novel. Additionally, there was no cultural equivalent in the target language that adequately captured the intended meaning. Thus, describing the meaning of the source word was deemed the appropriate approach.

As emphasized by Newmark (1988), the descriptive equivalent strategy involves providing a description of the meaning and function of words in the source language (p. 83-84). The researchers conducted research using online dictionaries to explore the definition of 'iconoclast.' It was discov-ered that iconoclast refers to individuals who strongly oppose widely accepted beliefs and traditions (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Consequently, the researchers decided to interpret 'iconoclast' as 'seseorang yang sangat menentang kepercayaan dan tradisi yang diterima secara umum' in the target language.

By opting for a descriptive equivalent, the researchers aimed to convey the intended meaning in the target language while accounting for the cultural context of the source text. This strategy enables a more precise and accurate representation of the original term, facilitating a better understanding for readers of the translated text.

The annotated items of phrase problem

Source Text: *Sarah's first cousin, her mother's sister's son, was a* **leather queen***, Sarah said calmly to platter-eyed classmates; this cousin lived in San Francisco, often wore women's clothes to sing torch songs, and in general gave Sarah a key to Mr. Kingsley's esoterica that her peers wholly lacked.* (Trust Exercise, Chapter 1)

Target text:

> *Kakak sepupu Sarah, anak lelaki dari saudara perempuan ibunya, adalah seorang **leather queen**, kata Sarah dengan santai pada teman sekelasnya. Sepupunya ini tinggal di San Francisco. Dia sering mengenakan pakaian wanita selama menyanyikan lagu balada cinta dan secara umum memberi Sarah kunci untuk rahasia Pak Kingsley yang sama sekali tak dimiliki teman sebayanya.* (Indonesian translation – the researchers)

In translating the term "leather queen," the researchers employed a semantic strategy known as descriptive equivalent. The decision to utilize this strategy was based on the close association between the words in the source text and the cultural context of the novel. Moreover, the researchers was unable to find a cultural equivalent in the target language that adequately conveyed the intended meaning. Therefore, the most suitable approach was to describe the meaning of the source word.

The researchers discovered that "queen of skins" refers to an effeminate gay individual who enjoys wearing leather attire (Urban Dictionary, 2003). Essentially, a "leather queen" is a gay individual who has a preference for wearing women's clothing made of leather. The reserachers believes that this meaning closely aligns with the context and language equivalent in the target text.

In Indonesian, "gay" is defined as a man who loves or experiences sexual attraction towards the same sex (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia [KBBI] Daring, n.d.). Therefore, the interpretation of "Leather Queen" in Indonesian can be rendered as "*Gay yang suka memakai pakaian wanita berbahan kulit*" (a gay individual who enjoys wearing women's clothing made of leather).

Source text:

> *In this strange realm, he showered with a smooth brick of Ivory soap, passing it between his legs, firmly lathering every square inch, meticulous and patient because truly frightened; he'd never had sex with a girl he loved.* (Trust Exercise, Chapter 1)

Target text:

> *Di tempat asing ini dia mandi dengan sebatang lembut **sabun bermerek Ivory**, melewatkannya diantara kedua kakinya,menyabuni setiap incinya dengan teliti dan sabar karena benar – benar gelisah. Dia belum pernah berhubungan seks dengan gadis yang dicintainya.* (Indonesian translation – the researchers)

The meaning of 'ivory soap' is translated as 'sabun bermerek ivory' in the target language. The literal translation of 'ivory soap' is 'sabun gading,' but the researchers did not comprehend its significance. To address this challenge, the researchers conducted an online search for a definition. It was discovered that Ivory is a brand of bar soap.

In translating the phrase into the target language, the researchers employed a syntactic strategy known as the information change strategy, specifically the addition technique. According to Suryawinata and Hariyanto (2016), the addition strategy involves incorporating words in the target language as needed. The purpose of employing the addition strategy in this translation is to ensure the structural coherence and ease of understanding in the target language. Therefore, the researchers made the decision to add the word *'bermerek'* (branded) in the target language to enhance comprehension. By including this word, the phrase becomes *'sabun bermerek ivory,'* making it more accessible to the target language readers.

The annotated items of sentence problem

Source text:

> *William was the heartthrob of Christian Julietta, fat Pammie, Taniqua who could dance, and her adjuncts Chantal and Angie, who screamed with pleasure when **William swung and dipped Taniqua**, when he spun her like a top across the room.* (Trust Exercise, Chapter 1)

Target text:

> *William adalah idola Christian Julietta, Pammie gendut, Taniqua yang bisa menari serta para asistennya, Chantal dan Angie, yang berteriak kegirangan saat **William mengayun dan menopang Taniqua pada gerakan dip**, lalu memutarnya layaknya gasing di seberang sisi ruangan.* (Indonesian translation – the researchers)

The meaning of 'William swung and dipped Taniqua' is translated as *'William mengayun dan menopang Taniqua pada gerakan dip'* in the target language. In this sentence, the researchers encountered difficulty in finding an equivalent meaning in the target language, particularly with the word 'dip,' which sounded unfamiliar. To address this challenge, the researchers conducted an internet search to determine the meaning of 'dip.' It was discovered that 'dip' refers to a movement where one embraces their partner's shoulder and leans on it for support.

When translating the sentence into the target language, the researchers employed a syntactic strategy, specifically the information change strategy, with the addition technique. As highlighted by Suryawinata and Hariyanto (2016), the addition strategy involves incorporating words in the target language as needed. The purpose of utilizing the addition strategy in this translation is to ensure structural coherence in the target language, making the phrase easier to comprehend. Consequently, the researchers decided to add the phrase *'pada gerakan dip'* (during the dipping movement) to facilitate understanding in the target language. By employing these translation strategies, the researchers aimed to convey the intended meaning of the sentence in the target language, overcoming the challenge posed by the unfamiliar word 'dip.' The goal was to ensure the translated phrase maintains both structural and contextual clarity.

4.   Conclusion

In conclusion, translation serves as a crucial link between diverse cultures and languages, facilitating the exchange of ideas and literature across borders. The field of Translation Studies provides valuable insights into the theories, practices, and challenges associated with translation, encompassing linguistic, cultural, and cognitive dimensions. Annotated translation, in particular, offers a valuable resource for scholars and readers, providing additional context and insights into the translation choices made by the translator. This study, however, aims to to determine the appropriate translation strategy for cultural words encountered in Susan Choi's novel "Trust Exercise". The findings revealed challenges encountered during the translation process, such as cultural disparities and difficulties finding equivalent meanings in the target language. Through the application of appropriate translation strategies, the researcher was able to overcome these challenges and provide accurate and contextually relevant translations. The inclusion of annotations alongside the translated text enhances readers' understanding of the original work, capturing its nuances and cultural references. Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of annotated translation and highlights the complexities and considerations involved in translating literary works. By examining the specific translation problems and strategies employed in the context of "Trust Exercise," the study sheds light on the intricacies of translation and the role it plays in making literature accessible to a wider audience while preserving the integrity of the original text.

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