

Subtitling Translation Strategy and Semiotic Approach on Titanic Film

Ni Made Sila Ulati¹, Mirsa Umiyati², Agus Darma Yoga Pratama³

^{1,2,3}Postgraduated Program in Linguistic, Universitas Warmadewa

surrendersiwa.2017@gmail.com, mirsa.umiyati2@gmail.com, agusdarmayoga85@yahoo.com

Published: 01/04/2022

How to cite (in APA style):

Ulati, N. M. S., Umiyati, M., & Pratama, A. D. Y. (2022). Subtitling Translation Strategy and Semiotic Approach on Titanic Film. *Retorika: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, 8(1), 57-64. doi: <https://doi.org/10.55637/jr.8.1.4344.57-64>.

Abstract - This research is entitled “Subtitling Translation Strategy and Semiotic Approach on Titanic Film”. This research aims to identify and analyze the subtitling translation strategies in the Titanic film. This research also analyzes the meaning in Titanic film delivered through non-verbal signs. This research contributes to fill some gaps in the field of film subtitling from English into Indonesian and utilizes the multimodal transcription to deliver the meaning of Titanic film. This research refers to the theory of subtitling strategy by Gottlieb (1992) and the theory of Multimodal Transcription by (Forceville, 2007). The methodology applied in this research is descriptive qualitative due to the analysis in the form of elaboration. This research shows the subtitling translation strategy found in the Titanic film are eight strategies which cover expansion strategy, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, condensation, decimation, and deletion strategy. The meaning delivered through nonverbal signs in the Titanic film is sadness, the happiness of love, and an unforgettable dreadful tragedy. This meaning is delivered along with the visual images and the soundtrack.

Keywords: Subtitling; Strategy; Translation; Semiotics

I. INTRODUCTION

A film contains a message to be conveyed to the audience. The messages can be transferred through four channels namely audio, visual, verbal, and non-verbal. There are four different types of signs: audio-verbal (words uttered), audio-nonverbal (all other sounds), visual-verbal (writing), visual-nonverbal (Cintas, 2008). The verbal sign in the film is the subtitle itself, which has an important role in delivering the message of the film. With subtitles, the meaning in the film can be conveyed clearly. (Yoga Pratama, 2018) Subtitling has its limitations in terms of delivering meaning, since there are some technical things that have to be applied, such as time limit for texts to appear on screen,

limited number of characters that can be displayed, fonts, color, and texts position. Nevertheless, subtitling remains interesting as a topic to study.

The translation strategy on subtitling influences the process of delivering messages. Yoga Pratama, (2016) stated that subtitling, as one of the AVTs, is defined as a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text and usually puts on the lower part of the screen though in some languages it may appear vertically on the right-hand side of the screen. In line with the subtitle, the nonverbal (music and image) also has an important role in a film. Music and image in a film as a nonverbal sign can be conveyed meaning as well. The type of

music with a slow beat and sad lyrics can convey a message of sadness. On the other hand, music with a fast beat and cheerful lyrics can convey a message of joy. Similarly, images or visual frames can convey meaning. A character in a film with a sad expression, accompanied by tranquil music, even without subtitles about sadness, can be predicted the message of sorrow which wants to convey. A visual image in a film also contains an implicit meaning. An actress said that she was delighted, with a sad expression on her face and accompanied by dreary music. The meaning conveyed is contrary to the multimodal sign indicated

The film delivers the meaning through visual image, soundtrack, subtitle and dialogue simultaneously. The meaning delivers is showing the suitability to the multimodal shown. Somehow, the film delivers the meaning through complete multimodal, but the multimodal against the meaning. Furthermore, the meaning of the film can be delivered through soundtrack and images only, as well. These contradictory multimodal signs will be discussed in more detail in this research. The researcher is going to emphasize the strategy translation applied in subtitling titanic film as a verbal sign and delivering meaning through music, images as a nonverbal sign.

