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INVESTIGATING THE APPLICATION OF TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES BY STUDENTS IN TRANSLATING BY LAWS

Jefriadi[1], Havid Ardi[2]
[1,2]Magister Program of English Language Education, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

Corresponding author: Adijefry66@gmail.com

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Abstract: The translation of legal documents, particularly bylaws, is fraught with empirical and theoretical challenges due to the precision required to uphold the original text's legal intent, authority, and clarity. Legal translation is not merely a linguistic exercise; it involves deep comprehension of both the source and target legal systems. the process of translating bylaws is often complicated by the necessity of maintaining a formal tone while ensuring that the legal meaning is preserved. The study utilized qualitative descriptive methods and the purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on specific criteria. The translation techniques in translating bylaws, conducted by sixth semester English Education students at Universitas Negeri Padang in 2024, there were 10 translation techniques used by translators and total of translation techniques used were 1364 times. From the 9 translation techniques, each one is ranked from the most frequently used to the least used: Established equivalent 743 times (54,5%), Literal Translation 185 times (15,6%), Calque 166 times (12,17%), Amplification with 92 times (6,74%), Transposition 89 times (6,52%), Borrowing 41 times (3,01%), Reduction 24 times (1,76%), Particularization 23 times (1,69%) and Variation with 1 time (0,07%). The percentage is a calculation of the total translation techniques used.
Keywords: *translation, translation techniques, by laws*

INTRODUCTION

The translation of legal documents, particularly bylaws, is fraught with empirical and theoretical challenges due to the precision required to uphold the original text's legal intent, authority, and clarity. Legal translation, which is fundamental to law and language, has a long and important history but has only recently emerged as a recognized specialized discipline (Graziadei, 2025). Legal translation is not merely a linguistic exercise; it involves deep comprehension of both the source and target legal systems, as emphasized by Cao (2007) and Gibbsons (1999). For students of translation, this task becomes especially daunting as they navigate formal language, fixed structures, and specialized terminology unique to legal texts (Alshaikh, 2022). They also have difficulty in identifying and understanding various lexical and syntactic features, such as technical vocabulary, passive structures, and unusual word orders (Al-jarf, 2023). In civil litigation, the use of good and correct Indonesian is very important, because foreign terms and legal jargon can confuse the general public and potentially change the intended meaning (Sarah & Hindun, 2022). The stakes are high, as inaccuracies can lead to significant misunderstandings, potentially affecting legal rights and obligations (Buansari et al. 2020). Therefore, understanding the translation techniques employed by students is crucial to uncovering their decision-making processes and strategies when engaging with such complex texts.

Translation techniques are the methods used by translators to transfer messages from the source language to the target language accurately and naturally. Furthermore, translation techniques are methods translators use to accurately transfer messages between languages (Volf, 2020; Ana & Puspani, 2021). These techniques help translators choose appropriate equivalents in the target language and can reveal the translator's ideology

(Volf, 2020). Common techniques include literal translation, borrowing, amplification, and generalization (Ana & Puspani, 2021; Fadhilah et al., 2023). Molina and Albir's framework of 18 translation techniques is widely used (Volf, 2020; Fadhilah et al., 2023). Research has shown that literal translation and borrowing are often the dominant techniques in various contexts, such as legal texts and religious prayers (Ana & Puspani, 2021; Fadhilah et al., 2023; Simanjuntak et al., 2021). However, the choice of technique depends on the specific translation task and source text. Translation techniques are very important to produce accurate and natural translations while maintaining the essence of the source language (Simanjuntak et al., 2021). Panessai et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of understanding source text terminology and identify transposition, borrowing, adaptation, and calque as common techniques used in translation.

Moreover, the process of translating bylaws is often complicated by the necessity of maintaining a formal tone while ensuring that the legal meaning is preserved (Cerdas et al., 2022). Scholars like Šarčević (1997) and Chesterman (2017) have highlighted that legal language is characterized by precision and formality, which can pose additional challenges for novice translators. Consequently, investigating how students approach these challenges can shed light on their learning processes and inform pedagogical practices in translation training. By focusing on the specific difficulties students encounter and the techniques they employ, this research aims to fill an existing gap in understanding legal translation within an educational context.

