

Pragmatic Function Shifts in the Translation of WH Questions in “500 Days of Summer”

Muhammad Afrizal Lutfi Prahara

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

luthfiprahara@student.uns.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received July 23, 2021

Revised December 29, 2021

Accepted December 30, 2021

Available online December 31, 2021

Keywords:

Interrogative utterances; illocutionary force;

500 Days of Summer



*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.
Copyright © 2023 by Author. Published by Universitas Sebelas Maret.*

ABSTRACT

1. The research attempts to analyze the translation of interrogative utterances in a film entitled "500 Days of Summer", focusing on WH questions. The research is focused on investigating the translation of WH questions because WH questions not only contain information at the surface structure, but also pragmatic functions within them. This study is carried out in order to help understand interrogative sentences better. This research is conducted under the framework of Translation Studies using a descriptive qualitative method. The analysis applies concept of pragmatic function, Nida & Taber's translation theory, Newmark's translation theory, Mona Baker's translation strategy theory, Marcella Frank's interrogative sentences theory and Nababan, Nuraeni & Sumardiono's translation quality assessment theory.

The scope of this research is a translational analysis of a film subtitle.

This research focuses on the translation of interrogative utterances in the form of WH questions in the film "500 Days of Summer" in the

characters' dialogues. This research intends to investigate the pragmatic functions of the WH questions in the target language, as well as the pragmatic differences that may exist between the source and target languages, as well as the translation techniques applied by the translator and their impact on translation quality.

1. INTRODUCTION

500 Days of Summer is a romance comedy drama movie released in 2009 and is directed by Marc Webb. The movie is about a person named Tom who is played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt. He is a greeting-card writer and a hopeless romantic, Tom feels so depressed when his girlfriend, Summer, played by Zooey Deschanel, suddenly breaks him up. He reflects on their 500 day relationship to try to figure out what goes wrong and why their love affair comes to a bad ending. In doing so, Tom rediscovers his true passions in life. This research attempts to analyze the translation of the dialogues in the movie and the shifts of discourse goals that may occur in the translation of the dialogues.

Translating is an activity of transferring thorough message within linguistic units including the discourse goals of the utterances from one language to another language (source language to target language), not merely looking for the equivalent forms word for word. In the case of conversation, the purpose of translation is to convey the original message and the discourse goals of utterances, transferring the two through linguistic and cultural differences between source and target languages. Translating utterances is not easy because there are a lot of grammatical forms that can be used to convey message or information from source language into target language. Translators need to understand several types of utterances used in languages, which are distinguished into four kinds according to their usage, declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative utterances (Verspoor & Sauter, 2000). According to numerous experts in Linguistics and Translation, translation is characterized in different ways. Nida and Taber (1974: 12) stated that "translation is the process of reproducing the target language's closest natural equivalent from the source language message or information, firstly in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style". Newmark (1988) stated that "translation is an activity consisting of an attempt to replace a written message and/or information in one language by the same message and/or information in another

language”. Meanwhile, translation according to Catford (1995) “the replacement of textual material in one language (Source Language) by equivalent textual material in another language (Target Language)”.

From the accounts about translation, it can be understood that translation is a process of transferring message and/or information from one language (source language) into another (target language). The message and/or information ought to be the same and thus, when utterances are translated, their pragmatic functions need to be equivalent. Pragmatic function has to be maintained in the target language although translation problems are encountered by translator and the problems can affect the result

This research employs the translation quality assessment theory proposed by Nababan, Nuraeni, and Sumardiono (2012) in order to assess the translation quality of the WH questions spoken in the movie. Nababan (2008: 85-92) stated that the purpose of assessment is to analyze the strength and weakness point of a translation product. There are three criteria that are used for the translation quality assessment, which criteria are: accuracy, acceptability and readability (Nababan, 2003). Nababan in his journal (2012: 39-57) stated that every aspect of the quality assessment has its own scale of grade.

