



Translation Techniques in the Comic "Pyramid Game"

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the translation techniques used in the comic *Pyramid Game* from English to Bahasa Indonesia. As digital media continues to evolve, digital comics have become an increasingly valuable medium for fostering reading interest and promoting literacy. This study employed a qualitative method to analyze the translation of 15 English sentences from the digital comic into Bahasa Indonesia, selecting sentences from Part 1 to Part 10 based on their linguistic complexity and relevance to the Indonesian context and culture. The findings identified various translation techniques, highlighting their importance in conveying meaning while addressing cultural and linguistic nuances. The study also illustrates how different translation techniques were chosen and applied based on the context of each sentence. This research provides valuable insights for students at Universitas Terbuka and other interested readers, particularly in the field of translation studies, by exploring the diverse strategies applied in translating various materials.

Keywords: Comic, Pyramid Game, Translation.

Introduction

Students' reading interest is a key factor in shaping the future of education, playing a crucial role in the generational development of knowledge and skills. In Indonesia, however, low reading interest among students has become a significant challenge, impacting their reading proficiency and, consequently, their overall academic growth. When students lack engagement with reading, their ability to develop critical literacy skills, such as comprehension, vocabulary, and analytical thinking, is hindered, affecting their performance across various subjects. To address this issue, fostering improved reading habits and providing access to engaging materials—such as comics, graphic novels, and digital resources—can create a more reading-friendly environment. According to the 2024 PISA data, reading interest among Indonesian students remains notably lower compared to their peers in other countries, highlighting the urgent need for interventions that can enhance their enthusiasm for reading and improve literacy outcomes.

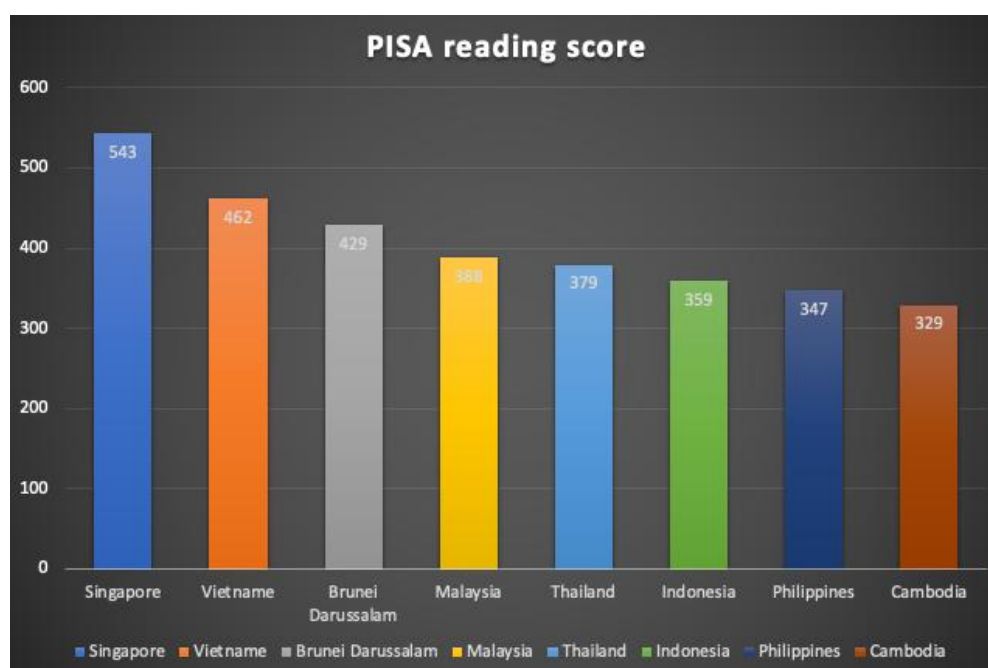


Figure1. PISA, a global survey conducted every three years by the OECD

It can be seen from the data above that Indonesia ranks number 6 in the context of PISA performance in terms of reading skills. Despite some improvements in literacy rankings over the years, Indonesia's students still face significant challenges in reading proficiency. In the latest PISA assessment, the percentage of students who could demonstrate reading skills at higher levels remains limited, with fewer students achieving above the basic reading proficiency level. This study also highlights the challenge of translating digital comics while

maintaining linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance. It underscores the need to improve reading education by enhancing comprehension, critical thinking, and interpretation of translated texts.

