

# Adjustments in Indonesian-English Translation of Public Signs in Bali

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**Abstract**—Public signs that are written in two languages are language phenomena found in some regions in Bali. This study is to explore the translation of public signs from Indonesian into English found in Bali. Deploying the concept of pragmatic equivalence (House, 2015) and translation shifts (Catford, 1965), this study focuses on the adjustments found in the translation of public signs from Indonesian into English. The data were taken from the public signs found in Badung regency and Denpasar city, Bali province, Indonesia by taking photos. The finding reveals that public signs in Bali are realized in the forms of non-sentence and sentence. The non-sentence used includes noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverbial phrase, and preposition. Public signs in the form of sentence include declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentence. To achieve the equivalence, the source public signs are rendered by re-contextualizing their forms in target language. The re-contextualization includes the change from sentence into non-sentence, non-sentence into sentence, one type of sentence into another type, one form of non-sentence into another form, the change of unit and of phrase/clause structure.

**Index Terms**—public signs, re-contextualization, adjustments, non-sentence

## I. INTRODUCTION

Public signs play an important role in tourism development in Bali, Indonesia. Some regions in Bali do the tourism promotion in some ways. One of them is promotion through the way how the visitors are welcomed. It is a common phenomenon in Bali as a tourist destination that public signs are found everywhere and written in two languages, they are Indonesian and English. When the Indonesian public signs are well translated into English, they will be beneficial for the visitors who come to Bali. As long as the promotion is concerned, public signs become the window of a tourist destination since the people visiting Bali can get information directly from the signs displayed.

Correct and satisfied information will depend on the language used in public signs. Since Indonesian and English are languages that are linguistically and culturally different, the translation of public signs from Indonesian into English needs to be well handled. To achieve equivalence, adjustments become a must in translating public signs from Indonesian into English. This statement refers to the concept of translation which defines that in translation there is a re-contextualization of a source language text in target language (House, 2015). Referring to this phenomenon, adjustments through re-contextualization in the translation of public signs are important to be conducted and the translations of public signs become translation researchers' concerns.

A number of studies on the translations of public signs have been carried out previously (Beili & Tuo, 2015; Wang & Jiang, 2020; He, 2019; Liang, 2019; Yu, 2019; Amenador & Wang, 2020; Zheng, 2021; Zhao & Wu, 2021; Ariani & Artawa, 2022; Susini et al., 2021). Their works show that they viewed the translations of public signs from different perspectives. The translations examined also involved different languages. One study by Amenador and Wang (2020) applied Functional Theory. Other researches examined the translations of public signs by using other theories. Eco-translatology was used in the research conducted by Yu (2019), Linguistic Landscape by Beili and Tuo (2015) and Wang and Jiang (2020), Skopos Theory by Zheng (2021), and translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and Ariani and Artawa (2022). Translation strategies by Malone (1988) were used by Susini et al. (2021) who found out that certain translation strategies applied by the translators resulted in translation alternatives in target language. The translations investigated involved the translation from Chinese into English, except for Ariani and Artawa (2022) and Susini et al. (2021) who worked on the translation of public signs from Indonesian into English. Applying pragmatic equivalence (House, 2015b) and translation shifts (Catford, 1978), this present study is to find out the kinds of linguistic adjustments in the translations of public signs from Indonesian into English.

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## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Public signs are signs displayed in public area. As a sign for public, the language used will be very much influenced by the situation and cultural contexts of the texts. Indonesian signs as the source language (SL) texts have different situation and cultural contexts compared with the texts of English as the target language (TL). To handle this issue, this study adopts the concept of pragmatic equivalence proposed by House (2015b) and translation shifts by Catford (1978).