While much research on translation techniques has explored various text types, such as literary or journalistic translations, the focus on legal texts, particularly bylaws, remains underrepresented. Studies by Al-Shabab (2022) and Kasuya, (2021) demonstrate how translation strategies can differ significantly based on the text's genre and intended audience. However, the intricacies of legal translation, especially in the context of educational environments, have not been thoroughly investigated. Research by Chan (2012) delves into the cognitive processes of translators, providing insights into how they navigate the complexities of legal texts. Still, it does not specifically address student translators' experiences or techniques when translating bylaws.

Furthermore, existing literature often emphasizes the theoretical frameworks surrounding legal translation without adequately addressing the practical aspects faced by students. Major difficulties include legal terminology, complex sentence structures, and unequal legal systems across cultures (Altuwairesh & AlGhamedi, 2025; Nhac, 2023). Students struggle with irrelevant terms, vague terms, and enantiosemus in legal texts (Klabal, 2024). Comparative conceptual analysis, crucial for finding terminological equivalents, presents challenges for students in identifying essential features and selecting appropriate terms (Klabal & Kubánek, 2021). For instance, Galán-Mañas (2013) discusses contrastive rhetoric in teaching legal translation, suggesting that pedagogical approaches need to be refined to address the specific challenges that arise in this field. Although studies like those of Cao (2007) and Šarčević (1997) underscore the importance of fidelity and accuracy in legal translation, they lack a direct focus on the educational context and the student perspective. Thus, this study aims to bridge the gap by examining the specific techniques students utilize in translating bylaws, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of legal translation pedagogy.

Most previous studies emphasize the theoretical and professional aspects of legal interpreting, without paying in-depth attention to the experiences and techniques used by novice interpreters such as university students. Hale (2021) and Atabekova (2021) note that most legal interpretation research focuses on analyzing courtroom discourse and role perceptions, with limited attention to other aspects such as regulatory interpretation. However, there has been no integration of cultural heritage modules into legal translation and interpretation studies. Moreover, the studies that have been reviewed are limited to text genres, with no studies specifically exploring bylaws as a research object. Bylaws are unique in terms of structure, terminology, and formal style, which are different from other text genres.

Despite these findings, there is a notable lack of research specifically addressing the techniques students use when translating bylaws and the obstacles they encounter. Previous studies have not sufficiently explored how students manage specialized terminology and maintain the formal tone essential in legal documents. This gap necessitates a focused investigation into students' use of translation techniques within the

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framework established by Molina & Albir (2002), allowing for a comprehensive assessment of both technical and linguistic aspects.

This article aims to answer the question: What translation techniques do students predominantly use when translating bylaws? The objectives are to identify the techniques commonly employed and analyse their effectiveness within the context of legal translation. This study contributes a novel perspective by concentrating on the intersection of legal translation and translation pedagogy. Moreover, this study is relevant to translation education as it provides a real picture of how students cope with the complexities of translating bylaws texts. This research can be utilized to improve teaching approaches, design curricula that are responsive to real-world challenges in the field, and prepare more competent legal translators.

METHOD

The study utilized qualitative descriptive methods to thoroughly explore phenomena, emphasizing the researcher's ability to articulate and analyse findings. Creswell (2012) defines qualitative research as an inquiry into social or human problems that focuses on understanding central phenomena through various forms of data. The data comprised translated legal texts, specifically bylaws from the Dinas Koperasi Usaha Kecil dan Menengah (DISKOPUKM) Provinsi Sumatera Selatan, produced by sixth-semester students from the English Education Department at Universitas Negeri Padang in 2024. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants based on specific criteria, as outlined by Sugiyono (2015).

In this study, data collection involved administering a translation test where 23 participants translated source texts from Indonesian to English within a 2-hour time limit. The test consisted of a passage from a bylaw text in Indonesian, which students were instructed to translate into English. This translation task was crafted to evaluate students' proficiency in handling formal and specialized content, such as legal documents, and to observe the specific techniques they applied in translating complex terms and structures, then, eighteen indicators of translation techniques formulated by Molina and Albir (2002) were used to collect data on the translation techniques the students employed in translating bylaws.

