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I-RoLE 2023

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION 2023

**EMBRACING CHANGE:
EMANCIPATING THE LANDSCAPE
OF RESEARCH IN LINGUISTIC,
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

13 - 14 MARCH 2023

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SaMDiL: SAME MUSIC, DIFFERENT LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT:

Translation has always been closely tied to lyrics. There are many songs from all around the world that uses foreign languages, therefore, to be able to understand the meaning of the songs, the lyrics have to be translated through a translation process. Lyrics, on the other hand, are a part of the music where people can sing and harmonise with the rest of the song. However, currently, lyrics from foreign language songs are translated in a straightforward manner, which is only translated to be able to understand the meaning of a song but given less consideration on its “singability”. Thus, people will end up with an end product that is not fulfilling, as they get to know the meaning, but could not sing along to it in a language that they recognise as the melody and rhythm do not match. In this project, several songs from Malaysian artists were selected and translated into the target language to be understood, and also singable. The clients were contacted through WhatsApp, where feedback from the translated lyrics was given. By the end of this project, it can be concluded that there is room in the translation industry to be given focus on this kind of translation and its importance.

Keywords: English, music, music videos, translation, YouTube

1. INTRODUCTION

Melody and lyrics are closely tied together as they represent the most basic forms of music. One simply could not exist without the other. People from across the country, and across time, listen to music and sing along to the lyrics. It is how people express the emotions carried by the music and how they express their own feelings, it is how people relate to songs. In this current day and age, where technology is striving, there are many lyrics on the internet that use foreign languages translated into English since that is the current lingua franca. Despite that, many lyrics translations on the internet are quite literal and lack the melody that the general people can read and sing along to. In addition, Fitri et al. (2022) remarked that the translations of songs into their target languages are done without considering the rhyme and rhythm that indicate the original songs’ musical novelties. This is big enough to become a problem, in which this project aimed to resolve.

For this project, the aim is to translate the lyrics of Malaysian music videos from local artists on YouTube to English. The aim is not to translate the lyrics literally, as that would not solve the problem, but to translate them thoroughly and with the melody and the ability to sing the translated lyrics. The clients were to be contacted through email or through online platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram. After the translations of the lyrics were completed, the lyrics were shown to the clients alongside the original lyrics. Last but not least, the project is named ‘SaMDiL’ which is an acronym for ‘Same Music, Different Language’, which can be



pronounced like the phrase “some deal”. The reason for the naming is to match the intended objective of the project, which is to translate the lyrics of the same music, into a different language.

1.1. Project Objective / Purpose

The objective of this project is to translate five local music videos from the media platform YouTube that are translated according to the best interests of the meaning and sonic properties of the music. The translated songs were translated from the source language into the targeted language while maintaining the rhythm and rhyme so that the lyrics will remain singable for the general viewers. This project’s purpose is to improve the current state of translated lyrics of music that are too literal.

1.2. Entrepreneurial Opportunities

For this project, it was decided that the translated versions of the lyrics in the music videos were not to be charged to the client in exchange for their permission to use their music videos for this course, which is ELS304 (Professional Communication Exercise). However, in the future, a standardised fee structure will be imposed on future clients for the translation services. This could be done by discussing appropriate rates for the services on online platforms such as Instagram or WhatsApp by calculating the translation rate based on the number of words and the popularity of the music videos.

1.3. Literature Review

For this project, an investigation was conducted on the full scope of translation in the music industry. It was revealed that most songs are translated with low “singability” (J. Franzon, 2015). Franzon (2015) found that out of 73 musicals or anything related to music, 35 were translated in a talkable manner while only 16 were translated and subtitled in a singable manner. This proves that most songs are not translated to be singable, but rather just to be understood the meaning of. A study of the relationship between the lyrics and the melody in music has also been conducted. According to Nichols et al. (2009), the possibility of melodic peaks has a correlation with syllabic stress levels. This shows that it is not easy to translate songs to be singable. Research on the translation of foreign music has been done by past studies. An example of such studies was conducted by Aleshinskaya (2020) where she studied translation when creating a musical discourse in Russia. The differences between Russian and English linguistics enable Russian musicians to use a different type of English that does not follow the Standard English norms. In addition, a relevant study regarding strategies when it comes to translation has also been done. A study by Leni and Pattiwael (2019) revealed that there are nine strategies for translation which are namely; word-for-word translation, the addition of words, omission of words, use of metaphors, use of rhymes, use of paraphrases, use of English words, and interpretation strategy; which in their study on the strategies of translation used for Disney’s “Do You Want to Build a Snowman?” indicated that the use of paraphrasing is the most consistent choice of translators when translating a song. This can be attributed to translators wanting to keep the central idea of the lyrics, but also to keep the song’s “singability”.

