Malay - English Translation Strategies in Malaysian Children's Film Subtitles

Hazlina Abdul Halim

Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages & Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: hazlina_ah@upm.edu.my

Abstract
Subtitling Malay films into English in Malaysia presents particular constrictions and defies for subtitlers, as the two languages have very little in common and presents a number of the untranslatability elements. Upin & Ipin is Malaysian television series produced by Les' Copaque Production, which feature the life of the twin brothers in a fictional Malaysian village. The series was first introduced on 2007 and can be considered as one of the most successful animated television series in Malaysia, and thus has been extended to film version. However, the animation represents significantly unique language has led to a significant concern on their subtitling. Hence, this article aimed to investigate the strategies utilized in the film Upin & Ipin. The research used Baker's (1992) model of translation strategies to classify the translation strategies by comparing the subtitles in the source and target texts. The result of the study found translation by omission, elaboration and paraphrasing to be to most frequent strategies used in the movie. It is hoped that this study could serve as a reference for other translation research on subtitling to and from other languages in Malaysia.
Keywords: Translation, English Subtitles, Translation Strategies, Malay Films

Introduction and Review of Literature
It is said that translation activities commenced as early as the Egyptian ancient realm, where inscriptions written in two languages were found (Newmark, 1981). In the olden days, the translated texts were mainly of those religious, literary, science and philosophical manuscripts. Traditionally, the objective of translations was to make known different types of texts to larger audiences who were well-versed in both origin and target languages. In line with this, translation studies had grown over the last two decades, during which merged the screen or audio-visual translation (O'Connell, 2007).

Audio-visual Translation (AVT) is a new ground in translation studies, which mainly involved subtitling and dubbing. While subtitling consists of "the production of snippets of written texts (subtitles or captions in American English) to be superimposed on visual footage (Baker & Saldanha, 2009; Khalid, Islam & Ahmed, 2019; Alzgool, 2019) and has the function to facilitate access to movies in a foreign language (Kapsaskis, 2008). Dubbing, on the other hand makes use of acoustic channel in screen translation, is oral (Baker, 1998).

Movies are measured to be one of the primary art forms consumed by people around the world. In addition, the quantity of time adults and children spend in front of their television is growing. Due to the long hours used up by most children watching television, translations for children have to incorporate the analysis of AVT for children, as to examine "the linguistic and textual challenges of translating audio-visual material."

The translation of children's literature is becoming a more and more vital field of study. Hence, there is a need to investigate this domain and emphasize its peculiarities and characteristics. Scholars such as O'Connell (2007) believe that audio-visual productions targeting children as part of children's literature, as surprisingly critical interest in translating children's literature has developed only over the last three decades (Lathey, 2006). Therefore, it is of great importance to study translation for children in general in order to understand subtitling for this particular target audience.

As one of the most exigent forms of translation encountered these days, subtitling focuses its problems not solely to questions of grammar, lexis or semantic structure, but, as well as other types of AVT, has always been inclined to cultural factors. The close interrelation between language and culture in subtitling may evoke tricky issues in translating cultural references from oral dialogue into written subtitles. This is owing to the reality that it is one of the most widely used forms of translation readily accessible, as within the context of film,

> [...] the film is a mirror of the culture which it unfolds, along with the materials, attitudes and intones of its screen play, author, and director all conveyed through the language and visual images which serve as their vehicle (Whitman-Linsen, 1992:10).

According to Schwartz (2002: 11), subtitling encompasses cultural adaptation and language transfer for a film to touch public in different countries representing a multiplicity of norms,

> "Subtitling changes the medium with written the target language (TL) version of the dialogue appearing on the screen. Although there is no lip-synchronization, there must be some agreement between the subtitle, the spoken source (SL), dialogue, and the corresponding image."

With this in mind, 'translation strategy' is used as "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language into another" (Lörscher 1991: 76). Chesterman (1997) added that translation strategies are goal-oriented and problem-centred measures built on the choices the translator has made from among several alternatives. The choice of subtitling strategy is principally founded on the type of movie and its future audience. Similarly, the degree of similarity or distinction of the source and the target cultures may play a role in determining what strategy to be followed.

