


Analysis of Translation Techniques Used in LINE Webtoon

“Serena” by Jeong Ina

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A B S T R A C T

Translation techniques play a crucial role in ensuring that meaning is conveyed accurately and naturally across languages, particularly in dialogue-driven texts such as webtoons. However, previous studies on webtoon translation have predominantly focused on specific linguistic or cultural aspects, with limited attention to the overall distribution of translation techniques in English-to-Indonesian contexts. This study aims to identify the types of translation techniques and analyze their frequency in selected chapters of *Serena* by Jeong Ina, based on the framework proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). Using a descriptive qualitative design with quantitative support, 474 data units were analyzed from the English and Indonesian versions. The findings indicate that modulation is the most dominant technique, followed by amplification, reduction, and established equivalent. These results suggest that the translator prioritizes naturalness, clarity, and readability. Overall, the selection of translation techniques is influenced by the communicative demands of webtoons as multimodal and dialogue-based medium.

Keywords: *Translation Studies, Translation Techniques, Webtoon Translation, English-Indonesian Translation*

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INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, the rapid growth of global media platforms has significantly increased cross-cultural communication and content consumption. One of the most popular forms of digital content today is webtoon, a type of online comic that combines visual and verbal elements and reaches a wide international audience. As webtoons are distributed across different languages, translation becomes essential in enabling global accessibility and understanding. In this context, translation has long been recognized as a vital means of communication between individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Jingyao (2024) highlights that translation functions as a bridge through which cultural exchange occurs and global culture is disseminated (Xu, 2024). In this sense, translation helps reduce communicative distance by mediating meaning across languages and cultural contexts, allowing messages to be understood beyond their original linguistic boundaries (Rachael & Mary, 2023).

The importance of translation has become increasingly evident in the digital era, particularly with the rapid expansion of global media consumption. Digital platforms now provide wide access to literary and entertainment content for international audiences, making translation indispensable for cross-language interaction. Translation, however, involves more than the replacement of words from a source language into a target language. It requires careful consideration of meaning, stylistic choices, and cultural implications to ensure that the message is conveyed naturally to target readers. As noted by Shakhruza (2024), successful translation depends not only on linguistic accuracy but also on the translator's awareness of stylistic and contextual elements (Bekhzodova, 2024). For this reason, translators are expected to employ appropriate translation strategies and techniques to maintain clarity, accuracy, and naturalness in the translated text.

Along with these developments, translation is no longer confined to traditional media such as books or films, but has expanded to various forms of digital content, including webtoons. This shift introduces new dimensions in translation studies, particularly in relation to popular digital narratives. A webtoon, derived from the terms “web” and “cartoon”, refers to an online comic that integrates visual elements with written text (Chiara et al., 2023). As a form of multimodal text, webtoons combine visual, textual, and interactive elements, such as sequential images and vertical scrolling, to enhance storytelling and reader engagement (Dar et al., 2023). This integration enables meaning to be conveyed not only through language but also through visual cues and narrative structure, facilitating comprehension and emotional connection. As a result, webtoons have gained significant popularity, especially among young readers worldwide. Digital platforms such as LINE Webtoon provide access to thousands of titles across diverse genres, fostering a global readership and shaping a contemporary culture of digital comic consumption (Nurohmah et al., 2024).

Despite their popularity, webtoons present distinctive challenges for translators. The translation process must consider spatial limitations within speech bubbles, the alignment between dialogue and visual expressions, and the transfer of humor and emotional tone in a way that remains accessible to target readers. Cultural references embedded in webtoon narratives further complicate the translation process, as many culturally specific elements cannot be translated literally without losing meaning (Putri et al., 2023). In addition, idiomatic expressions and cultural nuances require careful treatment to preserve their communicative function in the target language (Edianza & Fitriani, 2023). Translators are also faced with decisions regarding domestication and foreignization, particularly when determining how much of the source culture should be retained or adapted (Putri et al., 2023). Therefore, the selection of appropriate translation techniques plays a crucial role in maintaining clarity, coherence, emotional impact, and character representation in translated webtoon dialogues.

