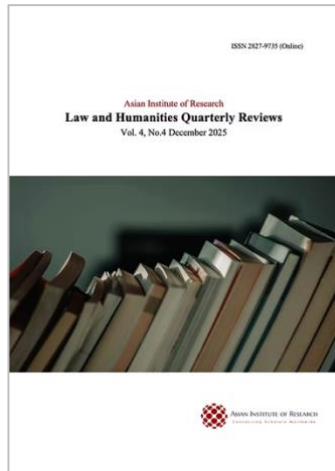




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Discursive Creation in Manga and Anime Titles: A Translation Study

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Abstract

The title is the first thing someone sees when choosing a *manga* to read or *anime* to watch. The titles summarize the main story or main focus of a *manga* or *anime*. In the discursive creative translation method, the translation in the target language will differ from the source language. Some well-known titles, such as *Shingeki no Kyojin*, are better known to fans as Attack on Titan. This research is a descriptive qualitative study with the aim of analyzing the use of discursive creative translation techniques in *manga* and anime titles. This study concludes that translators use these techniques to adapt the language to make it more acceptable to a wider audience or to highlight another aspect of the *manga* or *anime* that is more closely related to the culture of other countries. This technique is so common for *manga* and *anime* titles, primarily for some reasons like marketability, cultural barriers, and linguistic differences and copyright issues.

Keywords: Anime, Manga, Translation

1. Introduction

Japanese entertainment media such as *anime* and *manga* are among the most popular forms of entertainment today. *Manga* is a comic book with a cartoon style that originated in Japan. Meanwhile, *anime* is a cartoon with a Japanese style and language. The popularity of *manga* can be attributed to its abundant and varied material, which covers a wide range of genres and themes, making it appealing to a broad and diverse audience. *Manga* and *anime* feature highly varied stories, ranging from action-packed *shounen* to the subtle storytelling of *seinen manga*, which presents stories with broad scope and depth. The diversity of themes in *manga* allows readers to enjoy a wide range of storylines, making it a universally appealing form of entertainment (Sachdeva & Zisserman, 2024). The title is the face of a work that is seen by the public. An interesting manga or anime title will be an attraction in itself. For example, in the manga “*Shingeki no Kyojin*” which is better known in the world as “Attack on Titan,” this is an example of literal translation. Then, there is also a *manga* with the title “*Kimetsu no Yaiba*” which is more commonly known as “Demon Slayer” which when translated into Japanese will become a different title. This is an example of discursive creation translation technique, where the translation will be very different from the source language (Molina & Hurtado Albir, 2004).

Newmark (2009) defines translation as “A skill that seeks to replace a message or written statement in one language with the same message or statement in another language.” From Newmark's definition, it can be seen that translation involves the transfer of written messages between different languages, often referred to as written translation, and the transfer of spoken statements, better known as interpreting. However, in this definition, Newmark still emphasizes the importance of message equivalence rather than form equivalence. Meanwhile, Hatim and Mason (1997) define translation as an act of communication to convey a message across cultural and linguistic boundaries between the source text and the target text. This act of communication involves the translator's efforts to communicate with the target audience through the resulting translation. The translated text is adapted to the characteristics and needs of the intended readers or listeners. In this way, the translator will be able to produce a translation that is easy to understand. Shuttleworth & Cowie (1997) state that the essence of translation has a broad meaning in order to understand various linguistic forms. In this case, translation cannot only be considered as a product or process, but also identifies its sub-types. For example, today, audiovisual translation is found in movie cinemas, television, DVDs, or games. Translation technique is a method used by a translator to translate a text from the source language to the target language. Molina and Albir (2004) divided translation technique as:

- Adaptation is a technique of extracting elements from the source language with elements into the target language.
- Amplification is a technique that explains information not included in the source language.
- Borrowing is a technique that uses language from the source language.
- Calque, a literal translation of a word or phrase from the source language, both lexically and structurally.
- Compensation, inserting stylistic information in other parts of the target language.
- Description, replacing terms in the source language with descriptions of their form and function.
- Discursive creation, establishing a temporary equivalent that is completely unrelated to the source language because it is outside the context.
- Conventional equivalence, a technique that uses familiar terms or expressions.
- Generalization, translating words using more general terms.
- Linguistic amplification, a translation technique that adds linguistic elements to the target language.
- Linguistic compression, translating by simplifying linguistic elements in the target language text.
- Literal translation, translating word for word.
- Modulation, a technique that translates by changing the perspective, focus, or cognitive category in relation to the source text.
- Particularization, translating words using more specific terms that are appropriate for the target language culture.
- Reduction, filtering information in the source text because the meaning contained in the source text is already present in the target language.
- Substitution is the replacement of paralinguistic elements (intonation, gestures) with linguistic elements.
- Transposition is the replacement of grammatical categories in the source language.
- Variation is the replacement of linguistic or paralinguistic elements that influence aspects of language variation.

