



Translation Shifts Found in Public Signs at Airport

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Abstract

This study explores translation shifts in public signs at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, analyzed using Catford's category shifts (1965). Emphasizing semantic accuracy and stylistic preservation, the research identifies structure shifts as the most frequent (52%), followed by unit shifts (28%), class shifts (16%), and intra-system shifts (4%). These findings underscore the importance of structural adaptations for effective translation and highlight the role of diverse translation techniques in ensuring clear communication in international airport environments.

Keywords: *airport; category shift; public signs; translation*

Introduction

The fundamental purpose of any language system is to link meaning with expression, providing a verbal means to convey thoughts and emotions (Finegan, 2008: 5). Effective communication often requires learning and utilizing different languages to engage with others. Moreover, communication is defined by the methods through which it occurs (Dumbleby & Burton, 1998: 3). This definition underscores a crucial aspect of communication by focusing on the various methods or channels through which it occurs. It highlights that the nature of communication can shift depending on whether it is spoken, written, digital, or non-verbal. However, it is important to recognize that communication encompasses more than just the medium; it also includes the content, context, and relationships among the communicators. While the means of communication are significant, they represent only one facet of a broader and more intricate process.

Language serves as a medium to convey thoughts, emotions, and information, with translation playing a vital role in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. Translation is not merely about word-for-word equivalence but involves nuanced adjustments to maintain both meaning and style (Bell, 1991). Catford (1965) and Newmark (1988) emphasize the challenges of structural and contextual shifts during translation, particularly in public signage, where clarity and precision are

paramount. Building on prior studies, such as Miranti (2017) and Lilis (2021), this research examines translation shifts in public signs at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport. Unlike previous works focusing on literary texts or academic translations, this study emphasizes the practical application of Catford's category shifts in a public, multilingual environment.

Public signs are crucial communication tools designed to convey important information, instructions, or warnings in shared or communal spaces. To convey information in public facilities, especially at airports, signage is a three-dimensional visual tool that can be used. A sign should be able to fulfill various needs that arise from various language and observer perception issues. Signage in the building functions as a wayfinding tool that helps people find a way to find the desired space or place (Nastiti, 2018).

These signs serve essential functions, contributing to safety, order, and accessibility in public spaces. By providing clear information, they help prevent accidents, guide individuals to their destinations, and communicate important rules. In environments where individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds converge, effective public signage is crucial. It facilitates communication and enables everyone to navigate and utilize public spaces both safely and efficiently, underscoring the importance of inclusivity in urban design.

The findings aim to enhance understanding of the linguistic adaptations required for effective public communication in international settings and explore the types of category shifts employed in translating public signs at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, located 13 km south of Denpasar, Bali. The category shift theory proposed by Catford (1965) serves as the foundation for addressing this study's problems. The public signs at the airport were selected as the data source because translators cannot freely transfer messages from the SL to the TL. They face linguistic challenges, including lexical and grammatical meanings, as well as cultural issues related to societal and contextual meanings. Translators may utilize various methods, approaches, and strategies to convey messages effectively. This study's significance lies in the translator's responsibility to communicate wide-ranging meanings, ensuring that the content is understandable to all readers.

Method

The data for this study were collected from public signs at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, a major international gateway in Bali, Indonesia. Public signage serves as a vital communication tool aimed at marketing, intending to encourage, persuade, or influence its audience—whether viewers, readers, or listeners—and sometimes targeting specific groups to either maintain their current behavior or adopt new actions (Minda, 2019, 118).

The airport, strategically located in the heart of Bali—often referred to as the "Island of the Gods"—provides exceptional services and world-class facilities, ensuring easy access for tourists heading to various destinations across the island. Nestled in the Tuban area of South Kuta, it is conveniently close to Kuta, a prominent tourist destination known for its vibrant atmosphere and attractions. Additionally, it is situated just 13 kilometers from Denpasar, Bali's provincial capital, facilitating straightforward travel for visitors to their accommodations or other points of interest throughout the island. Named in honor of I Gusti Ngurah Rai, a celebrated Balinese hero recognized for his significant contributions to Indonesia's history and independence, the airport not only honors his legacy but also reinforces its role as a major hub for international and domestic travel (Bali Star Island, 2023).

