

AN IN-DEPTH TRANSLATION ASSESSMENT ON SUBTITLING STRATEGIES IN DOCUMENTARY YOUTUBE CAPTIONS

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: April 2025 Revised: May 2025 Published: July 2025	<i>Subtitling has become a vital tool for disseminating ideas and information through online video. This study takes a deep dive into the translation strategies employed in the subtitling of the acclaimed Netflix documentary series “Our Planet.” Drawing on Gottlieb's established theory of translation techniques for subtitling, this research analyses the subtitling approaches within the episodes of the series. The findings reveal that the transfer strategy presenting direct lexical translation is the dominant approach (71%) used by subtitlers. However, the analysis also uncovers nuanced applications of other strategies, such as expansion, paraphrasing, and condensation, which work in tandem to enhance the clarity and naturalness of the target language subtitles. By examining this rich dataset of documentary video subtitles, this study provides valuable insights into the complex decision-making processes of professional subtitlers especially those that is related to cross-cultural comprehensio. The results suggest that while transfer is the primary technique, subtitlers thoughtfully employ a mix of strategies to deliver an optimal viewing experience to multilingual audiences. This study offers a groundbreaking exploration of the intricacies involved in translating educational and informative video content for global distribution.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

Subtitling, one of the most essential audio-visual translation styles, cannot be understood without technology that makes it feasible. The function is doubled by the intervention of current subtitling technology (Agulló, 2020). The technology seems to understand that recurrent neural networks (Chen et al., 2020) are necessary for video to be automatically generated using its attributes. On YouTube (Müller, 2009), the auto-generated features are not limited to the language spoken in the video, but also include additional languages associated with the video for more wide-spread information (Capece et al., 2022). Therefore, translation is necessary to ensure that a video is universally comprehensible (Kessler & Schäfer, 2009). Linguistically, there are two basic subtitling (Gottlieb, 1992). Intralingual subtitling (Al-Abbas et al., 2022; Vitikainen & Koponen, 2021), which involves translating within a single cultural language, is typically used for those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. In countries where there is little use of interlingual subtitling, captioning is sometimes referred to as subtitling. This form of subtitling is also suitable for individuals learning a new language (Haider & Al-Salman, 2022).

Interlingual subtitling (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2014; Pöschhacker & Remael, 2019) refers to the process of translating two different cultural languages. This study focuses on this particular type, which is present in all European nations where dubbing is not used. It also

transmits in a diagonal direction: in interlingual subtitling, the subtitler transitions from decoding foreign-language conversations to presenting a translation in the viewer's native language. Technically, this is divided into open and closed subtitles (Pöschhacker & Remael, 2019; Remes & Slaveva-Griffin, 2014). Open subtitles are provided with the original film or television version. Closed captions can be optionally included in the original version (Beddiar et al., 2023). Interlingual translation, the main subject of this research, requires more than just language translation. The field of translation theory has evolved over the decades. However, traditional translation theories are inadequate for translating audio into flowing text displayed on the bottom of a screen (Perego & Bruti, 2016). The constraint imposed by screen size necessitates the implementation of additional solutions to accommodate the limited space (Gerber-Morón et al., 2021; Wright, 2015).

While traditional translation primarily focuses on the written transfer of text from one language to another (Purnomo & Baharuddin, 2018), the practice of subtitling involves a distinct set of considerations (Malenova, 2015). As the concept of subtitling highlights, the source text in audiovisual media encompasses not only spoken dialogue, but also visual and auditory cues that convey meaning (Cheng, 2014; Hadi et al., 2021). Subtitlers must then transform this multisensory input into a concise written target text, navigating the constraints of screen real estate and time (Bhat & Kopparapu, 2015). The current study is situated within this complex landscape. The growing prominence of online video platforms has significantly increased the demand for high-quality subtitling to disseminate educational and informative content to global audiences (Capece et al., 2022). As viewers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds engage with multimedia resources, the role of translation and localization becomes crucial in ensuring accessibility and enhancing the viewing experience. Against this backdrop, this study aims to explore the subtitling strategies employed by professional translators when localizing the acclaimed Netflix documentary series “Our Planet.”

In relation to the examination of the nuanced application of various techniques, the research delves into questioning the decision-making processes of the subtitlers and the contextual factors that shape their choices. Thus, three main research questions guide this study. What are the predominant subtitling strategies employed by professional translators when localizing educational and informative video content for global audiences? How do subtitlers balance the need for lexical accuracy with techniques that enhance clarity and naturalness when translating complex subject matter to multilingual viewers? What role do factors such as the translators' subject matter expertise and target audience's characteristics play in shaping the selection and application of specific subtitling strategies?

These questions may highlight issues not previously addressed in earlier studies, presenting a novelty for this study. Through a comprehensive analysis of the subtitling approaches used across multiple episodes of “Our Planet,” this study aims to provide valuable insights into the intricacies of audiovisual translation and the multifaceted considerations that influence the delivery of educational and informative video content to a global viewership. These findings are expected to have the potential to inform best practices and guides for research in the evolving field of video localization and in the educational development of subtitling.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative content analysis design to investigate the translation strategies employed in subtitled YouTube videos. The research emphasized the identification and interpretation of linguistic and translational features manifested in bilingual and translated captions. The analysis was framed by established theoretical perspectives, particularly Pym's

(Pym, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2023) theory of translation equivalence and Gottlieb's typology of subtitling strategies (1992), providing a robust theoretical foundation for the examination.

