

The Subtitling Strategies of Katherine Wyler's Utterances in The Diplomat TV Series Season 02 Episode 01

Sunarti Desrieny Tambunan

Faculty of Letters and Cultures/English Literature Department, Gunadarma University

Article History

Received : 15 October 2025
Revised : 20 November 2025
Accepted : 31 Desember 2025
Published : 31 Desember 2025

Corresponding author*:

sunartidtambunan@gmail.com

Cite This Article:

Tambunan, S. D. (2025). The Subtitling Strategies of Katherine Wyler's Utterances in The Diplomat TV Series Season 02 Episode 01. *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan*, 4(3), 236–242.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.56127/jushpen.v4i3.2494>

Abstract: The primary objective of this research is to discover the subtitling strategies employed in translating Katherine Wyler's utterances in The Diplomat TV Series Season 02 Episode 01 from English into Indonesian using Gottlieb's theory. Because the findings are not reached through statistical procedures or other methods of quantification, thus, this research used descriptive and qualitative. Katherine Wyler articulated a total of 155 utterances. In accordance with Gottlieb's theoretical framework, seven out of ten strategies have been discovered. The findings of the study revealed 171 data related to subtitling strategies. The first strategy is transfer with 66 data, followed by condensation strategy with 40 data. Then paraphrase strategy with 35 data, expansion strategy with 16 data, imitation strategy with 7 data, deletion strategy with 4 data, and decimation strategy with 3 data. The findings of the research indicate that the most frequently employed strategy is transfer. Furthermore, three strategies were not discovered. They are resignation, transcription, and dislocation.

Keywords: Audiovisual Translation, Subtitle, Subtitling Strategy, Translation

INTRODUCTION

Subtitles are the words or phrases spoken in an audiovisual text. People can access movies from different countries via various applications, therefore subtitles in different languages must be provided. Take western movies, for instance. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. People in Indonesia must have the Indonesian version of the subtitles to understand the dialogue when they want to watch Western movies. This version or the result of the translation helped bridge the gap between one to another cultures (Abdelaal & Sarhani, 2021). However, the movie subtitles from various languages that are provided in an application need to be processed. If the original language is in English than they need competent translators to translate the utterances into its target language. Mostly, the utterances of the casts in the movie cannot be translated word-for-word due to cultural gaps. For instance, profanity, humor, and idiomatic expressions are often considered taboo in Indonesian culture and are frequently omitted. As cited in Moreau (2024), based on Xavier's theory about "On norms and taboo", subtitlers or translators have the choice to either omit, maintain or adapt the swear words in the subtitles. Hence, translators must thoughtfully deliberate on an effective strategy for each case they come across during the translation process.

In the context of translation, the process of transferring a language from one culture to another entails more than merely transposing the text itself; it also involves the transposition of the culture from its original context into the target language (Valerio, 2013). Additionally, she noted that remaining faithful is not the only option available to a translator. A translation is considered "good" if the translator successfully conveys the

meaning and values of the original text in the target language. Translation encompasses a broad range of disciplines, not limited to legal texts. A different type of translation is subtitling, which is part of audiovisual translation. It is also called “interlingual subtitling”, which means the subtitles are a translation of the utterances into another language (Jelic, 2012; Alaa & Sawi, 2023). Bartrina & Espasa (2005) stated that during the process of the translation, there is a change of code, from the oral to the written form. Then, the oral message of the source audiovisual text is present in the translated product. As stated by Wang (2023), its translation is difficult and the translators need relevant theories to guide. It can be concluded that this process involves not only the process itself, but also the guidance or basis that underlies it.

In translating the movie or tv series subtitle from the original language to its target language, as cited in Ghaemi & Benyamin (2010), Gottlieb proposed ten (10) strategies. They are: (1) expansion, employing this strategy means that there is additional elements because the culture in the original text is different than the target language. (2) Paraphrase, employing this strategy means that there is a change of structure in the target language but the meaning is retained. (3) Transfer, employing this strategy means that the text is translated literally and completely, no addition or modification. (4) Imitation, employing this strategy means that all proper nouns, international greetings, etc. are translated exactly the way it is. (5) Transcription, employing this strategy means that there is the third language or nonsense language in the movie. (6) Dislocation, employing this strategy means that the result of the translation focus on the effect like silly songs. (7) Condensation, employing this strategy means that the text is shortened because of some redundancies. (8) Decimation, employing this strategy means that there is an extreme condensation due to fast tempo. (9) Deletion, employing this strategy means that repetition, filler words, and some unimportant elements are deleted. (10) Resignation, employing this strategy means that no translation solution can be found and the meaning is completely lost in the target language.

