

## Evaluative Language Maintenance and Shift on Vice-Presidential Candidates Reportage: Translation Analysis of ‘The Conversation’ Political News

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### Abstract

**Background:**

This paper seeks to shed some light concerning evaluative language maintenance and shift at the translation phenomenon of online news. Though this translation issue is frequently discussed in academic discourse, little has been concerned about comprehending to what extent the evaluation used in political news has been retained of a shift in their target texts.

**Methodology:**

Three political news articles published on ‘The Conversation’ online media were selected for the analysis. In doing so, the appraisal system and translation technique theory-based concepts were adopted to guide the analysis as well as the discussion. We employed a noteworthy move in terms of data collection technique, which is a focus-group discussion by involving several experts who are engaged in the field of linguistics and translation studies.

**Findings:**

These research findings can be understood as evaluative language maintenance dominating the data compared to the translation shift. Translators attempted to bridge Indonesian readers by rendering some ideological news, to knock language distance down between English and Indonesian texts. Meanwhile, plenty of translation techniques encourage translator awareness to take a position upon rendering ideological news, in case of retaining, altering, as well as omitting the constructed meanings.

**Conclusion:**

It is pivotal, as a consequence, to increase news translators’ awareness of understanding attitude constructed in political news. Otherwise, there will be reframing phenomena as the cause of translators’ intervention depriving readers’ rights to understand mass media attitude.

**Keywords:** evaluative language; translation; political news

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

An online news site is a mass media that recently is turning out into ‘the rising star’ following journalism advancement (Altahmazi, 2020, p. 1). This popularity is due to modern

civilization that cannot be separated from the growth of internet users who opt to consume news from various countries (Naratama, 2017; Rizkiana, 2016; Zhang, 2015). One example of these popular sites is 'The Conversation' news based in Melbourne, Australia, and has partnered with translators from diverse states, Indonesia, for instance. Some news presented on this site contain evaluations and frames of both Indonesia's vice-presidential candidates, Ma'ruf Amin and Sandiaga Uno. It was believed (Ross & Caldwell, 2020; Wilson & Davis, 2018) that several factors encouraging those constructed ideas in media were derived from facts or the political attitude of news writers. Texts comprising evaluative language, therefore, need serious attention from scholars and news translators since translation portrays a process to expand and render ideological messages.

The evaluative language here means the subjective presence of news writers in the text as their stance toward the presidential election, some name it as *appraisal system*. It deals with idea construction on how writers admire or criticize and praise or condemn toward particular phenomena, and how they position their readers to do likewise (Martin & White, 2005). They utilize news which in general is classified as factual and argumentative text, where evaluative language plays an important role in framing the image of Indonesia vice-presidential candidates. News function as "ideological messengers" (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 142; Ma'u et al., 2019) and are invaluable sources of information (Junining & Kusuma, 2020; Luo, 2015; Thahara et al., 2019; Zhang, 2015). When expressing their attitude on the news, writers are not just pouring ideas into a written form or saying something to others through writing. Beyond that point, they appeal to readers to share their evaluation of someone or something at the same time.

The presence of message shift and loss in target text is a form of betrayal of the news writer. Translators are not allowed to intervene in the evaluative language used to frame vice-presidential candidates unless the news content contradicts local cultural norms or even governmental regulations. In other words, translators are legitimized to implement domestication ideology strategies to filter confrontation information. Amount of experts assert that the main translation goal is the process of rendering messages in the source language (SL) into the target language (TL) without removing the essence intended by writers or speakers (Baker, 2011; Catford, 1965; Larson, 1984; M. Nababan et al., 2012; M. R. Nababan, 2008). Translators are required to search for and discover the closest natural equivalent words, not structural similarities. (Arbain, 2020, p. 26) proclaimed translation technique choice assigned the extent to which the translations were categorized as high-quality results.