Data Sources

The population of this study encompassed YouTube videos containing bilingual or multilingual subtitles. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select the sample, guided by specific inclusion criteria: videos were required to be publicly accessible, to feature captions in at least two languages, and to be relevant for examining translation practices. Notably, no human participants were engaged in this study; rather, the research exclusively focused on the analysis of textual data derived from the video subtitles of Netflix series of "Our Planet" consisting of eight videos

Research Instruments

The research employed several instruments to ensure systematic data collection and analysis. Observation sheets were designed to document and categorize observed features within the subtitles. Digital recording tools, including screen capture applications, were used to obtain visual records of relevant scenes and captions. Furthermore, transcription templates were prepared to facilitate the accurate transcription and organization of original and translated subtitles, enabling structured comparative analysis. An analytical framework, incorporating Pym's (Pym, 2023) translation equivalence theories and Gottlieb's subtitling strategies (1992), was also developed to guide the classification, interpretation, and critical evaluation of the collected data.

Data Collection

For this study, data were collected through a combination of methods involving internet connection and saving devices related to YouTube (Cunningham & Craig, 2017; Snickars & Vonderau, 2009). First, the researchers watched various YouTube channels and videos to identify those that were accessible and suitable for translation analysis. YouTube (Jenkins & Hartley, 2009; Lovink et al., 2007) is one of the most widely-used online video-sharing platforms, where users can upload and share their content without the need for a signup. The company was founded in 2005 and acquired by Google in 2006.

Second, recording techniques were employed to capture important scenes and captions from the selected YouTube videos. This involved taking static photographs of captions in different languages. While recording videos raised privacy concerns, a visual image alone often sufficed to identify the content in question. Additionally, the researcher transcribed the text that appeared on the screen and stored the transcriptions for further analysis. This text transcription process helped to identify any issues or challenges in terms of linguistic equivalence between the original and translated captions.

Data Analysis

The data went through a careful analysis that involved a lot of steps that were done exactly right in order to get important results that should be published. The first step of the analysis was to identify the data by putting it into subgroups based on the conditions that best supported the hypotheses that translation equivalence theory looked at. (Pym, 2023). A condensation phase ensued, during which the data were meticulously scrutinized to isolate the most pertinent components that could be utilized to tackle the research challenge. During this procedure, data were retained for potential future elimination. Subsequently, data reduction was conducted, wherein only a portion of the accessible data was preserved to aid the process of debate and interpretation.

A comprehensive analysis was conducted, and the results were thoroughly discussed and explained using the translation theory. This explanation provides valuable insights that could be used as a starting point for additional inquiry and inference. The comprehensive examination

finally produced resolutions to the primary concerns of the study, resulting in the anticipated valuable consequences. The investigation encompassed the strategies offered by Gottlieb (1992), who delineated efficacious strategies to be employed in the process of subtitling translation. This idea examines several strategies utilized in translation (Baharuddin, 2023b, 2023a), specifically within the realm of subtitling. It is observed that methods 1-7 give the corresponding translations of the portions concerned. Subtitling Type 7, which is commonly considered the standard, is occasionally incorrectly associated with a semantic reduction.

Nonetheless, Gottlieb asserts that in a compression, rather than a decimation, the subtitle accurately communicates the message and most of the artistic elements of the original. In condensation, the primary loss typically involves the elimination of superfluous verbal parts, especially in the realm of spontaneous discourse. In structured communication formats, such as drama or news commentary, substantial condensation occurs naturally during subtitle translation, due to the inherent diagonal format of this translation method.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The collected data revealed that the most frequently employed translation strategy across the video titles was transfer, which accounted for 71% of the instances, expansion at 8%, and condensation at 7%. In contrast, the strategy of deletion is used the least, accounting for only 1% of the total translation occurrences.

Table 1
Distribution of Translation Strategies of Eight Documentaries on Netflix Channel on YouTube

Movies	One Planet		Frozen Worlds		Jungles		Coastal Seas		Desert of Grassland		High Seas		Fresh Water		Forests		Ave
Strategies	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	%
Transfer	38	66	40	82	56	82	35	65	34	64	40	65	40	70	42	75	71%
Imitation	2	3	5	10	3	4	2	4	2	4	6	10	1	2	2	4	5%
Expansion	5	9	1	2	4	6	6	11	3	6	3	5	11	19	5	9	8%
Transcription	3	5	1	2	1	1	2	4	4	8	1	2	1	2	0	0	3%
Paraphrase	5	9	0	0	2	3	6	11	1	2	3	5	1	2	2	4	4%
Condensation	4	7	1	2	1	1	3	6	8	15	6	10	3	5	5	9	7%
Deletion	1	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	1%
Total	58		49		68		54		53		62		57		56		

The research also underscores variations in the diversity of translation procedures employed for specific video titles. “One Planet,” “Jungles,” and “High Seas” exhibit a broader array of procedures utilized, encompassing Transcription, Paraphrase, and Condensation, alongside the predominant strategies of Transfer and Expansion. Conversely, a section such as “Fresh Waters” depends significantly on a limited number of techniques, specifically Transfer and Expansion. Table 1 above provides a useful overview of the translation strategies utilized in subtitling the videos. This information can be valuable in understanding the various linguistic and cultural considerations that influence the translation process and how translators navigate the complexities of conveying source material effectively in the target language.

