

Available online at:

<https://jurnal.unikastpaulus.ac.id/index.php/ichelac>



Volume 5, 2025 (573-594)

International Conference on Humanities,
Education, Language, and Culture

The Impact of Translation Shifts on Translation Equivalence: A Linguistic Analysis

Yohanes Tresno Kurnianto*

Yosefina Elsiana Suhartini²

I Made Susini³

I Gusti Ayu Agung Dian Susanthi⁴

Natalia Karmelia Sale⁵

Guilielmo Vercelli Ampur⁶

^{1, 3, 4}Universitas Warmadewa, Denpasar, Indonesia

^{2, 5}Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Karya Ruteng,
Manggarai, Indonesia

⁶Universitas Udayana, Denpasar, Indonesia

*Corresponding email: kurniantoyohanes99@gmail.com

Abstract

Translation shifts play a crucial role in maintaining translation equivalence, as they enable translators to adapt linguistic structures while preserving meaning. This study examines the impact of translation shifts on translation equivalence by employing a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected from the novel *It Ends with Us* through documentation and note-taking techniques. The findings reveal that various types of translation shifts; unit shifts, structural shifts, intra-system shifts, and class shifts significantly influence how meaning, emotional nuances, and sentence structures are conveyed in the

target language. These shifts support the principle of dynamic equivalence, ensuring the message remains clear and comprehensible despite structural modifications. However, as this study is limited to a single literary work, further research is recommended to examine the effects of translation shifts across different text genres and translation approaches. Future studies might also explore how cultural and ideological factors influence translation decisions, offering a more comprehensive understanding of translation shifts and their role in cross-linguistic communication.

Keywords: translation shifts; translation equivalence; dynamic equivalence; linguistic adaptation; literary translation

INTRODUCTION

In communication, especially cross-linguistic communication, translation plays a very important role, allowing texts to be understood by individuals from different cultural backgrounds and languages. Historically, translation has been instrumental in the dissemination of knowledge, culture, art and science across national and cultural boundaries (Siregar et al., 2022).

Translation, according to (Newmark, 1998) is the process of changing the meaning of a text from one language, called the source language, into another language, called the target language. According to (Anderson et al., 1976), translation is the transfer of thoughts or ideas from the source language into the target language. Meanwhile, according to (Catford, 1965), translation is the activity of replacing textual material in one language with equivalent textual material in another language.

In the world of translation, especially written language translation of literary works such as novels, there are various challenges. One of the main challenges

faced by translators is maintaining equivalence of meaning between the source text and the target text. Translation equivalence refers to the creation of equivalence between the original text and the translated text, maintaining the characteristics of the original text (Oneț & Ciocoi-Pop, 2023). According to (Ryabokin & Stukalenko, 2020) equivalence in translation is the reproduction of the unity, content and form of the original text in different languages, maintaining the relative balance of meaningful, semantic, stylistic and functional-communicative information. Meanwhile, according to (Marolova & Gjorgjievska, 2015) the term equivalence in translation refers to the condition in which the target language text has the same communicative value as the source language text for the original recipient. Meanwhile, according to (Susini et al., 2021) said that equivalence is the main concept in translation which aims to achieve the closest equivalence of the source text in the target language. Based on these definitions, it is concluded that equivalence in translation is the similarity and accuracy of conveying messages from the source language into the target language.

In translation, even though translation equivalence is well taken care of, translation is often faced with changes or shifts in various aspects of the language, known as translation shifts. Translation shifts include both word-level and meaning-level changes that can affect the quality and equivalence of the translation itself. According to (Dorri, 2016) translation shifts are small linguistic changes that occur between units in the source text and target text pairs, which cause untranslatability and lack of beauty. (Utami & Hikmaharyanti, 2019) says that translation shift is an unavoidable deviation from formal correspondence in the process of translation from the source language to the target language, and can occur in

various types of texts, including novels. Such shifts are necessary to maintain the intended meaning and coherence of the original text in the translated version, especially when there are structural or cultural differences between the two languages.

This research explores the impact of translation shift on translation equivalence in the novel *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover. Translation shifts often occur due to differences in language structure and cultural context between the source and target languages. This can affect the accuracy of meaning, language style and readability of the text. Therefore, this study aims to identify the forms of translation shifts and the extent to which these shifts affect the equivalence of meaning in the target text.

