

The Functions of Hedging Devices: A Translation Study of Compound Hedges from English into Indonesian

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The aim of this study is to find the functions of compound hedges as hedging devices and their translation in target text (TT). Translation techniques used in translating this hedging device are translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). The theory used in expressing the function of hedging devices is the theory of Prince, Frader and Bosk (1982). They divide the types of hedging devices in two: approximators and shields. Approximators consist of adaptors and rounders. Shields consist of plausibility shields and attribution shields. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The data source used is the novel Sherlock Holmes and its translation. There are 27 pieces of data considered adaptors, 2 pieces of data considered rounders, 10 pieces of data considered plausibility shields and 9 pieces of data considered attribution shields. There are 18 pieces of data translated using established equivalent (EE), 18 pieces of data translated using modulation (M), 8 pieces of data using discursive creation (DC), and 4 pieces of data using reduction (R). By using establish equivalent compound hedges, they are translated with compound hedges in TT. The functions of the compound hedges in source text (ST) are also translated equally in the TT. There are some changing points of view when the compound hedges are translated into TT. This technique might cause a shift. In the DC and R techniques, the translator did not translate the compound hedges. As a result, the functions of compound hedges in the TT are deleted.

Key words: *Approximators, Compound hedges, Hedging, Face, Shields.*

Introduction

There are many studies that discuss hedging. Various theoretical concepts and models of hedging have been proposed, such as Lakoff's (1972) phenomenal statement about hedging as a word whose job is to make things fuzzy or less fuzzy. Brown and Levinson (1978) indicate hedging is a politeness strategy (a negative form of politeness to avoid disagreement). Prince et, al, (1982) made great categories of hedging related to its function as a politeness strategy. House and Kasper (1981) mentioned hedging's function can help to reduce negative influences and save face. Salager-Meyer (1995) indicates compound hedges are one of the hedging devices that express politeness. Fraser (2010) described proportional hedges and performativity hedges. Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that hedging is a device that can help a speaker to avoid disagreement and save face even though the word might create fuzziness.

Translation means rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way intended by the author (Newmark, 1988). It does not mean that in translating a text, the translator is only reproducing the ST the author intended into the TT without considering cultural aspects of the target reader. Consider the function of hedging devices as mention before. What will happen if the hedging devices are translated? This question will be discussed further in this article. Specifically, this article will discuss how compound hedges (as hedging devices) are translated into Indonesian. The possibility of the changing of a hedging device when it is translated might be argued. The change to a hedging device in translation might cause modification of the illocutionary force of the text (Peterlin and Moe, 2015). The way the translator uses a translation technique also plays a significant role in the translation result.

Theoretical Framework

Translation

Translation is a process of transferring an idea or message from a ST to a TT or replacing a written message and/or statements in another language (Newmark, 1988). Translation might be understood as a change in the form of a language involving words, phrases, clauses, sentences, etc. These might be spoken or written by the speaker or the writer of one language and the meaning being rendered into another language by the translator. Translation might also be understood as a series of activities carried out by a translator when he or she transfers a message from a source language (SL) into a target language (TL) (Nababan, 2003). Translation might become a complex task because the translator is not only expected to master both the languages but the cultures of both must also be considered (Toury, 1995). Translators face the problem of how to treat the cultural aspect implicitly in the ST and solve it with the most appropriate technique to convey these aspects in the TT. Those problems

might vary in scope depending on the cultural and linguistic gap between the two (or more) languages concerned (Nida and Taber 1980:130).

Translation Technique

Translation techniques can be defined as ways to transfer meaning from a SL to a TL. They are based on a micro unit (word, phrase, clause or sentence), that influences the result of translation. Molina and Albir (2002: 499) define translation techniques as allowing people to describe the actual steps taken by translators in each textual micro-unit to obtain clear data about the general methodological option chosen. Translation techniques are the procedures to analyse and to classify ways of equivalence. Translation techniques involve the realisation of the decision making process, where the product of translation can be identified as the translation result. There are 18 translation techniques stated by Molina and Albir (2002:509-511): 1. adaptation, 2. amplification (addition), 3. borrowing, 4. calque, 5. compensation, 6. description, 7. discursive creation, 8. established equivalence, 9. generalisation, 10. linguistic amplification, 11. linguistic compression, 12. literal translation, 13. modulation, 14. particularisation, 15. reduction, 16. substitution, 17. transposition, and 18. variation.

