



An Analysis on Understanding Localization Issues in Translating English Comics “Robber X Lover” to Indonesian

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Abstract

Comic translation is more than a linguistic exercise; it involves a complex process of localization to ensure that the intended meaning, humor, and cultural nuances of the source text are effectively conveyed in the target language. This study analyzes the challenges of non-equivalence in translating English comics into Indonesian, using a fan translation of Robber x Lover by Pengki as a case study. The research focuses on identifying difficult-to-translate words, phrases, and sentences from the original text and evaluates the translation using Prof. Nababan’s Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model. Baker’s (2011) theory of non-equivalence and corresponding strategies is employed as the theoretical framework. The study found nine instances of problematic translation, primarily caused by the lack of localized concepts. These were resolved using the paraphrasing strategy, which was consistently effective during both the initial translation and the revision process. The findings highlight that paraphrasing plays a crucial role in overcoming non-equivalence issues and enhancing localization in comic translation. This study contributes to the field of translation studies by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of paraphrasing in addressing non-equivalence and supporting localization in comic translation. It underscores the importance of combining linguistic strategies with cultural adaptation to achieve high-quality translations. The findings offer practical insights for translators, educators, and researchers, and suggest that future studies should explore diverse comic genres to further validate the applicability of these strategies across broader contexts.

Keywords: Comic Translation, Localization Issues, English Comic, Translation Quality Assessment

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INTRODUCTION

When translating a piece of media, localization becomes an important aspect. Localization is often done for various types of media, such as games, movies, novels, and comics (Oktaviana & Ishlahiyah, 2024). However, when it comes to localizing comics, it is not enough to simply convert the text from the source language to the target language. Instead, translators have to consider not only the equivalence of the text, but also the acceptability and readability of the text in the target language. Comic translation can be difficult because of how conversation-based it is. Oftentimes, comics rely on dialogue to tell the story. This can make it tricky for translators to adapt the dialogue from the source language to the target language, as sometimes the most accurate translation ends up sounding stiff or unnatural in the target language (Gradinaru, 2024; Pramudya et al., 2024). In the evolving field of translation studies, comic localization presents a unique set of challenges, combining linguistic fidelity with cultural adaptation and visual coherence

(Ahmadi, Darmawan, & Samosir, 2024; Sacko, 2025). Comics such as Robber X Lover feature multimodal storytelling that requires translators to navigate textual nuance and visual context simultaneously. Translating humor, idiomatic expressions, and culturally bound references often leads to semantic shifts, where meaning may drift or be intentionally adjusted to align with target audience expectations (Gradinaru, 2024; Sari & Putrayasa, 2024; Putra, 2024).

Examining previous case studies grounded in the Indonesian context reveals the variety of strategies used for comic localization. Ahmadi et al. (2024) analyzed onomatopoeia and speech bubble translation in Pyramid Game, revealing that translators often rely on adaptation and borrowings to retain expressive intent. Sacko (2025) explored semantic shifts in the Indonesian version of the webtoon Flawless, identifying frequent generalization, substitution, and deviation—strategies that balance readability against cultural nuance. These findings underscore how translators negotiate meaning and form when adapting comic text (Ahmadi et al., 2024; Sacko, 2025). Priatin et al. (2021) explored how translating comic strips supports vocabulary acquisition among Indonesian EFL students, demonstrating the educational potential of comics in enhancing language skills. Meanwhile, Ahsanah and Utomo (2022) reported significant improvements in students' overall English competence after exposure to digital comics. Ikawati (2019) highlighted the value of comic translation tasks in fostering communicative learning in secondary classrooms, arguing that process-based activities better support students' language development. These studies showcase translation strategies and pedagogical benefits of comics in various contexts (Ahmadi et al., 2024; Priatin et al., 2021; Ahsanah & Utomo, 2022; Ikawati, 2019).

