

# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRANSLATION BETWEEN THE SOURCE LANGUAGE (SL) AND THE TARGET LANGUAGE (TL) IN TAGORE'S POETRY: GITANJALI, SONGS OF OFFERINGS

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## Abstract

The long lyrical poem entitled *Gitanjali, Songs of Offerings* written by Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) is very interesting and has a deep philosophical thought. In this occasion, Part LVII is selected to be analysed. This poetry was translated into Indonesian by Amal Hamzah in 1952, which is used as the target language (TL). The approach used is from literary criticism (intrinsic and extrinsic) and from perspective of translation theories. Based on the analysis, obviously, we can see that a single word may have various senses and those are signalled by the context. Especially in poetry, it is enriched by figurative senses. The process of translating poetry absolutely cannot ignore the message of the source language (SL); however, reminding that there is no 100% synonymy between words in every language, the translating process must notice the intrinsic sight of the poem. We cannot judge whether a translation is bad, better or good, especially translation in poetry, particularly the lyrical poem. In this case, some strategies can be conducted such as: translation shifts, lexical translation, idiomatic translation, borrowing, etc., which can be used to naturalize the poetry translation and to achieve the best readability of the TL text.

**Keywords:** *Gitanjali, Lyrical Poem, Source Language, Target Language.*

## I INTRODUCTION

*Gitanjali* is a collection of poems by the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore. The English *Gitanjali, Songs of Offerings* is a collection of 103 English poems of Tagore's own English translations of his Bengali poems first published in November 1912 by the India Society of London. Tagore's poetry was viewed as spiritual and full of philosophy. Rabindranath Tagore has a school, *Shanti Niketan*, means the 'Abode of Peace' (now it becomes the University of Vishvabharati). There, Amal Hamzah, an Indonesia poet, had learned from him. This also can be one reason how Amal Hamzah appreciated Rabindranath Tagore and translated his poems.

A poem has at least two levels of meaning, i.e. literal and figurative or symbolic meaning. The literal meaning is the explicit meaning, which is overtly stated by the lexical items and grammatical forms; while figurative or symbolic meaning is the implicit meaning, which to be communicated by the translation, because it is intended to be understood by the original writer. In this case, only the poet knows what he or she meant in his or her works. Again, it is supported by the poetic license. The problem emerged in this study is the possibility to translate a poem. In this case, how to translate the SL into the TL which has the closest meaning? This project is trying to find the answer. The approach used is from literary criticism (intrinsic and extrinsic) and from perspective of translation theories. However, as the time given is very limited, this project will only select some interesting matters.

## II MATERIALS AND METHOD

The main theory that used in analysing the translation is taken from Mildred L. Larson (1998) in his book entitled "Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence". According to Larson, there are two main kinds of translations: form-based translation, which follows the form of source language (literal translations) and meaning-based translation, which makes every effort to communicate the meaning of the source language text in the natural forms of the receptor or target language. Meaning-based translation is idiomatic translation. Before doing the analysis, we should understand first about the definition of poetry. Poetry is the hymn of praise, and the essays on the nature of poetry would cram the shelves of any modest public library and overflow onto the floors as well.

A very old definition of poetry regards it as a fusion of sound and sense. Fusion means a melting together of sound and sense. In other words, poetry is the art of saying something by saying something else just as good. Regarding to the sense of the poetry's translation, the second book is the translation of *Gitanjali* in Indonesian version from Amal Hamzah (1952). Hamzah was one of the Tagore's disciple and also one of the pioneers in Indonesian poets.

Below is the original poem, the source language text (SL):

## Gitanjali, LVII

Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light!

Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the center of my life; the light, strikes, my darling, the chords of my love, the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth.

The butterflies spread their sails on the sea of light. Lilies and jasmines surge up on the crest of the waves of light.

The light is shattered into gold on every cloud, my darling, and it scatters gems in profusion.

Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heaven's river has drowned its bank and the flood of joy is abroad.

And now, here is the translation, the target language text (TL):

Cahaya, cahayaku, cahaya yang memenuhi dunia, cahaya yang menyayang mata, cahaya yang menyejuk hati!

Ah, cahaya menari, kekasihku, dalam sari kehidupanku, cahaya mengenai, kekasihku, tali cintaku; langit terbuka, angin untai, tawa berlayar didataran dunia.

Kupu-kupu membuka sayapnya dalam laut cahaya. Seroja dan melati menaik di atas puncak gelombang cahaya.

Dalam tiap-tiap mega, kekasihku, cahaya seperti emas terpecah dan menyebarkan permata dalam kemewahan.

Kegirangan mengembang dari daun kedaun dan kesenangan tiada berhingga. Sungailangit melampaui tepiannya dan pasang-kesenangan sedang mdatang.

The poetry used as data source is taken from a long lyrical poem entitled *Gitanjali, Songs of Offerings* written by Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941), an Indian multitalented philosopher. In this occasion, Part LVII is selected for the project. This poetry is very interesting and has a deep philosophical thought. Rabindranath Tagore was awarded Nobel Prize for this poetry in 1913, and he is the first Asian winner. This poetry was translated into Indonesian by Amal Hamzah in 1952, which will be used as the receptor or target language.

The data was collected by using observational method by close-reading strategy and comparison between the source texts and the target texts. The approach that used in analysing the data is from literary criticism (intrinsic and extrinsic) and from perspective of translation theories. The analysis begins with an explanation of the theories mentioned in theoretical framework. Finally, the data is analysed according to their types to maintain the theories.

