

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURALLY-BOUND EXPRESSIONS
IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION VERSION OF AHMAD TOHARI'S
*RONGGENG DUKUH PARUH***

Yulan Puspita Rini

Abstract: This study aims at identifying the culturally-bound expressions in the English translation version of Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Parukin* terms of techniques to translate the culturally-bound expressions and their meaning equivalence. This study uses a qualitative approach. The objects of this study are culturally-bound expressions in the form of words, phrases and clauses. The researcher becomes the primary instrument of this study. The secondary instrument is data sheets. In translating the culturally-bound expressions, the translator uses five techniques to solve the cultural gap between the source and target languages. The techniques can bridge the cultural gap.

The untranslatable expression is one of the problems in translation process. Because of the untranslatable expressions, the translator cannot find the appropriate equivalent terms. As the consequence, the author's message is not fully transferred and target reader cannot accept it completely. One of the untranslatable expressions is *culturally bound-expression*.

Newmark (1998: 94) divides cultural language into two i.e. universal and personal languages. The words *die, live, star, swim, mirror* and *table* are universal language. Meanwhile, the words *monsoon, steppe, dacha, and tagliatelle* are cultural words. There will be a problem in translating cultural words due to the cultural gap or distance between the source and target languages. Further, Newmark (1998: 95) says that most cultural words are easy to detect, since they are associated with a particular language and cannot be literally translated where literal translation would distort the meaning. From Newmark's explanation it is clear that cultural word is a word in particular language that brings cultural value which does not exist or differ from other languages. When a cultural word is translated, it is possible that the cultural value will change.

Furthermore, Baker (1992: 21) provides another term to mention cultural words. She uses culture-specific concept instead of cultural word. It is explained that the source language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in

the target language. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as culture-specific. In line with Baker, Simatupang (2000:62) states a cultural word is a word that reflects the cultural pattern of its native speaker which is not owned by other languages. In conclusion, cultural word is an expression whose meaning is tied strongly to its culture. It is almost impossible to transfer its cultural meaning into other languages by defending its original meaning. Due to the dissimilarity of culture among countries, this cultural meaning is hard to be translated.

Culturally-bound expressions are difficult to be translated. It occurs because the cultural ideology between one region and another is different. The author of a novel is shaped by a particular ideology in his/her environment. This ideology is reflected on the story of the novel. Another problem is translating the culturally-bound expressions by ignoring their cultural value. In translation process, sometimes, the cultural ideology of the author and the translator are different because they live in different social culture settings. The effect of this difference is that the result of the translator's interpretation potentially becomes different from the author's intention. A translator interprets the source text by using his/her cultural ideology that is different from author's ideology. Social culture variation is the key of this different interpretation. The author includes his/her social culture belief and the translator interprets the text based on his/her social culture belief. Because of this case, it is difficult to interpret a culturally-bound expression.

This hard interpretation of culturally-bound expressions has to be solved to get a high quality translation. It needs some strategies to translate them. The equivalent meaning will not be reached when there is no strategy to translate them. As the consequence, the reader will get a different thing and the main function of translation to communicate the message does not run well. When discussing about meaning, it has to be differentiated between denotation and connotation. Denotation meaning is divided into form and function. Form is any feature or characteristic of a thing (size, shape, quantity, color, taste, temperature,

substance, material etc) or a description of any event involving visible movement. Function refers to the significance of, the reason for, the purpose of, the use or uses of a thing or an event (Beekman and Callow, 1975: 193).

There are four possibilities of the relationship between form and function. First, a thing or event in one language and culture may have the same form and the same function in another language. Second, the form may be the same but the function may be different. Third, the form may be different but the function may be the same. Fourth, there may be no correspondence of form and function at all (Larson, 1984: 165).

As stated before, culturally-bound expressions are difficult to be translated because of the unknown concepts of the source language in the target language. According to Beekman and Callow (1975: 191-201), there are three strategies to solve a problem due to the culturally-bound expressions that is not recognized in the target language. They are equivalence by modifying a generic word, equivalence by modifying a loan word, and equivalence by cultural substitution. In addition, Baker (1992: 37) proposes one strategy to translate the unknown concept in the target language that is called paraphrase.