Harvey (2000:2-6) mentions four major techniques for translating: (1) Functional equivalence uses a referent in TL culture whose function is similar to that of the SL referent). There will be connotational or denotational differences between the SL and the TL terms. This technique is appropriate for the translation of texts intended for the lay reader (novels, general newspaper articles, political speeches etc.) in contexts where scrupulous accuracy is less important than fluency and clarity. However, in a document intended for lawyers, the technique can be misleading. (2) Formal equivalence or 'linguistic equivalence' means a 'word-for-word' translation. A number of formal equivalents are also functional equivalents since they correspond to institutions that exist or have existed in the TL culture. (3) Transcription or 'borrowing' stands at the far end of ST oriented strategies. If the term is formally transparent or is explained in the context, it may be used alone. In other words, a translator is allowed to reproduce or transliterate the original term. In other cases, it should be considered that there may be no knowledge of the ST in the mind of the reader. Transcription accompanied by an explanation or a translator's note is accepted. (4) Descriptive or self-explanatory translation uses generic terms to convey meaning. It is appropriate in a wide variety of contexts where formal equivalence is considered insufficiently clear. In a text aimed at a specialised reader, it can be helpful to add the original ST term to avoid ambiguity.

The translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002) are quite appropriate in translating compound hedges because the explanation of the translation techniques is representative enough for analysing the data.

Hedging Devices

Hedging devices are devices that change the expression of an utterance. These devices might be in the form of single word or compound words. The following devices are based on Hyland's categorisations (1994 & 1998):

1. Modal Auxiliaries

Modality is considered a major device of hedging. The use of modal auxiliary verbs can vary in accordance with their contexts. Such auxiliaries can be found frequently in academic writing, for example, while other auxiliaries are found in scientific or literary contexts. This distinction in use depends on the function itself. It has been assumed that modality is always connected to epistemic function. Markkanen and Schröder (1997) say "this connection is very clear in the case of modal verbs with epistemic meanings" (Markkanen *et al.*, 1997, p. 7). Thus, they are classified according to this function whereby they move the message of an utterance from certainty to doubt. The following are the most commonly used modal auxiliary verbs for hedging:

a. Can/Could

The modal verbs "can/could" carry the meaning of possibility. Their epistemic meaning occurs in interrogative and negative contexts, which creates assumptions and uncertainty in an utterance. Similarly, the modal auxiliaries "may/might" have the same epistemic meaning as "can/could". "Could", expresses the possibility to assess the value of truth as well (Hayland, 1998).

b. Must

From a grammatical perspective, the modal verb "must" is always seen in the English language as a marker used to express a clear necessity. Thus, it refers to a certainty that varies in degrees from strong to weak levels (Hyland, 1998). On the other hand, "must" carries a sense of obligation as well. In other words, it occurs whenever the concept of "need" is inferred.

c. Should/Shall

In grammar, both "shall and should" express a sense of necessity, but in a lower range than "must". The modal "should" is sometimes used as an alternative option for "must" due to the tentative sense it implies. It shows lack of confidence and possibility in an utterance (Hayland, 1998).

d. Would/Will

The modal verb "would" is a marker that indicates a sense of prediction in a situation that occurs in the past. "Will", the present form of "would", expresses necessity in a similar way

to "must" but in a lower range. "Would" is similar to "could", especially if a speaker or a writer wants to express possibilities in a present situation more than "will" (Hyland, 1998).

e. May/Might

The modal verbs "may/might" occur in different contexts as hedging devices. They are considered typical hedges that serve possibilities and hesitations. According to Hyland (1998), "might" can serve a better function to present ambiguity more than "may" because it indicates less certainty in statements. Palmer (1990) and Perkins (1983) suggest that "might and may" express a high degree of attentiveness and a distant possibility (cited in Hyland, 1994, p.246).

2. Introductory Verbs

Lexical verbs such as "believe, suggest, indicate, assume, and tend to" are considered hedging devices and are called introductory verbs. These verbs serve mitigation and then lessen the sense of commitment and the truth-value of an utterance. Thus, speakers or writers, according to Perkins (1983), use such verbs to add a sense of doubt rather than describing avoiding full commitment and presenting a subjective opinion or suggestion rather than presenting a fact (cited in Hyland, 1994, p.248). Introductory verbs are used in some utterances to serve the function of doubt as a means of justification to support a claim.