While the aforementioned research has shed light on general translation techniques and semantic strategies in Indonesian versions of comics or webtoons, these works have not delved into gendered emotional contexts and cultural intimacy found in romance narrative texts. Specifically, there is little examination of how translators render emotional nuance, expressions of affection, and culturally embedded relationship norms—elements critical in romance comics—to maintain narrative coherence for Indonesian readers. Additionally, existing studies focus primarily on written text within static panels, whereas Robber X Lover blends visual symbolism, color-coded dialogue, and visual pacing that interact dynamically with text. Despite these valuable insights, the specific domain of English-to-Indonesian localization of romance-themed comics like Robber X Lover remains understudied. Unlike children's or action-oriented comics, romance titles incorporate culturally specific interactions, emotional inflections, and visual cues that complicate translation.

This research aims to analyze the translation issues that are prominent in English to Indonesian comic localization. Aside from the translation issues, this paper aims to analyze how utilizing translation strategies can aid in localization and create a more natural-sounding translation. This will be done by analyzing a fan translation of *Robber x Lover* by Pengki and its revision after it has been evaluated using Professor Nababan's Translation Quality Assessment model. The translation of this comic was chosen as the original text utilizes several words, phrases, and sentences that are difficult to localize to Indonesian. Thus, for the reason stated above, this paper aims to study the localization issues that can be found in a fan translation of *Robber x Lover*. The research questions that will be the basis of this project are as follows:

1. What are the translation problems found in the translation of *Robber x Lover*?
2. What are the strategies used when translating difficult words or phrases in the translation of *Robber x Lover*?
3. How are the translation strategies used in localizing the comic?

Literature Review

The study of comic translation has received growing scholarly attention due to its complex multimodal nature, where meaning is shaped not only through words but also through visual and spatial elements. Comics challenge traditional translation practices by presenting verbal and non-verbal semiotic systems simultaneously, demanding a multidimensional interpretative approach. These constraints make it essential to examine both linguistic choices and visual alignment. Thus, the interdependence of image and text in comics leads to unique translation challenges, especially when cultural references or humor are involved. In the Indonesian context, Sacko (2025) found that idiomatic expressions and tone in romance comics often undergo semantic shifts to maintain relatability for local readers. Such shifts illustrate how localization requires not only translation competence but also cultural intuition and adaptive creativity (Oktaviana & Ishlahiyah, 2024).

Translation problems in comics are typically categorized under linguistic, cultural, and technical difficulties. Linguistically, challenges emerge in idiomatic expressions, slang, and character-specific speech styles (Ahmadi et al., 2024). Culturally, references to social norms, gestures, and humor often resist direct translation. Technically, spatial constraints in speech bubbles and text-image coherence add layers of difficulty (Rizzo, 2022).

To overcome these challenges, translators employ a range of strategies including borrowing, adaptation, omission, and modulation (Rahmah et al., 2025; Wedhowerti et al., 2020). Vinay and Darbelnet's classic model (as adapted by Munday, 2022) remains influential, with recent studies contextualizing its application to digital narratives. In comic translation, adaptation and modulation are especially dominant, as they allow translators to maintain narrative voice and emotional tone (Priatin et al., 2021; Ahsanah & Utomo, 2022). Molina and Hurtado Albir's (2002) taxonomy, though predating newer digital genres, continues to be useful for categorizing micro-level decisions. In the case of humor, visual puns, and sound effects, strategies often require a blend of creativity and contextual judgment (Rahmah et al., 2025). Such strategies are essential not just for accuracy but also for the successful localization of the comic, wherein the reader feels the content is culturally relevant and emotionally resonant (Oktaviana & Ishlahiyah, 2024)

With regard to localization, localization theory frames translation not merely as transfer but as transformation. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021), localization involves adapting the source material to fit the sociocultural norms of the target audience, which in comics can mean altering names, backgrounds, or dialogue tones. Digital comics intensify this process, as web-based platforms often cater to global yet segmented audiences. In this sense, localization serves both communicative and commercial purposes (Jiang, 2023). By studying *Robber x Lover*, a romance comic with emotionally rich and culturally nuanced dialogue, this research expands the current literature by examining how translators mediate between fidelity to the source and resonance with the target culture—an area where limited research has been done, especially in the context of English-to-Indonesian comic translation.

