
TRANSLATOR'S VOICE IN DISCURSIVE CREATION TRANSLATION ON THE MAHEN'S *PURA-PURA LUPA* SONG

Muhamad Saiful Mukminin

Master of Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada
muhamadsaifulmukminin@mail.ugm.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the translator's voice in the discursive creative translation of the song *Pura-Pura Lupa* by Mahen. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research seeks to explore the translator's role in reconstructing meaning through linguistic adaptation and cultural reinterpretation. The primary data consists of the song lyrics in the source language (Indonesian), performed by Mahen, and their translation into the target language (English), performed by Emma Heesters. Data collection was conducted using a documentation method by gathering and comparing both versions of the lyrics. The theoretical foundation of this study is based on the theory of discursive creative translation, which emphasizes the translator's active role in shaping discourse. Following an interactive model, the analysis process consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the translator's voice is reflected in structural and semantic changes, idiomatic adaptation, and shifts in perspective. This study reinforces the idea that translation is not merely a mechanical process but a discursive act that requires linguistic and cultural sensitivity.

Keywords: Translator's Voice, Discursive Creation, Song, Translation.

Introduction

Song translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but also involves reconstructing meaning within different cultural and aesthetic contexts (Desblache, 2018; Levý, 2011). In the song *Pura-Pura Lupa* by Mahen, the translator faces challenges in preserving the emotional and stylistic essence of the original lyrics when translating them into another language. One of the strategies used in song translation is *discursive creation*, which allows the translator to produce a new text that remains faithful to the message and

nuances of the original song (Rasti & Khajavi, 2023). However, how the translator's voice emerges in this process remains a question that requires further exploration. Therefore, this study focuses on identifying and analyzing the *translator's voice* in the translation of *Pura-Pura Lupa* using the *discursive creation* strategy.

This study is based on descriptive translation theory and the *translator's voice* approach. According to Hermans (1996), translator's voice reflects the translator's subjectivity in making linguistic and stylistic decisions that influence the final translation outcome. In the context of song translation, Lefevere (2016) emphasizes that adaptation is often necessary to ensure lyrical fluency and cultural compatibility with the target audience. Additionally, the theory of *discursive creation* proposed by Molina and Albir (2002) explain how translators recreate meaning in the target language while preserving the essence of the source text. In the translation of the song *Pura-Pura Lupa*, this strategy allows the translator to restructure the lyrics to fit the musical structure and target culture without losing their emotional meaning. By employing this approach, this study aims to identify how the translator's voice emerges in the translation of Mahen's song lyrics.

Several previous studies have explored translation strategies in songs and the role of translators in the process. For example, Susam-Sarajeva (2016), in her study on popular song translation, highlights how translation decisions are influenced by linguistic and musical factors. Meanwhile, Franzon (2008) discusses the importance of prosodic equivalence in song lyric translation to ensure rhythmic and melodic continuity. In the context of translator's voice, Venuti (2018) explains how a translator's ideology, personal preferences, and cultural background can affect the translation outcome. The research conducted by Andri and Cholsy (2024) aimed to identify the presence of the translator's voice and the patterns of its formation in the translated text *The Rainbow Troops*, which is the English version of the novel *Laskar Pelangi*. Furthermore, the translation of Mahen's songs has been studied by several researchers, including Mukminin & Iryani (2025), Putranti (2021), and Rosalina & Simbolon (2023). However, there has been limited research specifically analyzing song translation within the framework of discursive

creation and how translators shape their voices in this process. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in translation studies by focusing on the translator's role in reconstructing meaning in the song *Pura-Pura Lupa*.

This study offers novelty by examining song translation through the perspective of translator's voice within the discursive creation strategy. While previous studies have primarily focused on linguistic and prosodic aspects of song translation, this research emphasizes how translators' decisions in employing discursive creation can influence audience perception of the translated song. Additionally, the analysis of *Pura-Pura Lupa*, a song that has not been extensively studied in an academic context, provides a new contribution to song translation studies. Thus, this research not only enriches academic discussions on the role of translators in song translation but also offers practical insights for translators working in the field of lyrical adaptation.

Song translation requires a balance between fidelity to the original meaning and creative adaptation to fit the target language and cultural context. In the song *Pura-Pura Lupa*, emotional and narrative aspects play a crucial role in conveying meaning to the listeners. Therefore, the translator does not merely translate word for word but must also recreate the song's atmosphere and message to be accessible to a new audience. As Proto (2015) states, song lyric translation must consider prosodic, rhythmic, and musical elements to ensure that the lyrics remain singable in the target language. Additionally, Tymoczko (2014) emphasizes that translation decisions are not purely linguistic but also reflect the translator's subjectivity and ideology. The discursive creation strategy allows for flexibility in translation without losing the song's original essence, while translator's voice helps reveal how translators make decisions throughout the process. By analyzing the translation of Mahen's song, this study aims to demonstrate that the translator's voice significantly impacts the final translation outcome, both in linguistic and aesthetic aspects as well as audience reception.