Several studies discussing translation techniques have been conducted, for example “*Strategi penerjemahan pada komik jepang kocchimuite miiko dengan komik terjemahan indonesia hai miiko vol 33 & 34 karya Ono Eriko*” written by (Septiani & Amri, 2024), which explains translation strategies in comics using Baker's (2018) theory, which divides them into eight techniques. This study concludes that there is a shift in meaning caused by translation strategies. In addition, there is an article titled “*Penerjemahan Istilah Ekologi Bahasa Jepang ke Bahasa Indonesia dalam Kumpulan Cerpen Miyazawa Kenji*” written by (Rini & Kusmiati, 2022), which analyzes how Japanese ecological terms are translated into Indonesian using the translation technique theory proposed by (Hasegawa, 2013). This study concludes that there are discrepancies due to cultural differences between the source and target languages, which result in inaccurate translations. The difference between previous research and this study is that this study focuses on one translation technique, namely the technique of discursive creation from various anime and manga titles. The purpose of this study is to describe how the technique of discursive creation is used to translate manga and anime titles so that they can be understood by international audiences.

2. Method

This research is descriptive qualitative research that aims to understand and describe phenomena, events, or behaviors without changing the data or variables being studied. In most cases, the data collected consists of words, images, or events that are natural and not numerical. The focus of this research is data collection through observation, field notes, and documents. After that, this research continues by describing facts or phenomena systematically and in depth according to the conditions in the field.

This method prioritizes data collection consisting of words and actions (Moleong, 2020). It also seeks to understand social phenomena in their original context. Researchers serve as the primary tool in data collection and analysis. their goal is to uncover meanings and patterns related to the research subject without seeking cause-and-effect correlations. The method used in this research is the documentation method, which is defined by Arikunto (2010) as a method that searches for variables in the form of notes, books, newspapers, magazines, etc. The data in this study was obtained by collecting several titles from websites that provide *manga* and *anime*, such as Manga Plus by Shueisha, Crunchyroll, Netflix, etc. The data then analyzed in accordance with the theory explained in the introduction.

3. Results

With the definition of the definition of discursive creation that Molina & Hurtado Albir (2004) explained which is establishing a temporary equivalent that is completely unrelated to the source language because it is outside the context. The authors found several *manga* and *anime* titles from several sources that match the theory.

Table 1: List of *Manga* Titles

No.	Original Manga Titles in Japanese	Translated Titles
1	鬼滅の刃 (<i>Kimetsu no Yaiba</i>)	Demon Slayer
2	食戟のソーマ (<i>Shokugeki no Souma</i>)	Food Wars!
3	隣の怪物くん (<i>Tonari no Kaibutsu-Kun</i>)	My Little Monster
4	かぐや様は告らせたい〜天才たちの恋愛の頭 脳戦〜 (<i>Kaguya-Sama wa Kokurasetai Tensai Tachi no Renai Zunousen</i>)	Kaguya-sama, Love is War
5	名探偵コナン (<i>Meitantei Konan</i>)	Case Closed

Below is a list of *anime* titles that have been translated using discursive creativity in their international titles.

Table 2: List of *Anime* Titles

No.	Original <i>Anime</i> Titles in Japanese	Translated Titles
1	聲の形 (<i>Koe no Katachi</i>)	A Silent Voice
2	千と千尋の神隠し (<i>Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi</i>)	Spirited Away
3	天気の子 (<i>Tenki no Ko</i>)	Weathering with you
4	君と波にのれたら (<i>Kimi to Nami ni Noretara</i>) 私がモテてどうすんだ! (<i>Watashi ga motete dousunda</i>)	Ride Your Wave
5		Kiss Him, Not Me

4. Discussion

4.1 Discursive Creation in Manga

(1)



Figure 1: The Cover of manga 「鬼滅の刃」 more known as the translated version "Demon Slayer"