The analysis focused on category shifts theory as proposed by Catford (1965). Signs were observed and photographed to identify translation shifts based on Catford's (1965) category shift framework.

The analysis followed four steps:

1. Photographing public signs to gather data samples.
2. Classifying the data into structure, unit, class, and intra-system shifts.
3. Analyzing the shifts within Catford's framework, focusing on linguistic and contextual aspects.
4. Describing the results both quantitatively (e.g., frequency of shifts) and qualitatively (e.g., detailed case examples).

Findings were presented using formal methods, such as tabulations and charts, alongside informal narrative descriptions to provide comprehensive insights into the observed shifts

Results

Types of Category Shift

According to Catford (1965), there are four types of category shifts: structure shift, class shift, unit shift, and intra-system shift. The public signs at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport were analyzed using Catford's (1965) theory of category shift

Table 1. Types of Category Shift

Types of Category Shift	Quantity	Percentages
Structure Shift	27	0,52%
Unit Shift	4	0,8%
Class Shift	6	0,11%
Intra-system Shift	15	0,29%
Total	52	100%

After analyzing the data from this research, we can refer to Table 1, which shows that there are four types of category shifts identified from a total of 52 data points. These include 27 structure shifts (52%), 4-unit shifts (8%), 15 intra-system shifts (29%), and class shifts (11%). According to the table, structure shifts are the most common type utilized for translating public signs at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport. In this discussion, only 8 out of the 52 data points are presented based on each category shift.

Discussion

Structure Shift

Structure shifts are among the most common types of category shifts observed in translation, manifesting at various levels of linguistic analysis. These shifts can be identified not only in phonological and graphological translations but also in more comprehensive renderings, as highlighted by Catford (1965, 77). A structure shift occurs when the grammatical framework of a sentence in the SL is altered to align with the grammatical norms and conventions of the TL. This process is crucial for ensuring that translations not only sound natural but also adhere to grammatical standards in the TL, even when it necessitates deviation from the original sentence structure. Translators must possess a deep understanding of the grammatical intricacies of both the SL and TL. They need to recognize when a structure shift is necessary and determine the most effective approach to restructuring sentences while preserving the original meaning, tone, and intent.

The translator's role, therefore, extends beyond mere accuracy; it also involves a commitment to the grammatical conventions of the target language, leading to translations that are both faithful to the original text and appropriate for the intended audience. In conclusion, structure shifts are a critical aspect of the translation process, involving the intentional modification of a sentence's grammatical structure to conform to the norms of the TL. Such shifts are essential for crafting translations that are not only grammatically correct but also fluid and resonant, while remaining true to the original meaning. The complex nature of translation is highlighted by these structure shifts, underscoring the need for thoughtful and precise adjustments to ensure that the translated text connects meaningfully with its intended audience.



Figure 1. Kedatangan Internasional

SL: *Kedatangan Internasional*

TL: International Arrival

The data above points to the translation of the word "*Kedatangan*" (noun) "*Internasional*" (adjective) in the SL which is translated into "International" (adjective) "Arrival" (noun) in the TL. This sentence is now a very strong proof of a reasonable structural change taking place in the process of translation, thus underlining the structural changes that take place between the two languages. In other words, the Indonesian original is in a noun + adjective order, where "*Kedatangan*" is the main noun and "*Internasional*" is its attributive adjective; whereas in English, this order is reversed to follow an adjective + noun pattern for the name translation. Thus, "*Internasional Kedatangan*" is translated as "International Arrival." This reordering is not an issue of style; it's a must so that the translation sounds natural and fluent to native speakers of English. To present the translation in the order "Arrival International" would be grammatically incorrect and clumsy with the overall message suffering in clarity.