To analyze how translators make micro-level decisions in transferring meaning from the source text into the target text, translation studies commonly employ the concept of translation techniques. Translation techniques refer to the procedures used to transfer and classify how elements of meaning are rendered from the source text into the target text, particularly at the level of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences (Molina & Albir, 2002). Unlike translation methods or strategies that influence the overall direction or intention of translation, techniques focus on the practical application of equivalence at the textual level by comparing the source and target texts directly (Molina & Albir, 2002; Volf, 2020). In their widely cited framework, Molina and Albir (2002) propose a comprehensive taxonomy consisting of eighteen translation techniques, which include, among others, literal translation, modulation, transposition, adaptation, and amplification. These techniques represent different ways of negotiating meaning, form, and cultural elements between the source and target texts.

This taxonomy has been widely adopted in translation research because it allows for a systematic and detailed examination of translators’ decision-making processes. In the context of webtoon dialogues, where textual space is limited and meaning must align closely with visual and emotional cues, the application of translation techniques becomes particularly relevant. By analyzing the techniques employed, researchers can better understand how translators manage linguistic constraints, convey emotional expressions, and adapt culturally embedded meanings in translated webtoon dialogues.

A considerable number of studies have employed Molina and Albir’s (2002) translation technique framework to examine translation practices across various text types. Previous research applying this taxonomy has been conducted in literary and audiovisual contexts, including novels, poetry, films, and subtitles. For instance, Arbain (2023) analyzed the translation of fear expressions in the subtitles of *Stranger Things* and found that the established equivalent technique was the most frequently used technique, while Saputra et al. (2024) and Purba et al. (2023) reported the dominance of literal translation in animated film subtitles due to spatial and temporal constraints (Arbain, 2023; A. Purba et al., 2023; Saputra et al., 2024). Similar applications of Molina and Albir’s techniques have also been found in literary translation, such as the translation of poetry (Prisnalia & Sitinjak, 2025) and swear words in

novels (Baking & Sajarwa, 2023), demonstrating the flexibility and relevance of the framework across different genres and media.

In the context of comics and webtoons, existing studies have primarily examined specific linguistic and cultural elements rather than translation techniques comprehensively. Several researchers have focused on the translation of particular lexical categories, such as beauty-related terms (Alyfia, 2021), idiomatic expressions (Oktaviela, 2023), and phrasal verbs (F. F. Purba et al., 2025). Other studies have explored culturally embedded elements, including local mysticism and culture-specific items in the webtoon *Sarimin* (Putri et al., 2023), as well as sound-related features such as onomatopoeia and sound effects in horror and fantasy webtoons (Kho et al., 2024; Puspitasari, 2022; Sachiya & Juliana, 2020). These studies highlight the importance of visual-verbal interaction, emotional expression, and cultural nuance in webtoon translation.

In light of these findings, it can be observed that although Molina and Albir's (2002) translation technique framework has been widely applied across literary and audiovisual texts, its use in webtoon translation studies remains largely partial and selective. Most existing research on webtoons concentrates on specific linguistic categories, cultural expressions, or sound-related features, rather than examining translation techniques holistically across extended segments of webtoon narratives. As a result, the overall distribution and frequency of translation techniques used in dialogue-driven webtoons have not been sufficiently documented, particularly in studies involving English-Indonesian translation. This limitation highlights the need for a study that systematically maps translation techniques within representative chapters of a webtoon season to provide a broader understanding of translators' strategic choices in digital comic translation.

Serena, written by Jeong Ina, is a well-known webtoon published on the LINE Webtoon platform and widely read by international audiences. The webtoon has gained a substantial number of readers and interactions on the LINE Webtoon platform, particularly among English and Indonesian audiences, indicating its cultural relevance and wide circulation. The story of this webtoon is set in a historical European-inspired setting, Wellenberg, Meuracevia, at the turn of the nineteenth century. The story centers on the struggle to preserve Serenity Hotel amid personal conflict and social obligation among its main characters, *Serena* as the heiress, and Eiser as her husband. Unlike many webtoons that emphasize action or visually-driven narratives with minimal verbal interaction, *Serena* relies heavily on expressive dialogue to convey character development, emotional tension, and interpersonal relationships. As a result, language plays a central role in presenting the translation quality, especially in shaping meaning, tone, and narrative progression. This dialogue-driven structure distinguishes *Serena* from other webtoons and provides substantial linguistic material for translation analysis.