According to Santoso and Nugroho (2020), found that both internal and external factors significantly affect the reading proficiency of Indonesian students. They specifically look at how both internal factors (like students' attitudes and reading habits) and external factors (such as school facilities and availability of resources) combine to influence the reading proficiency of Indonesian students.

Factors affecting the low reading interest and reading proficiency among students in Indonesia.

Internal factor: One of the internal factors contributing to students' low interest in reading is their limited reading ability, compounded by a lack of reading habits. Many students struggle to develop consistent reading routines, which includes not setting aside time for reading, engaging in reading only when required by others, and rarely visiting libraries to explore books. The absence of early reading policies or initiatives in schools further exacerbates this issue, as students often lack the motivation or guidance to cultivate a habit of independent reading. Additionally, students often do not take the initiative to seek out reading materials on their own, limiting their exposure to diverse texts and hindering their overall literacy development.

As emphasized by Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), intrinsic motivation, reading interest, and self-regulation are essential factors in determining reading proficiency. When students are motivated and engaged in reading, they are more likely to establish strong reading habits. This aligns with the idea that internal factors, like a student's ability to develop reading habits, play a critical role in shaping their reading success. Without the necessary motivation and consistent reading routines, students may struggle to improve their reading skills, which in turn impacts their academic development.

External factors: This factor can contribute to students' low interest in reading: the school environment, inadequate school libraries, the scarcity of locally produced books and reading materials in Indonesia, and the influence of television and technological advancements. Furthermore, limited access to purchasing reading materials, coupled with a lack of personal book collections among students, exacerbates this issue.

To foster a greater interest in reading, many platforms now exist to help motivate students to read more. The use of comics as a learning medium is crucial, as they have the ability to capture students' attention and facilitate the retention of what they learn. Monnin (2009) states that comics encourage literacy for children rather than hinder it. Additionally, comics can be an engaging choice for educational purposes. Trimo (2007: 22) explains that comic media can enhance vocabulary, simplify abstract concepts, and stimulate students' interest in reading. Similarly, Rosyida (2019: 60) points out that comic media can be tailored to fit specific content and language used in contextual learning.

Several studies have explored the benefits of using comics in education. For instance, Mahendra et al. (2021) found that the use of comics significantly boosted students' motivation to learn. Additionally, Prastowo et al. (2019) found a positive impact of Singhasari comics on students' interest in learning. Narestuti et al. (2021) conducted a study on the use of digital comics in education and observed a substantial improvement in student learning outcomes, from 61% in the first cycle to 93% in the second cycle after the implementation of digital comics.

A recent study in this area focuses on the challenges of visual translation, particularly the alignment of graphic elements with written dialogue or narrative. This research emphasizes the importance of balancing visual elements with textual ones to retain the emotional and narrative essence of the comic. Borodo and Armour (2023) discuss multimodal approaches to comics translation, which integrate visual and textual components, and how these approaches affect the translation process, especially from Japanese to other languages. Similarly, Gottlieb (2020) examines how translators must consider visual elements that are not directly translatable, such as cultural differences in color symbolism, particularly in visual narratives like comics.

Larson (1984: 33) highlights that "translation consists of conveying the meaning of the source language into the recipient language." Another study by Martawijawa and Lestari analyzed the translation techniques used in *Kanjou Hyougen* from Japanese into Indonesian in the comic *Yakusokuno Neverland*. This current research aims to explore the translation analysis of the *Pyramid Game* comic with the goal of sharing knowledge with students at Universitas Terbuka regarding the techniques used in translating comics.

