

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonialism focuses on the experience of the colonized people whose history is develop in response to the colonial domination. According to Louise Tyson, “Postcolonial criticism seeks to understand the operations—politically, socially, culturally, and psychologically—of colonist and anti-colonialist ideologies” (365). Postcolonial criticism analyzes how the colonizer uses its ideology to press the colonized people cooperate with the colonizer’s value. The colonizer uses its power in controlling all life aspects of the colonized countries, including its social condition, political life, culture, and language. On the other hand, it shows the resistance of the colonized people against their oppressor. Postcolonial criticism defines formerly colonized people as any population that has been subjected to the political domination of another population (Tyson 364). It is used to analyze the condition of the colonized people in facing the colonial domination.

Since language issue is dominant in the play, the theory of imperial oppression through control over language will be applied. Bill Ashcroft et al. state that:

One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. The imperial education system installs a ‘standard’ version of the

metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all 'variants' as impurities (7).

Imperialism can be achieved by controlling the native language of the colonized countries. The imperialist country emphasizes that its language is considered as the main language. On the other side, other language is unimportant language. Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established (Ashcroft et al. 7). Language becomes a tool to establish power and dominate all life aspects in other countries. Imperialist country controls the language of another country by forcing the indigenous community to speak the dominant language. Such power is rejected in the emergence of an effective post-colonial voice (Ashcroft et al. 7). The power to maintain hegemony is opposed by the colonized people whose their life is dominated by the imperialist country.

In *Translations*, language becomes the dominant issue to be analyzed. Ashcroft et al. state that "Language is a material practice and as such is determined by a complex weave of social conditions and experience" (41). Language is also built through the experience of its community. Language is learned through the reality of a country. Language possesses power over truth and reality (Ashcroft et al. 81). Language has power in defining reality of a society. The condition of a society in a country is reflected through the language they used.

In imperial era, the colonized people will feel under pressure, so it will be difficult for them in maintaining its language because of negatively pervasive effects of imperialism. Its effect can be seen from the control of the colonizer in all life aspects in the colonized country, including its language. The colonized will be forced to speak the dominant language, even though it is not suitable with its background. A language somehow may be inherently inappropriate for use in another place (Ashcroft et al. 27). A language of a country is different with another. Each place has its own language, and it is cannot be used in another country.

In postcolonial era, language also becomes a power in dominating another country. Language will become power in dominating another society. Then, Ashcroft et al. also state that “The dominant imperial language and culture were privileged over the people’s tradition” (26). It means that the culture of the colonizer will become the most dominant culture in the colonized country. The colonized country will not be able to maintain its own culture. It can happen because the colonizer uses its power to dominate and control all life aspects in the colonized country.

Imperialism can also affect the condition of indigenous culture and identity of a country. Imperialism can influence the colonized culture; moreover the native culture may be lost. It can happen because the colonizer also brings their culture to maintain its hegemony in the colonized area. At last, the indigenous people will become a marginal community. As stated by Ashcroft et al. that “Marginality is the condition constructed by the posited relation to a privileged center” (104). The

colonized is marginalized because the colonizers see themselves at the center. On the other side, the colonized is at the margin. This condition causes the colonizer dominates all life aspects of the colonized country.

Imperialist countries use its power to dominate another country in many ways, whether it is good or bad for the colonized people itself. According to Ashcroft et al., "Imperial conquest has always destroyed the land and often regarded the human occupants as disposable, almost as if they were a species of exotic fauna" (82). In imperial era, the colonizer will try to get another land through many ways without regarding the colonized people as human. The colonizer expands its power in harsh ways even though they must destroy the indigenous community of the colonized countries. The colonizer only tries to maintain its power in controlling another society. But on the other side, the colonized will feel under pressure as a victim of imperialism. Through exploration of every space in the colonized country, the colonizer will maintain its power. The main purpose of imperialism is how to possess the land and control its community. Domination of the Empire can affect condition of the colonized people. Moreover, it can cause destruction to the indigenous people because of domination from the colonizer.

B. Related Studies

In making this analysis, some related studies are also very important. It is used to show that some people had written about "*Translations*". The paper

entitled *“Taking All Day to Put A Name on the Baby: The Ontological Anxieties of the Irish Language In Friel’s Translations”* written by Jeff Covington shows that this play analyzes the concept of ontological relations between language, culture, and the self. Covington correlates his analysis with Seamus Heaney’s statement about “through-otherness” (the cultural and historical confusion because of their amalgamated heritage that consists of Irish, Scottish and English traditions). *Translations* emphasizes that “through-otherness” is not just a confusion about traditions and heritages, but also the mixture of languages. The play concerns with the condition of Irish community that must face transformation of language to transformation of culture and identity. *Translations* does not only represent linguistic shift from Irish into English, but also transformation into another being (Online). At last, this play expresses the complex ontological relationship between the Irish identity and its language.