Language is not linear—it is a known fact that every language has its own collection of unique vocabulary. However, this uniqueness can turn into a problem when it comes to translating. When translating a piece of literature, oftentimes translators will stumble upon words, phrases, or sentences which do not have an equivalent in the target language. Such situations are known as non-equivalence (Baker, 2011 as cited by Fata & Syahiman, 2021), and there are several types of translation problems that can arise from non-equivalence. According to Baker (2011), those problems can be caused by several aspects. First, every language has their own sets of unique vocabulary and with it, there are culture-specific terms that do not have equivalents in other languages. An example is the Japanese term *umami* which is used to express a deep, savory, meaty flavor. Second,

source language concepts are not being lexicalized or localized in target language: Although similar, this problem is not the same as culture specific concepts. While culture specific concepts tend to be more abstract, more general concepts fall into this category. General concepts refer to certain concepts which are understood in the target language, however they do not have an equivalent for it, often using the target language's word as a loanword for that concept. An example for this problem would be *savory* in English, which doesn't have an Indonesian equivalent. Third, a word from source language are semantically complex when it is composed of multiple morphemes that create a complex meaning when they are combined. This usually leads to it being impossible to translate a word from the source language with one word in the target language, as it requires several words or even a sentence to describe it. For example, *unlikely* in English has to be translated to *tidak memungkinkan* as Indonesian does not have an equivalent prefix or suffix for the prefix *un-* or suffix *-ly* respectively. Another factor is that source language or target language makes distinctions in meaning that the other language does not make. It is possible for a language to have two or more variations of a word for a situation that another language does not have. For example, Indonesian has two words for going out in the rain. One is *hujan-hujan*, which means going out in the rain on purpose and *kehujan*, which means going out in the rain on accident. English does not have a word equivalent for any of these, so if a text simply wrote "He's going out in the rain." with no further context, a translator would be confused on which Indonesian word to use in their translation.

Baker (2011) also notes some other issues related to non-equivalent translation. For example, source language has a superordinate that target language does not have. Although it might sound unnatural, it is possible for one language to not have a superordinate that exists in the source language but have hyponyms for it. An example is Russian, where they do not have an equivalent for *facilities*, but they have different hyponyms which indicate different types of public facilities such as public transportation and public utilities. Another issue includes related to when source language has a hyponym that target language does not have. Contrarily to the previous problem, this problem appears when the target language does not have an equivalent of a hyponym that is used in the source language. An example is how in English, *croft*, *manor*, *mansion*, *chalet*, *lodge*, *cottage*, and *hall* are hyponyms of *house* while Indonesian only has equivalents for a select few of these hyponyms. Other problems might also encompass when (1) source language has different physical or intrapersonal perspectives and expressive meanings; (2) both languages have different forms; (3) both languages have different frequency or purpose when using a certain form; (4) source language uses loan words for a certain purpose.

The aforementioned non-equivalence issues can make it difficult for translators to accurately translate a text due to the absence of an equivalent. Fortunately, there are translation strategies that can aid in solving those translation problems. As stated by Baker (2011), these strategies include:

1. Utilizing superordinates: This method can be used when the target language does not have a hyponym that is equivalent to the one being used in the source language. For example, *leap* in English can simply be translated to *lompat* in Indonesian.
2. Using a more neutral word: The next method can be used when trying to translate words with a more expressive meaning. For example, *tataku* (fight savagely) from Japanese can simply be translated as *fight*.
3. Cultural substitution: This following technique can be used to translate culture-specific terms that have no equivalence in the target language. When using this strategy, translators usually substitute the word for another word which would have a similar impact (Wedhowerti et al., 2020). For instance, Korean has specific

honorific terms for older brothers when referred to by a male or female speaker, being *hyung* for males and *oppa* for females. However, Indonesian does not have those, so a translator can simply use *kak*, as it is also used to refer to someone older than the speaker.