This change of structure serves a few purposes: it conforms the translation to the accepted linguistic norms of English, where the adjective usually precedes the noun; it also clarifies the translation by ensuring that the intended meaning is appropriately enunciated and readily understandable to the target audience. Underlining naturalness and readability, the translator achieves comprehension and helps in proper communication. In other words, this example shows the complexity involved in the process of translation from one language to another with differing syntactic structures. Translation is not about literal meaning, and it involves adaptation of wording so that the text will adhere to both the grammatical and stylistic requirements of the target language. In this way, the translation will retain the original message and yet be able to appeal linguistically and culturally to the intended audience.

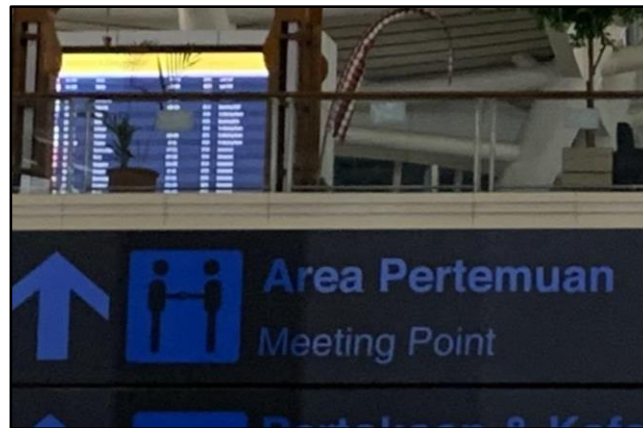


Figure 2. Area Pertemuan

SL: *Area Pertemuan*

TL: Meeting Point

From the data above, it can be established that the SL terms, "Area" as a noun, and "Pertemuan" as a verb, are translated into the TL as "Meeting" as a verb and "Point" as a noun. The translation is termed structural because there is a change in the arrangement of elements in the translated text from the original structure in the SL. The Indonesian sentence follows a noun-verb sentence structure, placing "Area" before "Pertemuan." The English translation retains a verb-noun structure in which the verb precedes the noun, resulting in the term "Meeting Point." Here, "Meeting" is a gerund, functioning as a noun, acting as an adjective to the noun "Point." In this way, the structure creates an expression more familiar and more common to the English language, one that conveys in a very good way the designation of a place for meeting. The use of "Meeting Point" in the translation shows an understanding of how speakers of that language, English, typically put the concept of a pre-arranged location for meeting up.

This idiomatic expression is popular for its clarity and immediate recognition among native speakers of the English language, hence easily conveying the right message. Moreover, this change in form points out the responsibility of the translator to keep the meaning of the source while calibrating expressions to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target audience. In fact, the success of a translation is often determined by its ability to sound natural and convey the right message smoothly. This is an example of how translation moves from source to target, showing a highly sophisticated and sensitive balance between fidelity to the original text and cultural and linguistic accommodations that must be made in any such process.

Unit Shift

The concept of unit shifts in translation refers to the alterations made at the linguistic rank or level at which a specific element from the SL is expressed in the TL. These shifts occur when a unit—such as a morpheme, word, phrase, clause, or sentence—is represented at a different rank in the TL. Essentially, unit shifts indicate deviations from formal correspondence, wherein the translation equivalent of a unit in the SL corresponds to a unit at a different rank in the TL, as stated by Catford (1965:79). Several key factors contribute to the occurrence of unit shifts. The first factor involves the grammatical differences between languages. Each language possesses its own unique grammatical structures, rules, and conventions, which may necessitate shifts in the rank of translation units. For instance, a sentence in the SL may require a translation that employs multiple clauses in the TL to maintain grammatical accuracy and convey the intended meaning naturally. Ignoring these structural differences can lead to awkward or inaccurate translations.