This evaluation should be well-comprehended by news translators. They need to take into account how mass media's standpoints in constructing candidates' images for state leaders are. Otherwise, any message shift in the translation product can change the ideological position of the source text. Studies (Hidayat, 2018; Wu, 2019; Yuliasri & Allen, 2019) highlighted the implementation of certain translation techniques causes evaluative language maintenance and shift. If translators are in line with the author's perspective, they will take a stand to be faithful to the source text. They maintain the candidate images constructed in The Conversation's political news into the Indonesian version text. On the contrary, there will be reframing or reconstructing candidate images in case translators seek to shift, either partially or totally, the point of view built by the news writer. This act will indeed result in evaluative language shift or even loss.

Commonly translation researches concern on translation shift and loss, undergone in a decade. They identified and analyzed the process shift that occurred in the translation version, whether in the form of literary works or factual texts (Li & Xu, 2018; Sujono et al., 2016; Tirtayasa & Setiajid, 2018). On the one hand, another study investigated loss in translation since the use of particular translation techniques—including modulation, transposition, reduction, and simplification—highly conduced shifts which might transform the genuine meaning of source text (Hidayat, 2018; Qian, 2017; Yuliasri & Allen, 2019). Nevertheless, none of those previous studies was discussing language maintenance in translation investigation.

Language maintenance and shift investigation were still within the scope of the study of sociolinguistics phenomena (Abushihab, 2015; Daly & Barbour, 2019; Masrudin, 2013). The results revealed a clear awareness that teachers played a significant role to maintain local languages. While societies experiencing a shift in their dialects and languages were due to mobilization and bilingualism. Further, a study contributed to maintenance and loss in the process of intergenerational transmission (Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2020, p. 17) and the other (Rupiah & Hartono, 2017, p. 227) emphasized a field of shift and equivalence on noun phrase translation. Several studies mentioned above are truly disparate with the current author research that focuses on highlighting some light concerning evaluative language maintenance and shifting at online news translation phenomenon.

This paper endeavors to give the contribution in linguistics investigation to enlighten on the immediate interconnection between translation studies and *appraisal* analysis. Researchers, consequently, adopted two approaches to achieve this paper objective. Those approaches, including translation technique by Molina and Albir (2002) as well as *appraisal*

system analysis proposed by (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005) will be implemented to examine the original text (written in English) and translation version (Indonesian) of news texts. The researchers will only elaborate on the ‘*attitude*’ (especially *judgment* and *appreciation*), and the graduation of those attitudes since this study draw into mass media’s attitude to frame the candidates of Indonesia’s vice presidents. Consequently, the research problems raised are (1) How the evaluative languages of original and translation version are potentially similar and differ in attitudes as reflected in ‘*The Conversation*’ political news? (2) How do translators intervene the occurrence of evaluative language maintenance and shift through translation techniques implementation?

By focusing on the translation of evaluative language presented in the mass media, we contribute to a comprehension of whether and to what extent the translator has maintained the evaluation of the Republic of Indonesia’s leader candidates framed in *The Conversation* online news or they produce message distortion. This noteworthy study needs to be carried out as translators’ intervention unconsciously deprives readers’ rights to understand mass media attitudes reflected in the published political news. Though readers are not able to read a simple conversion 1:1 between source and target text, translators should ‘hide’ it as a translation product in practice (Ardi, 2015; Hartono, 2017; M. Nababan et al., 2012). A few translators are more willing to keep silent upon translating messages nuanced tendencies. Or vice versa, the translator consciously come to an agreement with writer ideology in evaluating candidates with attitudinal lexis.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This present qualitative research leads to a detailed description of what is happening in the translation of online news named ‘*The Conversation*’. Focusing on evaluative language translation, data were collected in terms of words, groups of words, as well as clauses that accommodate attitude (Azwar, 2004; Pribody, 2018; Santosa, 2017; Sutopo, 2006). Researchers sorted political news in celebrating the vice-presidential election of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2019-2024 period on the sites <https://theconversation.com>. This primary study data is in the form of lexis accommodating writers’ attitudes in evaluating the image of Ma’ruf Amin and Sandiaga Uno; and the primary data came from informants who provided detailed and in-depth insight regarding translation aspects as well. Data sampling was carried out by determining specific characteristics with theory-based assessment by (Martin & White, 2005) and classification of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002).