To present a chart for easily captured information about the “Translation Strategies in Subtitle” used in various video content, including One Planet, Frozen Worlds, Jungles, Coastal Seas, Desert of Grasslands, High Seas, Fresh Waters, and Forests. The x-axis lists different translation strategies such as Transfer, Imitation, Expansion, Transcription, Paraphrase, Condensation, and Deletion (See Figure 1). The y-axis shows the frequency with which each

translation strategy is used for different video content types. The chart provides a comprehensive visual representation of how the various translation strategies are applied across different video types, allowing for a comparative analysis of the techniques employed in subtitling content.

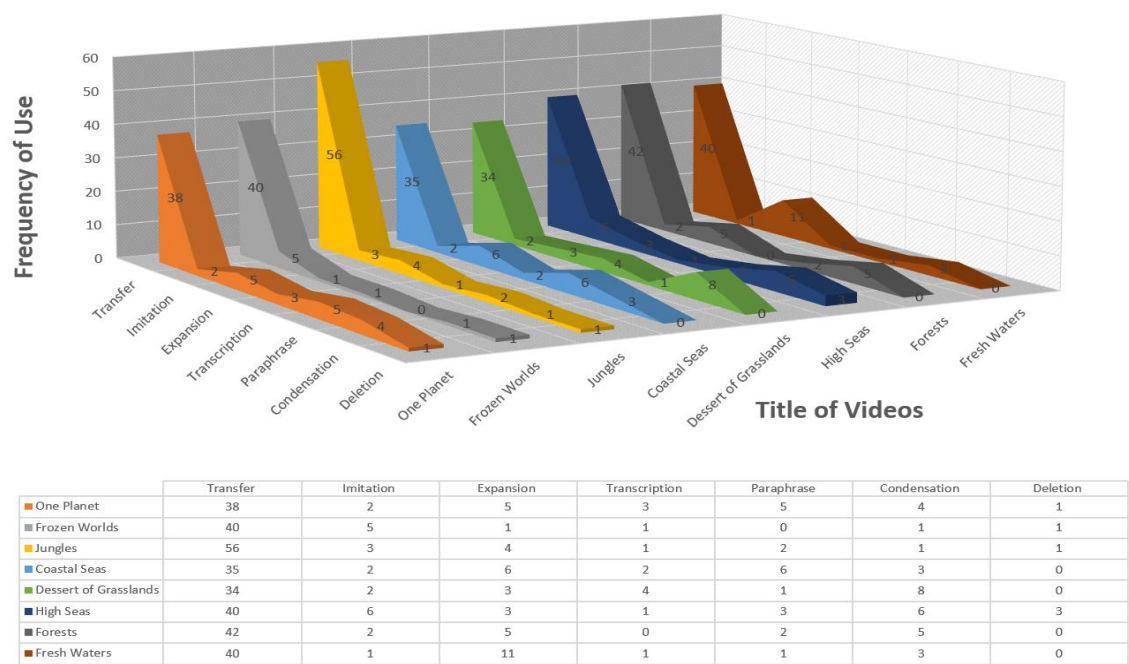


Figure 1. Translation strategies in Video Subtitles

This visual depiction illustrates the prevalence of utilization of diverse translation procedures across numerous video titles, including; Transfer: This entails the direct transference of a word or phrase from the source language to the target language without alterations. (2) Imitation: Replicating the structure or phonetics of a term in the original language. Expansion: Augmenting translation to incorporate additional information or context. (4) Transcription: Phonetic transcription of words from the source language. (5) Paraphrase: Reformulating the original text in the desired language. (6) Condensation: Abbreviating the translation for conciseness. (7) Deletion: certain elements are omitted from the source text in the target translation.

Pym's concept of translation equivalence suggests that the subtitles for the Netflix series "Our Planet" do not present significant issues. The translation preserves the original meaning and context, ensuring the subtitles align effectively with the source material. This indicates that the subtitlers have attained a level of equivalence that enables viewers to fully comprehend the documentary's message and nuances. No. further discussion is imperative on this issue.

Discussion

The procedures indicated in the data are frequently employed in translations. The strategies are encapsulated in a concise outline. The initial step is Transfer. This entails the straight transference of a word or phrase from the source language to the target language with minimal or no alterations. This is frequently employed for proper nouns, technical terminology, or phrases without direct equivalents in the target language. Consequently, it is imitation. This entails meticulously replicating the form and structure of the source language in the target language to preserve a comparable linguistic style. The subsequent topic is Expansion. This is incorporating additional words or phrases into the target language to express the same meaning

as the source language, frequently addressing disparities in linguistic structures or cultural subtleties.

The fourth category is Transcription. This approach entails transliterating a term from the source language into the alphabet or script of the target language, maintaining pronunciation as accurately as feasible. Subsequently, it is referred to as Paraphrase. This method entails rephrasing the meaning of the source language using alternative words or structures in the target language to communicate the same concept more naturally or clearly. The Condensation approach entails minimizing the length or complexity of the source language text in the target language while preserving its fundamental meaning. This was executed to condense the text to fit the restricted screen space of the subtitle. The Deletion technique entails excluding specific aspects from the source language text in the target language when they are considered superfluous or redundant in the target language context. These tactics are frequently employed in conjunction, contingent upon the unique demands of the translation assignment, linguistic and cultural disparities between the source and target languages, as well as the intended purpose and audience of the translated material.

Condensation or Deletion?