"*Kimetsu no Yaiba*" is a manga by Koyoharu Gotouge that tells the story of a younger brother who travels to fight demons while searching for a way to turn his older brother back into a human. When translated using literal translation techniques, the words "*Kimetsu no Yaiba*" mean "demon slaying sword". However, in the global translated version of this manga or comic, "*Kimetsu no Yaiba*" is better known as "Demon Slayer" which when translated back into Japanese becomes "*Onigari*." This translation is not contextually correct because it differs from the literal translation. The English translation emphasizes the story of demon hunters who in the story belong to a group called "*Kisatsu-Tai*" or in English more commonly known as the "Demon Slayer Corps". Meanwhile, the original title in the source language Japanese, focuses more on the sword used by the main character, which in the story is called "*Nichirin*" the sword that changing its color when used by a demon slayer.

(2)



Figure 2: The cover of manga 「食戟のソーマ」 more known as the translated version "Food Wars"

This *manga* is a cooking school manga known as “*Shokugeki no Souma*” written by Yuuto Tsukuda. However, this manga is better known by its translated title “Food Wars”. The title “*Shokugeki no Souma*” means “Souma's Cooking Duel” which is far literal translation of the title. The choice of words in this translation is most likely intended to indicate the main story of the manga, which is about the cooking battles fought by the main characters in the storyline. Meanwhile, the original Japanese title places more emphasis on the main character in the storyline, Souma. In this *manga*, “*Shokugeki*” means a cooking battle or war between students at Totsuki Culinary Academy, where students risk everything from their cooking equipment to their status at the academy. This concept of “war” describes the intensity, competition, and fighting spirit that are at the heart of each match. For viewers unfamiliar with the Japanese term “*Shokugeki*” the title “Food Wars” is an easier and more appealing way to convey the genre and theme of the show.

(3)



Figure 3: The cover of *manga* 「となりの怪物くん」 more known as the translated version "My Little Monster"

This *manga* written by Robico is titled “*Tonari no Kaibutsu-kun*” and follows the relationship between Shizuku Mizutani, a serious and ambitious girl and Haru Yoshida, an unruly boy who is considered “wild” or “troubled,” often referred to as a “monster” because of his strange behavior. “*Tonari no Kaibutsu-kun*” can literally be translated to “The Monster Sitting Next to Me” or “My Neighbor Monster” This original title emphasizes the character's proximity to a “monster” which may be interpreted metaphorically, hinting that the character has a unique or “wild” nature like a monster.

(4)



Figure 4: The cover of *manga* 「かぐや様は告らせたい～天才たちの恋愛の頭脳戦～」 more known as the translated version "Kaguya-Sama: Love is War"

This *manga* has an original Japanese title, “*Kaguya-Sama wa Kokurasetai, Tensai-tachi no Renai Zunoushen*” which literally translates to “Kaguya-sama wants to confess, the war of wits between geniuses” This manga tells the story of two geniuses smart junior high school students who are the president and vice president of the student council. The story focuses on the feelings of the two characters, who don't want to admit that they have fallen in love with each other, so they try various ways to get the other to confess their feelings. Although the translated version of this manga has the title “Kaguya-Sama, Love is War” which is far from the original context, the technique of discourse creation is used here to shorten the title even though the result of the translation is out of context from the source language.

(5)



Figure 5: The cover of *manga* 「名探偵コナン」 more known as the translated version "Case Closed!"

“*Meitantei Conan*” is a mystery manga written by Gosho Aoyama in 1994. The story centers on a detective who reverts back to childhood. The main reason why the manga “*Meitantei Conan*” was translated so differently from its original title, which literally translates to “Detective Conan,” is due to copyright issues. There are already many titles that use the name Conan with a detective theme, such as “Conan the Barbarian” The translated version of this comic is better known as “Case Closed” which is quite different from the context in the target language. This title choice is a closing phrase often uttered by the main character, Conan, when she successfully solves a case, at which point Conan will say “Case Closed.”