To accumulate the research data, we employed noteworthy moves in terms of data collection technique, those were document analysis and focus group discussion (commonly known by acronym FGD). In document analysis, the researchers first were undergoing an in-depth reading of political news text, both in original and translation. Secondly, we signed numerous lex considered as appraisal items by implementing Martin's appraisal framework. And the last data collection technique would be FGD. It was dealing with involving some experts (including the researcher) to have an in-depth discussion about the data obtained. In this case, the researcher-led it by proposing a planned discussion subject. They contributed translation assessment to acquire a strong interpretation of attitudes translation phenomena in the online news. The results of those interconnected data collections helped the researcher to analyze the data and draw a common thread on how that evaluative language is retained or even omitted.

### 3. FINDINGS

The following analysis leads to the classification of evaluative language maintenance and shift occurrences due to the translation techniques applied. We categorize examples of how the Indonesian translators stand on the news writer perspective by maintaining the appraisal items to evaluate each vice-presidential candidate, at first. We then identify the evaluative language shift, whether in the form of attitude or graduation domain. These shifts demonstrate that the Indonesian translator has reconstructed the text ideology in evaluating and framing the two vice-presidential candidates. The analysis is well-enlightened below;

#### 3.1 *Evaluative language maintenance and shift*

**Table 1. The maintenance and shift of lexis evaluated both candidates**

No	Evaluative Language	Frequency	%
1	Translation Maintenance	32	82,1
2	Translation Shift	7	17,9
	Total	39	100

After conducting an in-depth reading of three political news texts published in online media 'The Conversation', we found 39 lexis as the reflection of news writers' attitudes. These data were then translated into Indonesian as a medium to bridge target readers comprehending their future supreme leaders. The table above reflects that Indonesian translators preferred to be like-minded regarding the ideological construction brought by news writers. The equivalent of evaluative language has dominated the research data with occurrence frequency amounting to 32 data or equivalent to 82,1% of the total data obtained. Apart from that, the researchers had come across 7 data of evaluative language shifts. The

minimal number of shifts symbolizes the Indonesian translators had succeeded in transferring lexical messages accommodating news attitudes. In the following sections, this study portrays an investigation of whether and to what extent the evaluative language is maintained or shifted.

### **3.1.1 The Evaluative Language Maintenance**

#### **Capacity (+) and Established Equivalent Translation**

ST: *President Jokowi has chosen Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) chief and the supreme leader of Nahdlatul Ulama, Ma'ruf Amin, as his running mate for next year's election.*

TT: *Presiden Jokowi telah memilih ketua Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) dan pemimpin tertinggi Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Ma'ruf Amin, sebagai pasangannya.*

Lexis “*supreme*” portrayed in the source text is an appraisal item classified into character evaluation, *judgment: capacity (+)*. It was utilized to evaluate Ma'ruf's image positively by displaying his current political position—leader of Nahdlatul Ulama as the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia. The translator rendered this appraisal item into the word “*tertinggi*” which also has the same classification of the evaluative language “*supreme*”. In terms of graduation domain, both lex are also in the form of intensifier—a word indicating graduation force. The implementation of the intensifier is to strengthen the capabilities of Ma'ruf's figure. They admire Ma'ruf as an individual who could occupy the top seat of that organization. This similarity indicates the evaluative language that leads to Ma'ruf characterization had been maintained in the target text.