AVT is not a new field of research, and it has continued to develop until now. At this time, AVT has grown into an academic translation, which is the translation is not just a transferring of meaning from the source language to the target language but go beyond it. AVT is a rather didactic thing. Didactic means that by translating subtitles, we can learn in the field of foreign languages. This is confirmed by the statement of "Subtitling as an Aid to Language Learning" (Incalcaterra McLaughlin, Laura, Biscio Marie, Ní Mhainnín, 2011). Language learning in AVT covers formal and informal language as well. Furthermore, AVT does not only depend on linguistics but really needs to be integrated with other factors such as culture, customs, habits, beliefs prevailing in the target language area. This is what makes research in the field of audiovisual more attractive. In AVT including film subtitle, it is highlighted that filmic system and visual sign must considered in order to get a meaningful semiotics and multimodal whole. Furthermore, It is stated that films are as multisemiotic and multimodal texts (Cintas, Jorge Diaz and Remael, 2021).

In previous research related to subtitling

strategy, the researcher referred to six related articles to enrich this current research. The data collected from the six previous studies were audiovisual media from Arabic to English, Italian to English, Persian to English, French to English, and English to Indonesian. The focus of the six studies are different as well. As an academic reason from those elaborations the researcher is interested in carrying out the research related to subtitling translation strategy. This current research contributes to fill some gaps in the field of film subtitling from English into Indonesian and utilizes the multimodal transcription to deliver the meaning of Titanic film.

Based on the descriptions on the background of the research, it can be inferred that the research will emphasize to the subtitling translation strategies and the delivering meaning through nonverbal sign. The researcher is going to identify and discuss two problems, as follows:

Kind of subtitling translation strategy is applied in Titanic film and how the meaning on Titanic film is delivered through nonverbal sign.

The relevant theory bases to this research are subtitling strategy translation and the multimodal. Audiovisual is the most prominent type of text among polysemiotics.

In this research, the researcher employed the theory of subtitling translation strategy by (Gottlieb, 1992) to answer the first problem. The first problem is identifying the type of subtitling translation strategy found in the Titanic film. The theory of Multimodal Transcription by (Forceville, 2007) is used to answer the second problem. The second problem is delivering the meaning on the Titanic film through nonverbal sign.

This research will employ the subtitling strategy translation according to (Gottlieb, 1992), stated that to assess the quality of a specific subtitling, the rendering of each verbal film segment must be analyzed with regard to stylistic and semantic value. There are ten strategies that can be applied in subtitling strategies, as follows:

1. Expansion

The characters of this translation, namely expanded expression, adequate rendering, and culture-specific references. This strategy is usually used in which the target text needs more space than the source text. This could happen due to specific cultural reasons and it needs further explanation and

- interpretation
2. Paraphrase
The characters of this translation are altered expression, adequate rendering (non-visualized language-specific phenomena). This strategy is usually used for syntactic reasons. The translator is not able to maintain the structure of sentences from the source text to the target text.
 3. Transfer
The characters of this translation are full expression, adequate rendering ('neutral' discourse - slow tempo). This strategy is usually used to ensure the meaning from the source text to the target text. In this strategy, the sentence from the original text is fully and accurately translated to the target text.
 4. Imitation
The characters of this translation are identical expressions, equivalent rendering (proper nouns, international greetings). This strategy is usually used to translate the names of individuals and places. Imitation translation strategy aims to preserve precisely the original text and exact manner as if no translation has ever been done.
 5. Transcription
The characters of this translation are anomalous expression, adequate rendering (non-standard speech). Transcription strategy is usually used when a word or phrase is not even meaningful in the source text, for example, a third language or meaningless language is used in the source text. The translated result of this research sounds awkward due to the application of the third language.
 6. Dislocation
The characters of this translation are differing expressions, adjusted content (musical or visualized language-specific phenomena). This strategy is usually used as an approach to produce a musical and rhythmic text for the TT viewers. This strategy aims to put forward the effect of the translation than the text and content. It is applied to translate a silly song or poem as displayed in the animation's example.
 7. Condensation
The characters of this translation are condensed expression, concise rendering (normal speech). This type of strategy is usually used in which the text is shortened in such a way that the original text retains its original meaning. The pragmatic effect can be lost due to the application of condensation strategy.
 8. Decimation
The characters of this translation are bridged expression, reduced content (fast speech of some importance). This strategy is usually used in which to shorten the text due to the source text comprises too many words and wordy content. The effect of this strategy is that a large part of the text and the original information is eliminated. This kind of strategy is applicable for the high speed of speech of the source text. The decimation strategy sounds more extreme than the condensation strategy.
 9. Deletion
The characters of this translation are omitted expression, no verbal content (fast speech of less importance). This strategy is used in which the part of the text is completely deleted.
 10. Resignation
The characters of this translation are differing expression, distorted content ('untranslatable' elements). This strategy is used in which the translator finds no solution or strategy for translation, and meaning is definitely lost. Furthermore, this kind of strategy sounds similar to deletion strategy.

