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Page count:	7
Word count:	4,611
Character count:	24,887
Submission date:	29-Apr-2023 08:48AM (UTC+0700)
Submission ID:	2078832445

Translation Alternatives of Indonesian Public Signs

Made Susini
Warmadewa University, Denpasar, Indonesia

Nyoman Sujaya
Warmadewa University, Denpasar, Indonesia

I Wayan Ana
Warmadewa University, Denpasar, Indonesia

Abstract—Public signs written in two languages are found everywhere in public places in Bali. Appropriate translations of the public signs could help foreigners get information and they also could reflect good image of the places. To be able to create better image of the place, deep investigation on the translations of public signs is needed. This study examined the translations of public signs from Indonesian into English found in Bali. Deploying the concept of translation equivalence by House (2015) and translation strategies by Malone (1988), this study focused on target text alternatives when a certain strategy was applied in translating public signs from Indonesian into English. The data were collected in two regions in Bali, i.e. Denpasar city and Badung regency. This research revealed that the Indonesian public signs were translated by applying strategies of substitution, amplification, reduction, condensation, and re-ordering. The strategies resulted in some translation alternatives. In some cases, the alternatives induced by the translation strategies applied involved the changes of pragmatic and textual meanings. However, they are semantically equivalent.

Index Terms—public signs, equivalence, translation alternatives

I. INTRODUCTION

Public signs become the windows of a place, especially the one that functions as tourist destination. When the signs are created in the right forms, they can direct foreigners and deliver correct information. So, the promotion of the tourism depends very much on how the signs are designed that the tourists will feel convenience and could get information in a short and comfortable way. One of the tourist destinations in Indonesia is Bali.

Bali as a tourist destination is visited every year by foreigners from many parts of the world. To support this, public signs are found everywhere in public places in Bali. Many public signs are written in two languages, Indonesian and English. Indonesian and English, to some extent, are linguistically and culturally different. How the public signs are designed in Indonesian is not always applicable for the culture of the English speakers. The different way in viewing world between Indonesian and English speakers could influence the way how the public signs are designed and translated from Indonesian into English. Public signs which are appropriately translated could give good impact to the place, since the image of the place is also reflected in the signs. Based on this consideration, the study on the translations of public signs from Indonesian into English is important to be investigated. The research results could give overview to the signs under study whether the translations need correcting or not.

Public signs have become many researchers' concerns. Numerous researches have been conducted in some places. One of them is in China. There have been a number of translation researches of Chinese public signs found (Liu, 2013; Ma, 2014; Beili & Tuo, 2015; Shi, 2014; Bi, 2017; He, 2019; Liang, 2019; Yu, 2019; Jia, 2020). The researches showed that public signs were examined from different points of view. Shi (2014) investigated public signs from the perspective of Functional Equivalence Theory; Jing (2014) from Eco-translatology; Beili & Tuo (2015) from Linguistic Landscape; and Jia (2020) from Skopos Theory. This present study viewed the translations of public signs from different perspective. It was to reveal the translations of Indonesian public signs in English. Indonesian is different from other languages, including China. This difference could result in different degree of analysis. By deploying the translation equivalence of House (2015) and translation strategies of Malone (1988), this study investigated the translation alternatives of Indonesian public signs in English when certain strategies were applied. It also examined the differences of meaning which occurred when there were changes in the target text (TT) forms.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The forms of public signs in public places are commonly influenced by culture. Every culture has its own way to express meaning. Since public signs always come with culture, this research applied the theory of translation which also

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views translation equivalence from the perspective of culture. The results of the translation are influenced by the strategies applied, so this research also applied the theory dealing with translation strategies. The followings are the descriptions of the theories used.

A. House's Translation Equivalence

Equivalence is a main concept in translation. The goal of the translation work is to achieve the closest equivalent of the source text (ST) in target language (TL). There are a number of translation experts who consider equivalence necessary in translation (Nida, 1964; Catford, 1965; Neubert, 1970, House, 2015). However, some consider equivalence as unnecessary and unimportant concept (Hatim and Mason, 1990; Munday, 2008).