Condensation and deletion strategies are frequently misunderstood phrases when discussing their use in text. This was because the objective was to condense the text to fit the screen. However, they clearly differ in how they are applied. The distinction between condensation and deletion in translation strategies is primarily based on the intent and outcome of the process. With condensation, the aim is to reduce the length or complexity of the source text in the target text while preserving essential meaning and information. The translator seeks to convey the same content in a more concise or streamlined manner, without omitting any key elements. Condensation may involve rephrasing, more compact wording, or combining multiple ideas into a single statement. The objective is to enhance the target text's readability, fluidity, or appropriateness for the intended audience, while preserving essential content.

Deletion, conversely, entails the deliberate exclusion of specific components from the source text throughout the translation process into the target language. The translator deliberately omits words, statements, or entire concepts considered superfluous, redundant, or unimportant in the context of the target language. Deletion occurs when the translator ascertains that specific information in the source text is non-essential for conveying the overall meaning and can be omitted without consequence. This method is frequently utilized to enhance the conciseness, coherence, or cultural relevance of the target text, even at the expense of certain small features from the original. Condensation seeks to simplify content, whereas deletion is the deliberate elimination of specific components. Condensation retains the fundamental meaning, while deletion deliberately excludes non-essential information. The subsequent conclusion may be inferred. The data were obtained from the second dataset of One Planet.

ST: *For the very first time. We look back at our own planet.*

TT: *Untuk kali pertama, kita melihat planet kita sendiri.*

Within this dataset, the translation has a greater resemblance to condensation than to deletion. “For the very first time. We look back at our own planet.” is translated into Indonesian as “Untuk kali pertama, kita melihat planet kita sendiri.” The translated sentence compresses the original two-sentence structure into a solitary, more succinct statement in Indonesian statement. In Catford’s shifting theory, this strategy is called rank shift, shifting one sentence into two. The key elements of meaning - “for the very first time” and “we look back at our own planet” are preserved in the Indonesian translation. No words or phrases in the original sentence were deleted. Translation retains the essential information. The Indonesian translation uses more compact wording to convey the same idea, resulting in a condensed version of the original. Therefore, the strategy employed in this translation was more aligned with condensation than

with deletion. The translator aimed to express the same core meaning in a more streamlined manner rather than removing any significant parts of the original sentence.

ST: *It is an astonishing daily migration of five million birds.*

TT: *Migrasi harian yang menakjubkan dari lima juta burung.*

In these data, both condensation and deletion were identified. However, this is closer to deletion than condensation. The original English sentence contains the word “astonishing,” which could potentially be considered for deletion in the Indonesian translation. The translator may have opted not to delete this word because of its nuance and emphasis. The word “astonishing” adds the important nuance of amazement or wonder to the migration event. Maintaining this descriptor helps preserve the emotional quality of the source text. Conciseness is another reason for this finding. The Indonesian translation is already concise and translates the core idea. Deleting “astonishing” may not have significantly improved overall brevity. Linguistic and cultural differences may also be the reasons for this. The Indonesian language and culture may place more importance on retaining descriptive words like “menakjubkan” (astonishing) to fully convey the sense of wonder, rather than keeping the complete sentence structure. The translator’s preference is astonishing. The translator may have consciously decided that the benefits of retaining the emotive descriptor outweighed the potential gains of deletion in this particular context.

What is deleted in this translation? It is evident that all individuals who speak English that the original statement does not include any discomfort. The sentence has both a subject and a predicate. However, the Indonesian version lacks a distinct subject or predicate. In fact, this is a lengthy phrase comprising of eight words. The deliberate and purposeful removal of the subject (as in the English version) indicates a clear intention to prevent excessive text translations from appearing on the screen. However, this text is easily understandable, flows well, and even possesses a lyrical quality with the use of the term “menakjubkan” (astonishing). The (Indonesian) expression may be translated back as “What an astonishing daily migration of five million birds” or “The daily migration of five million birds is truly remarkable.” Is this not a cool and effective translation with the application of the Deletion Strategy? Although Deletion might have been a viable technique to contemplate, the translator also probably believed that the Transfer approach of substituting the word “harian” instead of “setiap hari” was more crucial for elucidating the meaning, and chose to retain “menakjubkan” to uphold the desired tone and subtlety. When deciding on techniques, it is necessary to consider many elements to identify the most suitable translation, considering the unique context and objectives.

Multi-strategical Translation

In the translation of the following, the strategy used is primarily a combination of paraphrasing and condensation.

ST: *The great age of this island's jungle is best illustrated by one of the oldest predators on Earth.*

TT: *Masa luar biasa dari rimba pulau ini diilustrasikan paling baik oleh salah satu predator di bumi.*

This translation employs the paraphrasing process described in Gottlieb's paradigm for subtitling techniques. The Indonesian version does not offer a literal translation of the original English language. The translator chose to rearticulate the meaning with alternative vocabulary and syntactic arrangements in the target language, while maintaining the fundamental concept. For example, the English phrase “the great age of this island's jungle” has been translated as “masa luar biasa dari rimba pulau ini” in Indonesian. This translates back to “the extraordinary age of this island's jungle.” The subtitler has chosen to use the more evocative and descriptive term “luar biasa” (extraordinary) in place of the more literal “great” to convey a similar sense of the jungle's ancient, primeval nature.