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the translator's voice in the discursive creative translation of the song *Pura-Pura Lupa* by Mahen. This approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of linguistic adaptation and meaning shifts in translation. The primary data in this research consist of the song lyrics in the source language (Indonesian) and their translated version in the target language (English), as covered by Emma Heesters. Data collection is conducted through documentation methods, involving the collection and comparison of lyrics in both languages. The collected data are then analyzed qualitatively to identify linguistic and semantic changes occurring in the translation process. This analysis is based on the theory of discursive creative translation (Molina & Albir, 2002), which highlights the translator's role in reshaping meaning through linguistic and cultural strategies.

The analytical process follows Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is carried out by identifying significant linguistic changes in the translation. Next, data presentation involves organizing the findings in a narrative format that compares the original and translated lyrics along with an in-depth analysis. In the final stage, conclusions are drawn based on observed patterns, considering the implications of translation on meaning and interpretation in the target language. To enhance the validity and reliability of the data, this study applies theory triangulation by comparing the analysis results with previous research on song lyric translation and the theory of discursive creation in literary translation.

Findings

Translation of *Pura-Pura Lupa* Song Lyrics (Indonesian-English)

The song *Pura-Pura Lupa* was originally performed by Mahen and later covered in English by Emma Heesters. Below are the lyrics in both versions for comparative analysis.

Table 1. Indonesian and English Version of *Pura-Pura Lupa* Song Lyrics

Indonesian Version	English Version
<i>Pernah aku jatuh hati</i>	I once fell so in love with you
<i>Padamu sepenuh hati</i>	I fell so deep with all my heart
<i>Hidup pun akan kuberi</i>	I thought no matter what I do
<i>Apapun kan ku lakui</i>	I will give anything for you
<i>Tapi tak pernah ku bermimpi</i>	Never thought you'd ever leave me
<i>Kau tinggalkan aku pergi</i>	Not even in my wildest dreams
<i>Tanpa tahu rasa ini</i>	I don't know what to feel or do
<i>Ingin rasa ku membenci</i>	Now I wish I never met you
<i>Tiba-tiba kamu datang</i>	Yeah now you're gone and honestly
<i>Saat kau telah dengan dia</i>	Your love for her is all I see
<i>Semakin hancur hatiku</i>	and every time it's killing me
<i>Jangan datang lagi cinta</i>	Don't ever come back to me again
<i>Bagaimana aku bisa lupa</i>	Trying to forget you the best I can
<i>Padahal kau tahu keadaannya</i>	It hurts too much to say you threw us away
<i>Kau bukanlah untukku</i>	Nothing that could make you stay
<i>Jangan lagi rindu cinta</i>	Don't ever miss me anymore
<i>Ku tak mau ada yang terluka</i>	You gave up on us when you closed that door
<i>Bahagiakan dia aku tak apa</i>	I wish you all the best thought you were my last
<i>Biar aku yang pura pura lupa</i>	Just please can you let me pretend.. to forget

Translator's Voice in Discursive Creation of *Pura-Pura Lupa* Song

This section discusses how the translator plays a role in shaping new meanings through the translation of the song *Pura-Pura Lupa*. The analysis focuses on the translation strategies used to adapt the meaning, emotions, and structure of the lyrics to the target language's culture and norms. The results reveal various shifts in meaning and the translator's creativity in creating a version that preserves the essence of the original song.

Structural and Semantic Changes

In discursive creative translation, the translator's voice emerges through structural and semantic changes to adapt the source text to the norms, style, and emotions of the target language. The translator does not merely transfer literal meaning but also interprets

the text to keep it engaging and impactful. Structural changes occur when sentence arrangements are adjusted, such as transforming questions into statements or choosing more natural constructions. Meanwhile, semantic changes involve additions, omissions, or substitutions to ensure the message remains relevant in the new context.