Another important reason for selecting *Serena* as the object of study lies in the complexity of its cultural and contextual elements. The webtoon incorporates representations of social hierarchy, business practices, food, art, and social etiquette that reflect its historical and cultural setting. These elements are often embedded in dialogue and require translators to make careful decisions regarding cultural transfer, explicitation, or adaptation. In addition, *Serena* offers richer and more nuanced verbal data. For this reason, selected chapters from Season 1 are chosen, as they introduce the main characters, establish core relationships, and contain a high density of expressive and culturally embedded dialogue. These characteristics make the selected chapters of *Serena* Season 1 a methodologically appropriate object for examining translation techniques in webtoon translation.

Despite the increasing scholarly attention given to webtoon translation, the review of previous studies indicates that comprehensive analyses of translation techniques in webtoon narratives remain limited. Existing research tends to concentrate on specific linguistic features or cultural expressions, leaving the overall distribution and frequency of translation techniques underexplored, particularly in the context of English-Indonesian webtoon translation. This limitation is especially notable in dialogue-driven webtoons, where meaning, emotion, and cultural nuance are largely conveyed through verbal interaction rather than visual elements alone.

In response to this gap, this study examines the translation techniques employed in the English-to-Indonesian translation of selected chapters from *Serena* Season 1 by adopting Molina and Albir's (2002) taxonomy. Rather than evaluating translation quality or focusing on specific linguistic categories, this study is designed to systematically map and quantify the translation techniques used within dialogue-rich chapters. By focusing on a representative narrative arc rather than a broad and potentially unwieldy dataset, this research aims to reveal broader patterns in translators' strategic choices when handling dialogue-driven and culturally embedded webtoon content.

Accordingly, the present study aims to provide a systematic analysis of the translation techniques used in the English-to-Indonesian translation of selected chapters of *Serena* Season 1 by employing Molina and Albir's (2002) taxonomy. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the types of translation techniques applied in the selected data and to examine their frequency of occurrence. By mapping and quantifying the techniques used in dialogue-rich webtoon chapters, this research offers an overview of translators' strategic choices without focusing on specific linguistic categories or evaluating translation quality. The findings of this research will enrich the field of translation studies by presenting a systematic analysis of translation techniques applied within a representative segment of a webtoon narrative.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design supported by quantitative data to examine the translation techniques used in the English-to-Indonesian translation of *Serena* Season 1. A qualitative approach is used to interpret how meaning is transferred at the micro-textual level in dialogue-based translation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 16), while quantitative data are used to calculate the frequency and percentage of each technique.

Data Source

The data were obtained from dialogue utterances in two selected chapters of *Serena* Season 1, published on the LINE Webtoon platform. The chapters were selected through purposeful sampling, a strategy defined by Creswell and Guetterman (2019, p. 206), which refers to the intentional selection of information-rich data relevant to the research objective. These chapters were chosen due to their high density of dialogue and their representation of key narrative developments and character interactions. The unit of analysis in this study consists of translation units at the level of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences found in the dialogue. The analysis focuses exclusively on verbal dialogue, while non-verbal visual elements are excluded.

Instrument

The primary instrument of this study is the researcher, as qualitative research relies on the researcher's ability to interpret and analyze data. In addition, a data sheet was used as a supporting instrument to systematically record and classify the identified translation units based on Molina and Albir's (2002) taxonomy. The use of a data sheet ensures that the classification process is organized and consistent, thereby supporting the reliability of the analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected through a systematic side-by-side comparison of the English source text and its Indonesian translation. The procedure involved identifying and extracting translation units from the dialogue and recording them in a data sheet for analysis. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019, p. 223), these textual dialogues are treated as documents, which serve as a stable and accessible source of qualitative data for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data of this study were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach supported by quantitative data. The analysis applied Molina and Albir's (2002) framework, which consists of eighteen translation techniques, including borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, established equivalent, generalization, particularization, amplification, reduction, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, discursive creation,

compensation, adaptation, description, variation, and substitution, as identified in the data. The analysis began with identifying translation units from the source and target texts, followed by coding and classifying each unit based on the relevant translation technique through a systematic coding process. This process involves segmenting and labeling the data to form meaningful categories (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 243). The coded data were then classified into categories of translation techniques to facilitate systematic analysis. Subsequently, the frequency and percentage of each technique were calculated to identify patterns and tendencies in their use. The qualitative analysis focuses on interpreting how meaning is transferred at the micro-textual level, while the quantitative results of this study is used to identify patterns and tendencies in the use of translation techniques. This combined approach allows for a more comprehensive and balanced analysis of the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Translation Techniques Used in the Selected Chapters