This paraphrase approach allows the translator to better fit the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling as well as account for potential differences in linguistic and cultural

references between the source and target audiences. By reformulating the wording, the subtitler can ensure that the translated text is succinct, natural-sounding, and convey the intended meaning, even if it does not adhere strictly to a word-for-word translation. The use of a paraphrase in this example demonstrates the subtitler's skill in balancing accuracy, concision, and contextual appropriateness - a hallmark of effective audiovisual translation. This strategic application of Gottlieb's framework helps preserve the essence of the original dialogue while also catering to the unique requirements of the subtitling medium

This translation not only applies the paraphrase strategy, as discussed earlier, but also makes use of the condensation technique outlined in Gottlieb's framework for subtitling translations. The Indonesian version of the sentence is slightly more concise than the original English version, with fewer words used to convey the same essential meaning. For instance, the English phrase “one of the oldest predators on Earth” has been translated into Indonesian as “salah satu predator di bumi,” which literally means “one of the predators on Earth.” The subtitler has chosen to condense the original wording by omitting the descriptor “oldest” and compacting the phrase to its core elements

Through the integration of Paraphrase and Condensation techniques, the translator conveyed the essential meaning of the original text in a more concise and fluid Indonesian rendition, without substantially modifying the core material. This method facilitates a more idiomatic translation that aligns with the traditions of the target language, while preserving the essential concepts and information from the original phrase. The prudent use of condensation in this instance guarantees that the subtitled text is easily readable within the designated time and spatial limitations of the audiovisual format. Subtitlers must consistently balance the necessity for brevity to maintain the clarity and integrity of the original content. The deliberate application of paraphrase and condensation illustrates the translator's proficiency in balancing these conflicting demands to provide an optimal viewing experience for the intended audience.

Dominant Strategy

Transfer, which accounts for 71% of the occurrences, expansion, which accounts for 8%, and condensation, which accounts for 7%, are the translation procedures that are utilized the most frequently throughout all videos, according to the data that was obtained. The fact that this is the case suggests that the majority of translators choose to directly transfer lexical elements from the source language into the target language, rather than considerably changing or reworking the original text. On the other hand, the strategy of deletion is utilized the least, accounting for only one percent of the total instances of translation. It would appear from this that the translators are, in general, making serious attempts to preserve as much of the original material as they can, rather than leaving out significant chunks of the source text.

Furthermore, the statistics shed light on the various translation processes utilized for certain video titles, highlighting the variations between them. As an illustration, the films “One Planet,” “Jungles,” and “High Seas” demonstrate the utilization of a wider variety of approaches, such as transcription, paraphrasing, and condensing, in addition to the more common tactics of transfer and expansion. However, a sector such as “Forests “ is dependent on a limited number of specialized methods, specifically Transfer, Expansion, and Condensation, to a far greater extent than other strategies. It is clear from these data that the translators are modifying their techniques in order to meet the language and conceptual requirements of various video materials. The translation procedures that were applied in the process of subtitling these films are summarized in the following table. This knowledge can be helpful in gaining awareness of the different cultural and linguistic factors that impact the translation process, as well as how translators manage the complexity involved in properly presenting the source content in the target language.

The data indicated that transfer is the prevailing translation approach used in all content areas. This suggests that translators often choose to transfer lexical elements directly from the source language to the target language without making substantial changes or alterations to the original terminology. This method of direct transfer is most effective when the ideas and vocabulary in the original text have well-defined counterparts in the language being translated. Furthermore, the data indicates that expansion is frequently employed as a strategy, alongside transfer, especially in “Fresh Water” and “Coastal Seas” videos. Translators occasionally include additional information or expand the topic of the source text while translating it into the target language. The Expansion technique can enhance the audience's understanding by providing further context or clarification when the direct transfer of source content is insufficient on its own.

Looking at the specialized usage of certain strategies, the data reveals that Transfer is employed most heavily in One Planet and all other videos. This suggests the content in this subtitling specification namely the series of “Our Planet” in Netflix channel on YouTube may contain a higher degree of specialized terminology or concepts that require the translators to simply transfer the source language forms directly, rather than attempting to find target language equivalents. The sparing use of “deletion across segments also indicates that translators generally avoid omitting large portions of the source text, preferring to preserve as much of the original content as possible.

To conclude, the data highlights differences in the overall volume of translation instances across various content segments. The “Jungles” segment, along with “One Plane” and “High Seas,” has the highest total number of translation occurrences (7) of translation strategies, implying that this area may contain the most complex or dense source material, necessitating more varied translation strategies to accurately convey the meaning. Conversely, the “Forests” segment has a relatively lower total number (five) of strategies, suggesting that their content may be more straightforward and require fewer translation interventions. Taken together, these observations point to translators tailoring their approach to the specific linguistic and conceptual demands of each content area. The preference for certain strategies over others in different segments indicates that translators are adapting their techniques to best suit the characteristics of the source material they are working with. Let us dive deeper into the analysis of the chart on the translation strategies.

Frequency Patterns: The chart shows that the most frequently used strategies were Transfer, Expansion, and Condensation. This suggests that these approaches are commonly employed to maintain the meaning and intent of at source text while adapting it to the target audience. Strategies, such as Imitation, Transcription, and Deletion, are used less frequently, indicating that they are likely to be employed more selectively for specific linguistic or contextual challenges.

Variation in Translation Strategies: The chart demonstrates the different approaches to translation used in various videos, which are influenced by the distinct language and cultural factors associated with each issue. For instance, the documentaries “One Planet” and “High Seas” demonstrate a more equitable utilization of diverse methodologies, indicating a more sophisticated approach to translation. Conversely, “Fresh Waters” places greater emphasis on a limited number of crucial strategies such as Transfer and Expansion. This variant emphasizes the necessity for translators to modify their method according to the content and context of the material being translated.

