

AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE-BASED TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES IN THE DUBBING OF THE SONG “I SEE THE LIGHT” IN DISNEY’S TANGLED

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the language-based translation techniques applied in the Indonesian dubbing of the song “I See the Light” from Disney’s Tangled, aiming to identify the most dominant technique used. Employing a qualitative approach, the research enables an in-depth analysis of translation strategies within the audiovisual context. The data consist of the original English lyrics and their Indonesian dubbed version, analyzed using Molina and Albir’s (2002) framework of translation techniques. The findings reveal eight techniques: modulation, literal translation, reduction, amplification, adaptation, discursive creation, generalization, and transposition. Among these, modulation is the most frequently employed technique, followed by literal translation. The dominance of modulation indicates the translator’s effort to adjust meaning, perspective, and expression to align with melody, rhythm, and synchronization constraints in dubbing. Meanwhile, literal translation helps maintain narrative clarity and emotional nuance. Overall, the study highlights the complexity of song translation in audiovisual media, where linguistic accuracy, cultural adaptation, and musical requirements must be balanced. It contributes to audiovisual translation studies by demonstrating how language-based techniques preserve meaning, rhythm, and emotional impact for Indonesian audiences.

Keywords: *Audiovisual Translation, Dubbing, Translation Techniques, Song Translation, Modulation*

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation plays a crucial role in communication between languages. It helps transfer spoken or written content from a source language into a target language while keeping the original meaning and cultural values. According to Lubis (2023), translation is not only about changing words but also about adapting culture, tone, and even songs so that the message can be understood well by the target audience. Khotimah (2023) also added that this becomes more challenging in song translation because songs combine language and music to express cultural values.

In the film industry, dubbing or sulih suara in Indonesian, is an important way to make films available to audiences around the

world. Qaid (2021) explained that dubbing is one of the most common methods to translate for international viewers. Dubbing not only translates but also matches the characters’ lip movements and expressions. Brannon et al. (2020) note that dubbing should retain the original meaning, sound natural, and align the timing of the video. Nicolae (2018) adds that dubbing requires both language and technical skills to make sure the result is natural and faithful to the original film.

Songs in films are often used to show the feelings and thoughts of the characters, which are sometimes difficult to express in dialogue (Vinh, 2025; Elia et al., 2024; Sinambela, 2020). The evidence comes from multiple film studies analyses spanning different cinematic traditions and time periods that film music functions as “a tool that can expose the inner feelings and

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thoughts of characters” (Green et al., 2010). Unlike spoken dialogue, songs combine language with rhythm, melody, and rhyme, which makes their translation more complex as translators must preserve meaning while fitting the lyrics into the musical structure. Beyond conceptual meaning, translating expressions that involve other types of meaning is particularly challenging. In addition to knowledge of the source language (SL) and target language (TL), translators require additional expertise to read between the lines and capture the core meaning (Wiles, 2020). As mentioned by Fitria (2024) that songs in films are used to convey characters' feelings and thoughts, providing setting information, explaining moods, and maintaining narrative continuity, often serving as a substitute for dialogue. In line with this Charoenpong and Kanokpermpoon (2023) state that in song translation, idioms or cultural references may need to be changed creatively to fit the target audience without losing the original message. Díaz-Cintas (2019) also explained that song translation is part of audiovisual translation (AVT), which requires translators to make sure the translation is both accurate and enjoyable for the audience. Additionally, Fadilla et al. (2024) added that translators must convey the meaning, concepts, and ideas in the source language (SL) most naturally to the target language (TL).

Based on Díaz-Cintas (2019), audiovisual translation (AVT) is an academic discipline and professional activity that involves the localization of audiovisual media content by means of different translation practices. This definition highlights AVT's dual nature, as both a scholarly field and a professional practice aimed at making media accessible across languages and cultures. According to Neves (2022), audiovisual translation (AVT) refers to the translation of materials in which the verbal sphere is supplemented by elements from other communication channels. Similarly, Cui (2025) explained that audiovisual translation (AVT) focuses on the practices, processes, and products that are involved in or result from the transfer of multimodal and multimedia content across languages and/or cultures. Gambier (2021) also highlights the diversity of genres (news,

fiction, documentaries, animated films, television and web series, children's programmes, operas, musicals, sitcoms, commercials, video games, corporate videos, etc. because each genre involves different modes of expression and communicative purposes, this becomes especially evident in song dubbing, where language must align with music and visual performance at the same time. In musical films such as Disney's productions, this diversity demands greater creativity and precision to synchronize lyrics, melody, and visuals while preserving meaning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have discussed the translation of songs. Lubis (2023) studied the translation of *Disney's Frozen 2* soundtrack and found that adaptation was often used to keep the meaning and rhythm. Dhananjaya et al. (2019) also studied *Frozen* and found that translation choices could strongly affect how audiences feel the emotion of the song. Another study by Haryati et al. (2023) looked at the subtitle and dubbing of songs in *Doraemon*, focusing on accuracy and acceptability. They found that subtitles often used literal translation, while dubbing used more modulation and reduction. These studies give useful information about song translation, but most of them focus on *Frozen* or *Doraemon*. This indicates that researchers in Indonesia tend to choose popular and widely accessible films as their objects of study, which makes the findings relevant to large audiences. However, the concentration on a few titles also shows that translation research in Indonesia has not fully explored other works, leaving space for studies on different films such as *Tangled*.

