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Potential of Composition Market: Public Acceptance in Translated Musical Works on YouTube Platform

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Abstract

Due to the worldwide demand for music consumption, more songs are translated into several languages. However, it remains a question whether the public i) prefers a loosely translated version, or ii) prefers a word-by-word translated version. Inspired by online data mining in business analytics, this quantitative research studied the public's sentiments on two translated versions of Disney's "We Don't Talk About Bruno" song on the YouTube platform. Through semantic analysis, the researchers had found that the public prefers loosely, poetically, translated songs whilst preferring the harmony, melody, and musical sense of the songs to be retained.

Keywords: translation techniques; compositional market; public acceptance; online data mining.

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1.0 Introduction

Lyric translation is conducted when a song is written in another language. This action is mainly done to suit the consumer demands on a musical work that shared across language borders. It is clear to many multi-lingual individuals that lyric translation is not a new phenomenon. It is in fact a common practice, especially in religious pieces or nursery rhymes. However, according to Golomb (2005), music-linked translation or translation of song lyrics is a relatively new field of linguistic research. Aware of the dire need for findings to unveil the music industry, the researchers studied the public sentiments and preferences on translated songs and the techniques preferred by the general public. Therefore, this paper presents a study on two translated versions of a Walt Disney Record production entitled We Don't Talk About Bruno, a soundtrack from a Walt Disney Animation Studio film namely Encanto. The studied translated versions were in Malay and Indonesian. Despite the targeted public of the two versions being seemingly different, the researchers were accidentally made aware of a viral discussion on the TikTok platform that compares the translation techniques conducted on We Don't Talk About Bruno's Malay-translated version and Indonesian-translated versions. The present study was conducted by a TikTok account from the Malaysian and Indonesian public. This has aroused the curiosity of the researchers to identify the preferred lyric translation techniques among comments from the public. The result of this research would be helpful to music composers as a lyric translation guideline in producing marketable translated song versions.

2.0 Literature Review

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Due to the technological developments that enable an entertainment medium shared across borders and language borders, the translation business flourished over time. Locals are commissioned by international corporates to produce local language versions to gain the local audience's interest. Walt Disney Animation Studios is one of the corporates actively hiring locals to make translated versions of their products. Most of their products are available in several languages mentioned by Gutierrez (2018) in the Disney, 'Moana' is available in 45 languages and Disney is even adding Hawaiian to the list. The translations were not only restricted to the film script but the translation was also broadcast in the movie songs. This proves that the translation business is not only active but kept busy fulfilling the demands of both the commissioners and the audience. Understanding the target audience preference would not only provide a better chance for the translation business to flourish but eventually provides a better opportunity for the composition market to succeed.

2.1 Music translations

Music translation is challenging as the translations are restricted to elements such as tempo, harmony, and stability. These were mentioned by Franzon (2008), indicating the options in song translation and the concept of 'stability' from a functional perspective, and strategic choices made by lyricists in translating songs. Assuming that a song has all the three properties; music, lyrics, and performance, and the music has all three components; melody, harmony, and musical sense, Franzon suggested five options to lyric translators such as i) leaving the song untranslated, ii) translating the lyrics without considering the music, iii) writing new lyrics to the original music, iv) adapting the music to the translation and v) adapting the translation to the music. In the attempt to understand the targeted preferences, the researchers used the options stated by the scholar to identify the lyric translation techniques favored by the public.

2.2 Translation techniques

The history of translations can be traced back thousands of years, and the word translation comes from the Latin word *translatum*, which means 'to transfer' (Simpson et al., 1989). According to Altarabin (2019), there are 12 methods and procedures for translations. After studying them, the researchers found several methods were used in the Malay and Indonesian translated version of Encanto soundtrack, *We Do Not Talk About Bruno*. According to Munday (2016) in Altarabin (2019), a literal translation is also called word-for-word translation. This is done when a translator translates one word at a time and follows source text word order when translating into a target language. This conduct is detected in several phrases translated into the Indonesian version.