González and Tovares (2021) argue that low reading interest is linked to the challenges faced in translating comics, particularly the difficulty of connecting text with images in a way that is comprehensible. They further suggest that a lack of reading interest can lead to an inability to interpret visual codes effectively in comics. Similarly, Norris (2018) highlights the impact of low reading interest on visual comprehension in comics, noting that understanding the visual symbolism unique to each culture depends largely on readers' literacy levels and their interest in reading.

Furthermore, according to Cholimudin (2005: 205), translations oriented towards the source language can be divided into four types: word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, and semantic translation. On the other hand, translations oriented towards the target language can also be classified into four types: adaptation translation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation. In line with Peter Newmark, describes the translation techniques and methods using the V Diagram below.

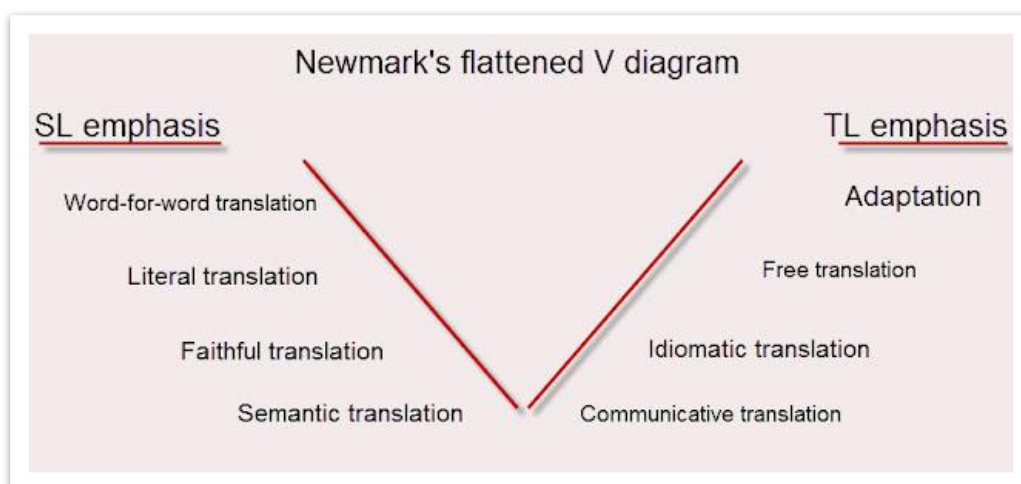


Figure 2. translation techniques and methods using the V Diagram

Based on the background of the study, this study highlights the challenges in translating visual and textual elements in comics and the need for improving reading interest and comprehension and formulates the following research question: "Which translation is most suitable for translating the comic *Pyramid Game*?"

Table 1. Summary of previous research covering methodology, findings, and relevance to this research

No	Author/Year	Methodology	Findings	Relevance to this study
1	Gottlieb (2020)	Case study analysis of visual narrative adaptations in comics.	Explores translation techniques in visual storytelling and cultural adaptation.	Offers insights on how visual elements affect translation in comics, relevant to <i>Pyramid Game</i> .
2	Norris (2018)	Literature review and theoretical analysis of multimodal translation.	Explores the role of multiple semiotic codes in translation, including the interplay of images and text.	Directly relevant for understanding translation techniques in comics, especially balancing visual and textual meaning.
3	Kovacic (2023)	Case study on comic adaptation and translation techniques.	Analyzes the challenges of translating visual narratives and their impact on textual coherence.	Directly ties into translating comics and understanding how visual elements shape translation techniques in <i>Pyramid Game</i> .

Methods

The research conducted in this study was qualitative. The qualitative research method is systematic, planned, and structured from the outset, providing a clear framework for the design of the study.

This particular research was a descriptive research approach. According to Sugiyono (2011: 29), descriptive research is to describe or provide an overview of the object being studied by presenting data or samples collected as they are, without conducting in-depth analysis or drawing general conclusions.

