

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES IN THE CONTENT LOCALIZATION OF AGODA.COM

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the translation strategies used in the content localization of Agoda.com, an online travel agency website, in both English and Bahasa Indonesia. Data collection was conducted through documentation, involving screenshots of specific content on Agoda.com. The collected data were categorized according to the framework proposed by Singh et al. (2009) and analyzed using Pierini's (2007) theory on website translation strategies. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, supplemented by documentation and note-taking techniques. The findings reveal that the predominant translation strategy applied in Agoda.com's content localization is full translation, accounting for 45% of the data samples (82 instances). This is followed by modified translation with 31.9% (58 instances), partial translation with 14.8% (27 instances), and rewritten translation with 7.7% (14 instances).

Keywords: *agoda.com; translation strategies; travel agency website; website localization.*

1. Introduction

Numerous companies engage in digital marketing, known as e-marketing, by utilizing the internet through the development of a website. A website is an online resource developed with a language of programming, such as HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and/or PHP (Hypertext Preprocessor). It contains text, graphics, photos, and multimedia and serves as an intermediary platform for distributing data (Hariyanto, 2015; Pym, 2010; Sandrini, 2005). In this situation, a website provides a platform for businesses to distribute and promote their products and services. This is a strategic initiative aimed at promoting products and services to customers. It offers more opportunities compared to traditional methods, even though it involves multiple languages, cultures, and interactive features (Fransinatra et al., 2021; He & Su, 2022; Husodo & Rini, 2023; Jimenez-Crespo, 2013; Omar, et al., 2022).

Moreover, the effectiveness of website development as a marketing tool for businesses relies on the substantial and fluctuating number of internet users. Taking on the increasing number of internet users, many companies have begun establishing global websites by utilizing English as the most widely used language in the world and localizing it to certain languages to expand their products and services to specific countries due to cross-cultural differences among online customers (Hariyanto, 2015; Pym, 2010).

Adapting cultural features to the process of localizing products often causes several issues, particularly in Indonesian tourist sector. Indonesia is a country with several distinct cultural regions. This will be an attractive and strategic marketing target for multinational companies to market their travel agencies through Indonesian-linked websites. For instance, to make Indonesian readers who might come from different regions understand the software terms they read, the terms need to be localized into Indonesian local terms. Thus, a highly localized website is required to mitigate the impact of company losses and failures caused by poor communication with the target audiences (Zhu, 2022).

As a result, high-quality tourist materials, particularly translations, are required to provide effective and clear communication between local people, culture, and actual or potential customers. Regrettably, several travel agency websites tend to integrate foreign domains into their service contents, leading to texts that frequently contain numerous errors and unclear information. These errors include conceptual errors, insufficient information, unnecessary reiteration, and missing adjustments (Muñoz, 2012).

Agoda.com is a website that has been selected as an exemplary medium for providing and disclosing information on travel agency. Agoda.com is an online travel agency catering primarily to consumers in the Asia-Pacific region. It is a specific website containing promotions and offering about vacation providers to worldwide destinations including hotels, tourist destinations and ticket booking. Agoda.com is being more popular and already has many connections with many tour companies and hotel companies especially in Indonesia. Agoda.com becomes bigger and advantageous due to the features provided by the website that contain various languages options such as Indonesian, English, Chinese, Germany, and etc.

As a result, this study decides to fill the gap by examining the localization of Agoda.com as a travel agency website in both its English and *Bahasa Indonesia* versions as a novelty and complementary study to the translation study and how many adjustments of translation strategies have been made in the case of adjusting to the unique culture for the acceptable localized contents on the web.

2. Literature Review

The word “localization” is associated with “locale”, a term to define a specific target market. Locales are often smaller than countries or languages. The Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA) defines the meaning of localization as the activity of linguistically and culturally adjusting a product to ensure its acceptance in the specific target market where it will be promoted (Esselink, 2000; He & Su, 2022). By translating cultural terms into certain languages, customers may eliminate their confusion and make the product and service information offered through the website acceptable and appropriate to a particular region or market (Ethelb, 2019; Lako, 2014; Pierini, 2007; Pym, 2010). Furthermore, a properly translated website might give an opportunity in search engine positioning. Thus, the company may meet its marketing objectives by reaching out more potential customers.

Developing a localized-web takes considerable strategy. Regarding Pierini (2007)'s concept about translation strategies, there are four points to consider: 1) The verbal component is translated without modification, while the nonverbal element is left unmodified (full translation); 2) Only minor (verbal and nonverbal) sections of the ST are modified (partial translation); 3) the verbal component is totally rewritten, but the nonverbal component is left unchanged (rewritten translation); 4) both components are modified (modified translation).