This study identified the translation techniques used in the English-to-Indonesian translation of *Serena* Season 1 by applying the framework proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). Based on the analysis of 474 data units collected from two selected chapters, a total of 18 translation techniques were examined. However, only several techniques were found to be actively employed in the data. The distribution of translation techniques across the two chapters is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Translation Techniques in the Selected Chapters of *Serena*

No.	Translation Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Adaptation	6	1,27%
2.	Amplification	92	19,41%
3.	Borrowing	8	1,69%
4.	Calque	-	0,00%
5.	Compensation	-	0,00%
6.	Description	-	0,00%
7.	Discursive Creation	10	2,11%
8.	Established Equivalent	85	17,93%
9.	Generalization	6	1,27%
10.	Linguistic Amplification	1	0,21%
11.	Linguistic Compression	9	1,90%
12.	Literal Translation	6	1,27%
13.	Modulation	134	28,27%
14.	Particularization	7	1,48%
15.	Reduction	90	18,99%
16.	Substitution	-	0,00%
17.	Transposition	7	1,48%
18.	Variation	13	2,74%
Total		474	100%

As shown in Table 1, the most frequently used translation technique is modulation, with a total of 134 occurrences (28,27%). This is followed by amplification (92 occurrences, 19,41%), reduction (90 occurrences, 18,99%), and established equivalent (85 occurrences, 17,93%). Other techniques such as variation, discursive creation, borrowing, and transposition appear in relatively smaller proportions. Meanwhile, several techniques, including calque, compensation, description, and substitution, were not found in the analyzed data.

In discussion of the findings, the researcher explain the result by interpreting the dominant translation techniques and their functions in the context of webtoon translation.

The Dominance of Modulation

The analysis shows that modulation emerges as the most frequently applied translation technique in *Serena*. This suggests that the translator often shifts the perspective or point of view of the source text in order to produce more natural expressions in the target language. Modulation is defined as a shift in message through a change in viewpoint, and it is commonly used to ensure that the translation sounds idiomatic, especially when literal translation would

Analysis of Translation Techniques Used in LINE Webtoon "Serena" by Jeong Ina

be awkward (Alwazna, 2022). In addition, modulation contributes to naturalness by employing lexical and grammatical forms that are familiar to target readers (Putranti, 2018).

This tendency is evident in the data. For example, the sentence in Chapter 2 "Are you serious?" is translated as "Kau sudah gila, ya?", where a neutral question is transformed into a more emotionally expressive utterance. Another example can be seen in the translation of "It looks like your master has trouble understanding me" into "Nyonyamu sepertinya tak memahami apa yang sudah kukatakan" in Chapter 2, where the degree of meaning shifts from partial difficulty to a stronger expression of inability. These examples demonstrate how the translator adjusts both perspective and intensity to produce more natural and contextually appropriate expressions.

The frequent occurrence of such shifts suggests that modulation is systematically used to enhance emotional nuance and character voice. Given that *Serena* relies heavily on expressive dialogue, this technique enables the translation to sound more natural and contextually appropriate for Indonesian readers.

The Use of Amplification

In addition to modulation, amplification also appears prominently in the translation of *Serena*, indicating the translator's tendency to expand the source text by making implicit meanings more explicit. This technique, often referred to as explicitation, involves adding information that is not overtly stated in the source text in order to enhance clarity and comprehensibility (Adjie et al., 2025). It also enables the translator to provide necessary details that help the target audience better understand the intended message (Darmayanti, 2020).

Evidence of this practice can be found in the data. For instance, the sentence in Chapter 2 "Pick it." is translated as "Ambil kertas itu.", where the object "kertas itu" is introduced in the target text. Although this element is not explicitly mentioned in the source text, it can be inferred from the visual context. The addition ensures that the message is conveyed clearly and avoids potential ambiguity for the reader.

Such patterns indicate that amplification is not applied incidentally, but rather functions as a consistent strategy to improve clarity. This is particularly significant in the context of webtoon translation, where dialogue is typically brief and highly dependent on situational context. By making implicit information explicit, the translator minimizes the risk of misunderstanding and supports smoother comprehension. This aligns with previous findings that highlight the role of amplification in enhancing the readability of translated texts (Lestari et al., 2020).

Overall, the use of amplification reflects the translator's emphasis on clarity and reader accessibility, ensuring that the translated dialogue remains informative, understandable, and contextually complete for Indonesian readers.