4. Using loan words with or without explanation: Sometimes, it is possible to simply use the original word as a loan word when there is no equivalent. To illustrate, oftentimes in manga translation, translators decide to keep honorifics like *-san*, *-kun*, *-chan* untranslated as there is no equivalent for them. Oftentimes they leave an explanation stating that those suffixes are honorifics, but some translators, most often fan translators, tend to leave no explanation as they assume that their readers are already aware of these honorifics.
5. Paraphrasing using a related word: This strategy can be used when the word in the source language has an equivalent in a different form in the target language, in which case paraphrasing can be used to make the sentence sound more natural. For instance, *kore tabete mo ii desu ka?* is rearranged and then translated to *can I eat this?* in English, as a word-by-word translation (*this eat can?*) does not make sense in English grammar. Notably, this is the most common strategy used in translation (Fata et. al, 2022).
6. Paraphrasing using an unrelated word: This works similarly to the last example, except this strategy is used when the word has no equivalence of any form in the target language (Rahmah et al., 2025). In which case, paraphrasing is used to emulate the source text using other words. For example, the word *alfresco* in English is translated to German as *der Terrasse im Freien sitzen* (sitting out in the open on the terrace); the paraphrase is used to explain the concept of an *alfresco*.
7. Translation by omission: This strategy can be used if the non-equivalent word has no significant impact to the definition of the entire text. For example, oftentimes when translating Korean webtoons, translators choose to completely omit honorifics such as suffixes *-oppa* and *-hyung*, as the meaning of the text remains even with the omission of those honorifics. This strategy is most often used when translating song lyrics (Ghasani, 2021).
8. Translation by illustration: This last method is a useful alternative if there are space limitations when translating. Sometimes, a picture is louder than words, in the sense that something that has to be described with a paragraph can be easily described using an illustration.

Additionally, avid readers of Japanese *manga*, Chinese *manhua*, and Korean *manhwa* are often familiar with the term scanlation. The word scanlation is a combination of the words "scan" and "translation" and it generally refers to unofficial translations of Japanese, Chinese, or Korean comics (Fabbretti, 2016). Scanlations are made by fans when a series or work does not have an official translation out yet. Due to the scale of translation projects, scanlations are usually made by an entire team of scanlators. According to Steph (2016), scanlation teams commonly consist of comic scan providers, cleaners, redrawers, translators, typesetters, editors, proofreaders, and quality checkers. The roles and amount of people working on a project can differ from team to team.

Despite their seemingly large size, scanlation teams are strongly reliant on volunteers. It is important to remember that fan translations are often passion projects that are done out of personal interest. Thus meaning that the quality of the translation is not necessarily guaranteed (Darissurayya, 2015). This is not to say that fan translations are not good; there are several fan translators who are certified in translating. However, it is unmistakable that a lot of fan translators are simply doing translating as a side hobby and therefore, are susceptible to making translation mistakes.

These mistakes can be caused by misunderstanding cultural terms, linguistic ambiguities or wordplays that are hard to translate, different formality-related terms

which have no English equivalent, or mimetic words and onomatopoeias. An important aspect in translation is having adequate understanding of the linguistic rules and cultural implicatures in both the target and source language (Abu, 2024). Without a solid background in language studies and translating, it becomes difficult for scanlators to make accurate translations. While it may still be readable to fans, when compared side-by-side with an official translation, it is often obvious that scanlations have a lot left to be desired. This is mostly due to a lack of certification and training in the translating field, which is inevitable considering that most fan translators are just hobbyists.

Besides mistranslations, inexperience can also lead to faulty localization. Localization requires the translator to have sufficient knowledge of both the culture and linguistic aspects of the target text (Jiang, 2023). This is so that the translator can create a translation that is not only tangible but also understandable and appropriate for the target locale (Cappelli, 2007). Thus, a good localization should result in an accurate and natural translation (Jiang, 2023). However, since fan translators are not certified translators, some tend to have difficulty in generating properly localized translations. Nevertheless, it is important to note that despite its flaws, scanlation serves as a means for unlicensed comics to be accessible for international audiences (Fabretti, 2017). Thus, scanlation is an important aspect of *manga* and *manhwa* fan cultures.

