

Use of vocabulary translation strategies: A semantic translation analysis

Laurent Rietveld¹ | Frank Van Hormelen²

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 27 January 2019
Revised: 9 February 2019
Accepted: 1 March 2019

KEYWORDS

contextual meaning,
message redirection process,
semantic structure,
syntax,
translation,
translation strategy.

ABSTRACT

Translation is the process of transferring source language text messages into the target language. The practical objective of the message transfer process is to assist the reader of the target language text in understanding the message intended by the original author of the source language text. There are many types of translations available, but semantic translation is considered the type of translation that is the most accurate in conveying meaning. Semantic translation tries to divert as closely as possible the semantic and syntactic structures of the target language with the exact same contextual meaning in the source language text, as well as word meanings and sentence meanings from the perspective of the source text context. Semantic translation is found to be the most flexible and flexible translation.



Copyright © 2019 by The author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, as long as the original authors and source are cited. No permission is required from the authors or the publishers.

Correspondence:

Rietveld, R.
 Triply, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 rietveld@triply.cc

¹ rietveld@triply.cc, Triply, Amsterdam, Netherlands

² rietveld@triply.cc, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

1 INTRODUCTION

Language and culture have an inseparable relationship because the language has a function in culture, namely as a means of developing culture, as a pathway for cultural success, and an inventory of cultural features [1][2]. In line with this, for the development of a country's culture, it is necessary to translate the source language into the target language, with the aim that readers of the target language understand the culture of the speakers of the source language. This led to a process of transferring information and communication. This process of building a communication bridge is known as translation.

The transfer of information in the translation process is always marked by cultural differences in the source language and target language. This difference directly places the translator in a dilemma. On the one hand, translators must translate the source language text messages into the target language accurately. On the other hand, and in many cases the translator has to find an equivalent that may not exist in the target language, especially if the result of the translation must be concise, interesting, and informative [3].

One example is the tourism information media published by the Central Java Province Culture and Tourism Office. In information media in the form of brochures, booklets, posters, and others, most of them are presented in bilingual form, namely Indonesian and English. Also, some speak Dutch and Japanese. In the media, there are many cultural vocabularies or "cultural words" that must be translated into the target language.

Translation of "cultural words" is a problem in itself for translators. This is because the translator must find a lexical equivalent for an unfamiliar (foreign) object or event in the target language culture due to differences in point of view, customs, geography, beliefs, and various other factors. To solve the translation problem, a translator must be able to find the right strategy to overcome the mismatch problem in translation [4][5].

The discussion on the three studies has similarities with the research conducted by the author but has a significant difference when viewed from the selected source language and target language. Based on this background, this paper will identify cultural vocabulary, describe the translation strategies used in translating cultural vocabulary from the source language (Indonesian and Javanese) into Japanese, and discover the shifts that occur in the translation of cultural vocabulary in the language tourism information media. Japan, Central Java Province.

The results of this study are expected to be able to provide a deeper understanding and understanding of the translation strategies used by the translator in translating cultural vocabulary or "Cultural Words" and help provide additional references for other researchers in the field of translation, especially those who want to research Indonesian translation text into Indonesian. in Japanese in terms of the meaning equivalence aspect

2 METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The data and results obtained from this study are verbal in the form of words or phrases that contain cultural elements in the source language (SL), namely Indonesian and their translation in the target language (TL) in Japanese from the tourism brochures and booklets available at tourist attractions in Indonesia. Semarang and Solo, which were taken randomly [6][7][8]. The data was collected using observational and comparative methods, namely observing and comparing the cultural vocabulary of the source text with the target text (the result of the translation). Then the comparison results are analyzed. Furthermore, from the analysis, it is hoped that the matching strategy used by the translator and the shifts that occur in translating the cultural vocabulary can be identified.

Data analysis was performed after the netted data were classified. Data analysis is the researcher's attempt to deal directly with the problems contained in the data. The main components in data analysis in this study are 1) data reduction, 2) data presentation, 3) drawing conclusions or verification. This data analysis model is called an interactive model of analysis. The way the interactive analysis model works is in the form of interaction between components with the data collection process as a cycle-shaped process.