According to Newmark's later work (1988), another translation method is idiomatic translation, which is the act of reproducing the original's message. Altarabin (2019) claims that it prefers colloquialisms and idioms that do not exist in the original. For example, when an English text is translated into Arabic, it sounds like 'He didn't get anything' to 'He returned empty-handed.' This type of translation has been discovered in the Malay version of *'We Do Not Talk About Bruno.'*

3. Methodology

According to Adedoyin (2020), quantitative research organized inquiry about the phenomenon through a collection of numerical data and execution of statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. As this research is intended to understand YouTube's audience preference in translation techniques used in translated songs, a lot of data is needed to represent the choice of the majority. Hence, the researchers were bound to adopt the quantitative research approach for this study.

As for research design, according to Mertler (2016) in descriptive research, the researcher is simply studying the phenomenon of interest as it exists naturally; no attempt is made to manipulate the individuals, conditions or events. In the attempt of getting genuine public feedback on their preferences and sentiments towards translated works, the researchers opted for the social media platform, YouTube to gain secondary data from the comments left by general public.

3.1 Data collection

Even though the researchers were made aware of the debated issue from the TikTok platform, the researchers decided to collect data directly from official sources which were commissioned by the main corporation. Therefore, the researchers referred to two YouTube accounts that posted commissioned products of Universal Music Groups Malaysia and Universal Music Groups Indonesia. From these two accounts, the researchers gained secondary data, through the observation technique conducted on the comments made by the public on the said YouTube platform. An amount of 149 and 157 comments were collected for the Malay version and Indonesian version respectively.

3.2 Theoretical framework

In this study, we categorize comments into positive and negative sentiments to understand the public's preferred translation techniques used for lyric translation. The researchers adopted the Sentiment Analysis as a guideline to classify the public's responses to the translated versions of *'We Do Not Talk About Bruno.'* Farhad et al. (2016) explained the sentiment analysis that the goal is to discover people's opinions expressed in written language. As this research aimed to understand the YouTube audience's preferences on two versions of translated works, sentiment analysis fits like a perfect glove to this research.

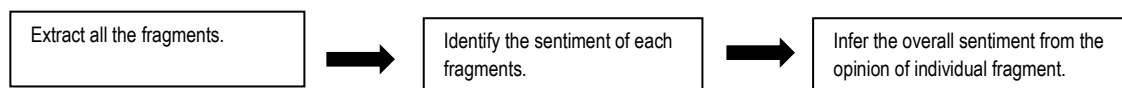


Figure 1: Process of Sentiment Identification

The comments available on two main accounts that posted the Malay and Indonesian versions were extracted manually and placed on an Excel Sheet. The researchers then divided the themed finding into three categories, namely i) positive, ii) negative, and iii) unrelated.

3.2 Data analysis

According to Yellapu (2018) descriptive statistics are used to summarize data in an organized manner by describing the relationship between variables in a sample or population. As this correlational research studies the relationship between the types of lyric translations and the public sentiment towards translated songs, the researchers separated the data into two categories; loosely translated lyrics (Malay translation) and directly translated (Indonesian translation). The data collected for each category were then classified into three classes which are positive, negative and unrelated.

Comments that have positive words towards the lyrics such as love, good, nice, best, like, great, and several others that the researchers consider positive views on the lyrics were placed in the positive columns. Whereas comments that question the choice of translated words, prefer the other translated language version, and provide suggestions for a different translation, were deemed as dissatisfied with the translated version, hence having a negative view of the translation.

The final category was named unrelated, where the comments that discuss the harmony, singing techniques, or other unrelated issues with the lyrics were identified. The researchers also took into account those comments that agree or disagree with statements made by other audiences on the platform. As the platform allows the audience to interact with one another, some audience members leave short comments as a show of agreement or disagreement with what is being said by an individual in the comment form. For example, if an individual posted "I agree." We referred to the beginning of the conversation to understand the individual's agreement position before categorizing it into one of the themes in response to a comment made on the platform.

