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**Translation Errors in Malaysian Children's Movie
Subtitles**

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Abstract

Subtitling Malay movies into English in Malaysia presents particular constrictions and defies subtitlers, as the two languages have little in common and have a number of untranslatability elements. *Upin and Ipin* is a Malaysian television series produced by Les' Copaque Production, which features the life of the twin brothers in a fictional Malaysian village. The series was first introduced in 2007 and can be considered as one of the most successful animated television series in Malaysia. However, the series represents significantly unique language, leading to a significant concern in subtitling. Hence, this article aims to investigate the errors utilized in the movie *Upin and Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula*. The research used Koponen's (2010) error categories to classify the translation errors, by comparing the subtitles in the source and target texts. The study supports the findings of Rull et al. (2016) on omission and mistranslation as the common errors. It is hoped that this study could serve as a reference for other translation research on subtitling to and from other languages in Malaysia.

Keywords: Translation, English subtitle, error analysis, translation strategies, Malay films

Introduction

Translation is no easy task. It requires powerful mastery and understanding of the source language (SL) and target language (TL), and yet this alone may not be adequate without appropriate exercise in translation techniques and approaches (Muhammad Bukhari Lubis 1984). According to Newmark (1981), translation can be referred to as applying an expertise to convert a written message and / or statement to another language.

Subtitles are the written forms of the dialogue in a film and in television programs, and are presented at the bottom of the screen. They materialize in two forms, which is in a form of written translation in a foreign language or in a form of a written rendering in the source language. Gottlieb (1992, 162) defines subtitling as a written, additive, instant, synchronous, and polymedial form of translation. Gottlieb (1998, 247) further added that: "Subtitling can be both 'intralingual' when the target language is the same as the source language, and 'interlingual' when the target language is different from the source language".

Therefore, film subtitling is interlingual, where its linguistic components of the source language are converted into target language subtitles. Subtitling is in fact the principal form of AV translation in European countries, which are commonly known as subtitling countries (Gottlieb 1992).

AV translation's discernibility is perhaps one reason as to why AV translation also imparts

itself to easy and harsh reproach among the spectators. Shochat and Stam (1985) mentioned that “subtitles offer the pretext for a linguistic game of ‘spot the error,’” particularly for those with perfect command of both languages. For the past two decades, studies on Audiovisual Translation (AVT), specifically on interlingual subtitling, have gained much attention (Gambier 2009). However, in Malaysia, there have been relatively few studies done in interlingual subtitling, particularly from other languages into the Malay language.

Error analysis is a method traditionally used to evaluate the learning of a foreign language (Ellis 1985). According Richards and Schmidt (2002), an error refers to the use of words, speech acts or grammatical items in an imperfect and insignificant way. Nonetheless, this method also plays a significant role in the discovery, rationalization, and rectification of translation errors. Therefore, error analysis is selected as the main approach for this research.

Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the translation from Malay language films into English subtitles, precisely to seek answers to the following objectives:

1. To investigate the translation errors used in Malay-English children movie subtitling?
2. To explain the reasons that lead to these errors.

Methodology

This study aims to analyse qualitatively the translation errors in the Malay children's movie *Upin Ipin Pengembaraan Bermula*. The movie comprises a 94-minute-film dialogue in Malay and a 94-minute-English subtitle sequence (184 minutes altogether). To analyze the data, the researcher uses the classification of translation errors proposed by Koponen (2010) as the theoretical framework. According to Koponen's (2010) classification, translation errors can be categorized as omission, addition, untranslated items and mistranslation. Meanwhile, substitution and explicitation are categories where the semantic content is preserved in the translation, which thus will be considered as strategies for the translator.

Table 1: Koponen's (2010) error categories

Error	Description
<i>Omission</i>	Translated texts omit the source texts
<i>Addition</i>	Translated texts with added concepts which are missing in the source texts
<i>Untranslated</i>	Appearance of loan words in the translated texts
<i>Mistranslation</i>	Translated texts have the wrong meaning or context from the source text
<i>Substitution</i>	Translated text concept is not a direct lexical equivalent as is the source but can be considered a valid replacement
<i>Explicitation</i>	Translated texts explicitly state information left implicit in source texts

Data Analysis and Results

Overall, 1,326 dialogues were analyzed in both English and its Malay translation. The study found omission errors as the most dominant error (62%) followed by mistranslation errors (20%)..

Omission errors

Omission errors refer to the complete removal (without translating or keeping the original text) of the source dialogue. As mentioned, omission errors figured to be the most commonly made errors in this study (159 instances). The most frequent omission errors in the dialogues were the omission of exclamation marks (64 instances). These errors can be further classified as purely exclamation omission errors and omission errors on culture related exclamation. Some of the examples are as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Omission errors