4.2. Discursive Creation in Anime Titles

(6)



Figure 6: Promotional Poster of *Anime* 「聲の形」 more known as the translated version "A Silent Voice"

"*Koe no Katachi*" literally can be translated as "Form of Sound." "*koe*" means "sound" which refers to the physical sound produced from speaking or communicating, while "*katachi*" means "form" or "shape" which can be interpreted literally as physical form or metaphorically as the essence or expression of something. This anime tells the story of a deaf girl named Shouko Nishimiya who was bullied by Shouya Ishida when they were children. After a few years, Shouya tries to make up for his past mistakes and establishes a relationship with Shouko. The elements of "voice" and "communication" are central themes of the story, as Shouko is unable to communicate verbally in the usual way, but she still has other forms of communication, such as sign language and emotional expressions.

(7)



Figure 7: Promotional Poster of Anime 「千と千尋の神隠し」 more known as the translated version "Spirited Away"

In Literal Translation Technique, "Sen" and "Chihiro" are two names that refer to the main characters of the movies. Chihiro is the girl's real name, while "Sen" is the new name given to her when she is trapped in the spirit world. "*Kamikakushi*" (神隠し) is a Japanese term that literally means "Mysterious Disappearance." This is a concept in Japanese mythology where a person, usually a child, mysteriously disappears and is believed to have been taken to the spirit world or another world by supernatural forces. "Spirited Away" is an English phrase that means taken away by spirits or supernatural forces. This phrase describes the main event in the film, which is Chihiro's disappearance into the spirit world.

(8)



Figure 8: Promotional Poster of Anime 「天気の子」 more known as the translated version "Weathering With You"

"*Tenki no Ko*" can be literally translated as "Child of the Weather" or "Child of the Sky". In Japanese, "*Tenki*" means weather, and "*Ko*" means child or someone who is bound to something (in this case, the weather). In the context of the film, "*Tenki no Ko*" refers to the main character who has the ability to control the weather. However, the title also contains poetic and intimate nuances about the character's relationship with nature. Instead of translating it literally as "Child of Weather" the translator used a discursive creation approach by choosing "Weathering with You" which gives the impression that this story is not only about controlling the weather, but about the shared process of facing challenges or situations (metaphorically, "weathering" means facing or enduring difficult conditions). This creates an emotional closeness between the two main characters who are "weathering" or facing challenges together.

(9)



Figure 9: Promotional Poster of Anime 「君と波にのれたら」 more known as the translated version "Ride your Wave"

"*Kimi to Nami ni Noretara*" literally means "If I could ride the waves with you" or "If we could ride the waves together". In translation, the phrase "Your Wave" emphasizes individuality, even though the film is actually about the relationship between two characters. This allows global audiences to interpret the story with a broader theme, namely how everyone needs to face their own challenges in life (likened to waves) and how they learn to navigate those waves, either alone or with others. The translator uses discursive creation techniques to simplify the complex ideas of the original title into phrases that are easier for global audiences to understand. In an international context, the element of "togetherness" implied by "*Kimi*" may not be necessary to convey the essence of the story, and the focus on the individual in "Ride Your Wave" is easier for a wider audience to understand.

(10)



Figure 10: Promotional Poster of Anime 「私がモテてどうすんだ！」 more known as the translated version "Kiss Him, Not Me"

“*Watashi ga Motete Dousunda*” can be literally translated as “What should I do if I become popular?” or “How can I be the chosen one?” This title describes the confusion or disbelief of the main character who suddenly becomes popular among men after previously being ignored. Instead of translating it directly, the translator used a discursive technique by changing the title to “Kiss Him, Not Me” This title refers to the main character's desire for *yaoi* (a genre of fiction about relationships between men) rather than the real situation where men are attracted to her. This translated title directly captures the romantic comedy element of the story, where the protagonist prefers to see men pair up with each other rather than be the object of their affection. In the original title, the focus is on the main character's confusion and disbelief at her sudden popularity. However, in the translated title, this focus shifts to a clearer and more direct statement about the character's preference, namely that she prefers to see men pair up with each other rather than herself being the object of love.

5. Conclusion

Discursive creation is a translation technique, often used as part of a broader localization strategy. Instead of a literal, word-for-word translation, the translator creates a new title that is often completely different from the original. The goal is to capture the essence, theme, or spirit of the work, rather than the literal meaning, to make it more appealing and understandable to the target audience. From a total of 10 data points regarding the use of discursive translation techniques in manga and anime titles, the author concludes that translators use these techniques to adapt the language to make it more acceptable to a wider audience or to highlight another aspect of the *manga* or *anime* that is more closely related to the culture of other countries. This technique is so common for manga and anime titles primarily for some reasons marketability, cultural barriers, linguistic differences and copyright issues.

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