



“Is that holy soup?” Analyzing Translation Procedures of Indonesian Traditional Food

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ABSTRACT

Translating traditional cuisine terms from the source language to the target language needs to be conducted appropriately to avoid the loss of meaning. In this sense, comprehending the procedures used to translate traditional cuisine terms can provide more insights for translators and educators in the translation field. Hence, the current research examined the procedures used in translating a set of Indonesian traditional food terms into English. This study used a qualitative descriptive research design with an emphasis on cultural analysis. The present study applied Newmark's typology of translation procedures to analyze a series of translated texts of Indonesian traditional food on a website. The results suggest that seven translation procedures (descriptive equivalent, literal translation, expansion, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent, and couplets) were used to translate the data. Furthermore, the results imply that the use of translation procedures as well as the translator's ideology have a significant impact on the translation results. In addition, it is significant for a translator to know the cultures of the target language and the source language to render appropriate translation results that can be understood by the intended readers. Besides that, it seems important for researchers to investigate the reasons behind the translators' preferences in choosing certain procedures to develop translation texts in the target language.

Keywords: Cultural Translation; Indonesian Traditional Food; Translation procedures.

1. Introduction

Many countries are starting to promote culture and cuisine as a diplomatic tool to build their image in the international world. One of the strategies used to promote culinary delights is gastro-diplomacy. The latter term can be defined as a government effort to promote a country's culture and food to the international world. In this regard, cooking can be considered an important non-verbal communication tool to promote a country. Food is an important element in defining people who live outside their country of origin and has even been recognized as an important part of diplomacy since ancient times (De Vooght, 2011). To introduce culture and culinary to the international community, the government or the people of a country usually promote their traditional cuisine through social media, television shows, or organizing culinary festivals so that outsiders can learn culinary from a country without visiting that country.

In order to effectively promote the traditional cuisine of a country, translating a dish name into English becomes vital so that more people can get to know the dish. Furthermore, when translating traditional food terms into English, the cultural context of the source language should be considered. Specific concepts, expressions, or words revolve around culture (Marco, 2019), considering the significant role of culture in people's lives and languages (Amenador & Wang, 2022). Traditionally, food is a cultural symbol that reflects the historical roots of each country. These cultural ties sometimes make translating gastronomic or culinary references difficult. Translating terms related to food requires translators to consider the cultural associations embedded in these food terms so that they can use appropriate equivalents in translating the source text (ST) to the target text (TT). In this regard, Newmark (1988) states that translation is a work that attempts to replace a written message or statement from one language with the same message or statement from another. Therefore, food translation should focus on the culture from the source to the target language to create appropriate translation texts. The previous point will be discussed further in the subsequent paragraph.

Nowadays, people can easily learn about food from other countries through social media, television shows, books, or websites. In this regard, food is considered a cultural symbol that reflects the history of each country or region. These cultural ties are what make translating culinary terms challenging. In this sense, translating food-related terms requires the translator to consider the cultural associations embedded in the terms. Many Indonesian foods are translated into English in food menus in restaurants, hotels, websites, and other media. However, some traditional Indonesian culinary terms might be difficult to translate into English, causing a loss of meaning. The lack of involvement of professional translators or the lack of equivalent terms in the target language can cause the latter. In this regard, Hakam (2017) argues that the translation of Indonesian food needs to be done properly so that the meaning of the food is not lost and can be understood by people from other countries. Following are some examples of translation errors found in online media.

Figure. Errors in translating Indonesian food into English



Source: Yamananda (2017)