To categorize cultural vocabulary which divides these cultural aspects into the following categories and sub-categories: a) Ecology such as plants, animals, environment and other geographic characteristics, b) Material culture (Artefacts) such as food, clothing, houses, equipment and transportation, c) Social cultures such as work, greetings and entertainment, d) Organization includes politics and administration, religion (religious and artistic). artistic), e) Body movements and habits. Furthermore, to find a translation strategy used the theory put forward which states several translation strategies that can be used by translators, namely: 1) translation strategies using more general words, 2) translation strategies using more neutral words, 3) translation strategy using cultural substitutes, 4) translation strategy using loanwords or loanwords accompanied by explanations, 5) translation strategies by

paraphrasing, 6) translation strategies by omitting, and 7) translation strategies with illustrations [9][10][11].

There is a shift in the syntactic and semantic levels. The shift in meaning at the semantic level includes 1) a shift in generic meaning to a specific meaning or vice versa, and 2) a shift in meaning due to differences in cultural perspectives. The presentation of the results of data analysis in this study was carried out formally and informally. The formal presentation is the presentation of the results of data analysis using language rules. In this study, the results of data analysis are presented informally because the analysis is carried out qualitatively with easy-to-understand explanatory words.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the research results, it was found that there were no official booklets or brochures published by the local government that used Japanese, however, published by private parties and uploaded in cyberspace and posted in several hotels with a very small number. From these data sources, the following results are obtained. The world of translation is a doorway to a new world of civilization. Much history has proven that after the translation took place, the golden age of the nation emerged, such as the golden age of Islam and the European Renaissance. The process of entering Islam into Indonesia brought by Arab traders brought a lot of influence. On the other hand, they preach to spread Islam along with the development of Arabic in Indonesia. Many Indonesians at that time learned Arabic intending to understand Islam. The entry of Islam in Indonesia certainly has a role in the world of translation of Arabic into Indonesia and vice versa. Many of us find Indonesian loanwords taken from Arabic.

Translation is the process of transferring source language text messages into the target language. The practical objective of the message transfer process is to assist the reader of the target language text in understanding the message intended by the original author of the source language text. This assignment of transfer places the translator in a very important position in disseminating science and technology [12][13]. If science and technology are understood as part of the culture, the translator indirectly participates in the process of cultural transfer. It is undeniable that when translating books in Arabic or other languages, translation problems are always encountered which include problems with linguistic aspects, non-linguistic aspects, and culture.

Translation cannot be carried out without adequate mastery of a foreign language. Ability and mastery of Arabic, for example, must be improved and developed. Because every nation is required to be able to communicate with other nations in all

aspects of life, especially to absorb information and science and technology to expand the nation's horizons in line with development needs. The translation process is divided into two stages, namely (1) analysis of the original text and the meaning or original text message, (2) re-expressing the meaning or original text message into the target language with words or sentences received by the target language.

Students of the 2016 Arabic Literature Department translation package course, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang (UM) are students who take the sixth semester by choosing the translation department package as their choice. The translation package consists of eight SKS for special translation courses consisting of three subjects namely Translation Training (4 credits), Translation Technique (2 SKS), and Translation Entrepreneurship (2 SKS) which is attended by ten students of the Arabic Literature Department in 2016. given to students a translation package, among others, the translation of the book Iqro 'Bismirabbika, important documents, and several books in certain scientific fanatics such as nahwu, shorof and ma'ani science. The translation process is carried out by translating the Arabic text as the original language into Indonesian as the target language. The learning process is divided into two, the practice of translating the text and revising the translation text.