Recently, novels written by Indonesian novelists have become popular abroad. Their popularity is gained due to their quality. Because Bahasa Indonesia is not an international language, many foreigners do not understand it. Translating Indonesian novels into foreign language is done to spread their popularity. The publisher issues Indonesian novels in English not only to gain profit, but also to promote Indonesian culture abroad. Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* has been translated into English entitled *The Dancer* by American translator. This novel reflects Indonesia's culture.

This study focuses on identifying the culturally-bound expressions of Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* in terms of techniques of translation and meaning equivalence. This topic is chosen because many translators translate the culturally-bound expressions inappropriately and it is one of the most difficult problems in translation.

A translator has to consider many factors in order to get the equivalent meaning. One of the factors is culture. Basically, the cultures between Indonesia and other countries are different. It causes difficulty to translate the Indonesia's culturally-bound expressions. This problem becomes the foundation of this research. Therefore, the culturally-bound expressions in the English translation of the Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* are interested to be analyzed.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method. In descriptive qualitative method, the selected data are investigated by analyzing them then drawing the interpretation from the analysis. The interpretation leads the researcher into conclusion. The analyzed data are culturally-bound expressions in the English Translation version of Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*.

This study uses credibility and dependability criteria to achieve the trustworthiness. By using credibility, the study is aimed at achieving the degree of validity of the data finding so that the findings remain relevant over various data. To do so, the data were read and reread carefully and then analyzed repeatedly and comprehensively. In line with dependability, the study is aimed at achieving the stability of the data and findings over several researchers. Here, the data were read and analyzed carefully in order to ensure that the data and the findings remain the same and asked the consultants A. Ghani Johan and Andy Bayu Nugroho as lecturers in Yogyakarta State University to check the stability. Instead of them, Steve, English-speaking foreigner, helped to check the meaning equivalence.

FINDING

This study is aimed at describing the culturally-bound expressions which occur in Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* translated into English version. The description is in term of translation techniques and meaning equivalence. Following descriptions are the finding percentage.

1. Translation Techniques

Table 1. Translation techniques

No	Translation Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
1	Equivalence by modifying a generic word	15	7.6%
	Generic word modified with features of form	8	4.0%
	Generic word modified with a statement of function	9	4.5%
	Generic word modified with both form and function	2	1.0%
2	Equivalence by modifying a loan word	7	3,5%
	Loan word modified by generic classifier	37	18.7%
	Loan word modified with a specification of form	12	6.1%
	Loan word modified with a specification function	15	7.6%
3	Equivalence by cultural substitution	40	20.2%
4	Paraphrase	49	24.7%
5	Unrealized	4	2.0%
Total		198	100%

2. Meaning equivalence

Table 3. **Meaning Equivalence**

No	Meaning equivalence	frequency	percentage
1	Fully equivalent	158	79.8%
2	Partly equivalent	33	16.7%
3	Different Meaning	3	1.5%
4	No meaning	4	2.0%
Total		198	100%

DISCUSSION

1. Translation Techniques

a. Generic Word

1) Equivalence by modifying a generic word

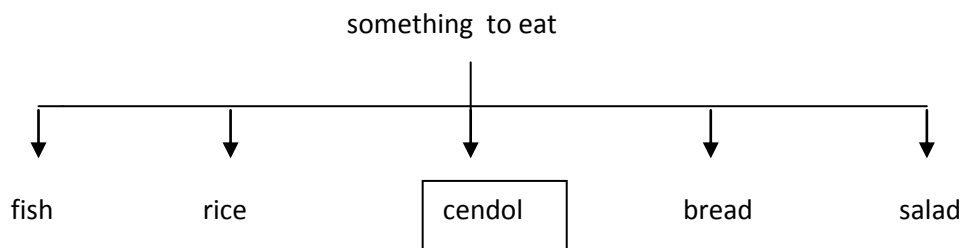
One of the relationships between words is generic-specific relation. This relationship can be used as a translation technique in finding the equivalence in translation problem especially in term of cultural barrier. The translator uses generic word technique in this work. The example is described below.

ST: Ataukalaukauinginmembualbanyak-banyakmarikitabelic*cendol*.

TT: If you want to brag, let's go and get *something to eat*.