As long as translation equivalence is concerned, Nida (1964) proposed the concept of 'dynamic equivalence' as the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message. Catford (1965) viewed that equivalence in translation is essentially situational. Furthermore, Nuebert (1970) proposed that translation equivalence includes syntactic, semantic and pragmatic components since it is a 'semiotic category'. To House (2015), text and context are two elements that always interconnect each other in translation. This is the basic concept of House's translation evaluation. Since context and text always show interconnectedness, House defined that to preserve meaning in TL, the three kinds of meaning which include semantic, pragmatic, and textual meanings must be evaluated (House, 2015, p. 21). Based on this concept, the source language (SL) texts are re-contextualized in TL to achieve equivalence. The TL texts must be equivalent in terms of their semantic, pragmatic, and textual meanings. Semantic meaning concerns with the relationship of the linguistic units to the reference of any world constructed by the human. Pragmatic meaning is about the relationship between the linguistic units and the participants in the situations of a given communication. Textual meaning is referred to the constitution of a text. This concerns with how any component relates one another to form a coherent text.

B. Malone's Translation Strategies

The results of translation depend on some factors. There are some classifications of translation strategies proposed by the translation experts. Malone (1988) suggested nine strategies. They include strategies of equation, substitution, divergence, convergence, amplification, reduction, diffusion, condensation and reordering. Eight of the strategies are put in pairs into a group as the followings:

      a. matching (equation and substitution)
      b. zigzagging (divergence and convergence)
      c. recrescence (amplification and reduction)
      d. repacking (diffusion and condensation).

Equation obtains when elements of the source text are rendered by target text elements deemed the most straightforward texts available (Malone, 1988, p. 16). Substitution obtains when source text elements are rendered by target elements deemed as being other than the most straightforward texts available (Malone, 1988, p. 16). Divergence is when elements of the source text may be mapped onto any of two or more alternatives in the target texts (Malone, 1988, p. 17). Convergence as the mirror image to divergence is when two or more distinct source text elements may each be mapped onto one and the same target element (Malone, 1988, p. 17). Amplification is a pattern when the target texts pick up a translational element in addition to texts of a source element (Malone, 1988, p. 41). Reduction is when source expressions are partially translated into target texts and partially omitted in its target texts (Malone, 1988, p. 46). Diffusion strategy concerns with the way when an element or construction of the source text is in some sense rendered by a more loosely or expansively organized target text (Malone, 1988, p. 55). Condensation refers to the strategy when a source element or construction corresponds to a tighter or more compact target text (Malone, 1988, p. 59). Reordering is about the kind of the strategy when one or more target element appears in a position different from that of the source text (Malone, 1988, p. 65).

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research involved public signs in two languages. The ones written in Indonesian were used as source texts and those written in English as target texts. Public sign meant is a kind of language that is displayed in public places. This includes public notices, guides for tourists, advertisement, road signs, brochures for product. They were collected in two regions in Bali, Indonesia. They are in Denpasar city and Badung regency. The research areas include police station, court, shopping malls, places of tourist interest which include hotels and beaches. The signs were collected by applying the methods of photo-taking and note-taking. Descriptive and qualitative approaches were applied in analyzing the data. The analysis was carried out in some stages.

Firstly, the public signs chosen as data of the SL were examined in terms of their forms. The forms meant include the word classes and their syntactic structures. The same things were also applied for the data of the TL. Secondly, the SL texts and their translation were compared to investigate the changes of their forms. The changes were noted as the adjustments carried out by the translators to achieve the translation equivalence. By applying the same method, the translation strategies applied were also analyzed by identifying how the SL texts change in TL. Lastly, the SL forms, the strategies, and the TL forms were compared to identify the translation alternatives of the SL texts when they were

translated by applying a certain strategy. To identify how the changes of forms in TT affect the translation equivalence, the meanings of the ST and TT were compared and evaluated from semantic, pragmatic, and textual perspectives.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The source public signs found are in some forms. The forms of their TT are also various. The research result revealed that the Indonesian public signs were re-contextualized in English. This re-contextualization process results in some changes in English and they are regarded as the translation alternatives of the Indonesian public signs. The changes are as the impacts of the translation strategies applied. The strategies which influence the translation results include strategies of substitution, amplification, reduction, condensation, and reordering.

A. Strategy of Substitution and Its Impacts

Strategy of substitution results in the changes of the English forms. The followings are some data in the forms of a word that are translated by applying substitution strategy.

   (1) ST: *Masuk*.
        TT: In.
   (2) ST: *Keluar*.
        TT: Out.
   (3) ST: *Masuk*.
        TT: Entry.
   (4) ST: *Masuk*.
        TT: Entrance.
   (5) ST: *Tutup*.
        TT: Closed.

