
Meaning Shift in the Translation of Disney Song Lyrics : A Stylistic Analysis

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Abstract/البحث

This research discusses the shift of meaning in the translation of Disney song lyrics from English to Indonesian with a stylistic approach. The three songs analysed are Let It Go, How Far I'll Go, and Beyond. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a comparative analysis technique between the original lyrics and translated version. The results show there are various forms of meaning shifts caused by simplification of language style, removal of symbolic meaning, and changes in sentence structure. Stylistic devices such as metaphor, personification, simile, anaphora and rethorical questions tend to change or disappear in the translated version, which results in a decrease in the expressive power, poetic beauty, and emotional power of the song. While the denotative meaning is retained, the connotative nuances and depth of meaning in the original lyrics are often not fully conveyed in the translated version. This research shows the importance of maintaining stylistic elements in the translation process to preserve the message and artistic power of song lyrics.

Key Words: Disney, Lyrics, Meaning Shift, Stylistic, Translation

INTRODUCTION

Translating requires analysing the source text for justification purposes so that the decisions made in the translation process can convey information in the same way as the source text (Karnedi, 2022). The principle of translation is the transfer of meaning or message from the source language to the target language (Budiman, 2018). This is done so that what is conveyed from the source language to the target language becomes equivalent (Budiman, 2022). In order to arrive at the transfer of meaning, the translator will carefully analyse the source language and take meaning from the linguistic

material of the source language to transfer the meaning into the target language and convey it according the system of target language (Samiati, 2022). In the process of translating by equalising the structure and rules from the source language to the target language, this will cause a shift in both form and meaning (Khoirini, 2023).

Language is a means of communication between social beings around the world. In addition, there are thousands of languages in which each language has its own system called grammar (Wiratno and Santosa, 2022). One form of using language as a communication tool can be found in songs. Songs are among the most unique forms of communication, using language as a medium to convey messages, emotions, or simply tell stories (Yulianti, 2024). According to Nugraha, songs can be understood as a combination of sound art and language art, which makes them a complex and meaningful form of art (Hasbillaah & Rachmaningtyas, 2033, in Nugraha, 2024). Each song seems to have a life of its own that becomes an addiction for the listener (Putri, 20220). The beauty contained in a song lyrics usually carries the attributes of the writer, such as cultural background and outlook on life that give distinctiveness to the song (johanis, 2022). This make the translation of a song interesting to study. About how to translate song lyrics from the source language to the target language by commensurate with the source language.

Disney songs have their own universal appeal and have been translated into various languages to reach a global audience, including the audience from Indonesia. However, in the process of translating song lyrics, there is often a shift in meaning that impacts the language style and emotional message. These shifts can affect the way listeners understand the characters, storylines and cultural values contained in the songs. Therefore, it is important for analyse the stylistic comparison of the original and the translation and identify the shifts in meaning in the translation. This aims to see if the different forms and shifts in meaning in the translated song lyrics can still convey the message of the song's source language commensurately despite following the rules and structures of the target language.

Similar research on shifts in meaning and stylistic has actually been written by several people. However, they only focus on one issue, such as "Analisis Pergeseran Bentuk dan Makna dari Bahasa Inggris ke Indonesia dalam lirik lagu Zain Bikha" written by Nurul Khoiri in 2023, which only focuses on shifts in form and meaning that makes us understand what kind of meaning shift and form shift in English songs translated to Indonesian, it's just that the author doesn't discuss stylistics, which is also very important in translated songs. There is also "Perubahan Makna pada Terjemahan Lirik Lagu 'In Control'

Setelah dialihbahasakan" written by Jeremiah Guinea Johanis in 2022 and only focuses on shifts in meaning which makes us understand how difficult it is to match English song lyrics into Indonesian translations, but does not discuss the language style used in translation. As well as "Translation of Metaphors Within The Lyrics of Queen's Songs" written by Akhmed Fauzan Nugraha in 2024, and also "Analisis Strategi Penerjemahan Metafora pada Lagu 'Skyfall' oleh Adelle" written by Gessyela Anindya Putri in 2024, these two studies only focus on Metaphor which is one of the points in stylistic analysis, both of these studies make us understand about metaphor in translation of song lyrics, but in translation of a song lyric there are so many other elements that we can learn from.

By using 3 songs from Disney entitled "Let It Go" which was released in 2013, "How Fall I'll Go" which was released in 2016, and "Beyond" which was released in 2024, the research that will be carried out is about shifting meaning and stylistic analysis simultaneously.

METHOD

In this research, a descriptive qualitative method with a stylistic analysis will be used to describe the forms of stylistic language in Disney song lyrics and also what kind of stylistic language in the song lyrics will experience a shift in meaning when translated into the Indonesian version. While the comparative analysis technique will be used in analysing between the source lyrics and the translation (Williams & Chesterman, 2014, in Khoirini 2023), this refers to the theory of shifting meaning and the theory of stylistic translation.