Table 1. *The indicators of translation techniques (Molina & Albir, 2002)*

No	Translation Techniques	Description
1	Amplification	To introduce details that are not formulated in the ST: information, explicative paraphrasing.
2	Borrowing	The idea of taking the word from SL and maintaining it to the TL
3	Calque	The literal translation of a word or phrase in the source language into target language. It can be lexical or structural.
4	Compensation	Introduces the SL element of information or stylistic effect in another place in the TL because it cannot be reflected in the same place of SL
5	Description	To replace a term or expression with a description of its form or/and function.
6	Discursive Creation	Establishes a temporary equivalence that is totally unpredictable out of context. It is usually applied in the title of the books, movies, and novels.
7	Established Equivalent	Uses a term or expression recognized (by dictionary or language in use) as an equivalent in the TL
8	Generalization	Used when term in the source language refers to a specific part, which is the equivalent in the target language does not exist/refer to the same section
9	Linguistic Amplification	To add linguistic elements. This is often used in consecutive interpreting and dubbing
10	Linguistic Compression	To synthesize linguistic elements in the target language (TL). It is often used in simultaneous interpreting and in sub-titling
11	Literal Translation	To translate a word or an expression word for word.
12	Modulation	To change the point of view, focus or cognitive category in relation to the source language (SL); it can be lexical or structural.
13	Particularization	To use of a more precise or concrete term
14	Reduction	To suppress a source language (SL) information item in the target language (TL).
15	Substitution	To change linguistics elements for paralinguistic elements (intonation, gestures) or vice versa. It is used above all in interpreting.

16	Transposition	To change a grammatical category of source language (SL) into target language (TL), for instance replacing the words become phrase.
17	Variation	To change linguistic or paralinguistic elements (intonation, gesture) that affect aspects of linguistic variations: changes of textual tone, style, social dialect, geographical dialect, etc.

The procedure for analyzing qualitative data has three stages, namely data reduction, data display, and data conclusion (Miles, 1994). The researcher used these three stages to analyze the data obtained after conducting a translation test. First stage, in this research, this would involve categorizing and identifying the specific translation techniques employed by the students. Data reduction helps to eliminate unnecessary information and refine the dataset for deeper analysis. Second stage, the reduced data are then presented in an organized format, such as tables, matrices, or charts, to facilitate understanding and interpretation. Data display provides a clear visual representation of findings, making it easier to compare and contrast different aspects. In this final stage, patterns, themes, or relationships within the data are identified, leading to conclusions about the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' translation techniques in translating bylaws

The translation techniques in translating bylaws, conducted by sixth semester English Education students at Universitas Negeri Padang in 2024, there were 10 translation techniques used by translators. The techniques and their frequency of use are as follow:

Table 2. *Frequencies of used translation techniques*

No	Translation Techniques	Frequently used	Percentage
1	Established Equivalent	743	54,4%
2	Literal Translation	185	15,6%
3	Calque	166	12,17%
4	Amplification	92	6,74%
5	Transposition	89	6,52%
6	Borrowing	41	3,01%
7	Reduction`	24	1,76%
8	Particularization	23	1,69%
9	Variation	1	0,07%
	Total	1364	100%

The total translation techniques used were 1364 times. From the 9 translation techniques, each one is ranked from the most frequently used to the least used: Established equivalent 743 times (54,5%), Literal Translation 185 times (15,6%), Calque 166 times (12,17%), Amplification with 92 times (6,74%), Transposition 89 times (6,52%), Borrowing 41 times (3,01%), Reduction 24 times (1,76%), Particularization 23 times (1,69%) and Variation with 1 time (0,07%). The percentage is a calculation of the total translation techniques used.

Students' translation techniques in translating bylaws

During the translation process, the students were limited time two hours. As students studying translation, the students accustomed to translating texts from Indonesian to English. The translations task distributed to 23 students, and all the students responded well by completing their translations. Therefore, the total number of translations produced is 23 texts. Each translator consists of 3 men and 20 women. The students were given codes ranging from ST-1 to ST-23

Established equivalent

Established equivalent attempts to use a known term or phrase of the source text as an equivalent in the target text.

Datum 1, ST-3

ST : Anggaran Rumah Tangga

TT : Bylaws

The translation of "anggaran rumah tangga" (ST) to "bylaws" (TT) is considered an established equivalent because it reflects a specific legal and organizational context that goes beyond a literal translation. In many contexts, especially within cooperatives or organizations, "anggaran rumah tangga" refers to the foundational rules or regulations governing the entity's operations, similar to how "bylaws" are used in English-speaking jurisdictions. This established equivalent captures the intended meaning and function of the original term within

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its specific context, making it more suitable than a direct translation.