The public signs presented are all in the forms of a single word realized by word class of verb *masuk* in (1), (3), and (4), *keluar* in (2), and *tutup* in (5). As their equivalents in English, these STs are realized in different word classes. Verbs in (1) and (2) are realized by preposition word class represented by *in* and *out*. The same cases also cover the STs of (3), (4) and (5). Verbs in (3) and (4) are realized by noun *entry* in (3) and *entrance* in (4), and by adjective *closed* in (5). In these translations the equivalence is achieved by using the strategy of substitution. One word class is substituted by another word class. This strategy results in the change of word class from verb into noun and adjective.

B. Strategy of Amplification and Its Impacts

Amplification strategy was also applied in translating public signs from Indonesian into English.

   (6) ST: *Jaga jarak*.
        TT: Keep your distance **to one another**.
   (7) ST: *KUTUS KUTUS*.
        TT: Kutus **Bali Oil**.
   (8) ST: *Terima kasih untuk tidak membawa makanan dan minuman dari luar Starbucks*.
        TT: **We** appreciate your cooperation not to bring outside food and beverage into Starbucks.

Strategy of amplification includes the addition of information in the TT. This information is not necessary to be included in the ST because the texts have come with clear context. For the Indonesian context, the ST of (6) represented by *Jaga jarak* meaning 'Keep distance' is to mean that *keeping distance* is between people. The meaning of the text is communicatively accepted by the speakers of Indonesian. In TL, additional information is regarded necessary to be included by using *to one another*. This information could be used to strengthen the instruction. In (7) KUTUS KUTUS is a kind of oil produced in Bali. Balinese people are very familiar with this oil, but people outside Bali might not. That is the reason why 'Bali oil' needs to be put after the 'Kutus'. In this translation the form changes from a phrase without Modifier *KUTUS KUTUS* into a phrase with premodifier *Kutus* (Mod) *Bali* (Mod) *Oil* (Head). The addition of some information is also important to do when the source text is rendered into a formal construction by using Subject *we* in (8). This is a kind of personalization. By this form, the TT speaker wants to make the language more formal. The translations show that the strategy of amplification changes the forms of the SL texts in TL.

C. Strategy of Reduction and Its Impacts

Strategy of reduction was also applied in translating public signs in Bali. Some data found are as the followings.

   (9) ST: *Terima kasih telah berpakaian sopan **di lingkungan kepolisian***.
        TT: Thank you for your good appearance.
 (10) ST: ***Wajib** pakai masker*.
        TT: Wear face mask.
 (11) ST: *Tempat cuci **tangan***.
        TT: Wash basin.

The public sign of (9) is found in the police station. *Di lingkungan kepolisian* meaning 'in the police station' functions as Adverbial of place. Since the sign comes with a clear context, the use of Adverbial of place becomes

unnecessary, except for strengthening the message. That is the reason why the TT comes without any Adverbial of place. This datum shows that strategy of reduction makes the TT come without Adverbial of place. The omission of element in the ST is found in datum (10). The word *wajib* meaning 'it is obligatory' is not translated in TL. For the speakers of Indonesian, the use of the word *wajib* is to emphasize the instruction. For the speakers of English, the expression 'Wear face mask' has implied that it is obligatory for all people coming to that place to wear mask. Semantically, the two texts express the same meaning. They are different if they are viewed from pragmatic perspective. The (11) public sign is found in the hotel area in such a position. Seen from the context of place, *the basin* is for washing hands. In Indonesian culture, when the basin is used for washing hands, word collocation consisting of the words *cuci* meaning 'wash' and *tangan* meaning 'hands' is commonly used. In English, the meaning of *tangan* is not realized since the sign is in a clear context. So, the TT is formed without adding the word *hands* after *wash*.

D. Strategy of Condensation and Its Impacts

A number of Indonesian public signs were also translated by the strategy of condensation. This strategy refers to the change of forms where simpler construction is used in TL to express the source meaning. The followings are some of the data found.

(12)   ST: *Dilarang berkumpul.*
       TT: No crowding.
(13)   ST: *Jaga jarak.*
       TT: Physical distancing.
(14)   ST: *Silakan pergunakan pintu lain.*
       TT: Next door please.
(15)   ST: *Pintu ditutup sementara.*
       TT: Temporary closed.

