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## The Translation of Name Labels in Spider-Man Comics

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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the translation of address terms or name labels in comics from English to Malay. The two aims of this study are: (i) to identify the main translation strategies used in the target text regarding Baker's (1992) typology of translation strategies and (ii) to discuss how effectively the source author's name labels are transposed in Malay by using Eugene Nida's (1964: 182) basic principles of "the general efficiency of the communication process" and "comprehension of intent" as a yardstick. The data comprises 187 name labels identified in 14 series of the Spider-Man comics and their Malay counterparts. The findings revealed that the three most frequently used strategies are paraphrasing by using related words followed by omissions of name labels and translating by using less expressive or neutral words. With regard to the efficacy of the Malay translations in conveying the semantic robustness of the English name labels, it was found that the translator has prioritized a transparent translation to achieve easy comprehensibility for the target reader over a faithful preservation of the author's style and the finer nuances expressed by the name labels.

**Keywords:** Name labels, Spider-Man comics, translation strategies

### Introduction

All cultures have a repertoire of address terms or name labels to refer to individuals. These comprise fixed terms to show kinship relations, professional designations, honorifics, and non-static forms of address that can be created spontaneously for different uses in different situations. With regard to fictional texts, name labels abound in comics, particularly in superhero comics, as they are fashionably spewed out by the protagonists and antagonists alike during repartees while in battle. The name callings hurled between the villains and heroes dramatically heighten the narrative, and this sustains the readers' engagement with the plot and characters in the superhero comics.

Name labels, as with most aspects in language, tend to be culture-bound and as such, translating them is not always a straightforward task. When the name labels appear in comics, the

challenge is doubled as the comic genre requires brevity because of space constraints. In comics, space is shared by visuals and text. Mikulic (2020: 17) explains that comics have "certain quantitative restrictions and are spatially limited because [the] written message can only appear in speech balloons, text boxes, and as a part of the imagepanels". Toivonen (2001: 103-104) says that "occasionally the speech bubbles...reserved for narration...can be modified slightly, but mostly the translator needs to be able to make the translation fit in the space given. This makes it necessary for the text to be as concise as possible. Shortening the text is not without complications, as the translator should not leave out any information essential to the smooth progress of the plot, and the shortness of space may cause the loss of certain nuances in the text."

Borodo (2015: 22) informs us that "[a]lthough several noteworthy studies concerning the translation of comic books have been published to date (notably Kaindl, 1999; Zanettin, 2008), it remains an under-investigated topic within Translation Studies." As such, the study undertaken here will fill a gap in the area of comic translation. This study focuses on translating name labels into Malay from a selection of the Spider-Man comic series.

Spider-Man has steadily remained popular among comic book enthusiasts in Malaysia since it reached the Malaysian shores in 1990. "Spider-Man #1 was the best-single issue selling comic book in the 20+ years of operations" of the Final Frontier comic shop (The Star 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020), reports the former proprietor of the comic outlet. Its popularity is also evident in the Malay versions of the comic books published between the years 1997-2000 under the sponsorship of Pizza Hut.

### *Purpose of the Study*

This study aims to identify the main strategies of translation employed in transposing Malay's name labels used by a range of characters in the Spider-Man comics. The translation will be assessed for its effectiveness in conveying the English source text's semantic impact. The following research questions thus direct this study:

- What are the main strategies used in translating name labels from English into Malay in the selected comic series?
- To what extent are the name labels in the selected English comics effectively translated into Malay?