The word *cendol* in the source text is translated into the generic word *something to eat* in the target language. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1995: 1132), the meaning of something is a thing that is not known. On the other hand, the word *cendol* is a thing known as a kind of food made from

flour. It can be concluded that *cendol* is a specific item. The further explanation is explained in the diagram below.



Something to eat can be everything. It can be fish, rice, cendol, bread, salad, etc. when it is read vertically, the relationship between *something to eat* and *cendol* is general and specific.

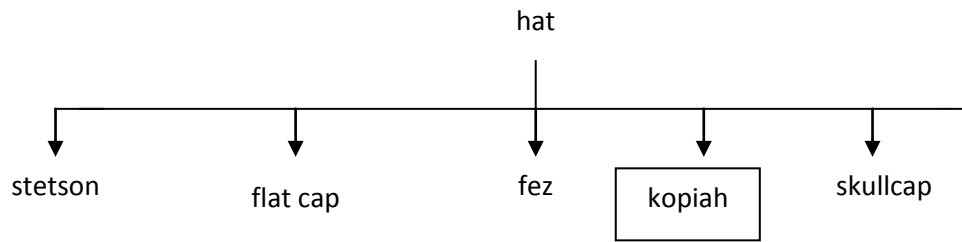
2) Generic word modified with features of form

Sometimes, it is not enough to translate the culturally-bound expressions only by stating the generic word. It is necessary to explain the form of the item briefly to make it understandable. In this study, the translator adds the form description in order to make it clear. The instance is below.

ST: Danpuncakhura-huraitumeledakketikasebuahpatungkelarasjagung yangdiberi *kopiah*sertakacamatadibakarmassa.

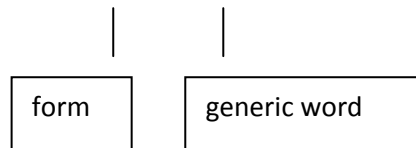
TT: The jubilation peaked when an effigy made of corn husks, wearing *a rimless hat* and a pair of sunglasses, was burned by the masses.

The word *kopiah* in the source text is translated into *a rimless hat* in target language. *Kopiah* is a specific term that is translated into the generic term *hat*. *Kopiah* is a square hat used by moslems in praying. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1995: 545), hat is a covering made to fit on the head. The relationship between *kopiah* and *hat* is explained below.



From the diagram, it can be seen that the word *hat* covers many kinds of hats. One of them is *kopiah*. The translator modified the generic word *hat* by adding the explanation of its form. The translator described *kopiah* as a hat without rim. By adding this explanation, the reader can imagine a specific kind of hat. The analysis is drawn below.

a rimless hat



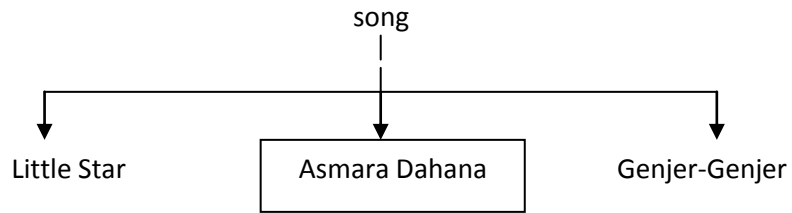
3) Generic word modified with a statement of function

Culturally-bound expressions which are abstract cannot be translated by using generic word modified with statement of form technique. To make it clear, the generic word is modified with a statement. In this research, it is found that the translator uses this technique to transfer the culturally-bound expressions. The example is below.

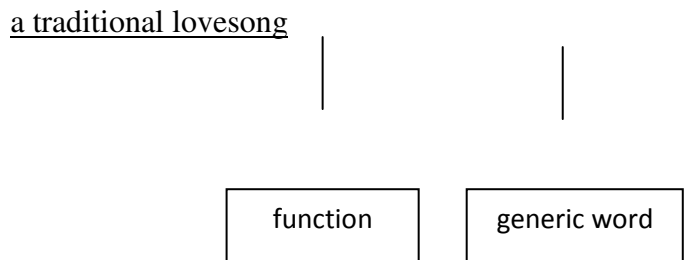
ST: Ciplak membawakan *Asmara Dahana*.

TT: Ciplak singing *a traditional love song*.

