

Translation Techniques in Subtitling the March Sisters' Utterances in Little Women (1994) Movie

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to find out which types of translation techniques are found in subtitling the main characters' utterances in Little Women (1994) movie and the reason they are applied in the subtitle. This research used a qualitative method to analyze the subtitles. The data are movie transcripts and Indonesian subtitles that were taken from a movie streaming platform called Netflix. The data is analyzed using Molina and Albir's theory of translation techniques (2002). The result showed that there are fourteen translation techniques applied in the subtitles namely; Adaptation (0.60%), Borrowing (10.26%), Calque (0.30%), Compensation (19.61%), Discursive creation (1.96%), Establish equivalent (8.45%), Generalization (3.17%), Linguistic amplification (4.07%), Linguistic compression (24.13%), Literal translation (13.12%), Modulation (2.26%), Particularization (1.51%), Reduction (7.99%), and Transposition (2.57%). The dominant type is Linguistic compression technique because subtitles have a character limit per line which forces the translator to compress the sentences into a shorter form.

Keywords

translation; translation technique; subtitle; little women



I. Introduction

Aside for entertainment, movies could also be a great media for education. With how popular they have become; the number of movies has increased quite rapidly over the century. However, the language difference makes it difficult for people to fully enjoy and understand a movie if they don't speak the language. Language is one of the most important things in the life of every human being. Each of them is of course inseparable from language, the first time a child gets a language that is heard directly from the father or mother when the child is born into this world. Then as time goes by and as the child grows, they will acquire a language other than the language taught by the mother and father, either in the form of a second, third, foreign language or so on which is called language acquisition where it depends on the social environment and cognitive level possessed by these children through the learning process in their environment. (Purba, N. et al. (2020).

Hartono and Yuliasri point out in their research that the diversity of languages nowadays leads people to freely communicate in different languages, in this case, translation plays a big role to help people understand foreign languages (Hartono & Yuliasri, 2019, p. 87).

With over 7000 words spoken in the world today, translation has been helping people all around the world to communicate effectively by spreading new information, knowledges, ideas, etc. Translation can be understood as an act of transferring messages from one language to another language so that they can be understood by the people who speak the target language (TL).

As simple as it sounds, the act of translation is actually not an easy thing that anybody could do. As cited in Aji, Gunawan, and Simatipang's research; To produce good translations, competent translators must be able to understand ideas and thoughts, including messages expressed in the Source Language (SL) into the Target Language (TL) (Aji, Gunawan & Simatupang, 2020, p. 180). Even with the existence of many wonderful technologies in this era of globalization that could help with the process of translation, human brains are still needed to make a good quality translation. The process of translating may be difficult because translation is not only about transferring words to another language, but also the messages. As Sajarwa stated, when someone translates a text, they are not only transferring the message but also the culture (Sajarwa, 2021, p. 38).

In their research, Napu and Pakaya point out that poor translation quality is due to the translator's poor translation skills. (Napu & Pakaya, 2021, p. 66). A translator requires certain skills to help them with the process of translating, especially since different languages could have different structures. The techniques used in the translation product can determine how the target text can be successfully translated (Noftariani, 2019, p.97). A translator has to understand the text by heart to be able to convey the meaning so that the readers of the target language (TL) could grasp the message as close to the source language (SL) as possible. Moreover, as Yuliasri stated in her research, Translators can experiment with different translation techniques to address problems and create high-quality translations as they perform their translation tasks. (Yuliasri, 2016, p.410).

The act of translating audio-visual works is called Audiovisual Translation (AVT). Among many kinds of AVT, Subtitling and Dubbing are the most popular ones to solve the language difference problem in movies. To put it simply, subtitling is the process of adding translation text to a movie while dubbing is the process of replacing the original audio in a movie with the translated audio of the target language. In their book, Cintas and Remael (2014, p.8) define subtitle as a translation practice consisting of the presentation of a written text, which is usually placed on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the speakers' original dialogue, as well as the discursive elements which appear in the image, and the information that is contained on the soundtrack.

People who do not understand the language of the film can easily understand the flow of the film and also what the characters say by reading the subtitle (Istiqomah, Hartano & Fatmalasari, 2020, p. 165). Subtitling may be a more efficient way of translating a movie since it costs less and requires less effort than dubbing. But of course, subtitling is not as simple and as easy as it seems. There are many things the translator needs to consider in the process of subtitling such as the culture difference, word limit, and time limit. Moreover, Adinusa and Asmarandani stated in their research that movie translators should give the target audience to experience the foreign language and put their knowledge into their translation. (Adinusa & Asmarani, 2018, p.72).