This research is expected to be a benchmark for translators and teachers of Arabic in improving Arabic learning, more specifically in translation programs and courses related to translation so that it becomes an academic contribution in terms of language, culture, and science. Further readability analysis in this research on translating Arabic into Indonesian can conclude the semantic translation style of Indonesian Arabic students in general and students of the UM Arabic Literature Department in particular so that the translation can be improved so that it can be enjoyed by the general public into a feasible translation product and easy to understand like not a translation product.

This research uses descriptive qualitative research because it describes the data in the form of written and translation errors. Descriptive research is a study whose data analysis only reaches one-by-one variable descriptions. Qualitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, used to examine natural object conditions where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation, and data analysis is qualitative. The method in this qualitative research uses the content analysis method. This method was chosen because it is expected to describe the error in translating the students of the translation package of the Arabic Literature Department, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, class of 2016 in the translation text of their assignments.

The content analysis method is research that is an in-depth discussion of the contents of written and printed information in the mass media. This analysis is generally a method that includes all analysis of the contents of a written text, but also this content analysis is used to describe a specific analytical approach. This study took data sources from the assignment of the translation training course that Prof. Dr. Imam Asrori, namely translating important documents with details of diplomas, birth certificates, certificates, academic announcements, contract surges, product advertisements, service advertisements, manuals, product packaging, pamphlets/brochures for students of the 2016 batch translation package. Academic research focuses on data translation from Arabic (BA) to Indonesian (BI).

The author uses the following data collection procedures: Observation is a way of collecting information materials (data) which are done by systematically observing and recording phenomena that are being subjected to observations. In observation using the observation method, namely listening to all sources of language data obtained. The term watch is not only spoken language but also written language because the data source comes from the written data of the 2016 UM JSA translation package student assignments.

Interviews are conversations and questions and answers that are directed to achieve certain goals. This interview aims to obtain knowledge about subjective meanings that are understood by individuals regarding the topic under study. Interviews were conducted by giving several questions to be answered directly by the subject, namely the students of the 2016 UM JSA translation package. The details of these questions helped the researcher to obtain data from the subject.

Documentation is how to find data about things or variables in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, meeting minutes, legers, agendas and so on. The documentation is meant to complement the data above by collecting the necessary research data, namely assignments and revisions to the translation training course. After the data has been collected, the researcher comes face to face with the analysis of language errors with a qualitative view. Because research is related to error analysis, language error analysis procedures are used, namely, (a) sample collection, (b) error identification, (c) error explanation, (d) clarification of errors, (e) error evaluation (Tarigan, 1988). Semantic analysis of student translation is in the form of choosing the right words for a context [14].

3.1 Definition of translation

Translation activities are activities of transferring meaning from the source language to the receptors. The translation is done by changing the first language to the second language using a semantic structure. That is, the meaning or meaning must remain constant, but only changes form. Translation is a skill to be able to change messages or meanings or written statements from the source language to the target language with messages or statements with the same meaning but in other languages.

In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word for translation comes from the root word "translate" with the affix "pe-an" which indicates the meaning of the process, method, and action of translating. Meanwhile, translating the word itself in KBBI is the same as translating, namely the activity of moving a language into another language or called translating. According to the type, translation is divided into several types seen from the level of translation. There are at least 8 types of translation. Word-for-word translation. The translation closest to the source language. The word order and order in the text of the source language is maintained in this translation regardless of the context brought either by the environment or culture. Literal translation. This type of translation uses the grammatical reconstruction of the source language by substituting its equivalents in the target language, while the words are translated out of context. As with word-for-word translation, the literal translation used for initial translation can help identify problems that need to be resolved. Translated faithfully (faithful translation). Faithful translation tries to reproduce contextual meaning even though it is still bound by the grammatical structure of the source language. Words whose target language culture and text are rewritten [15].

Semantic translation. Semantic translation takes into account the aesthetic elements of the source language text by compromising the meaning as long as it is still in the fairness stage. Adaptation translation. The freest type of translation and the closest to the target language. This type of translation is mainly for drama and poetry. The theme, characters, and plot are usually maintained. The culture of the source language is converted into the culture of the target language and the text is rewritten. Free translation is a rewrite without looking at the original form. Usually, it is a paraphrase that can be shorter or longer than the original. Idiomatic translation. A translation that expresses the message of the source language is conveyed again but there are deviations, nuances of meaning because it prioritizes everyday vocabulary and idioms that are not in the source language but can be used in the target language [16].