The phrase *Asmara Dahana* in the source text is translated into *a traditional love song* in target language. *Asmara Dahana* is a specific term that is translated into the generic term *song*. The relationship between *Asmara Dahana* and *song* is explained below.



The translator modified generic word *song* by adding the explanation of function. The translator described the function of *Asmara Dahana* as a traditional song. By adding this function explanation, the reader can imagine the specific kind of the song. The analysis is drawn below.



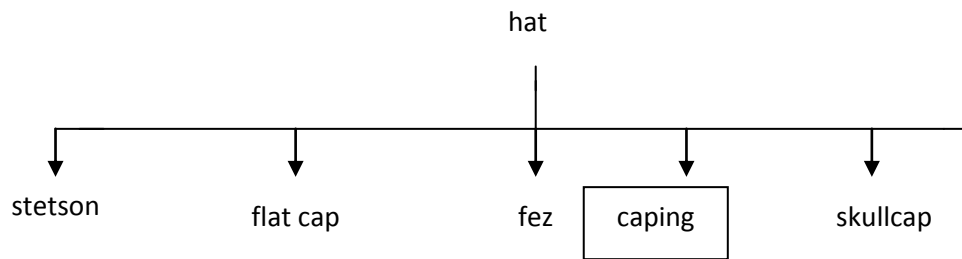
4) Generic word modified with both form and function

The translator uses not only generic word modified with form or modified with function, but also both. The example is below.

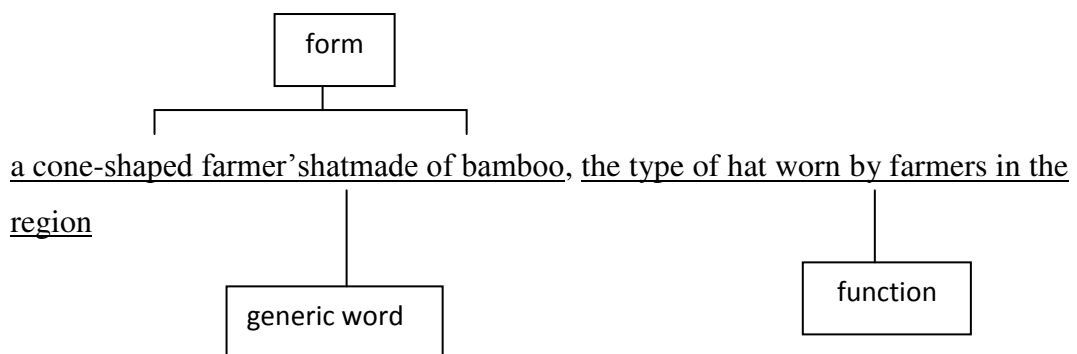
ST: Yang terakhir ini muncul dari balik semak membawa sebuah caping bamboo.

TT: Another boy suddenly appeared from behind some bushes holding a cone-shaped farmer's hat made of bamboo, the type of hat worn by farmers in the region.

The word *caping* in the source language is translated into the generic word *hat* in the target language. *Caping* is a specific term that is translated into the generic term *hat*. The relationship between *caping* and *hat* is explained below.



The translator translated the word *caping* not only by using the generic word *hat*, but also by adding the additional explanation of form and function. *Cone-shaped farmer's hat made of bamboo* is the explanation of form. *The type of hat worn by farmers in the region* is the explanation of function. The target reader will get the idea that *caping* is a kind of hat made of bamboo used by farmer in region. The explanation diagram can be shown below.



b. Loan Word

1) Equivalence by modifying a loan word

One of the techniques used by the translator is loan word. In this study, loan word is the most prominent technique used by the translator. Below is the example

ST: Nyai Kartareja membukawarung kecil-kecilan,
menjual pecel dan kelapa muda.

TT: Mrs. Kartareja opened a tiny foodstall to sell pecel and fresh coconut juice.

The word *pecel* in the source language is translated into the loan word *pecel* in the target language. The translator loaned the word *pecel* from the source text. It is because *pecel* does not exist in the target language culture.

2) Loan word modified with a generic classifier

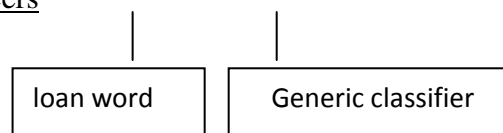
One way of handling culturally-bound expressions which are unknown in the target language is to use a generic classifier. It means that the loan word is explained by its general word. The translator of Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* applies this technique in his work. The example is below.