Professor Nababan's Translation Quality Assessment is a holistic approach to analyzing translation quality. According to Nababan, et. al. (2012) as cited by Putri, et. al. (2022) the translation model inspects three aspects, namely: accuracy, acceptability, and the readability of a translation. This translation model is well-known and often used to analyze translation as a whole, such as in Putri, et. al. (2022)'s research where the model was used to assess the translation quality of tourism-related texts, which further shows the versatility of Professor Nababan's TQA model.

METHOD

The research data were taken from *Robber x Lover*, a Korean webtoon that was first published on *Lezhin Korea* under the publisher *Haksan* in 2019 with the title *우렁강도* (pond snail robber). A year after, the comic got licensed for an English translation by *Lezhin*. The comic has a total of 95 episodes and it follows Jiho, a college student who had recently moved into his new house and Dojin, a "robber" who ends up living with Jiho after a series of unfortunate events. As its synopsis suggests, the story falls into a lighthearted slice-of-life genre with drama and comedy elements.

The data for this analysis were collected by reviewing and identifying the translation problems found in the translation and revised translation of *Robber x Lover*. The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative research method through reading and reviewing the fan translation of *Robber x Lover*. After translating *Robber x Lover*, the translator noted down the difficult words and phrases to localize along with the solution and translating strategy used in order to translate said phrases. The translation then went through a peer evaluation process which included identifying, reviewing and noting the mistakes in the translation. Afterwards, the translation was reviewed by two professional translators using Nababan's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA). The translator then evaluated and revised the translation according to the results of the assessment. The revised translation was reviewed and the translation strategies used in the revision were noted down and analysed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Prior to the peer evaluation, the translator had identified five (5) onomatopoeias and two (2) sentences that were difficult to translate. She noted that the onomatopoeias were especially hard to translate as some did not have Indonesian equivalents, while for

some others the onomatopoeias were uncommon. Therefore, she instead tried using related words and sounds in order to generate similar meanings for the onomatopoeias that did not have an Indonesian equivalent. Next, for one of the sentences she ended up omitting the whole sentence altogether and then substituting the whole sentence for a structurally different sentence with the same pragmatic meaning. Lastly, for the second sentence the translator decided to paraphrase the sentence with unrelated words in order to keep the sentence's intended meaning while making it flow naturally. Notably, the translator decided to take a casual approach when translating, as most of the translated text resembled everyday, conversational Indonesian as opposed to formal or semi-formal Indonesian.

After the peer evaluation process, the translator identified seven (7) mistakes in her translation. The words and phrases, along with their revisions, are as follows:

Table 1. Original and Revised Translation

Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
<i>Du-doom—</i>	<i>Du-dun—</i>	<i>Du-doom—</i> (*SFX ini digunakan untuk mendeskripsikan rasa takut akan malapetaka yang mendatang)

The translation in Table 1 received a score of 2 in all three categories from both checkers. The reason for this inaccurate translation is due to the fact that the onomatopoeia "*Du-doom*" is not a concept that is localized in Indonesian (Baker, 2011). Here, the onomatopoeia is used to describe the sense of impending doom that the character is feeling due to the desperate situation he is in. However, the concept of "impending doom" itself is not commonly found in Indonesian, and even more so the onomatopoeia. Therefore, the translator ultimately decided to use the word "*Du-doom*" as a loan word in the revised translation. As the concept of "doom" is somewhat foreign in Indonesian, the translator decided to add a description as a translation note (Fabretti, 2016) so that readers could better understand the meaning of the onomatopoeia.

Table 2. Original and revised translation

Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
My, a youngster like you'll brighten up this neighborhood!	Wah, anak muda seperti kamu pasti akan membuat lingkungan ini lebih ceria!	Wah, anak muda seperti kamu pasti akan membuat perumahan ini lebih ceria!