In this study, the sample consisted of a selected portion of the total object, or a small segment of the instruments being studied. The researcher randomly selected 15 sentences

from the story to analyze. The analysis focused on how these sentences are translated using different translation techniques.

The researcher followed specific criteria for selecting the sample sentences. First, the sentences were chosen for their relevance to translation techniques. These sentences reflected how translation techniques are applied in adapting the visual and textual elements of the comic, illustrating how the images and panels interact with the translated text. Second, the researcher aimed to showcase the diversity of translation techniques. The selected sentences demonstrated a variety of techniques, such as lexical translation or cultural adaptation. This approach offered a comprehensive view of how different translation methods are applied in the context of comics.

Result and Discussion

Here are 15 sentences between Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL) in the following table below:

Table 2. Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL)

No	Source of Text (English)	Target of Language (Indonesia)
1	I don't like letting work pile up	Saya tidak suka menunda pekerjaan
2	Did you do the math homework? Yup, here	Kau sudah mengerjakan PR matematika? Sudah, ini
3	Can I have one of your fried shrimps? Right, haha	Yeah, Gorengan udang satu. Apa-apaan haha
4	What's with you?	Apakah kau sudah gila?
5	Who do you think you are?	Apa kau nggak menyadari posisimu?
6	Seungyi, can I borrow some tape?	Seungyi, pinjam tip-ex dong!
7	Oh, no, Seungyi, do you have construction paper? One second	Hei, Seungyi, ada kertas origami nggak? Tunggu, ya
8	Literally, an angle on earth!	Dia bener-bener seperti malaikat!
9	Isn't today your first day at your	Bukankah Sooji hari ini masuk sekolah

	new school, Suji?	baru?
10	We'll come see you in Seoul sometime; just you wait	Lain kali kami akan main ke Seoul, jadi tunggu ya
11	But I didn't really notice her before	Tapi dia gak terlalu menonjol
12	Take your seat, Suji, I'll explain things once you do	Duduk di tempatmu Sooji, aku akan menjelaskannya setelah kau duduk
13	I need to make a video to commemorate the event	Aku harus membuat video kenang-kenangan
14	Seolha, open it up	Seolha coba buka pintunya
15	You're going to open it?	Kau akan membukanya?

This analysis examined the translation methods applied to various English sentences and their corresponding Indonesian translations, highlighting the use of word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptation, free, idiomatic and communicative translations.

1. Original (SL): I don't like letting work pile up

Target (TL): Saya tidak suka menunda pekerjaan

- Translation Method (SL): Semantic Translation
 - Reasoning: The focus here is on conveying the overall meaning rather than translating word-for-word. The sentence expresses frustration with procrastination, which is kept intact in the translation.
- Translation Method (TL): Communicative Translation
 - Reasoning: "Menunda pekerjaan" (delaying tasks) is a commonly understood phrase in Indonesian and communicates the idea of procrastination effectively. It's a natural and relatable expression in the Indonesian context.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker is expressing their dislike for procrastination and the habit of allowing work to accumulate.
- Cultural Context: Procrastination is a common issue discussed among Indonesian students and professionals, and the expression "menunda pekerjaan" is widely understood in the Indonesian school and work culture.

2. Original (SL): Did you do the math homework?

Target (TL): Kau sudah mengerjakan PR matematika? Sudah, ini

- Translation Method (SL): Literal Translation
 - Reasoning: This sentence is translated directly without much deviation since the meaning is clear and concise. The term "math homework" is simply translated as "PR matematika."
- Translation Method (TL): Idiomatic Translation
 - Reasoning: The informal tone of the response "Sudah, ini" is idiomatic and reflects the casual, conversational nature of Indonesian exchanges, especially in student life.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker is confirming whether the other person has completed their homework.
- Cultural Context: "PR" (pekerjaan rumah) is the standard term for homework in Indonesia, and such exchanges are very common in school settings, where students often talk about assignments in a casual manner.