The figure shows that '*soto Kudus*' (Kudus chicken soup) is translated to Holy Soup, while '*pempek kapal selam*' (fish cake with egg filling) is translated to 'submarine fish cake.' Translated texts of both Indonesian traditional food in the above figure are not appropriate because the meanings of the cuisine cannot be translated well into the target language. Hence, translating is not only about finding equivalent terms in the target language but also involves understanding its concepts or culture, especially in food translation due to its many cultural elements (Newmark, 1988). In this sense, Subhan (2016) argues that translation not only focuses on finding the dictionary's lexical equivalent but also on interpreting the text. In addition to converting the text, ideology has a significant role in the translation process. In this regard, a set of systematic points of view of people or certain attitudes toward politics, arts, aesthetics, and religion can be defined as an ideology (Bian & Li, 2022). It has been argued that translation is not only about rendering a text in the target language but also involves interacting with the translator's ideology (or the ideology imposed by the 'client') (Lewis & Gentzler, 1995). Furthermore, there is a need to maintain the persistent meaning even when the text is translated into the target language (van Ness et al., 2010). Hence, Larson (1998) believes that using appropriate translation procedures ultimately influences the final result of the text. In order to lessen the gap of understanding between the source language and the target languages, it seems important for translators to choose translation procedures and strategies for their texts appropriately.

There have been many discussions about translation procedures and strategies. Glynn (2021a) insists that the term 'translation theory' is hypothetical. Against this backdrop, translation theory can only be considered a set of principles or normative approaches to developing well-translated texts (Jin & Nida, 2006; Toury, 2012). Whereas some translators might focus on using specific translation strategies or procedures to develop a text in the target language (Glynn, 2021a), the role of culture in the text has also been an important consideration for other translators to create good translation (Glynn, 2021b; Hou et al., 2020). Furthermore, ideological aspects have become more recognized as a tangible part of the translation process (Baumgarten et al., 2012). It can be said that translation strategies and procedures also involve aspects beyond the translated texts. Regarding the involvement of culture and ideology in translating texts, Newmark (1988) also argues the importance of considering cultural aspects while rendering translation texts. Furthermore, Newmark (1988) arranges culture into five aspects; 1) Ecology (plants, animals, mountains); 2) Material culture (food, clothes, housing, transport); 3) Social culture (work and leisure); 4) Organizations, customs, ideas (political, social, legal); and 5) Gestures and habits (non-linguistic features)"

Considering the above aspects while interpreting a text from the source to the target language seems important for translators. Furthermore, Newmark (1988) proposed the following procedures to translate a text from the source language to the target language: 1) Transference; 2) Naturalization; 3) Cultural equivalent; 4) Descriptive equivalent; 5) Synonymy; 6) Through-translation; 7) Shift or transposition; 8) Modulation; 9) Recognized translation; 10) Compensation; 11) Componential analysis; 12) Reduction and expansion; 13) Paraphrase; 14) Couplets; and 15) Notes.

By conducting or choosing one of the procedures, the translators are expected to render a translated text well accepted in the target language. Newmark's (1988) translation procedures have been applied in several studies. Research by Putri (2014) employed a descriptive quantitative research design to examine a set of medical terms in a novel titled *Stress Less* using Newmark's translation procedures. Her research shows literal translation, naturalization, descriptive equivalent, transference, through-translation, modulation, shift, recognized translation, note, reduction expansion, and triplets (Putri, 2014). In addition, Behzadi and Suzani (2016) compared how three translators translated 30 eschatological terms in the Holy Koran. Their study found five procedures to translate the 30 eschatological terms. Those procedures are translation, paraphrase, cultural equivalent, synonyms, and transference. Besides that, Daghighi and Hashemian (2016) used Newmark's translation procedures to examine cultural-specific items in the English translation of *By the Pen* written by Jalal Al-Ahmad. Additionally, numerous studies have applied Newmark's typology of translation procedures to analyze their subjects (Abdulaziz Al Saleh, 2018; Mashhady et al., 2015; Putranti, 2015; Rasul, 2016). Their studies suggest the frequent use of Newmark's translation procedures to investigate general items or cultural-specific items.