Gottlieb (1994) summarised ten strategies to deal with linguistic and cultural problems in reducing a text to subtitles, which were expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation,

transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion and resignation. Meanwhile Baker (1992) listed eight strategies to overcome tricky problems in translation:

1. Translation by a more general word, which is the most common strategy to overcome the problem of non-equivalence.
2. Translation by a more neutral word or less expressive word.
3. Translation by cultural substitution by replacing the cultural-specific items by those from the target language.
4. Translation by using loan words
5. Translation by paraphrasing using related words, used when the source item lexicalized in the target language but in a different form
6. Translation by paraphrasing by using unrelated words, used when the when the source item is not lexicalized in the target language.
7. Translation by omission by leaving certain word or expression in some context.
8. Translation by illustration when the target equivalent item does not cover some aspects of the source item, and the equivalent item refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated.

Children's movies are the one of the initial steps for them to discover the beauty of other culture and way of life through their own languages, or through other languages via subtitling. Hence, it is crucial for the subtitling in these movies to correctly translate the original message in order to maximise the transfer of knowledge and culture to the target audience. Therefore, in this research the researcher will seek to cover subtitling translation strategies in Malaysian children's movie, *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula* by simplifying Baker's (1992) framework.

Research Objectives
This study aimed to analyze the translation from malay language films into english subtitles, precisely to seek answers to the following objectives:

1. To describe the subtitling strategies in Malaysian children's movie, *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula.*
2. To analyse which strategies were most frequently occurred in the movie subtitle *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula.*

Methodology
The study was a corpus-based analysis of subtitling strategies conducted on the comparative, descriptive which was carried out on the Malay children movie Upin & Ipin with its English translation. The corpus comprised 94-minute-film dialogue in Malay and 94-minute-English subtitle (184 minutes altogether). The corpus consisted Malay audio script of the movie *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula* along with their English translation in the form of subtitles, which were analysed according to their frames. In this research, 861 frames of English and 861 of Malay were studied. The researcher firstly viewed the whole film before transcribing the Malay utterances and matching them with the English subtitles. Finally, the researcher determined strategies by adapting the aforementioned framework. To analyse the data, the researcher used the classification of translation strategies proposed by Baker (1992) as the theoretical framework. However, in this research, the researcher simplified the taxonomy proposed by Baker (1992) from eight strategies to 6 strategies as per Table 1 below:

Table 1:
Simplification of Baker (1992) strategies in current research

Strategy by Baker (1994)	Strategies Simplified in the current research
Translation by a more general word Translation by a more neutral word	Translation by a more general word
Translation by cultural substitution	Translation by cultural substitution
Translation by paraphrasing using related words Translation by paraphrasing using unrelated words	Translation by paraphrasing
Translation by using loan words	Translation by using loan words
Translation by omission	Translation by omission
Translation by elaboration/ illustration	Translation by elaboration

Introduction to the sitcom Upin & Ipin
Upin & Ipin is Malaysian television series produced by Les' Copaque Production, featuring the life of Malay twin brothers in a fictional Malaysian village. The series were primary introduced in 2007 and can be considered as one of the most popular animated television series in Malaysia. Upin & Ipin series has presented a different model of children education through their dialogues among several ethnics and expose national harmony and unity through their *mise-en-scène* of their main characters. It reveals the close bond of Malaysian multi-ethnic groups and Malaysians way of life.

In spite of the resemblances that Malaysians share, there are some linguistic features which are distinct that make them special in their very own way. The concept of diversity incorporates acceptance and respect, despite a person's demographics or background. According to Nur Nadzria & Hassan (2013), the characters in Upin & Ipin represents the identity of Malaysians, of which their sensitivity and acceptance of others through respecting and acknowledging other cultures despite their differences.