Datum 3, ST-8

ST : Desa Meranjat Kec. Inderalaya Selatan

TT : Meranjat Village, South Inderalaya *Sub-Distric*

The abbreviation "Kec." is translated to "Sub-District." This is an established term used in English to refer to a similar administrative division in the context of local governance.

Datum 4, ST-1

ST : Bab I

TT : Chapter 1

The translation of "Bab 1" to "Chapter 1" is an established equivalent because "bab" is a term commonly used in Indonesian for a chapter in a document or text, and "chapter" is the standard English term used for the same concept. Both terms are widely recognized in their respective languages for denoting a division in written works, such as books or bylaws.

Datum 5, ST-6

ST : Tujuan

TT : Objective

The term "tujuan" in Indonesian is commonly understood as "objectives" in English, making this translation an established equivalent. Both terms refer to the goals or aims within a specific context, particularly in formal documents.

Datum 5, ST-13

ST : Tujuan

TT : Purpose

The translation from "tujuan" to "purpose" is an established equivalent that effectively captures the meaning of the source term. It aligns well with the intended meaning and is appropriate for the target audience.

Datum 6, ST-9

ST : Pasal 1

TT : *Article 1*

The translation of "pasal 1" as "article 1" is an example of an established equivalent. In legal and formal contexts, both terms are commonly used to refer to numbered sections of a document, such as bylaws, contracts, or legal texts. This equivalence is recognized in both Indonesian and English legal language.

Datum 7, ST-1

ST : Menuju tingkat hidup yang lebih baik

TT : a better *standard of living*

The phrase "standard of living" is an established equivalent in English, conveying the same concept as "tingkat hidup" in the source text. It's a widely recognized term in discussions of socioeconomic conditions.

Datum 8, ST-17

ST : Keanggotaan

TT : *Membership*

In this case, "keanggotaan" is a term commonly used in both legal and organizational contexts in Indonesian. Its translation to "membership" is an established equivalent that accurately reflects the concept of being a member of a group, organization, or cooperative. This term is widely understood in English-speaking contexts, particularly in bylaws, cooperatives, and associations.

Datum 11, ST-3

ST : Anggota Koperasi Terdiri dari:

TT : *Cooperative members* consist of

The term "Cooperative Members" is an established equivalent for "Anggota Koperasi" (ST). It is widely used in formal and legal contexts, particularly in bylaws or cooperative documents, and it appropriately captures the meaning of individuals belonging to the cooperative.

Calque

Calque is a word or phrase borrowed from another language by literal, word-for-word translation. This technique can be more detailed description, for examples:

Datum 2, ST-1

ST : Koperasi Pionir

TT : *Pioneer Cooperative*

The translator takes the expression from the source language and translates it literally, word by word, into the target language, preserving the structure of the original phrase. In this case, "Pioneer" (pionir) modifies "Cooperative" (koperasi) in both languages.

Datum 7, ST-2

ST : *Merupakan suatu wadah untuk menampung*

TT : To Serve As *A Forum For Accommodating*

The phrase "wadah untuk menampung" can be considered a calque, as it translates to "forum for accommodating." This involves a direct translation of components while preserving the original structure.

Datum 7, ST-2

ST : bermacam macam keinginan para anggota

TT : *Various Desires Of The Members*

Similarly, "bermacam-macam keinginan" translates to "various desires", which also fits the

calque definition since it mirrors the source language structure closely.

Literal translation

A literal translation preserves the elements or structure of the source language, but it is often not ideal for idioms or cultural contexts that may require adjustment. Some examples of such translations are:

Datum 1, ST-1

ST: Anggaran Rumah Tangga

TT: Household Budget

In the context of Indonesian cooperatives or organizations, "anggaran rumah tangga" refers to the organization's internal regulations, akin to bylaws or articles of association. Translating it as "household budget" ignores this legal or organizational context, instead implying a financial plan for a household, which is unrelated to the intended meaning in the cooperative context. "household budget" lacks the legal nuance and specific meaning required in the cooperative or organizational setting, making it less accurate compared to bylaws.