Related to the last point in the above paragraph, investigating translation strategies or procedures in a translated text seems imperative to provide further insights, especially in the context of traditional food translations. Numerous studies have attempted to analyze the translation strategies of traditional food terms. A study by Tanudirjo (2020) examined the equivalence and the translation procedures used by three restaurants in Yogyakarta to translate their food menus from Indonesia to English. Besides showing a high level of equivalence in the translated menus, Tanudirjo (2020) suggests using cultural equivalent, descriptive equivalent and transposition to increase text equivalence. In addition to the latter study, Mahmud (2022) analyzes how Indonesian food terms in an Indonesian novel are translated into English. Next, Farkhan et al. (2020) investigated cultural translation strategies in the cooking show from an episode of Netflix's *The Final Table*. Their results revealed 51 cultural-specific items related to food used to translate the show's episode. In addition, the show's translator uses six translation strategies: retention, specification, direct translation, generalization, and substitution. Despite the results shown by the above studies, there is still a dearth of studies that analyze the procedures used to translate Indonesian traditional food terms. Thus, the present research might be important to understand traditional food's translation procedures. The present research aims to investigate the translation procedures used to translate a set of Indonesian traditional food terms in an online article.

2. Method

A descriptive qualitative research design is applied in the present study. The design is chosen as qualitative research design allows the researchers to scrutinize social phenomena or social processes (Ho et al., 2019). The subject of this study is a set of translated texts of Indonesian traditional food terms from an article on a website (Gumilar, 2017). Fifty translated Indonesian traditional food terms are used as the research subjects in the present study. Thus, the present study would limit its discussion to Indonesian traditional food terms in the aforementioned article.

The data was analyzed using a descriptive qualitative research design and utilizing a discourse analysis. The latter can be defined as a field of study that analyzes the correlation between language and its context (Farahani, 2013). In this regard, the research subjects would be categorized based on Newmark's (1988) translation theory. The present study used Newmark's (1988) theory since it has been applied to analyze culture-specific items in numerous studies (e.g., Salsabila et al., 2020; Yingmin & Malini, 2021; Zulkifli Mahmud et al., 2020).

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Findings

A total of 50 food menu items were analyzed in this study. The translation procedures used to translate Indonesian traditional food terms are descriptive equivalent, literal translation, expansion translation, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent, and couplets.

Table. The Analysis Results of Translation Procedures

Translation Strategies	Total
Descriptive Equivalent	29
Literal translation	3
Expansion translation	2
Functional Equivalent	8
Cultural Equivalent	4
Couplets	4
Total	50

The table shows 29 food items use descriptive equivalent while two applied expansion procedures. Three food items used a literal translation procedure. Similarly, the couplets strategy was used in three food items. The functional equivalent procedure was used in eight texts, while the cultural equivalent procedure was used in four texts. It can be concluded that a descriptive equivalent procedure is the most commonly used to translate the texts in the present study. The next points describe the translation procedures used to translate the research subjects.

3.1.1. Descriptive Equivalent

The descriptive equivalent is used in 29 food items. In this sense, a descriptive equivalent procedure can be defined as a procedure to translate a source text to a target text by giving a descriptive explanation, as there is no equal or similar term in the target text (Fauzia, 2021). In regards to the present study, several terms are translated using descriptive equivalent procedures. Following are examples:

SL (Source Language): *Asinan*

TL (Target Language): Pickled fruits and vegetables.

In this example, the Indonesian word '*asinan*' is translated to 'pickled fruits and vegetables'. Pickle is a cooking method to preserve fruits or vegetables by immersing

them in vinegar, water or salt. As there might be a lack of equivalent terms that can explain *asinan* in English, a translator opted to use the descriptive equivalent procedure by putting the method of creating pickles and their ingredients. Another example of the use of the descriptive equivalent is shown below:

SL: *Ayam Betutu*

TL: Balinese-style spicy chicken dish

In this example, '*ayam betutu*' is translated to 'Balinese-style spicy chicken dish'. As Indonesia has a wide variety of traditional foods made of chicken as the main ingredient, putting the term 'Balinese' in the beginning seems appropriate as it will make the potential readers understand the origin of the food. In addition, the use of 'spicy' term will make the potential readers aware of the taste of this particular chicken dish.

SL: *Ayam Kecap*

TL: Poached chicken in sweet soy sauce

The example above shows that '*ayam kecap*' is translated to 'poached chicken in sweet soy sauce'. Similar to '*asinan*' which uses the cooking method and the ingredients to explain the term to the potential readers, the term 'poached' is used to explain how this dish is made and its ingredients. However, in contrast to '*ayam betutu*', '*ayam kecap*' is not particularly attached to certain regions in Indonesia, so the target text does not refer to any place in Indonesia.