In establishing localized-website, Singh et al. (2009) categorized the contents on a website localization framework into three categories. First, content localization, is the process of extracting content for a primary market and modifying it so that it is comprehensible and has a near-equivalent meaning in other relevant target markets. There are four variables consist in the content of localized-website: 1) content depth; 2) content synchronization; 3) navigation; and 4) website service and support. Second, cultural customization, has an essential function in comprehending and grasping the value of local culture, which will be converted into a product for a particular local group of people. In this category, there are four variables: 1) web structure; 2) colors; 3) graphics; 4) promotion of product and services. Third, local gateway provides information on the accessibility of localized websites.

Agoda.com is further classified as highly localized website since the evidences of multilingual preference are available on all pages in the same layout. Highly localized websites contain extensive and complete country-specific web pages. Agoda.com satisfies the standards by strategically arranging the country-specific (multilingual preference) on the top of the page, which makes it noticeable; second, another easily noticeable aspect is the currency, which can be adjusted into various types of currency in addition to language options. Theory is provided by Singh & Boughton (2005) above is relevant to link with other theoretical frameworks discussed about strategy on localization implying to website (Esselink, 2000).

3. Research Method

This study belongs to the scope of mixed-methods research (Quantitative and Qualitative) since it attempts to get a comprehensive knowledge of the research topic by combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, either through deductive or inductive reasons (Cresswell, 2009). This study develops a complex, holistic picture, analyzes language, and performs the investigation in a natural situation. As an outcome of the findings, it is feasible to establish the quality scale statement by comparing percentages and transferring the data to specified criteria to reach the domain equivalent.

The source data for this research is taken from the main website of Agoda (www.agoda.com) both in English and Indonesian, which provides the promotion images, menu, and contents. The data for this research are collected in the form of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or text from the website of Agoda in both English and Indonesian, mainly focusing on translation strategies applied in localizing the contents of Agoda.

In order to collect the data, this study applies the documentation method, which pertains to the promotion images, menu, and contents collected by the multiple links on one domain that provides bilingual options: English (www.agoda.com) and Bahasa Indonesia (www.agoda.com/id). The next step is deciding the interval time between June and August 2023 due to the dynamically updated website, sorting the data by following the terms of localization strategy theory by Pierini (2007), and taking screenshots by the type of.jpeg to distinguish the contents for some localization and cultural aspects that will be identified by the theories. The last is providing a table of contents to examine the variable constructed by adding the comparison section between source and target language.

In order to classify the data according to the appropriate variables of website contents, the analysis of this research adhered to the theoretical framework covered by Singh et al. (2009) and Pierini (2007) theory about website translation

strategies. Furthermore, this study uses the model analysis stated by Spradley (1979) distinguished into 4 main parts: domain analysis, aiming to find data from the main domain that represents the distinctive objects for the following research; taxonomy analysis, classifying objects within the cultural domain to demonstrate their connection to one another; componential analysis, identifying similarities and distinctions in the connection between classed domains and finding the cultural terms.

4. Results and Discussion

This section provides an analysis of the translation strategies applied to the localized content of Agoda.com by using the theory of Pierini (2007). The findings are discussed in accordance with the variables outlined in the theoretical framework.

Type of Translation Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Full Translation	82	45%
Partial Translation	27	14,8%
Rewritten Translation	14	7,7%
Modified Translation	58	31,9%
Total	181	100%

Table 1. Distribution of Translation Strategies

The table provides the result of the translation strategies that were applied to Agoda’s localized contents. The Agoda website utilized a range of translation strategies, with full translation being the most prominent. Based on 181 sample data, the findings were separated into 121 data points for content localization, 60 data points for cultural customization.

The total number of data categorized as full translation was 82 data, or 45% of the total percentage. Subsequently, modified translation was in the second position, which had 58 data sample, or 31,9% of the total percentage. The third position was partial translation, which was found at 27 data points, or 14.8% of the total. The fourth utilized strategy was rewritten translation, observed at 14 data and got 7,7% of the total.

The analysis indicates that the prominent approach applied on the website is full translation, followed by modified translation, partial translation, and rewritten translation. The prominent strategy adopted by Agoda is full translation, which is implemented to enhance the performance of their services for both global and local users. This ensures that users have the optimal experience when surfing and obtaining detailed information about the services offered.