3. Original (SL): Can I have one of your fried shrimps?

Target (TL): Gorengan udang satu

- Translation Method (SL): Literal Translation
 - Reasoning: This is a simple, straightforward translation where "fried shrimp" is translated directly into "gorengan udang."
- Translation Method (TL): Communicative Translation
 - Reasoning: "Gorengan" (fried foods) is a term widely used in Indonesia, especially in street food culture, making this translation culturally fitting and easily understandable.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker is politely requesting one piece of fried shrimp.
- Cultural Context: "Gorengan" (fried foods) are extremely popular in Indonesian street food culture, so the translation captures a familiar situation, likely in a casual food-sharing context.

4. Original (SL): Right, haha

Target (TL): Apa-apaan haha

- Translation Method (SL): Literal Translation

- Reasoning: "Right, haha" is directly translated into Indonesian.
- Translation Method (TL): Idiomatic Translation
 - Reasoning: "Apa-apaan" is a playful Indonesian expression that conveys surprise or amusement, fitting the tone of the original. The addition of "haha" maintains the casual, humorous tone.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker is reacting with humor or disbelief, indicating amusement or surprise.
- Cultural Context: "Apa-apaan" is a common and playful expression in Indonesian that fits well in informal conversations, especially when reacting to something surprising or funny.

5. Original (SL): What's with you?

Target (TL): Apakah kau sudah gila?

- Translation Method (SL): Semantic Translation
 - Reasoning: The focus is on translating the meaning behind the phrase rather than a literal translation. "What's with you?" is understood as asking if the person is acting strangely or out of line.
- Translation Method (TL): Communicative Translation
 - Reasoning: The translation "Apakah kau sudah gila?" (Are you crazy?) keeps the meaning intact while adopting a tone that fits well within Indonesian conversational language.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker is questioning the behavior or actions of the person in a possibly playful or surprised tone.
- Cultural Context: In Indonesian, using "gila" (crazy) is a common way to express disbelief at someone's behavior. This phrasing is widely understood and reflects the informal, humorous side of the conversation.

6. Original (SL): Seungyi, can I borrow some tape?

Target (TL): Seungyi, pinjam tip-ex dong!

- Translation Method (SL): Literal Translation
 - Reasoning: The phrase "Can I borrow some tape?" is translated directly into Indonesian.
- Translation Method (TL): Adaptation Translation

- Reasoning: The term "tip-ex" (a brand of correction fluid) is more culturally relevant in Indonesia than generic "tape," which fits the context of the conversation.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker is making a casual request to borrow some correction fluid.
- Cultural Context: "Tip-ex" is widely recognized in Indonesia, especially in student or office settings. The use of "dong" makes the request sound informal and friendly, which fits everyday conversation among peers.

7. Original (SL): Oh, no, Seungyi, do you have construction paper?

Target (TL): Hei, Seungyi, ada kertas origami nggak?

- Translation Method (SL): Faithful Translation
 - Reasoning: "Construction paper" is translated to "kertas origami" (origami paper), which is more culturally appropriate in the Indonesian context.
- Translation Method (TL): Adaptation Translation
 - Reasoning: The translation uses "kertas origami" (origami paper) since it is more familiar in the Indonesian context, especially for arts and crafts.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker is asking if the other person has any paper suitable for arts and crafts.
- Cultural Context: "Kertas origami" is a common term in Indonesia, especially in schools where origami and paper crafts are often done. It's a term more widely recognized than "construction paper."

8. Original (SL): Literally, an angle on earth!

Target (TL): Dia bener-bener seperti malaikat!

- Translation Method (SL): Semantic Translation
 - Reasoning: The literal phrase "an angle on earth" was translated to a metaphorical expression "seperti malaikat" (like an angel) to better capture the intended meaning and tone.
- Translation Method (TL): Idiomatic Translation
 - Reasoning: The metaphorical expression "seperti malaikat" is used in Indonesian to express admiration, likening someone to an angel, a culturally familiar and powerful image.

