POLITESS STRATEGIES AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR CHARACTERIZATION: A CASE STUDY ON INDONESIAN WEBTOON MY PRE-WEDDING AND ITS ENGLISH VERSION

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Abstract
Following the development of information technology, webtoon has transformed into an incredible breakthrough in popular literature. Line Webtoon, one of the most influential webtoon developer, also creates “webtoon translate” and “fans translation” features providing readers with translated webcomics so that the works can be more accessible, in terms of languages, for its readers. My Pre-wedding is one of the most popular Indonesian webtoons that has been translated into fourteen languages. This study is a qualitative research focusing on the Indonesian and English versions of My Pre-wedding webtoon. Using pragmatic approach emphasizing on politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson, this research analyzes the speeches of the main character, Adelia, that contain politeness strategies. The shift occurs from positive politeness to bald on record due to the omission of in-group identity markers, especially in the forms of greetings that deal with cultural values. Furthermore, there is also omission on the politeness sub-strategy which employs cultural in-group identity markers. These two findings indicate that the translators do not convey the cultural value of the source text in the target text. Consequently, it leads to different characterizations of Adelia: from a girl who positions herself as “younger sister” to her surrounding into a casual girl who puts herself in a parallel position to others.

Keywords: politeness, translation, webtoon, shift, omission, characterization

Introduction
Recently, comic as one of the most well-liked works of arts has transformed into a perfect combination of literature and technology. Using technology-based platform, it is possible for comic fans to read their favorite webcomics through gadgets. On the other hand, this phenomenon also becomes a promising chance for comic artists to promote their works worldwide.

One of the most influential webcomic developers is Naver Corporation, originated from South Korea, with its web-based and application-based comic named LINE Webtoon. Hundreds of webtoons have been published in LINE Webtoon as the number of webtoon artists and readers increases rapidly every year. A number of Indonesian webtoon artists also have published their works through LINE Webtoon. One of them is Annisa Nisfihani who creates My Pre-wedding and Pasutri Gaje. My Pre-wedding can be considered as one of Nisfihani’s successful works as a webtoon artist. Through this webtoon, Nisfihani became the first champion of Line Webtoon Contest in 2015.

Following the success of this webtoon in the contest, My Pre-wedding is then published officially and translated into fourteen languages; including English, Thai, French, Polish, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese, Italian, Filipino, Turkish, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Greek; in “webtoon translate” feature. “Webtoon translate” is a form of fans translation feature which enables fans to translate their favorite webtoons into other languages. This feature
is developed as a free service. Consequently, the translators in “webtoon translate” feature do not have any financial profit while the developer has no obligation to pay for the translators’ works. In the application version, this feature is labeled as “fans translation” feature.

Considering the variety of languages and the high number of the readers of its fans translation feature, it can be assumed that this feature has been a successful media in accommodating fans’ interest in reading and translating their favorite webtoons. Although the translators are considered as amateurs, the fact that the translation versions invite a high number of readers cannot be ignored.

The aforementioned background on webcomic and fans translation underlines the interest of conducting a research on webcomic fans translation. Previously, research on comic translation are focused on analyzing comic text. Besides, the translators are considered as official translators since the translated version are published legally. On the other hand, Yablonsky (2016) discusses the relation between text and image in comic translation. Yablonsky’s research emphasizes the semiotic aspect of comic text. Thus, in translating comic, besides the decision made by the translator; whether to add, omit, reduce, borrow, etc; the translator must also consider the visual aspect other than merely the verbal aspect.

Apart from the visual aspect, comic contains a storyline which employs some elements of prose fiction, including traits, characterization, setting, tone, mood, etc. These elements work together to form a storyline constructing a comic. The decisions of the translation techniques used by a translator would possibly change these elements in the translated version unless they are contemplated carefully. My Pre-wedding webtoon contains a storyline which accommodates Indonesian cultural values since the setting is in Indonesia. As a consequence, when it is translated into English, the translators must decide whether to create an accurate and acceptable translation for the target readers while disregarding the cultural values of the original version; or to produce accurate translation by conveying the cultural values without neglecting the acceptability and readability aspects.

This study highlights the comparative analysis of the trait (the personality) of the main character, Adelia, on the ST and TT. The instrument used to analyze the trait is the theory of Face Threatening Acts (FTA) proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987). FTA theory is used as it is seen that Adelia explores many politeness strategies in conducting communication with other characters. The use of politeness strategies was observed to find out the reconstruction of Adelia’s trait in the target text.