Analysis and Discussion
Overall, the research found 514 strategies throughout the 94-minute film. The most utilised strategy was omission strategy (164 instances), followed by elaboration strategy (110 instances) and paraphrasing strategy (92 instances). The details on the use of translation strategies in this research are as shown in Figure 1 below:
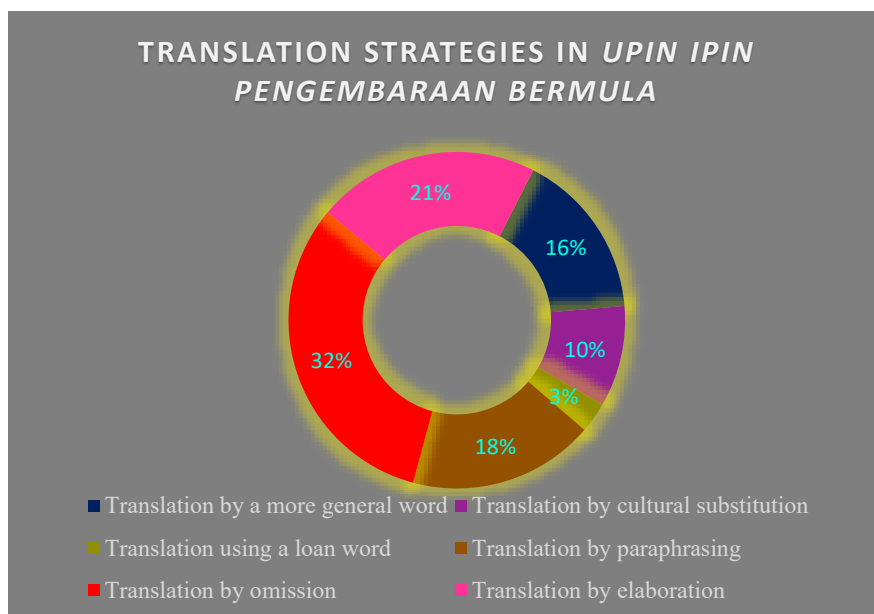
Figure 1: Translation strategies in *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula*

Omission Strategy

According to Ivacovoni (2009), omission strategy applies when a translator drops a word or words from the source language while translating. Baker (1992:40) mentioned that there are certain words or expressions in some circumstances can be excluded without any effect "…if the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations." In this research, the omission in word or expression will be further classified into two: those of which disposed to be an error and the others to lean towards being a strategy. The examples are as illustrated in the following table (the omitted texts or phrases are presented by < >):

Table 2:
Omission strategies in Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula

Omission leaning towards strategy Example 1 (F26)	Uncle Muthu:	*Dey, Salleh! Tak mau tunggu kuih lagi ka?* (ST) <u>< ></u> Salleh! Don't you want to wait for the snacks? (TT)
Example 2 (F25)	Ah Tong:	*Haiyya! Mana ada hantu? Itu musang makan ma…* (ST*)* <u>< ></u> What ghost! It was a fox that ate all those durians (TT)
Example 3 (F90)	Upin	*Eh! Opah, Opah datang? Yeay yeay Opah datang!* (ST) Opah! Opah's here! Yay <u>< >!</u> (TT)
Omission leaning towards error Example 4 (L127)	Uncle Muthu:	*Rumah Tok Dalang, mmm boleh boleh. Jalan terus sini, belakang, itu Pak Samad punya reban ayam sudah nampak, pusing kiri. Belakang, itu jambatan juga sudah nampak, pusing kanan. Aiyyo, betul ke? Saya punya kepala pun sudah pusing.* (ST) Tok Dalang? Oh, no problem. Go straight ahead. <u>< ></u> Then, when you see Uncle Samad's chicken coop, turn left. And then, <u>< ></u> when you see the bridge, turn right. <u>< ></u> Is this right? I'm confused myself. (TT)
Example 5 (L217)	Badrul:	*Apahal pulak motor ni? Ha! Hidup pun!* (ST) <u>< ></u> . It works! (TT)

From the data, it was found that almost all omitted phrases inclined towards being a strategy were the exclamative words or expressions. As mentioned beforehand, the movie portrays life of Malaysian in a village, where there were Indian, Chinese and Malay people living together. The words or expressions that were omitted in the English translation were those proper to certain ethnics such as *Aiyoyo, Dey, Poorah* which are Indian expressions (in the Example 1), and *Haiyya* and *ma…* which were Chinese expressions (in the Example 2). Likewise, the repetitive Malay children's exclamation (as per Example 3) were also omitted in the translation to avoid redundancy. According to Nida (1964), the omitted expressions were a considered a strategy as the source language (Malay) tends to be a redundant language. Though the omitted expressions will not hinder the whole meaning, the omission or "globalization" as mentioned by Davies (2003) will result to a loss of Malaysian colorful charm derived from the original expression.