- **Speaker's Intended Meaning:** The speaker is expressing admiration, emphasizing that someone is angelic or pure.
- **Cultural Context:** The comparison to an "angel" (malaikat) resonates well in both Indonesian Islamic and Christian contexts, where angels are viewed as pure and kind beings. It reflects admiration for someone's virtuous qualities.

9. Original (SL): Isn't today your first day at your new school, Suji?

Target (TL): Bukankah Suji hari ini masuk sekolah baru?

- **Translation Method (SL): Literal Translation**
 - **Reasoning:** This sentence is translated literally as it's straightforward and doesn't require major alterations.
- **Translation Method (TL): Faithful Translation**
 - **Reasoning:** The translation keeps the same question structure, which makes it natural and clear in Indonesian.
- **Speaker's Intended Meaning:** The speaker is asking if today is Suji's first day at a new school.
- **Cultural Context:** Starting at a new school is a big event in Indonesia, and the phrase is very relatable in the Indonesian context, particularly for students.

10. Original (SL): We'll come see you in Seoul sometime; just you wait

Target (TL): Lain kali kami akan main ke Seoul, jadi tunggu ya

- **Translation Method (SL): Literal Translation**
 - **Reasoning:** The meaning of the original sentence is conveyed directly, with slight changes for a more natural flow in Indonesian.
- **Translation Method (TL): Communicative Translation**
 - **Reasoning:** "Main ke" is a casual and idiomatic expression in Indonesian, meaning to visit or hang out. This is more natural and culturally appropriate in casual conversation.
- **Speaker's Intended Meaning:** The speaker is reassuring the listener that they will visit them in Seoul in the future.
- **Cultural Context:** The term "main ke" is widely used in Indonesia to describe visiting or hanging out with friends, making it fit well within an informal, friendly conversation.

11. Original (SL): But I didn't really notice her before

Target (TL): Tapi dia gak terlalu menonjol

12. Original (SL): We'll come see you in Seoul sometime; just you wait

- Translation Method (SL): Semantic Translation
 - Reasoning: The sentence conveys the idea of not having noticed someone before, which is kept intact in the translation. The phrase "didn't really notice" is translated to "gak terlalu menonjol," which shifts from a direct "noticing" to focusing on the idea of someone not standing out or being prominent.
- Translation Method (TL): Idiomatic Translation
 - Reasoning: "Gak terlalu menonjol" (not too noticeable) is an idiomatic expression in Indonesian that conveys the intended meaning in a way that's natural and relatable in the Indonesian cultural context.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker is explaining that they did not pay attention to or "notice" someone in the past, possibly because the person didn't draw attention or wasn't prominent in their environment.
- Cultural Context: In Indonesian culture, the expression "menonjol" (to stand out) is frequently used to describe someone or something that catches attention, which makes the translation relatable.

13. Original (SL): *I need to make a video to commemorate the event*

Target (TL): *Aku harus membuat video kenang-kenangan*

- Translation Method (SL): Faithful Translation
 - Reasoning: The translation remains close to the original structure and meaning but slightly adapts for naturalness. The phrase "*to commemorate the event*" is translated as "*kenang-kenangan*," which captures the essence of remembering an event.
- Translation Method (TL): Adaptation Translation
 - Reasoning: The phrase "*kenang-kenangan*" is an adaptation rather than a literal translation of "*to commemorate the event*." While the English version emphasizes the act of commemorating, the Indonesian translation shifts the focus slightly toward a keepsake or memory (*kenang-kenangan* means "souvenir" or "something to remember").

- Speaker's Intended Meaning: The speaker wants to express the necessity of making a video as a way to remember or honor a specific event.
- Cultural Context: In Indonesian, "*kenang-kenangan*" is commonly used to refer to something that serves as a memory of an occasion, often a physical object or media like photos and videos. This makes the translation feel natural and relatable to Indonesian speakers.

