Translating Academic Texts: An Analysis of Translations Solutions

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the translation strategies employed by translators in translating the abstracts of undergraduate theses. Specifically, the study focuses on the techniques or translation solutions utilized by translators when handling various topics of thesis abstracts, using Pym's (2016) translation solution theory as a framework. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, and data collection is done through documentation, using two forms of thesis abstracts: the original abstract written in Bahasa Indonesia and its translated version. The study reveals the presence of seven types of translation solutions used in the selected abstracts data, namely: copying words, copying structure, perspective change, density change, compensation, cultural correspondence, and text tailoring. Among these types, text tailoring emerged as the most dominant translation solution. This study provides insights into the translation strategies adopted by translators in handling undergraduate thesis abstracts. The findings of this study could be useful for future research on translation and also for improving the quality of translations in academic settings.

Keywords: Pym's translation solution typology, translation errors, thesis abstract

INTRODUCTION

Translation has become a critical issue in academic work, such as the translation of theses, articles, abstracts, and so on. The demand for translation in academic settings has increased due to the need for international publications. Many academics desire their work to be read by international readers, which makes translation the solution to achieving this goal.

It is crucial that translators produce a good and acceptable translation product that presents the authentic ideas of the source language in the target language. Hasyim (2015) defines translation as an activity that conveys the intended meaning and context of the first speaker, known as the sender, to the second speaker, known as the receiver, for effective communication. Thus, the essence of translation activity is the contextual meaning, while the main purpose is to enable the audience to understand the work. Therefore, translators must have a comprehensive understanding of the ideas and concepts of the source language, and the translation should convey the same meaning in the target language, rather than translating the language word for word. The example of this can be seen from translating academic text such as thesis abstracts.

A thesis abstract is a concise summary of a research paper or dissertation that highlights the main points and conclusions of the study. It typically includes a brief overview of the research problem, research questions or hypotheses, methods, results, and conclusions. The abstract is often the first section of the thesis that readers encounter and serves as an introduction to the paper's content.

Due to the intricate and specialised nature of the language utilised, translating thesis

abstracts presents a number of difficulties for translators. One of the difficulties is attempting to portray the abstract's original meaning with accuracy and precision while also adhering to the author's tone and writing style. According to Hasyim (2015), in order to achieve effective communication, translators must be able to convey the intended meaning and context of the source language into the target language. The usage of specialised language, particularly in scientific and technological subjects, presents another difficulty in translating thesis abstracts. These terms frequently lack direct translations in the target language, necessitating the adoption of effective translation strategies by translators in order to effectively convey the meaning. According to Pym (2018), translators might work around these problems by adopting new vocabulary or sentence structures, shifting their viewpoint, or creating cultural allusions. The translation of idiomatic idioms, phrasal verbs, and other language-specific elements that are frequently used in academic writing can also be challenging. These characteristics could have various interpretations or meanings in various languages, necessitating extra care and effort on the part of the translator.

Additionally, translating thesis abstracts can be difficult due to deadline pressure and time limits. There's a chance that translators won't have enough time to do in-depth research, speak with subject matter experts, or thoroughly edit their work, which could lead to mistakes or inaccuracies in the final product.

To overcome these difficulties, translators may require the use of appropriate strategies, to guarantee the correctness and consistency of their work. To ensure that their translations are accurate, they might also need to work with specialists in the subject matter or native speakers. During the translation process, the translator may encounter various difficulties related to their English knowledge or translation skills, such as limited vocabulary, difficulty in finding appropriate words with multiple meanings, and issues with English tenses due to different grammar structures in other languages. Translators may utilize various strategies to address these issues.

Pym (2018) suggests a new idea for the general term "translation solutions" instead of "procedures," "techniques," or "strategies" based on a method that employs typology, comparing texts based on the solutions adopted rather than on the cognitive processes involved. Pym divides the solutions into eight categories: Copying Words, Copying Structure, Perspective Change, Density Change, Resegmentation, Compensation, Cultural Correspondence, and Text Tailoring.

This paper discusses Pym's Translation Solution and its relation to other strategies used by translators today. The article also will look at the translation solutions in the translation of undergraduate thesis abstracts with a case from Indonesian into English.

