

## Problems and Strategies in Translating Legal Texts

### Masalah dan Strategi dalam Penerjemahan Teks Hukum

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#### Abstract

Translating legal texts is considered the most challenging translation task as it needs accurate translation, and even minor errors can result in different lawsuits and legal exposure. This paper aims to discover the translation problems and formulate the best strategies for translating legal texts from Bahasa Indonesia into English. This is a descriptive study using a document analysis as the method. The data were 15 legal texts having been translated from Bahasa Indonesia into English by semi-professional translators. The document analysis was carried out by skimming, reading, and interpreting the translated legal texts in analyzing the data. The results of data analysis revealed three general problems in translating legal texts done by the semi-professional translators, including finding the correct equivalent, the translator's insufficient knowledge of the English legal language, and source text decoding. To overcome such problems, four strategies are proposed: (i) utilizing online resources, (ii) finding the proposition of the legal sentence, (iii) using a description technique, and (iv) employing a functional approach to translation. It is concluded that translating legal texts requires a translator's sound knowledge of applicable laws and language competence in both the source and target languages.

**Keywords:** *legal language, legal text translation, translation problems, translation strategies*

#### Abstrak

Menerjemahkan teks hukum dianggap sebagai pekerjaan yang paling sulit dalam penerjemahan karena membutuhkan hasil terjemahan yang akurat, dan bahkan kesalahan kecil sekalipun dapat memengaruhi tuntutan hukum dan paparan hukum. Makalah ini bertujuan untuk menemukan masalah penerjemahan dan merumuskan strategi terbaik yang dapat diterapkan dalam menerjemahkan teks hukum dari bahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif dengan metode analisis dokumen. Data penelitian ini adalah 15 teks hukum yang telah

diterjemahkan dari bahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Inggris oleh penerjemah semi profesional. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan analisis dokumen yang dilakukan dengan membaca sekilas, membaca secara utuh, dan menafsirkan teks hukum yang telah diterjemahkan. Hasil analisis data mengungkapkan tiga masalah umum dalam menerjemahkan teks hukum yang dilakukan oleh penerjemah semi profesional, yaitu masalah dalam menemukan padanan makna yang tepat, pengetahuan penerjemah yang kurang tentang bahasa Inggris untuk keperluan hukum, dan pemahaman teks sumber. Untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut, empat strategi diusulkan dari hasil penelitian ini: (i) memanfaatkan sumber daring, (ii) menemukan proposisi kalimat hukum, (iii) menggunakan teknik deskripsi, dan (iv) menggunakan pendekatan fungsional untuk terjemahan. Disimpulkan bahwa menerjemahkan teks hukum membutuhkan pengetahuan penerjemah yang baik tentang hukum yang berlaku dan kompetensi bahasa baik di bahasa sumber maupun di bahasa sasaran.

**Kata kunci:** *bahasa hokum, penerjemahan teks hokum, masalah dalam terjemahan, strategi penerjemahan*

## **Introduction**

Legal translation often presents difficulties to translators, especially novice translators, due to its highly specialized vocabulary and 'unique' structure. According to Murici (2016a, p. 80), the difficulties in translation are basically due to the differences in the different legal cultures and legal systems because the legal language has developed its characteristics to meet the demands of the legal system where it is expressed. For example, translating legal texts from bahasa Indonesia (BI) into English may present difficulties regarding the technical legal terms prevailing in English. Word by word translation or literal translation always presents awkwardness in the target text (TT). For example, the Indonesian legal term "*akta*" is literally translated as "deed" in English; therefore, it is commonly found in English such words as deed establishment (equivalent with *akta pendirian* in BI) and land title deed (equivalent with *akta tanah* in BI). However, the Indonesian legal terms "*akta lahir*" and "*akta perkawinan*" literally translated as a birth deed and marriage deed in English sound awkward in English; instead, the applicable English legal terms for them are birth certificate and marriage certificate, respectively. This is strengthened by Kobyakova and Habenko (2017, p. 40), arguing that "there is no room for word-for-word translation when translating legal documents".

In addition, legal translation is obviously different from other types of technical translation that tend to convey universal information with much less technical terms. It is enough to apply equivalent terms in the target language (TL) and source language (SL). Kockaert, Leuven, and Rahab (2017) even confirm that legal translation has always been a cornerstone of professional translation and the most challenging area in technical communication. This indicates that both novice and experienced translators encounter difficulties in translating legal texts.