The second factor pertains to the stylistic conventions inherent to each language. Every language has distinct stylistic norms, rhetorical devices, and literary traditions that shape how ideas are expressed. Translators must navigate these norms to create translations that resonate with the target audience. Unit shifts can facilitate this alignment by restructuring sentences or phrases to conform to the stylistic expectations of the TL. The final factor involves the cultural context surrounding the TL. A thorough understanding of the cultural nuances within the TL is crucial, as they may require adjustments in specificity or emphasis. Certain cultural expressions or references that are significant in the SL may not hold the same relevance in the TL, necessitating shifts between units to ensure that the meaning is preserved while remaining contextually appropriate.

In summary, unit shifts are essential tools in a translator's toolkit. They provide the flexibility needed to express the source text's meaning clearly, coherently, and in a manner suitable for the intended audience. By adeptly navigating between different linguistic units—including morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences—translators can effectively bridge the inherent structural differences between languages. This process ultimately allows them to produce translations that are both precise in meaning and fluent in style, successfully connecting diverse cultures and languages.



Figure 3. Musholla

SL: *Musholla*

TL: Prayer Room

The information provided clearly shows that the term "*Musholla*," which in the SL is a noun, is translated into "Prayer Room," a noun phrase in the TL. This change shows a great shift from a single lexical unit to a much more complex phrasal unit. This type of translation is openly categorized as a unit shift, since there is a change in the unit of meaning which is conveyed between the two languages. To be more precise, this shift is a progression from a basic unit of (noun) in the SL to an increased unit of (noun phrase) in the TL.

The choice of the "Prayer Room" as a translated term retains not only the core connotation associated with a place designed for prayer but also develops the description adding more context, which may fit more coherently with both the cultural and grammatical predispositions of the TL. The change points out the complexity involved in the process of translation where linguistic and contextual aspects interplay. This would demonstrate how translators often have to expand or adjust the unit of meaning in order to make it compatible with grammatical structures and situational nuances of the TL, all the while resulting in a translation that is both accurate and culturally appropriate.

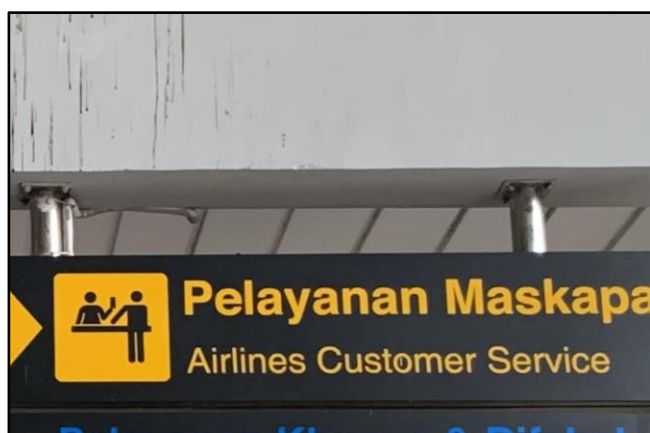


Figure 4. Pelayanan Maskapai

SL: *Pelayanan Maskapai*

TL: Airlines Customer Service

The SL term "*Pelayanan*" is translated to the TL as "Customer Service", which is a big linguistic shift from a simple noun to a compound noun phrase. The shift falls under a unit shift, meaning the unit of sense in translation is different. Specifically, the word "*Pelayanan*" is a common noun that may refer to any number of services, depending on the context; however, it does not have the degree of specificity necessary to pinpoint exactly what type of service is being rendered or who the recipient of that service is. On the other hand, the term "Customer Service" is a noun phrase comprising a main noun ("Service") and a noun adjunct ("Customer").

This framework allows for a much more accurate understanding of the attributes of the service involved. Through its articulation, it provides context that the service is directed toward customers; this phrase then brings in a crucial dimension of context that is lacking in the isolated term "*Pelayanan*." The distinction it brings about is very important because it gives an explanation that has specific applicability in the scope of business dealings and customer interactions.