METHODS

The study utilized a qualitative approach to investigate the translation strategies employed by translators in translating abstracts of undergraduate theses. The data source consisted of original abstracts and their translated versions from Indonesian into English collected from the repository of Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. There are a total of 50 abstracts collected representing different topics and study programs. The primary focus of the study was on the translation strategies employed by the translators. Data were collected using the documentation technique, and the analysis aimed to identify the correlation between the translator strategies and Pym's translation solution. Data were then categorized based on the translation solutions and analysed using content analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study identified a total of 362 cases of Translation Solutions (TS) that were distributed across seven TS types: copying words, copying structures, perspective

change, density change, compensation, cultural correspondence, and text tailoring. The copying words TS type was found to have six instances of occurrence in the translated abstracts. The following data provides a representation of the use of copying words as a translation solution employed by the translators in translating abstract texts.

ST: "*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas dari daun Lamtoro* (Leucaena leucocephala)…."

TT: "This present study was intended to find out the effectiveness of Lamtoro (Leucaena leucocephala) leaves….."

The sample data above illustrates the use of the copying sound strategy by the translator to translate the Indonesian term "Lamtoro" by keeping the term untranslated in the target text, as there is no equivalent term in English. However, this approach contributes to redundancy in the text, as the scientific term "Leucaena leucocephala" is also mentioned. Scholars such as Baker (2009) and Kelly (1998) suggest that to avoid confusion for target text readers, translators may either add explanatory information or exclude redundancies.

Furthermore, the study identified four instances of the copying structure TS type in the translated abstracts. The following data provides a detailed and representative description, along with its analysis.

ST : "…. *seiring berkembangnya zaman*…."

TT: "…., as the age goes ahead….."

The sample data above illustrates the use of copying fixed phrases as a sub-class of the copying structure translation solution in the translated abstracts. The translation followed the structure of the source text, with the translated phrases matching the common expressions used in the original text.

The study identified 21 instances of the perspective change TS type, which were further divided into three sub-types of strategies, including changing sentence focus, changing semantic focus, and changing voice. The following

representative data provides an example of the perspective change translation solution used by the translators in translating abstract texts.

Changing sentence focus

ST : "*Metode yang digunakan dalam penilitian ini adalah penilitian kualitatif*…."

TT : "…., this qualitative research was carried out….."

In the provided extract, it is evident that the translators employed the strategy of changing sentence focus. This can be observed from the alterations made to the sentence structure. The original sentence had the phrase "*Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini*" as the subject, "*adalah*" as the predicate, and "*penelitian kualitatif*" as the object complement. However, in the translated text, the translator changed the sentence focus by rendering the phrase "*penelitian kualitatif*" as "this qualitative research," which now serves as the subject in the target text. This modification of sentence structure is a clear example of the changing sentence focus strategy used by the translator.

Changing semantic focus.

ST: "*Banyak masyarakat yang beranggapan bahwa*…."

TT: "Most people preconceive that…"

In the extract above, the translator employed the strategy of changing semantic focus. This can be observed from the conversion of the phrase "*Banyak masyarakat*..." in the source text to "Most people..." in the target text. However, the translated phrase does not have the same meaning as its equivalent in the source text, "*Kebanyakan masyarakat*." Additionally, the word "Most" does not carry the same weight as "*banyak*," which has an equivalent meaning of "many" in English. As such, the semantic change employed by the translator contributed to the alteration of information conveyed in the target text.

Changing voice.

ST:

"…. *analisis data yang digunakan adalah tehnik analisis…. "*
TT:
"….technique of data analysis uses descriptive with….."
In contrast, the extract above reflects the use of changing voice as the TS employed by the translator. The phrase "*yang digunakan"* in the source text is translated to "uses" in the target text, which denotatively means "*menggunakan*" and leads to a distinct register. However, the source text "yang digunakan" is actually an adjective clause that should be translated as "which is used" [S(Adj.C) + To be + V3] in order to maintain the original form. The translator deviated from the source text formation by using the base form "uses" [V1], which does not accurately reflect the original sentence structure.
Overall, the presented extracts above highlight three different samples of translation solutions that fall under the perspective change TS type in the translated abstract texts produced by the translators. From the analyses presented thus far, it can be concluded that the three emerging cases of density change have different characteristics, as demonstrated through the analysis.
Regarding the density change TS type, several instances of density change were found in the translated abstracts. A total of 75 cases were identified, representing density change in the source text of abstract translations. Of these, two instances denoted generalization/specification, 13 instances referred to explicit/implicit, and the most dominant sub-type of density change translation strategy found in the translated abstract texts was multiple translations, while the remaining 23 instances represented resegmentation. The following instances were taken from the abstract data to provide further examples.