The data source in the descriptive qualitative research method is data in the form of words both written and verbal, which is described descriptively in the form of written or verbal data from the subject and object under study (Khoirini, 2023). The research data collection is done by observing the translation of 3 Disney songs from English into Indonesian. The analysis of this research will focus on the linguistic side of the three songs. Then, the data is analysed descriptively to answer the research problem.

The first think to do is listening to the lyrics of a Disney song that has been translated from English into Indonesian. Comparing the original English version the lyrics with their translated version in Indonesian, and observing the shifts of meaning in language style such as metaphor, personification, simile, anaphora, and rhetorical question. Focusing on how these elements are changed or lost in the translation process..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research explores the meaning changes that arise in the process of translating Disney song lyrics into Indonesian, with a special emphasis on stylistic elements. The study focuses on three well-known Disney songs, entitled Let It Go, How Far I'll Go, and Beyond. These three songs show the use of various stylistic forms, such as metaphor, personification, simile, anaphora, and rhetorical questions, which in their translated versions undergo various forms of adjustment.

Overall, it was found that the changes in meaning in the translations were heavily influenced by attempts to simplify stylistic language, remove symbolic meanings, and shift sentence structures from rhetorical to more narrative or literal forms. In some cases, although the denotative meaning is retained, the strong connotative elements or poetic beauty in the original are often weakened or lost in the translation.

1. Analysis of Meaning Shift and Stylistic Features in “Let It Go” and “Lepaskan”

The first song that will be discussed in this research is the song from Disney titled ‘Let It go’ which in translation is titled ‘Lepaskan’, the analysis of which shows that there is a significant shift in meaning due to change or omission of stylistic elements in the translation process. Stylistic features such as metaphor, simile, anaphora, parallelism, and alliteration tend to be simplified or not retained in the Indonesian version. This results in decrease in the expressive power, aesthetics, and emotional meaning contained in the original lyrics and will be shown in the following table.

Table 1.1 Analysis of Meaning Shift and Stylistic Features in “Let It Go”

Original	Translation	Original Stylistic Feature	Meaning Shift
Let It Go	Lepaskan	Metaphor	“Let it go” as a metaphor for emotional release loses its idiomatic nuance in “lepasan.” The metaphor remains, but with less expressive power.
The wind is howling like this swirling storm inside	Angin menderu bak badai dalam diri	Simile and Personification	The simile structure is retained, but the dramatic imagery of

Conceal, don't feel, don't let them know	Sembunyikan yang sebenarnya	Anaphora and Imperative Mood	"swirling storm" is weakened in translation. The repetition is removed, reducing rhetorical impact and emotional urgency.
No right, no wrong, no rules for me – I'm free	Menguji kekuatanku tanpa ada yang mengatur – 'ku bebas	Parallelism and Repetition of Negation	The tripartite structure is lost, softening the tone of defiance and making it more neutral.
My soul is spiraling in frozen fractals all around	Jiwaku berputar di dalam butiran beku	Elaborate Metaphor and Alliteration	The scientific and poetic imagery of "frozen fractals" is simplified to "frozen grains," losing intellectual and aesthetic nuance.
I'm never going back, the past is in the past	'Ku tak akan Kembali biarlah berlalu	Pleonasm and Parallel Structure	The deliberate redundancy is omitted, lessening the emotional resolution.
And I'll rise like the break of dawn	Bersinar Bagai mentari	Simile	The theme of transformation ("rise") shifts to illumination ("shine"), changing the emotional resonance.

The song 'Let It Go' describes a person's (Elsa in Frozen) struggle to escape the pressure to hide her identity and feelings. She chooses to accept who she really is and live freely without fear of other people's judgement. This song symbolizes freedom, self-acceptance, and courage to change.

2. Analysis of Meaning Shift and Stylistic Features in "How Far I'll Go" and "Seberapa Jauh Ku Melangkah"

The second song that will be discussed in this research is the song from Disney titled 'How Far I'll Go', which in translation is titled

'Seberapa Jauh Ku Melangkah', which is analysed as experiencing a shift in meaning due to simplification or changes in language style. Stylistic elements such as metaphor, personification, symbolism and rhetorical questions tend to be weakened or changed, so that the poetic, symbolic and emotional nuances in the original lyrics become less prominent in the translated version. Although the core message of self-discovery and freedom is retained, the expressive power and depth of meaning built through stylistic devices are reduced in the translation process and will be shown in the following table.

Table 1.2 Analysis of Meaning Shift and Stylistic Features in "How Far I'll Go"

Original	Translation	Original Stylistic Feature	Meaning Shift
How Far I'll Go	Seberapa Jauh Ku Melangkah	Metaphor	Retains the theme of exploration, but the internal/spiritual symbolism is slightly reduced due to focus on physical action.
I've been staring at the edge of the water	Telah lama ku tatap tepian air	Symbolism (water = freedom/unknown)	Minimal shift; symbolism and imagery are preserved.
But I come back to the water, no matter how hard I try	Ku telah mencoba tapi selalu Kembali lagi	Repetition of meaning, Personification (water as a calling force)	Explicit mention of "water" is removed to weakens the core symbolic motif of the sea.
See the line where the sky meets the sea? It calls me	Horizon seakan memanggil diriku	Personification and Visual Imagery	Maintains personification, but simplifies the rich visual metaphor by replacing the full phrase with "horizon".
If the wind in my sail on the sea stays behind me	Jika angin laut membawaku berlayar	Metaphor of journey (fate/spiritual drive)	Passive structure becomes active; focus shifts from external condition to action, reducing dependence symbolism.