The details of the translation strategies used in content localization are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Translation Strategies	Content Localization			
	CD	CSY	NAV	WSS
Full Translation	25	1	26	13
Partial Translation	8	1	1	1
Rewritten Translation	2	0	1	5
Modified Translation	26	4	7	0
Total	61	6	35	19

Table 2. The Distribution of Translation Strategies in Content Localization

According to the result above, full translation (FT), which is defined as a translation that uses verbal components is transferred without any alterations and non-verbal components left unmodified, and this is the dominant strategy used in content localization, with 25 data in content depth (CD), 1 data in content synchronization (CSY), 26 data in navigation (NAV), and 13 data in website service and support (WSS). The total of findings is 65 data of localized contents. The second translation strategy used is modified translation with 26 data in content depth (CD), 4 data in content synchronization (CSY), 7 data in navigation (NAV), and no finding in website service and support (WSS). The total of findings is 37 data. The third position is partial translation, with 8 data in content depth (CD), 1 data in content synchronization (CSY), 1 data in navigation (NAV), and 1 data in website service and support (WSS). The total of findings is 11 data points. And the last is rewritten translation with 2 data in content depth (CD), no data in content synchronization (CSY), 1 data in navigation (NAV), and 5 data in website service and support (WSS). The total of findings is 8 data.

Furthermore, the variable with the most translation strategies applied to localized contents in Agoda is content depth (CD), which has 61 findings. Content depth refers to content that is localized into the target language, such as contact information, product information, services, business information, shipping, and handling. In other words, this variable is a substantial aspect of a website to distribute and market its products and services to customers.

Translation Strategies	Cultural Customization			
	CL	GR	PPS	WS
Full Translation	3	1	13	0
Partial Translation	0	4	12	0
Rewritten Translation	2	4	2	0
Modified Translation	0	6	1	12
Total	5	15	28	12

Table 3. The Distribution of Translation Strategies in Cultural Customization

From the result above, it shows that promotion product and service (PPS) has the largest amount of findings among all the variables with 28 data, followed by graphics (GR) with 15 data, website structure with 12 data, and color (CL) with 5 data. Promotion product and service. This variable is designed to show the extent to which special products and services have the potential to be advertised and tailored to the culture of specific target market.

Furthermore, modified translation (MT) receives the highest amount of data with 19 data of findings followed by full translation (FT) with 17 data of findings, partial translation (PT) with 16 data of findings, and rewritten translation (RT) with 8 data of findings. In contrast to content localization, full translation (FT) is the primary strategy for localizing cultural components to target and specific countries.

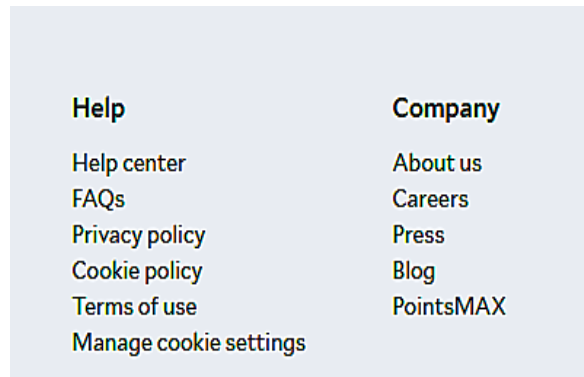
In addition, this strategy involves full translation of both the verbal (textual or written text) and non-verbal (graphics, colors, currency, language optional, and cultural) components of the website's contents. More simply, the translator of the website adapts the modifications to the target market customs in order to make customers accept and encourage them to reserve or purchase the products and services that are being provided.

4.1 Full Translation

The first strategy is characterized by full translation. Full translation refers to the source content, which is literally transmitted into the target language without any cultural adaptation or alteration.

Data 1

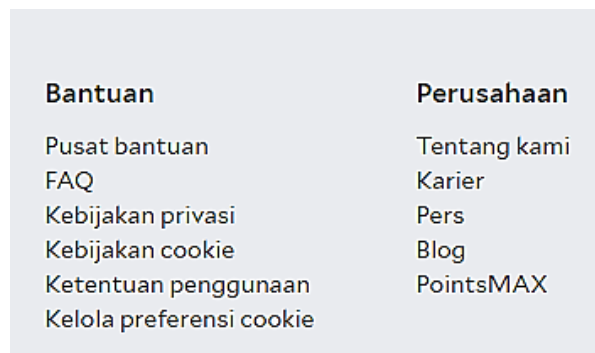
Source Text (English Version):



Help	Company
Help center	About us
FAQs	Careers
Privacy policy	Press
Cookie policy	Blog
Terms of use	PointsMAX
Manage cookie settings	

Figure 1. Website Service and Support in English Web Version

Target Text (Bahasa Indonesia Version):



Bantuan	Perusahaan
Pusat bantuan	Tentang kami
FAQ	Karier
Kebijakan privasi	Pers
Kebijakan cookie	Blog
Ketentuan penggunaan	PointsMAX
Kelola preferensi cookie	

Figure 2. Website Service and Support in Bahasa Indonesia Web Version

This initial data has been determined as a full translation, which is related to the literal translation of the text from ST to TT without any cultural adaptation or alteration. Literal translation implies the information of ST, such as "Help Center, FAQs, Privacy Policy, Cookie Policy, Terms of Use, Manage Cookie Settings," is translated into "Pusat bantuan, FAQ, Kebijakan privasi, Kebijakan cookie, Ketentuan penggunaan, Kelola preferensi cookie" as TT word by word. So that the translation of TT is based on the translation. Additionally, based on the theory of Singh et al. (2009), the data are categorized as website service and support of Agoda web as a variable.

