

## Translation Methods and Pragmatic Functions of Directive Utterances in the Film *Turning Red*

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the translation methods applied to directive utterances in the animated film Turning Red, translated from English into Indonesian. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, drawing on Newmark's (1988) theory of translation methods and Kreidler's (1998) classification of directive utterances. The data consist of 110 directive utterances, comprising 56 commands, 29 requests, and 25 suggestions, all taken from the dialogues of the film's main characters. The analysis reveals that the literal translation method was the most frequently used, particularly in translating commands (28 instances). The semantic translation method appeared consistently across commands, requests, and suggestions, indicating efforts to preserve meaning while ensuring naturalness in the target language. Additionally, free, communicative, and adaptation methods were used in smaller proportions, whereas word-for-word and idiomatic methods were not found in the data. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the translators of Turning Red applied a balanced combination of translation methods to maintain the authenticity of meaning while achieving effective and natural communication for Indonesian audiences.*

**Keywords:** *directive utterances, translation methods, Turning Red*

### A. Introduction

Language functions as a fundamental medium of human interaction, enabling individuals to communicate thoughts, emotions, and intentions. However, linguistic diversity often poses challenges in achieving accurate and effective communication across different languages and cultures. Each language possesses its own system of meaning, cultural nuance, and contextual expression, which can lead to variations in interpretation even when the same message is conveyed. Consequently, cross-linguistic communication requires a mediating process, translation, to ensure that messages are transmitted accurately and contextually (Emzir, 2015; Noermanzah, 2019).

Effective communication, however, extends beyond linguistic form; it also depends on the shared contextual understanding between interlocutors. As pragmatic theorists argue, meaning is shaped not only by what is said but also by how it is understood within a given situation. For example, when a speaker utters "It's so cold in this room," the literal meaning describes temperature, yet the pragmatic intent may function as a request to reduce the air conditioning. Such utterances demonstrate that communication relies heavily on shared context (Baharuddin, Ramadhan, & Wardana, 2021; Simarmata, 2023). Misinterpretations frequently occur when interlocutors do not share the same contextual framework, a challenge amplified in interlingual communication.

Utterances thus serve as the core unit of communication. They not only express linguistic content but also convey social and functional meanings (Molina & Albir, 2002; Santoso & Pratama, 2022). According to Kreidler (1998), utterances can be classified into several types—assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declaratives, interrogatives, and phatics—each reflecting the speaker’s communicative intent within context. Among these, directive utterances hold particular significance because they are intended to influence the listener’s behavior through commands, requests, or suggestions (Kreidler, 1998; Saifudin, 2019).

The translation of directive utterances presents a distinct challenge, especially in audiovisual media, where contextual cues, tone, and cultural conventions shape interpretation. Directive utterances are pragmatically charged; thus, their translation demands more than literal equivalence. The translator must maintain the illocutionary force and communicative purpose of the source text while ensuring naturalness and cultural appropriateness in the target language (Saputra, 2014; Fatmasari, 2015). Achieving this balance necessitates the use of an appropriate translation method.

Translation methods, as conceptualized by Newmark (1988), serve as systematic approaches for transferring meaning from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL) while maintaining the balance between accuracy and naturalness. He identifies eight methods—word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation—each reflecting different emphases on either form or meaning. The choice of method significantly affects how directive utterances are rendered, influencing both pragmatic equivalence and communicative effectiveness (Simarmata, 2023; Xirera, Muth’im, & Nasrullah, 2021).

For instance, in the animated film *Turning Red*, the English directive utterance “Besties, assemble!” is translated into Indonesian as “Sahabat, berkumpul!” using a literal method. While the term “sahabat” sounds slightly more formal than “besties,” the translation still conveys the intended directive force, preserving both meaning and function in the target context. This example underscores how translation methods can maintain pragmatic intent while adapting to linguistic and cultural differences.

Films represent an ideal medium for studying translation phenomena. They combine linguistic, visual, and cultural dimensions, offering rich material for analyzing how translators navigate meaning transfer under multimodal constraints (Baharuddin, Ramadhan, & Wardana, 2021). The film *Turning Red*, written by Domee Shi, Julia Cho, and Sarah Streicher, provides numerous instances of directive utterances that reflect interpersonal dynamics and cultural expression.