Research on translation is highly relevant in the era of globalization, where cross-cultural and linguistic interactions are intensifying. In this context, translation plays an important role in bridging intercultural communication, whether in academia, business, literature or diplomacy. Therefore, understanding the impact of linguistic changes that occur during the translation process, and how they affect translation equivalence, is crucial. Translation theory has come a long way, but the issue of translation shifts remains a hotly debated issue among linguists and translators. Many studies have shown that translation shifts have a major impact on translation quality, which can sometimes reduce the equivalence between the source and target texts.

The first research was conducted by (Sipayung, 2020) in 2020 titled “The Impact of Translation Method and Shift on Translation Quality at Bilingual Textbooks of Physics, Mathematics, and History”. The study was conducted using descriptive methods and interactive techniques that included focus groups, in-depth interviews, and the

distribution of open and closed questionnaires, and non-interactive techniques that included direct observation of the source and target text pairs to identify translation methods and shifts. The results show that communicative translation is the dominant method used by translators in translating the source text into the target text, while the dominant translation shift is unit shift. The shift has an impact on the translation quality of the history book where there is a distortion of meaning and the use of inappropriate terms. In addition, the unit shift has an impact on the translation of physics books, where most of the technical terms are translated according to the target language norms. The study did not examine or explore the impact of translation shift on translation equivalence explicitly, but rather the impact of translation shift on translation quality in bilingual textbooks.

The second research was conducted by (Adam & Ali, 2018) in 2018 with the title “The Impact of Translation Shift Techniques on the Quality of the Translated Text of the Novel ‘And the Mountains Echoed’ into Indonesian.” This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach and content analysis method to compare the source text and target text. The data collection process was carried out through several stages such as selection of research objects, data collection, validation and data analysis. From 766 data analyzed in this study, it is found that the dominant translation shift technique is single technique with a percentage of 80% and multiple techniques such as couplet, triplet and quartet with 20%. These techniques have an impact on the accuracy, acceptability and readability of the translation which is very high. The study highlights how the application of certain techniques can affect the accuracy, acceptability

and readability without exploring the equivalence aspect of the translation.

Translation equivalence is a crucial aspect of translation studies as it ensures that the message conveyed in the source language is preserved in the target language. Translation shifts, whether they occur at the level of structure, units or other categories, can cause changes in meaning that impact translation equivalence. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by analyzing more deeply how translation shifts affect translation equivalence in various contexts, including linguistic and pragmatic aspects. As such, it can provide a more comprehensive insight into the impact of translation shifts on the quality and effectiveness of cross-language communication.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to explore translation shifts found in the novel *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a deep, contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study, in this case, the linguistic and structural changes that occur during translation. The descriptive method was used to systematically describe and interpret the data without manipulating it, aiming to reveal patterns and categories relevant to translation shifts. The data consisted of written sentences extracted from the source text of the novel, which were relevant to the research objectives, particularly those that demonstrated changes in form, meaning, or structure during the translation process.

For data collection, the documentation method was applied, as the primary data source was in the form of textual documents (i.e., the novel and its translation). To

support this method, the note-taking technique was used to manually record and organize instances of translation shifts. The stages of data collection included:

1. Reading the entire novel to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the content and context.
2. Identifying relevant data, that is, sentences or phrases that exhibit shifts from the source language to the target language.
3. Categorizing the data according to the types of translation shifts observed (e.g., level shifts, category shifts) in line with the research questions and theoretical framework.

After data collection, the analysis was carried out using the content analysis method, which involves interpreting textual material systematically to identify the presence of specific words, themes, or concepts. To structure this process, the data analysis techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman were adopted. These include:

1. Data reduction, which involved selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data into a more manageable form by focusing on key examples of translation shifts.
2. Data display, which was done informally using descriptive explanations and simple language to present findings clearly.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification, in which patterns and themes were interpreted to answer the research questions and ensure the validity of the findings.

RESULTS

Based on the analysis of the data, it is found that in some translations there are unit shift, structural shift, intra-system shift and class shift. These shifts cause the

equivalence of translation. The following is the detailed explanation;

The Impact of Unit Shift on Translation Equivalence

Unit shift in the context of translation refers to the shift or change of language units (words, phrases, clauses, sentences) between the source language and the target language (Simamora, 2022).

Data 1

Source language: "The iconic Bib's on Marketson opened in April of last year, quickly becoming one of the highest rated restaurants in the city, according to TripAdvisor."