On the other hand, the researcher also discovered omission strategy that has tendency of being an error. In the Example 4, for instance, the omission of the translation *belakang* (which means 'at the back') will result the inaccuracy of the meaning, as this dialogue is about giving direction. The same goes for Example 5, where the expression *Apahal pulak motor ni?*

(translation: 'what's wrong with this motorcycle'?) was left untranslated, which makes the next translated phrase awkward, if not for the images in the scene.

Elaboration Strategy

Elaboration strategy, also referred to as addition strategy, occurs when translator chooses "to keep the original item but supplement the text with whatever information is judged necessary" (Davies, 2003). In this research, elaboration strategy refers to any instance where additional information is incorporated to the translation. The examples are as shown in Table 3:

Table 3:
Elaboration strategy in Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula

Example 6 (F14)	Badrul :	*Eh! Ini atuk aku!* (ST) Hey, my Grandpa's *on TV!* (TT)
Example 7 (F20)	Bus driver:	*Tayar meletup. (telefon) Hah! Tayar meletup lagi.* (ST) A tyre punctured. One of the tyres blew again._(TT)
Example 8 (F48)	Badrul:	*Tuuu... (shows 5 km sign)* (ST) See for yourself... (TT)
Exemple 9 (F86)	Salleh:	.... Kuih tak de ke? Lapar ni.(ST) Hey fatty! Don't you have any snacks? I'm starving (TT)

From Table 3 above, we could see the elaboration strategy utilized by the translator in this movie can be classified into two, which are to accentuate the discourse and as a pure additional info. In the Example 6, for instance, the phrase 'on TV' was added to accentuate the fact that Badrul's grandfather is on air. As for the Example 9, the exclamation 'Hey Fatty!' to refer to Uncle Muthu, which is quite big in size.

As for Example 7, the phrase *Tayar meletup lagi* (Translation: the tyres blew again) is translated with addition of information 'one of' to make the sentence more accurate/specific. The same goes for Example 8, the phrase *Tuu* (translation: 'there') was translated into 'see for yourself' as an addition to the gesture Badrul made (by pointing the finger to the signboard).

Paraphrasing Strategy

Baker (1992) defined paraphrasing strategy as a strategy to be used when the source item in lexicalized in the target language but in a different form. In other word, paraphrasing strategy is used when a translator passes by other words to express a word, a phrase or a statement, to make the subtitle comprehensible to the audience. In this research, the paraphrasing strategies appeared in 92 instances, sharing 18% of the total strategies used. The examples of paraphrasing as indicated in Table 4 below:

Table 4:
Paraphrasing strategy in Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula

Example 10 (F107)	Ah Tong :	*Mana ada hantu? Ini lagi, hantu makan durian aa? Mana ada betul?* (ST) And I see no ghosts! Now this, a durian eating ghost? Rubbish! (TT)
Example 11 (F114)	Badrul:	*Ha Uncle! Lama lagi ke ni? Rasa macam jauh je.* (ST) How much further is it? It has been a long journey. (TT)
Example 12 (F117)	Ah Tong:	*Itu mak Uda aa... Hantu, hantu, hantu. Tci sing punya orang. Muthu aa, ini kasi kira.* (ST) That Mak Uda. Always talking about ghosts! Crazy woman. Muthu, how much do I owe you? (TT)

In the Example 10, the phrase *Mana ada betul* (literal translation: where's the truth) could not be rendered literally as the translation would be unacceptable in English, hence the sentence was paraphrased to 'Rubbish' to have the equivalent meaning. The same goes to Example 11 for the sentence *Rasa macam jauh je* (literal translation: Feels like quite far) was quite illegible and is redundant with the first phrase 'which is how much further is it'. Therefore, paraphrasing the sentence to 'it has been a long journey' is considered a good strategy by the translator. The last example (Example 12) is the paraphrase of the sentence *Ini kasi kira* ((literal translation: count this) is equally a good move by the translator to contextualize and rendering the translation comprehensible.