The researcher will employ multimodal transcription to answer the second problem. Multimodal transcription could be a useful tool in establishing where meaning was being created in a multimodal text and whether resources other than the spoken word could relay that meaning (Taylor, 2003). Multimodal transcription underwent a modification, and it could be worthwhile in the spotting of the subtitles, that is, the art of timing and placing them precisely. The modification, namely, there is an addition of kinetic action part in one column to the visual image. The other modification is an additional column specifically for subtitles.

II. METHODS

A researcher needs a methodology in order to have a systematic result. The research

model is basically a scientific way to get data with specific purposes and uses. In this research, researcher applied descriptive qualitative method, since the result of the research will be presented in a description. Qualitative research focuses on meanings rather than numbers. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribing to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). With respect to the literature review, qualitative research has three placements of the literature review i.e., viz. the literature is placed as the introduction, the literature is separated in a separate section, and the literature is presented in the study at the end. In this research, the researcher presented the literature in a separate section as a review of the literature. This approach is used with those studies employing a strong theory and literature background at the beginning of a study.

Qualitative research is identical with an inductive method in which an inductive process of building from the data to broad themes to a generalized model or theory. The inductive approaches of this research are, firstly the researcher posed generalizations or theories from past experiences and literature. Secondly, the researcher looked for broad patterns, generalizations, or theories from themes or categories. Thirdly, the researcher analyzed data to form themes or categories. The basic procedure in reporting the results of a qualitative study are to develop descriptions and themes from the data. The data that emerge from a qualitative study are descriptive. That is, data are reported in words) or pictures, rather than in (Webster, 1988). In doing qualitative research, the gathering data can be obtained in a form of interview data, observation data, document data, and audiovisual data (Creswell, 2014). This research obtained the audiovisual data from the Titanic film. Qualitative research involves text and image analysis, as well. This research identified and analyzed the text of the subtitles and the images of the Titanic film.

In this research, the researcher focuses on the analysis process, and the analysis is completed by the images, as well. This research was precise to apply descriptive qualitative since the main data is in the form of film subtitles. More clearly, the researcher applied descriptive qualitative because the selected utterances were analyzed with elaborations.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The subtitle of Titanic film comprises of 1783 utterances. The researcher elaborates three representative examples of analyzing for the each type of strategy found in the subtitle of Titanic film. It is found that the subtitling translation strategies applied on Titanic film are expansion strategy, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, condensation, decimation, and deletion strategy. Among the ten strategies by Gottlieb (1992), there are two strategies not found in the Titanic film namely dislocation and resignation. The most subtitling translation strategy found in subtitles of Titanic film is transfer strategy, because most of the translation result is fully and accurately translated to the target text. The translator uses the transfer strategy to ensure the meaning from SL to TL.

1. Expansion.

Among the subtitle, there are eight utterances that applied expansion strategy.

Example (TF 1997, minute 1 : 46 : 35)

SL : *“Not five, but not five”*

TL : *“Tapi tidak dengan lima kompartemen, tidak dengan lima”*

The phrase “but not five” is expanded and translated into “Tapi tidak dengan lima kompartemen.” The expanded part is “kompartemen” since there is no the word of “compartment” in SL. Compartment is one of the separate areas inside a vehicle (dictionary.cambridge.org). Without the addition of the word “kompartemen” the result of the translation could be hard to understand in the people in TL since there is no visual image in this scene. By expanding the word of “kompartemen” the translator needs more space in TL and get acceptable and understandable meaning in the people in TL.