Target language: "*Bib's, restoran paling terkenal di Marketson, dibuka April tahun lalu dan segera menjadi salah satu restoran dengan rating tertinggi di kota ini, menurut TripAdvisor.*"

In the data 1 above, the word "iconic" in the source language is a single adjective. At the same time, it is equivalent "*paling terkenal*" in the target language, a phrase consisting of an adverb and an adjective. This unit shift influences the translation's equivalence which is dynamic equivalence, prioritizing conveying the intended meaning and effect over strict adherence to form. By choosing "*paling terkenal*," the translator ensures that the target text captures the cultural and emotional nuances implied in the source text. This approach enhances the translation's readability and relatability, making it more accessible and impactful for Indonesian readers.

Data 2

Source language: I told him we had to start some kind of charity, or at least donate to the ones Marshall and Allysa like.

Target language: *Aku bilang padanya kami harus membuat satu kegiatan amal, atau paling tidak menyumbang ke badan-badan amal yang disukai Marshall dan Allysa*

In the data 2 above, the word "charity" in the source language is a single noun, while its equivalent, "kegiatan amal," in the target language is a noun phrase consisting of two words. This shift clarifies the meaning by specifying that charity refers to organized social activities rather than a general act of kindness. The unit shift influences the translation's equivalence, which is dynamic equivalence, prioritizing conveying the intended meaning and effect rather than strictly following the source text's form. By translating "charity" into "kegiatan amal," the translator ensures that the message remains clear, culturally appropriate, and accessible to the target audience. This approach helps readers better understand the concept, making the translation more effective and relevant in the target language context.

Data 3

Source language: I can barely even stay on my knees

Target language: *Aku nyaris tak kuat untuk terus berlutut*

The word "barely" in the source language is an adverb. In contrast, its equivalent, "nyaris tak kuat," in the target language is a phrase consisting of two elements: "nyaris" (adverb) and "tak kuat" (adjective). This shift occurs because the translator adapts the language structure to provide a more explicit explanation of the

physical difficulty experienced by the subject. The unit shift helps the target language reader better grasp the intensity of the situation described in the sentence.

Moreover, this unit shift aligns with dynamic equivalence, which emphasizes delivering the intended meaning and impact rather than strictly following the original form. By selecting the phrase "nyaris tak kuat," the translator effectively conveys the sense of limitation present in the source text, along with the subject's physical and emotional struggle. This strategy improves the readability of the translation and allows the target audience to fully grasp the message conveyed in the original text.

Data 4

Source language: "I've had it forever."

Target language: "*Aku sudah memilikinya sejak dulu sekali.*"

In the data 4 above, the word "forever" in the source language is a single word, while its equivalent, "sejak dulu sekali" in the target language, is a phrase. This shift occurs as the translator transforms the simple structure of the source text into a more complex structure to ensure that the intended meaning is conveyed with greater clarity. The unit shift influences in the translation of the data 4 above aligns with dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes conveying the meaning and effect of the message rather than maintaining the exact form. By choosing "sejak dulu sekali," the translator ensures that the target text captures the intended emphasis on the long duration of ownership, making the message clearer and more relatable for Indonesian readers. This approach enhances the readability and comprehensibility of the translation while preserving the original meaning.

Data 5

Source language: “What the fuck, Lily?”

Target language: “*Apa-apaan ini, Lily?*”

The phrase “What the fuck” consists of a pronoun and an expletive in the source language, expressing a strong emotional reaction. However, in the target language, the translator renders it into “*Apa-apaan ini,*” a phrase with an interrogative form that carries the same emotional impact. This shift highlights the translator’s decision to adapt the expression into a more natural and acceptable form in the target language without losing the original emotional intensity. The unit shift in the translation of the data 6 above aligns with dynamic equivalence, emphasizing conveying the message’s intended effect rather than strictly following the form. By choosing “*Apa-apaan ini,*” the translator prioritizes the impact and emotional resonance of the phrase, ensuring that the target language readers experience the same level of surprise and disbelief as the source language readers. This approach enhances the communicative function of the translation while maintaining the original message’s emotional weight.

The Impact of Structural Shift on Translation Equivalence

Structural shift in translation is a change or shift in the grammatical structure or word order in the source language to the target language, which occurs due to differences in the language system (Fat’hi & Akbari, 2012).

Data 6

Source language: Right when Atlas reaches the kitchen doors, he pauses

Target language: *Tepat saat Atlas sampai di pintu dapur, langkahnya terhenti*

The translation of the data 5, the sentence structure in the source language follows the pattern Subject + Verb (he pauses), while the target language changes the structure into Nominal Phrase + Verb (*langkahnya terhenti*). This shift adjusts the delivery by changing the focus from the subject performing the action to the action itself, a common syntactic structure in Indonesian to convey the same meaning more naturally.