The translation in Table 2 received a score of 2 on accuracy and acceptability, so the translator felt that it was necessary to substitute the word "*lingkungan*". The problem in this example lies in the word "neighborhood". The translator recognizes this mistake as a mistranslation, as she had not initially considered the equivalent for "neighborhood" to be "*perumahan*". She decided this as the character did not live in a housing complex, hence leading her to believe that "perumahan" would not have been an accurate translation. However, after re-evaluating, the translator realized that "*lingkungan*" was too broad of a term and that "*perumahan*" was indeed the most suitable translation.

Table 3. Original and Revised Translation

Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
...After that, I saw there was a hole in my	...Abis itu, aku melihat lobang di kantong plastikku, jadi tadinya	...Abis itu, aku melihat ada lobang di kantong plastikku,

bag, so I was gonna go back out when...	aku mau keluar lagi tapi tiba-tiba...	jadi tadinya aku mau keluar lagi tapi tiba-tiba...
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The translation in Table 3 received a score of 2.5 on all three categories from one of the evaluators. This was likely due to the omission (Baker, 2011) of the word "was" in the original translation. Initially, the translator had omitted the word "was" from the translation due to the casual tone, however it ended up reducing part of the text's meaning, which is why in the revised translation the word "ada" was added as a translation of "was".

Table 4. Original and Revised Translation

Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
I'm sorry for gulping!!	Maaf sudah menelan ludah!!	Maaf karena sudah bersuara!!

The original translation of Table 4 received a score of 2.5 on acceptability and readability from both checkers, likely due to the unnatural sense of the original translation. While the translation is correct by definition, the sentence "*Maaf sudah menelan ludah*" sounds awkward in practice. Moreover, the phrase is almost never used in Indonesian conversation. Hence, the translator decided to paraphrase the translation using different words in order to better replicate the vibe of the source text (Baker, 2011), while making sure that the translation sounds more natural in Indonesian. As the context of this line was a situation where the speaker is being pinned down by a robber, the translator decided to paraphrase the line to "I'm sorry for making noise (by gulping)".

Table 5. Original and Revised Translation

Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
I'll hold my breath, just please don't kill me!	Aku gak bakal nafas, jadi tolong jangan bunuh aku!	Aku akan tahan nafas, jadi tolong jangan bunuh aku!

The original translation in Table 5 received a score of 2 on accuracy and 2.5 on acceptability and readability. While the translation is somewhat accurate, the phrase "*Aku gak bakal nafas*" sounded stiff in Indonesian. Upon further observation, the translator realized that "*gak bakal*" was a mistranslation of "hold". Thus, in the revised translation she fixed this mistranslation.

Table 6. Original and Revised Translation

Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
...And what happens after he pulls out the knife? What if he blocks the exit?	...Terus abis dia nyabut pisaunya aku gimana? Kalo dia nutupin pintu keluar?	...Terus abis dia nyabut pisaunya aku gimana? Gimana kalau dia nutupin pintu keluarnya?

The original translation in Table 6 received a score of 1.5 and 2.5 on all three categories from the two evaluators. While reviewing the evaluation results, the translator realized that the original translation felt a bit unpleasant to read. The second sentence in particular felt like an incomplete sentence as she omitted the "what" portion of the sentence, which does not reflect the whole quality of the source text. Therefore, the

translator decided to revise the entire line. In order to make the last line feel more complete, she added back the “what”.

Table 7. Original and Revised Translation

Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
He's gonna get me if I run towards the door!	Kalau aku lari ke pintu, pasti ketangkap!	Dia pasti akan menangkap aku kalau aku lari ke arah pintu!"

The original translation in Table 7 received a score of 2.5 on all categories from one of the evaluators. Similarly to the previous example, the second portion of this sentence feels incomplete and it does not accurately reflect the intentions of the source text (Baker, 2011). Hence, the translator decided to adopt a word-by-word translating strategy in the revision, in order to make sure that the original author’s intentions are conveyed properly. Fortunately, even though the revised translation is more literal, it does not look awkward or stiff.