### A. *Pragmatic Equivalence*

House (2015b) viewed translation as intercultural communication. Based on this, language and culture are always involved in translation and they cannot be separated each other. Language functions to shape culture and the meaning of the linguistic units always depends on the cultural context of the text. The concept of interconnectedness between context and text must be considered in achieving translation equivalence. The evaluation of a text from its context can help the translator get the closest meaning. Shortly, in this type of intercultural communication, to achieve translation equivalence, a translator functions to build a bridge between the language and culture of the two languages involved. Equivalence is viewed as a concept that is very important in translation (Nida, 1964; Catford, 1978; Neubert, 1985; House, 1997). Viewing text in context, the three aspects of meaning involve in preserving meaning in target text. They include semantic, pragmatic, and textual meaning. Semantic meaning deals with the relation between linguistic units and their reference, pragmatic meaning between linguistic units and their user (s), while textual meaning deals with the interrelation of any component of text to form a coherent whole. Since a text always covers the three meanings, equivalence in translation must be examined from the semantic and pragmatic point of view (House, 2015b).

### B. *Translation Shifts*

Translation always involves languages which have different culture. As far as translation as intercultural communication is concerned, linguistic adjustments are common in achieving translation equivalence. This adjustment bears shifts in the process of rendering SL text into TL. The concepts of shifts were proposed in different points of view (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995; Catford, 1978). One of the concepts defined shifts as departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to TL (Catford, 1978, p.73). A distinction was also made dealing with the types. There is a categorization between obligatory and optional shifts (Toury, 1980) and between level and category shifts (Catford, 1978).

Catford (1978) proposed shifts of two kinds. They include shifts of level and shifts of category. Shifts of level can be found, as example, in the case when grammar in one language is expressed by lexis in another. Category shifts involve structure shifts, class shifts, unit shifts and intra-system shifts. Structure shifts refer to shifts in grammatical structure. Class shifts occur when a source language item is rendered into a member of a different class. In these shifts there is a change from one part of speech to another. Unit or rank shifts refer to a change of rank between the SL and TL texts. The change of rank includes hierarchical linguistic units, such as sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme.

## III. RESEARCH METHOD

The data of this study are in the form of bilingual public signs. The Indonesian public signs function as the SL and the English ones function as the TL. The signs chosen as data were collected in Badung regency and Denpasar city, Bali Province by taking their photos. The data needed were transcribed and grouped based on their forms. To analyze the data, it was carried out by applying descriptive qualitative approach. The stages are as the followings.

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 analysis was to find out whether the public signs are in the form of sentence or non-sentence. Non-sentence refers to a sentence which does not have complete structure. It can be formed by noun phrase, prepositional phrase, adjective phrase, or vocative. The simple form is not caused by a process of ellipsis or substitution (Quirk et al., 1978). The same things were also applied for the data of the TL. Secondly, the SL texts and their translations were compared to investigate the changes of their forms. The changes were identified as the adjustments carried out by the translators to achieve the translation equivalence. The adjustments from their linguistic dimension were then viewed from their cultural and communicative dimensions to see their translation equivalence pragmatically.

## IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Referring to the concept of translation shifts by Catford (1978), the category shifts as a whole are broken down into further classifications. They are then categorized as linguistic adjustments in translation. Based on the data, some adjustments are found in the translations of public signs from Indonesian into English. In general, the adjustments include the change from the form of non-sentence into sentence, the change from sentence into non-sentence, the change from one type of sentence into another type, the change from one form of non-sentence into another form, the change of unit, and the change of structure. The linguistic changes which occur in the translations of public signs from Indonesian into English are elaborated in the followings.