The structural shift in the translation of the data 5 above aligns with dynamic equivalence, prioritizing conveying the intended meaning and effect over strict adherence to form. By choosing the phrase "*langkahnya terhenti*," the translator ensures that the target text captures the implied action and maintains the natural flow of the sentence. This approach enhances the readability and cultural appropriateness of the translation, making it more accessible and impactful for Indonesian readers.

Data 7

Source language: "I might get something dirty."

Target language: "*Takut mengotori sesuatu.*"

The source language sentence follows a subject-verb-object structure, with "I" as the subject, "might get" as the verb phrase, and "something dirty" as the object. However, the target language sentence transforms this structure into a more compact and impersonal form by eliminating the subject and restructuring the sentence into a verb-object pattern with "*takut*" as the main verb. This shift

adapts the sentence to the grammatical norms of Indonesian, which often allows for subject omission when the context makes the subject clear.

This structural shift aligns with dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes conveying the intended meaning and effect of the message over strict adherence to the original form. By simplifying the sentence and using a more natural expression in Indonesian, the translator ensures that the target language readers receive the same understanding and emotional nuance as the source language readers. This approach enhances the readability and fluency of the translation, making it more accessible to the target audience.

Data 8

Source language: His hand

Target language: *Tangan-nya*

The source language phrase “His hand” consists of two separate words: the possessive pronoun “his” followed by the noun “hand.” However, the translator combines both elements in the target language into a single word, “Tangan-nya,” by attaching the suffix “-nya” directly to the noun. This shift reflects the structural difference between English and Indonesian in expressing possession.

The structure shift in the data above aligns with dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes conveying meaning and effect over maintaining the exact grammatical structure of the source text. By employing “Tangan-nya,” the translator ensures that the translation sounds natural and clear to Indonesian readers without altering the intended meaning of the original text. This approach enhances the readability and cultural relevance of the

translation, making it more accessible to the target audience.

The Impact of Intra-System Shift on Translation Equivalence

Intra-system shifts in translation are shifts that occur within the source language system rather than between languages, for example from plural to singular or vice versa, without significantly changing meaning (Herman, 2017).

Data 9

Source language: I pull the ACE bandage out of the first aid kit and begin wrapping his hand

Target language: Aku mengambil perban ACE dari kotak P3K lalu mulai membebat tangannya

The phrase “first aid kit” in English uses a noun phrase structure, while the *translation* “kotak P3K” in Indonesian also uses a noun phrase structure. However, the shift occurs in the internal system of both languages, where the English term represents a general concept. In contrast, the Indonesian term includes the abbreviation “P3K” (*Pertolongan Pertama Pada Kecelakaan*), which is more culturally specific and widely understood by Indonesian readers.

The intra-system shift in the translation of the data above aligns with dynamic equivalence, prioritizing the message's intended effect over rigid adherence to form. By choosing the term “kotak P3K,” the translator ensures that the target language readers receive the same understanding and impact as the source language readers. This approach enhances the clarity and cultural relevance

of the translation, making it more natural and accessible to the target audience.

Data 10

Source language: “The chef gives all expectant mothers dessert on the house,” he says

Target language: “*Chef kami memberi semua ibu hamil hidangan penutup gratis,*” ujarnya

The phrase “on the house” in English functions as an idiom with a figurative meaning, while the translated term “*gratis*” represents a more straightforward lexical item. This shift highlights how the translator adapts the idiomatic expression into a common term without altering the core message, reflecting the structural and lexical differences between the two languages.

Furthermore, this category shift aligns with dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes conveying the intended meaning and effect over the literal structure of the source text. By choosing a familiar and easily understood term, the translator ensures that the message resonates with the target language readers, enhancing both clarity and readability. This approach allows the target audience to grasp the intended meaning without being hindered by unfamiliar idiomatic expressions.

Data 11

Source language: “I told you I couldn’t imagine what something like that will do to that little boy’s brother”

Target language: “*Aku bilang aku tidak bisa membayangkan dampak hal tersebut padanya*”

The original sentence explicitly mentions the boy's brother as the affected party. At the same time, the translated version uses the pronoun "*padanya*," which represents a shift from a specific noun phrase to a more general pronoun. This intra-system shift reflects differences in how the two languages handle pronouns and references, with Indonesian preferring a more concise expression.