Subtitling presents new challenges for traditional translation, such as the time and space limitations inherent in the process of subtitling, visual conventions, modes changes from speech to writing, and other related challenges. (Liu, 2014, p.1103). From the explanation, we can see that the process of subtitling requires proper procedures and strategies to result in a good translation so that the audiences could understand and grasp the meaning of the movie. The different languages and different cultures, however, caused translators to often face problems in the process of translating. This is supported by the statement of Rois, Kirana, Putri, Setyowati, and Sari that the struggle in choosing the equivalent word and grammatical complexity could lead to inaccurate, unacceptable, and incomprehensible translation. (Rois, Kirana, Putri, Setyowati & Sari, 2020, p. 123).

Therefore, to solve this problem, certain techniques are required in the process of translating.

As quoted in Baihaqi and Subianto's research, within the past fifteen years, audio-visual translation has been the most rapidly growing strand of translation studies (Baihaqi & Subiyanto, 2021, p.81). Therefore, the researcher intends to conduct research on subtitling the March sisters' utterances in *Little Women* (1994) movie using translation techniques that Molina and Albir proposed (2002).

According to Molina and Albir (2002, p.509), translation technique is methods for analyzing and classifying translation equivalence. In their research, they proposed 18 translation techniques and translators could use these techniques to help with the process of translation and elevate their translation quality. The translation method you choose will play a major role in determining whether your translation is of good quality. (Hardiyanti, Nugraheni, Nababan & Santosa, 2021, p. 32). The explanation of 18 types of translation techniques can be sum up as follows:

1. Adaptation is a translation technique in which cultural elements from ST is changed with one from the target language. The translator used this technique because there are a more well-known words or phrases that have the same meaning with one from the ST.
2. Amplification is a translation technique in which the translator adds detail information that cannot be found in the ST.
3. Borrowing is a translation technique where words from ST are taken and kept as they are in the TT. This type of translation technique is used when there is no translation word in the TL. There are two kinds of borrowing; pure borrowing in which the translator does not change anything in the translation; and naturalized borrowing in which the translator adjusts the spelling of the translation to the TL.
4. Calque is a literal translation of foreign words that could be lexical or structural. Calque is nearly similar to Literal translation technique; however, Calque technique is only applied in translating phrases.
5. Compensation is a one of translation techniques where the translator moves element of information or stylistic effect in the ST to another place in the TT. This technique is usually used because they cannot be reflected in the same place in the TT.
6. Description is one of translation techniques in which the translator changes a term or expression with the description of the term itself.
7. Discursive Creation is one of translation techniques where the translator sets a temporary term that is equivalence but totally out of context.
8. Establish equivalent is one of translation techniques where the translator uses a term or expression approved by dictionaries or language in use as an equivalent in the TT. This technique is used usually when there is already a term in the TL that has the same meaning with one from the ST even though it is not the literal meaning.
9. Generalization is one of translation techniques in which the translator uses a more general term to translate a word. This technique is used usually because there is no word or expression that has the same meaning as one in the ST in the TL.
10. Linguistic amplification is a kind of translation technique in where the translator adds linguistic elements in the TT which is not exist in the ST without changing the meaning of the original. Linguistic amplification technique is usually applied in dubbing and consecutive interpreting.
11. Linguistic compression is a kind of translation technique where the translator synthesizes linguistic elements in the TT without changing the meaning of the

original. Linguistic compression technique is usually applied in subtitling and simultaneous interpreting.

12. Literal translation is one of translation techniques where the translator translates a word or an expression in the ST word for word without considering the correct structure of the TL.
13. Modulation is one of translation techniques in which the point of view used in the ST is changed by the translator in the TT. This technique could be lexical or structural.
14. Particularization is one of translation techniques where the translator uses a more exact or concrete term for the TT, which makes it contrary to Generalization technique.
15. Reduction is a kind of translation techniques where the translator removes information items of the ST in the TT. This technique is a bit similar to Linguistic compression technique. However, while Linguistic compression technique does not change the meaning of the ST, the removal of elements in the sentence using Reduction technique may change the meaning of the ST.
16. Substitution is a translation technique in which the translator changes elements of linguistic for elements of paralinguistic or vice versa.
17. Transposition is a kind of translation technique where grammatical categories of the ST is changed in the TT.
18. Variation is a translation technique where the translator changes the linguistic or paralinguistic elements which affect the linguistic variation aspects.

There are some previous researchers that have done the study using translation techniques as the tool of their analysis. The first one the researcher found is conducted by Evirius Ndruru (2017). In the research, Ndruru analyzed the translation techniques and processes applied in the Indonesian translation of a novel entitled "A Time to Kill". The result of the research shows that they found seventeen translation techniques in the translation of the novel. The second one is conducted by Ika Wellya Rahesa RM and Rusdi Noor Rosa (2020). Their research's objective is to find out the techniques used in translating a narrative text from English into Bahasa Indonesia by the third-year English Department students. Through the research, they found nine translation techniques applied in the text. The results of both researches show that the dominant type of translation technique applied is literal translation. The former stated that it was because the translator focused on giving the same experience and impression. While the latter is because literal translation is the easiest technique to apply as they are the works of inexperienced translators who tend to be influenced by the ST's style and structure.

Little Women (1994) is a movie adaptation based on an American classic novel written by Louisa May Alcott about the life of the four March sisters, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, from their childhood to womanhood. Little Women has the story set in the 19th century. Language grows and continuously changes over time. It is a given that translating texts that use an older style of language is more complicated than translating texts using language that is commonly used nowadays. Moreover, different languages have different structures which means the translator needs some adjustments in transferring the sentences into the TL. There is actually the newer version of the movie adaptation that was released back in 2019, but the researcher chose the 1994 version because the enthusiast of this fifth movie adaptation of the novel and how faithful it is to the tone of the book are truly impressive. Other than that, compared to the 2019 version, the 1994 version used a far more historical language which makes it more challenging to translate than modern English.

By conducting this research, the researcher hopes to enhance their translation skills and knowledge with translated texts. The researcher also believes that this study will be useful not only for the students but also for teachers or lecturers as a material from acquiring some information about types of Translation Techniques to enrich teaching materials of Translation.

II. Research Method

This research used a qualitative method to observe and analyze the types of translation techniques found in the subtitle of Little Women (1994) movie. According to Tracy, qualitative research is about immersing yourself in a scene, such as a company meeting, community event, or interview, and trying to understand what it means. (Tracy, 2013, p.3). The researcher chose the qualitative method because to conduct the research, the researcher collected and analyzed non-numeric data to understand the theory.

The unit of analysis of this research is the utterances of the March sisters as the main characters of a movie entitled Little Women (1994) directed by Gillian Armstrong. The data of this research are the movie transcripts as the source text and the Indonesian subtitles by Froellen Tjandra as the target text that were both taken from a streaming service named Netflix.

The procedure of collecting data in this research was conducted through data analysis. Firstly, the researcher watched Little Women (1994) to understand the content and message delivered from the movie. Secondly, the researcher collected the selected lines from the movie transcript and Indonesian subtitles for the data. Thirdly, after the data were collected, the researcher identified and classified the types of translation techniques in the March sisters' utterances based on Molina and Albir's theory (2002). Lastly, the researcher drew a conclusion from the research and found out which type of translation techniques is dominant in subtitling the March sisters' utterances in Little Women (1994) movie and the reason those techniques are applied in the subtitles.

III. Results and Discussion

Based on the data analysis result, the researcher found fourteen translation techniques of eighteen translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002, p.509-511) are applied in subtitling the March sisters' utterances in Little Women (1994) movie. Those translation techniques are namely; Adaptation, Borrowing, Calque, Compensation, Discursive creation, Establish equivalence, Generalization, Linguistic amplification, Linguistic compression, Literal translation, Modulation, Particularization, Reduction, and Transposition. The summary of data analysis in finding out translation techniques applied in subtitling the March sisters' utterances in Little Women (1994) movie is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Translation techniques found in the subtitle

Translation technique	Frequency	Percentage
Adaptation	4	0.60%
Borrowing	68	10.26%
Calque	2	0.30%
Compensation	130	19.61%
Discursive creation	13	1.96%
Established equivalent	56	8.45%
Generalization	21	3.17%

Translation technique	Frequency	Percentage
Linguistic amplification	27	4.07%
Linguistic compression	160	24.13%
Literal translation	87	13.12%
Modulation	15	2.26%
Particularization	10	1.51%
Reduction	53	7.99%
Transposition	17	2.57%
Total	663	100%

According to table 1 above, it is shown that from the total of 663 data obtained, the dominant type of translation technique applied is Linguistic compression technique with 160 data (24.13%). The details of each translation technique found in subtitling the March sisters' utterances in Little Women (1994) movie are explained as follows.