Moreover, the term "*Pelayanan*" is broader and less specific as compared to "Customer Service," which clearly indicates the field where the service is performed. For example, this accuracy may be important in ensuring that the translation will meet the expectations and understanding of the target audience. Not only does such a distinction clarify communication, but it also passes as acceptable norms in terms of usage among customer service settings. The general noun therefore evolves into a specific noun phrase, conveying contextual accuracy, cultural adjustment, and conformance with the terminology used in a given profession. In this way, the unit of meaning is altered, intention and significance are

conveyed in the TL, under its limitations. The complexity of the translation process itself underlines the need for making deliberate changes in linguistic elements to achieve clarity, effectiveness, and relevance in communication. After all, this close attention to detail is pivotal in overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers, ensuring that the message not only reaches but also resonates with the target audience.

Class Shift

The class shift occurs when a word or phrase from the SL is translated into the TL as a word or phrase belonging to a different grammatical category, or "word class." These word classes encompass nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and more. Catford (1965) observed that class shifts happen when the translation equivalent of an SL item belongs to a different class than the original item. This may involve translating a noun into a verb, an adjective into a noun, or any other transformation in word class, depending on the syntactic and semantic requirements of the TL. Class shifts are fundamental to the translation process, highlighting the complexities involved in transferring meaning between languages. They challenge the notion that words can always be translated directly while maintaining both meaning and naturalness. Instead, class shifts illustrate that translation often necessitates a more dynamic approach, requiring the translator to consider the broader context, grammatical rules, and stylistic preferences of the TL.

This concept is aligned with the broader translation theory of dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes conveying the meaning and effect of the original text over strict adherence to its form. In essence, class shifts serve as practical tools for achieving dynamic equivalence, allowing translators to adapt the text in a manner that resonates with the target audience while remaining faithful to the original intent. Class shifts are essential mechanisms in translation, facilitating the adaptation of language units across different grammatical categories. They assist translators in navigating the structural, stylistic, and semantic differences between languages, ensuring that translations are both accurate and natural. By preserving the original text's meaning and making it accessible to the target audience, a thorough understanding and effective application of class shifts become crucial for producing high-quality translations that respect the linguistic and cultural nuances of both the SL and TL.

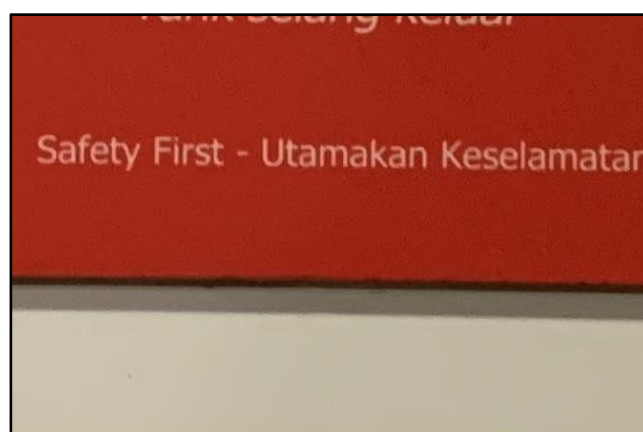


Figure 5. Utamakan Keselamatan

SL: *Utamakan Keselamatan*

TL: Safety First

The example shows the verb "*Utamakan*" in the SL is translated as the adjective "First" in the TL. This particular translation is an illustration of a great class shift, which means in general terms a word changing from one grammatical class or category to another; in this particular case, more specifically from a verb in the SL to an adjective in the TL translation. This change is striking because it brings to light the inherent variability of how different languages categorize concepts and express meaning. That a verb, which typically denotes an action, event, or process, can become an adjective in order to describe or modify a noun shows the remarkable flexibility required in translating. This flexibility is very important in ensuring that the message to be conveyed conforms with the grammatical structure and semantic expectations usual in the TL. This adjustment goes beyond mere lexical selection; it is a delicate balancing act, one that translators must pull off in order to keep the kernel of the original message while at the same time surmounting it into the straitjacket of the norms of the TL.