Furthermore, this intra-system shift aligns with dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes conveying the message's overall meaning and effect rather than strictly adhering to the source text's form. By omitting the explicit reference to the boy's brother, the translator ensures that the primary message about the unimaginable impact of the event is conveyed clearly and naturally to the target language readers. This approach enhances the readability and fluency of the translated text without distorting the original message

The Impact of Class Shift on Translation Equivalence

Class shift in the context of translation refers to a word class shift or a change from one word class to another when translating from the source language to the target language (Ufani & Hutauruk, 2022).

Data 12

Source language: Ryle just opened up to me in a way that he's probably never opened up to anyone

Target language: Ryle baru saja membuka rahasianya yang mungkin tak pernah dia ceritakan pada siapa pun

The phrase "opened up" in the source language is a verb that shows the action of sharing personal feelings. However, in the target language, the equivalent "membuka

rahasiannya" combines a verb (*membuka*) with a noun (*rahasiannya*). This shift occurs because the translator makes the implied information in the source text more explicit by adding the word "rahasiannya," categorized as a noun.

The class shift caused dynamic equivalence, prioritizing conveying the message's meaning and emotional effect rather than rigidly following the original structure. By choosing "*membuka rahasiannya*," the translator ensures that the target text captures the emotional depth and personal nature of the conversation, making the message clearer, more natural, and more impactful for Indonesian readers.

Data 13

Source language: I just pushed him onto glass

Target language: *Aku mendorongnya ke pecahan beling*

The word "glass" in the source language is a noun representing a material or object in various forms. In contrast, its equivalent, "pecahan beling" in the target language is a noun phrase that specifies the broken state of the glass. This shift occurs because the translator adapts to the situational context, making the translation more vivid and contextually accurate.

This class shift aligns with dynamic equivalence, prioritizing conveying the intended meaning and effect over strict adherence to form. By choosing "pecahan beling," the translator ensures that the target text captures the emotional intensity and potential danger implied in the source text. This approach enhances the translation's clarity and emotional impact, making it more accessible and immersive for Indonesian readers.

Data 14

Source language: Kiss kiss

Target language: Mmuahh

The source language phrase “Kiss kiss” is categorized as a noun phrase, referring to an act of affection in a nominal form. Meanwhile, its equivalent “Mmuahh” in the target language is an onomatopoeia, which functions as an interjection to imitate the sound of a kiss. This shift from a noun phrase to an onomatopoeic expression occurs due to the translator’s adaptation to the linguistic and cultural conventions of Indonesian, where affectionate gestures are often conveyed through sound imitations rather than verbal phrases.

The class shift in the data above aligns with dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes conveying the intended meaning and emotional effect over maintaining the exact form of the source text. By choosing “Mmuahh,” the translator ensures that the target text effectively captures the affectionate and playful nuance implied in the source text. This approach enhances the translation’s readability and relatability, making it more accessible and impactful for Indonesian readers.

Data 15

Source language: “You have people who can run your store for you”

Target language: “Ada karyawan yang bisa mengurus tokomu”

The word “people” in the source language is a noun that represents a general group of individuals, while its equivalent “karyawan” in the target language is also a noun but refers to a specific group of people with a particular role or occupation. This shift occurs due to the

translator's effort to convey a more precise meaning that aligns with the context of the sentence, which mentions individuals employed to manage the store.

Furthermore, this class shift influences the dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes the effect and meaning conveyed to the target readers over the literal form of the source text. By choosing “karyawan,” the translator ensures that the target text conveys the same understanding and communicative effect as the source text, making the translation clearer, more natural, and easier to comprehend for Indonesian readers

CONCLUSION

This study shows that translation shifts have a significant impact on translation equivalence. The shifts in units, structures, intra-language systems and word classes found in *It Ends with Us* affect how the meaning, emotional nuances and sentence structures of the source text are conveyed in the target language. The analysis shows that the application of dynamic equivalence in translation allows the message to be conveyed clearly and effectively, despite the changes in form and structure in the target text.

However, this study has some limitations. This study only focuses on one novel as the object of research, so the results may not fully represent the patterns of translation shifts in other types of texts. In addition, this study focuses more on linguistic analysis without considering socio-cultural factors that may influence translation decisions.

For future research, it is suggested that a broader analysis be conducted involving different text genres and different translation methods. In addition, further studies could explore how readers' perceptions of translations shift, as well as how translators' cultural and ideological

factors influence the translation process. Thus, this research can provide a deeper insight into the practice of translation and its impact on cross-language communication.

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