2. METHODOLOGY

The creation of the translation for the music videos has been planned and translated according to the flowchart below. After contacting and ensuring an agreement with the clients, a series of questions was asked that will serve as the pre-questionnaire to determine the need for a translation for the music videos. After the translated versions of the music videos were displayed to the clients, a post-questionnaire was asked to ensure the satisfaction of the clients with the end products.

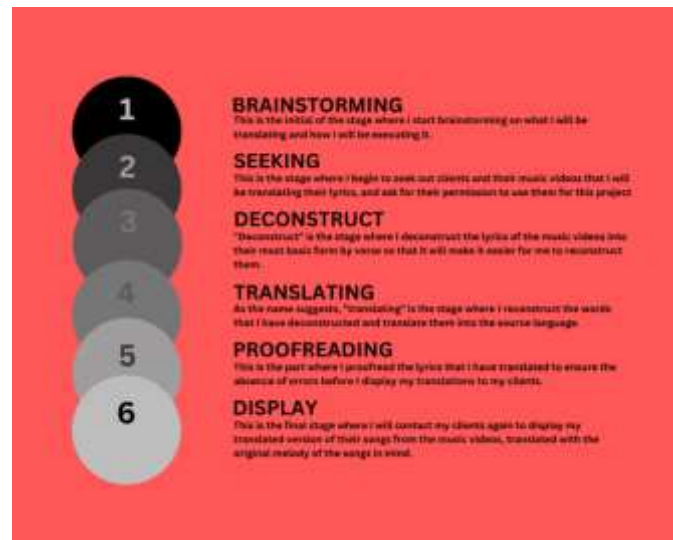


Figure 1: Project's Flowchart

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1: The Agreement of Consent with the Clients

After deciding on which clients to pursue, a prompt search was made on how to contact them. After discovering the phone numbers that could be contacted for enquiries, the clients were contacted through WhatsApp and agreements of consent to use their songs to be used and translated for this project were requested. The consents were given for this project as long as any part of the songs or translated songs were posted online.

