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# The Utilization of Communicative Translation Principles in Translating The *Gojek* Application Into English

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## ABSTRACT

In the digital era, applications have become essential tools for daily activities, particularly in Indonesia. As local apps like Gojek expand into international markets, translation is not only a matter of transferring language but also of ensuring that messages are effectively communicated to target users. This study analyzed the application of Newmark's communicative translation principles in the English version of the Gojek app. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research examined data from Gojek version 5.18.0, collected through screenshots of the Indonesian and English user interfaces. The analysis focused on three principles: naturalness, equivalent effect, and information accuracy. Findings from seven data samples indicated that these principles were consistently applied. Naturalness was reflected in language that read smoothly and was easily understood. The equivalent effect was maintained through the preservation of vocative and informative functions. Information accuracy, particularly in technical terminology, enhanced user comprehension. Overall, applying communicative translation principles improves user experience and supports global market accessibility while offering guidance for translators and UX writers.

**Keywords:** Communicative translation, Principle of communicative translation, Gojek application.

## 1. Introduction

In the digital era, apps have become an essential part of everyday life, especially in Indonesia. The growth of local apps that offer services such as accommodation, transportation, and digital payments shows the increasing demand for technology-based services. As Indonesian applications expand their reach to the international market, translation becomes a crucial aspect.

This is not only in terms of transferring the language, but also in ensuring users can understand and use the app effectively. One approach that focuses on user experience is communicative translation, a method that focuses on the reader's experience and understanding rather than simply following the structure or form of the original text (Newmark, 2008).

*Gojek* is one of the leading multi-service applications in Indonesia that provides various services such as transportation, food delivery, and digital payments. In the process of expanding to the global market, *Gojek* faces challenges in translating its content into English, especially in terms of translating cultural contexts such as slang, idioms, and colloquial language. As cited in Nida & Taber (1969) who emphasized the importance of equivalence of meaning in translation in order to ensure that the message remains relevant and understandable to the target reader. In addition, the translation must also maintain the function of the message, whether to engage or inform the user. A number of previous studies have highlighted the importance of communicative translation in improving readability and cultural relevance, as found by Fitrianti (2015), who showed that communicative translation can improve readability and cultural appropriateness which are important for reader engagement. Similarly, Juwita and Kemal (2022) demonstrated that communicative translation contributes to greater naturalness and clearer comprehension of movie texts among target audiences.

This study aims to examine the utilization of Newmark's (2008) principles of communicative translation, such as naturalness, equivalent effect, and information accuracy, in the English version of *Gojek* application. The main question raised in this study are: What are the principles of communicative translation strategies applied in the translation of *Gojek* application from Indonesian to English? Through the analysis of translation strategies in *Gojek* application, this research is aimed to contribute to the field of translation studies, especially in digital application writing. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for translators and user experience writers who work on digital platforms with multilingual users. Thus, this study tried to bridge the gap between communicative translation theory and its application in the context of digital media writing.

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## 2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative research method to identify the communicative translation principles used in translating the Gojek application into English. The data were taken from Gojek version 5.18.0, developed by PT Goto Gojek Tokopedia Tbk. The Indonesian interface served as the source language (SL), while the English interface functioned as the target language (TL). To ensure data accuracy, the application was freshly installed to avoid any prior user-based modifications.

Data collection was conducted using audiovisual and documentation techniques. After installing the application, the researcher explored its user interface and identified elements

relevant to communicative translation. Screenshots of these elements were captured and categorized according to their context and functional role within the app.

The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to provide a clear and detailed explanation of observed phenomena (Creswell, 2018, p. 292). Each selected interface element was examined using Newmark's (2008) communicative translation principles to evaluate naturalness, equivalent effect, and information accuracy. The findings were presented using both formal and informal descriptive methods.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the data that have been collected and observed. The data are then categorized based on the principle of naturalness, the principle of equivalent effect, and the principle of information accuracy.

### 1. Principle of Naturalness

| Number of Data | SL | TL |
|---|---|---|
| **[3-1]** | Takasimuraaaa!<br>Cek menu yang lagi diskon disni.<br>[Lihat semua] | All prices chopped!<br>Check out our menus on promo today!<br>[see all] |

In data [3-1], the SL title "*Takasimuraaaa!*" is a slang expression adapted from a combination of the words "takasih" (give) and "murah" (affordable), used to highlight discounts or low prices. In the TL, it is translated as "All prices chopped!", where the word "chopped" suggests that prices have been cut or reduced (Cambridge Online Dictionary), which aligns with the idea of discounts.