The data above include the change from sentence into phrase which is induced by the condensation strategy applied. As a result, the constructions of the TL texts are simpler than the SL texts. The SL texts of (12), (13), and (14) are in the forms of imperative sentences, while (15) is in the form of declarative sentence. The strategy applied results in the change of forms in the TT. The TTs of (12), (13), and (14) are in the forms of noun phrase, while the one of (15) in the form of adjective phrase. Condensation strategy was also applied in the following translation.

(16)   ST: *Jika melakukan pelanggaran dari hal tersebut di atas maka pelaku pelanggaran akan dikenakan sanksi sebesar 2 Juta Rupiah.*
       TT: Any violation will be subject to a sanction of IDR 2 Million.

The strategy of condensation also results in the change from complex sentence into simple sentence as seen in the following analysis.

TABLE I.
THE CHANGE FROM COMPLEX SENTENCE INTO SIMPLE SENTENCE

ST	*Jika melakukan pelanggaran dari hal tersebut di atas*	*pelaku pelanggaran akan dikenakan sanksi sebesar 2 Juta Rupiah*	
	Subordinate clause	Main clause	
	Complex sentence		

TT	Any violation	will be	subject to	a sanction of IDR 2 Million
	S	V	C	A
	Simple sentence			

From the aspect of the textual meaning, the ST and TT have different meanings. The information which is put initially as the more important information is different between the two texts.

E. Strategy of Reordering and Its Impacts

The strategy of reordering involves the change of source text elements in TL. Some translation alternatives occur when the Indonesian public signs are translated into English by using the strategy of reordering.

(17)   ST: *Dilarang masuk mall bagi semua yang demam/batuk.*
       TT: For those who have fever/cough are forbidden to enter the mall.

The change from active into passive form is found in (17). From the textual meaning point of view, there is a change of meaning. By active form, the speaker gives more priority to the information represented by the verb *dilarang masuk* meaning 'it is forbidden to enter', while by passive form, the speaker puts the more important information to the Subject *those who have fever/cough*. Pragmatically, by passive sentence, the speaker intends to avoid addressing direct instruction. This English translation of the sign needs correcting by crossing out the *for*.

(18)   ST: *Hari bebas kendaraan bermotor.*
       TT: Car free day.
(19)   ST: *Arah evakuasi tsunami.*
       TT: Tsunami evacuation route.

Nominal clauses with noun head *hari* in (18), *arah* in (19) and post modifier *bebas kendaraan bermotor* in (18) and *evakuasi tsunami* in (19) change into nominal clauses with noun head *day* in (18), *route* in (19) and pre modifier *car free* in (18), *tsunami evacuation* in (19). The changes which occur are obligatory since the changes are induced by the different language system between Indonesian and English.

(20)   ST: *Motor dilarang naik.*

          TT: No motor allowed.

The datum (20) concerns with the different position of the negation marker *dilarang* in ST and *No* in TT. In ST the negation is before the verb *naik*, while in TT before the noun *motor*. As a result, textually, the ST and TT have different nuance of meaning because the focus of negation is different.

(21)   ST: *Semoga liburan anda menyenangkan.*

          TT: Hopefully you will have a pleasant holyday.

(22)   ST: *Dilarang masuk mall bagi semua yang demam/batuk.*

          TT: For those who have fever/cough are forbidden to enter the mall.

(23)   ST: *Para pengunjung dan pencari keadilan supaya berpakaian sopan dan rapi.*

          TT: The visitors and justice seekers please dressed polite and neatly.

To the datum (21), the strategy of reordering can also change intensive clause with S and V elements into mono-transitive clause with S, V, and O elements. Pragmatically, when the information is conveyed by using transitive verb, the speaker expresses his message in indirect manner. The change of pragmatic meaning induced by strategy of reordering is also found in (22) and (23). Datum (22) concerns with the change from imperative sentence into declarative sentence, while datum (23) from declarative sentence into imperative sentence. By using declarative sentence, the speaker wants to soften the instruction. So, data (22) and (23) have different pragmatic meaning. However, semantically, they are equivalent.

To summarize, some data show that Indonesian public signs are translated by using strategy of substitution. One kind of word class representing ST is substituted by another word class as TT.

ST: *Masuk.*

TT: Entrance.

This datum shows that there is a change of viewpoint in this translation. The writers of the ST and TT view the meaning of the texts differently. The ST writer gives emphasize on the action. That is people could enter the building through the place where the sign is displayed. On the other hand, the TT writer gives emphasize on the place. That is the entrance where people could enter.