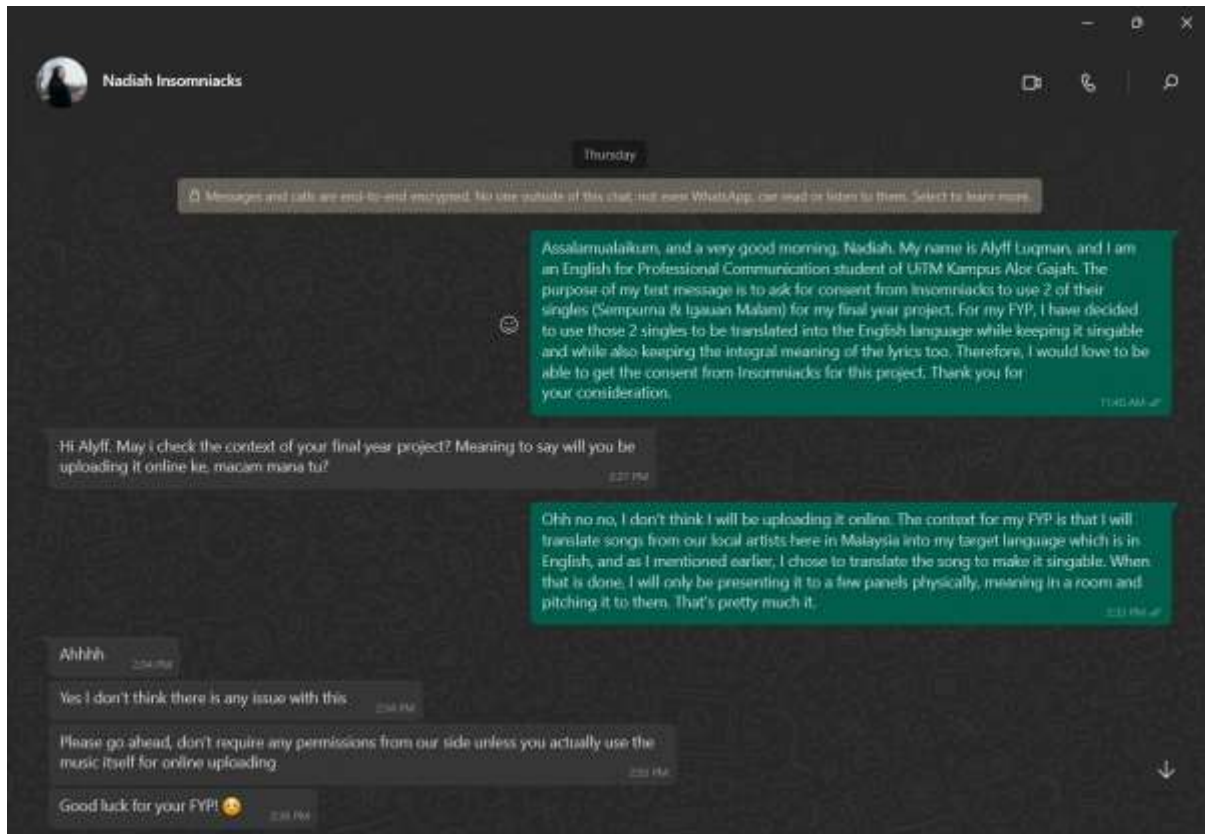


Figure 2: Screenshot of Consent from the Manager of Insomniacks



SEMPURNA

Siapakah diriku (Who will I end up being)
Tanpa dirimu sayangku? (Without your presence my dear love?)
Telah lama ku tunggu (I have waited for so long)
Tiap malam ku merindu (For every night I really miss)
Wajahmu cintaku (Your pretty face dear love)

Di dalam dakapanmu (When I am in your embrace)
Ku diselimit bintang (I'm blanketed by the stars)
Lukisan senyumanmu (The image of your pretty smile)
Berlari di mindaku (It is running through my mind)

Kini aku merayu (Right now I am begging you)
Tolong kekal dalam hidupku (Please stay forever here in my life)
Sangat sepi tanpamu (It's so lonely without you)
Takut tuk teruskan hidup ini bersendirian, oh (It is scary to continue with this life by my own, oh)

Di dalam dakapanmu (When I am in your embrace)
Ku diselimit bintang (I'm blanketed by the stars)
Lukisan senyumanmu (The image of your pretty smile)
Berlari di mindaku (It is running through my mind)

Bagaimanakah caranya (Please tell me what I can do)
Untuk ku ganti apa yang sudah (For me to replace what is already)
Sempurna, oh (So perfect, oh)

Oh god I can't go on without her
This girl is my love, my forever
I'm begging you please don't take her
Away from me

Bagaimanakah caranya (Please tell me what I can do)
Untuk ku ganti apa yang sudah (For me to replace what is already)
Sempurna, oh (So perfect, oh)

Oh god I can't go on without her
This girl is my love, my forever
I'm begging you please don't take her
Away from me

Figure 3: Translation of “Sempurna” by Insomniacks

3.2: The Feedback from the Clients of the End Products

After the translations of the songs were completed, the updated versions of the lyrics were displayed to the clients for their approval and feedback. This was also done also through the messaging platform, WhatsApp.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the project's objective has not been completely reached. 3 out of 5 music videos from our local artists were translated into the target language and translated to be singable while keeping all of the integral parts of the songs' meanings. The translated lyrics are similarly matched with the original lyrics in terms of syllables, which will assist the readers of the lyrics to sing along with the translated lyrics.

For this project, time was the biggest limitation. The clients who were chosen for this project did not respond to the enquiries as promptly as the researchers would have liked them to. This affected the timeline in which the translations should be completed. Therefore, a recommendation for future projects would be that the timeline for completion should take into consideration the response time of potential clients to ensure that both the translators and the clients will have sufficient time to exchange feedback. In addition, the translators can start with clients who are not tied to major record labels, such as independent artists or budding musicians. This will ensure that more translation projects can be completed and a portfolio of completed projects can be built before efforts to approach more established artists can be made.



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First and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation towards Allah SWT for his grace for present me with this opportunity to partake in the creation of my final year project for this subject, ELS 304, also known as Professional Communication Exercise, titled SaMDiL, which is an acronym for Same Music, Different Language.

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