Given this background, the present study investigates the translation methods of directive utterances in the film *Turning Red*. The research aims to examine how these utterances are translated into Indonesian subtitles and to analyze the strategies used to maintain their pragmatic and communicative functions. The study contributes to the field of translation studies by offering insights into the interaction between translation methods, pragmatic equivalence, and cultural adaptation in audiovisual contexts.

## **B. Method**

### **1. Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the translation methods applied in rendering directive utterances from English into Indonesian in the *Turning*

*Red* movie. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human phenomenon. This approach allows for in-depth analysis of linguistic and contextual features that cannot be quantified, emphasizing the interpretive and descriptive nature of the findings.

The qualitative method was considered appropriate for this study because it focuses on interpreting meanings rather than measuring variables. It provides flexibility for examining the relationship between linguistic forms, pragmatic intent, and translation strategies. As Rofiqoh and Zulhawati (2020) note, qualitative inquiry emphasizes the description and interpretation of phenomena in their natural context, producing narrative and interpretive insights instead of numerical data.

## 2. Data Source

The primary data source of this research was the English and Indonesian subtitle texts of the animated film *Turning Red* (2022), directed by Domee Shi and produced by Pixar Animation Studios. The film was chosen because it contains a variety of directive utterances reflecting interpersonal relationships, cultural contexts, and everyday communication patterns.

The researcher transcribed all dialogues involving the main characters—Meilin Lee, Ming Lee, Abby, Priya, and Miriam—and identified instances of directive utterances in both the source (English) and target (Indonesian) subtitles. Supplementary references such as books, journal articles, and previous studies on translation and pragmatics served as secondary data sources, supporting theoretical and analytical grounding.

## 3. Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected through several systematic steps:

1. **Film Observation:** The researcher watched *Turning Red* multiple times to gain comprehensive contextual understanding of the plot, characters, and dialogue.
2. **Transcription:** The English dialogues and their corresponding Indonesian subtitles were transcribed and aligned for comparison.
3. **Data Identification:** From the transcribed text, only directive utterances—those functioning as commands, requests, or suggestions—were selected for analysis.
4. **Data Compilation:** The identified utterances were compiled into a dataset consisting of parallel source-language (SL) and target-language (TL) pairs for further examination.

These steps ensured systematic data selection and maintained contextual integrity during analysis.

## 4. Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative techniques, following the framework proposed by Creswell (1998). The analysis process consisted of four key stages:

### a. Classification of Directive Utterances:

The identified utterances were classified according to Kreidler's (1998) typology of directive utterances—commands, requests, and suggestions—based on their illocutionary function within the dialogue.

*Example of classification:*

No.	Directive Utterance	Type
1	“Get your butt over here!”	Command
2	“Can’t you just get one afternoon off?”	Request
3	“Perhaps we should talk about why this is happening.”	Suggestion

b. Identification of Translation Methods:

Each directive utterance was analyzed using Newmark’s (1988) translation method framework, which includes eight approaches—word-for-word, literal, faithful, semantic, adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative translation. The researcher identified which method was applied to each utterance pair (SL–TL).

*Example of analysis:*

No.	Source Text (SL)	Target Text (TL)	Translation Method
1	“Jin, open a window!”	“Jin, buka jendela!”	Literal Translation
2	“Can’t you just get one afternoon off?”	“Tidak bisa libur satu hari saja?”	Free Translation
3	“Get in here!”	“Masuklah!”	Communicative Translation

c. Cross-Analysis of Utterance Type and Translation Method:

The researcher examined correlations between the types of directive utterances and the translation methods employed. Frequency counts were used descriptively to identify the dominant translation method for each utterance type.

*Example summary:*

Directive Type	Word-for-word	Literal	Faithful	Semantic	Adaptation	Free	Idiomatic	Communicative	Total
Command	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5
Request	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	4
Suggestion	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	3

d. Interpretation and Discussion:

The final stage involved interpreting how translation methods preserved or altered the pragmatic force of directive utterances. This analysis considered linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors influencing translation choices, providing insight into the equivalence and naturalness of the target-language renderings.