### A. *The Change From Sentence Into Non-Sentence*

- (1) SL : *Dilarang berjualan/berjemur di dalam area ini*  
 TL : No selling and sunbathing in this area
- (2) SL : *Dilarang menyalakan petasan/kembang api.*  
 TL : Fireworks prohibited.
- (3) SL : *Jam operasional dimulai dari jam 07.00-22.00 WITA.*  
 TL : Open daily from 7.00 a.m to 10.00 p.m.
- (4) SL : *Jaga jarak*  
 TL : Social distancing

The source texts in the translations above are in the forms of sentence. The data (1) and (2) belong to imperative sentence characterized by the use of negative word *dilarang* and the verb *berjualan/berjemur* in datum (1) and *menyalakan* in datum (2). The datum (3) is in the form of declarative sentence. The Subject is filled by *jam operasional* and Verb *dimulai*. The datum (4) belongs to positive imperative sentence. The verb used in this datum is *jaga*. To create equivalence, all these sentences are rendered into non-sentence. The form used is noun phrase in data (1), (2), and (4). The head of the noun phrase of datum (1) is *selling and sunbathing*, datum (2) is *fireworks* and datum (4) is *distancing*. The non-sentence functioning as the equivalent of the third source text is filled by verb phrase. It is characterized by the use of the verb *open*. As a whole, all these translations show shifts of unit. The source texts which are in the forms of sentence are rendered into noun phrase in data (1), (2), and (4), and into verb phrase in datum (3). This kind of shifts occur when the public signs are used to express prohibition as in data (1) and (2), to give information as in datum (3), and to express command as in datum (4).

#### B. The Change From Non-Sentence Into Sentence

- (5) SL : *Cara penyebaran*  
 TL : How it spreads?
- (6) SL : *Tidak meninggalkan barang berharga di atas sepeda.*  
 TL : Do not leave any valuable belonging on the bicycle,
- (7) SL : *Tidak diperkenankan menggunakan segala jenis mainan yang dapat mengganggu kenyamanan dan keselamatan orang lain di kolam renang.*  
 TL : Inflatable or mechanical toys are not permitted in the pool for convenience and safety of all guests.

The source texts of the public signs above are all in the forms of non-sentence. The non-sentence which fills the datum (5) is noun phrase *cara penyebaran*. This noun phrase has *cara* as head and *penyebaran* as modifier. The source texts of data (6) and (7) are filled by negative verb phrase with verb of *meninggalkan* in datum (6) and *diperkenankan* in datum (7) as the heads. Both verbs are preceded by negative marker of *tidak*. When these source texts are translated into English, their equivalents are all in the forms of sentence. The target text of datum (5) is in interrogative sentence. It is realized by interrogative word *how* followed by Subject *it* and Verb *spreads*. The target text of datum (6) is in the form of negative imperative sentence. It is composed of auxiliary verb of *do*, followed by negative word *not*, and Verb *leave*. The target text of (7) is in passive declarative sentence. It is represented by Subject *inflatable or mechanical toys* with negative passive verb filled by *are not permitted*. Referring to the concept of shifts (Catford, 1978), unit shifts occur in these three translations. Phrase in the source texts become sentence in target texts. The changes from phrase into sentence are found in the translations of public signs which function to give information (datum 5), to express command (datum 6), and to express prohibition (datum 7).

#### C. The Change From One Type of Sentence Into Another Type

- (8) SL : *Dilarang untuk berenang jika dalam pengaruh obat-obatan atau alkohol.*  
 TL : Swimming is not allowed if under influence of drug or alcohol.
- (9) SL : *Dilarang untuk berlari, melompat, atau melakukan tindakan yang membahayakan di sekitar kolam renang.*  
 TL : Running, jumping, or rough play inside the pool are prohibited.
- (10) SL : *Dilarang meninggalkan kendaraan.*  
 TL : Drivers don't leave the vehicle.

All the texts of the SL are in the forms of imperative sentence. The source texts are characterized by the verb of *dilarang* followed by the verb *berenang* (*untuk* before it is not grammatically used) in datum (8), by the verb *berlari* (*untuk* is also ungrammatically used) in datum (9), and by the verb *meninggalkan* in datum (10). The adjustments carried out by the translators to achieve equivalents are by rendering imperative sentence into a sentence of another type.