Such difficulties have attracted several scholars to conduct translation studies on law and its related discourse. Challenges or problems in legal texts translation (Camelia, 2014; Karjo, 2015; Kobyakova & Habenko, 2017), models in translating legal texts (Kocbek, 2012), the importance of the legal translation in the globalized world (Hargitt, 2013; Murici, 2016a; Al-Refo & Faqir, 2016), approach in translating legal texts

(Stolze, 2013; Stepanova, 2017) are some of the translation studies dealing with a legal text translation.

In addition, the need to be acknowledged in the globalized world requires companies and enterprises, especially those located in Indonesia, to translate their legal documents such as contracts, sale and purchase agreements, deed of incorporation, and others, into English. Translating such legal texts from bahasa Indonesia into English is not only a matter of language transfer, commonly applicable in translating less technical texts, but it requires knowledge of laws prevailing in the TL. Besides, the globalized world also requires law enforcers in Indonesia to get involved in English legal settings, such as in criminal case minute entries, court proceedings, etc. Based on the rationale above, this paper attempts to find problems in translating legal texts from bahasa Indonesia into English and formulate strategies applicable to solving such problems.

Unlike ordinary language (the language used by people in their daily conversation), legal language is a specialized language of legal norms and related discourse. In addition, legal language is a language related to law and legal processes (Murici, 2016a, p. 280). Due to its specialized usage, it belongs to a specific register, i.e., a variety of languages appropriate to the legal situations of use. This is since legal language has its own vocabulary, grammatical structure, and subject matter. Besides, it allows deviant rules of grammar which are certainly not acceptable in the ordinary (standard) language (Tiersma, 1999, p. 142).

In terms of the nature of its use, Cao (2007, p. 13) describes legal language as normative, performative, and technical language. Legal language is normative because it is used to impose rights and obligations and is prescriptive mainly because the essential function of law is to guide human behavior and regulate human relations, and language serves as the medium, process and product in the various areas of the law (Maley, 1994, p. 11). Therefore, legal language shall be predominantly prescriptive, directive, and imperative to achieve its purpose.

Furthermore, legal language is performative because words (as the element of language) are used to construct expressions and contain actions. Adopting the speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), words are not only used to say things but are also used to do things. This means that facts in law may be changed by uttering certain words because legal effects and legal consequences are commonly obtained by merely uttering certain words (Cao, 2007, p. 14). In addition, Cao (2007, pp. 14-15) also uses the term 'legal speech acts' to accommodate the performative function of legal language. Therefore, the so-called five types of speech acts – representatives, commissives, expressives, declaratives, and directives (Searle, 1976; Danet, 1980) – are indispensable by the law in achieving its purpose of regulating human behavior and society and establishing obligation, prohibition, and permission.

Moreover, legal language is technical because it involves specialized language and texts (Cao, 2007, p. 15). The question of the technicality of legal language is not perceived consistently. One party argues that there is no legal language because it is merely a part of the ordinary language. The other party holds that legal language is a technical language, a specialized language which is different from the ordinary language. If the second view is accepted, what are the factors that make the legal language different from other types of language use? According to Smejkalova (2009,

p. 8), the core differences are related to such following aspects as speakers, stylistic features, specific vocabulary/terminology issues, and syntactic structures.

To sum up, legal language is a specialized language used in legal settings for which it is categorized as a particular register. It has its own vocabulary, grammatical structure, and subject matter.

As a language register, legal language has its own typical lexical and syntactic features (Stanojevic, 2011). Lexical features concern with the choice of words used in legal texts. Meanwhile, syntactic features concern with the structure used to arrange the lexical items in the form of phrases, clauses, or sentences.

The first lexical feature of legal texts is archaism, which literally means old-fashioned style. Archaic words belong to the formal style used by legal officers. The examples include 'pursuant to' (under, in accordance with), 'prior to' (before), 'subsequent to' (after), 'vel non' (or not, or the lack of it) (Garner, 1986, p. 663); 'hereinafter' (adverb), 'darraign' (verb), 'surrejoinder' (noun), 'aforesaid' (adjective) (Williams, 2004, p. 112), 'therein' or 'hereunder' (here), 'thereof' or 'thereto' (there) (Stanojevic, 2011, p. 69). Such words are rarely used in everyday English, but they are understandable and widely used in legal text.