In the body text, "*Cek menu yang lagi diskon disni.*" is translated as "Check out our menus on promo today!". The word "*diskon*" is translated as "promo" instead of being literally translated into "discount". The word "promo" is often preferred over "discount" in marketing because it sounds more appealing and covers a broader range of benefits. While "discount" only focuses on price cuts, "*promo*' might include other advantages like bonuses, free items, or free shipping. So, "promo" tends to attract consumers more since it's not just about lower prices (Romatua et al., 2023). This supports Newmark's view on naturalness, where a translation sounds more natural when contextually appropriate word choices are used.

| Number of Data | SL | TL |
|---|---|---|
| **[3-2]** | **Diem-diem laku keras, lho**<br>Ini dia UMKM favorit foodies lokal. | **GoFood's hidden gems**<br>Local restos loved by foodies in town. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | [Lihat semua] | [See all] |

In data [3-2], the SL title text *"Diem-diem laku keras, lho"* is a slang that express the idea that something is unexpectedly popular. If translated literally, it would become "quietly sells well," which might sound awkward or unnatural for the target audience. That's why the TL uses "hidden gems," a commonly used phrase in English to describe something valuable but not widely known. It sounds more natural and still conveys the same message.

In the SL body text, *"Ini dia UMKM favorit foodies lokal,"* the term "UMKM" stands for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises. While it's possible to borrow "UMKM" directly into the TL, it could confuse readers who are not familiar with the term. Therefore, it is translated as "local restos," which gives a similar context and is easier to understand. This translation avoids awkwardness by not applying a one-to-one translation, especially when dealing with cultural terms, idioms, or slang (Newmark, 2008, p. 27).

| Number of Data | SL | TL |
|---|---|---|
| **[3-3]** | **Nah, Perginya pakai Gojek aja!**<br>Tinggal duduk sambil nikmatin pemandangan sampai tujuan. | **Let's go with Gojek, shall we?**<br>All you need to do is sitback & enjoy the ride |

In data [3-3], the interjection *"nah"* in the sentence *"Nah, Perginya pakai Gojek aja!"* is a conclusive interjection, which is used to conclude or affirm a decision that has been previously considered (Pertiwi & Nusarini, 2018: 83). In this context, *"nah"* gives the impression that choosing Gojek is the right choice, creating an inviting tone and making the message sound more convincing to users. Meanwhile, in the TL version "Let's go with Gojek, shall we?", there is no direct equivalent for the conclusive interjection. However, the expression "shall we?" still gives the sense of inviting to the users and sounds natural in the English cultural context.

In the body text, *"nikmatin pemandangan sampai tujuan"* is translated as "enjoy the ride." This phrase is a common English expression that encourages enjoying the experience or the journey rather than focusing on the destination or outcome (Cambridge Online Dictionary). This translation is not only concise but also sounds natural by adapting to the target language, following Newmark's (2008, p. 27) suggestion that translation should flow as though it were written by a native speaker.

**2. Principle of Equivalent Effect**

| Number of Data | SL | TL |
|---|---|---|
| **[3-4]** | **Jadwalin pemakaian, yuk?**<br>Biar nanti nggak repot, jadwalin aja. | **Let's schedule a booking**<br>Make your day hassle-free, schedule now. |

In data [3-4], the text can be considered a vocative text, which is a type of text that aims to invite, persuade, influence, or encourage the reader to respond in the way the writer intends

(Newmark, 2008, p. 41). In the SL, *"Jadwalin pemakaian, yuk?"* served to invite the user, with the word "yuk" as an invitation or call to action. In the TL, "Let's schedule a booking", the sense of invitation and call to action is maintained through the use of "Let's".