Contextual Factors: The differences in translation strategies across videos may be influenced by factors such as the complexity of the source text, the cultural references involved, the target audience's familiarity with the subject matter, and the translator's linguistic and stylistic preferences. For instance, videos covering more specialized or technical topics (e.g., “Coastal Seas,”) may require more Expansion or Paraphrase to ensure the audience

comprehends the content. Similar to the video of “Dessert of Grasslands” more requires condensation for the same purpose. Likewise, videos with more culturally-specific references (e.g., “Frozen Worlds,” and “High Seas”) may rely more on Transfer or Imitation to preserve the original context.

Implications for Subtitle Quality: The strategic use of these translation techniques can have a significant impact on the quality and effectiveness of subtitles. A balanced approach that leverages the strengths of various strategies can result in subtitles that are accurate, concise, and easily understandable to the target audience. Overreliance on certain strategies, such as excessive Condensation or Deletion, could compromise the comprehension or nuance of the original content.

Contrast and Similarity

The following visual chart shows that the translation strategy profile for the “High Seas” and “Fresh Waters” with their contrast and for the “One Planet” and “Coastal Seas” that appears to be quite similar. The four videos show relatively high usage of the transfer strategy. The latter two showed similar levels of Expansion, Paraphrase, and Condensation. The overall shape and distribution of strategy utilization across these two segments are noticeably similar, indicating significant similarities in the linguistic and conceptual requirements for translating the content of these two video titles.

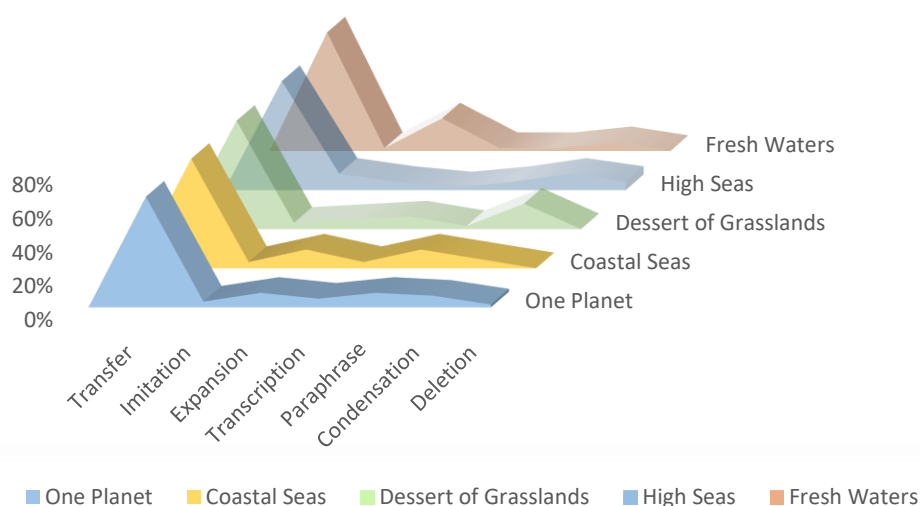


Figure 2. Contrast and Similarity

The differences in translation strategies between the “High Seas” and “Fresh Waters” suggest contrasting priorities and approaches to making environmental concepts accessible across linguistic and cultural boundaries. The strategy in “Fresh Waters”, with its emphasis on expansion and condensation, implies a focus on adapting the subtitles to the target audience and context. This indicates a priority in making the content resonate, even if it involves a greater possibility of deviation from the source material. In contrast, the “High Seas” approach, relying more on imitation and deletion, suggests a stronger drive for fidelity to the original text, prioritizing literal and concise translations over extensive reinterpretation. Condensation was exclusively employed to fulfil the screen size requirements.

In “Fresh Waters”, the strategies allow for more flexibility in the translation process, as evidenced by the higher degree of expansion, suggesting an openness to reworking certain elements to better suit the needs of the target audience. Conversely, in the “High Seas,” strategies appear more constrained, with a focus on imitating and condensing information rather

than expanding or fundamentally reframing it, pointing to a translation process that is more closely bound to the source content. These differences reveal contrasting priorities, with the approaches in *Fresh Waters* targeting adaptation, and in *High Seas*, the strategies aim for broader accessibility.

Now, consider the contrast between “*Fresh Waters*” and “*Desserts of Grasslands*”. “*Fresh Waters*” prioritize the expansion strategy, while “*Desserts of Grasslands*” highlights condensation. In “*Fresh Waters*”, the translation approach focuses more on expansion, which indicates a priority on adapting and reframing the content to make it more accessible and relevant for the target audience. This suggests a willingness to depart from the source material in order to achieve better resonance and understanding. In contrast, the translation strategy in the “*Desert of Grasslands*” leans more towards condensation. This implies a focus on summarizing and compressing information to fit the target format or medium, potentially at the expense of some of the nuances or depths of the original content.

In essence, approaches in “*Fresh Waters*” favor a more adaptive and expansive translation approach, while in “*Desert of Grasslands*,” the strategies tend towards a more concise and condensed strategy. These contrasting priorities likely reflect the unique needs, constraints, and target audience considerations of each of these environmental concepts. The emphasis on expansion versus condensation highlights how the two translation approaches balance factors such as accessibility, fidelity, and practical considerations when rendering content in the target language. Understanding these strategic differences is crucial to effectively communicate complex environmental information across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Unlike these variances, the last two videos demonstrate commonalities in strategy utilization. By delving deeper into the similarities between the “*One Planet*” and “*Coastal Seas*” videos, this study reveals some potentials. The Transfer Strategy is the primary approach employed in both segments and constitutes a significant portion of all translation scenarios. This indicates that translators often have the ability to convey lexical elements from the source language to the target language without significant modifications. The application of the expansion method was similarly comparable in both groups. This suggests that the translators employed a comparable method to integrate additional information or provide greater clarification of the source text throughout the translation into the target language.