SL : *Hidup pun akan kuberi*

TL : I thought no matter what I do

In the translation of the lyrics, there is a structural shift from a declarative to a reflective form. The source text emphasizes a concrete action with a futurative form (*akan kuberi*), whereas the target text transforms it into personal reflection with *I thought*. This change shifts the focus from the act of giving everything to contemplating various possibilities. Additionally, there is a difference in meaning between the two versions. The source lyrics convey certainty and absolute sacrifice, while the target version is more speculative and open-ended, as seen in the phrase *no matter what I do*, which does not explicitly state a life sacrifice. This adaptation allows the message to remain emotional while aligning better with English expressive patterns. The translator opted for a more idiomatic approach to ensure the translation sounds natural and resonates with the cultural context of the target audience.

Another example of the translator's voice in discursive creation through structural and semantic changes in the song *Pura-Pura Lupa* is as follows:

SL : *Tapi tak pernah ku bermimpi*

TL : Never thought you'd ever leave me

There is a structural shift from an explicit to an implicit form in the translation of the song lyrics. In the source language, the subject *aku* is hidden, while in the target language, the subject *I* is omitted, making the translation sound more natural in spoken English. Additionally, the translation adds the clause *you'd ever leave me*, which is not present in the source text. This addition expands the meaning from an abstract statement to a more concrete one, conveying surprise and a sense of loss. In terms of meaning, the

source text simply states that the character never dreamed something would happen without specifying details. In contrast, the target text explicitly expresses disbelief about the separation, clarifying the song's emotional context. Furthermore, the addition of *ever* intensifies the sense of shock and disbelief, enhancing the emotional impact.

Here is an example of structural and semantic changes in the song *Pura-Pura Lupa* that highlight the translator's voice in discursive creation:

SL : *Tiba-tiba kamu datang*

TL : Yeah now you're gone and honestly

In this translation, significant changes occur in both structure and meaning to create an expression that aligns more naturally with English. Structurally, the original lyrics in the source language have a simple form, focusing on someone's sudden arrival. However, in the target language, the translator modifies the sentence structure by adding *Yeah* to create a more casual conversational tone and *now you're gone*, which instead expresses departure rather than arrival. This shift from arrival to departure helps maintain continuity with the previous lyrics or align with the song's emotional context. Additionally, the inclusion of *and honestly* enhances the emotional impact, emphasizing sincerity in expressing feelings.

Idiomatic Adaptation

In discursive creation translation, the translator's voice often emerges through idiomatic adaptation, which involves adjusting expressions to sound natural in the target language. This adaptation is achieved by replacing phrases or structures that may be unfamiliar in the target language with expressions more commonly used by native speakers. This process not only ensures textual fluency but also preserves the emotional and aesthetic impact of the source text.

SL : *Ingin rasa ku membenci*

TL : Now I wish I never met you

In the translation, idiomatic adaptation is used to convey the message more naturally in English. In the source language, the lyrics explicitly express a desire to hate, whereas in the target language, the meaning of hatred is conveyed implicitly through the wish that a certain meeting had never happened. The phrase *I wish I never met you* is a commonly used English idiom to express deep regret over a past relationship or event. Additionally, the inclusion of the word *Now* in the target text serves to emphasize that these feelings arise as a result of the current situation, thereby strengthening the song's emotional context. This adaptation demonstrates that the translator does not merely translate literally but also selects expressions that are more expressive and communicative in the target language.

Another example of the translator's voice in discursive creation through idiomatic adaptation in the song *Pura-Pura Lupa* is as follows:

SL : *Semakin hancur hatiku*
TL : and every time it's killing me

In discursive creation translation, the translator's voice is evident through idiomatic adaptation, which involves adjusting expressions to be more natural and expressive in the target language. In the sentence *Semakin hancur hatiku*, translated as *and every time it's killing me*, structural and semantic changes are made to create a stronger emotional impact in English. In the source language, the phrase *Semakin hancur hatiku* literally means that the heart is experiencing increasing devastation. This structure is more descriptive and direct in expressing sadness. However, in the target language, the translation is changed to *and every time it's killing me*, an English idiom commonly used to describe intense emotional pain. This shift reflects the translator's decision to choose an expression that is more powerful and resonates with English speakers. The phrase *it's killing me* not only conveys sadness but also evokes a sense of deep emotional suffering, thus intensifying the original meaning in a more dramatic way. This adaptation demonstrates that the translator does not merely transfer meaning literally but also

captures the emotional essence of the text to make it more effective for the target audience.