3. Probability Adjectives and Adverbs

Probability adjectives and adverbs are other forms of hedging in spoken and written contexts. Holmes (1988) suggests that "these grammatical classes make up around 27% of the devices used to express epistemic modality in written discourse" (cited in Hyland, 1994, p. 249).

Modal adjectives such as "possible, probable, potential, and apparent" serve a degree of uncertainty (Hyland, 1994). Hyland (1998) concludes that adjectives are used more frequently as hedging in research articles because they function to downgrade a writer's commitment. On the other hand, adverbials such as "probably, possibly, and apparently" are used more than adjectives. They are used to affect a proposition's meaning. This is due to the role of adverbs that serve the function of down graders that reduce the effect of a verb.

4. Approximators of Degree

Another category related to adverbs is frequency adverbs. This category is typically described as unspecified words that mainly refer to time. They are words such as "rarely, occasionally, and usually" that function as indefinite devices that can be good choices for hedging purposes. Indefiniteness helps users not to commit full assertion. At the same time, adverbs with indefinite degrees share the same function of other adverbs in general. They are, also, considered down grader devices to decrease the potential force or effect of an utterance.

5. Compound Hedges

In addition, Salager-Meyer (1995) indicate compound hedging devices include modals with hedging verbs:

- It *would appear* that...

A hedging verb with a hedging adverb/adjective

- It *seems reasonable* that...

Double hedges

- It *may suggest* that this *probably* indicates...

Triple hedges

- It *seems reasonable to assume* that...

Quadruple hedges

- It *would seem somewhat unlikely* that it *may appear somewhat speculative* that.

Hedging Functions

As a linguistic tool used in oral or written texts, hedging varies according to its function within different communicative situations. In other words, hedging can serve different functions that can change according to the propositional situation itself. Many functions have been put forward for the various hedging devices. In his article "*Hedging in academic writing: Some Theoretical Problems*", Crompton (1997) points out "that a definition that serves no based function designates a 'ragbag' category 35 of features understood in different ways by different people" (p. 281). In general, hedging tools are most commonly seen as serving two functions. The first one expresses the lack of commitment to the truth of something people say (Hyland, 1998). The second function serves as an alternative softener and politeness strategy to reduce the force and the effect of utterances in order to make the hearer accept what has been said in a conversation or a written text (Brown and Levinson, 1979). This means that the second function emphasises the interpersonal aspects of hedging, which can be seen as a politeness strategy.

A study by Prince *et al.* (1982) on medical discourse shows that hedging serves two specific functions: *approximation* and *shielding* (cited in Crompton, 1997, p. 273). The first one presents a semantic aspect of utterances, while the second presents a pragmatic aspect. The function of *approximation* adopts a term of a non-standard representation of some figures. *Shielding* is a function of a linguistic reflection of a commitment and obligation on the part of the speaker. Additionally, *approximators* can be divided in two subcategories: adaptors and rounders, and *shields* are also divided into two subgroups: plausibility shields and attribution shields (Prince *et al.*, 1982). Wibowo and Yussof (2014) mention three important aspects regarding the employment of hedges in media: journalism ethics, impersonation, and protecting participants. They also assume that the use of a hedge in a newspaper may serve as

a medium to create peace among society. In general, many linguists, such as Hyland (1994, 1998), Fraser (1990), Salager-Meyer (1994), Skelton (1988), and others have identified some functions of hedging devices. Some agree on the categorisation of the functions of some devices, while others oppose such categorisation. The following table summarises the common identified functions of different hedging devices:

Research Method

The research method used in this research was descriptive qualitative research (Gay, Mills, and Airasian 2011:15). The research started from analysis of the techniques used in translating compound hedges. Afterwards, detailed analysis was conducted on how each technique resulted in the rendering of compound hedges. The data was taken from the novel *Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. After collecting sentences containing hedging devices and their translations, the data was classified based on the technique used by E. F. Prince, J. Frader & C. Bosk (1982). In identifying the translation technique, the writer used the work of Molina and Albir (2002).