3.1.2. *Literal Translation*

The application of literal procedure is found in three food menu items. In light of this, literal translation refers to a translation procedure to change or transfer the source text's grammatical structure to the closest equivalent in the target language (Chandra et al., 2016). Following is an example of a food menu item translated using the literal translation procedure:

SL: *Nasi kuning*

TL: Yellow rice

In this example, '*nasi kuning*' is translated to 'yellow rice', the literal text equivalent from Indonesian to English. However, the translator changed the word order in Indonesian text to suit the grammatical rules of English. Instead of arranging the words into 'rice' (noun) 'yellow' (adjective) as the exact equivalent of translation from Indonesian to English, the translator arranged the text to 'yellow rice' to follow the rule of adjective-noun in English.

It has been argued that the literal translation procedure is commonly applied when SL and TL have similar structures (Hadithya, 2014; Halverson, 2015; Riecher, 2019). However, in the present study, the literal translation procedure might be less used as there is a slight difference between the grammatical structure of Indonesian and English.

3.1.3. *Expansion Translation*

The application of the expansion translation procedure is found in two food items. The latter can be defined as using more words in the target text to describe the

meaning in the source text because of the need for more exact equivalence in the target language (Abdulaziz R Saleh, 2019). Following is an example of the use of the expansion translation procedure:

SL: *Ikan asin*

TL: Salted dried fish

In this example, the translator used more words in the target language to explain '*ikan asin*'. Instead of using a literal translation procedure that translates the term to 'salty fish', the translator expanded the target text by explaining how to create the food item.

3.1.4. Functional Equivalent

The use of culturally equivalent procedures is found in eight food menu items. In light of this, the functional equivalent can be described as applying a culture-free word, sometimes adding a new specific term (Newmark, 1988). Below is an example of the use of this procedure:

SL: *Coto Makassar*

TL: Beef organs soup

In this example, '*coto Makassar*' is translated to 'beef organs soup'. '*Coto*' refers to a dish similar to soup, while Makassar is one of the main cities in Indonesia where the dish originated. Instead of translating the phrase to 'Makassar Soup', the translator converted '*coto Makassar*' to 'beef organs soup', attaching more terms to explain the dish's ingredients.

3.1.5. Cultural Equivalent

In the present study, cultural equivalent refers to a translation procedure in which a heavily-cultured word in the source language is converted to a cultural word in the target language (Artha Pitaloka et al., 2018). Below is an example of the application of cultural equivalent in the current study:

SL: *Tempe*

TL: Fermented soybean cake

'*Tempe*' is a cultural word in Indonesia as it is a local delicacy. Instead of converting '*tempe*' to '*tempeh*' like McClements (2023) did, the translator converted the word '*tempe*' to 'fermented soybean cake' that might suit the culture of English language speakers.

3.1.6. Couplets

Couplets are found in three food menu items. The term 'couplets' can be defined as a translation procedure combining one or two procedures to translate a word from the source to the target language (Newmark, 1988). Below is an example of the use of couplets:

SL: *Emping*

TL: Indonesian chips made from Melinjo nuts

The word '*emping*' is translated to 'Indonesian chips made from Melinjo nuts'. In order to translate the word '*emping*', the translator combined the descriptive equivalent and functional equivalent. As the word '*emping*' is closely related to the

Indonesian language, the translator described the origin of 'emping' by using the word 'Indonesian' and adding the ingredients of 'emping'.

3.2. Discussion

This section discusses the use of Newmark's translation procedures and the equivalence of translation results of each data. The results found that translators used seven Newmark's translation procedures to translate Indonesian food terms into English. In this regard, the descriptive equivalent procedure is the dominant procedure used as 29 data out of 50 were translated using a descriptive equivalent procedure. The functional equivalent procedure is the second most commonly used in translating these texts. As for the literal strategy, three texts with a high level of equivalence used this procedure. Similarly, the texts that used the expansion procedure suggest high levels of equivalence. Couplet procedure is used in four texts.

