

An Analysis of Reduction Technique Applied on the Interrogative Sentences and Its Impact on the Translation Quality in the Movie Subtitle of National Treasure 2: Book of Secret

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ABSTRACT

This research is conducted to analyze the use of reduction technique on interrogative sentences in the movie subtitle of National Treasure 2: Book of Secret. The objectives of this research are (1) to find out the types of reduction technique in translating interrogative sentences in the movie subtitle of National Treasure 2: Book of Secret; (2) to find out the accuracy and acceptability of the interrogative sentences that are translated using reduction technique in the movie subtitle of National Treasure 2: Book of Secret as a result of the reduction technique application. This research is a descriptive qualitative research. The data consist of interrogative sentences with reduction technique that are found in the movie subtitle National Treasure 2: Book of Secret and the statement from the informants about the quality of the translation. The sampling techniques are total sampling and a purposive sampling technique. The result of this study shows that there are 62 data (52.54%) accurate, 51 data (43.22%) less accurate, and five data (4.23%) inaccurate. The current study also shows that there are 111 data (94.06%) classified into acceptable translations and seven (5.93%) classified into less acceptable translations.

1. INTRODUCTION

In adjusting the right portion of line and time of subtitles, translators sometimes face problems about the different speed between spoken language and the viewers' reading speed. Therefore, a lot of times reduction is needed in order to conform to "the reading speed of the receivers" (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 20). Transforming spoken to written language is essential because spoken language is commonly filled with redundant speeches, pauses, false starts, etc. Reduction to some extent is able to deal with these common features of spoken language, so as to keep the translation compact. However, reduction technique sometimes results in the inaccuracy if the main information is distorted. Categories that can be easily deleted are filler words, swearing words, repetitions, tag questions, exclamations, incomplete utterances, adverbial expressions, and character names, even though the contexts still need to be considered. By deleting the words included in these categories, the message can still be transferred well as long as the main information is still retained. Oftentimes, translators do not give a lot of considerations to the context and end up reducing words that are insignificant or not suitable to the readers' preferences, putting the accuracy at stake.

A study about reduction technique has been conducted by Chasanah (2012) in her thesis that examines omissions in the translation of the movie Step Up II. Chasanah focuses on the impact of omission on the accuracy and acceptability of the subtitle. Aiming to fill in the gap on the reduction technique studies, the current study aims to identify the types of reduction techniques that are applied on the interrogative sentences in the movie subtitle of National Treasure 2: Book of Secret. Besides, this study also assesses the accuracy and acceptability of the translations as a result of the application of reduction technique.

The objectives of the current study are to identify the types of reduction technique that are applied on interrogative sentences, and to find out the impact of these techniques to the translation quality, especially in terms of accuracy and acceptability. It is expected that this study can be a reference for translators to produce better subtitles, particularly when dealing with the limitations of time and space, filler words, or multi-language

dialogues. Besides, it is also expected that this study inspires further research to assess translation quality on different contexts.

2. METHOD

Descriptive qualitative method is applied in the current study since the analyzed phenomena are multiple, constructed, holistic, and context-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 2003). The data were taken from the movie subtitle of National Treasure 2: Book of Secret and its translation in bahasa Indonesia. The English subtitle was downloaded from www.subscene.com, which was then verified through the original dialogue from the VCD. The Indonesian subtitle was copied by the researcher from the original VCD. Raters also contribute in this study by assessing the translation quality. The raters are competent in the translation studies practically and theoretically. They are responsible for assessing the quality of the translation. The data in this study are 118 interrogative sentences that are translated using reduction technique according to the theory by Gottlieb (1998). These data are chosen to meet the purpose of the research based on certain criteria using purposive sampling (Patton, 1980; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Besides, the data also include the result of data collection from the raters based on the translation quality assessment model proposed by Nababan, Nuraeni, and Sumardiono (2012). The data were collected using two methods: content analysis (Spradely, 2006) and questionnaire distribution.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

There are three types of reduction techniques in the data: condensation, decimation, and deletion. Condensation technique shortens interrogative sentences by condensing some of the conveyed information. Decimation technique decimates the entities employed in the interrogative sentences. Meanwhile, deletion technique simply reduces the elements included in the interrogative sentences.