### **Literature Review**

Tomasek (2009) argues that comics are "a media and not a genre" (10) as they embody the elements of film, literature, and painting. He explains that a comic consists of five main elements: (1) it is pictorial, (2) it is narrative, (3) it is formed by static expositions, (4) it contains images and (5) it contains nonpictorial symbols" (9), and this is what makes it comparable to the media of film, literature, and painting. He adds that "[t]his comparison clarifies and emphasizes the uniqueness of the medium of comics" yet comics tend to be underrepresented as they are considered "to be genre-focused exclusively on children," which "puts comics on the same level as literature for children." (10). Mackova (2012: 11) regards comics as "a sociological, literary,

and cultural artifact, independent of the internal structures comprising them". Mackova's words imply the importance of, according to the comics genre, a much more severe treatment than it is often given. Delespaul (2015: 5) supports Zanettin's (2014) argument, which emphasizes that "comics are not a mere literary genre" but a rich amalgamation of genres found in other literary traditions. All of these views point to the fact that comics are bountiful in themes, forms, and techniques and, as such, merit adequate scholarly attention like other creative productions.

Amongst the relatively small number of studies on the translation of comics in the last decade are those undertaken by Tomasek (2009), Delespaul (2015), Borodo (2015), Peter Bryan (2018), and Laura Antola (2019). Tomasek, who studied the localization, domestication, and foreignization of the Batman comics in the Czech Republic, informs us that "[f]oreignizing strategies are used less often than domesticating strategies" (2009: 41). Regarding proper names of superhero characters, he mentions that different translators use many strategies, including localization into Czech names or omission where the names "do not have a strong characterizing or referential function" (2009: 56). He also highlights that the Czech translations frequently omit onomatopoeic sounds.

Delespaul (2015) analyses the translation of the verbal and multimodal humor, irony, and sound symbolisms in Dutch translations of two comic books, *Scott Pilgrim* series and *Seconds*. He informs us that in the translators' "attempts to provide an equivalent translation for the vernacular, conversational English used in both source texts, both translations heavily draw onto conversational Dutch from the translator's region of origin. The *Scott Pilgrim* translation contains several words and idioms characteristic of the Netherlands, whereas the *Seconds* translation draws mostly on Flemish vernacular." (2015: 75).

Borodo (2015) explores the influence of multimodal features on the translation of comic books. His discussions are based on a classic, Franco-Belgian comic book series, Thorgal, entitled *Les trois vieillards du pays d'Aran* (1981). He looks at how the comic book's pictorial and typographical features have been exploited in two markedly different Polish translations produced in 1989 and 2008. Borodo's analyses highlight the more faithful rendition of the 2008 translation and the relatively more modulated translation of the 1989 version. He states that the condensations, reformulations, and omissions in the 1989 translation do not cause significant meaning loss as the dialogues in the speech bubbles are well compensated by the visual text. He concludes that in a multimodal text like the comics genre, "the translator can exploit the overlap and complementarity between the verbal and the visual" (2015: 38) to minimize meaning loss in translation.

Bryan's (2018) and Antola's (2019) studies aim to understand the trends in the transnational publishing of comics. Bryan's focus is on the evolution of the Donald Duck comics in Germany. He concludes that the German fandom for the Donald Duck comics is huge owing to translators like Erika Fuch, who have domesticated the comics to suit the existing cultural context. Antola's study focuses on Marvel's superhero comic books' adaptation strategies in the Finnish media culture from the 1980s to the 1990s. The findings revealed three main adaptation strategies, which are selection, cut and paste, and domestication.

It is evident that apart from Tomasek's study, which partly focused on the translation of proper names in comics into Czech, there are no other studies that have entirely concentrated on name labels and particularly into an Asian language like Malay. It is therefore believed that this study will make an insightful contribution.

## Methodology

This study uses a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach. The first research query is quantitatively presented to highlight the strategies that are frequently used to translate name labels in the Spider-man comics into Malay. The findings from this will be interpreted and discussed qualitatively by referring to specific samples to answer the second research query that investigates the extent of effectiveness achieved in preserving the semantic quality of the name labels.

The data for this research were extracted from fourteen issues of the Spider-Man comics in English and their fourteen matching counterparts in Malay. Information on the specific issues is available in Chan's (2014) Master dissertation at <http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/5441/>. The data set comprises 187 name labels. The terms of address are used by the superheroes and supervillains as well as their sidekicks not only to deride and poke fun at an enemy but also to motivate and show care when communicating with family members or fellow comrades.