## 5. Trustworthiness of Data

To ensure analytical rigor and validity, the researcher applied triangulation and peer review techniques. Triangulation was achieved by cross-verifying data using multiple theoretical sources (Kreidler, 1998; Newmark, 1988) and existing literature on audiovisual translation. Peer debriefing with academic supervisors and colleagues helped refine interpretations and reduce potential researcher bias.

## C. Findings and Analysis

### Findings

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study on the translation methods used for directive utterances in the film *Turning Red*. The analysis focuses on identifying which translation methods were applied to render the three types of directive utterances—commands, requests, and suggestions—from the source language (English) into the target language (Indonesian). The summary of the data findings is presented in the following table.

*Table 4.1*

*Directive Utterance and Translation Method Found in the Turning Red Movie*

Translation Method	Total	Directive Utterance		
		Command	Request	Suggestion
Word For Word	0	0	0	0
Literal	35	28	7	8
Faithful	1	1	0	0
Semantic	33	14	10	9
Adaptation	5	4	1	0
Free	21	5	8	8
Idiomatic	0	0	0	0
Communicative	7	4	3	0
Total	110	56	29	25
		110		

A total of 110 directive utterances were identified in the *Turning Red* movie, comprising 56 commands, 29 requests, and 25 suggestions. The analysis revealed that the translator employed a variety of translation methods based on Newmark's (1988) framework to convey these utterances effectively from English into Indonesian.

Among the translation methods identified, literal translation emerged as the most frequently used, appearing in 35 instances. It was predominantly applied to commands (28 data), followed by suggestions (8 data) and requests (7 data). This indicates the translator's tendency to preserve the syntactic structure and lexical meaning of the source text while maintaining the clarity and directive force of the utterance. The preference for literal translation in commands reflects a commitment to accuracy and directness, ensuring that the illocutionary intent of instructions remains clear to the Indonesian audience.

The semantic translation method was the second most commonly used, accounting for 33 instances. This method appeared relatively balanced across all categories—commands (14), requests (10), and suggestions (9). The use of semantic translation demonstrates the translator's attempt to achieve pragmatic and cultural equivalence, adapting expressions to sound natural and contextually appropriate in Indonesian while maintaining the original meaning and function of the utterances.

Free translation appeared in 21 instances, mainly in requests (8) and suggestions (8), with fewer cases in commands (5). This method was used to create more flexible and communicative renderings, allowing the translator to adjust phrases for better readability and comprehension by the target audience, especially when literal equivalence would result in awkward or unnatural phrasing.

The communicative translation method was found in 7 instances, primarily used in commands and requests. This method emphasizes naturalness and functional equivalence, ensuring that the directive's intended effect is successfully conveyed in the target language.

The adaptation method, found in 5 instances, was mostly applied to commands, reflecting contextual and cultural adjustments made by the translator to ensure that expressions resonate naturally within Indonesian cultural norms.

Notably, word-for-word and idiomatic translation methods were not found in the data. The absence of these methods suggests that the translator consciously avoided overly literal renderings that could distort meaning, as well as highly idiomatic choices that might misrepresent the original context or sound unnatural in Indonesian.

The findings indicate that the translator of *Turning Red* employed a strategic combination of translation methods to balance accuracy, naturalness, and cultural relevance. The dominance of literal and semantic methods reflects a consistent effort to maintain the directive intent of the source language while ensuring the translated utterances remain clear, fluent, and appropriate for the target audience.

## **2 Analysis**

This section presents an in-depth discussion of the analysis results related to directive utterances found in the film *Turning Red*, as well as the translation methods used to render these utterances from English into Indonesian. The discussion is divided into two main parts: first, an exploration of the characteristics and functions of directive utterances within the context of the film's dialogues; and second, an examination of the translation methods applied in translating these directive utterances. Through this discussion, a clearer understanding is expected regarding how directive utterances are translated and the effectiveness of the methods used in preserving the original meaning and context.

### **2.1 Directive Utterances found in Turning Red Movie**

Directive utterances are utterances that aim to direct or ask the listener to perform a specific action. According to Kreidler (1998), there are three main types of directive utterances: commands, requests, and suggestions. A command is an utterance that is effective if the speaker has control over the listener's actions, usually in the imperative form, and gives a direct command. A request is an expression of the speaker's desire for the listener to do something, but the speaker has no control over the listener and can therefore refuse. A suggestion, on the other hand, is an invitation or suggestion to the listener about what should be done (p.189). Therefore, in this

chapter, the types of directive utterances found will be classified, in order to analyze how translation methods are applied to each type in the film *Turning Red*.