Generalization/specification.
ST : "*Berdasarkan hasil penelitian yang dilakukan dapat disimpulkan bahwa,….*"
TT : "Therefore…."

The above examples demonstrate four sub-types of the density change translation solution that occurred in the translated abstract texts. The first example, illustrated in the extract Ai11, showcases the generalization/specification translation solution. This type of solution is characterized by a transformation of sentence density, where the translator simplifies the source text. As noted by Pym (2016), generalization and specification involve changes in how much text is used to express a set of information.
The highlighted data in the example shows the phrase "*Berdasarkan hasil penelitian yang dilakukan dapat disimpulkan bahwa*..." in the source text, which is translated to "Therefore" in the target text. This change in sentence density and simplification of the source text exemplifies the generalization/specification solution used by the translator.

Explicitation/implicitation.
ST : "….Mts Al-khairat….
TT : "….Islamic Junior High School…."
The provided data exemplifies the explicit/implicit translation solution, in which the translator intentionally expands the density of the source text. This can be observed in the translation of the word "Mts", which is expanded to "Junior High School" in the target text to convey a specific set of information. In doing so, the translator broadens the density of the source language word to achieve the desired effect in the target text.

Multiple translation.
ST : "*Untuk meningkatkan kualitas pelayanan perpustakaan[1] penilitian ini menyarankan*[2]…."
TT : "The following are suggestions [2] to improve the library service quality [1]….."
The extract above provides clear evidence that the translator used the multiple translation strategy. This can be seen in the translation of the dependent phrase in the source text, "*Untuk meningkatkan kualitas pelayanan perpustakaan*", and the sentence

predicate, "*menyarankan*", which are transformed into a predicate complement and a noun, respectively, in the target text. It is plausible that the translator employed this strategy because the sentence structure in the source text needed to be adjusted to maintain context in the target text.

Resegmentation.
ST : "*Metode penelitian yang dilakukan adalah kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian deskriptif[1]. Instrumen yang digunakan Three tier test*[2]"
TT : "The research method uses qualitative with descriptive research design, while the instrument employs a Three tier test…"
In extract above, the translator utilized the resegmentation strategy to increase sentence density. This is evident in the combination of two separate sentences into one by using the conjunction "while" in the sentence.
The use of the compensation translation solution can be challenging since it is often employed to "decongest the location of the initial problem, one might be tempted to place it under density change, especially since its occurrences are relatively rare" (Pym, 2016). In the translated abstract texts, there were six instances of compensation, with five representing a new level of expression and one indicating a new place in the text. Pym (2016) notes that compensation involves placing the solution in a new textual location and/or at a new linguistic level and has long been present in the main typologies of translation solutions, although it generally plays a minor role. The following is an analysis of the two sub-types of compensation found in the translated abstracts.

New level of expression.
ST : "*Penelitian ini dilaksanakan pada…*"
TT : "It is conducted…."
The previous sample demonstrates the use of a specific translation strategy to address the translation of the target text. In extract Ai2, a new level of expression occurred as a result of the translation. This translation solution is characterized by the substitution

of the word "*penelitian*" with the pronoun "it" in the target text, which represents a more concise expression of the original word.

New place in text.
ST : "*Pada observasi awal….*"
TT : "In the preliminary observation (Before implementation*)"
In the second sample, on the other hand, there exists additional text enclosed in parentheses. It is observed that the translator has provided additional information in the target text in order to clarify the intended meaning to the target reader. This type of compensation TS, as per Pym (2016), is referred to as new place in text. Specifically, this translation solution is best known as "addition + compensation" (Pym, 2016) since the translator adds a new linguistic element to the target text.
The occurrence of cultural correspondence in the translated abstracts is intriguing as only one instance of this TS type is found, and it appears in the form of a corresponding cultural specific item. It is not surprising that this sub-type is rarely observed in translated texts, as it requires translators to replace a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item while considering its impact on the target text reader. The analysis of the corresponding cultural specific item case is presented below.

Corresponding cultural specific item.
ST :
"Lamtoro"
TT :
"River tamarin"
As evident in the above sample, the translator employs text tailoring translation solution to make the translated text more natural and familiar for the target reader. The underlined phrase shows that the translator used an equivalence translation to overcome the cultural difference in the meaning of the term "Lamtoro", which is an Indonesian plant that is also endemic in Mexico and South America. The translator's

responsibility is to ensure that the target reader understands the text, and translating the term into an acceptable word achieves this objective.