To answer the first research question, the samples were analyzed based on the taxonomy of translation strategies introduced by Mona Baker (1992) in her influential formative work, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. Of the eight strategies (1992: 26-42), only the following six were applicable for this study:

- (1) Translation by using a more general word (superordinate)
- (2) Translation by using a neutral or less expressive word
- (3) Translation by using a loan word or loan word plus explanation
- (4) Translation by paraphrasing using related words
- (5) Translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words
- (6) Translation by omission of words

The two strategies that were not employed in this study are 'translation by cultural substitution' and 'translation by illustration'. The former is not used as none of the 187 name labels underwent cultural substitution, and the latter is left out as it does not apply as a strategy in the translation of name labels.

In Nida's seminal work, *Toward a Science of Translating*, he proposes three principles that translators should use as a yardstick to achieve efficacy in translation. He states:

“It is not easy to judge the relative merits of two or more translations. However, three fundamental criteria are basic to the evaluation of all translating, and in different ways, it helps determine the relative merit of particular translations. These are: (1) general efficiency of the communication process, (2) comprehension of intent, and (3) equivalence of response” (Nida, 1964: 182).

As the third goal or principle is a highly debatable one as it is not always possible to measure the equivalence of response in the target recipients, let alone know who the recipients are,

this study will be guided by the first two goals, which will help assess whether the name labels are communicated in a manner that is easily comprehensible to the receiving culture (which includes a language that is spontaneous, natural and familiar) with the source author’s intent being conveyed as faithfully as possible without major alterations.

### Data Analysis and Discussions

Of the 187 name labels identified, only 172 were analyzed based on Baker's translation typology as the other 15 samples comprised four mistranslations and 11 name labels that were substituted with pronouns in Malay. As mistranslations imply an oversight on the translator's part, they were excluded from this study, and concerning the pronoun substitutions, they did not lend themselves to an insightful critical discussion, and as such, it was deemed best to leave them out. The table below shows the frequency of the translation strategies used:

**Table 1.** Frequency of Strategies Used

<b>Strategies (Baker, 1992)</b>	<b>Frequency of Use (FoU)</b>	<b>Percentage: (FoU/173 x 100%)</b>
1. Translation by using a more general word (superordinate)	8	4.65%
2. Translation by using a neutral or less expressive word	37	21.51%
3. Translation by using a loan word with an explanation	15	8.72%
4. Translation by paraphrasing using related words	49	28.48%
5. Translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words	18	10.47%
6. Translation by omission of words	44	25.58%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### *Strategy 1: Translation by using a more general word (superordinate)*

The eight samples that were translated with this strategy make it evident that the translator prioritized the principle of sense and naturalness for the target readership over the criteria of precision in meaning. For example, in Malay, the phrase "orang gila"/mad person is used on two different occasions in Spider-Man to represent two related yet semantically dissimilar words which are, “freak” and “maniac”. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online (<https://www.ldoceonline.com/>) defines "freak" as "someone who is considered to be very strange because of the way [the person] look[s], behave[s] or think[s]" and "maniac" as "someone who behaves in a stupid or dangerous way". The definitions highlight the difference as "freak" refers to a person's outward appearance, whereas "maniac" suggests a certain mental instability in an individual. However, as mentioned earlier, both are rendered as "orang gila"/mad person in Malay. This is a general term, but one that is appropriate in this context as Malay speakers often use "orang gila"/mad person to refer to a person who appears queer or outlandish and acts irrationally like a lunatic.

Another name label, "my fellow outcasts," which a villain uses to address his evil allies, is also translated into a superordinate term in Malay, that is, "kawan-kawan"/friends. The idea of being "outcasts" is dropped, and only the fact of being buddies is transposed. This is because the closest equivalence to outcast in Malay, 'orang terbuang/outcast or 'orang yang disingkir'/person who is cast out' cannot be morphologically compounded with "fellow" which in this context means partner, comrade or crony. If attempted in Malay, it would result in an ungrammatical and semantically odd-sounding expression. As such, only the general idea of being associated with each other as friends is conveyed.