Perspective Shift

In discursive creation translation, the translator's voice can emerge through a perspective shift, which involves changing the point of view in conveying the message to better align with the target language and culture. This shift often occurs in song lyrics, where the translator adjusts the perspective to maintain narrative flow or to match the intended emotional expression. Here is an example of perspective shift in the song *Pura-Pura Lupa* that highlight the translator's voice in discursive creation:

SL : *Ingin rasa ku membenci*
TL : *Now I wish I never met you*

In the translation of these lyrics, the perspective is internal, where the speaker directly expresses their desire to hate someone. The lyrics emphasize the speaker's emotions without specifying a particular reason. However, in the translation *Now I wish I never met you*, there is a shift in perspective from an internal feeling (the desire to hate) to an expression of regret. The phrase *I wish I never met you* highlights the consequence of a past experience, feeling regret over meeting someone, rather than merely expressing a desire to hate. Additionally, the use of the word *Now* emphasizes that this emotion has developed from past events, reinforcing a reflective tone in the target language. This shift demonstrates that the translator is not merely transferring meaning directly but also adjusting the perspective to sound more natural in the target language.

Another example of the translator's voice in discursive creation through perspective shift in the song *Pura-Pura Lupa* is as follows:

SL : *Bahagiakan dia aku tak apa*
TL : *I wish you all the best thought you were my last*

In the lyrics translation, the perspective used is a direct expression from the speaker, conveying sincerity toward someone else's happiness. This lyric focuses more on

accepting the situation with a tone of resignation. However, in the translation *I wish you all the best thought you were my last*, there is a shift in perspective from surrendering to the situation to expressing personal hope and disappointment. The phrase *I wish you all the best* still conveys a sense of sincerity, but *thought you were my last* introduces a reflective and disappointed tone, which is absent in the source text. In the original lyrics, there is no explicit expression of unfulfilled expectations, whereas in the translation, the perspective shifts to a more personal stance, highlighting the speaker's sense of regret. This shift reflects the translator's decision to adjust the emotional nuance to a more natural expression in English.

Discussion

In discursive creative translation, the translator's voice emerges through structural and semantic changes that accommodate linguistic norms and cultural expectations in the target language. Unlike literal translation, discursive creation allows modifications to ensure that the translated text remains engaging and emotionally impactful (Molina & Albir, 2002). Structural changes involve sentence reordering, shifts in grammatical structures, and modifications in sentence type (Biber & Clark, 2008), while semantic changes include alterations in meaning, additions, or omissions to maintain coherence and relevance (Koch, 2016). In *Pura-Pura Lupa*, the line *Hidup pun akan kuberi* becomes *I thought no matter what I do*, shifting from a declarative statement to a reflective expression. The original suggests absolute sacrifice, whereas the translation expresses uncertainty and contemplation. This transformation aligns with English expressive tendencies, making the message more relatable. Similarly, *Tapi tak pernah ku bermimpi* is translated as *Never thought you'd ever leave me*, incorporating subject omission and additional information. This shift intensifies the emotional impact, demonstrating that translation is not only about transferring meaning but also about adapting textual nuances to enhance readability and resonance in the target culture (Tolibovna, 2025).

Another key manifestation of the translator's voice in discursive creation is idiomatic adaptation, where expressions are modified to reflect the natural fluency of the target

language. Idiomatic expressions are often culturally bound, requiring the translator to find equivalents that capture the intended emotional and aesthetic effects (Al-Masri, 2009). In *Pura-Pura Lupa*, the phrase *Ingin rasa ku membenci* is translated as *Now I wish I never met you*, demonstrating a shift from a direct emotional expression to an idiomatic phrase. While the source text explicitly conveys a desire to hate, the target text uses a common English expression of deep regret, making the translation more idiomatically and emotionally effective. Likewise, *Semakin hancur hatiku* becomes *and every time it's killing me*, replacing a descriptive phrase with an English idiom that amplifies the emotional intensity. This adaptation showcases the translator's agency in ensuring the translated lyrics sound natural and emotionally engaging. Research by Wijaksono et al. (2022) supports the notion that idiomatic translation enhances readability and helps the audience connect with the text on a deeper level, proving that translators actively shape meaning rather than passively transfer words.

Perspective shifts in translation reveal the translator's role in adjusting the narrative stance to maintain coherence and emotional depth in the target language. Song lyrics often contain implicit meanings and contextual references that may require reinterpretation for the target audience (Gracyk, 2013). In *Pura-Pura Lupa*, *Ingin rasa ku membenci* is translated as *Now I wish I never met you*, shifting from an internalized emotion (desire to hate) to a regretful reflection on past experiences. This alteration provides a more natural and emotionally resonant translation for English listeners. Similarly, *Bahagiakan dia aku tak apa* is rendered as *I wish you all the best thought you were my last*, introducing a personal perspective on loss that was not explicitly stated in the original. The source text conveys acceptance, while the translation adds an element of unfulfilled expectation, making the message more relatable to an English-speaking audience. These changes align with previous studies on translation shifts (Baker, 2007), which suggest that translators actively reframe perspectives to enhance coherence and emotional impact. The translator's voice is thus evident in their decision-making, ensuring

that the translated text resonates naturally with the target audience while maintaining the essence of the original lyrics.