In the translation of datum (8), its equivalent is represented by declarative sentence in passive form. The sentence is realized by the use of Subject *swimming* filled by negative passive verb represented by *is not allowed*. In datum (9) the target text is also in passive declarative sentence characterized by Subject *running, jumping, or rough play inside the pool* and passive verb *are prohibited*. The target text of datum (10) is realized by active declarative sentence. The subject of the sentence is filled by *drivers* and the verb by *don't leave*. The changes from one type of sentence into another type indicate that structure shifts occur in these translations. The shifts are found in the translations of public signs which show prohibition. In Indonesian language, prohibition is commonly characterized by the use of negative word *dilarang* which means 'it is forbidden'.

#### D. The Change From One Form of Non-Sentence Into Another Form

(11) SL : *Keluar*  
TL : Exit

(12) SL : *Masuk*  
TL : Entrance

(13) SL : *Masuk*  
TL : In

(14) SL : *Tutup*  
TL : Closed

All source and target texts in the translations above are in the forms of non-sentence. All the source texts belong to word class of verb represented by *keluar* in datum (11), *masuk* in data (12) and (13), and *tutup* in datum (14). In their translations, the verb form changes into noun as in datum (11) and (12), preposition in datum (13), and into adjective in datum (14). The adjustments in these translations are from one form to another form of non-sentence. The change from one word class into another word class is categorized into class shifts. This kind of shifts occurs in the translations of Indonesian public signs that have function to give information. The source texts are to inform people that it is the way where people can go out as in datum (11), that it is the way where people can enter the building as in data (12) and (13), and to inform people that the area is closed as in datum (14). The following is datum which shows the change from verb phrase into noun phrase.

(15) SL : *Tidak diperkenankan untuk piknik.*  
TL : No picnic allowed.

The source text of this datum is in the form of verb phrase represented by the verb *diperkenankan* as the head preceded by negative marker *tidak* and followed by modifier *untuk piknik*. The target text is in the form of noun phrase with *picnic* as the head preceded by negative marker *no* and followed by modifier *allowed*.

#### E. The Change of Unit

(16) SL : *Maaf*  
TL : Sorry for the inconvenience

(17) SL : *Mushola*  
TL : Prayer Room

(18) SL : *Gejala umum*  
TL : Symptoms

The change of unit is found in the translation which covers the change from sentence into non-sentence, and vice-versa. This change also occurs in the change from word into phrase and vice-versa, as found in the data (16) and (17). The signs *Maaf* and *Mushola* are in the forms of word, while their translations are in the forms of phrase. *Sorry for the inconvenience* is adjective phrase with adjective *sorry* as its head and *for the inconvenience* as modifier and *Prayer Room* is noun phrase with noun *room* as its head and *prayer* as modifier. On the other hand, *gejala umum* in datum (18) is in the form of phrase with noun *gejala* as the head and *umum* as modifier. Its translation is in the form of word represented by noun *symptoms*.

#### F. The Change of Phrase/Clause Structure

(19) SL : *Titik kumpul*  
TL : Assembly point

(20) SL : *Pelayanan bus umum*  
TL : Public bus service

(21) SL : *Parkir sepeda tidak dikenakan biaya apapun (Gratis) bagi karyawan*

& pengunjung Lippo Mall Kuta  
 TL : Bicycle parking is free of charge for employee & visitors of Lippo Mall Kuta.

- (22) SL : *ATM untuk sementara tidak dapat dipergunakan.*  
 TL : ATM is temporary out of service.

