Subtitling Strategies of Main Characters' Expressive Utterances in The Little Mermaid (2023)

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Article History: Submitted: 4 April 2024 Accepted: 3 May 2024 Published: 30 June 2024	This research delves into the subtitling strategies of expressive utterances in "The Little Mermaid (2023)", employing a descriptive qualitative method for analyzing 40 instances of expressive utterances. The subtitling strategies identified encompass transfer (52.50%), condensation (15.00%), deletion and paraphrase (10.00% each), expansion (7.50%), and transcription (5.00%). The transfer strategy, being the most frequently used, serves as a crucial tool in enhancing the clarity of expressive utterances. The relationship between expressive and strategic types lies in the translator's deliberate selection of subtitling strategies to convey nuances and emotions inherent in each expressive type. This suggests a strategic alignment between the nature of the expressive utterance and the chosen subtitling technique. The findings emphasize the translator's nuanced decision-making process in conveying emotions effectively in subtitles. This research's unique focus on a specific film and comprehensive analysis of subtitling strategies to the understanding of film subtitle translation.
	Keywords: expressive, subtilte, strategies, the little mermaid

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Introduction

Film is one of the most popular forms of visual entertainment today. According to (Dunat, 2015), a film is an audio-visual medium that incorporates various modes of expression (such as image, sound, written and oral language) and is a productive source of knowledge regarding different ways in which meaning is created. Conventional cinematic metaphors frequently employed by film historians, critics, and theorists, such as "film as visual music," "film as moving image," "film as a window to the world," "camera-stylo," "film as a language," "film as a dream," "kino-eye," and so forth, underscore the idea that the essence and fundamental characteristics of film are not haphazard or capricious. Film is an artistic medium that serves not only as a source of entertainment but also as a means of educating society.

A perfect example of the power of film as an educational and expressive medium is the 2023 adaptation of The Little Mermaid. This film not only entertains but also explores complex themes of adolescence, societal expectations, and personal growth through its central characters. The film The Little Mermaid (2023), directed by Rob

Marshall and scripted by David Magee, is a live-action adaptation of Disney's 1989 animated film, which, in turn, drew inspiration from Hans Christian Andersen's 1837 fairy tale of the same title. The movie primarily revolves around two central characters: Ariel, a mermaid princess, and Prince Eric, who serve as the primary focus of this research. Ariel, the youngest of seven siblings born into royalty as the daughter of King Triton, faces high expectations regarding etiquette, speech style, and manners due to her royal background. Consequently, expressive utterances become integral in her character development, as her turbulent transition through adolescence at the age of 18 leads to a strong desire to explore the human world. Her journey unfolds as she strikes a deal with the crafty sea witch Ursula, trading her voice for human legs to impress Prince Eric, whom she saved from a shipwreck.

Likewise, Eric, a prince and heir to an unnamed kingdom, also hails from a royal lineage. He adheres to his position's expected etiquette, speech style, and manners. Eric's life takes a dramatic turn when Ariel rescues him, though he remains oblivious to her identity. His quest to find his savior ensues, leading to interactions with Ariel after she sacrifices her voice. During their time together, Eric frequently articulates his thoughts and emotions, effectively serving as a vocal representative for Ariel. In this context, expressive utterances significantly shape Eric's character and are recurring throughout the movie.

The Little Mermaid (2023) has become a globally renowned film, widely watched in various countries, including Indonesia. During its pre-release phase and immediately after its launch, The Little Mermaid (2023) garnered substantial attention. It generated considerable discussion on social media platforms, particularly Twitter (now referred to as X). However, the substantial attention and discussion generated by The Little Mermaid (2023) on social media platforms, particularly the changes observed on X, piqued the researcher's interest. It led to the selection of this particular film for an in-depth exploration of the utterances and subtitling strategies employed in the movie. Furthermore, expressive utterances encompass various types are prevalent in Ariel and Eric's dialogue throughout the film and significantly contribute to driving the plot forward.

Alongside the expressive utterances, there exist corresponding subtitles for these utterances. Many Indonesian movie platforms, such as Pahe.in and Idlix, offer this film, along with Indonesian subtitles on subscene.com, enabling viewers to comprehend the film's language. Subtitling indeed acts as a bridge between countries that speak different languages, facilitating a deeper understanding of the plot's nuances; this includes the translation of expressive utterances, which adds to this complexity. Precise subtitles are imperative for comprehending these utterances accurately. Subtitling is characterized as a form of translation where written text is displayed typically at the bottom of the screen. Its purpose is to faithfully convey the original spoken dialogue of the speakers, as well as capture the discursive aspects of the visual content and the informational cues embedded within the audio track (Lu & Lu, 2021).

This research focused on the subtitling strategies utilized for the utterances, with Gottlieb's strategies serving as the fundamental theory. Subtitling, as a specialized form of translation, seeks to transform the dialogue's form and context while maintaining the integrity of its original meaning. As for the subtitling strategies, ten subtitling strategies can be applied in subtitling, namely expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, condensation, decimation, deletion, taming, and resignation (Gottlieb, 1992).

Taking into account the preceding aspects and explanations, the researcher seeks to scrutinize the subtitling strategies applied by the translator. The proposed title for this study is Subtitling Strategies of Main Characters' Expressive Utterances in The Little Mermaid (2023).

Saputra, R.G.T, Yulianti,N.G, H, N., Handoyo,R.P. (2024). Subtitling Strategies.

Method

This chapter provides an extensive overview of the research methodology adopted in this study. It outlines the approach employed to attain the research objectives and highlights the various stages of the research process. The chapter is further subdivided into five sections, each covering a specific aspect of the methodology: research design, data and data sources, population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques. Through these subsections, the research methodology is systematically explored to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the study's methodological framework.