Result and Discussion

Compound hedges are hedging devices that can be categorised as Prince et al, (1972) suggest (seen in Table 1 below).

Table 1: Compound Hedges

Hedging Device	APP		SH		Jumlah
	ADP	RND	PS	AS	
Compound Hedges	27	2	10	9	48

There are 48 pieces of data that can be categorised as compound hedges. There are 27 pieces of data categorised as adaptors (ADP), 2 pieces of data categorised as rounders (RND), 10 pieces of data categorised as plausibility shields (PS), and 9 pieces of data categorised as attribution shields (AS).

A. Adaptors

An adaptor is a hedging device that expresses the degree of truth of an original proposition. Degree here means the estimation is not explicitly mentioned by providing exact numbers.

Example 1:

*She was seated by the open window, dressed in **some sort of** white diaphanous material, with a little touch of scarlet at the neck and waist (ST: 105).*

The hedging devices in Example 1 is a compound hedge because the hedging devices is made of two words. The first hedging device is *some* and the second one is *sort of*. These devices are categorised as adaptors because they express the degree of truth of the proposition. The expression of the degree of truth in the proposition: *dressed in some sort of white diaphanous material* is not specific. The function of this hedging device is to show the speaker's uncertainty about the exact degree of the proposition. The speaker tries to minimise the chance of being mistaken by using hedging, hoping it will save the speaker's face.

B. Rounders

Hedging devices considered rounders refer to those hedges that relate to a range of limitation. These hedging devices usually involve words used to measure things. Rounders are usually used by a speaker to express the size of a range without thinking about the proximity of the subject to the fact.

Example 2:

*It is very late, and I should desire the interview to be **as short as possible**" (ST: 76).*

As short as possible is a hedging device consisting of *as short as* and *possible*. That is why this hedging device is called a compound hedge. It is considered a rounder because the expression describes the range of duration related to time. The range of duration is not mentioned explicitly in order to express uncertainty of the exact range of the duration of the interview. By using compound hedges, the speaker tries to avoid being responsible if the statement is inaccurate. A compound hedge used by the speaker keeps them safe from being threatened.

C. Plausibility Shields

When a speaker feels uncertain about something, a proposition in text is called a plausibility shield. It can be understood as a speaker's speculation about a proposition. Plausibility shields can be easily recognised by seeing the first-person pronoun in singular or plural form, expressing the speaker's willingness to take responsibility for the utterance.

Example 3:

***We might have thought** that our imaginations had conjured up that wild, fierce face (ST: 77).*

In Example 3, *we might have thought* is a hedging device that is categorised as a compound hedge. There are two hedging devices in the utterance. They are *might* and *thought*. This hedging device is called a plausibility shield because this device expresses the speaker's direct speculation about the uncertainty of the proposition. By using this device, the speaker is not committed to being responsible if the statement is not accurately true. The use of the

personal pronoun 'we' also keeps the speaker safe because the subject of the sentence is in plural form.

D. Attribution Shields

Attribution shields basically have the same function as plausibility shields. The difference between them is in quotation. In plausibility shields, the speaker uses direct quotation by using first person singular or a plural pronoun. The attribution shield makes an indirect quotation by using third person singular or a plural pronoun. Speaker hopes that by using this device, he or she won't be responsible for the utterance.

Example 4:

*I handed him over the watch with some slight feeling of amusement in my heart, for the test was, as I thought, an impossible one, and I intended it as a lesson against the somewhat dogmatic tone which **he occasionally assumed** (ST: 69).*

The indirect quotation in Example 4 describes the speaker's speculation about the proposition. By using a personal pronoun, he, the speaker, tries to say that he is not responsible for the truth of the statement. This example can be categorised as a compound hedge because it is formed by two hedging devices: *occasionally* and *assumed*. This device saves the speaker's face if the statement is not accurate. This can be seen by the way speaker quotes another statement, showing his limited understanding of the truth of the statement. By doing this, speaker is not committed to his statement.

Translation Technique

The translation techniques are used in translating compound hedges are 1) discursive creation (DC), 2) established equivalence (EE), 3) modulation (M), and 4) reduction (R).

Table 2: Translation Technique

Hedging Device	Translation Technique			
	DC	EE	M	R
Compound Hedges	8	18	18	4

There are 8 pieces of data translated using discursive creation (DC). 18 pieces of data are translated using established equivalent (EE). 18 pieces of data are translated using modulation (M) and 4 pieces of data are translated using reduction (R).