The Role of Reduction

In contrast to amplification, the data also reveal a frequent use of reduction, highlighting the translator's tendency to simplify the source text by omitting less essential elements. This technique is typically applied when certain information can be inferred from the context, allowing the translation to focus on conveying the core message more efficiently. As noted by Sajidah et al. (2025), reduction involves the removal of non-essential elements so that the most relevant information is retained. This pattern can be observed in the translation of "Did everything go well during the trip?" in Chapter 2 into "Apa perjalanannya lancar?", where the word "everything" is omitted. Despite this reduction, the main idea remains clearly understandable, indicating that the omitted element does not significantly affect the overall meaning.

The consistent use of reduction suggests that the translator aims to produce concise and effective expressions. This is particularly important in webtoon dialogue, where space is limited and readability must be maintained. Furthermore, reduction may also serve as a strategy to adapt the message to the target audience by excluding elements that are less relevant or culturally unnecessary (Sajidah et al., 2025).

Overall, the application of reduction reflects an effort to streamline the translation while preserving its essential meaning, resulting in dialogue that is clear, natural, and suitable for Indonesian readers.

Another notable pattern in the data is the use of established equivalent, which reflects the translator's reliance on expressions that are already familiar and widely accepted in the target language. Rather than translating literally, the translator selects forms that naturally fit the linguistic and cultural norms of Indonesian.

This can be seen across different types of expressions. In terms of forms of address, "Lady" is rendered as "Nyonya", demonstrating a culturally appropriate equivalent. In conversational responses, "I see" is translated as "Oh, begitu", which mirrors a natural reaction in everyday Indonesian communication. Similarly, in agreement expressions, "That's true" becomes "Ya, benar", reflecting a commonly used and recognized form.

These examples suggest that the established equivalent technique is consistently employed to maintain fluency and familiarity in the translated text. Such usage indicates that the translator places strong emphasis on naturalness, readability, and acceptability. This aligns with previous studies showing that established equivalent contributes to clearer and more acceptable translations (Novitasari et al., 2025), while also supporting readability and cultural relevance across different contexts (Anshori et al., 2025). Overall, this technique enables the translation to sound more natural and contextually appropriate, ensuring that the dialogue aligns with the expectations of Indonesian readers.

Translation Techniques in the Context of Webtoon

The findings of this study show that the use of translation techniques in *Serena* is strongly influenced by the characteristics of webtoon as a digital comic medium. As a dialogue-driven and visually supported format, webtoons function as multimodal texts that integrate verbal and nonverbal elements, requiring translators to consider how meaning is constructed through the interaction between language and visual context (Skwarzyński, 2019; Tredoux, 2024). In such texts, images, facial expressions, and visual cues are closely interconnected with dialogue, and they may significantly shape or even alter the intended meaning. Therefore, translations must remain natural, clear, and contextually appropriate to maintain coherence between textual and visual elements.

This influence is reflected in the dominance of modulation, which allows the translator to adjust perspective and emotional intensity. The frequent use of amplification indicates the need to make implicit meanings more explicit, while reduction is applied to maintain brevity in line with the limited space of speech bubbles. Meanwhile, established equivalent ensures that expressions remain natural, familiar, and culturally appropriate for Indonesian readers.

The combination of these techniques suggests that the translator adopts a reader-oriented approach, prioritizing acceptability and readability over literal translation. This is also consistent with the nature of webtoons, which integrate visual and textual elements to enhance reader comprehension and emotional engagement (Dar et al., 2023). Overall, the findings indicate that the selection of translation techniques in *Serena* is shaped by the communicative demands of webtoon as a multimodal and dialogue-based medium, highlighting the importance of flexibility and contextual sensitivity in translation.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed translation techniques used in the English-to-Indonesian translation of selected chapters of *Serena* Season 1 based on Molina and Albir's (2002) framework. The findings show that modulation was the most dominant technique, followed by amplification, reduction, and established equivalent. The translator tended to prioritize naturalness, clarity, and readability through meaning-oriented translation strategies adapted to the communicative and visual constraints of webtoons. This study contributes to translation studies by highlighting how linguistic and contextual factors influence translation practices in digital comic media. Future research should examine broader data, multimodal aspects, translation quality, and audience responses to provide more comprehensive insights into webtoon translation.

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Analysis of Translation Techniques Used in LINE Webtoon "Serena" by Jeong Ina

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