Subtitling Strategies Applied In *Tilik* Short Movie English Subtitle

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ABSTRACT

Subtitling becomes the most popular AVT in movie industry, included short movie as well. In order to reach various audience across the world, English subtitle is a must when publishing short movie on YouTube, such as Tilik which won awards in 2018 that used Javanese language as the original language. This research focuses on the subtitling strategy of the crucial moment in Tilik short movie in English subtitle. The data was collected from transcribing the original dialogues in Javanese language as the SL and English as the TL on YouTube. The findings presented there are 45 subtitles appeared during the crucial moment in Tilik short movie. Moreover, there are seven subtitling strategies employed with details paraphrase used 19 times, condensation 18 times, direct translation and explicitation used six times, substitution three times, deletion and addition one time. The most frequent strategy used are paraphrase and condensation which is inseparable from the characteristic of Javanese language and the limitation of subtitling. All in all, this research presents that the subtitle in the first three minutes Tilik movie is a good subtitle.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, subtitling, subtitling strategy, Tilik

INTRODUCTION

The flourish of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) is started from 1980s because of the technological advancement in media visual (Cintas, 2012). AVT consists of three kinds of translation, those are dubbing, subtitling and voice over (Khalaf, 2016). The most notable AVT type is subtitling in which providing the translation of the spoken utterances or the dialogues at the bottom of the screen as well as other verbal information show up on the screen (Cintas & Baños, 2024). Not only giving the written text of the dialogue, subtitle functions as an inclusive device in which providing the descriptions of the audio that help people with hearing impairment (Cintas, 2012) and (Khalaf, 2016). Such subtitle is categorized as an intratextual in which there is no transfer from one language to another, while the

translation of the dialogue into written text in different language belongs to intertextual subtitling (Khalaf, 2016). Plenty of media now provide subtitle, for example, movies, series, anime series, and most of YouTube videos that consist of various type of contents in order to reach audience outside those who speak the original language.

YouTube has various contents, it can be personal vlog, tutorial videos, podcasts, until short films are available. In sharing short films, YouTube is a platform that is widely chosen by short film producers in Indonesia because of its practicality. Another reason is because short movies have a short duration, namely a maximum of only around 40 minutes (Murdock, 2024) that is suitable to the typical length of videos on YouTube. One of the most well-known Indonesian short movie is *Tilik* which won several awards for short movie and was first aired in 2018 and available on YouTube for free in 2020 by Ravacana Films (Cicilia, 2021). It tells a story of the villagers who intend to visit the Mayorees who gets hospitalized, and the interactions of the characters happened on the way to the hospital that are loaded with culture-specific expressions. Though *Tilik* employed Javanese as the language in the film which is one of local languages in Indonesia, the audience of the film is diverse across languages and cultures since it is accessible worldwide through YouTube. Therefore, *Tilik* short movie provides Indonesian and English subtitle on the movie (Prasetyo, 2018). Cultural contents in *Tilik* which are highly related on Javanese culture, must be transferred carefully in order to preserve the core meanings of the movie, and it becomes one of the challenges in providing the subtitle.

Subtitling can be challenging in a sense that it is different from conventional translation (Cintas, 2012) and (Orero, 2004). Cintas (2012) emphasizing that the challenges in subtitling are related to linguistics, cultural, and technical constraints. In the process of transferring dialogue into subtitle with different languages, Gottlieb (1997) stated that it may lead to the condensation or omission of cultural context because of spatial and temporal limitations. Regarding to the technical limitations, subtitle is limited and has several restrictions in the production regarding to the space, time, spotting, and position on screen (Cintas & Remael, 2010). The process of translation must pay attention to these aspects to create a good subtitle that matches the meaning contained in the dialogue without sacrificing crucial meaning or cultural-specific expressions such as idiomatic phrases, humor, and wordplay. These challenges underscore the need for careful decision-making by translators to ensure clarity, cultural appropriateness, and coherence, ultimately impacting audience reception and the overall quality of AVT.

To overcome the challenges that arise during the process of subtitling, strategies in subtitling are proposed by experts. Gottlieb (1997) proposed 10 strategies which later developed and detailed by Schjoldager (2009) that generated 12 strategies in subtitling. Those are direct transfer, calque, direct translation, oblique translation, explicitation, paraphrase,

condensation, adaptation, addition, deletion, substitution and permutation (Schjoldager, 2009). Those subtitling strategies are based on the linguistic, cultural and technical challenges that may emerge in mostly intertextual subtitling since intratextual subtitling not requiring language transfer. Before deciding the micro strategy, the subtitler must comprehend the macro strategy based on the Skopos theory of subtitling such media (Khalaf, 2016). The subtitler needs to understand the aim of the subtitling for choosing the best strategy in preserving the messages, whether it is for inclusive purpose or other purposes.