Rephrasing and summarizing the text. The levels of paraphrasing and condensing employed were comparable in both the “*One Planet*” and “*Coastal Seas*”. This indicates that the translators employed comparable techniques to rephrase content and condense it as required. The overall profile and spread of the translation approach were very similar in both categories. This implies that the language and conceptual difficulties presented by the source material for both video titles may be extremely similar, necessitating translators to choose a highly comparable translation strategy.

The strong convergence in approach choices between “*One Planet*” and “*Coastal Seas*” suggests that the translators are probably encountering comparable source text qualities, target audience requirements, and contextual considerations when working on these two parts. The similarity of the translation approach offers useful insights into the shared characteristics of the text and the consistent decision-making of translators.

The striking similarity between the translation strategy profiles for the “*One Planet*” and “*Coastal Seas*” segments does raise the possibility that they could have been translated by the same person or team. A few key points that support this idea are the consistent strategy preferences. As discussed, the distribution and relative usage of various translation strategies, such as high transfer, similar Expansion, Paraphrase, and Condensation, are remarkably consistent between the two segments. This level of alignment is often indicative of the style and decision-making process of a single translator. The translators working on “*One Planet*” and “*Coastal Seas*” may have specialized knowledge or familiarity with the subject matter and

terminology in these related content areas. This allows them to apply a cohesive translation approach across two segments.

It is also possible that the same translation team or agency was tasked with handling both the “One Planet” and “Coastal Seas” videos, leading to a uniform application of strategies. If the translations were reviewed and edited using the same quality assurance process, this could further contribute to the alignment of approaches between the two segments. In summary, the high degree of similarity does suggest the distinct possibility that the translations for “One Planet” and “Coastal Seas” were conducted by the same individual translator or translation team. This consistency in strategy application is a positive sign for quality and coherence in the overall translation effort.

As evidence, the following two instances of how “Expansion,” the second highest approach is employed in these two segments:

ST: *Small fish, in turn, sustain bigger ones.*

TT: *Ikan kecil, pada gilirannya, menopang ikan yang lebih besar.*

These data are derived from the “Coastal Seas.” The key expansion observed in the translation is that the Indonesian translation adds the word “ikan” (fish) to provide more explicit information about the relationship between small and bigger fish. The original English sentence conveys the idea concisely, but the Indonesian translation expands upon it by including an additional phrase to further clarify the sequential nature of the fish sustaining each other.

This Expansion strategy is often used by translators to enhance the clarity and contextual understanding of the translated text without significantly altering the core meaning from the source language. Adding the word “ikan” in the Indonesian translation makes the relationship between the small and bigger fish more explicit and natural for the target audience, which is an effective application of the Expansion translation technique.

In “One Planet,” Expansion strategy is used 9%. The following example is derived from “One Planet.”

ST: *Since then, the human population has more than doubled.*

TT: *Sejak saat itu, populasi manusia meningkat lebih dari dua kali lipat.*

In this case, the expansion can be seen in two ways. The First is the expansion of verb phrases. The English sentence uses the verb “has doubled” in a compact way. Then, the Indonesian translation expands this to “meningkat lebih dari dua kali lipat” (has increased more than two-fold). The Indonesian translation uses a more elaborate phrase that includes the verb “meningkat” (has increased). It also uses the adverbial phrase “lebih dari dua kali lipat” (more than two-fold). This expansion provides more specificity and nuance compared to the more concise English verb “has doubled,” Indonesian translations make the degree of increase (more than two-fold) explicit.

The second is explicit time reference. In the English sentence, the time reference is expressed in a more general way with “Since then.” The Indonesian translation, on the other hand, uses a more explicit time reference “Sejak saat itu” (Since that time). By specifying “saat itu” (that time), the Indonesian translation anchors the timeframe more clearly compared to the vaguer “then.” This expansion of time reference helps situate the context more precisely for the Indonesian audience, providing a more unambiguous temporal frame of reference. In both of these aspects, the Indonesian translator has chosen to expand upon more concise elements in the English source text. This expansion strategy aims to improve the clarity, specificity, and natural flow of the translated text while preserving its fundamental meaning. The augmented verb phrase and clearer temporal reference facilitate a more fluid and contextually suitable translation, illustrating the effective application of the expansion method to improve the clarity and coherence of the target language text.

In most cases, the two videos used the same strategy. At least three key similarities were identified. First, both have high reliance on the transfer strategy, accounting for over 60% of the techniques used. Second, they both utilize Expansion and Paraphrase strategies to a similar

extent, at approximately 9-11% each. Third, condensation was used moderately in both at 7% and 6%, respectively. The overall distribution and balance of these core strategies appear analogous between the two video titles. This suggests that the translators likely faced comparable challenges and constraints, leading them to adopt similar translation approaches. Some minor differences include the slightly higher use of Expansion and Paraphrase in “Coastal Seas,” as well as the lower condensation percentage. However, the core strategy mix is remarkably similar. This comparative analysis revealed an insightful parallel translation methodology applied to these two video titles. This exemplifies how significant patterns and relationships can be revealed through careful data analysis. The idea that the same individual translated both requires serious consideration. However, it is fair for these videos to be translated by the team. Even if the translations were not done by the same person or team, however, there are other potential explanations for the similarity in the translation strategy profiles between the “One Planet” and “Coastal Seas” segments.