In the body text, *"Biar nanti nggak repot, jadwalin aja."* aimed to persuade the user by emphasizing the benefit "biar nggak repot". This is effectively translated into "Make your day hassle-free, schedule now", where the phrase "hassle-free" successfully conveys the idea of convenience and ease, preserving the persuasive effect of the original message. This is aligned with Newmark (2008, p. 48) view that if text is vocative, the persuasive or inviting effect should be preserved in the TL, as it is in the SL.

| Number of Data | SL | TL |
|---|---|---|
| **[3-5]** | Gak ketemu hasil buat "Coffee"<br><br>Wah, kayaknya emang belum ada di Gojek. Cari pakai kata lain yuk? | No result found for "Coffee"<br><br>Alas, your search is not on the app yet. Let's try another word? |

In data [3-5], the SL title *"Gak ketemu hasil buat 'Coffee'"* and the body text *"Wah, kayaknya emang belum ada di Gojek."* can be considered an informative text, as it reports that the user's search did not return any results. The informative function is maintained in the TL with the title "No result found for 'Coffee'" and the body text "Alas, your search is not on the app yet." However, there is also a persuasive element in the SL body text *"Cari pakai kata lain yuk?"* which encourages the user to try searching with a different keyword. This is also preserved in the TL "Let's try another word?". Thus, maintaining the persuasive thread from the SL is important, as Newmark (2008, p. 48) stated that if an informative text contains persuasive elements, those aspects must also be retained in the TL.

**3. Principle of Information Accuracy**

| Number of Data | SL | TL |
|---|---|---|
| **[3-6]** | Belum ada alamat pribadi yang disimpan<br>Tambahin alamat yang sering dipakai yuk, biar pesen Gosend bisa lebih cepet. | No personal saved address yet<br>Let's add your frequently used addresses, so you can find' em in just one tap. |

In data [3–6], the SL body text "Tambahin alamat yang sering dipakai yuk, biar pesen Gosend bisa lebih cepet" aims to persuade users to add frequently used addresses by highlighting the benefit "biar pesen Gosend bisa lebih cepet" (so you can book Gosend faster). In the TL, this is rendered as "Let's add your frequently used addresses, so you can find 'em in just one tap." Although the specific service name "Gosend" is omitted, this does not create ambiguity because

the message is displayed within the Gosend service page. The TL instead shifts the emphasis toward ease and efficiency through the phrase “so you can find 'em in just one tap.” Despite differences in structure, the TL successfully preserves the core message regarding the convenience of saving addresses, demonstrating the application of communicative translation principles.

This translation aligned with the principle of information accuracy proposed by Newmark (2008, p. 47), which prioritizes message clarity and readability in understanding the text, especially when the purpose of the text is to invite or persuade.

| Number of Data | SL | TL |
|---|---|---|
| **[3-7]** | Huhu, internetnya mati<br>Bertahanlah. Coba cek WiFi atau paket datamu, trus coba lagi.<br>[Coba lagi] [Pengaturan] | You’re offline. Stay Strong<br>Check your WiFi or mobile data and try again.<br>[Try again] [Settings] |

In data [3-7], the SL title “*Huhu, internetnya mati”* is translated into “You’re offline. Stay Strong”. *“Internetnya mati”* means the user is disconnected from the internet. Although a literal translation like “disconnected from the internet” could also be used, it sounds unnatural for the target audience. Thus, the translation used the term that is more common and understandable for the target users, such as “You’re offline.” This choice conveys the same message, that the user is not connected to the internet.

In the body text, the phrase *“paket datamu”* is translated as "mobile data" instead of the literal “your data plan”. “Mobile data” is more accurate because it directly refers to the on/off switch and the active internet connection type on the mobile device. When the internet is down or offline, the first things a user can check are their Wi-Fi connection and whether mobile data is enabled. Thus, "mobile data" is more suitable and relevant to the context, making it easier for the target user to understand. Therefore, this translation applied Newmark's (2008) principle of information accuracy by using technical terms that suitable with the target culture and are easily understood by the user.

## 4. Conclusion

The translations in the Gojek application demonstrate the application of Newmark’s communicative translation principles, namely naturalness, equivalent effect, and information accuracy. This approach offers clear advantages, particularly its emphasis on user comprehension and engagement. By prioritizing natural, user-friendly expressions rather than rigid literal forms, the translated messages feel smooth and accessible. In addition, the accurate use of contextually appropriate technical terms supports quicker user understanding, especially when navigating specific services or features within the app.

Although certain slang, idioms, or colloquial expressions are not translated directly into the TL, the core meaning and intended effect—whether informative or persuasive—are consistently maintained. Overall, this study provides valuable insights for UX writers and translators working on digital product localization, highlighting how communicative translation principles can enhance usability and support broader audience reach.

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