The voice inside sings a different song	Tapi suara hatiku berkata lain	Methapor and Personification	Artistic metaphor ("sings a different song") becomes literal ("says something else") to poetic and emotional quality is lost.
See the light as it shines on the sea, it's blinding Will I cross that line?	Lihat Cahaya di laut itu menyilaukan Kulewati kah	Personification of light + Metaphor of enlightenment Rhetorical Question + Metaphor (line = boundary/limit)	Accurate translation; minimal to no shift in meaning or imagery Loss of emphasis on "line" as methapor for life boundaries; rhetorical force is weakened

The song 'How Far I'll Go' is about self discovery and the courage to follow your heart, even if it goes against the expectations of your environment. The character (Moana) feels called to explore the world and discover who she really is.

3. Analysis of Meaning Shift and Stylistic Features in "Beyond" and "Jauh di Sana"

The third song that will be discussed in this research is the song from Disney titled 'Beyond', which in translation is titled 'Jauh di Sana' and the analysis reveals a significant shift in meaning, especially due to the loss of stylistic devices such as metaphor, personification, symbolism, and rhetorical questions. Many poetic expressions in the original version are simplified or turned into literal narratives in translation, so the richness of philosophical, emotional and spiritual meaning is reduced. In addition, the inner tension and reflective nuances built up through rhetorical structure and repetition are also weakened. As a result, the aesthetic power and thematic depth in the original lyrics are not fully conveyed in the translated version and will be shown in the following table.

Table 1.3 Analysis of Meaning Shift and Stylistic Features in "Beyond"

Original	Translation	Original Stylistic Feature	Meaning Shift
Beyond	Jauh di Sana	Metaphor + Thematic Ambiguity	The broad philosophical and metaphorical sense becomes

I know these stars above the ocean	Bintang di atas laut itu	Symbolism and Visual Imagery (stars = guidance, hope)	more literal and spatial. Emotional and symbolic nuance is weakened; becomes a neutral description
Now new skies call me by name	Kembali memanggilku	Personification ("new skies" = personal calling)	Removal of "new skies and "by name" weakens emotional depth and spiritual personification.
This bigger than before	Walaupun lebih menentang	Metaphorical Exclamation	Shift from scale ("bigger") to conflict ("menentang"); meaning direction changes.
Winds have changed, tides turn me far away from shore	Arus laut bawaku pergi jauh	Metaphor of fate and natural forces	Dual symbolic elements ("winds" and "tides") removed to loss of metaphorical complexity.
What waits for me? Forever far from home	Ku harus siap / meninggalkan semua	Rhetorical Question	Shifted into an affirmative narrative; internal conflict and emotional tone are reduced.
Can I go beyond?	Mampukah aku?	Rhetorical Question with Existential Metaphor	Maintains question form but loses metaphor "go beyond" to becomes about capability, not transcendence.
There is destiny in motion / And it's only just begun	Apakah yang kan terjadi	Metaphor of destiny as motion	Metaphor omitted; replaced by general exposition to

I must go, I will go, then we'll know / What lies beyond	Penuhi panggilan yang ada / Jauh di sana	Emotional Clima with repetition and Contrast	poetic depth is lost. Poetic tension and inner resolution are flattened; rhythm and emotive contrast lost.
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The song 'Beyond' tells the story of the courage to leave one's comfort zone and home to pursue a greater destiny and future. The main character (Moana) struggles with uncertainty and longing, while maintaining her identity and promises to herself and her loved ones. The song is about travel, self discovery, and hope for the future.

CONCLUSION

This research finds that the translation of Disney song lyrics into Indonesian language is affected by the need to conform to language structure, emotional nuance, as well as fidelity to musical form and language style. Through a stylistic analysis of three songs "Let It Go", "How Far I'll Go", and "Beyond", it is found that these shifts are not only lexical changes, but also reflect adaptions to the target culture. This means that the meaning in translated lyrics is often not conveyed in a literal way, but is approached through semantic and pragmatic approaches in order to remain relevant and touch the local audience.

These results are in line with some previous studies such as those conducted by Khoiri (2023) and Johanis (2022), but this research offers a more comprehensive perspective by combining meaning and stylistic analyses at once. Thus, this research occupies a position that complements and expands previous studies in the field of song lyrics translation.

The findings implicatively emphasise the importance of linguistic and cultural competence in the process of artistic translation, especially in song genres that are sensitive to rhythm, emotion and cultural context. This research also opens up room for further exploration, such as cross language studies on the psychological impact and audience perception of translated lyrics.

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