The second feature is using technical terms, which are either purely legal terms or general terms. The term 'tort' is one of the examples of the purely legal term meaning "a civil wrong act, whether intentional or accidental". In addition to such purely legal terms, general terms or words are also used in legal language, but with uncommon meanings. They are polysemous lexical items that have specific meaning within legal English, e.g., attachment, file, agreement, execute, party. These are some of the words used by legal professionals as technical terms for their purposes in specific contexts. They are idiosyncratic because they have precise definitions in the domain of legal science (Stanojevic, 2011, p. 70).

The third feature is the use of foreign words. In legal language, especially in English, many foreign words and phrases are mainly derived from Latin and French. They underwent either the process of transliteration or the direct borrowing process. The words which are borrowed from Latin include "negligence, adjacent, frustrating, inferior, legal, quit, and subscribe". The words which are borrowed from French include "appeal, attorney, claim, complaint, counsel, court, damage, default, defendant, demurrer, evidence, indictment, judge, jury, justice, party, plaintiff, plea, sentence, sue, verdict, attorney general, court-martial, fee simple absolute, letters testamentary, malice aforethought, and solicitor general" (Stanojevic, 2011, p. 71). In Indonesian legal texts, foreign words are commonly of Dutch origin (Mattila, 2016).

The fourth feature is the use of synonymy. Haigh (2004, p. 40) argues that the main difficulty in drafting a legal text is the existence of many synonyms that refer to the same legal concept such as assign – transfer, breach – violation, clause – provision – paragraph – article, contract – agreement, default – failure, lessee – tenant, promise – assurance – undertaking, void – invalid – ineffective. Because consistency in using a particular diction is hard to achieve, legal texts often contain different words that refer to the same meaning.

The fifth feature is the repetition of words, which is mainly motivated by the absence of anaphoric reference in legal texts. Anaphoric reference is avoided although it is commonly used in other registers through personal pronouns, demonstrative adjectives, and demonstrative pronouns. In legal texts, the use of repeated nouns is

more preferable than the use of pronouns because it is not always clear which word in the text a particular pronoun refers to. This certainly cannot be tolerated in legal text writing because it may lead to ambiguity. Thus, repetition is used in order to avoid ambiguity (Stanojevic, 2011, p. 72).

The first syntactic feature of legal language is sentence length. The unusual length and complexity characterize a legal sentence. Such unusual structure is caused by every part of a legal document consisting of a single sentence. Stanojevic (2011, p. 72) argues that sentences in legal texts include a lot of information, repetition, long noun phrases with various modification, unusual word order, prepositional phrases, and coordinate and subordinate clauses.

The second feature is the frequent use of nominalization, a process of forming nouns from words, groups, phrases, or clauses (Rosa, Sofyan, & Tarigan, 2018, p. 66). Nouns derived from verbs are frequently used instead of verbs, such as 'to give punishment' instead of 'to punish', 'to be in opposition' rather than 'to oppose', or 'to be in agreement' instead of 'to agree'. Although it is better to avoid using nominalization as it results in a long and non-dynamic text (Haigh, 2004, p. 44), it is hard to eliminate nominalization in writing a legal text. Instead of saying 'to arbitrate', lawyers prefer to say 'to go on arbitration' because arbitration is a legally defined procedure and should be considered as such.

The third feature is impersonal style. The use of passive voice and anomalous use of pronouns characterize a highly impersonal style of writing (Williams, 2004, p. 114; Rosa et al., 2018, p. 64). Passive voice is obviously inherent in legal language; nevertheless, it is often overused in all types of legal texts. As a result of overusing passive voice, personal pronouns (particularly first person singular) are often omitted, showing the efforts of judges to achieve maximum objectivity. In addition, a second singular person is also often omitted; as a result, the use of the third person singular and plural is predominant.

Translating a legal text does not only mean translating a text from one language into another language but it also means translating a text from one legal language into another legal language. Consequently, legal translation is different from other translation tasks: it is a complex process and needs particular translation competencies (translation skills, knowledge, and experience). Smith (1995, p. 60) argues that successful translation into another language requires the translator to have competency in at least three separate areas: (i) a legal translator must acquire a basic knowledge of the legal systems applicable both in the SL and TL; (ii) a legal translator must be familiar with the relevant terminology; and (iii) a legal translator must be competent in the TL-specific legal writing style. Such competencies are needed to minimize possible misinterpretation of legal system terminology used in the TT because the legal translation products will have legal effects and legal consequences.