Datum 5, ST-4

ST: Tujuan

TT: Goal

"Objectives" and "purpose" are more commonly used in formal documents, such as bylaws, strategic plans, or legal texts. These terms convey a sense of structure, planning, and broader intentions that align with legal or organizational language. "Goal," on the other hand, is more general and can be used in informal contexts, which may not be suitable for legal documents. "objectives" or "purpose" are more precise and formal, making them more accurate for bylaws or formal contexts than "goal," which is more informal and general.

Datum 7, ST-3

ST: menuju tingkat hidup yang lebih baik .

TT: Move Towards A Better *Level Of Life.*

"Standard of living" is the idiomatic, natural way to express this concept in English, especially in formal or technical writing like bylaws. "Level of life," while understandable, is not a phrase used in such contexts and could seem unnatural or less professional.

Datum 7, ST-14

ST: suatu wadah untuk menampung.

TT: A *Container* To Accommodate

"forum" is a more accurate translation of "wadah" in contexts like bylaws because it accurately conveys the idea of a space for organized discussion or decision-making. "Container," while technically a possible translation, is not accurate because it suggests a physical object for holding items, rather than an active venue for collective action or discourse.

Borrowing

Borrowing is translation is that copying is a translation way using lexical expressions directly from other languages, for examples;

Datum 2, ST-2

ST: Koperasi “Pionir”

TT: Cooperative *“Pionir”*

The term "pionir" is kept in its original form in the target text. This is a clear instance of borrowing, as the word is taken directly from Indonesian and used in English without translation.

Datum 3, ST-4

ST: Desa Meranjat Kec. Inderalaya Selatan

TT: Meranjat Village *Kec.* South Inderalaya

Translating "Kec." (an abbreviation for "Kecamatan" or district) as "Kec." in the target text is considered borrowing based on Molina and Albir's theory because borrowing involves transferring a word or phrase directly from the source language into the target language without any modification or translation. "Kec." in the target text is a foreign term that has been borrowed directly from Indonesian without an English equivalent like "District" being used.

Datum 4 ST-15

ST: Bab 1

TT: Bab 1

Datum 8, ST-21

ST: Bab II

TT: Bab II

Borrowing occurs when a word or phrase from the source language is transferred directly into the target text without modification. In this case, "Bab" (meaning "Chapter" in Indonesian) is retained as "Bab" in the target text. Instead of using the established equivalent ("Chapter"), the source language term "Bab" is borrowed in its original form.

Amplification

Amplification is a technique in which the translator introduces additional information or details that are not explicitly present in the source text. For example;

Datum 7, ST-12

ST: merupakan suatu wadah untuk menampung

TT: *This Cooperative* serves as a platform

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The source text does not explicitly mention "cooperative" (koperasi) in the phrase "Merupakan suatu wadah," yet the translator adds "This Cooperative" in the target text. This addition clarifies the subject, which may have been implied in the source context but is made explicit in the translation. The translator provides extra information for the target audience.

Discursive creation

The discursive creation is a translation technique that seeks to determine or create a temporary equivalent that is truly out of context that is not predictable, examples given;

Datum 4, ST-7

ST: Bab I

TT: Pig

Translating "bab I" to "pig" exemplifies a discursive creation that not only misrepresents the original text but also renders the translation irrelevant in the context of bylaws or any formal documentation.

Generalization

The technique of generalization constitutes to use more general or neutral terms in the target language. For example;

Datum 1, ST-5

ST: Anggaran Rumah Tangga

TT: *Constitutional Charter*

The translation of "anggaran rumah tangga" (ST) to "constitutional charter" (TT) is considered a generalization because it broadens the meaning of the original term to encompass a wider range of governing documents. This shift in meaning dilutes the specific focus of the original term, making it more general and potentially less precise in capturing the intended context of organizational rules or regulations.