#### **Normality (+) and Transposition Translation**

ST: *Sandiaga is young and a professional businessman.*

TT: *Sandiaga adalah seorang pemuda dan pebisnis profesional.*

The translator's decision to use transposition as a translation technique at data 011/ SU/ T09 carried out a significant impact on grammatical changes. The appraisal item “*young*” inscribed in source text turned out into a lexis “*pemuda*” in the translation version. It indicates transposition technique implementation, whereby a word is classified as an adjective changing into a noun. However, the grammatical part of speech conversion does not influence both their attitude variety. They are evaluative language aimed at assessing Sandiaga positively, especially through *judgment: positive normality*. Sandiaga was framed as an individual with special character due to his youthful vigor. He is admired directly through attitudinal lexis presence. His nomination was expected to boost Prabowo's electability in winning the Indonesian presidential seat. On this fundamental analysis, the

transposition technique generates evaluative language maintenance posted in media ‘The Conversation’.

**Valuation (+) and Modulation Translation**

ST: *Ma'ruf's **broad** experience is expected to maximize Jokowi's political machine to win the election.*

TT: *Pengalaman Ma'ruf yang **banyak** diharapkan dapat memaksimalkan mesin politik Jokowi.*

The application of modulation translation technique had modified the word “*broad*” which means covering a wide scope of experiences to be the word “*banyak*” in the Indonesian version—meaning a large number of experiences. The news translator changes the appraisal item point of view lexically. What needs to be underlined is that this change does not always lead to a shift in attitude type. Though it occurs modification in lexical focus, these appraisal items are still in the same scope class. They are included in the category of *judgment: capacity (+)* in as much as Ma’ruf was considered a suitable figure to support Jokowi’s electability for appealing Muslim groups lived in Indonesia. In other words, modulation translation here maintains the type of attitudinal lexis used to evaluate Ma’ruf Amin’s valuable image; as a result, both the meaning and the attitude are captured.

**3.1.2 The Evaluative Language Shift**

**Table 2. The shift of lexis evaluated Ma’ruf Amin image**

	<b>The shift types</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Judgment - Judgement	Att. Lexis – non-appraisal	2
	Att. Lexis - Intensifier	1
	Intensifier – non-appraisal	1
	Sharpen - Polarity	1
	Total	5

**Normality (-) and Discursive Creation Translation**

ST: *Ma'ruf is **not only an ordinary traditional ulama** (Muslim leader).*

TT: *Ma'ruf **bukanlah seorang tokoh ulama biasa.***

In the case of attitude type, both lex are classified into similar judgment category. The nominal groups are deal out as a ‘*judgement: negative normality*’ as Ma’ruf was criticized as a figure with nasty behavior for all decisions he had executed. Through a simple type of *Google* search engine, you will find his image related to sensitive issues. Edicts declared by Ma’ruf as Muslim leader was evaluated discriminatory against minority groups’ rights domiciled in Indonesia. With the result that news writer asserted negative evaluation for Ma’ruf character. Apart from that, those lex illustrating the writer’s attitude are included in ‘*focus: sharpen*’ seen from the graduation perspective. The message is sharpened by the word “*not only*”. It is rated as discursive creation translation as if the translator constructs and

establishes a temporary equivalence that is partially or even totally out of context from original meaning (Molina & Albir, 2002, p. 510). The news translator, by selecting this translation technique portrayed on data 002/ MA/ T01, has explained that he changed the graduation aspect—the gradeability of attitudinal meaning, whether it is realized with up-scaling and down-scaling. This change triggered a shift in focus: sharpen to force: the polarity.

### Propriety (+) and Deletion Translation

ST: *A **respected** Muslim leader, Ma'ruf is expected to save Jokowi from any attempts to discredit him in the religious front.*

TT: *Sebagai Ketua Umum MUI, Ma'ruf diharapkan Jokowi dapat menetralkan isu negatif terkait politik identitas.*

Positive propriety falls on what is meant by individual behavior praised alongside as exposition dealing with truth integrity according to state and religious observances (Martin & White, 2005, p. 52). Here, Ma'ruf was evaluated through an individual with good characteristic respected by Islamism's adherent. The lexis "respected" is an appraisal item classified as judgment: positive propriety. He had occupied the highest leader seat of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and the nation's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama. As a matter of Ma'ruf political experiences, the news writer praised him due to both his supreme positions by drawing attitudinal lexis "respected".