The English language abounds in adjectival compounds, unlike Malay. Thus, it is difficult for Malay to operate on such lexical and morphological levels; forcing a literal translation in such instances would result in a clumsy and unnatural translation. Therefore, it is understandable why the translator has resorted to using a superordinate, as seen in the last example. However, using more general words inevitably diminishes the finer nuances in the name labels. In translating "my fellow outcasts" as "kawan-kawan"/friends, the tone of smug camaraderie in crime expressed in the English address reference is lost.

### *Strategy 2: Translation by using a neutral or less expressive word*

An example of a name label that is translated with a phrase that is less expressive is "armored villains". This is transposed in Malay as "angkatan Platoon"/Platoon army. The translator's choice relays the correct information as Platoon is Spider-man's enemy, and "armoured villains" refers to the team led by Platoon. However, Platoon's army's well-secured defense is fortified with, and their malicious nature is not felt in the neutral expression, "angkatan Platoon"/Platoon army.

Another example in this category is the name label, "splatoon," which is a blend between the name, Platoon, the villain, and the sound "splat". The word "splat" is an onomatopoeic sound commonly seen in comics. Here, it is used to create a comical effect to evoke a light tone amidst the tussle Spider-Man is facing with the enemy. Spider-Man says, "...so the rest of the splatoons overload each other on contact," referring to the villain's army, which is hook-winked into colliding into one another. In the original text, the protagonist uses this name label to refer to the villain's army, but in the Malay text, "splatoon" is translated as "Platoon" which does not refer to Platoon's army. Both accuracy of reference and the expressiveness of humour in "splatoon" is clearly lost in translation. Although Malay has 'percikan', which is a close equivalent for 'splatter', which is the derived verb form of "splat", it has no equivalence for "splat". 'Splat' in English functions as a noun and adverb and is used as a sound effect in comics because of its onomatopoeic quality. So, it is clearly impossible to translate "splatoon" into Malay, but the translator could have still rendered the reference accurately by translating it as "angkatan Platoon"/Platoon's army instead of "Platoon".

The use of adjectives in the name labels creates much expressiveness in the English source text, but the adjectives are consistently removed in the Malay version. The following are some examples: ""rakan-rakan"/friends for "foul companions", "seorang"/a person for "one, lousy tough guy", "ketua"/leader for "warped warlord", "bekas ketua"/former leader for "formerly fearless

leader”, “sebuah tiruan”/a counterfeit for “a freak genetic counterfeit”, “ayah”/father for “Daddy dearest” and “si rambut merahnya”/the redhead for “delicious redhead”. The name label, “delicious redhead” is used by a villain to address Spider-Man’s wife. While the adjective “delicious” in the source language suggests that she is sexually appealing to the villain owing to being a gorgeous redhead, the Malay translation merely highlights the color of her hair.

It needs to be noted that the Malay structure does not usually pile up adjectives as seen in the English example, "one, lousy, tough guy". Malay can, however, easily translate single adjectives to qualify nouns without any awkwardness. Unfortunately, the translator has not attempted to reproduce the English source text's expressiveness in the Malay version. As a result, the vibrant tones in the English discourse are not reflected in the Malay translation.

### *Strategy 3: Translation by using a loan word or loan word with an explanation*

Direct borrowings or loan words serve as a translation strategy when specific cultural-specific terms are not found in the lexicon of the target language. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) point out that loan words are also sometimes used to highlight a certain distinct uniqueness of the source language in the translation.