14. Original (SL): Seolha, open it up

Target (TL): Seolha coba buka pintunya

- Translation Method (SL): Literal Translation
 - Reasoning: The translation closely follows the original structure but adds "pintunya" (the door) for clarity in Indonesian.
- Translation Method (TL): Communicative Translation
 - Reasoning: "Coba buka pintunya" sounds more natural and polite in Indonesian, making it more contextually appropriate.
- Speaker's Intended Meaning refers to what the speaker actually wants to express in the sentence. It helps clarify the intended message behind their words.
- Cultural Context explains how the meaning of the sentence fits into the target culture. It considers how people in that culture typically express similar ideas and whether the translation aligns with common language use and social norms.

15. Original (SL): You're going to open it?

Target (TL): Kau akan membukanya?

- Translation Method (SL): Literal Translation
 - Reasoning: The translation follows the original sentence structure closely while maintaining the same meaning.
- Translation Method (TL): Faithful Translation
 - Reasoning: The phrase "*Kau akan membukanya?*" stays true to the original meaning without significant changes, making it a direct yet natural translation.
- The speaker is asking if the listener intends to open something.
- Cultural Context: The use of "*Kau*" is slightly formal, and in casual Indonesian, "*Kamu*" or "*Lo*" (informal) might be more common depending on the context.

Each translation method was chosen based on the need to either stay faithful to the source language or to adapt the phrasing to the Indonesian context while preserving the speaker's original intent. By combining literal translation, semantic translation, idiomatic translation, faithful translation, and communicative translation, the meaning and tone of the original English phrases are effectively conveyed while considering the cultural nuances of Indonesian speakers.

This study lies in its exploration of how these translation techniques are uniquely tailored to fit the Indonesian cultural context, specifically in everyday, informal conversations. This highlights how translations, while remaining faithful to the original message, also take into account the local language's expressions, slang, and cultural familiarity. For example, the use of "tip-ex" for "correction fluid" or "kertas origami" for "construction paper" demonstrates the adaptation of terminology that resonates with Indonesian students and their common experiences. This study showcases how effective translation not only bridges linguistic gaps but also brings a fresh perspective on how language evolves and adapts within specific cultural settings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this analysis reveals that the most commonly used translation methods are communicative translation and literal translation, both of which serve to make the text accessible and culturally relevant while maintaining the original meaning. Communicative translation is particularly prevalent, as it allows for the adaptation of expressions that feel natural and idiomatic in the Indonesian context, such as in the use of "menunda pekerjaan" for "letting work pile up" or "main ke" for "come see you." On the other hand, literal translation is applied when the original meaning is straightforward and does not require heavy adaptation, as seen in phrases like "Kau sudah mengerjakan PR matematika?" (Did you do the math homework?).

This study offers valuable insights for students at Universitas Terbuka and others studying translation, particularly those focusing on multimedia content such as comics. By examining various translation methods like literal, communicative, and idiomatic translations, students can learn to adapt content effectively to suit both the linguistic and cultural needs of the target audience. The research highlights how different techniques,

such as keeping cultural relevance in mind, can help ensure that translated materials are engaging and accessible. For students at Universitas Terbuka, this study serves as a practical reference to help develop skills necessary for translating various types of content—whether it's educational material, comics, or children's literature—and making them relatable to Indonesian readers. The study also underscores the importance of understanding both the source language and the cultural nuances of the target language, fostering a deeper comprehension of translation's role in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps.

Future research could delve deeper into how specific translation techniques work across different genres of non-literary texts. Comparative studies between translating comics and other types of multimedia content could offer insights into the unique challenges and strategies involved in these forms of translation.

This study primarily focused on the linguistic aspects of comic translation, such as word choice, sentence structure, and cultural adaptation of text. However, comic translation involves more than just language; it also includes the integration of visual elements, layout, and design. This study did not explore the interaction between the text and visuals in-depth, which is a key aspect of comic translation. Future research could examine the role of visuals and how they influence translation choices or how the collaboration between translators and graphic designers impacts the final product.

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