Communicative translation with culture (communicative translation). This translation seeks to convey the contextual

meaning of the source language in such a way that the content and language can be accepted and understood by the readers of the target language. This is usually considered the ideal translation.

3.2 Semantic translation

All sentences cannot be separated from semantic meaning. Semantics with the object of meaning are located at the ten levels that build a sentence. The notion of semantics itself is a linguistic field that studies the relationship between linguistic signs and the things they sign. Therefore semantics can be defined as the science of meaning which falls into three levels of analysis of the language of phonology, grammar, and semantics [17].

If applied in the field of translation, semantic translation tries to move as closely as possible the semantic and syntactic structures of the target language with the same contextual meaning in the source language text, as well as word meanings and sentence meanings from the perspective of the source text context. The results of semantic translation are considered to be more flexible and closer to the meaning desired by the target language.

When using the semantic translation method, the resulting translation is a flexible and flexible text when compared to other types of translations. This flexible and flexible meaning is obtained because this translation considers the aesthetic elements of the target language while still compromising the meaning as long as it is within the limits of reasonableness. It is not uncommon for even words with little cultural meaning are termed more neutral or functional language. Seeing the results of the translation, semantic translation is considered the best type of translation to be judged by the accuracy of the messages conveyed from the original language to the source language.

Semantic translation has advantages and disadvantages in the process. The advantage of semantic translation is that it focuses more on finding equivalents at a word level that is bound to the culture of the source language strongly and strictly. The weakness is that it is too attached to the culture of the source language when the translation process is running. As a result, this type of translation is often difficult to use to translate abstract or subjective words.

3.3 Analysis of language errors

As long as language users are still in the process of language formation, language errors must occur whether they are done

consciously or unconsciously. Language errors do not only happen to learners, even teachers are not free from language errors at either the foreign language level or their language. Language error studies are closely related to language teaching. Language errors interfere with the achievement of language teaching goals [18].

Errors can occur due to: Inter-language transfer, namely the transfer of the first language element (B1) which has fossilized into B2 (the language being studied), Inter-language transfer, namely the transfer of the first language element to the language itself. Errors in the context of learning, namely errors caused by the wrong method, material, way of teaching the lecturer/teacher, errors due to B2 learning strategies as a result of the approach taken by learners to the "B2 rules" material being studied (strategies of second language learning), and, errors that occur due to communication strategies, namely the approach taken by learners in communicating with other people/native speakers of B2 (strategies of second language communication).

Language error analysis is an advanced procedure of contrastive analysis, namely the procedure carried out in studying, researching, and examining the mistakes of learners who are studying a foreign language. Because in the process of learning a foreign language it is very possible to find errors. Error analysis studies the mistakes made by learners, which can be observed, analyzed, classified to reveal a system that is operating on the learner. So language error analysis is an activity to reveal the language found in the speaking and writing proficiency of foreign language learners (Richard & Weber, 1985). In linguistics, the classification of language errors that occurs is at the phonological, grammatical (syntactic and morphological), semantic, and discourse-level. The steps in analyzing language errors explained by linguistic experts are as follows: Sample collection, Identification of errors, Explanation of errors, Clarification of mistakes, Evaluation of errors [19].

3.4 Translation strategy

There were 3 translation strategies found, namely general-specific pattern or vice versa in dealing with cultural vocabulary that is not in the target language, the translator uses a general pattern or vice versa for 8 vocabularies. An example is the vocabulary of night market culture translated into Japanese as *yorushi*. The night market referred to in the context in the source text is a special market that is open at night to celebrate certain celebrations. In addition to selling several types of goods, this market also provides a game arena and performances such as *Sintren*, *Lumping Horse* and other traditional games. *Yorushi* is a regular market that opens at

night. The meaning of the night market is very different from yorushi because the concept of a night market like the one in Indonesia is not found in Japan, so the translator uses a more general vocabulary [20].