A. Established Equivalent Technique

By using established equivalent, the translator finds a similar hedging device in the ST for the TT.

Example 5:

*You **may consider** me to be a murderer; but I hold that I am just as much an officer of justice as you are (ST: 57).*

*Tuan-tuan. Kalian **boleh menganggapku** sebagai pembunuh, tapi aku tetap yakin bahwa diriku hanyalah penegak keadilan, sama seperti kalian (BSA: 108).*

In Example 5, the compound hedges in the ST, *you may consider*, are translated using established equivalent *Kalian boleh menganggapku* because in the TT, the translation has the same form and meaning as the ST. The expression of the ST and the TT are also the same. As a modal verb, the hedging device *may* express an epistemic function, and it shows the uncertainty of the proposition *you may consider me to be a murderer*. By using this hedging, the speaker hopes that it might save the speaker's face. The proposition *kalian boleh menganggapku* also expresses the speaker's uncertainty in order to save his or her face if his or her statement is not accurate. The function of the hedging device in the ST is the same as in the TT. The hedging device in the ST is considered a plausibility shield because of the existence of first personal pronoun *me*. The personal pronoun *me* in the ST is translated as *ku* in the TT. This shows that the translation technique used by the translator is an EE because the appropriate and common translation for the first-person pronoun *me* is *ku* in the TT. The hedging device, which is considered a plausibility shield in the ST, is also translated as a plausibility shield in the TT. That is why the technique in translating compound hedges in Example 5 is considered an EE technique.

B. Modulation Technique

A modulation technique means that the translator uses a different point of view of the hedging device in the ST when it is translated into TT. By using this technique, the translator tries to find a similar hedging device in the TT. It doesn't matter if the expression of the hedging device in the TT is a bit different to the ST.

Example 6:

*"They **would be likely** to agree on some meeting-place before hand," remarked Holmes (ST: 30).*

Bisa saja mereka sepakat untuk bertemu di tempat lain, sela Holmes (BSA: 56).

The changing point of view in Example 6 shows the translation of the hedging device *would be likely*, expressing probability in the ST, becomes *bisa saja*, which expresses ability in the TT. This changing point of view doesn't affect the function of the hedging because both of the texts express uncertainty. The hedging device *would be likely* can be categorised as an adaptor. This device expresses a degree of uncertainty because the speaker does not mention

the exact number of the degree. By using this strategy, the hedging device in the ST is translated well, even though there are several changing points of view in the TT. The changing point of view in the TT does not affect the kind of hedging device and its function because it expresses the same kind and function as the TT.

C. Reduction Technique

This strategy occurs if the translator does not translate the hedging device in ST into the TT. No hedging devices are found in the TT using this strategy; therefore, the function of the hedging devices in the ST are missing.

Example 7:

Oh, I didn't say there was anything against him. He is a little queer in his ideas—an enthusiast in some branches of science. As far as I know he is a decent fellow enough (ST: 8).

Oh, aku tidak mengatakan kalau ada apa-apa dengannya. Orangnyanya cukup baik, hanya saja dia memiliki gagasan yang aneh-aneh. Dia menaruh perhatian besar terhadap beberapa cabang sains (BSA: 13).

The compound hedge *as far as I know* is categorised as a rounder. This hedging device expresses uncertainty relates to the range of distance, duration, and time. This hedging device is used to save the speaker's face, which is caused by their limited knowledge about the proposition. In the Example 7, the hedging device *as far as I know* in the ST is not translated. Therefore, the function of the hedging device in TT becomes lost. The speaker's limited knowledge about the information in the ST proposition *as far as I know he is a decent fellow enough* becomes clear in the TT proposition because the hedging device is not translated and it becomes *Dia menaruh perhatian besar terhadap beberapa cabang sains*.

Conclusion

Compound hedges are components of fuzzy language. They play roles in maintaining politeness in communication. Compound hedges are able to make communication euphemistic, moderate, polite, and flexible. They effectively help speakers and hearers in saving face and keeping communication smooth. Inaccurate information and miscommunication between a speaker and a hearer might fail to maintain the appropriate transfer of information if compound hedges are not translated.

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