### III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tense used in the SL poetry is consistently simple present, except the last line used present perfect. The simple present tense is used to express general truth and habitual action. So, it can be said that this poem express everlasting value. And since the last line is present perfect, which is used to express something already happened completely at the present time; the last line can be determined as the real situation, the main event of this text. In the Indonesian translation, the tense cannot be clearly recognized, as Indonesian language has no clear tenses. However, by tracing the message of the translation, the value can be obtained.

The first paragraph, there are five repetitions of the word 'light' and all are added by adjectival modifier: *my*, *world-filling*, *eye-kissing*, and *heart-sweetening*. The effect of such composition is hyperbolism. Also, there is a meaning of continuity in the adjectival verb: *world filling*, *eye-kissing*, and *heart sweetening*; these indicate that the events are permanence or happen regularly. If we look from figurative meaning perspective, 'light' has to do with life, consciousness, enlightenment, and educated condition, and most of all, it means divine. And when someone enriches with life, consciousness, enlightenment, and educated condition, he feels joy. If we may interpret, those are meant by the *world-filling*, *eye-kissing*, and *heart-sweetening*.

The same repetitions happened in its Indonesian translation. The word 'light' is translated into 'cahaya' in Indonesian. There are two SL words which are translated into different literal meaning in the TL text, those are 'eye-kissing' into 'yang menyayang mata' – not 'mencium mata' (*mencium*: means to kiss), and 'heart-sweetening' into 'menyejuk hati' not 'memaniskan hati'. According to Larson, the process is called idiomatic translation. As the translation should sound natural, the SL can be translated

into different word from the lexicon as long as it still on the main thought expected. In this case, the word '*mencium*'; *to kiss*, and '*menyayang*'; *to love* has close relationship that generally one of people showing their love, especially in close or intimate situation is by kissing, while the word '*memaniskan*'; *to sweeten* replaced by '*menyejuk*'; *to cool*. So, if the translation used the Indonesian denotative words, '*mencium*'; *to kiss* and '*memaniskan*' *to sweeten*, it doesn't match with the expected meaning. And the text '*cahaya yang menyejukkan hati*', again it is hyperbolism, 'light', usually causes 'warm', but in fact, it is chained with '*menyejuk(kan)*'; *to cool*. This is called as oxymoron, an effect in which two contradictory terms are used in conjunction.

Based on those explanations, the first paragraph, which is full of hyperbolic sense, is trying to explain about an extraordinary one, the magnificent thing that is symbolized as 'Light'. Then, we proceed to paragraph 2, 3, 4 and 5. There is dynamic sense in all these line, which is described by the motion verbs: *dances, strikes, opens, runs, passes over, sails, surge up, is shattered, scatters, spreads*. Then, notice the words *butterflies, lilies, jasmines, and leaf*; flowers, leaves, butterflies exist in Spring time, and usually, the living environment begins to start their productive live on Spring because of the appropriate conditions. The time which is full of energy of live and dynamic will emerge joy and happiness.

There are also words having contrastive sense such as: *the sky opens, wind runs wild, cloud, laughter passes over the earth*; which indicates the unfavourable situations. There is a mismatch in translating 'pass over' into '*berlayar*'. According to the Thesaurus, pass something over means *disregard, forget, ignore, skip, omit, pass by, not dwell on*. In this case, although the Indonesian '*berlayar*' as figurative meaning has a link with *skip, pass by, not dwell on*; it is inappropriate for translating the word 'pass over'. The solution is, according to Larson, to keep the first meaning. So, it is better to translate it as '*meninggalkan*' *to leave*' as the meaning of idiomatic words *not dwell on*. These parts describes about the beauty of complete life both in good and bad times, which run through consciousness about the Light. The last line is translated without clearly stating the tense. It is very important because the line determine the event explained by whole text. This is the conclusion of the message of the poem. By historical or diachronic approach, the author is from *brahmin* family, the Thakur family (in English, it is pronounced as Tagore). Rabindranath has well comprehension about Hinduism, especially Saivism, which believes the inseparable relationship between *atman* (being) and *Paramatman* (the Supreme Being), that *atman* is the sprinkle or particle of *Paramatman*.

It is described as the sunlight and its reflections in thousands clay pots filled with water, that is how the Supreme Being is reflected in all beings. All beings can be unified with the Supreme Being when they set their life unbounded into liberation, they will feel the greatest joy, *Advaitam Anandam*. In order to achieve the liberation, there must be consciousness in every being; and consciousness is reached through creative unity, creative actions and thought, which all of those are fully dedicated to the Great Creator. In his essay, *Religion of the Poet*, he said that all his creative works are the way he devote the Supreme Being. And he often described God as if he was very close with Him such as: *my love, beauty, lord of my heart, my dear, princess, my dearest one, etc.* Having traced the history of the author, it can indicate that the poem has to do with theology, the philosophy of divinity. That all creatures begin from the Great Creator. They are blessed and they all can find their joy and happiness by their self-consciousness.

#### IV CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, obviously, we can see that a single word may has various senses and those are signalled by the context. Especially in poetry, it is enriched by figurative senses. The process of translating poetry absolutely cannot ignore the message of the SL, however, reminding that there is no 100% synonymy between words in every language, the translating process must notice the intrinsic sight of the poem, in order to get the most equivalent translation; and also the extrinsic sight, to achieve the text is matching with the context of situation and context of culture, and also to provide the readability of the poem in the TL readers.

We cannot judge whether a translation is bad, better or good, especially translation in poetry, in this case, lyrical poem. The translator also has his own competence in understanding a poem to be translated through his contemplations. In this case, some strategy can be conducted such as: translation shifts, lexical translation, idiomatic translation, borrowing, etc., which can be used to naturalize the poetry translation and to achieve the best readability of the TL text.

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