ST: dananak-anakmenyanyikanlagu-laguronggeng.

TT: and the songs of ronggeng dancers that were popular among the children.

The word *ronggeng* in the source language is translated into the loan word *ronggeng* in the target language. The translator loaned the word *ronggeng* from the source text. To clarify the meaning of it, the translator added generic classifier. The generic word for *ronggeng* is *dancer*. Accompanied by classifier, the target reader will get an idea that *ronggeng* is a kind of dancer.

ronggengdancers



3) Loan word modified with a specification of form

One of the techniques that can be used by the translator is loan word modified with a specification of form. This way can give more information about the loan word that is new for the target language's reader. In this study, the translator employs this way in his work. The example is below.

ST: Melihat keadaannya dua diantara mereka tentulah tengkulak terasi.

TT: Two of them were traders of terasi, a pungent spice made from shrimp, crabs and other seafood.

The word *terasi* in the source language is translated into the loan word *terasi* in the target language. The translator loaned the word *terasi* from the source text because *terasi* did not exist in the target language culture. To clarify the meaning of it, the translator modified the loan word with a specification of form. The specification of form is *a pungent spice made from shrimp, crabs and other seafood*. Modified by specification of form, the target reader will get an idea that *terasi* is a kind of substance made from shrimp, crabs and other seafood.

terasi, a pungent spice made from shrimp, crabs and other seafood



4) Loan word modified with a specification function

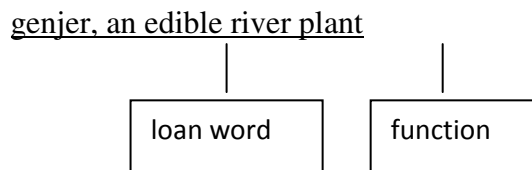
Loan word modified with a specification function can make the target reader who is foreign with the new concept get more understanding. This is one of the techniques used by the translator of Ahmad Tohari’s *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* in translating the culturally-bound expressions. The example is below.

ST: Tentang kualiraksasa yang
dipergunakan untuk mengolah kangkung dan genjer hanya dengan bumbu gara
untuk lauk grontol, rebusan bijijagung.

TT: She recalled a gigantic clay pot, used to cook kangkung, a leafy vegetable, and genjer, an edible river plant, spiced only with salt as side dish for grontol, boiled corn.

The word *genjer* in the source language is translated into the loan word *genjer* in the target language. The translator loaned the word *genjer* from the source text because *genjer* did not exist in the target language culture. To clarify the meaning of it, the translator modified the loan word with a specification of function. The specification of function is *an edible plant*. Modified by

specification of function, the target reader will get an idea that *genjer* is a kind of a river plant.



c. Equivalence by cultural substitution

There may be period when the source text's culturally-bound expressions can be best translated by using equivalence by cultural substitution technique. In this study, there are some data using this technique. Below is the example.

ST: "Santayib, Engkau *anjing! Asubuntung*"

TT: "You *son of a bitch! You bastard*"

The words *Anjing* and *asubuntung* in the source text is translated into the phrases *son of a bitch* and *you bastard*. In the source language's culture, the words *anjing* and *asubuntung* are used as cursing words. In the target language's culture, people use phrases *son of a bitch* and *you bastard* to curse someone. Literally, *son of a bitch* is not the translation of *anjing* and *you bastard* is not the translation of *asubuntung*, but they are equivalent in terms of naturalness. For this reason, the translator uses the cultural substitution technique in translating the expressions *anjing* and *asubuntung*.

d. Paraphrase

This technique tends to be used when the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalized in the target language but in a different form (Baker, 1992:37). Paraphrase is used by the translator in his work. The example is below.

ST: AkumengertimaksudSakaryam*memingit*cucunya.

TT: I could understand why Sakarya wanted *to keep**Srintil**secluded*.

The word *memingit* in the source language is paraphrased into *to keep Srintil secluded*. It happens because the concept of *memingit* is not recognized by

the target language's culture. The meaning of *memingit* is forbidden to get out of home. The concept of *memingit* is rendered by using other words in the target language but still reflect the same meaning.

e. Unrealized

This is one of the techniques used by the translator in dealing with culturally-bound expressions. Although it is an extreme way, the translator of Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* employs this technique in his work. The example is below.