This example also illustrates the lesser differences that may be created within linguistic frameworks themselves, as cultural, contextual, and grammatical components interact in translation. It emphasizes the art of adaptation, as translators will have to navigate these differences in order to preserve the intended message while still conforming to the structural requirements of the TL. In summary, this case subsumes the nature of translation as both an art and a science, where diligence and knowledge of linguistics come together to assure good communication across the barriers of languages.

Figure 6. *Gunakan Air Mengalir*

SL: *Gunakan Air Mengalir*

TL: Use Running Water

The above data shows a thrilling change in the word "Mengalir." In the SL, the said word is a verb that denotes action or movement. In the TL, however, the said "Mengalir" is rendered as "Running," which is used as an adjective. This change is a drastic change in grammatical categories; a verbal form in the original text is changed into an adjective-like form in the translated text. This change of verb to adjective reflects an inherent category change in the process of translation. It brings out the complex problems that arise in translation work, which involves not only a simple replacing of words but also sensitivity to the grammatical role that words play within their respective linguistic structures. Such changes can have considerable effects on the general meaning and use of a term, hence underlining the complicated relationship that exists between grammar and semantics across languages. This brings into limelight the need to be very alert to these differences in order to communicate the right message.

Intra-system Shift

An intra-system shift is a subtle adjustment that occurs within the grammatical or structural framework of a single language during the translation process, specifically when transforming text from one language—the SL—to another—the TL. This shift reflects a departure from formal correspondence, wherein a term in the SL lacks a direct, equivalent counterpart in the grammatical system of the TL. According to Catford (1965:79), this implies that an expression in the SL may correlate with a different set of linguistic rules or terms in the TL. The need for intra-system shifts arises from the unique characteristics intrinsic to each

language's structure. Since no two languages are constructed identically—varying in grammar, morphology, and syntax—a word, phrase, or sentence in the SL may not have a direct equivalent that adheres to the same grammatical conventions in the TL. This absence of direct equivalence poses a challenge for translators, who must skillfully modify or shift elements within the target language to accurately capture and convey the intended meaning of the original text.

In this complex process of translation, the role of the translator is crucial. They serve as a bridge, expertly navigating the disparities between the SL and TL to produce a translated text that retains both precision and a natural flow in the TL. Intra-system shifts emerge as vital strategies in this endeavor; they enable translators to adapt expressions, ensuring that the final output resonates with the target audience while remaining faithful to the essence of the original message. Ultimately, intra-system shifts are necessary adjustments made during the translation process, dictated by the fundamental differences between the grammatical and structural systems of the SL and TL. These shifts not only ensure that the final translation conforms to the linguistic norms of the TL but also faithfully convey the meaning and emotional nuance of the SL. The necessity for such shifts underscores the complexity of translation, highlighting the expertise and sensitivity required to navigate the rich tapestry of diverse language systems adeptly.

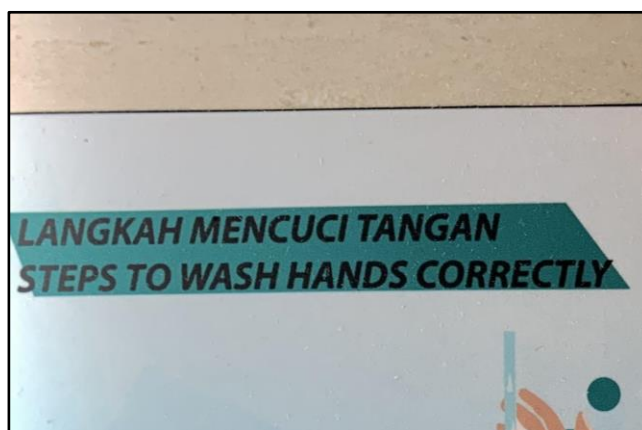


Figure 7. Langkah Mencuci Tangan

SL: *Langkah Mencuci Tangan*

TL: Steps to Wash Hands Correctly

The above data shows an interesting phenomenon of translation where the singular expressions "Langkah" and "Tangan" from the SL are translated into the plural forms "Steps" and "Hands" in the TL. This can, therefore, be considered as an example of one of the categories of translation shift known as intra-system shift,

useful in translations. An intra-system change refers to a change occurring within the grammatical system of the target language, as opposed to a change that occurs between entirely different grammatical systems. The translation is then more than a simple word-for-word substitution of one language into another; it involves also a change in the grammatical number of the corresponding nouns. In particular, "Langkah" and "Tangan" are singular forms in the SL, but they become plural nouns in the TL. That grammatical change points out an important aspect of translation: that one needs to translate in a manner that complies with the grammatical rules and idiomatic expressions of the TL.