The findings suggest that translation procedures that have a negative impact on the quality of equivalence are the cultural equivalence procedure and the couplets procedure. In the cultural equivalent procedure, translated texts suggest a low level of equivalence. The results of the data translation using this procedure cause many shifts in meaning in the target language so that the information in the source text is not fully conveyed in the target text. An example of data that contributes a low acceptability value to the strategy classification is 'tempe' which is translated as 'fermented soybean cake'. Even though 'tempe' can be translated by applying the naturalization procedure to 'tempeh' because the word 'tempeh' exists in the Cambridge Dictionary. The addition of the word 'cake' disrupts the integrity of the meaning because 'cake' is defined as a sweet food made with a mixture of flour, eggs, fat, and sugar. This definition does not match the description or composition of 'tempe' itself. Hence, finding the exact equivalent of the word 'tempe' in English might be difficult. It might be attributed to the assumption that cultural translation cannot be a word-to-word translation.

The triplets procedure is one of the strategies that have a negative impact on the quality of equivalence because there is only one data that applies the couplets strategy and shows a low equivalency level. Even though it combines two translation procedures, more is needed to clarify the translation results, resulting in a shift in meaning in the target language. For example, the 'combro' data is translated as 'fried oncom (fermented soybean)'. Even though it was translated using a combination of two procedures at once, the level of equivalence in the results of this translation is classified as low because the information in the target text does not fully describe the information in the source text.

Descriptive, literal, and expansion procedures positively impact translation quality. The results of the present study show that these procedures predominantly produce translation results with a high level of equivalence. Moreover, the literal and expansion procedures do not contribute to poor equivalence quality. Data classified into these two procedures produce translation results with a high level of equivalence because all the information in the source text is fully conveyed in the target text. For example, 'kue lapis' is translated using a literal translation procedure into "layered cake". This procedure translates every word from the source language into the target language. It is because there is no shift in meaning, and it is grammatically equivalent. However, some texts were added with one or two words in the target language to add

nuance. For example, the data for 'sambal goreng ati' is translated to 'spicy stir-fried liver and gizzard'. In the translated text, there are additional words 'and gizzard' which do not exist in the source text. The addition of "gizzard" to the translated text aims to provide additional information that several dishes whose main ingredient is chicken liver are usually cooked together with chicken gizzards, like this '*sambal goreng ati*' dish. Although '*sambal goreng ati*' and '*kue lapis*' were translated using literal procedure, the translator added extra words to make the terms more understandable in the target language.

Descriptive procedures are more dominantly used due to the support of the translator's knowledge and cultural background regarding the object or field of translation. This assumption is based on the translator's ability to describe information from the source text into the target text so that the information in the target text reflects the information implied in the source text. This descriptive strategy can simplify the readability of the translation because it describes components of the source text that do not have equivalents in the target language. Apart from that, the influence of the translator's background can also be seen in implementing the expansion procedure (Abbasi & Koosha, 2016), which is the addition of information from outside the text. This can only be done by translators who have mastery of knowledge regarding the object of translation and a cultural background that supports their understanding. This addition is very useful for the target reader as long as the addition of this word is relevant to the message in the source text.

The translator's ideology might influence the choice of terms or procedures used to translate a text. Grant et al. (2017) revealed that translation ideology plays an important role in translation practice, this can influence text selection, translation strategy, translation goals, or else. Related to the research subjects, it can be concluded that the translator used domestication ideology in translating Indonesian food texts into English. Venuti (2018) defines domestication in translation studies as a strategy that adopts a more familiar language style to minimize the strangeness of the target texts for readers of the target language. Domestication ideology focuses on the target text, where the translator creates culturally charged terms to be translated flexibly or familiarly so that readers of the target text are not confused by the translated text. This ideology will make readers of the target text feel that they are not reading a translated text. With domestication, the source text becomes more understandable to readers of the target text. For example, '*gudeg*' food is translated to 'boiled young jackfruit stew with palm sugar, coconut milk, and Javanese spices'. The translator seems to describe this dish in the target text by mentioning the main ingredients and the complementary spices in this dish. With such descriptions, readers can imagine the dishes referred to in the source text. However, the research subjects do not suggest the use of foreignization ideology. The latter can be described as retaining information from the source language, deliberately suggesting foreign cultures to the readers of the target language texts (Venuti, 2018). It can be said that the translator tends to domesticate the terms instead of introducing a foreign term to the readers of the target language texts.