2. Paraphrase

Among the subtitle it is found ten utterances that applied paraphrase strategy.

Example 3 (TF 1997, minute 1 : 47 : 01)

SL : *“The pumps buy you time but minutes only”*

TL : *“Pompanya hanya akan menunda tenggelamnya sebentar”*

The phrase “buy you time but minutes only” is not a word-to-word translation because the meaning is not acceptable and hard to

understand in the people in TL. The phrase of “buy you time but minutes only” has an implicit meaning. The translator changed the phrase in SL into a sentence in SL. With the changes of the structure, the translator has a purpose to make the people in TL can get easier comprehending.

3. Transfer

Among the subtitle, it is found that the transfer strategy is the most used strategy by the translator.

Example (TF 1997, minute 15 : 08)

SL : “*Yes. I would like to see my drawing*”

TL : “*Ya. Aku ingin melihat gambarku*”

The sentence in SL “*Yes. I would like to see my drawing*” is fully and accurately translated into TL “*Ya. Aku ingin melihat gambarku*” the translator translated the sentence in SL in a word-to-word translation in order to ensure the meaning in TL. There is no addition or deletion part in the process of translation. The translator did not change the structure of the sentence, as well.

4. Imitation

Among the subtitle, there are fifteen utterances applied imitation strategy.

Example (TF 1997, minute 11 : 00)

SL : “*From the research ship Keldysh, in the North Atlantic*”.

TL : “*Dari kapal penelitian Keldysh, di Atlantik Utara*”

Keldysh is the name of the research ship and the translator imitates the word ‘*Keldysh*’ in SL to “*Keldysh*” in TL. Hence there is no addition or deletion part for the translation strategy. The translator has a purpose to preserve the meaning precisely like the original text.

5. Transcription

Among the subtitle, twelve utterances applied transcription strategy.

Example (TF 1997, minute 25 : 44)

SL : “*We're practically goddamn royalty, ragazzo mio*”.

TL : “*Kita akan berhasil, Kawan*”.

The word “*ragazzo mio*” is Italian language which means “*my boy*”(ItalianDictionary). It is

translated into “*kawan*” due to his friend is a boy. The translated result sounds awkward due to the application of the Italian language. The translator recognizes that a word of “*ragazzo mio*” is not even meaningful in source text due to the application of the third language.

6. Condensation

Among the subtitle it is found thirteen utterances that applied condensation strategy.

Example (TF 1997, minute 12 : 08)

SL : “*Bobby, we're launching. See these submersibles going in the water?*”

TL : “*Bobby, kita sedang bekerja. Lihat kapal selam kecil ini?*”

The sentence “*See these submersibles going in the water?*” sounds having a long meaning to the translator and there is a shortened part. The complete sentence in SL was changed into a simple sentence in TL. It is shortened and translated into “*Lihat kapal selam kecil ini?*” The translator understands that there is a non-verbal sign that adheres to this utterance. The visual image shows obviously which one means the submersibles. While talking, the speaker is pointing to the submersibles prepare to go into the water. The translator still maintains the original meaning of the sentence.

7. Decimation

Among the subtitles, the researcher found that the decimation strategy is the least applied strategy.

Example : (TF 1997, minute 08 : 01 – 08 : 08)

SL : “*Okay, go. Flip it over. Go. Turn over. Keep going. Go Okay, drop it*”.

TL : “*Ayo. Balikkan. Terus. Terus. Baiklah, jatuhkan*”.

The translator determines the source text,” *Okay, go. Flip it over. Flip it over. Go Go Go Turn over. Keep going. Go Go Go Okay, drop it*”, comprises too many words and wordy content. Considering the numbers of the characters and the lines on a screen, the translator eliminated the large part of the text. The wordy content is translated into “*Ayo. Balikkan. Terus. Terus. Baiklah, jatuhkan*”. The result of the translation sounds simpler and more understandable. Even though some large parts of the original sentences are eliminated, the

meaning of TL does not change.