Conclusion

The translator's voice in discursive creation translation is evident in structural and semantic changes, idiomatic adaptations, and perspective shifts. These strategies demonstrate that translation is not a mechanical process but an interpretative act requiring creativity and cultural sensitivity. The analysis of *Pura-Pura Lupa* illustrates how meaning is reshaped to align with the linguistic and emotional expectations of the target audience. The translator makes deliberate choices to enhance naturalness, coherence, and emotional resonance, reflecting the active role of translators in shaping discourse.

References

- Al-Masri, H. (2009). Translation and cultural equivalence: A study of translation losses in Arabic literary texts. *Journal of Universal Language*, 10(1), 7–44.
- Andri, L. O., & Cholsy, H. (2024). Pola Kehadiran Suara Penerjemah Dalam Terjemahan The Rainbow Troops Dari Novel Laskar Pelangi. *Pustaka: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Pendidikan*, 4(2), 1–12.
- Baker, M. (2007). Reframing conflict in translation. *Social Semiotics*, 17(2), 151–169.
- Biber, D., & Clark, V. (2008). Historical shifts in modification patterns with complex noun phrase structures: How long can you go without a verb? In *English Historical Syntax and Morphology: Selected papers from 11 ICEHL, Santiago de Compostela, 7–11 September 2000. Volume 1* (pp. 43–66). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Desblache, L. (2018). Translation of music. *An Encyclopedia of Practical Translation and Interpreting*, 297–324.
- Franzon, J. (2008). Choices in song translation: Singability in print, subtitles and sung performance. *The Translator*, 14(2), 373–399.

- Gracyk, T. (2013). Meanings of songs and meanings of song performances. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 71(1), 23–33.
- Hermans, T. (1996). The translator's voice in translated narrative. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 8(1), 23–48.
- Koch, P. (2016). Meaning change and semantic shifts. *The Lexical Typology of Semantic Shifts*, 58, 21–66.
- Lefevere, A. (2016). *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*. Routledge.
- Levý, J. (2011). *The art of translation*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. California: Sage Publication.
- Molina, L., & Albir, A. H. (2002). Translation Techniques Revisited: A Dynamic and Functionalist Approach. *Meta*, 47(4), 498–512. <https://doi.org/10.7202/008033ar>
- Mukminin, M. S., & Iryani, E. (2025). Mahen's song 'Pura-pura Lupa' in English by Emma Hesters: Translation Techniques, Methods, and Ideologies Analysis. *Journal of Society Innovation and Development (JSID)*, 6(2), 77–87.
- Proto, T. (2015). Prosody, melody and rhythm in vocal music: The problem of textsetting in a linguistic perspective. *Linguistics in the Netherlands*, 32(1), 116–129.
- Putranti, A. (2021). Kesepadanan Makna dalam Terjemahan Lirik Lagu "Pura-Pura Lupa" ke dalam "Pretend To Forget. *Sintesis*, 15(2), 80–87.
- Rasti, A., & Khajavi, Y. (2023). Analysis of discursive translation strategies in the rendition of the US image: Findings from FM Zarif's Twitter diplomacy. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 14(1), 112–123.
- Rosalina, U., & Simbolon, V. (2023). Kinds of Translations Used From Mahen's Song "Pura Pura Lupa" By Emma Heesters. *Tomorrow's Education Journal*, 1(1), 1–9.

- Susam-Sarajeva, Ş. (2016). Translation and music: Changing perspectives, frameworks and significance. In *Translation and music* (pp. 187–200). Routledge.
- Tolibovna, Q. N. (2025). Inversion as A Tool for Emphasizing Meaning in Translation Discourse. *International Journal Of Literature And Languages*, 5(01), 10–13.
- Tymoczko, M. (2014). Ideology and the Position of the Translator: In what Sense Is a Translator ‘In Between’? In *Apropos of ideology* (pp. 181–201). Routledge.
- Venuti, L. (2018). *Rethinking translation: Discourse, subjectivity, ideology*. Routledge.
- Wijaksono, R. N., Hilman, E. H., & Mustolih, A. (2022). Translation methods and quality of idiomatic expression in My Sister's Keeper movie. *Jurnal Basis*, 9(1), 73–84.