Generalization Strategy
According to Baker (1992), the use of generalization strategy is to handle a relative lack of specificity in the target language. The examples are as shown in Table 5:

Table 5:
Generalization strategy in *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula*

Example 13 (F589)	Uncle Muthu:	*Aiyoo Tok Dalang, jangan cakap bukan bukan.* (ST) Tok Dalang! Don't say that! (TT)
Example 14 (F649)	Rajoo:	*Oopet, macamana mak engkau hilang kat situ?* (ST) Oopet, how did it happen? (TT)
Example 15 (F843)	Opah:	*Ye lah, ye lah, yang penting cucu Opah semuanya selamat* (ST) Whatever it is, I'm just glad you're all safe.(TT)

It was found in the research that the generalization strategy was used to simplify subject pronouns and phrases. In the Example 15 for instance, though the use of names associating to nouns in the middle of the sentence is a appropriate in Malay syntax (e.g. *cucu Opah* for

'Opah's grandson(s)'), it is not the case for English. Due to this, the translator had to choose a generalize pronoun (which was 'you') in the translated version.

Generalization strategy was also used to generalize the phrases. In Example 13, for instance, the translator simplified the translation from 'don't speak nonsense' to 'don't say that'. The same for Example 14, where the translator simplified the original message 'how did your mum get lost there' to simply 'how did it happen'. In the two examples, though the translated versions were accurate, the translator did not however respect the same sentence length, which was another important aspect in doing subtitling translations.

Substitution Strategy
According to Cintas & Ramael (2007), substitution strategy is used when in subtitling, there are space constraints which restrict the insertion of a rather long term, even if the term exists in the target language. This strategy is similar to 'localization' strategy from Davies (2003). Some of the examples from this study are as follows:

Table 6:
Substitution strategy in Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula

Example 16 (F127)	Uncle Muthu:	*Belum sampai lagi, adik manis* (ST) They're not here yet, darling! (TT)
Example 17 (F88)	Salleh:	*Nak ngumpat la tu* (ST) There she goes again gossiping.(TT)
Example 18 (F102)	Lim:	*Cucu dia dua kali lima je* (ST) His grandson is no different ! (TT)

In this research, substitution strategy was used for culture specific words or expressions. In the first example (Example 16), the expression *adik manis* (literal translation: pretty girl) is awkward to be used since the character in the movie (Kak Ros) is a young lady, hence the substitution of the translation to 'darling' was used. Meanwhile, in Example 17, the word *ngumpat* or *mengumpat* is a culture related word which means 'saying bad things about people at their back' (Kamus Dewan Bahasa Edisi Keempat). As the translation is lengthy for the limited space in the subtitle, the nearest and most similar concept in English is 'gossiping', hence the utilization of the word.

The expression *dua kali lima*, on the other hand, is a Malay colloquial expression which means two entities having the same manner or character. The translator here translated this expression by substituting to English expression which has the same context, which is 'to be no different'.

The Use of Loan Word Strategy
In subtitling, there are instances where it is difficult, impossible, or inaccurate to give an equivalent to certain words or phrases, therefore the translator has to borrow the original word or phrases from the source text. Díaz Cintas & Ramael (2007: 202) explained that loan is a strategy used when "the source text word or phrase is incorporated into the target

language and text, because no translation is possible and both languages use the exact same word." In this study, the loan word strategy involves mainly the use of names such as *Abang Lim* (Brother Lim), *Akak* (Sister), and *Opah* (Grandma). The examples are as shown below:

Table 7:
Loan word strategy in *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula*

Example 19 (F550)	Upin:	*Tapi kak, kita takde benda nak buat* (ST) But kak, we have nothing to do! (TT)
Example 20 (F849)	Ipin:	*Abang Lim! Cepat bukak, cepat!* (ST) *Abang Lim*! Crack it open! Quick!(TT)

While the use of kinship terms such as *Mak*, *Pakcik*, *Abang* or *Kakak* is a common address when speaking to others, it is not the same for English language. This is why in the example above, the translator did not translate the names *kak* in Example 19, and *Abang* Lim (in Example 20) as 'Sister' or 'Brother Lim'.