Even though some translations were changed in the revised version in order to better convey the meaning of the source text, the translation still manages to retain a good localization quality and does not look rigid (Jiang, 2023). Most of the non-equivalence problems were caused by certain concepts, especially onomatopoeias like the one in Table 1, that does not have any Indonesian localization. Interestingly enough, most of the revisions were done not because of any translation problems, but due to the translation strategy (omission) that the translator decided to adopt for some lines such as the examples seen in tables 3, 6, and 7. Consequently, the translation strategy that was adopted the most by the translator was indeed paraphrasing (Fata et al., 2022), which was used in the original translation and revision, which can be seen in table 4. It can be concluded that the paraphrasing translation strategy helped the translator to find alternatives for several words and phrases that did not have an Indonesian equivalence. Additionally, it allowed creative freedom, which enabled the translator to arrange and use words more freely to form a translation that fits the target language.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the translation of comics from English to Indonesian presents multifaceted challenges, particularly in the areas of onomatopoeia, sentence structure, and pragmatic meaning. One major insight is that many mistranslations stemmed not from linguistic incompetence but from strategic decisions, such as omission and paraphrasing. This demonstrates that translating comics involves navigating multimodal constraints that go beyond text fidelity (Gradinaru, 2024). The difficulties in conveying the meaning of culturally untranslatable elements—such as “Dudoom”—validate Baker’s (2011) argument regarding non-equivalence at the word level, especially in expressive items like sound effects, which lack direct counterparts in the target language.

The use of paraphrasing as the dominant strategy aligns with findings by Fata et al. (2022), who argue that paraphrasing grants the translator necessary creative flexibility when local equivalents are unavailable. For instance, the revised translation in Table 4 replaces “gulping” with “bersuara” to achieve a more idiomatic and culturally appropriate rendering. This shows that Indonesian fansubbers frequently opted for paraphrasing over literal translation to retain naturalness in translated comics. Readability in the target language often outweighs literal fidelity when the original text contains culturally specific or expressive nuances.

Moreover, the decision to retain the foreign onomatopoeia "Du-doom" and supplement it with an explanatory note echoes Fabretti's (2016) proposal of intratextual glossing as a means of preserving meaning while acknowledging cultural distance. This approach also aligns with the findings of Rizzo (2022), who suggested that using loan words with contextual explanations is a practical compromise in comics translation when readers are unfamiliar with the foreign term but its expressive function is crucial. While this strategy may risk disrupting immersion, it enhances comprehension—a trade-off supported by Ahmadi et al. (2024), who found that Indonesian readers generally prefer clarity over complete domestication.

Interestingly, several translation issues were not primarily due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge but rather to structural decisions that altered the sentence's natural flow, as in Tables 3, 6, and 7. This shows that novice translators often struggle with clause cohesion and ellipsis when attempting to mimic informal tones. The tendency to omit words like "was" or "what" resulted in incomplete or ambiguous meanings. Revisions that restored these elements improved the acceptability and readability scores, suggesting that while informal tone is desired, structural clarity must not be compromised. Munday (2022) supports this view by noting that tone consistency must be balanced with syntactic completeness in functional equivalence translations.

The findings also reinforce the argument made by Priatin et al. (2021) and Ahsanah & Utomo (2022), who observed that translating comics into Indonesian often benefits from conversational, informal registers. This casual tone was evident throughout the translation, enhancing localization and relatability. In particular, the translator's choice to avoid formal Indonesian mirrors Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2021) claim that the use of register must align with the genre's stylistic conventions and target audience expectations. In this study, the translation's informal tone reflects the comic's youthful and emotionally intense narrative, ensuring the target audience can engage with the text naturally.

Finally, the iterative revision process following peer evaluation mirrors the reflective practices which highlight the importance of collaborative quality control in translation tasks. The translator's revisions were not only based on accuracy concerns but also on the acceptability and naturalness of the translation. This peer feedback loop supports Sacko's (2025) findings that post-translation evaluation can uncover unnoticed semantic shifts or pragmatic gaps. As shown in this study, peer-based critique led to more culturally nuanced and syntactically fluid translations, underlining the importance of involving multiple perspectives in the translation process for web-based, localized comic content.