Seventy data in this research use condensation technique. The technique is applied, among other, in the source text “What do you mean by ‘a key’?” that is translated into “*Yang dimaksud ‘kunci’?*” The translator does not translate the question word and the subject. However, the question mark at the end of the sentence in the TT leads the viewers to understand that the person is indeed questioning something, in this case, a key, which is also the main message of the dialogue. The deletion of the subject “you” does not cause any problem because the person being referred to is clearly represented visually in the film. By deleting it, the focus of the audience is still directed to the character Gates as the person being asked. Thus, the reduction of some parts in the interrogative sentence does not interrupt the message in the dialogue since the information is still retained.

Similarly, the ST “What if he isn’t innocent?” is translated into “*Jika dia bersalah?*” Even though the question word “what” is deleted, the main information is not affected in the TT because the question mark is still there, indicating an interrogative sentence.

Furthermore, there are 34 data that use decimation technique. One of the examples of the application of decimation technique is the ST “How stupid was that?/ Did have stitching,” which is translated into “*Bodoh./ Memang ada jahitan rahasia.*” The dialogue in the ST is categorized as an exclamatory question, whose function is to seek agreement with the speaker’s assumption or belief. “How stupid was that” should be translated into “*Betapa bodohnya saat itu.*” However, the translation in the TT is extremely shortened into “*Bodoh*” that is equivalent to “stupid.” The original message of the ST refers to the foolishness done in the past. However, in the TT, the utterance gives an impression that the speaker is yelling at the hearer and calling him stupid. Likewise, the ST “Where are we to find them?” is extremely severed in the TT “*Di mana?*”, leaving the message not perfectly persevered in the target language. The original message of the source language is a question asking where the Wilkinson’s teammate will find the expert of ancient pre-Columbian graph, while in the TT, the information is distorted into asking about place. The information about “who will find”, “where to find”, and “who/what they will find” is completely left out. Therefore, the intended message from the ST is not delivered.

Another example is the TT “Going to arrest a man for that?” that is translated into “*Mau menangkap orang itu?*” The example can be categorized into incorporating the application of decimation technique since “for that” in the ST refers to being drunk, while “Going to arrest a man for that” means “*mau menangkap orang karena tindakannya (mabuk)*”. The message of the ST has changed in the target language as the main information is not delivered properly, thus the use of the technique leads to different meaning. This translation is less accurate because the ST message is not completely transferred into the TT.

Subsequently, 11 data are identified as using deletion technique. One of the examples is the ST “So the author’s here signing copies?” which is translated into the target language as “*Akan ditandatangani pengarangnya?*” The omission of the word “so” can be classified into deletion since it is a conjunction and not a verbal content. By deleting it, the message in the ST can still be transferred well without losing its main information. Similarly, the ST “And where are those desks now?” is translated into “*Di mana meja-meja itu kini?*” The deletion of the word

“and” does not affect the main information in the TT. By deleting it, the main message can still be conveyed even though it affects the semantic and stylistic features. Also, the ST “Oh, this doesn’t involve another treasure hunt, does it?” is translated into “*Ini tak terkait perburuan harta karun lain, bukan?*” The word “oh” can be categorized as a filler word that does not have any significant contribution to the main information conveyed in the utterance. The word “oh” is also familiar in target text, so without being translated, the audience can already understand the dialogue clearly.

In terms of the translation quality, especially accuracy, there are 62 accurate translation of ST questions, 51 less accurate, and five data inaccurate. The example of accurate translation is the ST “Do you know what that is?” that is translated into “*Tahu apa ini?*” The reduction of the utterance in the TT does not interrupt the original message communicated by the speaker. In fact, it makes the message in the TT clearer and more effective with the simple translation. The message is delivered correctly and fits the context. All three raters give the score 3, which means the translation is accurate. Another example is the ST “You see? One syllable, a knife in the heart” that is translated into “*Lihat? Sepatah kata, terasa menyakitkan.*” The deletion of “you” does not affect the meaning because in the movie scene we can see that “you” refers to Ben, a person to whom Patrick speaks to. No important element is deleted or disregarded, and the original message is still delivered well. In this example, the reduction technique that is chosen by the translator is decimation technique since “you” in “you see?” does not contain any vital information.