In opting for deletion translation, instead of finding an alternative technique that may stand for the above appraisal item, the translator had eliminated the writer's evaluation of Ma'ruf image as a positive character. The attitudinal lexis "respected" stated in English (as source text) has not been retained in the Indonesian (as target text), though translator could have chosen to apply lexis such 'disegani' or 'dihormati'. Most Indonesian-speaking readers would have caught an ideological message constructed at those two-translation lexes. The Indonesian translator, nevertheless, did not take into account the lexis accommodating news writer's attitude; which ultimately results in an attitudinal loss in the Indonesian translation of political news published in 'The Conversation' mass media.

**Table 3. The shift of lexis evaluated Sandiaga Uno image**

The shift types		Frequency
Judgement - Judgement	Att. Lexis - non-appraisal	1
Appreciation - Judgement	Att. Lexis - Att. Lexis	1
Total		2

### Valuation to Capacity (+) and Modulation Translation

ST: *Sandiaga's **strong** point also lies on his relatively young image that can attract millennial voters.*



TT: ***Kekuatan** Sandiaga terletak pada usia yang relatif muda yang diharapkan dapat mempengaruhi para pemilih milenial.*

This shift in attitude types from judgment to appreciation stages was a significant alteration. In the appreciation evaluation, however, Sandiaga was framed as an individual holding a positive image that might attract millennial voters of the presidential election in April 2019. Attitudinal lexis presented in the original text derives from the word “*strong*” to evaluate “*Sandiaga’s point*”. Therefore, this lexis is classified as ‘appreciation: valuation (+)’. While in judgment evaluation, Sandiaga was portrayed as a character who owned legitimate power. This lexis leads to judgment: capacity (+) on account of framing the capability of Sandiaga’s young image from a positive viewpoint. The attitudinal lexis of translation version arises from the word “*kekuatan*” that evaluated the word “*Sandiaga*”

The meaning constructed in the above attitudinal lexis is thus maintained, but the attitude is a shift from appreciation to judgment evaluation. As indicated by the attitude shift from the lexis “*strong point*” into “*kekuatan Sandiaga*”. Indonesian translator employed modulation translation to render that attitudinal lexis. Instead of stating “*poin signifikan dari Sandiaga*”, which would have created an established equivalence result, the translation version outlined a lexis “*kekuatan*” to evaluate Sandiaga’s character. On this basis, the lexis shift occurs in terms of the attitude domain, whereby it does not give a crucial impact on reconstructing Sandiaga’s image. He was evaluated positively, whether in the original or the translation version sentence.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Build upon a close reading of the parallel translation text, and it has been clearly described the Indonesian translators have a crucial role in rendering these evaluative messages to disseminate information in a comprehensive, holistic, and mass manner. The dominance of evaluative language maintenance reflects their awareness of how news writer of ‘The Conversation’ media position their side as a political observer. They hold the right to evaluate both vice-presidential candidates based on their viewpoint or numerous data gained. Throughout this awareness, translators attempted to bridge Indonesian readers by rendering some ideological news, to knock language distance down between English and Indonesian. They carried out the original writer attitudinal close to their target readers. It can be understood as a reflection of their tendency to inject that appraisal item in the Indonesian version.

It is worth noting here that Indonesian translators stand for the ideology constructed by news writers upon evaluating and framing Ma’ruf and Sandiaga. The occurrence of

attitudinal meaning distortion in translation version is detected infrequently. The evaluation built by news writers had been conveyed by news translators in Indonesian translation text. Translators' success in translating those appraisal items through established equivalent gives arise to translation quality. This was in line with the thought (Baker, 2011; Catford, 1965; Molina & Albir, 2002; M. Nababan et al., 2012) which highlighted that text could be categorized as proper and valid translation in case it had an equivalent message affiliation. Consequently, both candidates' images of Indonesia state leaders have deemed appraisal items, either in English or Indonesian text.