3.3 Validity and reliability

To ensure the validity of the research is kept visibly, the researchers purposely adapted the Semantic Analysis method as a guide to classify the collected data. Other than that, to avoid biases in the data collection process, the researchers purposely used secondary data, readily available data that expresses the thoughts of individuals on the platform. According to Orehek et al. (2017), social media is a good way to accurately and positively portray personality traits. They also claim that these findings apply to previously unstudied personality traits such as impulsivity, self-esteem, and attachment style. This suggested that due to the nonface-to-face confrontations, whatever is being written in the media reflects the in-depth thoughts that individuals usually keep to themselves in physical communications. As this research compares two translated versions from neighboring countries which are friendly-rival relationships, the researchers chose to refer to the readily available opinion broadcast on YouTube platforms.

Even though the audiences of the two translated versions could not be kept from the same sample for reliability, this is still the best way to find out what the public wants in terms of how songs are translated. This is because no song has ever been translated into two different versions in the same language in different ways. Because Malaysia and Indonesia are so close to each other, they often share words. This is called "cognate language," and it helps the people of both countries notice the similarities and differences in the translations (Stamenov, 2009). The translation skills of one of the researchers, who had worked in the translation industry for seven years, were also very important to this study. The researcher is a full-time translator and writer for an international company based in Malaysia. In addition, both private and public institutions still hire her to do translation work on the side.

4.0 Findings

A total of 134 data and 95 data were collected for Malay and Indonesian versions respectively. This data was collected on the 30th of December 2021, and new comments available on the platform were not taken into consideration. The table below shows the findings of the research, prepared by the researchers.

Table 1: Public sentiments towards the translated version of We Don't Talk About Bruno, Encanto, Soundtrack.

Public Sentiments	Malay Version	Indonesian Version
Positive	N = 55, 41%	N = 15, 16%
Negative	N = 2, 1.5%	N = 32, 33.5%
Unrelated	N = 77, 57.5%	N = 48, 50.5%

For the Malay version, the comments with positive views towards the lyrics translations were (N = 55, 41 percent), while the comments with negative views on the lyrics translations of the Malay version were (N = 2, 1.5 percent), and several (N = 77, 57.5 percent) comments were not related to the accepted translation of the lyrics in any way.

Although, for the Indonesian version, 16 percent of the comments available were the translation techniques used for the lyric translation, which was followed by several (N = 32, 33.5 percent) that have negative views on the lyrics. These comments disagree with the translation technique that was used, suggest their preferences in translation, and express their liking towards another version of translations. The final category, which was "unrelated" to the Indonesian version and had N equal to 48 and a percentage of 50.58, is where the data comes to a close.

5.0 Conclusion

The Malay-translated version was translated in a quite casual fashion using a variety of translation methods. The idiomatic translation as mentioned by Altarabin (2019) was one of the methods of translation that the researchers discovered in the Malay-translated version. This method was discovered when the original phrase of the English version, "Seven-foot frame, rats along his back," was translated to the Malay version as "Tinggi lampai, tikus dibelai," which brings the meaning of "Tall and lean, a rat is caressed." As the translated version used an idiom that does not exist in the original, this confirms that the Malay-translated version had adopted the idiomatic translation technique and it is one of the most praised parts of translation techniques received from the public.

Whilst for the Indonesian-translated version, the literal translation technique was used to translate the same line. However, unlike the Malay-translated version, the translation was met with rather negative feedback. The translated version which sounded as "Badannya tinggi, tikus di punggung," which, if translated back to English holds the meaning of "His body is tall, Rat on his bottom," was severely condemned due to its direct translation and its lack of rhyme. During the analysis, the researchers also noticed that both English and Malay version has four syllables in each said sentence, while the Indonesian version has 5 syllables. Referring to Franzon's (2008) options in lyric translation, the Malay version had adapted the translation to the music, while the Indonesian version had adapted the music to the translation by breaking the tempo of a single crotchet (one beat) to two quavers (half beat).