Public signs in the forms of passive imperative using the verb *dilarang* meaning 'it is forbidden', such as *Dilarang berkumpul*, *Dilarang berenang*, *Dilarang berjualan* show consistency in their English translations. The signs are mostly translated into noun phrase using the word *No* followed by noun, such as *No crowding*, *No swimming*, *No selling*. As long as this kind of translation alternative is concerned, this is a common translation phenomenon from Indonesian into English which can be used as a model.

ST: *Dilarang berkumpul.*

TT: No crowding.

This kind of translation proves that the concept of translation equivalence proposed by House (2015) was applied by the translator to achieve adequate translation. The role of culture in the translation of public signs from Indonesian into English is represented by the linguistic choices which are associated with who the participants are. Most of the translations are equivalent from the aspects of semantic, pragmatic, and textual meanings.

Contextual consideration in this translation is also found in the omission of Adverbial of place in the sign. For instance, the following sign that is displayed in the police station comes with Adverbial of place *di lingkungan Kepolisian* meaning 'at the Police Station'. Since the context of place of the sign is very clear, the element representing the place is possible to be omitted in its TT. Strategy of reduction results in this change.

ST: *Terima kasih telah berpakaian sopan* <u>*di lingkungan kepolisian*</u>

TT: Thank you for your good appearance.

Reordering strategy applied by the translators is induced by some reasons. When the speaker wants to soften the instruction, he or she can change the ST form from imperative sentence into declarative sentence. Depersonalization can also be adopted in Indonesian-English translation by rendering the source active sentence into passive sentence. This also becomes one of the considerations in House's pragmatic equivalence. When the translation equivalence of Indonesian public signs is compared with other translation concepts proposed by other experts, it is correlated with eco-translatology analysis which views texts from the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions (Yu, 2019).

Summarizing the translation strategies applied in the translations of public signs from Indonesian into English, this research reveals that the impacts of the strategies on the TT are as the followings.

TABLE II.
TRANSLATION ALTERNATIVES OF PUBLIC SIGNS FROM INDONESIAN INTO ENGLISH

Source Text Forms	Strategies	Target Text Forms
Verb	Substitution	Preposition
		Noun
		Adjective
Word	Amplification	Phrase
Informal sentence	Amplification	Formal sentence
Sentence with Adverbial	Reduction	Sentence without Adverbial
Complex sentence	Condensation	Simple sentence
Sentence	Condensation	Phrase
Active sentence	Reordering	Passive sentence
Noun phrase with post-modifier	Reordering	Noun phrase with pre-modifier
Imperative sentence	Reordering	Declarative sentence
Declarative sentence	Reordering	Imperative sentence
SV structure	Reordering	SVO structure
Verb negation	Reordering	Subject negation

V. CONCLUSION

Various translation alternatives occur in the translation of public signs from Indonesian into English. Some kinds of translation strategies take part in the changes of the ST forms in TL. The translation equivalence of Indonesian public signs into English is achieved by evaluating the meanings of the texts to be conveyed. Firstly, semantically, the signs realized in Indonesian and English have meanings and every sign denotes a reference in the world of the Indonesian and English speakers. Secondly, pragmatically, public signs are also influenced by the users of Indonesian and English. The forms selected to be used are associated with to whom they are displayed for. Thirdly, the source and target texts are equivalent textually. The forms chosen are associated with what information is considered to be more important.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Made Susini was born in Singaraja, Bali, Indonesia in February 6, 1962. She is a lecturer at English Department, Faculty of Letters, Warmadewa University, Bali, Indonesia. She obtained her Master Degree in Applied Linguistics (Translation) in 2005 and her Doctorate in Applied Linguistics (Translation) in 2019 from Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia. Her research interest focuses on Translation.

Nyoman Sujaya was born in Singaraja, Bali, Indonesia. He is one of the lecturers at English Department, Faculty of Letters, Warmadewa University, Bali, Indonesia. He got his Master Degree in Applied Linguistics (Translation) in 2003 and his Doctorate in Linguistics in 2020 from Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia. He has participated in a number of national and international seminars and conferences. His main research interests include Translation and Syntax.

I Wayan Ana was born in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. He is a lecturer at English Department, Faculty of Letters, Warmadewa University, Bali, Indonesia. He obtained his Master Degree in Linguistics in 2000 and his Doctorate in Applied Linguistics (Translation) in 2021. He has participated and become invited speaker in a number of seminars and conferences on Translation and Interpreting. His main research interests include Translation and Interpreting.

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