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The Analysis of Translation Techniques used in Translating Slang words on Disney Cartoon “Turning Red”

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Abstract

This study analyzes the translation techniques applied to slang words in Disney's animated movie Turning Red. Slang words, often culturally and socially embedded, pose challenges in translation, especially for films targeting young audiences. The research aims to identify the types of translation techniques used, the most dominant technique, and their impact on audience comprehension. Using Molina and Albir's (2002) classification of translation techniques, this study found that the adaptation technique was the most frequently used, followed by established equivalence and modulation. The findings suggest that adaptation plays a crucial role in ensuring that slang words are effectively conveyed in the target language without losing their meaning and cultural significance.

Keywords: translation techniques, slang words, adaptation, animated movie, Turning Red.

Introduction

Language plays a vital role in communication, and translation serves as a bridge to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers. In audiovisual media, especially animated films, translation is not only about substituting words but also about maintaining cultural relevance, humor, and emotional nuance. One of the significant challenges in film translation is the presence of slang words, which are highly dynamic and often lack direct equivalents in other languages. Slang is commonly used among young people to express identity, familiarity, and group belonging, making its translation a complex task.

The animated film *Turning Red* (2022), produced by Pixar Animation Studios, provides an interesting case study for analyzing the translation of slang words. The film portrays the life of a 13-year-old girl, Mei Lee, navigating adolescence, friendship, and family expectations. Throughout the film, Mei and her friends frequently use slang, reflecting contemporary teenage communication styles. When translating such dialogue into another language, translators must carefully choose techniques that preserve the intended meaning while ensuring that the translation remains natural and relatable to the target audience.

Slang words are an integral part of informal language, frequently appearing in films, music, and social media. Translating slang is challenging due to its dynamic nature and cultural specificity. This study explores the translation of slang words in *Turning Red*, a film known for its teenage-oriented dialogues rich in contemporary slang. The research focuses on identifying the translation techniques applied, determining the most dominant technique, and analyzing their contribution to understanding English slang.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the translation techniques used in *Turning Red*. The qualitative method is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth exploration of how slang words are translated within a specific cultural and linguistic context. The primary data source for this study is the dialogue transcript from *Turning Red*, while the secondary sources include relevant books, journals, and research articles on translation techniques and slang translation were identified and classified based on Molina and Albir's (2002) 18 translation techniques. The frequency of each technique was calculated to determine the most dominant one.

Result and Discussion

A total of 67 slang words were identified in the film. The analysis revealed that seven translation techniques were used, with adaptation being the most frequently applied (47.22%), followed by established equivalence (33.33%) and modulation (11.11%).

- 1. Adaptation:** This technique was commonly used to replace slang with culturally relevant expressions in the target language. Example: "*Oh crap!*" was translated as "*Aduh*".

2. **Established Equivalence:** Used when a well-known equivalent existed in the target language. Example: “*Dude*” was translated as “*Kawan*”.
3. **Modulation:** Applied when a change in perspective is necessary to retain meaning. Example: “*You sicko!*” was translated as “*Kau sinting!*”.

The dominance of adaptation indicates the importance of cultural adjustments in translating slang, ensuring that meaning and emotional impact are preserved.

Furthermore, the study found that certain slang expressions posed greater challenges in translation. Expressions deeply rooted in English-speaking cultures, such as idioms and colloquial phrases, required more creative solutions. For example, phrases like “*That was dope!*” were adapted into “*Itu keren banget!*”, maintaining the original enthusiasm while making it sound natural in Indonesian. In contrast, slang that had direct equivalents, such as “*Yo!*” being translated to “*Hei!*”, often utilized established equivalence.

Another significant finding was the occasional use of multiple translation techniques for a single phrase to achieve the best possible translation. For instance, the phrase “*Smell you later, dorks!*” was translated as “*Sampai jumpa, bodoh!*”, utilizing both adaptation and established equivalence. This hybrid approach ensured that both meaning and tone were preserved.

The study also observed that modulation was often employed when the original phrase contained cultural connotations that were not directly translatable. For instance, “*You’re kind of a perv*” was translated as “*Dan kau agak aneh*”, shifting the tone to suit the target audience’s cultural sensitivity.

Overall, these findings highlight the complexity of slang translation in animated films and the need for translators to balance linguistic accuracy with cultural appropriateness.

TABLE 1 Percentage translation techniques used in translating slang words

Translation techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Adaptation	34	47,22%
Established equivalence	24	33,33%
Modulation	8	11,11%
Reduction	3	4,17%
Transposition	1	1,39%
Compensation	1	1,39%

Amplification	1	1,39%
Total	72	100%

The table shows that Adaptation (47.22%) and Established Equivalence (33.33%) techniques are the most dominant, indicating the importance of cultural adjustment and the use of established equivalents, while other techniques such as Modulation (11,11%), Reduction (4,17%), Transposition (1,39%), Compensation (1,39%), and Amplification (1,39%) are used less frequently according to the needs of the translation context.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the importance of adaptation as the most frequently used translation technique for slang words in *Turning Red*. The high percentage of adaptation indicates that translators prioritize cultural relevance and naturalness in the target language, ensuring that Indonesian audiences can understand and relate to the film's dialogue without losing the essence of the original text. The use of existing equivalents also plays an important role in maintaining the meaning of slang words that already have generally accepted translations in Indonesian. In addition, modulation was found to be useful in cases where a shift in point of view was required to maintain the clarity and readability of the translated text. These findings contribute to the wider field of translation studies, particularly in audiovisual translation, by emphasizing the importance of choosing the right technique based on the language and cultural context. The study also underscores the complexity involved in translating slang, as different phrases may require different strategies to ensure accurate and meaningful translations. Future research could further explore audience reception of translated slang in animated films to assess the effectiveness of these techniques. In addition, comparative studies involving different films or languages could provide deeper insights into how slang translation varies across different cultural contexts.

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