The 51 less-accurate translation data include the ST “Wanna know what taxes are on five million dollars?” This ST is translated into “*Tahu berapa pajaknya dari \$5 juta dolar?*” In ST, the speaker is asking about the taxes, where he already knows the amount of the taxes. By using the word “wanna” that is equivalent to the word “*ingin*” in the TT, the speaker intends to bring out the hearer’s curiosity about the amount of the taxes. Meanwhile, in the target language, the utterance seems to show that the speaker is plainly asking without any prior knowledge about the cost. Thus, the ST message does not get transferred completely into the TT, and the intended meaning cannot be expressed well. The three raters subsequently give the score 2 that means less accurate. Similarly, the ST “Did you learn that from my book?” is translated into “*Tahu dari buku?*” The deletion of the word “you” does not disturb the message transfer since the audiovisual image already indicates that “you” refers to the character Patrick Gates. However and by deleting the word “my”, the translation becomes less accurate because the information about the kind of book, or in this case the owner of the book, is not clear; while in the ST, it is clear that the book that is being referred to is owned by the character named Riley.

Among the five inaccurate translation data is the ST “You see that? Burned out right there” that is translated into “*Terbakar di situ, mungkin.*” The interrogative sentence “You see that?” is completely omitted in the TT. This deletion makes the translation become inaccurate since that sentence is important in the scene for indicating the way the speaker shows the lost part of Booth’s diary. The reduction technique that is applied in the example is decimation: the deletion disregards the main information so that the message is totally not conveyed, leaving the quality to be inaccurate. Likewise, the ST “A few minutes? Really?” is translated into “*Hanya beberapa menit?*” The word “really” has an essential role in constructing the meaning in the ST. It indicates that the speaker is not sure that someone, according to the context, can have a few minutes with the President. For him, it is impossible to even meet the President due to the security level around him. However, in the TT, the word “really” gets deleted, leaving the message not conveyed. This, instead, turns into some kind of a confirmation question in the target language.

In terms of the acceptability, a translation is considered acceptable if it sounds natural and acceptable culturally, grammatically, and contextually in the target language. There are 111 data classified into acceptable translation. An example is the ST “Oh, you think this is a treasure map for Cobola, don’t you?” that is translated into “*Menurutmu ini peta harta karun ke Cibola?*” The deletion of the filler word “oh” and question tag “don’t you” does not affect the acceptability because the application of the technique still maintains the naturalness of the target language question in the subtitle. Similarly, the ST “Any report regarding what’s on page 47?” that is translated into “*Ada kabar soal halaman 47?*” The literal translation of “any report regarding what's on page 47?” should be “*Ada kabar soal apa yang ada di halaman 47?*” Instead of translating the question literally, the translator applies condensation technique by deleting the question word and changes the prepositional phrase “on page 47” into a noun phrase “*halaman 47.*” This makes the translation sound more natural in the TT and fit the context better.

A translation is considered to be less acceptable when most of the translation sounds natural, but there is still a grammatical mistake or the term is not commonly used in the target language. Among the seven less-acceptable translation data is the ST “Are we allowed to do that? which is translated into the TT “*Dibolehkah itu?*” The translation is considered less acceptable since the information on “who’s gonna trace the tunnel” and “what they will do” are not provided. The only information we can get is only “allowed.” To become more acceptable, the translation should be “*Apakah kita diijinkan untuk itu.*” This translation is more appropriate grammatically and contextually, and under the character limit. Similarly, the ST “How fast can we get to Buckingham Palace?” is translated into “*Berapa cepat ke Istana Buckingham?*” The reduction technique in the translation makes it less

acceptable since it sounds unnatural. It is better if the text is translated into “*Seberapa cepat ke Buckingham Palace?*”.