Table 1. Score for Assessing Translation Quality

No	Graded Quality Aspect	Score
1.	Accuracy	3
2.	Acceptability	2
3.	Readability	1

Source : Nababan, Nuraeni, and Sumardiono (2012)

Because the basic concept of translation is a process of message or information transfer, accuracy has the highest score in the quality assessment aspect. Then Acceptability has a score of two in the quality aspect, because acceptability is related to language culture and norms, and because acceptability can influence accuracy, if the translation product is less acceptable in the target language, the translation will be less accurate as well. Readability has the lowest score on the table, because the translation problem is not related to whether the text is easily understandable or not for the target reader, because the target reader did not have access to the source text and only expect that the target text needs to be more readable for them. From the statements above it can be pointed out that translation quality assessment needs to be done to make sure that the translation is accurate, acceptable and readable in the target language.

1.1. Accuracy in Translation

Accuracy does not imply copying the text word for word, but rather conveying the intended information from the source language into the target language as much as possible. Larson (1998:3) stated that the accuracy of a translation consisted of analyzing the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation and the cultural context of the source language text in order to determine the meaning of the text in source language and then reconstructing the same meaning of the text using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the target language and its cultural context thus making the translation product accurate.

1.2. Acceptability in Translation

Acceptability according to Nababan (2012) is how a translated text is correctly reflecting the target culture, norm and linguistic rules. It means that translation must abide to the target language's culture, norms, and linguistic rules in order to be accepted by the target readers.

1.3. Readability in Translation

According to Dubay (2004) readability is a way to find the best translation methods and techniques to fit with the source text, so the text can be easily understood by the target readers. Nababan (2012) also stated that, in written translation, readability shows how much a text can be easily understood by the target readers in the target language. After we can conclude the translation quality, we can see the pragmatic functions of the sentences translated, and the pragmatic shifts that may occurs in the translation result.

According to Yule (2012), people do not communicate by means of well-structured utternces without any intention or purpose. When people form an utterance, they have some kind of function in their mind. Adopting the concept in Elshamy (2016), the function is labelled pragmatic function and refers to the intended function of the WH questions the speakers use, investigated under the framework of speech act theory.

2. METHOD

This research employs descriptive qualitative method. By using qualitative method, the research is empirical and the data results are in non-numerical form. This is in line with the statement stated by Creswell (2002) “Quantitative research is a process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the results of a study, while qualitative research is an approach to data collection, analysis, and report writing, then it means that qualitative approaches are different from the traditional, quantitative approaches”. The data in this research are WH questions found in the movie entitled “500 Days of Summer and the information about the translation quality.

This research uses three forms of data, The first type of data of this research is in the form of WH questions found in the subtitle of the movie entitled “500 Days of Summer” the second type of data consists of the translation of the WH questions in the movie and the third type of data covers statement about the translation quality obtained from the informants and the researcher. The data of this research were obtained from two sources of data, consisting of the movie entitled “500 Days of Summer” and informants who are the evaluators in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Sampling technique is a technique used to decide the source of data. This research uses purposive sampling technique. The movie entitled “500 Days of Summer” and the informants are chosen in a purposive way to be the source of data. The movie “500 Days of Summer” is chosen because it has a lot of speech styles used in the dialogue and the narrative of the movie, and it contains many sentences especially WH questions which are studied in this research.

The data in this research are analyzed by using the data analysis model proposed by Spradley (1980). This model of data analysis consists of four steps to analyze the data, which are: domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and cultural-theme analysis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

3.1.1. Types of pragmatic functions identified in the film

WH questions not only function as a way to deliver questions, but WH questions also function in many different ways. The pragmatic functions communicated within the WH questions in 500 Days of Summer are shown in the table 2:

Table 2. Pragmatic functions of WH questions

No.	Pragmatic Functions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Seeking information	68	75.6%
2.	Seeking Clarification	10	11.1%
3.	Expressing disapproval/ disagreement	3	3.4 %
4.	Seeking advice	2	2.2%
5.	Advising	2	2.2%
6.	Maintaining/initiating conversation	2	2.2%
7.	Expressing irritation, or exasperation	2	2.2%
8.	Seeking confirmation	1	1.2%
	TOTAL	90	100%

Table 2 shows that most of the 90 data have the function of seeking information (65 data/72.2%). The second most frequent pragmatic function is seeking clarification (10 data/11.1%), and the other pragmatic functions are expressing disapproval/disagreement (3 data/5.4%), seeking advice (2 data/2.2%), advising (2 data/2.2%), maintaining/initiating conversation (2 data/2.2%), expressing irritation/exasperation (2 data/2.2%), and seeking confirmation (1 data, 1.1%).