Several studies were done related to AVT with various focuses. The studies conducted by Wigraha and Puspani (2022), Baihaqi and Subiyanto (2021), and Wahyudi et al. (2024) explored the subtitling strategy in movies which the SL is English and the TL is Indonesian translation. The results of those studies are relatively similar in which the most frequent strategies employed are paraphrase and condensation. Meanwhile, the study from Devi and Amini (2022) not only investigating the strategies, but they also ensuring the accuracy of the subtitle. Other studies related to subtitling with similar focuses are from (Zgoul & Salman, 2022) and (Abdelaal & Sarhani, 2021) which merely highlighted the strategy utilized in subtitling and translating swear words and taboo in a movie. Both studies revealed that in subtitling swear words and taboo, the most common strategy utilized is omission in which the subtitler chose to omit those expression rather than translate them into the TL. Those mentioned studies are mostly focused on the movies subtitling with various languages, which left a gap in which none of them exploring how local languages transferred into a foreign and international languages such as English that remain challenging.

In filling the gap from the prior related studies in AVT and subtitling, this study aims to scrutinize the subtitling strategies applied in *Tilik* short movie from Javanese to English. Since *Tilik* is listed as the awardee of Official Selection World Cinema Amsterdam in 2019 which define its quality, and its translation into other languages become significant in preserving the essential of the movie. Consequently, this study contributes to the literature of AVT, particularly subtitling that provide an analysis of the strategy in transferring Javanese into English.

METHOD

This research is qualitative research in which the research is based on descriptive analysis and not including any statistical data (Creswell, 2014). The transcription dialogue in *Tilik* spoken by the characters in Javanese are served as the Source Text (ST) and the subtitle in English as the Target Text (TT). The process of transcribing was done conventionally due to the unavailability of online source of *Tilik*'s transcription. The researcher only transcribed *Tilik* for the first three minutes, since it holds

the crucial moment of the whole story. The translation or subtitle of those times must be carried out attentively to avoid misunderstanding of the story since *Tilik* is a short movie which consist only one problem (Murdock, 2024).

In analyzing the data, the researcher utilized a theory of subtitling strategies developed by Schjoldager (2009) which consists of 12 strategies as mentioned earlier. When the transcribing process was done, subsequently, identifying the strategy based on the subtitle produced in English. One subtitle is not limited to only possess one particular strategy since it may consist of more than one strategy. Next, counting the frequency of each type of strategies utilized and formulating the pattern. Afterwards, discussing the findings and concluding the overall analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings shows there are seven subtitling strategies employed in English subtitle of *Tilik* short movie out of 12 strategies presented by Schjoldager (2009). The most frequent strategy employed is paraphrase which appeared 19 times and condensation 18 times. Further details can bee seen in the table below.

No	Subtitling Strategy	Frequency
1	Direct translation	6
2	Condensation	18
3	Paraphrase	19
4	Explicitation	6
5	Substitution	3
6	Addition	1
7	Deletion	1
Total		54

Here are some examples of the strategies applied in subtitling of *Tilik* movie to English.

1. Paraphrase

Paraphrase is defined by Schjoldager (2009) as a strategy where the subtitler translate by making a new meaning in TT that still point out the idea of the ST. This strategy became the most adopted strategy in subtitling the short movie because Javanese used many implied expressions and interhections in the daily language they used. To illustrate the application of paraphrase strategy, two examples are provided below.

> ST: "*Fikri ki karo Dian ki opo bener sesambungan toh Bu?*"
> TT: "Is it true that Fikri and Dian are in a relationship?"
> **(Example 1)**

Example 1 presented the adoption of this strategy in translating the sentence '*Fikri ki karo Dian ki opo bener sesambungan toh Bu?*' which is

rephrased to 'Is it true that Fikri and Dian are in a relationship?' can be seen through the placement of the sentence structure and the rephrase of '*sesambungan'* into 'in a relationship'. Moreover, the subtitler try to maintain the idea of the sentence with paraphrasing it but sacrificing some elements of the SL.