Conclusion
As a conclusion, there are few strategies that were used in translating the movie *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula*. The dominant strategies were omission strategy, elaboration strategies and paraphrase strategy. For omission strategy, it was discovered in this research that some of the omissions employed in the movie can be considered as errors rather than strategies. As for elaboration strategy, they were used in the movie mainly to accentuate the discourse and as a pure additional info to the original script. It was also found that the use of these strategies was due to the fact there were culture barrier that the translator has to overcome and paraphrasing, simplifying and explicitation of words and phrases are steps the translator has to undergo in order to conserve the contextual meaning of the movie.

It is hoped this research will be expanded to other languages, and to the subtitling of foreign movies, to enable to build a framework on overall translation strategies on children's' movie subtitling.

References

Baker, M. (1992). *In Other Words: A Textbook on Translation*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Baker, M., & Saldanha, G. (2009), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Chesterman, A. (1997). *Memes of Translation*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Davies, E. E. (2003). A Goblin or a Dirty Nose? The Treatment of Culture-specific References in Translations of Harry Potter. *The Translator,* 6, 65–100 [Online] Available at http://www. tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13556509.2 003.10799146 [Accessed on Jan 12 26, 2019].

Cintas, D. J., & Remael, A. (2007). *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. Manchester: St Jerome.

Gottlieb, H. (1992). "Subtitling - A new university discipline". In Dollerup, C. & Loddegaard, A. *(eds). Teaching Translation and Interpreting* (pp. 161–170). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Gottlieb, H. (1998). Subtitling. In M. Baker (Ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (pp. 244-248).* London: Routledge.

Ivacovoni, A. (2009). *Translation by omission*. Retrieved on Jan 23th, 2019, from: http://ivacovoni.wordpress.com/2009/02/01/translation by omission/

Kapsaskis, D. (2008). Translation and Film: on the Defamiliarizing Effect of Subtitles. *New Voices in Translation Studies*, 4(1), 42-52.

Lathey, G. (2006). *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Lorscher, W. (1991). *Translation performance, translation process, and translation strategies: a psycholinguistic investigation*. Tubingen: Gunter Naar.

Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Newmark, P.(1981). *Approaches to Translation*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Nida, E. (1961). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: Brill.

Nida, E. (1964). Principles of Correspondence. In Venuti, L.(ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader* (pp.126–140). London: Routledge.

Nadzria, N. S. M., & Hassan, H. (2013). The Language Identities of Malaysians as Portarayed in Upin and Ipin, *Journal Technology Social Sciences*, 65(2), 109-114.

O'Connell, E. (2007). Screen translation. In P. Kuhiwczak, & K. Littau (Eds.), *A companion to translation studies* (pp. 120-133). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Schwarz, B. (2002). Translation in a Confined Space- Film Sub-Titling with Special Reference to Dennis Potter's "lipstick on your collar" Part 1. *Translation Journal*, 6(4). Retrieved from http://accurapid.com/journal/22subtitles.htm.

Whitman-Linsen, C. (1992). *Through the Dubbing Glass: The Synchronization of American Motion Pictures into German, French and Spanish*. New York: Peter Lang.

Khalid, N., Islam, D. M. Z., & Ahmed, M. R. M. (2019). Sentrepreneurial Training and Organizational Performance: Implications for Future. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, *7*(2), 590-593.

Alzgool, M. (2019). Nexus between Green HRM and Green Management towards Fostering Green Values. *Management Science Letters*, *9*(12), 2073-2082.