

ACCURACY OF ENGLISH SUBTITLE TRANSLATIONS OF SELECTED FILIPINO MOVIES

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Abstract. With the technological evolution, language educators are faced with the dilemma of how to integrate multimedia tools in the language classroom in order to engage students who are digital natives. One of the tools frequently used in English language teaching is movies or films since it has been proven to be an effective platform in language learning, particularly in enhancing the vocabulary of language learners. This study then zeroed in on the accuracy level of English-subtitled Filipino films and the strategies used in the translation. This is to ensure that the materials used in language teaching, specifically in vocabulary development, are precise and reliable. The study employed a qualitative-quantitative research design. Exclusion-inclusion criteria were developed in selecting the movies to be included in the study. A movie reviewer, a renowned translator, and an English language teacher were asked to rate the English translations of selected hugot lines from selected Filipino movies. Gottlieb's translation typology was used in analyzing the translation strategies used in the selected movies. The findings show that the English subtitles are accurate. Also, using Gottlieb's typology, the translation strategies used were: Transfer, Condensation, Paraphrase, Imitation and Resignation. This suggests that movies can be used as a tool in vocabulary building.

Keywords: *translation strategies, multimedia in language class, hugot lines, vocabulary building*

Introduction

Language teaching and learning are two intertwined human aspects that are both social and linguistic. In this digital age, especially in the education sector, educators must keep up with the pace to make the language teaching-learning process more authentic and meaningful, as advancements in the field of multimedia have had a significant impact on the practices used in language teaching (Zhu, 2010). Teachers must use technology such as audios and videos to motivate students especially that language curriculum at present includes not only content but also the use of various modes and media of teaching (Britsch, 2010). There is, however, a challenge in reconciling learners' interests in technology and multimedia, as well as meeting the expected outcome of the language teaching-learning process (Engin, 2014). Technology and multimedia tools such as audios and videos are also popular in language classrooms because these are proven to improve students' academic performance (McClanahan, 2014; Wang, 2012). Technology has become an essential component of the "global educational system" (Saqlain and Mahmood, 2013) because its use has been shown to improve second language learning (Andriani and Angelina, 2020; Engin, 2014; Ina, 2014; Pellerin, 2014; Wei et al., 2014).

According to Kabooha (2016) and Sabouri et al. (2015), one of the innovations in language teaching is the use of movies, which is thought to motivate students and alleviate anxiety in non-native learners. This could be because movies use visual images that stimulate students' perception, resulting in a better sensory experience for learners (Ismaili, 2013), which contributes to improved retention (Yaseen and Shakir, 2015).

According to Kabooha (2016) study on the use of films in EFL classrooms, both learners and educators have a positive attitude toward the use of movies, and well-selected movie materials encourage language learning among students. The students also thought that the movie materials were helpful in expanding their lexicon repertoire because these provided them with a wealth of information on vocabulary, phrases, and colloquial expressions. According to Andriani and Angelina (2020), English subtitled movies have a positive impact on students because these motivate and encourage them to learn the English language. The student respondents stated that they benefited more from English subtitled movies that could help them learn English. Students suggested that lecturers show more English-subtitled movies in class, particularly for students in the first through third semesters, because it could help them learn new vocabulary.

As evidenced by the plethora of studies that investigated the effect of using such in language classes, the advent of movies with subtitles prompts language educators to use these types in their classes. Sirmandi and Sardareh (2016) discovered that those in the bimodal subtitling group performed significantly better and acquired more new words in their study on the effect of subtitled and non-subtitled BBC World Clips on the development of the lexical level of intermediate learners. Aside from vocabulary, movies with subtitles have been found to be an effective teaching tool for improving students' reading comprehension and writing proficiency (Fernandez, 2013). English subtitles have begun to appear in Filipino films. As the use of hugot lines becomes more popular in the Philippines, these have also become an important part of most Filipino films. Hugot is a Filipino term that means "to draw or "pull out," which explains its meaning: words with potentially and personally deep sentimental or emotional undertones, simply because emotions come from "deep within" and must be "pulled-out" or drawn from one's heart.

Teachers are encouraged to use trendy items to their advantage, such as incorporating these into their language classrooms as innovative and practical teaching tools and methods in order to engage students' participation (Rafiee et al., 2010; Kong, 2009). The current popularity of Filipino movies with subtitles can thus be used by language educators to help students improve their arsenal of English words. However, there is a scarcity of research on the accuracy of English subtitles in Filipino films, particularly in the study conducted by Inoue and Molina (2011), which revealed that there are culturally specific expressions that lose their cultural meaning when translated into another language. This is due to linguistic differences, which result in variations in meaning and concepts. According to Daghoughi and Hashemian (2016), the complexities of transferring meaning and concepts from one language to another stem from differences in the languages' culture-specific items. Several studies conducted relative to translation strategies made use of Henrik Gottlieb's Typology. Some of these studies include the works of Hosseinnia (2014) which focused on the translation strategies used in subtitling cartoons for children; Bak and Gwordz (2016) which looked into the application of Gottlieb's typology to an episode of an American television series; and Ghaemi and Benyamin (2010) which dealt on the strategies used in translation of interlingual subtitling. Hosseinnia (2014), Taylor (2000), and Ghaemi and Benyamin (2010) enumerated Gottlieb's typology of subtitling strategies as: a) expansion; b) paraphrase; c) transfer; d) imitation; e) transcription; f) dislocation; g) condensation; h) decimation; i) deletion; and j) resignation. Further, Taylor (2000) provided a discussion of Gottlieb's typology as follows:

“expansion is used when the original requires an explanation because of some cultural nuance not retrievable in the target language; paraphrase is resorted to in cases where the phraseology of the original cannot be reconstructed in the same syntactic way in the target language; transfer refers to the strategy of translating the source text completely and correctly; imitation maintains the same forms, typically with names of people and places; transcription is used in those cases where a term is unusual even in the source text, for example the use of a third language or nonsense language; dislocation is adopted when the original employs some sort of special effect, for example a silly song in a cartoon film, where the translation of the effect is more important than the content; condensation would seem to be the typical strategy used, that is the shortening of the text in the least obtrusive way possible, but as we shall see later, this is not necessarily the case; decimation is an extreme form of condensation where, perhaps for reasons of discourse speed, even potentially important elements are omitted; deletion refers to the total elimination of parts of a text; resignation describes the strategy adopted when no translation solution can be found and meaning is inevitably lost.”

Nababan et al. (2012) proposed three qualities that translation should fulfill-accuracy, acceptability and readability. He further postulated that a translation can be categorized into three level of accuracy-accurate, less accurate and inaccurate. A translation is said to be accurate when “the meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or the source language accurately transferred into the target language absolutely no distortion of meaning”; if most of the “meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences the source language has been transferred accurately into the target language but some meaning eliminated, which interfere with the integrity of the message” it is considered as less accurate. Lastly, if “the meaning of the word, a technical term of phrase, clause, sentence or source language inaccurately transferred into the target language or omitted/deleted” during the translation of text, it is said to be inaccurate. The aforementioned implications of using movies as a strategy in language teaching, and the scarcity of studies on the accuracy of the English translations of the subtitles of Filipino movies motivate the conception of this study. This paper aims to investigate the translation strategies used in the hugot lines taken from selected Filipino movies, and to look into the accuracy of the English translations as provided by the movies’ subtitles. The study therefore sought to find answer to the following questions: (1) what translations strategies were used in the hugot lines taken from selected Filipino movies with subtitles? And (2) what is the accuracy level of the English translation of the hugot lines taken from the selected Filipino movies with subtitles?

The result of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning the strategies used in movie subtitling as well as the effect of translations to meaning. Likewise, the findings of the study will be beneficial to language educators, especially those who are using movies with subtitles as a strategy in language teaching; they will be encouraged to value the significance of the accuracy of subtitles used in movies.

Materials and Methods

Research design

A descriptive qualitative-quantitative research design was used in the study. Pangestu (2016), acknowledged the appropriateness of using the descriptive qualitative design in

translation studies, such as looking at translation errors, procedures observed during the translation process, and so on. In this study, forty hugot lines with their English translations were chosen from Filipino movies with subtitles produced from 2014 to 2017. The researchers used content analysis to identify the translation strategies used in the hugot lines based on Gottlieb's typology as cited by Hosseinnia (2014), Taylor (2000), and Ghaemi and Benyamin (2010). Quantitative analysis was also used in the study to treat the data obtained after identifying the translation strategies in order to determine the most commonly used strategies and, similarly, to determine the accuracy of the English translations of the hugot lines. To meet this requirement, one professional Filipino book translator, one Filipino movie reviewer, and one Filipino professional raised and exposed in an English-speaking environment evaluated the hugot lines and their English translations using the Accuracy level criteria proposed by Nababan et al. (2012).

Subject of the study and data gathering procedure

The main source of data was the hugot lines with their provided English translations taken from selected Filipino movies produced from 2014 to 2017 which were subjected for evaluation to identify the strategies used in the translation, and to determine the accuracy level of the provided English translations.

The researchers looked for Filipino movies with subtitles which were produced from 2014 to 2017. The researchers watched the movies then select forty-five trending hugot lines with their English translations as provided by the movies' subtitles. The selected hugot lines were evaluated by the researchers using the translation strategies proposed by Gottlieb in order to identify the translation strategies used. On the other hand, the evaluators determined the accuracy level of the provided English translations using the accuracy level criteria proposed by Nababan et al. (2012). Prior to the evaluation of the hugot lines, a letter explaining the purpose of the study, and at the same time, requesting the evaluators to take part in the endeavour, was given to the evaluators via e-mail to ensure their voluntary participation.