Besides that, Maureen S.G. Hawkins also writes the Journal of Irish Studies entitled *“We must learn where we live”: language, identity, and the colonial condition in Brian Friel’s Translations*. This essay tells that military imperialism is only the first step in establishing imperial hegemony in another country. Imperialism gives benefits for the colonizer, and the colonized is persuaded to accept their condition to live under pressure of the colonizer.

Hawkins states that in *Translations*, Friel focuses on the effects of linguistic and cultural imperialism on the culture, identity, and even physical existence of the colonized. She quotes the statement proposed by Edmund Spenser about linguistic imperialism.

The conqueror despise the language of the conquered, and force him by all means to learn his language. Language equals identity and allegiance; “the speech being Irish, the heart must be needs be Irish” (Online).

The idea is related to the effect of linguistic imperialism in the colonized area. The colonizer tries to eliminate the colonized language. For the colonized, their language has important meaning in showing their identity and pride to their country. If the indigenous people speak Irish, it means that they are very proud of their identity as an Irish. But the colonizer will try to obliterate the Irish identity and culture by forbidding the Irish community to speak Irish language. This condition put them in the lowest place, as a useful subjects. They will have dependency to the colonizer.

Hawkins also states that “Translating the local place names into English by British army metaphorically ‘translates’ the ownership of the landmarks and communities they indicate” (Online). Translation of the Irish place names into English is only a tool that is used by the British Empire in possessing Ireland. Translation the Irish place names into English through military action is only a way to transfer the property from the colonized to the colonizer. The property here is not only the physical matters, but the most important thing is identity of the colonized country. The British wants to control the land and Irish community, so they can expand their power. The process of translation can also be seen from the British renaming of Owen as Rolland. In this case, Owen disrespects his community by denying his identity as an Irish. The establishment of a new national school in Ireland also indicates a process of expanding the British power in Ireland.

Friel also makes relation between translation the Irish place names into English with physical destruction of the Irish community. In the play, Captain Lancey orders destruction of the Irish community because Lieutenant Yolland is missing. The Irish community is become the suspect. The British will evict the Irish community and burn their livestock and houses. On the other side, this condition makes the Irish community aware of their position. They want to against the British and get their freedom. This condition is representation of 1798 rebellion, when the Irish community rebelled against British Empire. The rebellion was lead by Wolfe Tone and the society of United Irishmen. This 1798 rebellion was an effort to achieve equality and freedom for the Irish community. The moment of rebellion can be seen in the play through the characters of Hugh and Jimmy Jack Cassie who join in the battle. The destruction is ordered to evict the colonized community and possess its land.

If the result of British imperialism and its economic life can cause agriculture no longer suffices for survival, the Irish community will depend on the British. Then they will adopt the economic life of the British, including its language. As what Hugh stated in the play, if the British has power to change the Irish place names into English, the Irish community should learn those new names and make them their own. To maintain their survival, they must adopt the new language that suited to a commercial global economy of the colonizer. Besides that, Friel proposes two ways for the Irish to combat the British imperialism. The Irish community can choose physical force to against the British, but it will destroy its survival. On the other side, the Irish community also can make English

and its life aspects as a part of their life. It will become a tool to against the British, but also can still preserve its culture. This essay shows that British imperialism has caused a fatal effect on the Irish language and culture.

The next essay is written by Kurt Bullock entitled *Possessing Wor(l)d: Nationalis Ontology and Imperialist Epistemology in Brian Friel's Translations*. In this essay, Bullock shows the fuction of giving name for some places in Ireland. She says that "The naming of place names is a way of identifying, knowing, and understanding" (Online). Naming is a means of possession, and it can be seen in Brian Friel's *Translations* through translation of the Irish place names into English.

Through control over language, the Irish community can also lost their identity. Bullock says that "Identity is formulated through language" (Online). It can be seen from the naming of each person in the Irish community itself. The name of each person has important meaning to show their own characteristic. The name of Sarah is crucial in her identity. Besides that, her name carries not only an identity, but also an origin and a lineage. The Irish place names are also related to Irish history, associated with their identity through lineage and society. The Irish history is embedded in its place names, and it represent the identity of the Irish community itself.

Postcolonial theory and those essays are very helpful to support the analysis. The paper about transformation of language that is related to transformation of culture and identity by Jeff Covington, the essay about linguistic imperialism by Maureen S.G. Hawkins, also the essay about nationalist ontology

and imperialist epistemology by Kurt Bullock are very useful in making the analysis of this thesis because those are complement to each other.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS