

## TRANSLATION AND CULTURE: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN INFORMATION PORTAL WEBSITE

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### **Abstract**

With the more rapid development of digital-based communication and information technology, people are forced to be able to work more quickly. Thereupon, the government is also obliged to give fast and responsive services in order to provide accurate information for the public. In Indonesia itself, the government has established the system of e-Government, by which one of the forms is a website. In order to accommodate global visitors, the website contents written from Bahasa Indonesia have to be shifted into English. Consequently, the process of translation is required. This study aims to analyze the English translation in the website of Indonesia Information Portal. Furthermore, this study also intends to investigate the aspects of localization and globalization throughout the website contents. Based on the examples of several findings, it can be viewed that in the English-translated pages of Indonesia Information Portal, some of the terms related to specific parliament system, worship places, and traditional food are not entirely translated. To sum up, the English translation in the website of Indonesia Information Portal can be considered to be adequately balanced and appropriate. The translator knows when to apply localization and when to apply globalization in translating several terminologies.

**Keywords:** Culture, Globalization, Localization, Website Translation

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the era where internet has a crucial role in determining humans' life, the world nowadays becomes more borderless and people get more connected to each other. Also, along with the rapid development of digital-based communication and information technology, people are forced to be able to work more quickly. The effect of internet emergence does not only affect individuals, but also larger institutions. Even the government is also obliged to give fast and responsive services in order to provide accurate information for the public. Thus, one of the solutions is by creating an e-Government system. According to Grönlund and Horan (2004), e-Government, which can also be shortened into e-Gov, stands for Electronic Government or Electronic

Governance. Moreover, the establishment of e-Gov particularly has three purposes, which are to set up more efficient government, to deliver better services to citizens, and to improve democratic processes (Grönlund & Horan, 2004).

In Indonesia itself, the government has established the system of e-Government, by which one of the forms is website. As a big country inhabited by people who have various cultural backgrounds and speak different languages, there are now many Indonesian governmental websites that start providing the option of language choice. Crystal (2003) argues that in societies where there are many languages in contact, finding a language that can be used as a *lingua franca* or 'common language' is needed (Crystal, 2003, p.

11). Hence, the language choice option in many Indonesian governmental websites is mainly available in two languages, which are Bahasa Indonesia and English, since Bahasa Indonesia becomes the common language for Indonesian people and English is provided to assist foreign visitors.

In order to accommodate global visitors, the website contents written from Bahasa Indonesia have to be shifted into English. Consequently, the process of translation is required. According to Zakrimal (2019), translation has a crucial role in the development of science and technology in Indonesia due to the large number of printed and electronic sources written in foreign languages. Moreover, Munday (2008) states that the process of translation between two different written languages encompasses translator's effort to change the original written text (source language or SL) into the target text in a different language (target language or TL) (Munday, 2008).

The phenomenon of website translation is indeed intriguing. One of the studies is a study that examines the quality in the translation of UK and Italian Websites conducted by Patrizia Pierini. Pierini (2007) mainly discusses about the issues of localization and translation in the website and focuses on the tourist language regarding accommodation. The results of the study show that there is still a very low or zero degree of adaptation that implies the lack of a targeted marketing strategy. Therefore, the translation is not able to communicate and deliver the message related to the tourism aspect effectively (Pierini, 2007).

Even though this study is similar to Pierini's (2007) study, however, there is still little attention given to the research related to the website translation in Indonesia. Thus, this study aims to

analyze the aspects of localization and globalization throughout the translation in the English page of Indonesian Information Portal website. Furthermore, this analysis is crucial to be conducted because there are many specific terms in Indonesian Information Portal website that have to be carefully translated as they carry particular socio-cultural values.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Translation and Culture

In the scope of the relation between translation and culture, Newmark (1988) argues that culture becomes the way of life and language happens to be the medium to express it. Since different language carries different cultural value, therefore a problem can sometimes occur when translating from source language to target language.

Consequently, Newmark (1988, p. 95-103) classifies and narrows several 'foreign' cultural words translation into five types, which are related to:

- (1) Ecology: geographical features can be generally differentiated from other cultural words because they are usually politically and commercially value-free. This type includes some words related to flora, fauna winds, plains, and hills (*e.g.* 'honeysuckle', 'downs', 'tundra', 'sirocco', 'pampas', 'tabuleiros', 'plateau', 'selva', 'paddy field', and 'savanna')
- (2) Material culture or artifacts: this type includes the terms related to, such as, food which its terms are subject to wide variety of translation procedures as it becomes an important expression of national culture (*e.g.* 'sake', 'zabaglione', and 'Kaiserschmanen'), clothes that may be adequately explained for TL readers if the generic noun or classifier is attached (*e.g.* 'anorak', 'kanga' from Africa, 'sarong' from

South East Asia, and ‘dhoti’ from India), typical houses and towns of many language communities that for general purposes remain untranslated (e.g. ‘kampong’, ‘bourg’, ‘bourgade’, ‘chalet’, ‘low-rise’, and ‘tower’), and transportation that is dominated by American culture and car (e.g. ‘bike’, ‘rickshaw’, ‘Moulton’, ‘cabriolet’, ‘tilbury’, and ‘caleche’)

- (3) Social culture: in translating social culture terms, there is a rare translation problem occurs because the words can be shifted, have reasonable one-to-one translation or can be purposively defined. This type includes work and leisure (e.g. ‘ajah’, ‘amah’, ‘condottiere’, ‘biwa’, ‘sithar’, ‘raga’, ‘reggae’, and ‘rock’)
- (4) Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, and concepts: this type includes political and administrative words that reflect the political and social life of a country (e.g. ‘White House’, ‘Pentagon’, and ‘Bundestag’), religious words that tend to be translated when they become of TL interest and the most general words are also naturalized (e.g. ‘dharma’, ‘karma’, ‘temple’), and artistic words that refer to movements, process, and organizations commonly depend on the assumed knowledge of the readers (e.g. ‘the Leipzig Gewandhaus’ and ‘the Amsterdam Concertgebouw’).
- (5) Gestures and habits: there is a difference between the description and function in which several gestures and habits occur in some cultures and not in others (e.g. ‘cook a snook’ and ‘spitting’).

## 2.2. Localization and Globalization

In new media like website, the aspects of localization and globalization

are also needed to be involved in its website translation. Munday (2008) argues that localization concerns with making a product linguistically and culturally suitable and appropriate to the target locale, whether it is a country, region, or language where it will be functioned and sold. On the other hand, the perspective of globalization or internationalization can also be applied as it leads to the adaptation of accepted communication models. Globalization produces multiple versions of target language that modifies the ‘simple’ model of the transfer from source language into target language (Munday, 2008, p. 191)

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

In conducting this study, the writer applied qualitative approach, particularly content analysis method. Williams (2007) explain that content analysis study is a detailed and systematic investigation of the contents of a particular body of materials. It reviews several forms of human communication such as books, newspapers, films, as well as other forms in order to identify patterns, themes, or biases (Williams, 2007, p. 69).

As it was mentioned before, the object of this study is the website of Indonesian Information Portal with the address [www.indonesia.go.id](http://www.indonesia.go.id). This website was chosen mainly because it provided comprehensive information about Indonesia, including, for example, the information about constitution in the ‘profile’ section page and tourism information in the ‘variety’ section page.

In collecting the data, first of all, the writer opened the website of Information Portal of Indonesia ([www.indonesia.go.id](http://www.indonesia.go.id)). After the website had been displayed, the writer changed the language option into English. Then, the writer chose specific page sections within the website, which were the page

sections of ‘profile’ and ‘variety’. These two section pages were chosen because they contained many terms that embodied Indonesian cultural values. From the ‘profile’ page, the writer only took the data from the sub-section page of ‘government system’ and ‘religion’ while from the ‘variety’ page, the writer obtained the data from the sub-section page of ‘culinary’. Furthermore, the writer also captured those section and sub-section pages that had been specified previously in order to help identifying and displaying the localization and globalization aspects of this website English translation.

Moreover, in the process of data analysis, the writer began with presenting the data that had been captured and labeled them using the term ‘figures’. The writer also used Newmark’s (1988) theory about translation and culture and Munday’s (2008) theory about localization and globalization in translation to examine the pattern of translation in Indonesian Information Portal website. After the analysis was finished, the writer made the conclusion of the study.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings are divided based on the page sections chosen to be analyzed. The findings are then equipped with the screenshots of the pages and labeled with the term ‘figure’. This section also covers the discussion based on the findings.

Before explaining the finding, it is better to first of all take a look at the each section. The first page section is profile. This section includes the information about Indonesian profile, government system, parliament, religion, map of Indonesia, president and vice president, constitution, emblem, flag, national anthem, language, regulation, ministry or institution, ethnic groups, provincial

government, data and statistic Indonesia.



Figure 1. The Profile Page Section of Indonesia Information Portal Website

In the sub-section of government system, it mainly explains about the form of Indonesia which includes four main points. Those main points are about the Indonesia parliament, government system, government form, and state form. The first findings are found in the point of Indonesia parliament as it is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. The Sub-Page Section of Government System

According to Figure 2, it can be seen that there is a translation of the Indonesian parliament. It is found that *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (DPR) is translated into House of Representatives, *Dewan Perwakilan Daerah* (DPD) is translated into Regional Representative Council (DPD), and *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* is translated into People’s Consultative Assembly. Based on those results, it can be interpreted that the translation of those parliaments applies Newmark’s (1988) theory. Newmark (1998) states that where the name of a parliament is not ‘readily’

translatable, it has a recognized official translation for administrative documents and glossed for a general readership (Newmark, 1988, p. 99). Since the terms such as *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, *Dewan Perwakilan Daerah*, and *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* cannot accommodate foreign target audiences, thus they are translated into more general terms.

Moreover, the translation can also be said to apply Munday's (2008) theory about localization and globalization. The localization aspect can be seen in the abbreviation of each parliament. Even though the parliament names are translated into more general terms in English, the abbreviations written are still Bahasa Indonesia-based abbreviation. For instance, they are written like House of Representatives (DPR), Regional Representative Council (DPD), and People's Consultative Assembly (MPR).

The use of both general translation but with local abbreviation can be considered to have several purposes, such as to emphasize the understanding about the parliament system in Indonesia, to familiarize foreign audiences about the name of parliament system in Indonesia, and to assist the local audiences when reading the information in English language. In addition, by the use of both localization and globalization perspective in the translation of Indonesia parliament system in this website, it can be said that the translator wants to present Indonesia as a country that embraces multilingualism.

Moving to the sub-section of religion, it describes the six official religions in Indonesia, including its description and information about the worship places. This finding is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. The Sub-Page Section of Religion

Based on the finding shown in Figure 3, in the sub-section of religion there are several terms that are translated and there are some others that are not translated. In the part explaining the worship place, it can be seen that the names of the worship place are not translated. The worship place of Muslim people is still written as *Masjid*, the worship place of Protestant and Catholic Christians are still written as *Gereja*, the worship place of Hindu people is still written as *Pura*, the worship place of Buddhist people is still written as *Vihara*, and the worship place of Confucian people is still written as *Klenteng* or *Litang*.

The classification of those worship places can be included in Newmark's category of material culture. According to Newmark (1988), many language societies have a typical material culture which for general purposes remains untranslated (Newmark 1988, 97). In the website, the information about the worship place of each religion can be seen to remain untranslated or is still using Bahasa Indonesia. It is evidenced with how *Masjid* is not translated into Mosque, *Gereja* is not translated into Church, and *Pura*, *Vihara*, or *Klenteng* are not translated into Temple.

In addition, the application of Munday's perspective of localization is also found here. It is evidenced by how worship places are still written using local language (Bahasa Indonesia) and not being translated. By this, it can be interpreted that those specific terms of

worship places in Bahasa Indonesia embody religious and cultural values that are bound to the value of life of Indonesian people, in which the sense of meaning will be different if they are changed into English.

Later, the second section is the section of variety. This section includes the information about Indonesian tourism, art, commodity, biodiversity, culture, and culinary.



Figure 4. The Variety Page Section of Indonesia Information Portal Website

The next finding is related with culinary term. In the culinary sub-page section, it is found a news that reports a traditional food from Lamongan, East Java named *Sego Boranan*. The description of the food is shown in Figure 5.

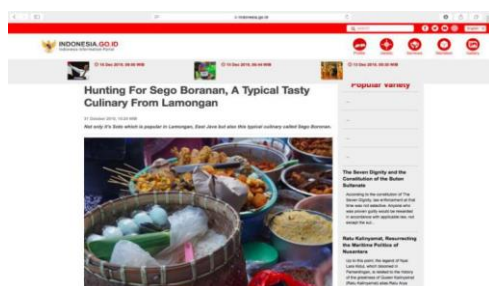


Figure 5. The News about Sego Baronan

According to Figure 5, it can be seen that the name of the food is not translated into English. Instead of translating it into Boranan rice, it is still written as *Sego Boranan*. The name of *Sego Boranan* itself is derived from Javanese language. In addition, English

cannot equivalently accommodate the translation of the word *Sego* because in Javanese language there are many terms that describe rice itself. For examples, *sego* is used to describe *beras* (paddy seeds) that has been successfully cooked and *karak* is used to describe stale rice that has been dried. Thus, English word of rice is too general to describe *sego* and is better not to be used.

Similar with the worship places, the name of food is also classified into material culture based on Newmark's (1998) categorization. Therefore, it is better if the specific name of the food remains untranslated. By not translating the food name, it can be interpreted that the Indonesian local value, especially on its food, is being preserved. Furthermore, by the use of local name of *Sego Boranan*, it can help establishing the local patent of Indonesian food in global context.

Based on the examples of several findings, it can be viewed that in the English-translated pages of Indonesian Information Portal, some of the terms related to specific parliament system, worship places, and traditional food are not entirely translated. Some of them remain in Bahasa Indonesia and some others are written in both of the languages. This happens because those Indonesian terms in Bahasa Indonesia do carry Indonesian value that cannot be completely replaced using English.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As vast technological development demands humans to be more efficient in performing some works, therefore, many digital tools are established. One of the cyber media such as a website has now been operated for a more convenient humans' activities. Since website should be able to accommodate people who speak different language, thus the process

of translation is often needed. In view of the fact that website translation is becoming more common and important nowadays, there are several considerations that must be taken, especially if it is done for the official website of particular governmental institution.

According to the findings of the study, the English translation in the website of Indonesian Information Portal ([www.indonesia.go.id](http://www.indonesia.go.id)) can be considered to be adequately balanced and appropriate. It can be said so since the translation of some of its contents apply the perspective of both localization and globalization. The translator knows when to apply localization and when to apply globalization in translating several terminologies. The application of those strategies successfully maintains Indonesian culture throughout the terms while at same time familiarizes them in global context.

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