3.1.2. Techniques Used by the Translator

This section discusses the translation techniques used by the translator to translate the WH questions. Based on the data obtained from the focus group discussion (FGD) with 2 raters, 11 translation techniques are identified. The techniques used by the translator are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Translation techniques used by the translator

No.	Translation Techniques	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Established Equivalent	118	56.5%
2.	Implication	27	13%
3.	Modulation	19	9.1%
4.	Paraphrase	17	8.1%
5.	Variation	11	5.3%
6.	Pure Borrowing	7	3.3%
7.	Transposition	4	1.9%
8.	Explication	2	1%
9.	Reduction	2	1%
10.	Discursive Creation	1	0.4%
11.	Linguistic Compression	1	0.4%
TOTAL		209	100%

The translation techniques used by the translator in translating the utterances was dominated by established equivalent (118 data/56.5%). The second most dominant technique is modulation (19 data/9.1%). The other techniques are paraphrase (17 data/8.1%) variation (11 data/5.3%) pure borrowing (7 data/3.3%) transposition (4 data/1.9%) explication and reduction which have the same number of data (2 data/1%). Lastly, the techniques showing the least frequency of use are discursive creation and linguistic compression (1 datum/0.4% each).

3.1.3 Translation Quality

In analyzing the translation quality in terms of the accuracy and acceptability, the translation quality assessment model proposed by Nababan, Nuraeni and Sumardiono (2012) was applied. The result of the translation quality assessment is presented below.

Table 4. Translation Quality Assessment

No	Category of Translation Quality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Accuracy		
	1. Accurate	87	96.70
	2. Less Accurate	3	3.30
2	3. Inaccurate	0	0
	Acceptability		
	1. Acceptable	89	98.90
	2. Less acceptable	1	1.10
	3. Unacceptable	0	0

1) Accuracy

Accuracy in translation result deals with the equivalence of the translation result between the texts (source language and target language). The accuracy assessments using the Translation Quality Assessment model proposed by Nababan, Nuraeni and Sumardiono (2012) classifies the score into three levels: accurate, less accurate, and inaccurate.

2) Acceptability

Acceptability of the translation result depends on whether the translation result is suitable to the target language or not, the factors that can affect the acceptability of the translation are culture, norms and grammatical structure. In this research, the acceptability assessments use the translation quality assessment model proposed by Nababan, Nuraeni and Sumardiono (2012). Which classifies the level of the score into three levels of score: acceptable, less acceptable, and unacceptable.

3.1.4. Pragmatic function shift in the translation

Translation techniques give impact on the translation result and one of the kinds of impact is shift in the pragmatic function in the translation of WH questions in 500 Days of Summer. There are 3 pragmatic function shifts uncovered as a result of the analysis. The data are shown in the table below.

Table 5. Pragmatic function shift

No	Pragmatic function	Pragmatic shift	
		Yes	No
1	Seeking Information	1	57
2	Seeking Clarification	1	9
3	Expressing disapproval or disagreement	0	3
4	Seeking advice	0	2
5	Advising	0	2
6	Maintaining/initiating conversation	0	2
7	Expressing irritation/exasperation	0	1
8	Seeking confirmation	1	0

One pragmatic function shift is from seeking information to maintaining/initiating conversation. Another shift occurs from seeking clarification to maintaining/initiating conversation and one pragmatic shift is from seeking confirmation to seeking information

The WH questions are classified using the 5W+1H into what (60 data), why (10 data), how (9 data), who (7 data), where (3 data) and when (1 data). Of 90 data, there are 8 types of pragmatic function in the translation of WH questions in 500 Days of Summer. The most frequently used pragmatic function is seeking information (68 data) and the other function covers seeking clarification (10 data), expressing disapproval or disagreement (3 data), seeking advice (2 data), advising (2 data), maintaining/initiating conversation (2 data), expressing irritation or exasperation (1 data), and seeking confirmation (1 datum).