Although translating legal texts produces legal impacts and consequences, one point that should be highlighted is that a legal text translator is always a translator; he/she is not a lawyer. Therefore, the legal translator's main task is to create a text in a TL (to convey what the ST needs to convey), not to solve legal problems discussed in the legal text. In other words, legal translators should neither provide legal advice nor solve legal problems but they merely translate and facilitate communication across linguistic, cultural, and legal barriers through the medium of language (Murici, 2016b, p. 72).

## Method

This is a descriptive study using a document analysis as the method because this study examined and interpreted a document in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The data were 15 translated legal texts documented in the Language Center of Universitas Sumatera Utara, which were collected using a documentary annotation as suggested by Saldanha and O'Brien (2014) in translation research. The translated legal texts were written in English, while the source texts were written in bahasa Indonesia. The texts had been translated by semi-professional translators employed in the Language Center of Universitas Sumatera Utara. They were all Indonesian native speakers. The term semi-professional translator was adopted from the work of Ronowicz et al. (2005) who define the term as a translator who had already been working in the profession but with less than 3 years experience. The data collected were the legal texts, including contracts, statutes, laws, certificates, and power of attorney, translated from July to December 2019. In the analysis process, the data were skimmed, read, and interpreted following Bowen's (2009) document analysis procedure.

## Results and Discussion

Due to its typical language characteristics, translating legal texts presents several problems; however, the main problem is related to the fact that each country has its own legal terminology and legal system. This does not only involve countries with obviously different languages, but it also involves countries with identical languages (Kobyakova & Habenko, 2017, p. 40). The problem becomes even worse when the translation direction is from the translator's first language to the foreign language, in this case, from bahasa Indonesia into English.

### ***Problems in Translating Legal Texts from Bahasa Indonesia into English***

The first problem encountered in translating legal texts from bahasa Indonesia into English found in the translation of the semi-professional translators is finding the correct equivalent applicable in the English legal terminology because many of the legal terms in bahasa Indonesia do not literally correspond to the legal terms in English, or vice versa. In addition, inconsistency in using legal terminology is also a problem leading to multi-interpretation from the readers. For example, in the Indonesian legal system, the terms '*anak sah*' and '*anak yang disahkan*' clearly have a different meaning. The former refers to the legitimate child (a child born or conceived during the marriage). In contrast, the latter refers to a non-marital child (a child born outside of marriage) whose status is then legalized after his/her parents' marriage.

Meanwhile, the English legal system only introduces legitimate and illegitimate children. Therefore, translating '*anak yang disahkan*' needs a particular translation technique to make it acceptable in English. The other example of terminology-related problem found in the semi-professional translators' work can be seen in (1).

- (1) ST : "... *Kejaksaan Negeri Medan, Kejaksaan Tinggi Medan, ...*"  
TT : "... the office of the district public attorney general in Medan, the office of the district high attorney general in Medan, ..."

The terms "*Kejaksaan Negeri*" and "*Kejaksaan Tinggi*" are obviously different in the Indonesian legal system. However, the difference cannot simply be considered to take place between the words "*negeri* (public)" and "*tinggi* (high)" because district

public attorney and high attorney general are not known in English-speaking countries. The level of attorney is distinguished based on its authorized territory, so there are such recognizable terms as attorney general, district attorney, and deputy district attorney.

Even though finding equivalent is a problem commonly found in the translation of other text types, the problem of finding equivalent in translating legal texts is quite specific. In translating legal texts from bahasa Indonesia into English, such a problem is caused by two factors. First, the different legal system applicable in both countries might lead to the absence of the corresponding equivalent in the TL. Second, legal terminology has a very sensitive meaning, and any inaccuracy is absolutely intolerant, because a very small inaccuracy has a legal consequence.

The second problem is the translator's insufficient knowledge of the English legal language, reflected in their translation. This problem is related to archaism, a typical English lexical feature used in legal documents. There are many instances in the translation of semi-professional translators related to the use of general words instead of specific lexicon, which is typically used in legal texts. For example, the legal term 'selanjutnya' cannot be translated as 'next' in English legal texts; instead, the archaic term 'hereinafter' is used. Other archaic terms include 'di bawah ini' (hereunder), 'daripadanya' (thereof), 'tersebut di atas' (aforesaid), 'di sana' (therein), 'atau bukan' (vel non), etc. Such words are typical lexical features widely used in English legal texts.