4.2 Partial Translation

The second strategy is characterized as partial translation. Partial translation refers to the source content (verbal or non-verbal content), which is transmitted into the target language partially.

Data 2

Source Text (English Version)

Payday Sale

Treat yourself with an extra 20% off
select hotels.

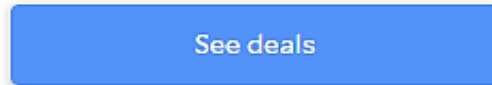


Figure 3. Promotional Product and Service in English Web Version

Target Text (Bahasa Indonesia Version):

Payday Sale

Manjakan diri dengan ekstra diskon
20% untuk properti pilihan.

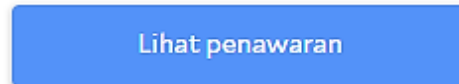


Figure 4. Promotional Product and Service in Bahasa Indonesia Web Version

This data above has been determined to be a partial translation. It is included in the variable promotion and product service. The verbal information such as “*Treat yourself with an extra 20% of select hotels*” was localized into the target language “*Manjakan diri dengan ekstra diskon 20% untuk property pilihan*” partially, unless the name of the promotion, “*Payday Sale,*” was rewritten without any adaptation or cultural alteration. Without any adaptation into TL, the non-verbal component (size, arrangement, picture) of the data is affected because of the reduction of verbal components. Besides, it can be misunderstood by the local users, who are non-native speakers.

4.3 Rewritten Translation

The third strategy is characterized as a modified translation. Rewritten translation occurs when the verbal component is completely rewritten while maintaining the nonverbal component unaltered.

Data 3

Source Text (English Version):

Why Agoda



Figure 5. Promotional Products and Services in English Web Version

Target Text (Bahasa Indonesia Version):

Why Agoda



Figure 6. Promotional Products and Services in Bahasa Indonesia Web Version

This second sample of data was classified as a rewritten translation in its verbal component from SL with no additional modifications or cultural adjustments to TL. Based on the data provided above, it appears that the information given wasn't transferred to TL. Furthermore, nonverbal components such as size, arrangement, and data presentation stay unmodified. This data encompasses partner hubs of Agoda for professionals who are looking to expand their businesses with associations with Agoda. Additionally, it incorporates variables such as Agoda's promotional products and services.

4.4 Modified Translation

Modified translation refers to the alteration of both verbal and non-verbal elements on a webpage. It means that textual and visual are modified following the culture of target market.

Data 4

Source Text (English Version):

Flights & Activities Promotions



Figure 7. Promotional Products and Services in English Web Version

Target Text (Bahasa Indonesia Version):

Promosi Penerbangan & Aktivitas



Figure 8. Promotional Products and Services in Bahasa Indonesia Web Version

The data provided is categorized as a modified translation due to the modifications made to the content and visual layout on the global version and target market website. It can be seen from the verbal component in the first promotion content such “Up to 30% off all routes” has altered into different promotion “Makin Sering Terbang, Makin Murah! Diskon hingga 5%”. The preview indicates the global webpage has offered distinct flight specials to the Indonesian webpage. Moreover, the data are shown in the promotion section as a variable, allowing users to select the most suitable promotion for their specific needs.

5. Conclusion

After providing the findings and result, the conclusion can be stated that the translation strategy that is mostly applied to the transferred contents on Agoda.com is full translation, covering 82 data samples with 45% of the total percentage. The second position is modified translation, which has 58 data samples with 31.9% of the total percentage. The third position is partial translation, which has 27 data points, or 14.8% of the total. The fourth strategy utilized is rewritten translation, which is observed in 14 data points and gets 7.7% of the total. And the fifth is no translation; it is observed at 1 data point and gets 0.5% of the total.

Based on the result above, Agoda as a travel agency website has to customize the information and services it provides to the local culture and language in order to prevent customers from encountering misconceptions. In addition, Agoda not only customizes its information and services to match the culture and language of the local market but also provides customers with the option to customize currency, time, location, distance, and even cultural preferences to accommodate the special requirements of the local market.

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