Discussion on Similarity

Standardized translation instructions published by Netflix, the commissioning entity, must be available to ensure uniformity in the quality, performance, and caption translation process. This may be the first reason for this finding. Preference is also allowed to give freedom to the translator as long as it aims to create a better translation. The organization commissioning these translations may have established a set of standardized guidelines or best practices that translators are expected to follow. This could lead to consistent application of strategies across different content areas.

First, Netflix, the company that commissions translations, must have made standardized translation instructions available to maintain consistency in the quality, performance, and process of caption translation. Translators are given the opportunity to exercise their preferences as long as they contribute to the goal of producing a superior translation. The Netflix organization likely mandated that these translations be performed according to a set of specified principles or best practices that translators must follow. This has the potential to result in uniform implementation of strategies across various content domains.

Second, subject matter expertise can also be another important consideration in understanding translators' use of similar strategies across these segments. It is quite possible that individual translators working on these particular passages, but not necessarily on the same people, have similar domain expertise or background knowledge in the subject matter of nature, environment, and geography. This shared expertise and familiarity with thematic content could result in translators employing analogous translation approaches, even if they are not directly collaborating. Individuals with strong backgrounds in topics such as ecology, natural history, and regional geography may draw upon their existing knowledge and conceptual frameworks when rendering these types of source texts into the target language.

For example, translators with solid grounding in the characteristics and evolution of tropical ecosystems may be more inclined to use techniques such as expansion adding explanatory information to clarify cultural or scientific references that may be implicit in the original text. Similarly, those familiar with the distinctive flora and fauna of a particular island environment might lean towards transcription strategies to preserve specialized terminology related to local wildlife and vegetation. The translators' depth of subject-matter knowledge can thus shape their decision-making process, leading them to select similar translation strategies that best convey the intended meaning and contextual nuances to the target audience. This shared expertise, even across different translation teams, can result in consistent application of techniques such as paraphrasing, expansion, and condensation observed across the analyzed segments.

Accounting for this subject matter factor provides additional insight into the translators' rationale and the ways in which their specialized knowledge can influence the final subtitled

product. Understanding these underlying considerations is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of translation strategies employed in audiovisual content.

Third, target audience alignment is another key factor that may contribute to translators' use of comparable strategies across different segments. The Indonesian viewers, as the intended target audiences for both the “One Planet” and “Coastal Seas” videos, are likely quite similar in terms of their language proficiency, cultural background, and contextual familiarity. When translating audiovisual content to a specific target audience, subtitlers must carefully consider the needs, expectations, and capabilities of the audience. Indonesian viewers, as the shared target group for these nature documentaries, may share certain characteristics that inform translators' strategic decisions.

The subtitlers strive to provide a smooth and engaging viewing experience perfectly tailored to the Indonesian context by matching their translation methods with the expected demands and preferences of the target audience. Translators, even while working separately, might develop comparable tactics to attain the intended results because of their common comprehension of the target audience's features. Considering the alignment of the target audience helps us to understand why methods such as paraphrasing, expansion, and condensation are consistently used in the investigated segments. An audience-centric viewpoint is a crucial factor to consider when aiming for good audiovisual translation.

Another possible factor that might be attributed to translators' use of comparable strategies across different segments is the technological tools they have at their disposal. The increasing reliance on computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, such as translation memory (TM) software, can significantly influence the consistency of the translation approaches employed by subtitlers. Translation memory tools are designed to store previously translated segments, terminologies, and stylistic preferences. As translators work on new projects, these tools can suggest or automatically populate text based on matches found in existing TM databases. This functionality can encourage the use of similar techniques, such as paraphrasing, expansion, and condensation, across multiple translations, as translators leverage previously established patterns and conventions.

Drawing upon the accumulated knowledge and pre-existing translations stored in the TM helps subtitlers ensure a greater degree of consistency in their terminology, phrasing, and overall translation strategies. This can be particularly beneficial in the context of audiovisual translation, in which maintaining linguistic and stylistic coherence across multiple segments or episodes is crucial for providing a seamless viewing experience for the target audience. Furthermore, the use of translation memory software and databases can facilitate collaborative work among translation teams. When multiple subtitlers contribute to a single project, the shared TM can help synchronize their translation approaches, leading to observed similarities in techniques such as paraphrasing and condensation.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of subtitling strategies in the Netflix documentary series “Our Planet” highlights the complex nature of audiovisual translation. The predominant use of the transfer technique shows the subtitlers' commitment to maintaining the core meaning of the source text, while strategies like expansion, paraphrasing, and condensation demonstrate their understanding of the target audience. The findings illustrate the balance subtitlers must achieve when translating educational content for a global audience. By examining strategic decisions across episodes, this study provides insights into the cognitive and pragmatic processes involved in effective subtitling.

Additionally, the insights gained have important implications for audiovisual translation, considering factors like subject matter expertise and technological tools. These findings can guide best practices and inspire further research into video localization and multilingual content. As online platforms expand globally, the demand for high-quality subtitling grows.

This research underscores the vital role of translation in bridging linguistic and cultural divides, enhancing viewers' engagement with diverse narratives. Ultimately, the study contributes to a better understanding of the art and science of audiovisual translation, enriching the multilingual viewing experience.

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