Table 4.2  
*Directive Utterance found*

No	Directive Utterance	Total
1	Command	56
2	Request	29
3	Suggestion	25
	<b>Total</b>	110

### 2.1.1. Command

Newmark (1998) Command is a type of directive speech that aims to force or tell someone to carry out a certain action. In orders, there is usually a clear element of authority, where the person giving the order expects the action to be carried out without many questions (p.189). To understand better, see the following examples:

#### (1) DATUM (1)

SL: Besties, assemble!

Context: Mei orders her besties to assemble and introduce them, a scene that occurs at the beginning of the movie. This is the way how Mei introduces her friends one by one until they're all gathered.

The SL 'Besties, assemble!' is a directive utterance with an illocutionary function as a command. Pragmatically, the speaker directs his close group (besties) to gather immediately, emphasizing familiarity and a spirit of solidarity among friends (Kreidler, 1998). The use of the greeting 'besties' indicates an informal social context, so this command is more of a persuasive invitation than an authoritative one. The expected effect is a quick response in the form of harmonious togetherness. Therefore, the translation of this sentence must maintain the nuances of familiarity and invitation to remain natural in the target language.

#### (2) DATUM (6)

SL: Shut up!

Context: After school, they passed the Daisy Mart store. Miriam bent her body and crawled through the front door of the store to behind the wall of the store intending to observe the shopkeeper named Devon, who she thought was handsome. Because her friends were noisy, she told them to be quiet so as not to be caught admiring Devon.

In this context, the utterance "Shut up!" is a directive utterance with the function of a direct command uttered by Miriam to her friends to immediately stop talking and not make any noise so as not to be caught while spying on Devon. The situation demands silence and calm, so the command carries a high sense of urgency. Although the phrase is informal and strong, its use is considered normal among close friends in serious and urgent situations like this. The intended effect is, of course, that her friends quickly become silent, with the possibility of mild tension arising due to the secret and tense situation. When translating film dialogue, it is important to adjust the level of politeness and emotional nuances to ensure the translation remains natural and in line with the norms of the target culture.

#### (3) DATUM (46)

SL: Come on. Mei, Mei, fast!

Context: Because Mei wasn't too interested in Devon, the shopkeeper, she seemed reluctant to follow them, hiding her attention from Devon. Therefore, she walked slowly, and Miriam told Mei to move quickly to follow her behind the shop wall.

The SL 'Come on. Mei, Mei, fast!' is a directive utterance uttered by Miriam, which functions as a command to Mei to move quickly. This utterance occurs when Mei, Abby, Priya, and Miriam are secretly observing Devon from behind the shop wall. In translation, it is important to maintain a familiar and urgent tone so that the pragmatic meaning remains conveyed naturally in the target language.

**(4) DATUM (15)**

SL: Don't come in here!

Context: Mei was shocked when she woke up in the morning and saw herself in the mirror, which had transformed into a red panda. She panicked and screamed loudly, because her body was big, she made a commotion in her bathroom which Ming heard. Ming, her parents, were worried about hearing the screams and noise from Mei's room, he knocked on Mei's bathroom and said he wanted to come in, but Mei reflexively shouted forbidding him from entering.

The sentence "Don't come in here!" is a directive utterance with a negative command function that aims to prohibit the listener from entering a place. Mei spontaneously said it by shouting at her mother not to enter the bathroom because she didn't want her mother to see her transform into a red panda. This form of directive utterance shows a low level of formality and can seem rude depending on the context (Kreidler, 1998). Therefore, in the process of translating this sentence, attention must be paid to ensure that the nuances of commands and prohibitions are still conveyed naturally and according to the norms of politeness in the target language.

**2.1.2 Request**

Newmark (1998) said a request is a directive utterance used to ask someone to do something but is not as firm as a command. Requests tend to be more polite and are usually conveyed with the hope that the person being asked will respond according to their wishes, even though there is no direct coercion (p. 189) here examples of a request.

**(5) DATUM (69)**

SL: Guys, hold me.