However, there is a film that also places great importance on music, *Tangled*, released by Walt Disney Animation Studios in 2010. The movie adapts the classic fairy tale of Rapunzel. Among its soundtrack, the song “I See the Light” stands out as the most iconic piece, performed by the main characters Rapunzel and Flynn Rider. Narratively, “I See the Light” represents a turning point in the story, portraying the character's emotional growth and deepening

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their relationship. Its symbolic significance makes the song not only central to the film but also particularly challenging to translate, especially in the context of dubbing.

This gap is significant because research on the Indonesian dubbed version of “I See the Light” remains very limited. While earlier studies have concentrated on *Frozen* and *Doraemon*, little attention has been paid to how this song has been adapted for Indonesian audiences. Since the selection of appropriate translation techniques plays a crucial role in determining translation quality (Widarwati et al., 2019).

To address this gap, the present study aims to: (1) analyze the translation techniques used in the Indonesian dubbed version of “I See the Light”, and (2) identify which translation technique is most frequently employed the results are expected to provide a clearer understanding of how translation strategies are applied in song dubbing to preserve the meaning, rhythm, and emotions of the original. This study also seeks to contribute to translation studies in Indonesia by expanding the discussion beyond the frequently analyzed works such as *Frozen* or *Doraemon*, focusing instead on *Tangled* as a different yet equally significant example of musical dubbing. Furthermore, the discussion are expected to offer new insights into how translation strategies can balance linguistic accuracy, cultural adaptation, and musical synchronization in audiovisual media

3. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze the translation techniques applied to the Indonesian dubbed version of the song “I See the Light” from Disney’s *Tangled*. A qualitative approach is considered suitable because it allows the researcher to describe the data in detail and interpret the meaning behind the translation choices. According to Ho et.al. (2019) a qualitative approach is suitable for detailed data description and interpretation because it enhances researcher engagement, transparency, cultural sensitivity, and handling of sensitive data. Moreover, this

research involves examining naturally occurring language in an existing audiovisual product rather than controlled experimental data, which aligns with the principles of naturalistic inquiry. Neuman (2019) explained that qualitative approach studies tend to draw from naturalistic inquiry, which purports a commitment to studying something in its natural state to the extent that is possible within the context of the research arena.

The main data source is the Indonesian lyrics, which are compared with the original English version. Previous studies have also used song lyrics as their primary data to analyze translation strategies in audiovisual contexts. Putri and Supardi (2018) analyzed songs from *Frozen* and showed the translation choices affected the delivery of meaning and emotion in the target language. Their study demonstrated that song lyrics can serve as affective linguistic data for investigating translation techniques. The English lyrics were obtained from the official soundtrack, while the Indonesian lyrics were transcribed directly by the researcher from the Indonesian audio of Disney’s *Tangled*, accessed through YouTube with the video titled “Tangled I See the Light Bahasa Indonesia”. The transcription process was carried out to ensure that the data analyzed accurately represented the version of the song used in the film. Similarly, Haryati et al. (2023) examined the subtitles and dubbing of songs in *Doraemon*, in which they transcribed the Indonesian versions of the lyrics to ensure that the data accurately reflected the songs as they appeared in the film.

The study employs the framework of Molina and Albir (2002), which is widely used in translation studies. The framework outlines a variety of translation techniques, including adaptation, literal translation, and paraphrasing, as well as examining how these techniques affect synchronization with the characters’ lip movements. This framework is chosen because it offers a comprehensive classification of techniques that can account for the linguistic, cultural, and contextual aspects of translation. Lubis (2023) also applied Molina and Albir’s (2002)

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framework in analyzing the translation of the song “Into the Unknown” from Disney’s Frozen 2, showing its usefulness in identifying strategies to preserve meaning and rhythm. By using this framework, the study is able to systematically identify and categorize the strategies applied in the dubbing process.

The steps of analysis include: (1) collecting the original and dubbed lyrics, (2) comparing the source text (English) with the target text (Indonesian), (3) classifying the translation techniques based on Molina and Albir’s framework, and (4) identifying the most frequently used translation technique. This method allows a clear understanding of how translation strategies are applied in dubbing to maintain meaning, rhythm, and naturalness. Similar procedures were also applied by Lubis (2023) in analyzing the Indonesian dubbing of Disney’s Frozen 2 soundtrack, which further supports the reliability of this methodological approach.

By adapting these established steps, the present study ensures a systematic and replicable analysis of translation techniques in song dubbing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**1) Results**

This study addresses two research questions. The first question concerns the translation techniques used in the Indonesian dubbing of the Disney song “I See the Light.” The second question is related to identifying which translation technique is most frequently employed throughout the dubbing process. These two questions will be elaborated in detail through the presentation and analysis of the data.