> ST: "*Banjur digowo nang rumah sakit toh Bu."*
> TT: "That's why they bring her to the hospital immediately."
> **(Example 2)**

In example 2, the translation on the English subtitle is longer than what spoken on the SL. As mentioned earlier, paraphrase is making new meaning but still preserving the main idea from the ST. In the ST, the whole sentence carries the idea of bringing the Mayorees to the hospital regarding to the context where it was spoken.

2. Condensation

Condensation strategy was used in the English subtitle of *Tilik* short movie with a total of 18 times. It refers to a strategy where the text in TT is made shorter than ST (Schjoldager, 2009). The strategy happened often due to the limitation of subtitle that must pay attention to the times and frame. Two examples are written below to show the adoption of the condensation strategy in making the English subtitle.

> ST: "*Yuk Sam, kui kabare saka sapa lo?"*
> TT:" Who said that?"
> **(Example 3)**

In the example 3, it can be seen that the text in TT is shorter than the text in ST. It is because some words in ST are omitted. This omission resulted in more compact translation in the TT which only consists of three words. Nevertheless, both ST and TT correspond the same idea besides of the omission of other words. The subtitle on the TT is assumed as condensation since the TT is shorter than the ST.

> ST: "*Kok jare ono sing tau ngomong"*
> TT: "I heard that"
> **(Example 4)**

The example 4 above presented the strategy of condenstation which the TT is obviously shorter than the ST. But, despite the omission of some words from the ST, the meaning of the sentence is preserved. According to Schjoldager (2009), condensation is a startegy that shortened the translation, so that the example 4 is considered as condensation.

3. Explicitation

Explicitation is a strategy that state out the implied meaning in the ST (Schjoldager, 2009). In this ovie subtitle, this strategy was employed six timed. One of the example is presented below.

> ST: "*Dian ki mlebu metu hotel ngono kuwi lo"*
> TT: "She often rents a room"
> **(Example 5)**

Example 5 above showed the TT explicitly stated the implied meaning of the ST. In the ST, the sentence said '*Dian ki mlebu metu hotel ngono kuwi lo'* which is merely mentioning that Dian only enters and exits hotels. Meanwhile, the ST stated that Dian 'rents' the hotel's room which is not stated in the ST, but it can be inferred that if Dian enters and exits hotel's room, she must rent the room. Thus, it is assumed that the TT used explicitation strategy.

4. Direct translation

Direct translation is similar to literal translation in which the ST translated to the TT word-for-word (Schjoldager, 2009). In subtitling *Tilik* short movie, this strategy was applied six times. Here is one of the example of direct translation strategy.

>ST: "*Ooo, pantesan"*
>TT: "Hmm, no woder"
>**(Example 6)**

In the example 6 above depicted the strategy of direct translation in which defined by Schjoldager (2009) as a word-for-word translation. The ST was translated directly into the TT without any addition or deletion to it. Hence, it is classified to direct translation.

The relation between the strategy employed and the general characteristic of Javanese language which used many interjections in the daily conversation. *Tilik* movie is a depiction of some Javanesse which are gossipping of something. In the movie, the conversations of the characters are dense and heavy with additional words perform as interjections. This is because Javanese tends to emphasize what they are talking using exclamation and intonation in their utterances. The most strategies employed are paraphrase and condensation because the basic distinctive patterning sentence rule in Javanese language and English, and also to make the subtitle shorter by condensation strategy becaus the dialogues contain many unnecessary words.

In this study, the subtitles that are analyzed are only the first three minutes subtitles since it contains the orientation of the movie and is crucial moment of the movie. It is important because to understand the next story after the three minutes, so that the delivery of the meanings is important. Overall, the English subtitle in the first three minutes of *Tilik* movie is considered as good subtitle since the subtitler pay attention not only to the limitation of subtitling, but also try to maintain the meaning carried and implied from the SL.

CONCLUSION

The findings shows that the most frequent subtitling strategy applied is paraphrase which used 19 times. Followed by condensation which used 18 times in subtitling Tilik movie. The used of paraphrase is the impact of Javanese language feature that tend to exaggerating the speech and the

different rule of patterning sentences in Javanese language and English language. In addition, the application of condensation is due to the limitation and nature of subtitling and to reduce the redundant expressions on the SL. Nevertheless, the subtitler still tried to manage the meaning of the SL in the subtitle even though the subtitle has limiation. Therefore, the subtitle of the first three minutes of Tilik movie is considered as a good subtitle because it carries the meaning of the movie's content and fit to the subtitle limitation.

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