1. Adaptation

The researcher found 4 data (0.60%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 1

ST	...but necessity is indeed the mother of invention .
TT	...tapi kebutuhan memang menjadi akar penemuan .
Little Women (1994) 00:03:07	

The data use adaptation technique to translate the phrase "mother of invention" into "*akar penemuan*". Indonesia is known as an agrarian country or agrarian nation. The majority of Indonesian residents work in agriculture which makes Indonesian people more familiar with plants. Hence, the translator changed the word "mother" into "*akar*" (root) for the translation of the phrase "mother of invention". Therefore, it can be concluded that Adaptation technique is applied in this data.

2. Borrowing

The researcher found 68 data (10.26%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 2

ST	One periwinkle sash belonging to Mr. N. Winkle...
TT	Sebuah selempang periwinkle milik Tn. N. Winkle...
Little Women (1994) 00:09:54	

The data above use borrowing technique to translate the word "Periwinkle" into Indonesian. The translator used this technique because there is no Indonesian word for the color periwinkle, which is a color in the blue and violet family, since Indonesian usually doesn't have a name for specific types of color and only the basic color. Hence, the translator had to take the word "periwinkle" and kept it as it is in the Indonesian translation which means Borrowing technique is applied in this data.

3. Calque

This technique seems to be the least applied in subtitling the movie among the rest of the data. The researcher only found 2 data (0.30%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 3

ST	Meg is a sensational actress .
TT	Meg adalah aktris sensasional .
Little Women (1994) 00:32:12	

The data above use calque technique to translate the phrase “Sensational actress” into Indonesian. The translator translated this phrase into Indonesian word for word where “sensational” is translated as “*sensasional*” and “actress” is translated as “*aktris*” then merged them as “*aktris sensasional*” to adjust with Indonesian structure and spelling. Therefore, it can be concluded that the translator used Calque technique in translating this phrase.

4. Compensation

The researcher found 130 data (19.61%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 4

ST	...but I fear for my new slippers .
TT	...tapi aku khawatir akan sandal baruku.
Little Women (1994) 00:41:16	

The data above use compensation technique to translate the word “slippers” into Indonesian. The word “slipper” has the suffix -s attached to imply a plural form or more than one but the suffix cannot be portrayed in the same place as the ST because in Indonesian slippers are already considered as a pair. Hence, the Indonesian translation of the word “slippers” is “*sandal*” and it doesn’t need any affix. Therefore, it can be concluded that Compensation technique is applied in translating this word.

5. Discursive creation

The researcher found 13 data (1.96%) translated into Indonesian using this technique.

Data 5

ST	We've been expectorating you for hours!
TT	Kami telah menantukanmu berjam-jam!
Little Women (1994) 00:03:31	

The data above use discursive creation technique to translate the word “expectorating” into Indonesian. Amy, who is still a little girl, often makes mistakes in saying words. In this scene, Amy meant to say “expecting”, but she misspelled it into “expectorating”. Therefore, the translator set a temporary term to translate this word to become “*menantukanmu*”, which means Discursive creation technique is applied in this data.

6. Established equivalent

The researcher found 56 data (8.45%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 6

ST	Your faithful, Jo.
TT	Salam hormat, Jo.
Little Women (1994) 01:40:57	

The data above use established equivalent technique to translate the phrase “Your faithful” into Indonesian to become “*Salam hormat*”. If translated literally, the phrase “*Salam hormat*” in Indonesian means “Respect greetings”. However, in Indonesian, “*Salam hormat*” is a common greeting people usually use at the end of a letter, which makes it equivalence with “Your faithful” in English. Therefore, it can be concluded Established equivalent technique is applied in this data.

7. Generalization

The researcher found 21 data (3.17%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 7

ST	As she spoke, Jo took off her bonnet .
TT	Sambil bicara, Jo melepas topinya .
Little Women (1994) 01:44:07	

The data above use generalization technique to translate the word “bonnet” into Indonesian as “*topi*”. The word bonnet mentioned above refers to the kind of headgear usually worn by women in the late 19th century in western countries. But since there is no bonnet in Indonesian culture, there is no word for bonnet in Indonesian. Hence, the translator generalized the word “Bonnet” to become “*topi*” which means “Hat” in general in English for the Indonesian subtitle, which makes it clear that the translator used Generalization technique in translating this word.

8. Linguistic amplification

The researcher found 27 data (4.07%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 8

ST	Here. Flowers . Oh, you're so...
TT	Ini bunga untukmu , kau sangat...
Little Women (1994) 01:48:02	

The data above use linguistic amplification technique to translate the word “Flower” into Indonesian. In the original scene and transcript, Amy only said “Flower” when she gave flower to her sister Jo. However, the translator added some words in the final subtitle to become “*Bunga untukmu*” or “Flower for you” in English which means Linguistic amplification technique is applied in this data.