Correction/censorship/updating.

ST :

"*Presupposisi pada Bahasa spanduk iklan warung bakso di kota Gorontalo, terdapat 5 jenis presupposisi, yaitu presupposisi eksistensial 4 data spanduk iklan….*"

TT :

"There are five types of presupposition in the ad banner, namely existential presupposition (four data) ….."

As demonstrated in the example above, correction/censorship/updating is a part of the text tailoring TS. The translator appears to have remedied the source text in terms of content readability to generate the most comprehensible information in the target reader text. The sentence fragment in the source text, as in "*Presupposisi pada Bahasa spanduk iklan warung bakso di kota Gorontalo,*" is likely to be the underlying reason for the translator to make adjustments in the target language text. Thus, the translator addressed such anomalies taking place within the given source text information via amending its overall content to the target text.

In addition to correcting the source text content, omissions of content were also found in the translated abstract, as shown in the following sample:

Omission of content.

ST :

"*Berdasarkan hasil penelitian penulis memperoleh jawaban atas permasalahan yang ada bahwa…*"

TT:

"Findings reveal that…."

The above instance depicts the TS of content omission as a sub-type of text tailoring. Here, the translators omit some particular material as highlighted in the underlined phrase of the source text. It can be argued that the exclusion of material in the target text is driven by the presence of unnecessary words in the source language. This corresponds to Suryawinata and Hariyanto's (2003) suggestion that leaving out certain parts of the source language text is a mechanism employed by the translator when they deem the excluded material to be less important and difficult to render.

In addition to content omissions, the translators were also found to add material in the target text, as shown in the following sample.

Addition of content.

ST : "*….di desa Bina Jaya yang berasal dari usahatani padi sawah sebesar Rp. 15.465.836/tahun, pendapatan dari buruh tani perkebunan tebu sebesar Rp. 6.155.558/tahun, dan pendapatn dari luar sector pertanian sebesar Rp. 4.261.176*"

TT : "In Bina Jaya Village, the average income from rice farming is Rp. 15,465,836/year, from sugarcane plantation of Rp. 6,155,558/year, and income outside the agricultural sector was Rp 4,261,176/year. Moreover the household income of lowland rice farmers in Tolangohula district is Rp. 57,246,509/year."

The provided data analysis presents the translation solutions employed in translating abstract texts. However, it should be noted that some sub-types of translation solutions, such as copying morphology, copying scripts, copying prosodic features, copying text structure, and cultural idioms, were not identified in the selected abstract texts. This is primarily due to the absence of such terms in the source language, which do not require such translation solutions to be implemented. Therefore, these translation solutions do not appear in the translated abstract texts.

The analysis reveals that the most frequently employed translation solution is text tailoring, which includes the sub-types of correction/censorship/updating, omission of material, and addition of material. The addition of material sub-type is the most widely used solution, followed by omission of material and

correction/censorship/updating. The other sub-types of translation solutions identified in the translated abstract texts include density change, multiple strategies, compensation, explicit/implicit, and corresponding cultural specific items.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the employed translation solutions aim to provide the most comprehensible information to the target reader while preserving the source text's original meaning. This approach involves various strategies, such as generalization/specification, resegmentation, and compensation, among others.

In conclusion, the presented analysis highlights the diverse range of translation solutions employed in translating abstract texts. However, the absence of certain sub-types of translation solutions in the selected texts indicates the need for a more comprehensive analysis of various text types to understand the full scope of translation solutions.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative descriptive analysis aimed to investigate the translation techniques utilized by translators in translating abstracts of undergraduate theses written by non-English department students. The study identified seven types of translation solutions applied by the translators, namely copying words, copying structure, perspective change, density change, compensation, cultural correspondence, and text tailoring, with the latter being the most dominant among the others.

The study was conducted on abstract translations produced by translators from two legal translation agencies handling thesis abstracts from Gorontalo State University students. While this study had a relatively short duration and an adequate sample size, it is expected to serve as a useful reference for future research. Future studies can expand on this research by analyzing more diverse data sources, such as journal articles, legal documents, and literary works (e.g., novels, short stories, etc.), which may reveal new and different translation solutions that were not covered in this study.

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