Another example is the vocabulary of alunalun translated by hiroba. Hiroba translation is a more general (superordinate) vocabulary of alunalun. Hiroba in Japanese includes a more general meaning as seen from the component analysis of its meaning above. The square contains the meaning of a large field near the center of government, such as the regent's office and others and close to the mosque. Meanwhile, hiroba covers a wide field in general, both near the center of government and worship or not.

In Japanese, loanwords or loanwords are indicated by transliteration or transvocalization based on existing rules in Japanese. This loanword is called gairaigo 外来語 (foreign language) and is usually written in Katakana. The translator uses this strategy in two ways, namely: (1) with modification and (2) without modification. An example of using loanwords without modification is Wingko Babat ウィンコーババト [winko-babato]. The word wingko babad is absorbed as it is by using katakana to become wingko babato. Babad, translated as babato, because the concept of writing gairaigo is based on sound and consonants in Japanese letters are always followed by vowels (KV). Meanwhile, the rickshaw is absorbed into Japanese as the target language with modifications, namely the word bechaku in katakana letters and an additional explanation of the word wataku (wheeled vehicle) in kanji.

An example of vocabulary that uses this strategy is that the word Sintren as a traditional Indonesian art has no equivalent in Japanese culture. Therefore, the translator uses paraphrases to match these words. The paraphrase of Sintren is majutsu buyou, which is a dance that uses magic. The process of translating the source language into the target language, at least two things happened, namely a shift in structure and a shift in meaning. The basic pattern structure of the Indonesian language explained (DM) shifted to explain in Japanese. For example, Dawet Ayu translates to 美しいダウエット [utsukushii dawetto] namely ayu dawet.

Shifts in semantics are caused by differences in viewpoints and different cultures of speakers. This shift in the field of meaning also means that it is not always possible to transfer the meaning of the source language into the target language as a whole. For example, the night market. In the culture of speakers of ancient source languages, Indonesians or especially Javanese, were looking forward to the crowd at the night market. The market, which is held only to welcome special days, is equipped with games and art performances. Such cultural concepts are not well known in Japanese culture.

Japanese people define a night market as a market that is open at night, while for special day celebrations they have a matsuri, which is a very different concept from a night market.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Handling cultural vocabulary that has no equivalent in the target language, namely from Indonesian to Japanese, the translator uses a strategy of a) paraphrasing equivalent, b) equivalent to loan words, c) matching special patterns - general or vice versa. The choice of strategy in translating to find the right word equivalents in expressing cultural vocabulary that does not exist in the target language, the translator cannot be separated from the context. Context is a major consideration in choosing the right strategy. However, a shift in meaning may occur due to differences in viewpoints and cultures of different language speakers, but the main goal of the translator is how the meaning in the source language can be conveyed to the target language reader without neglecting the principles of clarity and fairness.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to the material presented in this article.

REFERENCES

- [1] Albrecht, L., Archibald, M., Snelgrove-Clarke, E., & Scott, S. D. (2016). Systematic review of knowledge translation strategies to promote research uptake in child health settings. *Journal of pediatric nursing*, 31(3), 235-254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2015.12.002>
- [2] Au, H. H., & Jan, E. (2014). Novel viral translation strategies. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: RNA*, 5(6), 779-801. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wrna.1246>
- [3] Banerjee, A., Ifrim, M. F., Valdez, A. N., Raj, N., & Bassell, G. J. (2018). Aberrant RNA translation in fragile X syndrome: From FMRP mechanisms to emerging therapeutic strategies. *Brain research*, 1693, 24-36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brainres.2018.04.008>
- [4] Beamond, M. T., Farndale, E., & Härtel, C. E. (2016). MNE translation of corporate talent management strategies to subsidiaries in emerging economies. *Journal of World Business*, 51(4), 499-510. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2016.01.002>
- [5] Calis, E., & Dikilitas, K. (2012). The use of translation in EFL classes as L2 learning practice. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 5079-5084. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.389>