The WH questions are classified using the 5W+1H into what (60 data), why (10 data), how (9 data), who (7 data), where (3 data) and when (1 data). In identifying the translation techniques, the theory of translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002) was applied. There are 11 translation techniques identified. The most frequently used translation technique is established equivalent (118 data/ 56.5%), the second most frequently used translation technique is implicit (27 data/ 13%), followed by modulation (19 data/ 9.1%), paraphrase (17 data/ 8.1%), variation (11 data/ 5.3%), pure borrowing (7 data/ 3.3%), transposition (4 data/ 1.9%), explicit (2 data/ 1%), reduction (2 data/ 1%), discursive creation (1 data/ 0.4%), linguistic compression (1 data/ 0.4%). Translation techniques give impact on the translation quality in terms of accuracy and acceptability on the target language. Based on the result, paraphrase, reduction and discursive creation give a negative impact to the accuracy and acceptability of the translation result and established equivalent gives the biggest positive impact on the accuracy, and acceptability of the translation. It is because established equivalent transforms the original expression using natural equivalent expressions in the target language, making the translation result convey the same meaning as that of the original. This leads to accurate and acceptable translation because of the choice of words that are familiar and commonly used in the target language, Other techniques that gives a positive impacts on the translation accuracy and acceptability are modulation and transposition. It is because that the two techniques convey equivalent meaning in the target language from the meaning of the source language by using more common and familiar linguistic forms used in the target language, thus making the translation accurate and acceptable.

Explication and linguistic compression also give positive impact on the translation result as both do not cause distortion in meaning. Explication adds details that are not provided in the source text without altering the message conveyed, thus making the message conveyed accurate and acceptable in the target language. Meanwhile, linguistic compression integrates linguistic elements within utterances, making the translation simpler, thus producing high quality translation in terms of accuracy and acceptability.

Pure borrowing gives a negative impact on the acceptability of the translation. The quality is negatively affected because terms from the original text is used in the translation. One of the examples is the use of the term "Norway", which is a name of a European country. The name has an equivalent word in the target language, which is "Norwegia". The use of pure borrowing by using the name "Norway" in the target language language expression makes the expression less acceptable.

The techniques that give negative impacts towards the translation result in terms of accuracy and acceptability are reduction and discursive creation. It is because reduction technique compresses the information translated into the target language, making the message not wholly conveyed, giving impact on the accuracy of the translation. Discursive creation also gives negative impact on the quality of the translation because it conveys a different meaning from the meaning of the original expression. One of the examples is the translation of “What is that, then into *“Lalu, bagaimana?”*” using discursive creation, making the translation conveys different meaning and thus, the translation result is less accurate.

3.2 Discussion

Overall, the translation techniques give positive impact on the translation quality in terms of accuracy and acceptability. In terms of accuracy, there are 87 data (96.70%) are accurate and 3 data (3.30%) are less accurate. In terms of acceptability, 89 data (98.90%) are acceptable and 1 datum (1.10%) is less acceptable.

The score of the translation accuracy is 2.97, which indicates that the translation of WH questions in the movie entitled *“500 Days of Summer”* has high level of accuracy. The average score of the translation result acceptability is 2.98 which indicates that the WH questions in the movie entitled *“500 Days of Summer”* have been translated into common and familiar words in the target language.

There are three pragmatic function shifts identified from the research, those pragmatic shifts are seeking clarification into maintaining/initiating conversation (1 data), seeking confirmation into seeking information (1 data), seeking information into maintaining/initiating conversation (1 data).

The first pragmatic function shift which is identified is the shift from seeking confirmation into seeking information. The original question is “What are we looking for again?” and the translator translates the sentence into *“Kita mencari apa?”*. Tom and Summer go shopping at Ikea, a Swedish furniture store, and they are looking for a trivet. In the source language, the word “again” indicates that the pragmatic function of the expression is seeking confirmation about what they are looking for. Meanwhile in the target language, no part in the translation shows that the speaker in the conversation is seeking for confirmation, thus shifting the pragmatic function into seeking information about the purpose of their going to Ikea.