Analysis of data

In order to identify the strategies used in the translations of the hugot lines, qualitative approach through content analysis was used by the researchers in evaluating the selected hugot lines and their provided English subtitles. Frequency and ranking were employed to find out the most commonly used strategies to the least. To determine the accuracy of the provided translations, a checklist was developed where the evaluators rated the accuracy level of the English translations of the selected hugot lines using the criteria proposed by Nababan et al. (2012). After which, the percentage of accuracy of the English translations as rated by the evaluators was computed.

Results and Discussion

This section presents a discussion on the strategies used and accuracy level of the English translation of selected hugot lines as provided by the subtitles of the Filipino films- That Thing Called Tadhana, Para sa Hopeless Romantic, Beauty and the Bestie Movie, and Last Night. Gottlieb's typology was adopted for the identification of the strategies used while levels of translation accuracy proposed by Nababan et al. (2012)

was employed to gauge the accuracy level of the subtitles/translation as perceived by the selected evaluators.

Translation strategies

The *Table 1* shows that transfer was the most commonly used translation strategy on the selected hugot lines which coincides with the findings of Taylor (2000). Transfer is a translation strategy that is considered to be the best to use when possible as it maintains information structure with regard the theme, cohesion and information focus (Taylor, 2000). The second commonly used translation strategy is condensation which deals with the shortening of the text in a very subtle or unnoticeable way. It implies the process of reduction of SL information in the translation, but without reducing its meaningful content. Further, seven of the forty hugot lines’ translations observed the use of paraphrasing. Basing from the definition given by Gottlieb, this strategy is the opposite of straight transfer whereby the perspectives of the translator affect the translation process. Also, imitation was employed as a translation strategy in the hugot lines. This strategy covers the retaining of names of people and places included in the SL to the translation. Lastly, the least translation strategy used is resignation. This type of translation is observed when the meaning of the SL is totally lost in the translation.

Table 1. The frequency and percentage of the different strategies used in study.

Strategies	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Expansion	-	-	-
Paraphrase	7	17.5%	3
Transfer	19	47.5%	1
Imitation	3	7.5%	4
Transcription	-	-	-
Dislocation	-	-	-
Condensation	9	22.5%	2
Deletion	-	-	-
Decimation	-	-	-
Resignation	2	5%	5
Total	40	100	-

Accuracy level

Table 2 presents the accuracy level of the English subtitles based on the perceptions of the evaluators. Three evaluators were asked to rate the select hugot lines into three categories-Accurate, Less Accurate and Inaccurate, as proposed by Nababan et al. (2012). Half of the subjected hugot (50%) lines were perceived as accurate by the evaluators. Basing from Nababan et al. (2012), this connotes that meaning of “words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences or the source language was accurately transferred into the target language, with absolutely no distortion of meaning”. This means that the evaluators perceived that the meaning of words, expressions, phrases, and sentences in the translation of the hugot lines were preserved, hence, the statements are accurately transferred. Nineteen out of the forty (47.5%) hugot lines were perceived to be less accurately translated in English. This implies that most of the words used in the SL – technical terms, phrases, clauses, expressions, have been transferred accurately into the TL, however, the meaning of some of the utterances have been altered. This resulted to an interference on the veracity of the message. Finally, only one (2.5%) of

the forty [hugot] lines was perceived to be inaccurately translated. The omission of a word in the TL would greatly affect the meaning of the statement, and hence, distorting the intended sense of the original sentence.

Table 2. *The accuracy level of the English subtitles based evaluators perceptions.*

Level	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Accurate	20	50	1
Less Accurate	19	47.5	2
Inaccurate	1	2.5	3
Total	40	100	-

Conclusion

The findings indicated that few of the translation strategies proposed by Gottlieb were applicable to the English subtitling of Filipino movies which include transfer as the most commonly used translation strategy, followed by condensation, paraphrase, imitation, and resignation. Transfer conveyed the full expression, revealing a sufficient translation of the SL to the TL which signifies that the English subtitle writers did their best in transferring dialogues to the English language in the most understandable and natural way as possible. This is supported by the evaluators' perception on the accuracy level of the given translations of the selected hugot lines. Half of the forty hugot lines were perceived to be accurate translations; nineteen (47.5%) of which are less accurately translated while only one (2.5%) is seen as inaccurate. Regarding its pedagogical implication, the accuracy level results suggest the potential of using English- subtitled Filipino films as a material in the language classroom focusing on vocabulary enhancement and semantics. Due to time constraint though, the accuracy level of the hugot lines was evaluated by only three evaluators, and the tool used was validated by only one language researcher. The study is also limited to the analysis of forty hugot lines taken from four Filipino films produced from 2014 to 2017.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest with any parties involved with the study.

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