The findings of this study carry several significant implications for both translation practitioners and educators. Firstly, the consistent use of paraphrasing and revision strategies highlights the importance of translator awareness in handling culture-specific and non-equivalent expressions in comics. For professional translators, this research emphasizes the value of adaptive strategies that prioritize pragmatic meaning and naturalness over strict lexical fidelity (Rahmah et al., 2025). As supported by Windarwati and Sari (2022), this adaptive competence is essential in audiovisual and comic translation where context, tone, and character voice play a critical role. Moreover, for educators, the results suggest that training programs in translation studies should incorporate real-world texts such as comics to sharpen students' abilities in dealing with informal language, slang, and onomatopoeia—elements often missing in traditional translation exercises.

Another important implication lies in the role of peer evaluation as an effective tool for improving translation quality. The iterative process of revising translations based on feedback enhanced both the accuracy and readability of the final product, illustrating how collaborative methods can be implemented in translator training and classroom practices (Martinez, 2023). This approach shows that collaborative translation exercises

lead to deeper reflection and better decision-making in interpreting ambiguous texts. In the digital age, where many translated works—especially webtoons and manga—are accessed and shared online, ensuring that translations meet both linguistic and cultural standards is crucial for audience engagement and reception.

Despite these contributions, this study is not without limitations. The sample size was confined to one translator working on a single comic, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the evaluative feedback was sourced from only two peer reviewers, which may not fully capture a wide range of reader expectations or linguistic intuitions. Furthermore, while the focus on paraphrasing strategy provided valuable insights, it somewhat limited the exploration of other potentially useful strategies such as transcreation, modulation, or explicitation. Examining a broader range of strategies could yield a more comprehensive understanding of translation dynamics, especially in expressive genres like comics.

Another drawback lies in the absence of quantitative analysis to complement the qualitative findings. While the study effectively described how certain strategies improved translation outcomes, it lacked statistical tools to measure the extent of improvement in accuracy, acceptability, and readability across all data points. Incorporating a mixed-methods approach in future research would enhance the credibility and replicability of the results. Combining qualitative textual analysis with reader response surveys or Likert-based evaluation metrics could offer more holistic insights into how translated content is perceived by diverse audiences.

Future research should expand the scope of analysis by involving multiple translators, preferably with varying levels of experience, to explore how different backgrounds influence strategy selection. Comparative studies involving translations of the same text into other languages beyond Indonesian would also be valuable, especially in understanding how different cultures approach the translation of visual-verbal texts. Additionally, follow-up studies could investigate how readers interpret and respond to translated comics, focusing on their perception of naturalness and humor retention.

Lastly, given the rapid growth of AI in translation technology, future research could also explore how machine translation tools handle comic-specific challenges, such as slang, informal tone, or visual-context integration. While AI-based translators have shown improvements in general accuracy, their limitations in capturing nuance and tone in multimodal texts remain a concern. A comparative study between human and AI-generated comic translations could yield insights into the current capabilities and shortcomings of these tools, helping educators and developers improve both machine learning models and human translator training programs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data and analysis results, the common translation problem when localizing *Robber x Lover* from English to Indonesian was non-equivalence caused by concepts that are not localized in the target language. Consequently, the translation strategy which was utilized to solve this problem was paraphrasing by using both related and unrelated words depending on the context. Although the revision changed several lines from the original translation, it still managed to retain the source text's meaning well, if not better. From this study, it can be concluded that paraphrasing as a translation strategy is very helpful in solving both translation and localization issues in translating English to Indonesian comics. However, this does not mean that other translation strategies can not be utilized to aid in localization. Even so, more research needs to be conducted in order to further discover how other translation strategies can assist in localization and solve localization issues. For further research, it is recommended to analyze the usage of translation strategies in the translation of comics from different

genres and languages in order to better understand the effects of translation strategies on localization.

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