Intersystem shifts of this kind have serious repercussions in the translation and interpretation of meanings from one language to another. Translators try to bring out contextual nuances more aptly expressed in the TL by way of pluralization while translating singular nouns into their plural forms. This approach allows subtler and more accurate communication of ideas, making sure that complexities are faithfully represented. In addition, the use of plural forms may also be a signal for cultural or contextual features that influence the perception of some concepts in the TL. For example, by the use of pluralization, one can extend the understanding of something in a collective manner and, hence, effectively communicate a sense of multiplicity or diversity that might be crucial in the communication process.



Figure 8. Toilet

SL: *Toilet*

TL: *Toilets*

The data above shows a very clear instance of the concept of grammatical adaptation in translation, more specifically pointing out the change from singular noun "Toilet" in the SL to its plural form "Toilets" in the TL. This change represents one important intra-system shift, in which the grammatical changes carried out are actually based within the system of the TL itself. Here, the singular "Toilet" is replaced by "Toilets" in order to meet, first, the pluralization standards of the target language and, second, grammatical norms and conventions. Such changes are part of the translation process in that they help to incorporate the translated material smoothly into the grammatical structure of the TL so that it appears as natural as possible to the intended audience. The change from singular to plural involves effects that go beyond the superficial level of word form; it has implications for how the information is processed and understood in its context. In doing so, translators increase the clarity, meaningfulness, and overall coherence of the target text by adapting the noun to the number agreement patterns of the TL.

This is an intentional change in order to maintain accuracy, as the message conveyed must be appropriate and a true representation of the meaning found within the source material. Another example of an intra-system shift, this shows how translators must be aware of the specific grammatical needs of the TL while trying to preserve as closely as possible the original meaning. Translators, by doing so, provide a translation not only faithful to the SL but also one that is meaningfully resonant with the target audience.

Conclusion

The translation of public signs at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport showcases a variety of category shifts, categorized into four distinct types: structure shift, unit shift, class shift, and intra-system shift. This classification draws on the foundational theory of translation proposed by Catford in 1965. Through a thorough qualitative analysis of 52 data points, the study revealed that 27 of these (52%) were identified as structure shifts, indicating a significant alteration in the grammatical structure during translation. Additionally, 4 unit shifts (8%) were observed, which involved changes in the size of the translation units; 6 class shifts (11%) indicated changes in the grammatical class of items; and 15 intra-system shifts (29%) were noted, highlighting variations within a particular system of translation. Notably, structure shift emerged as the most prevalent type among the data analyzed.

It would therefore be important that a set of translation methodologies is carried out in order to greatly improve communication and ensure clarity for international visitors at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport. These should include direct translations, which stick closely to the original meanings, and localized translations, where the message is changed to fit cultural nuances and levels of understanding. This will increase the accuracy in translation because

professional translators used have specialized knowledge in airport signages. In addition, simplicity in language on the signages will also allow access to information by different people. In light of the earlier mentioned strategies, universal symbols and visual aids, which exceed the barriers of language and the speed of understanding of crucial information, would be greatly useful to the airport. The regular update of translations will make them relevant and accurate, while proactive feedback solicitation from travelers will go a long way in gaining valuable insight into their experiences and perceptions. The final implementation of multilingual support through accessible mobile apps or interactive kiosks will give travelers the ability to receive crucial information in their native languages, thereby enhancing their overall satisfaction and streamlining the airport experience.

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