The third problem is related to decoding the ST, particularly in terms of deciding the modifiers. As legal sentences are usually long, containing several phrases (Harkrisnowo, 2008; Stanojevic, 2011), the problem arises when deciding "which modifies which". A translator needs to carefully divide the phrases to find the core and the modifiers of those phrases. The text in (2) is an example of how semi-professional translators encountered a problem in translating a legal sentence with some phrases.

(2) ST : *"Terlepas dari pembagian tanggung jawab kerja, dan/atau operasi, dan/atau keuangan antara PARA PIHAK dalam Perjanjian Konsorsium ini, Para Pihak dari perjanjian Konsorsium akan bertanggung jawab secara bersama-sama tanggung menanggung (tanggung renteng) dan sendiri-sendiri secara penuh kepada PT. ini dan kepada siapapun mereka membuat perjanjian-perjanjian untuk pelaksanaan penyerahan barang/jasa sesuai Perjanjian Konstruksi Pembangunan Pabrik ini untuk tercapainya keberhasilan pelaksanaan Proyek sesuai dengan ketentuan yang dipersyaratkan dalam Perjanjian Konstruksi Pembangunan Pabrik ini."*

TT : *"Notwithstanding to the allocation of work, and/or operation and/or financial responsibilities of THE PARTIES under this Consortium Agreement, The Parties to the Consortium Agreement will jointly and severally be liable toward this limited liability company and to whomever they have entered into agreements and have conducted the delivery of goods/services under the Construction Agreement of Building this Factory in order to successfully achieve the implementation of the Project in accordance with the required provisions in the Construction Agreement of Building this Factory."*

The problem found in (2) is the translator's failure to find "which modifies which". As the ST in (2) contains several phrases, it contains some modifiers and heads of

phrases. The translator's incorrect decision is considering the underlined phrase "*pelaksanaan penyerahan barang/jasa* (have conducted the delivery of goods/services)" as the modifier of "*kepada siapapun* (whomever)". In fact, the phrase "have conducted the delivery of goods/services" explains which responsibilities are assigned to the parties in the consortium agreement, playing the essential role in delivering the meaning of the text in (2), because the proposition of the ST is "*Para Pihak bertanggung jawab untuk pelaksanaan penyerahan* (The Parties are liable for delivering)". Finding such a proposition makes it easier to decide which elements serve as the cores of the phrases and which elements serve as the modifiers. Therefore, the translation in (2) can be improved as in (2a)

(2a) "Notwithstanding the allocation of work, and/or operation and/or financial responsibilities of THE PARTIES under this Consortium Agreement, The Parties to the Consortium Agreement will jointly and severally be liable toward this limited liability company and to whomever they have entered into agreements to deliver goods/services under the Construction Agreement of Building this Factory for the success of implementing the Project in accordance with the required provisions in the Construction Agreement of Building this Factory."

### ***Strategies in Translating Legal Texts from Bahasa Indonesia into English***

Translating legal texts from bahasa Indonesia into English presents many different translation problems. Their translation process requires specific methods or strategies to make the translated legal texts understandable to the TL readers. Such problems, following Kobyakova and Habenko's (2017, p. 40) suggestions, require a legal translator to have the competencies in three areas: competency in the English particular writing style, familiarity with the pertinent terminology, and general knowledge of the legal systems of both bahasa Indonesia and English.

In addition to having such competencies, a translator will also successfully translate a legal text from bahasa Indonesia into English by applying good strategies. One of the strategies is utilizing online (internet) resources. Sofyan and Tarigan (2017) suggest using online resources to overcome the problem of translating specialized vocabulary used in legal texts. In addition, the excellent management of online resources is one of the characteristics distinguishing professional translators from student translators (Rosa, Sinar, Setia, & Ibrahim-Bell, 2018). Such a statement indicates that online resources management is a skill that translators need to train. In this context, online resources management means finding the right online resources for a particular translation problem. The Internet provides many resources that help translate a legal text into English; however, it can create another problem, e.g., time-wasting, when such online resources are utilized improperly. Utilizing online resources is through the following procedures:

- (i) Use Google Translate to get the literal translation of the word/phrase.
- (ii) Google the literal translation to see whether it is widely used or known in English legal texts.
- (iii) If the term is not well recognized, the Google search space usually provides several possible articles that contain the term having a close meaning to the term searched.