ST: Kegembiraan penonton tercetus ketikatangan-tangan terlatih mulaimenggarapiramacalung dalam laguse sekargandung.

TT: As practised hands began playing the calung instruments, the spectators became more lively.

The phrase *sekargandung* is not realized in the target language. The translator omits it.

2. Meaning Equivalence

a. Equivalent

1) Fully Equivalent

The intention of translation is transferring the source language's message into the target language in order to be understood by the target reader. In transferring the message, all of the messages have to be transferred that the target reader will have the same understanding like the source language's reader do. Most of the culturally-bound expressions that are translated into English are fully equivalent. The instance is below.

ST: "Kula nuwun". Dower mengucapsalam.

TT: "Kula nuwun", Dower declared, politely announcing his request to come in.

Kula nuwun is a custom of Javanese people. It is a polite greeting. Javanese people always say it when they come to other people's house. The translator translated it by using loan word technique. By using this technique, the target readers who do not know the Javanese people's custom will get a clear definition that *kulanuwun* is a polite greeting that is declared when they come to other people's house. Because the target readers catch the idea exactly, the equivalence of this example is fully equivalent.

2) Partly Equivalent

In some cases, there is lost of information in the transferring process. As the impact, the target reader will not get the complete information. In this study, there are some sentences that are partly equivalent. Below is the example.

ST: *Ketupat*diatakmau, *lontong* yang
kuberikantadipagimasihutihsekarang.

TT: *The dish* I prepared for her this morning hasn't been touched.

Ketupat and *Lontong* are specific items that are translated into generic word *the dish*. *The dish* covers many kinds of foods. The target readers do not get specific items when they read the phrase *the dish*. Because of that, this is partly equivalent.

b. Non Equivalent

1) Different Meaning

Different meaning means that the translation version does not reflect the same message like the source text. Target reader gets the different information. There are some cases of different meaning in this study. Below is the instance.

ST: OlehNyaiSakarya, Srintildiberihidupdengan*air tajin*.

TT: To quiten her, Mrs. Sakarya fed her *rice porridge*.

Air tajin is translated into *rice porridge*. The translator used cultural substitution in translating the phrase. It is because there is no *air tajin* in the target

language's culture. *Air tajin* is water that is used to boil the rice. The way to cook the rice between source language's culture and target language's culture are different. Furthermore, people in the target language do not take the water to be consumed. *Rice porridge* is a porridge made from rice. The form of *air tajin* is water, while the form of *riceporridge* is porridge made from rice. Their forms are different. Their functions are different. Because they have different form and function, they are different meaning.

2) No Meaning

No meaning means that the culturally-bound expressions in the source language are not realized in the target language. There are some cases of no meaning in the data. The example is below.

ST: "Meniran, mak"

TT: -----

The word *meniran* in the source language is not translated in the target language. The target readers do not get the information about *meniran* because the translator omits it. Based on this fact, it is non equivalent in term of no meaning.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data based on the formulation of the problems, the analysis result shows some conclusions. In translating the culturally-bound expressions, the translator uses some strategies to solve the cultural gap between the source and target languages. The first technique is using a generic word. This technique is divided into four terms; they are equivalence by modifying a generic word, generic word modified with features of form, generic word modified with a statement of function, and generic word modified with both form and function. The second technique is using loan word. This technique is divided into four terms; they are equivalence by modifying a loan word, loan word modified with a generic classifier, loan word modified with a specification of form, and loan word

modified with a specification function. The third is equivalence by cultural substitution. The fourth is paraphrase technique. The fifth is unrealized equivalence technique.

The discussion of the study concludes that the equivalence level of the culturally-bound expressions in Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* and its translation is divided into two terms. The first is equivalent meaning that is classified into two degrees; they are fully equivalent and partly equivalent. The second is non-equivalent meaning that is classified into two degrees; they are different meaning and no meaning. The translator maintains the source text's message well. It is signed by most of the meaning equivalence of culturally-bound expressions in the Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* English version are fully equivalent with 158 cases out of 198 cases or 79.8%.

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