The research design chosen for this study is qualitative research. Through qualitative research, the study intends to explore the subtleties of the research topic and extract meaningful insights from the data collected. This design is particularly suitable for investigating the various dimensions of expressive utterances in the context of subtitles and their acceptability in The Little Mermaid (2023).

According to (Aspers & Corte, 2021), qualitative research is characterized by a multimethod approach, embracing an interpretative and naturalistic orientation toward its subject matter. This methodology entails the examination of phenomena within their authentic contexts, aiming to comprehend and interpret them based on the significance attributed by individuals. The researcher has employed a qualitative approach in this study due to using expressive utterances as the primary data source. These expressive utterances encompass sentences, clauses, phrases, and individual words spoken by Ariel and Eric in the context of The Little Mermaid (2023). The collected data is thoroughly elucidated and tailored to align with the research objectives. Additionally, the research has involved multiple assessors to evaluate the acceptability of the Indonesian translations of these expressive utterances.

This method has been chosen to enable the researcher to discover, identify, define, and explain the subtitling strategies and the acceptability of expressive utterances within The Little Mermaid (2023). In conjunction with this, a library research approach has been adopted to explore relevant theories and insights from various sources, including books, journals, articles, and other scholarly materials connected to the research topic.

Results

This chapter is dedicated to analyzing expressive utterances uttered by Ariel and Eric in The Little Mermaid (2023), along with their corresponding subtitle. The primary emphasis is on identifying these utterances, and scrutinizing the subtitling strategies applied to both the utterances and subtitles.

The primary emphasis is on utilizing subtitling strategies in the research, drawing from (Gottlieb, 1992) classification of 10 subtitling strategies, each defined with examples. The identified subtitling strategies employed in translating expressive utterances in The Little Mermaid (2023) include transfer, condensation, deletion, expansion, paraphrase, transcription, and decimation, with the frequency of each strategy detailed in the ensuing table. The subtitling strategies used in the translations are in the table below:

Table 4. Subtitling Strategies of Expressive Utterances found in The Little
Mermaid (2023)

No	Types of Subtitling Strategies	Total	Percentage
1	Transfer	21	52.50%
2	Condensation	6	15.00%
3	Deletion	4	10.00%
4	Paraphrase	4	10.00%
5	Expansion	3	7.50%
6	Transcription	2	5.00%
	Total	**40**	**100.00%**

As depicted in the aforementioned table, the most frequently utilized subtitling strategy in the research is "transfer," accounting for (52.50%) of the 21 utterances and subtitles analyzed in the film. Following closely is "condensation" at (15%), associated with 6 utterances and subtitles. Both "deletion" and "expansion" share a usage rate of (10%), each observed in 4 utterances and subtitles. "Transcription" registers the lowest usage at (5%), corresponding to 2 utterances and subtitles.

Discussion

This section emphasizes examining subtitling strategies and their application in the research. According to (Gottlieb, 1992) introduced ten subtitling strategies, each defined with corresponding examples. However, within the subtitles of expressive utterances in The Little Mermaid (2023), only 7 strategies are identified: transfer, condensation, deletion, paraphrase, expansion, transcription, and decimation. The explanation of subtitling strategies to translate expressive utterances in The Little Mermaid (2023) and their examples are below.

In summary, the examination of subtitling strategies employed in The Little Mermaid (2023) has elucidated the prominence of the transfer strategy as the most frequently utilized technique. This prevalence can be attributed to the film's intricate narrative structure and the need for precise translation to maintain audience comprehension. By opting for the transfer strategy, translators can navigate the challenges posed by a convoluted narrative structure. This approach facilitates a more straightforward and direct translation of expressive utterances, aligning with the intricate details embedded in the film's dialogue. As a result, the audience is better equipped to grasp the subtleties of character relationships, plot twists, and thematic nuances without the introduction of potentially confusing or distorted elements.

Saputra, R.G.T, Yulianti,N.G, H, N., Handoyo,R.P. (2024). Subtitling Strategies. Therefore, the choice of the transfer strategy is a deliberate effort to ensure that the subtitled expressions are well-received and deemed acceptable by the target audience. This approach enhances the overall viewing experience by maintaining linguistic fidelity while meeting the cultural expectations and emotional nuances inherent in the film's dialogues. Given the fantastical and emotionally charged nature of The Little Mermaid, the transfer strategy becomes indispensable in capturing the essence of the characters' dialogues, enhancing the viewer's engagement with the unfolding story. The consistent application of transfer strategy reflects the translator's adeptness in navigating linguistic complexities and cultural nuances, ultimately contributing to the film's overall accessibility and audience immersion.

Conclusions

The predominant subtitling strategy employed for rendering expressive utterances in "The Little Mermaid (2023)" and their respective subtitles is the transfer strategy, constituting the highest frequency with 21 instances (52.00%). Subsequently, condensation is utilized with 6 instances (15.00%), while deletion and paraphrase strategies each account for 4 instances (10.00%). Expansion strategy is applied in 3 instances (7.50%), and transcription strategy is observed in 2 instances (5.00%). The prevalence of the transfer strategy in the research can be attributed to its fundamental role in maintaining accuracy and faithfulness to the source language while conveying the intended meaning to the target audience. The transfer strategy is often employed when the source language and target language share similarities, allowing for a direct and precise translation. In the context of expressive utterances in The Little Mermaid (2023), where conveying emotions and sentiments accurately is crucial, the transfer strategy ensures that the subtitled content remains faithful to the original dialogue, preserving the emotional nuances and cultural context. This fidelity to the source language contributes to the effectiveness of the translation and aligns with the goal of delivering a comprehensible and emotionally resonant viewing experience.

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