3.2. Discussion

According to Schwarz (2002), the three types of reduction technique (i.e. condensation, decimation, and deletion) can be combined in an application. However, in the current study, one technique is applied only on one source text. The most dominant technique is condensation, with the number of 70 data; which is followed by 34 data of decimation technique; and 14 data of deletion technique. Condensation is mostly applied possibly because it can reduce phrases or delete some parts of a dialogue without distorting the main information. The translation also sounds natural and acceptable in the target language culture so that the message is easily understood by the target readers.

Furthermore, decimation technique is used to cope with a large volume of speech due to the fast pace of speech. This strategy is characterized by abridged expressions and reduced content. Long speeches are made fit in the subtitle bar so as to minimize the distraction tendency during the reading process. As a consequence, however, the omissions of the ST may result in a loss of both semantic and stylistic contents. Meanwhile, although deletion affects the semantic or stylistic contents, it is applied on repetitions, filler words, conjunctions, etc. Deletion does not affect the message of the ST and the viewers still understand the information and do not miss anything important even though some parts are gone.

These applications of reduction technique surely have impact on the translation quality. In terms of the accuracy, five inaccurate translations employ decimation and deletion technique. The inaccuracy caused by the application of deletion suggests that deletion is incorrectly used as Schwarz (2002) asserted that the technique is “mainly used to deal with non-verbal content”. This study reveals, however, the use of deletion to omit an entire utterance. Meanwhile, decimation and deletion techniques omit words that are not substantial to the main message, resulting in accurate translations. In terms of the acceptability, it is safe to say that most interrogative sentences that are translated using reduction technique are acceptable. The translations that are less acceptable use decimation and condensation technique. This occurs as a result of the use of improper techniques in translating the data.

The current study and existing ones find out similar result in terms of translation quality of the data that use reduction technique. This research and Chasanah’s study show that the application of reduction technique affects the translation quality in terms of accuracy and acceptability. Reductions by the translator are believed to be the strategy to overcome the differences between ST and TT in terms of grammatical, cultural, and semantic factors. The reduction technique is applied while considering the presence of audiovisual images and the interrelated dialogues to prevent the messages from distorting and ensure that they convey the equivalent expression in the TT. Therefore, the translation is appropriate and fulfils the criteria of the accurate and acceptable translation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the application of deletion techniques in translating interrogative sentences in the movie subtitle of National Treasure 2: Book of Secret. The types include: condensation (70 data or 59.32%), decimation (34 data or 28.81%), and deletion (14 data or 11.86%). The most dominant reduction technique is condensation technique. This technique reduces phrases or delete some parts of a dialogue without distorting the main information.

In this study, there are 62 accurate translation data, 51 data less-accurate and 5 data inaccurate. The inaccurate translation data use decimation and deletion techniques. Both of these techniques trigger the translations to be inaccurate because: First, decimation technique deletes words or sentences in order to make the subtitle fit in the bar. This technique has a high tendency to omit the main information, which then distorts the original message. Second, deletion technique deletes words or sentences that do not support the main information (ex: repetitions, filler words, swearing words, exclamations, conjunctions, incomplete utterances, adverbial expressions, character names, and tag questions). Even though this technique only deletes linguistic entities that do not support the main information, it fails to completely transfer the actual message, which makes the source message diverge.

In this research, there are 111 acceptable translation data and seven less-acceptable translation data. Inappropriate choice of translation techniques drives the translation to be unnatural. In one of the data, for example, the translator translates “Doesn’t think I can what?” into “*Aku tak bisa apa?*” The translation does not sound natural in the target text. It is better if the sentence is translated into “*Apa yang aku tak bisa?*”

It is important to be careful in analyzing data involving reduction techniques on interrogative sentences. Hopefully, this research is able to provide insights and inspirations for other researchers that are interested in the application of reduction technique. Furthermore, these researchers can use this study as a reference in future works such as research about the domination of reduction technique when facing the problems of limited character, research about the application of reduction technique in Black movie’s movie subtitle, research about the application of reduction techniques in dealing with swearing words in children’s movie subtitle, etc.

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