Two examples of name labels used to scoff and make fun of a character in Spider-man that are borrowed into Malay are the proper name, "James Dean" and the metaphorical reference, "pussy cat" to mean weak or posing no threat. The sarcastic taunt which alludes to a legendary cinematic idol is found in the question, "Thought you were indestructible, didn't you, James Dean?" which is translated as, "Kau ingat kau kebal sangat, James Dean?"/You think you are so invulnerable, James Dean? James Dean (1931-1955) was an American actor who had lived a brief but exhilarating life on and off-screen and was a huge cultural icon for teenage angst during the 1950s. He was killed in a car accident at the height of his career at age 24. The villain refers to a superhero who stands weakened in his presence as James Dean to provoke and belittle him before crushing him further. The Malay translator has not chosen to culturally substitute "James Dean" with fictional or historical Malay heroes but retains the American icon's name very possibly because the late Hollywood star became world-renowned after his last and most celebrated movie, 'Rebel without a Cause' (1955).

Some other examples of the name labels loaned into Malay include: the idiom, “real McCoy” which means the genuine or real thing translated literally as “McCoy sebenar”, the petname “Carny” which is an affectionate shortening of the villain’s name “Carnage” by his lover and other words that are graphologically modulated in Malay like “geng” for “gang”, “Venus moden” for “modern Venus”, “Komrad” for “Comrade”, “pembunuh psikotik” for “psychotic murderer” etc.

Borrowing some of the name labels has definitely aided in preserving the source author's semantic impact up to a point. However, there are instances where Malay comic readers might be befuddled by references to idioms using proper names like "McCoy" or metaphors like "pussycat" to refer to a weakling. Malay usually refers to the rat (takut macam tikus/scared as a rat) as a weak and timid creature. However, the translator might have borrowed "pussycat" because, universally, the house cat is considered a non-threatening pet.



It must be pointed out that the samples in this study with borrowed name labels in the Malay version do not come with any added explanations usually provided in some comics as brief footnotes for words/phrases for cultural terms, terminology, coinages etc. that are marked with asterisks in the speech bubbles.

#### ***Strategy 4: Translation by paraphrasing using related words***

This strategy is akin to a literal, grammatical translation using closely synonymous words. Examples of name labels translated using this strategy are as follows: "satria-satria gagah berani"/brave knights for "gallant knights", "Spider-Doppleganger yang setia"/ Spider-Doppleganger who is loyal for "my trusty Spider Doppleganger", "wira New York and tidak pernah mengaku kalah"/ New York heroes who never accept defeat for "New York's never-say-die defenders", "budak mentah yang menyedihkan"/pathetic immature child for "the pathetic crybaby" etc.

As with loan words, this strategy has allowed most of the source text meanings to be retained. However, not all name labels can lend themselves to a near literal translation using related words, as seen in some culture-bound name labels that had to be translated with a superordinate.

#### ***Strategy 5: Translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words***

Baker says that this strategy is used when "the concept in the source language is not lexicalized in the target language (2011: 38). In other words, the target language lacks equivalent terms to accommodate particular source language references, and thus, the translation results in a paraphrase using unrelated words. The translations, which are approximations in meaning, present some distant semantic relationship with the source lexis but are not precise reflections of the source text discourse as they might carry different nuances or undertones.

Six samples of the name labels that were paraphrased with unrelated words are: "little man", "bug boy", "Super-Powered Freaks", "Harpy", and "costume vigilantes". The address references, "little man" and "bug boy" which are used in the utterances, "Out of my way, little man" and "Does Spider-Man know you're...trying to outdo him, bug boy?" are both translated as "budak hingusan"/snotty child or child with nasal mucus. In Malay, "budak hingusan" refers to a child or young person who is perceived as insignificant due to a lack of experience in life or a particular situation. The use of "little" in "little man", "boy" in "bug boy" and "budak"/child in "budak hingusan" emphasize the diminutive sense shared by these name labels and implies the condescending tone of the addresser. But there are differences in the more nuanced meanings of these name labels between English and Malay, which are challenging to capture equivalently.