Table 2: Translation techniques based on Franzon's lyric translation options.

Translation version	Content	Syllables per beat (/)	Beat amount
English version	Seven-foot frame	Se / ven / foot / frame	Four crotchets
Malay version	Tinggi lampai	Ting / gi / lam / pai	Four crotchet s
Indonesian version	Badannya tinggi	Badan / nya / ting / gi	Two quavers and three crotchets

As the Malay-translated version is easily singable, rhymes, and similar to the original version in both meaning and tempo, this verse was met with a great deal of acclaim from the general people. This shows that the technique of adapting the translation to the music as mentioned by Franzon (2008) is far favored by the public in comparison to the technique of adapting the music to the translation.

Interestingly, despite getting negative feedback on the Indonesian translation, specific agreements were also found in the support of the Indonesian version which said that the poetry translation of the Malay version would be too difficult to be understood by the intended primary audience, which consisted of young children. This, however, was contested by several other individuals, who voiced their disagreement by stating that it would be beneficial exposure and practice for the children to use infrequently used Malay idioms and phrases.

Leaving aside the comments and opinions that were not directly related to the lyrics, the bulk of the audience (N=55, or 41% of the total) had provided a favorable response to the loosely yet poetically translated Malay version. The vast majority of people who commented on the translation commended the translator's ability to make the phrases rhyme wonderfully with one another. However, there was 1.5 percent of participants who disagreed with the phrase of "He told me my fish would die, the next day, dead" being translated to "Katanya Ikan Emasku 'kan Lemas," which, when directly translated into the English language, sounded like "it is reported that my goldfish will drown." Unhappy with the dissimilarity to the original meaning due to the addition of goldfish in the translated version, numerous people defended the translations by stating that it still embodies the concept of irony and that it opens the door to interpretations of a subconscious or double meaning for the individual.

Concerning the Indonesian version, it had been subjected to a great deal of criticism, with a certain number of folks likening it to the conduct of Google Translate, which is notorious for producing translations that are word-for-word literal. It was however previously explained by the Indonesian version translator in his previous work after receiving the same kind of criticism that the literal translation was done due to the instructions received from the higher up of the corporate that it was done due to the literal translation being done due to the instructions received from the higher up of the corporate. The translator even said that in his prior work, the translation was done stringently because the translator conducting the commissioned job was only given a limited amount of creative leeway. This was further called into doubt by the general public when it was discovered that the rhythm of the song had not been preserved, specifically when it was discovered that the echo of "no, no, no" at the beginning of the song had not been followed in the Indonesian version of the

song. The public did not react favorably to any of the music-translation choices provided by Franzon, and they did not react favorably either to the adaptation of music to the translations.

Therefore, even though the public prefers the translator to provide an idiomatic, rhyme, and loose translation, the public also prefers the translator to maintain a song's rhythm, harmony, and melody. To accomplish this, the translator or lyricist needs to work closely with the composers.

This finding is limited in that it only pertains to one particular case scenario of translation, which is a limitation. This occurs as a result of the need for a significant quantity of manpower as well as time to investigate comparable situations that had attracted thousands of online opinions. Despite this constraint, the possibility exists for additional research of a similar nature in the future, which might be developed into a series, to understand the patterns of the public's preference regarding the linguistic components of a song. The translation of music has been demonstrated to be a revenue-generating activity for both corporate and municipal organizations. As the mining of web data is credible for commercial purposes, additional research needs to be done to gain a better understanding of the demand from the general audience, and the treasure trove of translated musical works should not be overlooked.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This finding will eventually help music composers in Malaysia to have a better understanding of consumerism demands and preferences, hence, helping them to conduct effective commission works of international-scaled music work translations.

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