The result of this research is expected to give contributions to comic fans translation. Fans translators, especially those dealing with comic translation, are expected to deliberate the elements of prose fiction, such as characterization and traits, with the aim of producing a more qualified translation. Qualified translation, in this case, does not only comprise the aspect of accuracy (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997), acceptability (Puurtinen, 1998), or readability (Nababan, 2008); but also consider other elements of literature as well as the aspect of image.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology
Characterization in prose fiction is the process by which the author reveals the traits of the characters in a story. Characterization can be direct or indirect. Indirect characterization, the author directly mentions
the traits (personalities) of the characters. Meanwhile, in using indirect characterization, the author may use five different methods which are recognized as STEAL (Speeches, Thoughts, Effects on others toward the character, Actions, and Looks). Speeches refer to utterances delivered by the characters. Thoughts mean the characters’ personal feelings and ideas. Effects on others toward the character signify the behaviors and feelings of other characters in reaction to the characters. Actions denote the activities and attitudes of the characters. The last method, looks, reflect the physical appearance of the character.

This research analyzes the trait of the female main character in My Pre-wedding webtoon, Adelia, through her speeches. Speeches are selected as they are the most dominant verbal aspect in My Pre-wedding webtoon compared with the other types of characterization. The researcher uses politeness strategy, which is derived from FTA theory by Brown & Levinson (1987), as the instrument to analyze the speeches.

FTA is based on the theory of “face” referring to general image owned by each individual. In daily communication, face-threatening act can be organized by applying politeness strategies. There are five types of politeness strategies: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off record, and no FTA. When performing bald on record strategy, a speaker wants to have a direct utterance and expects that the utterance would be immediately understood by the hearers. Positive politeness refers to impressive acts showing the same longing between the speaker and the hearer. Indeed, by doing positive politeness, a speaker may intend to establish confidence. Negative politeness shows the purpose of a speaker to ascertain social break with the hearer. Meanwhile, off record is done when a speaker wants their utterances to be interpreted in various ways by the hearer. No FTA strategy means that a speaker decides to be silent in order to save the face of the hearer.

This is a qualitative and case study research. The source of data was taken with purposive sampling technique. There are two English versions of My Pre-wedding published in “webtoon translate” and “fans translation”. The first is Pujangga Webtoon version. Pujangga Webtoon is a team consisting of some fans translators. This team has translated some webtoons and been popular as comic fans translator. The second version is a form of collaborative translation of some fans. This research uses the first version as the source of data. Ten episodes of My Prewedding were selected, including episode 0, 1, 2, 3, 14, 17, 18, 24, 25, and 26; representing the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story. The data are all Adelia’s speeches showing the use of politeness strategies. The method of data collection is observation which was conducted by analyzing the politeness strategies of Adelia’s speeches both in the source text and target text. The use of politeness strategies in the source text and target text was then compared in order to find out the reconstruction of the politeness strategies. The reconstruction was then analyzed to find out its impacts on the personality or the trait of Adelia.

Finding and Discussion

The realization of politeness strategies in Adelia’s speeches are described in the following table:

Table 1: Politeness Strategies in Adelia’s Speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Types of Politeness</th>
<th>Source Text</th>
<th>Target Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>bald on record</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>off record</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table shows that there are shifts in bald on record and positive politeness. In order to find out the types of shifts occurred in both politeness strategies, further analysis by examining the sub-strategies were conducted. The results are shown in the following table:

Table 2: The Reconstruction of Politeness Strategies and Sub-strategies in Adelia’s Speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>politeness strategies and all sub-strategies are maintained in the TT</th>
<th>positive</th>
<th>Sub-strategies in ST and TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>positive strategies</td>
<td>give reason (2)</td>
<td>joke (1)</td>
<td>use in-group identity markers (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>avoid disagreement (3)</td>
<td>gave reason &amp; avoid disagreement (1)</td>
<td>give deference (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be pessimistic (1)</td>
<td>gave deference &amp; apologize (1)</td>
<td>hedge (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bald on record</td>
<td>use contradiction (1)</td>
<td>direct utterances (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>off record</td>
<td>use in-group identity markers &amp; avoid disagreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>avoid disagreement (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use in-group identity markers &amp; give reason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>give reason (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use in-group identity markers &amp; exaggerate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exaggerate (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This category shows that there is no shift either in the politeness strategies or in the sub-strategies.

ST: 5 menit lagi, **Mas**.
TT: **Hunny**, can I sleep for another 5 minutes?
Positive politeness with in group identity markers

ST: Kenapa **Pak** Adimas ada di sini?
TT: Wha, what are doing here, **Sir**?
Negative politeness with gave deference

ST: Ihh! Sudah sana pakai bajunya! Sudah sana pakai bajunya!
TT: Just hurry up and put on that clothes!
Bald on record with direct imperative

ST: Anu... Mbak, itu mau dibawa ke kelurahan sebelah? Biar kubantu, ya?
TT: Ummm... Linda, you want to deliver those to the next district office, right? Let me help you!
Off record with Be vague

The bold-typed parts show the realization of politeness strategies and sub-strategies in the speeches. It seems that the translators try to convey the whole meaning of the ST. Besides, there is no significant difficulties in delivering the meaning of the ST so that the translators must not apply any types of politeness shifts. The equivalence of politeness strategies and sub-strategies between the ST and the TT does not influence the personality of Adelia in both versions.