- [6] Campbell, A., Louie-Poon, S., Slater, L., & Scott, S. D. (2019). Knowledge translation strategies used by healthcare professionals in child health settings: an updated systematic review. *Journal of pediatric nursing*, 47, 114-120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2019.04.026>
- [7] Chai, Y. C., Carlier, A., Bolander, J., Roberts, S. J., Geris, L., Schrooten, J., ... & Luyten, F. P. (2012). Current views on calcium phosphate osteogenicity and the translation into effective bone regeneration strategies. *Acta biomaterialia*, 8(11), 3876-3887. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actbio.2012.07.002>
- [8] Garzón-Orjuela, N., Bello, N. F. S., Mahecha, L. P. B., Hernández, L. A. M., Ángel, M. C. S., Ardila, N. V. M., ... & Eslava-Schmalbach, J. (2019). Effectiveness of knowledge translation strategies in audiovisual language compared with other languages to improve health outcomes in individuals and the general population: a systematic review. *Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría (English ed.)*, 48(2), 105-126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcpeng.2019.03.002>
- [9] Grainger, D. W., van der Mei, H. C., Jutte, P. C., van den Dungen, J. J., Schultz, M. J., van der Laan, B. F., ... & Busscher, H. J. (2013). Critical factors in the translation of improved antimicrobial strategies for medical implants and devices. *Biomaterials*, 34(37), 9237-9243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biomaterials.2013.08.043>
- [10] Janssens, M., Lambert, J., & Steyaert, C. (2004). Developing language strategies for international companies: The contribution of translation studies. *Journal of World Business*, 39(4), 414-430. Janssens, M., Lambert, J., & Steyaert, C. (2004). Developing language strategies for international companies: The contribution of translation studies. *Journal of World Business*, 39(4), 414-430.
- [11] Ma, Z. M., & Yan, L. (2007). Generalization of strategies for fuzzy query translation in classical relational databases. *Information and Software Technology*, 49(2), 172-180. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infsof.2006.05.002>
- [12] Mahmoudi, M. (2018). Debugging nano-bio interfaces: systematic strategies to accelerate clinical translation of nanotechnologies. *Trends in biotechnology*, 36(8), 755-769. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tibtech.2018.02.014>
- [13] Martin, I., Smith, T., & Wendt, D. (2009). Bioreactor-based roadmap for the translation of tissue engineering strategies into clinical products. *Trends in biotechnology*, 27(9), 495-502. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tibtech.2009.06.002>
- [14] Ramer, L. M., Ramer, M. S., & Bradbury, E. J. (2014). Restoring function after spinal cord injury: towards clinical translation of experimental strategies. *The Lancet Neurology*, 13(12), 1241-1256. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422\(14\)70144-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1474-4422(14)70144-9)
- [15] Risku, H. (2002). Situatedness in translation studies. *Cognitive systems research*, 3(3), 523-533. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1389-0417\(02\)00055-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1389-0417(02)00055-4)
- [16] Ryabova, L. A., Pooggin, M. M., & Hohn, T. (2002). Viral strategies of translation initiation: ribosomal shunt and reinitiation. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-6603\(02\)72066-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-6603(02)72066-7)
- [17] Stepanova, V. V. (2017). Translation strategies of legal texts (English-Russian). *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 237, 1329-1336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.218>
- [18] Stepanova, V. V. (2017). Translation strategies of legal texts: Experimental approach. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 237, 1201-1207. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.190>
- [19] Straus, S. E., Tetroe, J. M., & Graham, I. D. (2011). Knowledge translation is the use of knowledge in health care decision making. *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 64(1), 6-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2009.08.016>
- [20] Volkova, T. (2014). Translation model, translation analysis, translation strategy: an integrated methodology. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 154, 301-304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.167>