While mostly the Indonesian translation versions have achieved attitudinal equivalence, our research has shown those lexis accommodating writers' attitudes were not accurately rendered into the target text. There were some circumstances whereby translators, in particular, shifted even omitted those details. It took place either at the attitude domain or graduation force. In the case of attitude type shift, it turned appreciation (evaluation of 'thing', especially performance that Sandiaga gives) to judgment (evaluating how he behaved—Sandiaga as a character). The translator has changed the original text viewpoint lexically, though the meaning constructed in attitudinal lexis is thus maintained.

In addition to the attitude shift, we then move into the region of graduation force. Our research finding portrays the majority of evaluation shifts occurred in the 'graduation of attitude' domain—the volume of gradations of attitude meaning, both manifested by up-scaling and down-scaling. Indonesian translators declined to keep those details in the target text, adopting unbalanced message gradation. For instance, they altered attitudinal lexis into intensifier—to raise meaning gradation volume. This finding is following Li and Xu (2018, p. 3) revealing this shift had potentially upgraded the degree of appraisal meanings. At the same time, the researcher also discovered a loss in evaluative language translation. Ideological diversity may account for the translation loss. It indicates translators sometimes manipulated (i.e. omit or replace attitudinal lexis into lexis with no corresponding appraisal item) the source text when they did not concur with the image constructed in the news.

Previous studies (Arbain, 2020; He & Wen, 2015; Hidayat, 2018; Mardiana, 2015) discovered modulation and transposition translation technique caused shift occurrence; however, this present study portrays opposite findings. Referring to transposition translation usage, this present finding shows that it did not interfere with the attitudinal lexis, despite changing the part of speech could not be inevitable. The evaluative language, nevertheless, both at the original and the Indonesian version was retained. Upon the Indonesian translator applied modulation technique, it generates two main results, involving evaluative language

maintenance and shift. It belongs to the maintenance as if referring to the change of attitudinal lexis perspective throughout its synonym (clearly illustrated in data 018/ MA/ T09 on research result analysis). By contrast, it was categorized as a translation shift in as much as modulation translation technique brought a crucial effect on attitude type transformation. As stated in the analysis, an appreciation evaluation turned into judgment evaluation, leading to a partial viewpoint shift.

If some previous studies and this research highlighted that the use of translation techniques had a crucial impact on gaining or omitting evaluative language, Qian (2017); Wu (2019) declared polar arguments. Both insisted evaluative language shift might arise from a few contextual factors, including linguistic distance, socio-cultural diversities, as well as an ideological gap that had a potential impact on the translation version. It was believed that those factors played an important role to influence Chinese translators' decisions to shift the attitudinal lexis. Whether intentionally or not, it had caused partial as well as the total shift of attitudinal lexis located in Chinese public notices and fictional text entitled '*The Newcomer*'—a reputable Chinese short story.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Concerning translation maintenance or shift, we conclude that the Indonesian translation of political news published at '*The Conversation*' site adopted a foreignization ideology. The translators were in line with what was being constructed by news writers through implementing evaluative language to frame both vice-presidential candidates. This agreement, whether they were aware or not, creates a defense of attitude meaning. They had fruitfully maintained numerous lexis accommodating evaluation. On the opposite side, our study has also demonstrated that, even if the Indonesian translator had achieved translation equivalent in the target text, it was perceived evaluative language shift in particular sentences. These shifts were objectified through partial change (i.e. a shift in the graduation of attitude) or total change (e.g. loss in evaluative language translation).

The present literacy work assures translation techniques application can be connected to the phenomena of translation maintenance and shift in rendering evaluative language presented on political news of online media. The technique of established equivalent and transposition leads to attitude maintenance, while deletion, as well as creative discursion translation, portray shift or even loss. It is worth stressing that modulation translation usage generates two significant effects, involving evaluative language maintenance and shift. It is pivotal, as a consequence, to increase news translators' awareness of understanding attitude

constructed in the news. Otherwise, there will be reframing phenomena—reconstructing individual evaluation in translation version text—to give rise to the message transformation in translation version.

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