The analysis shows varied frequencies of translation techniques used. The Established Equivalent technique was the most common, indicating a reliance on standardized terms for accuracy. Recent studies have explored the translation and standardization of terminology across languages. Restiana & Nugroho (2021) found that Established Equivalence was the most common translation technique, covering 63.54% of cases. This is in line with Golgolnia et al. (2024), who emphasized the need for standardized terminology in translation. Hancock & Volante (2020) measured language quality, revealing significant variability in the comprehension of statements. In the context of machine translation, Noll et al. (2023) reported that CT was the most frequently translated terminology (39.1%), with English as the primary source language (55.9%) and German as the primary target language (41.2%). Statistical and Neural Machine Translation methods were commonly used, along with commercial tools such as Google Translate. These findings highlight the ongoing effort to standardize and translate terminology to improve accuracy and consistency in global communication.

Literal Translation and Calque were also frequently employed, reflecting a tendency to maintain the source text's structure. Moreover, Ratna et al. (2025) found that calque was the most frequently used technique in translating environmental campaigns from English into Japanese, indicating a preference for preserving the structure of the source text. Avezimbetova & Kaljanova (2022) defined calque as word-for-word translation, emphasizing its role in creating new lexemes in the target language. Giaber (2023) explored lexical calque as a method of secondary term formation, emphasizing its cognitive and cultural implications for Arabic speakers. Chernovaty (2024) observed that translations often follow the structure of the source text, especially in simpler constructions, while complex sentences may require transformation.

Techniques like Amplification and Transposition added clarity and adjusted grammar. Amplification and transposition are important translation techniques that improve clarity and adjust grammar when translating between languages. Amplification involves adding information to the target text to provide clarity (Darmayanti, 2020; Lestari et al., 2020). while Borrowing demonstrated direct incorporation of source terms. Less frequently used techniques like Reduction and Variation indicated specific needs for streamlining or adapting terms. Overall, the distribution highlights the translators' commitment to preserving meaning while adapting the text for the target audience.

On the other hand, Hidayat (2020) found a significant dominance of literal translation in the translation of informal letters by English Literature students. Similarly, Fadhilah et al. (2023) observed that Arabic Language Education students primarily used literal and loan translation techniques when translating grammar rules. Ginting et al. (2020) reported that literal translation was the most frequently used technique (39%) in translating Immigration Law texts, contributing to near-perfect translation

quality. These findings align with research by Al-Jarf (2023), which showed that EFL translation students struggled to identify complex lexical and syntactic features of legal documents, indicating a preference for a more straightforward translation approach.

The dominance of the Established technique in the translation of bylaws by students reflects the natural tendency of translation novices to prioritize theminological safety and adherence to formal conventions in the montext of legal texts. Students tend to adopt a direct and cautious approach in the translation process. The above findings can be an indicator in measuring the level of students' critical thinking independence in translating legal texts as well as the effectiveness of the translation process.

CONCLUSION

After conducting a thorough and comprehensive analysis of translations produced by the sixth-semester English Education students at Universitas Negeri Padang in 2024, it is evident that nine translation techniques were utilized in translating bylaws. The analysis indicates that a range of translation techniques was utilized, each at varying frequencies. The Established Equivalent technique emerged as the most common, indicating a significant reliance on standardized terminology that promotes accuracy and familiarity in the translation process. Following closely were Literal Translation and Calque, which demonstrate a tendency to preserve the structure and expressions of the source text. Other techniques, such as Amplification and Transposition, were employed to enhance clarity and modify grammatical structures, respectively. Borrowing reflects situations where directly adopting terms from the source language was essential, while techniques like Reduction, Particularization, and Variation were used less frequently, suggesting specific needs to streamline information or adapt terminology for improved clarity and stylistic consistency.

On the other hand, this research has a number of limitations, among which is that it focuses on identifying the use of translation techniques from one theory without comparison with other theories of translation techniques. Hence, this research is limited to the context of students in one particular academic environment. The findings cannot be generalized to a wider context of translation education. Also, this study has not gone deeper in analyzing whether the techniques used are appropriate or effective in conveying the full meaning of the law in the target language. It can be concluded that the limitations of this study are in the context, method, and scope of analysis. The focus is on the frequency of techniques without broader exploration.

Despite the limitations of the study, this research has a significant contribution to translation education. It provides an empirical understanding of the translation techniques used by students in translating legal texts in the form of bylaws. It enriches the literature which has previously been dominated by theoretical and professional studies. Furthermore, the study provides concrete quantitative data that can be used as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented curriculum. As such, the study contributes to establishing a conceptual and practical foundation for further researchers in the field of translation education.

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