The change of structure in the translation of public signs in Bali includes the change of noun phrase and clause structure. Data (19) and (20) above show the changes of noun phrase structure. The source noun phrases come with head before the modifier, while the target noun phrases after modifier. The nouns functioning as the head of the source texts are *titik* (datum 19) and *pelayanan* (datum 20). The nouns as the heads of the target noun phrases are *point* (datum 19) and *service* (datum 20). In the datum (21) the source clause is formed by Subject filled by *parkir sepeda*, Verb by *tidak dikenakan*, Adverbials by *biaya apapun* and *bagi karyawan & pengunjung Lippo Mall Kuta*. The target text has different structure. It is composed by Subject filled by *bicycle parking*, Verb *is*, Complement *free of charge*, and Adverbial *for employee & visitors of Lippo Mall Kuta*. Change of clause structure also occurs in datum (22). The source text is composed of elements of Subject realized by *ATM*, Adverbial by *untuk sementara*, and Verb *tidak dapat dipergunakan*. The target text consists of Subject *ATM*, Verb *is*, Adverbial *temporary*, and Complement *out of service*. This shows that the structures between the source and the target texts are different.

To sum up, bilingual public signs in Bali as a tourist destination become a common phenomenon. The forms of the language used to increase the promotion of the tourism development are various. The public signs are realized in the forms of non-sentence and sentence. The non-sentence used covers noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, and preposition. The types of sentence used include declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentence.

Indonesian and English have different language systems and they also have different culture. To translate the Indonesian public signs, a translator must be able to function as a bridge to overcome these differences. When the bilingual public signs found in Bali are concerned, the data show that to achieve the equivalence, a number of Indonesian public signs are re-contextualized in English. The common recontextualization which occurs can be seen in the change of phrase and clause structures. In terms of the change of phrase structures, for instance from *pelayanan bus umum* becoming *public bus service*, the translation implies that the change is induced by grammatical systems of the two languages. How to restructure the head and modifier of the phrase is not the same between Indonesian and English. So, this is a kind of obligatory change. The use of non-sentence is commonly found in public signs which are used to give information and to express prohibition. Viewed from the communicative dimension, the change from sentence into non-sentence is partly induced by the intention of the translators to make the information or the instruction more direct. *Open daily from 7.00 a.m to 10.00 p.m.* which is in the form of verb phrase is more direct compared with *Jam operasional dimulai dari jam 07.00-22.00 WITA* which is in the form of declarative sentence.

SL : *Motor dilarang naik*  
 TL : No motor allowed

This datum also shows the change from sentence into non-sentence represented by noun phrase. It functions to express prohibition. In this translation the Indonesian public sign comes with the additional context using the word *naik* meaning 'go up'. This word is used to refer to the location of the parking area which is upstairs. In its translation in English, the use of a specific word as the translation of the word *naik* is considered not so necessary since the context of place is clear enough. So, in this datum, the translation equivalence is achieved through a kind of pragmatic equivalence by using non-sentence represented by noun and by re-contextualizing the context of place. The use of noun phrase as the equivalent makes the information conveyed more direct.

The adjustments carried out by the translators result in some linguistic changes in TL. The translations of Indonesian public signs into English cover shifts of class, structure, and unit. The shifts occur in the translations of the source texts which function to express prohibition, command, warning, welcoming, and to give information.

Indonesian prohibitions are characterized by the use of negative word *dilarang* followed by verb, such as *Dilarang memakai kaos*, *Dilarang menyalakan petasan*, *Dilarang menginjak rumput*. and the use of passive declarative sentence. The adjustments carried out are partly by rendering the source texts into noun phrase, negative imperative sentence, and even by re-contextualizing negative word by positive word, such as *Dilarang menginjak rumput* which is translated into *Keep off grass*.

Some source data of public signs investigated reflect Indonesian characteristics represented by the use of negative word *dilarang* to express prohibition and *wajib* to emphasize the instruction. He (2019) also found that some public signs in China come with Chinese characteristics. In general, the translation of public signs in Bali shows to be in line to the eco-translatology perspective deployed in the translation of public signs in China. The perspective was through the transformation of the three dimensions which include linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions (Yu, 2019).

## V. CONCLUSION

Linguistic adjustments in the translation of public signs in Bali are induced by linguistic and cultural differences between Indonesian as the source language and English as the target language. The adjustments are to make the texts equivalent from the three dimensions which include linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. Some are

categorized as obligatory change induced by the different system of the two languages.

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