Next, the name label, "Super-Powered Freaks," which is used about a super-villain team, is transferred into Malay as "kumpulan samseng"/gangster group. The semantic impact evoked in the original comics is much reduced in Malay, with the super-villains being merely referred to as a group of thugs. "Harpy" is translated as "mulut tempayan"/ literally mouth of the pot, meaning one who cannot keep a secret. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online

(<https://www.ldoceonline.com/>) informs us that a harpy is “a cruel creature in ancient Greek stories with the head and upper body of a woman and the wings and feet of a bird” and the contemporary context is metaphorically used to refer to “a cruel woman”. The Malay name label is markedly dissimilar to the English one. The only semantic component shared by “harpy” and “mulut tempayan” is that both are negative references but they vastly vary in the degree of unpleasantness they can cause. The fifth example has likewise lost the specific semantic sense intended as “costume vigilantes” is translated as “sukarelawan berkostum”/costumed volunteers. Here, a negative connotation in “vigilantes” has been substituted with a relatively positive meaning expressed by “sukarelawan”/volunteers. While “vigilantes” voluntarily appoint themselves as law-enforcers (without legal authority) due to a loss of trust in the legal system, they are not ‘volunteers’ in the traditionally positive sense.

### *Strategy 6: Translation by omission of words*

A substantial number of 44 name labels were omitted in the translation. Sharma (2015: 6) states that the translator “omits words that do not have equivalents in the TT, or that may be ambiguous or pose interpretation problems to the receptor.” Nida (1964) sees omission as necessary to avoid redundancy and awkwardness. In the Malay translation of Spider-Man, the omissions are predominantly naming labels with negative connotations like “chumps”, “Old Hag”, “dandy little blood letter”, “prattling pest”, “witch”, “boy toys and ghouls”, “punks” and “sucker”. In dropping these name labels, the translated version appears as a tamer version of the dialogues between the protagonist and antagonists highly charged with bitter spite and animosity in Spider-man. Thus, there is a distinct loss of mood and tone. While the name labels pose a challenge, the translator could have attempted to provide taunts commonly used in Malay to recreate the atmosphere of tense conflict and hostility.

The omissions in the Malay version not only mitigate the intensity of the hostile relationship between the heroes and their adversaries, but they also do not reveal the affection and intimacy that exist between some of the characters. An example can be seen when Mary Jane, Spider-Man's wife, says to him, “Try to tone down the enthusiasm, Tiger”. The term “Tiger” which is her affectionate pet-name for her husband, is omitted in the Malay text. As a result, the quality of the conversations between husband and wife in the target text appears a lot less intimate. This could have been modulated with “sayang”/sweetheart or beloved which is used elsewhere in the Malay translation. This would have at least preserved some sense of the affection expressed by Mary Jane.

Other omissions relate to the American culture where its elders tend to address its young people as “young man” “son”, “boy”, “kid” and “young fella”. In America, a young person is called “kid” or “son” by an older adult even though they are not related. An example of an utterance is: “You've had me very worried, young man” and “Are you alright, son?”. This is uttered by Seward Trainer, a supporting character who is like a father figure to Scarlet Spider. The speaker's level of affection is not seen in the resulting utterances in Malay, which are, “Aku risau tentang kau”/I was worried about you and “Kau tiada apa-apa?”/literally, nothing happened to you? The address

references of "young man", "son", "kid," etc., are, however, not so commonly practiced in the Malay culture. A word-for-word translation of these words in Malay could thus create some confusion amongst Malay readers. Likewise, the name label "sister" in the question, "How about the privacy of your padded cell, sister?" posed by a female ally of Spider-Man's, to a villainess is also omitted in the Malay text. The translator has decided to omit this reference as it neither refers to someone who is a blood sister nor expresses a form of respect (kakak/sister), which young Malays use to address females slightly older.