In addition, the research subjects suggest no use of specific procedures used to translate ethnic foods. In this regard, the translation procedure used depends on the translation's purpose and the translator's ideology. If the translator is oriented towards the source text, the strategy or method can be faithful translation. On the other hand,

if the translator is oriented towards the target language, he/she can use descriptive, functional or other procedures to make it easier for target text readers to read the translated text. Translation procedure is assessed as the translator's potential in solving translation problems so that the success of the translated text is also determined by how a translator chooses a translation procedure. However, the results of Abarca (2021) suggest that the most commonly known and applied translation procedures are literal translation and free translation. This literal translation procedure focuses on word-for-word, while free translation refers to more creative translations that look for more similarities than just the actual meaning of the words. It can be implied that each translator might have different preferences regarding translation procedures, indicating the differences in translators' ideologies.

4. Conclusion

This study suggests the use of seven translation procedures in the translated texts. While expansion strategy, literal strategy, and couplets become the least used procedures, the descriptive equivalent procedure is shown to be the most commonly used procedure to translate the texts. In addition, the results suggest a tendency of the translator to apply a descriptive equivalent procedure to communicate the messages from the source language to the target language, prioritizing the equivalence of the translation results. The quality of the translation results is quite good, showing a high level of equivalence in the translation results. Applying descriptive equivalence procedures, literal procedures, and expansion procedures might positively impact translation results because these three translation procedures tend to show high equivalence results. In contrast, the cultural equivalent, couplets, and triplets procedures show low equivalence levels. In other words, these three procedures cannot fully convey the message of the translation results. The results also suggest the frequency of domestication ideology, indicating the translator's preferences to apply procedures oriented toward the target language.

The results also implied three points. Firstly, the use of the procedure significantly influences the translation results. If the translator only translates sentences based on the literal meaning of each sentence in the target language, the translation results might lose their meanings in the source language. Hence, the translator should not only consider the language differences but also the cultural differences between the source language and the target language as this can lead to possible translation shifts. Secondly, the translator's ideology affects the choice of translation procedure as it is related to whether the translator will be oriented toward the source or target text. The translator's ideology will also affect the flexibility of the translation results. If it is oriented towards the source text, the translation results will feel less familiar or foreign to readers of the target text. However, the readers of the target text will know other cultures from the text they read. On the other hand, if the translator is oriented towards the target language, the translation results will be easier to understand by the readers of the target language. The choices taken by the translators can significantly affect the translation results. Thirdly, the results of the present research show that in translating culturally charged words, in this case, ethnic food, applying a descriptive equivalent procedure seems effective because it will be easier for readers of the target language to understand the translation results. Besides that, the translation results using descriptive procedure show good equivalence.

Hence, it seems important for translators to consider using a descriptive equivalent procedure to translate traditional food or cultural terms. Besides using a dictionary, translators should consider interviewing a native speaker to check the translation results' equivalence to measure the translation results. This method's assessment seems more effective because it uses informants to assess the suitability of the message.

Although the present study has obtained new insights toward translation procedure especially in the context of Indonesian traditional food terms, a few limitations are worth noting. First, it should be equipped with an interview with the translator to understand the translator's ideology and motives behind the preferences for choosing certain terms in translation practices. However, the present study did not include such interviews due to time constraints. A further study should investigate the reasons behind the translators' preferences to select certain procedures. The next study could also interview a group of translators to understand their points of view in the selection of translation procedures and strategies, allowing more comprehension of the field of translation. Next, the present study does not involve a relatively large number of translation data. Involving a larger number of translation results might give different information about preferred translation procedures, especially in the context of cultural translation practices. Further studies should use relatively huge data to fix this limitation. Nevertheless, the present study could be a milestone for similar studies investigating cultural translation procedures in other aspects, such as games, textbooks, or advertisements. The next research can investigate the differences in cultural translation procedures used in the advertisements.

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