8. Deletion

Among the subtitle, thirteen utterances applied condensation strategy.

Example (TF 1997, minute 54 : 02)

SL : “Then we'll ride horses on the beach, right in the surf”

TL : “Lalu kita menunggang kuda di pantai”.

The source text of “Then we'll ride horses on the beach, right in the surf” is translated into, “Lalu kita menunggang kuda di pantai.” The deleted part of the sentence is “right in the surf”. The main point of the SL is “Then we'll ride horses on the beach”. The translator deleted the phrase “right in the surf “ that has a less important meaning in SL. Even though there is a deleted part in SL, it does not change the meaning of the sentence in TL.

The meaning of the film Titanic is analyzed by utilizing multimodal transcription by (Forceville, 2007). In this analysis, the researcher focuses more on several scenes that contain non-verbal meaning, whether they are equipped with subtitles or not. MT is a multimodal analysis in tabular form equipped with some points such as shots, visual images+ kinetic actions, soundtracks, and subtitles.

This multimodal transcription is the analysis of the ending scene of the Titanic film. There are four shots transcribed that deliver a meaning of the power of true love. The Titanic film is ended with the song entitled "Hymn to the Sea”, along with the shots of a smiling old lady, the blue diamond and the sea in the darkness.

T	Visual Frame	Visual image + kinetic Action
1		CP : stationary HP : frontal VP : median D : CS VC : the ship VS : the face CO : naturalistic CR : white hair VF : close, off screen The smiling face of the old lady

The meaning of a lady with smiling face: happy

T	Visual Frame	Visual image + kinetic Action
2		CP : stationary HP : oblique VP : median to high D : CS VC : the ship VS : a blue diamond CO : naturalistic CR : blue and white VF : close, off screen The old lady holds a blue diamond

The meaning of a blue diamond: a beautiful thing

T	Visual Frame	Visual image + kinetic Action
3		CP : moving HP : oblique VP : high D : MCS VC : the ship VS : the face CO : naturalistic CR : black VF : close, off screen A lady with knitted eyebrow

The meaning of a lady with knitted eyebrow: thinking something

T	Visual Frame	Visual image + kinetic Action
4		CP : stationary HP : frontal VP : high D : CS VC : the ocean VS : the diamond CO : naturalistic CR : blue VF : close, off screen

The image of a diamond on the sea means: valuable thing. The sound of the sea rumbling means: something scary. The sound track of “Hymn to Sea” means : a sadness.

The message delivered from the sequence of visual frames, visual images, soundtracks, and subtitles is the power of true love. Rose has kept the diamond for about 84 years. She was

supposed to be able to put on or sell that blue diamond, but she never thinks to do that. She prefers to throw the diamond into the ocean, as her love token, because the only thing she has is a picture with a blue diamond. That diamond reminds Rose of her love. She decides to bury her love at the bottom of the ocean, as the way Jack dies.

IV. CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes two problems specifically. The first is analyzing the subtitling strategy on Titanic film and the second one is delivering the meaning of Titanic film through the non-verbal sign. After accomplishing the analysis of the two problems, it can be concluded that, as follows:

1. The first problem utilized the theory of subtitling strategy by [Gottlieb \(1992\)](#) and it is found that the subtitling translation strategies applied on Titanic film are expansion strategy, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, condensation, decimation, and deletion strategy. Among the ten strategies by [\(Gottlieb, 1992\)](#), there are two strategies which are not found in the Titanic film namely dislocation and resignation.
2. There is a correlation between the subtitling strategy used and the nonverbal sign shown in the Titanic film. Nonverbal signs can be used as a reference for the precise subtitling strategy to be applied. This can be seen in nonverbal signs in the form of visual images where someone points to the man upstairs and then points to the row of the boats and he says, “ You there! Get down here and help with these lines!” It is translated into, “ Kau yang di sana! Turunlah kemari dan bantulah! The phrase “with these lines! “ was deleted and it does not change the meaning of the sentence in SL. This shows that subtitling translation strategy can be influenced by nonverbal sign shown in a film.
3. The second problem specifically on delivering the meaning through non-verbal sign on Titanic film, utilizes theory of multimodal transcription by [\(Forceville, 2007\)](#). In nonverbal sign analysis, it can be done by describing through multimodal transcription which outlining the time, shots, visual frames + kinetic action, and subtitles. There are meticulous parts of the visual image by analyzing some points such as Camera Position, Horizontal and Vertical Perspective, Distance, Visual Collocation, Visual Salient, Coding Orientation, Color, and Visual Focus. In the nonverbal sign, it is found that there is a message of deep sadness with the soundtrack of very melancholic instrumental music (Hymn to the Sea). The message of sadness is also conveyed by the kinetic action, namely the waving ocean moves slowly during the nighttime with dark blue as the background color of the nonverbal sign.
4. There is unsuitability between the meanings delivered to the nonverbal sign shown. It can be seen on the nonverbal signs when someone is smiling and showing the gaze, the meaning delivered is not happiness but the anger or feeling of inconvenience. The anger is obviously shown by the Visual Salient (VS) of the smiling face of a lady and the Distance (D) is Close Shot (CS), which indicates that the viewer can perceive the participants from head to shoulders. Those nonverbal signs confirm that the meaning of inconvenience has been delivered to the viewers. It can be concluded that the meaning is created by the various semiotic modes contained within them.
5. This research shows five examples of delivering the meaning through nonverbal sign in the Titanic film. From the multimodal transcription it can be seen that in the Titanic film the delivered meaning are sadness, the happiness of love, an unforgettable dreadful tragedy, and the power of true love. This message is delivered through visual image and the precise soundtrack for every single shot.
6. There are three types of how the meaning is delivered on the Titanic film. Firstly, the multimodal (image, soundtrack, subtitle, and dialogue) delivers the meaning of the Titanic film simultaneously. Secondly, the multimodal (image, soundtrack, subtitle, and dialogue) delivers the meaning of the Titanic film simultaneously, but it is

against the multimodal. Thirdly, the multimodal (soundtrack and image) can deliver the meaning, as well.

This research was motivated by an academic reason regarding the previous research where there are variety of films and advertisements which are used as data in translation studies. The previous research emphasized to the subtitling strategy only or multimodal approach only as the key in the research. In order to enhance and develop the translation study and multimodal approach, it can be suggested as follows:

1. This research is not perfect yet, especially in describing multimodal transcription, hence it is suggested for the next researchers to be able to display the transcription in more detailed elaboration.
2. It is suggested to use a variety of film types in order to enhance the insight of the researcher in doing the translation studies.

REFERENCES

- Cintas, Jorge Diaz and Remael, A. (2021). *Subtitling Concepts and Practices*. New York: Routledge.
- Cintas, J. D. (2008). *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Thousand Oaks. CA: SAGE Publications.
- Forceville, C. J. (2007). *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis: A Multimedia Toolkit and Coursebook: Anthony Baldry, Paul J. Thibault, Equinox, London/Oakville*.
- Gottlieb, H. (2005). *Multidimensional Translation. Semantics Turned Semiotics. EU-High-Level Scientific Conference Series*.
- Incalcaterra McLaughlin, Laura, Biscio Marie, Ní Mhainnín, Á. M. (2011). *Audiovisual Translation Subtitles and Subtitling, Theory and Practice*. British: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers.
- Taylor, C. J. (2003). Multimodal transcription in the analysis, translation and subtitling of Italian films. *The Translator*, 9(2), 191–205.
- Webster, A. M. (1988). *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. Merriam – Webster Inc.
- Yoga Pratama, A. D. (2016). Taboo Words and Their Translation in Subtitling: a Case Study in “the Help.” *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, 2(Oktober), 350–363.
- Yoga Pratama, A. D. (2018). Deletion in Movie Subtitling. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, 4(1), 86–90.