The second shift is the shift from seeking clarification in the source language into maintaining/initiating conversation in the target language. The question in the source language is “What is that, then?” which has the pragmatic function of seeking for clarification. The question is translated into *“Lalu, bagaimana?”* which shows that the speaker is asking for the other persons to continue their sentence, making the pragmatic function shift from seeking clarification into maintaining/initiating conversation. The technique used in translating the question is discursive creation. This shows that the discursive creation gives a negative impact on the translation quality in terms of accuracy since the message in the form of pragmatic function changes.

The third shift found is the one from seeking information into maintaining/initiating conversation in the target language. The expression in the source language is “What else do you have?”, which indicates that the pragmatic function is seeking information. The translator translates the original expression into *“Lalu, apa lagi?”*, shifting the pragmatic function into maintaining/initiating conversation. It is because that the is asking for the listeners to continue their explanation, thus making the pragmatic function classified into maintaining/initiating conversation.

Translation is not an easy task for translator because the translator needs to make sure that the message is conveyed correctly from the source language into target language in terms of accuracy and acceptability without altering any message and using familiar or common words in the target language in order to make the translation result acceptable. Finally, the translator has been successfully translated the WH questions found in the movie entitled *“500 Days of Summer”* with high accuracy and acceptability.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There are 11 translation techniques used by the translator found in this research. These translation techniques are established equivalence (118 data), modulation (19 data), paraphrase (17 data), variation (11 data), pure borrowing (7 data), transposition (4 data), explicit (2 data), reduction (2 data), discursive creation (1 data), and linguistic compression (1 data).

4.1 Pragmatic Functions Shifts in the Translation of WH Questions

The translation techniques used by the translator give impacts on the translation quality in terms of accuracy and acceptability. In terms of accuracy, there are 87 data (96.70%) of accurate translation, 3 data (3.30%) of less accurate translation. In terms of acceptability, there are 89 data (98.90%) of acceptable translation and 1 datum (1.10%) of less acceptable translation. The average score of the translation result accuracy is 2.97 and the translation acceptability is 2.98 which indicate that the translation has high quality.

The pragmatic function of the WH questions in this research are classified into 8 types, such types are seeking information, seeking clarification, seeking confirmation, expressing disapproval/disagreement, seeking advice, advising, maintaining/initiating conversation and expressing irritation/exasperation. The pragmatic function in this research is mostly dominated with seeking information (58 data), followed by seeking clarification (10 data), expressing disapproval/disagreement (3 data), seeking advice (2 data), advising (2 data), maintaining/initiating conversation (2 data), expressing irritation/exasperation (1 data), and seeking confirmation (1 data).

There are 3 pragmatic shifts found in the research, which are 1 pragmatic shift of seeking information into maintaining/initiating conversation, 1 pragmatic shift of seeking clarification into maintaining/initiating conversation and 1 pragmatic shift of seeking confirmation into seeking information.

REFERENCES

- Catford, J. (1995) *A linguistic theory of translation*. Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Dubay, W. H. (2004). *The principles of readability*. Impact Information.
- Elshamy, H. M. (2016). An analysis of the pragmatic functions of idiomatic Expressions in the Egyptian novel 'Taxi'. *The American University in Cairo: Thesis*.
- Frank, M. (1972). *Modern English: A Practical Reference Guide*.
- Larson, M. L. (1998). *Meaning Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence*. University Press of America.
- Molina, L., & Albir A. H. (2002). Translation techniques revisited: A dynamic and functionalist approach. *Meta: Journal des Traducteurs/Meta: Translator's Journal*, XLVII (4), 498-512
- Nababan, M. R. (2003). *Teori Menerjemah bahasa inggris*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Nababan, M. R. (2008). *Teori Penerjemahan Bahasa Inggris*. Pustaka Belajar.
- Nababan, M. R., Nuraeni, & Sumardiono. (2012). *Pengembangan model penilaian kualitas terjemahan. kajian linguistik dan sastra*, 24 (1), 39-New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation*: Prentice Hall.
- Nida, E.A. and Charles. R Taber (1974). *The theory and practice of translation*.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College.
- Verspoor, M., & Sauter, K. (2000). *English sentence analysis an introductory course*. J. Benjamins.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: University Press.
-
-