- (iv) Read those few related articles and find the term that possibly has the same meaning as the term searched. Understanding the context where such a term is used is extremely required.
- (v) Re-search the term in other articles to make sure that the term is widely used in legal English texts. This is also useful to determine whether the meaning contained in the term corresponds to its original meaning.
- (vi) If the term is used in most English legal texts, use it in the TT.

Using online resources helps find the standard or more acceptable legal terminology in the TL and constructing grammatically accepted sentences used in the TT. Contracts, agreements, deeds, criminal case minute entries, and court proceedings written in English are the online resources that can be used as the basis for constructing grammatical sentences in English legal texts.

The second strategy is finding the proposition of the legal sentence. This is particularly helpful in the process of decoding the ST. Finding the proposition of the ST makes it easier for the translator to rewrite the ST meaning in the TL. Sentences in a legal text may contain a long subject, an extended predicate, a long object, or a long complement. Failure to identify each element of the sentence results in inaccurate meaning, which eventually results in inaccurate translation. This indicates that TT comprehension is the defining factor of successful legal translation. Meanwhile, accuracy is the most influential aspect of successful translation (Ardi, 2016; Sofyan & Tarigan, 2019). The text in (3) is an example of applying the strategy of finding the proposition.

(3) ST : *“Pendapat Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat bahwa Presiden dan/atau Wakil Presiden telah melakukan pelanggaran hukum tersebut ataupun telah tidak lagi memenuhi syarat sebagai Presiden dan/atau Wakil Presiden adalah dalam rangka pelaksanaan fungsi pengawasan Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat.”*

TT : *“The opinion of the House of Representatives that the President and/or Vice-President has violated the law or no longer meets the qualifications to serve as President and/or Vice-President is undertaken in the course of implementation of the supervision function of the House of Representatives.”*

The proposition of the ST is *“Pendapat Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat adalah dalam rangka pelaksanaan fungsi pengawasan (The opinion of the House of Representatives is undertaken in the course of implementation of the supervision function)”*. Meanwhile, other sentence elements serve as the modifier of the subject *“The opinion of the House of Representatives”*. The proposition can only be found through understanding, and once the proposition is identified, the translation process becomes much more manageable.

The third strategy is using a description technique. This is particularly helpful in translating Indonesian legal terminology with no established equivalent in English. However, the description should not be too long as an extended description might lead the TL reader's immediate attention to the meaning of the term and pay less attention to the content. In addition, it is better to write the description in a phrase rather than in a clause. In Indonesia, for example, the judicial power is divided into three bodies with different tasks: *Mahkamah Agung* (Supreme Court), *Mahkamah Konstitusi* (Constitutional Court), and *Komisi Yudisial* (Judicial Commission). Although such bodies

have their English-established equivalents, they do not have separate constitutional courts in many English-speaking countries. In addition, the use of such a description technique can avoid ambiguity in understanding a legal text. Consequently, to better understand the term 'Constitutional Court' to the TL readers, providing its description is the best strategy. Nevertheless, it will be hard to provide a clear short description without good knowledge of the SL legal system.

The fourth strategy is employing a functional approach. The approach allows producing similar legal effects contained in the ST. Different types of legal texts obviously have different social functions. Different social functions employ different specialized legal terms; in other words, contracts have different functions from deeds, criminal case minute entries have different functions from court proceedings, and so forth. Employing a functional approach shows that, as Stepanova (2017) argued, a translator is well informed in legal matters of both SL and TL cultures. This idea implies that translation experience plays a role in producing accurate translated legal texts.

## Conclusion

Translating legal texts is the most complex and challenging task leading to several problems encountered by translators. This is also found in the translation of legal texts from bahasa Indonesia into English. The problems in translating legal texts that include finding the correct equivalent, translator's insufficient knowledge of English legal language, and source text decoding are mainly caused by each country's legal terminology and legal system. In order to overcome such problems and help ease the process of legal translation, four strategies are proposed, i.e., utilizing online resources, finding the proposition of the legal sentence, using a description technique, and employing a functional approach to translation. The results of this study imply the need for a translator's good knowledge of the applicable laws and language competence in both the SL and TL in translating legal texts.

What has been discussed in this article just focuses on the translation of legal texts from bahasa Indonesia into English done by semi-professional translators available in the Language Center of Universitas Sumatera Utara. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all legal translation problems. Nevertheless, this study provides contribution for further studies on legal translation. Further studies can investigate problems in legal translation that involves other languages. Besides, it is also possible to take professional translators as the research participants.

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