Context: Mei escapes from the ritual and arrives at the 4town concert in red panda mode. As the concert begins with the opening song featuring each member, Mei is excited she expresses her joy by asking her friends to hug her.

The SL 'Guys, hold me.' is a directive utterance with a request function that directly asks the listener to provide physical or emotional support. Mei says this to her friends as the concert is about to begin as a form of enthusiasm. The use of the word 'guys,' which indicates social closeness and familiarity is informal and indicates social closeness between the speaker and the listener who is addressed with the greeting 'guys.' This request tends to be persuasive and gentle, not an authoritative command (Kreidler, 1998), and the expected effect is a response in the form of holding or supporting the speaker. In translation, the element of familiarity and the friendly nuance of the request must be maintained so that the meaning of the request remains conveyed naturally in the target language.

**(6) DATUM (69)**

SL: Can't you just get one afternoon off?

Context: After school, after Mei and her friends noticed Devon, the Daisy Mart keeper, Miriam, Abby, and Priya planned to go to karaoke and invited Mei to join them. However, Mei refused because she had to clean the temple with her mother, which had become her routine. Miriam asked Mei to take a break from cleaning and join them for karaoke.

In this context, the SL “Can't you just get one afternoon off?” is uttered by Miriam to Mei, who cannot join the karaoke because she has to go home and clean the temple with her mother. According to Kreidler (1998), this sentence is a directive speech act in the form of a request, specifically a negative rhetorical question used to take a one-off break. This strategy serves to maintain politeness in social interactions, because Miriam does not give a direct order but rather conveys a desire while opening space for Mei to respond. Furthermore, Kreidler also emphasizes the importance of social context and intonation in determining how the message is received—whether as a polite insistence or simply an expression of hope. In the translation process, this rhetorical question form must be maintained so that the communicative function and polite nuances are conveyed appropriately according to the target cultural norms.

#### **(7) DATUM (87)**

SL: I just have one teeny-tiny favor to ask.

Context: Before Mei asked her mother for permission to watch the 4town concert, she gave an introductory presentation about 4town. With feelings of worry and fear, Mei slowly asked her mother to allow her to watch the 4town concert.

In this context, the SL “I just have one teeny-tiny favor to ask” is uttered by Mei to her mother as a directive speech act with an indirect request function. According to Kreidler (1998), the use of the phrase “teeny-tiny favor” aims to lower the weight of the request so that it sounds light, friendly, and polite, so that Mei can convey her wishes without appearing to force or pressure her mother. This pragmatic strategy is very important for maintaining good social relationships, especially in informal situations and in contexts between children and parents where politeness and respect are paramount. In translation, this subtle and non-urgent nuance must be maintained so that the request function remains conveyed naturally and does not turn into a rigid demand in the target language.

### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of directive utterances in the film *Turning Red*, three types of directives were identified: commands, requests, and suggestions. A total of 110 directive utterances were analyzed, consisting of 56 commands, 29 requests, and 25 suggestions. The dominance of commands indicates that the film’s dialogue relies heavily on assertive and directive expressions, reflecting the interpersonal dynamics and hierarchical relationships among the main characters. The variation in directive types also illustrates the diversity of communication styles used to convey instructions, make requests, and offer suggestions throughout the film.

With regard to the translation methods applied in rendering these directive utterances from English into Indonesian, several methods were identified with differing frequencies. The literal translation method was the most frequently employed, particularly for commands, demonstrating the translator’s effort to preserve the original syntactic structure and pragmatic intent to ensure the clarity and strength of the directive function. The semantic translation method appeared consistently across all directive types, indicating an attempt to adapt expressions to sound natural and culturally acceptable in Indonesian while maintaining the original meaning.

Other methods—free, communicative, and adaptation—were used in smaller proportions, primarily to enhance fluency, ensure readability, and achieve cultural resonance in the target language. Notably, word-for-word and idiomatic methods were absent, suggesting that the translator deliberately avoided extreme approaches that could result in rigid or overly localized translations.

Overall, the findings reveal that the translator employed a strategic combination of translation methods, balancing faithfulness to the source text with the communicative effectiveness required for natural and culturally appropriate subtitles. This demonstrates a nuanced

understanding of the linguistic and pragmatic demands of audiovisual translation, ensuring that the translated dialogue maintains both meaning and function for Indonesian audiences.

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