It is evident that some omissions of name labels are unavoidable owing to their culture-boundness, and it is vital to omit in such instances to prevent incomprehensibility. Simultaneously, there are also name labels that can be transposed with related words, and these should not be overlooked. In other words, some of these name labels, especially the cruel taunts and affectionate address forms, could have been paraphrased with near equivalent words. Omissions must always be judiciously practiced; they should be the absolute last way out of any translation type.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study have revealed that the strategies most frequently used in translating name labels into Malay from the selected Spider-Man comics include: (i) translation by paraphrasing using related words (28.48%), (ii) translation by omission of words (25.58%) and (iii) translation by using a neutral or less expressive word (21.51%). The findings of this study concur with an earlier study on translating comics conducted by Tomasek (2009). His study on the Czech translations of the Batman comics also showed that paraphrasing using related words was the translators' preferred strategy for translating various elements in comics. It is believed that a skillful selection and application of related words can aid in the effective rendering of the source author's intentions.

Omissions in the Malay translations were made when distinctly culture-bound references in the American context could not be transposed into Malay or when the name labels were insulting. 'Kesantunan'/politeness is a foundational principle in the Malay culture, and this could be one possible reason for the omissions of certain unsavory address forms.

In this study, translating with neutral or less expressive words comes into play in translating English name labels that are adjectival compounds and word blends that are not morphologically common in Malay. The Spider-man comics teem with name labels that are adjectival compound phrases like "armored invaders", "my fellow outcasts," and "the little guy". Translation is a "process of discovery" (Saeed et al., 2018: 45) where the translator becomes "aware of what his/her language can and cannot do" and has to make appropriate decisions, therefore, to solve the translational challenges. The translator of Spider-Man has handled the English name labels that are blends and compounds adequately enough in Malay. Any attempt by the translator to mimic a similar morphological construction in Malay would appear forced and jarring, which would deter a smooth reading of the comics.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the primary concern of the translator of the Malay version of the Spider-Man comic series has been to convey the main flow of the storyline

to the target readership uninterrupted by unwieldy descriptions, which are a part of several name labels in the Spider-man comics. This can be seen in examples like “big bad killer Kasady”, "freak genetic counterfeit", "dandy little blood letter", "scoop of face meat," etc. The impact of the source author's style is thus compromised at many junctures in the process of relaying the main narrative; the more refined nuances expressed in the source author's linguistic creativity evident in the name labels are abandoned on account of achieving a swift storytelling easily comprehensible to the teenage and young adult audience. The translated version as such resorts to using simplified and straightforward forms of expression for the name labels, and this is evident in the use of general, related, and less expressive words with omissions where necessary.

The translator has fulfilled Nida's first goal, which is "general efficiency," that "can be judged in terms of the maximal reception for the minimum effort of decoding" (Nida, 1964: 182). In other words, by deciding to leave out or simplify specific complex descriptive name labels, the Malay translator has avoided providing more than is necessary for the target audience to understand the text. In terms of Nida's second goal, which is the comprehension of intent, the translator has only partially achieved this as he aims to be mainly "understood in terms of the receptor culture (Nida, 1964: 182)". The Malay translator does not consistently achieve "the comprehension of intent [which] must be judged essentially in terms of the context in which the communication was first uttered" (Nida, 1964: 182). This refers to the source author's pragmatic intent in the semantically laden name labels, which is not always possible for the translator to render fully.

Smart (2016) informs us that "over the past ten years, superheroes have gone from garnering a narrow audience of children and a few nostalgic adults to achieving worldwide acclaim as a wildly successful, multibillion-dollar enterprise with a level of popularity never seen before." In tandem with the booming superhero film industry in America that Smart refers to, superhero comics from where the filmic versions grew are also increasingly read by people of all ages in many languages globally. To remain attractive to the market at large, comics in translation must be done tastefully, considering different types of audiences. Epic, action-packed, linguistically-charged comic books like the Spider-Man series cannot be merely offered as a simplified and summarized narrative in translation as they might not appeal to adult readers who have a preference for more sophisticated writing styles in comics. On the other hand, if the language used is advanced and the narrative is unwieldy, it might also pose a challenge or lose its appeal. Thus, the translator's task is certainly never an easy one, as made evident by this study on the translation of name labels in the Spider-Man series.

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