Omission on pure exclamation Example 1 (L94)	Lim :	<i>Hoi! Hoi! Mana? Mana?</i> (ST) Where? Where? (TT)
Example 2 (L135)	Ah Tong:	<i>Oit, ini lu punya ah ?</i> (ST) Is it yours? (TT)
Omission on Indian related exclamation Example 3 (L26)	U n c l e Muthu :	<i>Dey, Salleh! Tak mau tunggu kuih lagi ka?</i> (ST) Salleh! Don't you want to wait for the snacks? (TT)
Example 4 (L74)	Rajoo :	<i>Poodab! Baru menang sekali, kecoh!</i> (ST) What's the big deal? You've only won once.(TT)
Omission on Chinese related exclamation Example 5 (L25)	Ah Tong:	<i>Haiyya! Mana ada bantu? Itu musang makan ma...</i> (ST) What ghost! It was a fox that ate all those durians (TT)
Example 6 (L119)	Ah Tong:	<i>Haiyya, ini sapa kasi buang ? Tadak sayang barang aa?</i> (ST) Who threw this thing away ? So ungrateful! (TT)

The Mistranslated Errors

The mistranslated errors in this research refer to the Malay words or phrases in the dialogues which were wrongly translated into English. The research found 51 instances (20% of total errors) of mistranslated items.

Table 3: Mistranslated Errors

Total Error Example 11 (L694)	Taukeh :	<i>Jangan tipu gua ah! Jangan main-main oo!</i> (ST) Don't try to fool me! You were late last time. (TT)
Error by simplification Example 12 (L646)	Kak Ros:	<i>Oopet, macamana mak engkau hilang kat situ?</i> (ST) Oopet, how did it happen? (TT)
Word Choice Example 13 (L782)	Pak Mail :	<i>Ah pedulikan mereka! Selamatkan diri kita dahulu!</i> (ST) Just leave them! Save yourself first! (TT)

From the research, it was found that the mistranslated errors can be divided into three categories; total error, error by simplification and word error. The total error refers to the translated sentence which is totally out of context. In Example 11, for instance, the sentence *Jangan main-main oo!* (Translation: Don't play me a fool) was translated into "you were late last time" which has a significantly different meaning from the source text.

In Example 12, the translation was erroneous due to the simplification made by the translator. The sentence "*macamana mak engkau hilang kat situ*" (Translation: How did your mother get lost there?) was simplified into: "How did it happen?", thus failing to reveal the real scenario. The last mistranslated error is the error on word choice, where the translator translated the dialogue by using antonyms (for example, *kita* ('ourselves') was translated into 'yourself'.

The Errors of Untranslated Items

In this research, the errors on untranslated items were mainly due to the inconsistency of the translation in the English dialogues. For example, the retention of the subject pronoun "Kak" or "Atuk" was inconsistent (in some instances, the translator generalized by using "you") throughout the dialogues. Other errors can equally be classified as a strategy as they involve cultural specific items (such as the use of the word *Maghrib* to indicate 'after sunrise') and proper names (as per Example 12 on the use of *pulut panggang* without translating). Below are some examples:

Table 4: Errors on Untranslated items

Culture specific items Example 11 (L18)	Tok Dalang :	<i>Mana budak-budak ni ? Dah nak Maghrib pun tak balik-balik lagi !</i> (ST) Where are these kids? It's almost Maghrib and they're not home! (TT)
Proper nouns Example 12 (L139)	Kak Ros:	<i>Ini Ros ada bawa pulut panggang dan karipap ye</i> (ST) I've bought some <i>pulut panggang</i> and curry puffs (TT)

Addition errors

Addition errors in this study refer to any inclusion of texts or ideas which were originally not stated or implied in the source dialogue. In this study, only 25 instances (10%) of addition

errors were found. These errors can be further categorized as errors on the addition of nouns, adjectives, subject pronouns and other information.

Looking further into these four types of addition errors, only errors on the addition of subject pronouns can be classified as the translator's procedure. This is due to the fact that unlike Malay, the English sentence structure requires the inclusion of subject pronouns before the verbs (except for imperative sentences). From the data, the other addition errors on nouns, adjectives and other information, were the errors which were inserted to strengthen the dialogues. Below are some examples:

Table 5: Addition errors

Addition of nouns Example 7 (L18)	Salleh :	Hah! Saya tak tau! Saya ikut Pak Mail dengan Singh! (ST) I didn't know! I only followed Pak Mail and Singh's orders! (TT)
Addition of adjectives Example 8 (L860)	Pak Mail:	<i>Kalau kita jual ni Singh, kaya kita...</i> (ST) If we sell this Singh, we'll be filthy rich! (TT)
Addition of subject pronoun Example 9 (L539)	Upin :	<i>Ha! Robot! Nak main! Nak main!</i> (ST) A robot! I want to play! I want to play! (TT)
Addition of information Example 10 (L397)	Lim :	Panjat pokok durian la. Apa lagi? (ST) I'm climbing this durian tree, what else do you think I'm doing? (TT)

Conclusion

The main aim of this preliminary study was to provide a corpus-based analysis which accounted for the main linguistic aspects of errors in the translation of Malaysian children's movie subtitles. This study was primarily concerned with the classification and explanation of the errors found. It was found that omission errors were the most frequent errors made in this study, followed by mistranslation.

To conclude, it is essential to pay attention to the translation of texts destined for children, to later on project models to prevent poor translation. Exploration at larger scales is essential for a more precise representation of the situation. However, research on various categories of movies may assist to distinguish specific parts with a high manifestation of errors, in line with the elaboration of propositions and approaches to enhance the quality of subtitles.

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