Translation technique

Table 1. Example of Translation Techniques in The Dubbing of

Source Text (English)	Target Text (Indonesian)	Tecnique (Molina & Albir)
All those years outside looking in	Apa yang ada di luaran	Discursive creation
Now I’m here, suddenly I see	Tiba-tiba aku melihat	Transposition
And it’s warm and real and bright	Hangatnya keadaan cerah	Modulation
All those years living in a blur	Telah lama tak tentu arah	Modulation

Frequently Use Technique

After collecting the lyrics of I See the Light and comparing the original English version with the Indonesian dubbed version, the analysis was conducted using Molina and

Albir’s (2002) framework. The findings show that several translation techniques appear repeatedly throughout the song. To provide a clearer overview, the results of this comparison are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Frequently Use Technique

No	Translation Technique	Amount Dubbing Version
1.	Adaptation	2
2	Amplification	4
3	Borrowing	-
4	Calque	-
5	Compensation	-
6	Description	-
7	Discursive creation	1
8	Conventional equivalence	-
9	Generalization	1
10	Linguistic amplification	-
11	Linguistic compression	-
12	Literal translation	10
13	Modulation	11
14	Particulization	-

15	Reduction	7
16	Subtitution	-
17	Transposition	1
18	Variation	-
TOTAL		39

Discussion

After analysing the data, it was found that several translation techniques were employed in the Indonesian dubbing of *I See the Light*. These techniques include literal translation, modulation, reduction, amplification, adaptation, discursive creation, generalization, and transposition (Bielykh & Charikova, 2024; Abadou, 2024; Nygård, 2024). Each technique was applied depending on the context of the lyrics, the need for synchronization, and the musical arrangement.

Among these techniques, modulation was the most frequently used, appearing 11 times, followed closely by literal translation with 10 occurrences. This shows that the translator often needed to adjust the meaning or perspective of the rhythm of the song. At the same time, literal translation was maintained in lines that carried strong emotional or narrative significance, ensuring that the original message remained clear to the audience.

The frequent use of modulation also reflects one of the main challenges of audiovisual translation, particularly in dubbing songs, where synchronization with music, rhythm, and character lip movements is essential. Obenza and Silah (2024) claim that the repeated use of modulation highlights the difficulty of balancing musical

rhythm and visual synchronization, which frequently outweighs literal accuracy in dubbed songs. Meanwhile, reduction was employed in lines where words or phrases were omitted to achieve better timing with the melody, without significantly altering the overall message of the song.

Thus, it can be concluded that modulation is the most of translation technique used in the dubbing of the song *I See the Light*, indicating its central role in maintaining harmony between lyrics and visuals. This finding supports previous research such as Anjani (2023), who also noted the frequent use of adaptation and modulation in the translation of Disney songs. From a pedagogical perspective, the frequent use of modulation in song dubbing also provides valuable insights for English Language Teaching (ELT). It demonstrates how linguistic flexibility and creativity are essential in translation practice, particularly when adapting between languages with different syntactic and cultural systems. According to Gee and Gee (2020) said that Linguistic flexibility and creativity are essential in translation practice for adapting between languages with different syntactic and cultural systems, requiring strategies like equivalence, adaptation, and modulation to convey meaning and preserve tone. Teachers can use translated song as authentic materials to help students understand how meaning can be conveyed in various ways while maintaining naturalness and emotional

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impact. This argument in line with Manninen (2021) that pedagogically, translated songs offer multiple advantages: they stimulate cognitive processes, activate emotional engagement, and provide multisensory learning experiences. Moreover, analyzing modulation in song translation can encourage students to think critically about equivalence, adaptation, and communicative purpose in translation, bridging linguistic theory and real-world application.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the language-based translation techniques employed in the Indonesian dubbing of Disney's "I See the Light" from *Tangled* through the lens of Molina and Albir's (2002) framework. The analysis identified eight techniques modulation, literal translation, reduction, amplification, adaptation, discursive creation, generalization, and transposition with modulation emerging as the most dominant. Its prevalence indicates the translator's priority in adjusting semantic perspective and syntactic structure to achieve harmony with rhythm, melody, and lip synchronization, ensuring that the lyrics remain natural and performable within musical constraints. Literal translation, used with nearly equal frequency, functioned to preserve narrative substance and emotional intensity, thereby maintaining coherence between the English original and the Indonesian rendition.

The complementary application of amplification, adaptation, and reduction further reflects a deliberate effort to balance linguistic precision with artistic fluency. Adaptation effectively localized culturally bound expressions, while reduction and amplification helped maintain timing without diminishing emotional resonance.

Broadly, this study enriches the discourse on Audiovisual Translation (AVT) in Indonesia by foregrounding *Tangled* as a meaningful case study. Pedagogically, it offers valuable insights for ELT, illustrating translation as both a linguistic and creative endeavor. Future research may explore comparative dubbing strategies and their

impact on audience reception and intercultural communication.

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