9. Linguistic compression

This technique seems to be the most frequent used in the subtitle. The researcher found 160 data (24.13%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 9

ST	I'm sorry . Meg always makes me take the gentleman's part at home.
TT	Maaf , Meg selalu memaksaku melakukan bagian pria di rumah.
Little Women (1994) 00:17:53	

The data above use linguistic compression technique to translate the phrase “I’m sorry” into Indonesian. If it is translated literally into Indonesian, it would be “*Aku minta maaf*” or “*Aku menyesal*”. However, the translator removed the subject for the final subtitle

to become “*Maaf*” or “Sorry” in English. Therefore, it can be concluded that Linguistic compression technique is applied in this data.

10. Literal translation

The researcher found 87 data (13.12%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 10

ST	I can be brave like you.
TT	Aku bisa menjadi berani sepertimu.
Little Women (1994) 01:36:22	

The data above use literal translation technique to translate the sentence “I can be brave like you.” into Indonesian to become “*Aku bisa menjadi berani sepertimu.*”. The translator solely translated the sentence into Indonesian word for word without minding the correct Indonesian structure. Although by chance, it’s still in the correct structure in Indonesian, so it still sounds natural and does not give off any strange feelings. Therefore, it can be concluded that Literal translation technique is applied in this data.

11. Modulation

The researcher found 15 data (2.26%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 11

ST	Oh, Jo. Jo, I've sprained my ankle.
TT	Jo, pergelangan kakiku terkilir.
Little Women (1994) 00:18:09	

The data above use modulation technique. The subject in the sentence of the original line and transcript in this scene is “I” when Meg March referred to herself as she sprained her ankle. However, the point of view of the sentence is changed by the translator from “I” to “My ankle” for the final subtitle so it became “*Pergelangan kakiku terkilir.*” or “My ankle sprained” in English which means Modulation technique is applied in this data.

12. Particularization

The researcher found 10 data (1.51%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 12

ST	Oh, he's dull as powder. Meg, can't you at least marry someone amusing?
TT	Dia sangat membosankan. Meg, tak bisakah kau menikahi pria yang lucu?
Little Women (1994) 01:00:12	

The data above use particularization technique to translate the sentence. The word “someone” is used in the original line and transcript of this scene when Jo March asked Meg March if she could marry someone else besides Mr. Brooke. However, the translator changed the word “someone” into something more particular for the context and became “*pria*” or “man” in English. Therefore, it can be concluded that Particularization technique is applied in this data.

13. Reduction

The researcher found 53 data (7.99%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 13

ST	Oh, where is that miserable glove ?
TT	Di mana sarung tangan itu?
Little Women (1994) 00:37:58	

The data above use reduction technique to translate the phrase “That miserable glove” into Indonesian. The Indonesian translation of the phrase could have been “*Sarung tangan menyedihkan itu*”. However, the translator removed the word “*Menyedihkan*” or “Miserable” in English in the final Indonesian subtitle of the movie. Therefore, it can be concluded that Reduction technique is applied in this data.

14. Transposition

The researcher found 17 data (2.57%) translated into Indonesian using this technique for the subtitle of the movie.

Data 14

ST	Well, I do my own sewing , and...
TT	Aku menjahitnya sendiri dan...
Little Women (1994) 00:39:40	

The data above use transposition technique to translate the sentence “I do my own sewing” into Indonesian. As seen in the original line and transcript of the movie in this scene, the word “sewing” has a role of a noun in the sentence. However, the translator changed the role of the word “sew” from a noun into a verb for the final Indonesian subtitle and became “*Aku menjahitnya sendiri*” or “I sew it myself” in English. Therefore, it can be concluded that Transposition technique is applied in this data.

Subtitles are placed on the screen of movies to help people who don’t speak the language used in the movie. Since they cover some parts of the screen, some people may find them disturbing. Therefore, there is usually a character limit per line that subtitlers must follow in order for the subtitles to not block the screen too much. This explains why Tjandra used a lot of Linguistic compression techniques in subtitling the movie

V. Conclusion

The result of the analysis shows that there are fourteen translation techniques applied namely: Adaptation, Borrowing, Calque, Compensation, Discursive creation, Establish equivalence, Generalization, Linguistic amplification, Linguistic compression, Literal translation, Modulation, Particularization, Reduction, and Transposition. The dominant type of translation technique applied is Linguistic compression technique with 160 data (24.13%), which is a translation technique where the translator synthesizes linguistic elements in the TT without changing the meaning of the original. This technique is applied many times in subtitling the movie because subtitles have character limitations per line. Hence, subtitle translators are forced to compress long sentences into shorter forms in order to fit and not cover the screen.

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