Politeness strategy is maintained but parts of the sub-strategies are omitted

Partial shift, in terms of the shift of politeness sub-strategies occurred in this category. Further analysis shows that, the shift happens in the omission of in-group identity markers in some speeches which contain positive politeness.
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ST: Ternyata Mas memang banyak kekurangannya, ga bisa mancing, ga bisa berenang, sekarang takut kecoa.
Positive politeness with gave reason and use in group identity markers

TT: Looks like you have a lot of downside, uh? So you can't swim, you can't fish, and you are afraid of roach?
Positive politeness with gave reason

ST: Kalau ada apa-apa jangan ragu minta bantuan Adek ya Mas, Mas boleh bergantung sama Adek.
Positive politeness with Exaggerate and in group identity markers

TT: If you need something, don't hesitate to ask for my help, okay. Feel free to depend on me.
Positive with in group identity marker

The in-group identity markers adek and mas in the context above show the forms of greeting used by a husband and a wife in Javanese culture. Occasionally, the wife calls her husband mas and the husband calls her wife adek. These kinds of greeting cannot be found in the TT. Thus, the translators tend to omit the cultural greetings.

Shift in the politeness strategy
Shift on the politeness strategy occurs in the shift of positive politeness into bald on record.

ST: Bang Meka, mas nitip lagi sama abang, ya?
Positive politeness with in group identity marker

TT: Meka, did he told you to bring something to me again?
Bald on record

ST: Oh? Iya, adek tunggu.
Positive with in group identity marker

TT: Oh! I will wait for your call.
Bald on record

Similar phenomenon as found in the previous finding also happens in this category. There are omissions of in-group identity markers in the form of cultural greetings, such as bang, abang, adek, mas, and mbak; which results in the changing of politeness strategy from positive politeness into bald on record, in the form of direct imperative.

Pratama (2013) underlines the problem of preserving or omitting in-group identity markers in the form of cultural greetings. In some cases, the use of in-group identity markers contains probability of showing the traits of the characters. Thus, when they are deleted, there might be difference in the traits of the character between the ST and the TT.

In Indonesian culture, greetings show deference among participants. It is also reflected in the way Adelia greets the other characters in My Pre-wedding. Adelia always uses mas to call Adimas (her boyfriend) and Meka (her cousin), mbak to call Linda (her bestfriend) and her sister, also bapak and ibu to call her parents. The use of these kinds of greetings is a dominant characteristic of Adelia. As a consequence, the use of greetings develops the trait of Adelia as a girl who always positions herself as “younger sister” to other characters. However, these greetings are omitted in the TT. Thus, there is a shift on the trait of Adelia. As a result of the omission of the in-group identity markers, realized as cultural greetings, the translation version created by Pujangga Webtoon portrays Adelia as a girl who puts herself in a parallel position to others.

In the case of cultural values in translation, a translator, sometimes, is put in a dilemma position; whether to maintain the cultural values as well as the meaning or only the meaning (Akbari, 2013; Bracaj, 2015). However, it should be underlined that the combination of different semiotic elements, the verbal aspect (words) and visual aspect
(images) is the unique characteristic of comic. Thus, as in film subtitle, translating comic should not ignore the visual aspect. The translation and the visual aspect should be appropriate. (Zanettin, 2008; Yablonsky, 2016).

Besides highlighting the love story between Adelia and Adimas, My Pre-wedding also tells the life of some civil servants. In some scenes, the visual aspects show the characters wearing civil servant uniform. This visual aspect portrays the setting of the story which takes place in Indonesia. Therefore, the speeches of the characters should contain Indonesian values, including the way the characters greet the other characters.

As an alternative of the aforementioned problem, providing footnote can be a good solution. As stated before, there are two English versions of My Pre-wedding webtoon published in “webtoon translate” or “fans translation” features. The translation version done by 148 fans has applied footnote technique in translating the cultural greetings as shown in the following picture:

Picture 1: Footnote Technique in Comic Translation

**Conclusion**

In the case of translation, shift in the politeness strategies as well as politeness sub-strategies influences the traits of the main character in My Prewedding webtoon. Adelia is defined as a girl who positions herself as “younger sister” to her surroundings. As the shifts on the politeness strategies and politeness sub-strategies occur in some speeches, the personality of Adelia is changed into a casual girl who puts herself in a parallel position to others. This finding shows that politeness strategies can be one of the instruments in prose fiction characterization.

Comics is a work of art which employs the verbal as well as the visual aspects. This semiotic elements cannot be separated and should be conveyed in the target text. Thus, as an alternative, translators may put footnotes in order to convey the meaning and the cultural values. This effort is important as the cultural values, according to the findings, influence the personality or traits of the main character.

**References**