In accordance with the explanation above, in this research, the researcher will explore the use of subtitling strategies from a TV series entitled *The Diplomat* which has 3 seasons. The researcher chose the second season episode 01 entitled *When a Stranger Calls*. Therefore, this research aims at discovering the subtitling strategies used in translating Katherine Wyler's utterances in *The Diplomat* TV Series Season 02 Episode 01 from English into Indonesian using Gottlieb's theory. It can be concluded that only Katherine Wyler's utterances will be described and discussed.

Some studies conducted regarding the use of the strategies in subtitling. Manik, Puspani, Mulyawan (2024) discussed two points, such as finding out the subtitling strategies applied in translating the Indonesian subtitle from an English movie *The Greatest Showman* based on Gottlieb's ten strategies of subtitling and then analyzing and describing the translation equivalence found. Their findings revealed that Paraphrase is a strategy which frequently used by the translator and followed by Transfer strategy.

Xiaorui & Amirdabbaghian (2024) focused on identifying quotes of humor in a movie. They discussed the categorization of the translation techniques using Pedersen's typology (2005, 2011) and assessed the translation quality of the humorous content in the English subtitles of the Chinese comedy movie *Goodbye, Mr. Loser* (2015) based on Newmark's (1988) framework. Their first finding revealed that based on the collected samples, substitution emerged as the most prevalent technique, with six out of twelve samples employing these translations. Followed by omission, occurring four times. However, techniques like retention and specification were not observed. The second finding revealed

that there were only two out of twelve samples are accurate, while the remaining ten exhibited varying degrees of inaccuracy in semantics and context, resulting in an overall lower accuracy of the English subtitles.

Last, Aisyah & Budiman (2023) discussed about the use of subtitling strategies and techniques in Indonesian film *Marlina si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak* due to spatial constraints based on Gottlieb's ten strategies of subtitling. In their finding, out of ten strategies, one strategy, transcription, was not applicable to the corpus. The most common strategies were transfer, then condensation. Transfer was used to translate simple phrases, while condensation was used to translate dialogs with unimportant utterances.

As previously mentioned, the three preceding researchers have primarily focused on strategies or techniques employed in the translation of subtitles for movies or television series. However, Xiaorui & Amirdabbaghian (2024) focused on identifying quotes of humor in a movie entitled *Goodbye, Mr. Loser* (2015) using Pedersen's translation techniques, Newmark, and Nababan, Nuraeni and Sumardiono's (2012). While Manik, Puspani, Mulyawan (2024), Aisyah & Budiman (2023) and this research have the similarities in using Gottlieb's theory to find and analyze the data found.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the findings are not reached through statistical procedures or other methods of quantification. Thus, this research is descriptive and qualitative given the nature of the research questions that it aims to answer, based on Gottlieb's theory, what subtitling strategies are used in translating Katherine Wyler's utterances in *The Diplomat* TV Series Season 02 Episode 01 (45 minutes) from English into Indonesian. This TV series is available on Netflix. It is an American political thriller, which first airing is in 2023 while the second season is in 2024. It is directed by Debora Cahn starring Keri Russell as Katherine Wyler. Moreover, the data collected only Katherine Wyler's utterances and they are taken manually. The data are the English and Indonesian subtitles.

To conduct this research, several procedures were employed. The initial step in this process is the collection of data. To achieve this objective, the following three steps were taken: (1) Katherine Wyler's utterances in English were gathered and translated into Indonesian, (2) the theory of subtitling strategies proposed by Gottlieb as cited in Ghaemi and Benyamin (2010) was studied and comprehended, and (3) each utterance was classified based on the subtitling strategies. The second is analyzing the data. The data were analyzed by: (1) choosing the samples randomly based on the number of strategies found. This research discovered seven strategies, and seven samples were taken as representatives from each strategy. (2) Defining each strategy found. (3) Narrating the scene to make it clear why a strategy was used. (4) Explaining the reason clearly why the translator chose the strategy. (5) Drawing a conclusion whether the strategy used has met the criteria based on Gottlieb's theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The primary objective of this research is to discover the subtitling strategies employed in translating Katherine Wyler's utterances in *The Diplomat* TV Series Season 2 Episode 1 from English into Indonesian using Gottlieb's theory. Katherine Wyler articulated a total of 155 utterances. The findings of the study revealed 171 data related to subtitling strategies. In accordance with Gottlieb's theoretical framework, seven out of ten strategies have been discovered. The first strategy is transfer with 66 data, followed by condensation

strategy with 40 data. Then paraphrase strategy with 35 data, expansion strategy with 16 data, imitation strategy with 7 data, deletion strategy with 4 data, and decimation strategy with 3 data.

Discussion

Transfer Strategy

Transfer strategy in subtitling is conveying full expression from the source language into the target language. In other words, the utterances are translated completely and accurately. In this research, transfer is the most dominant used of strategy in translating Katherine Wyler's utterances. One of the examples is provided below:

English (SL)	Indonesian (TL)
00:02:41,849 --> 00:02:48,731 Yeah. Alert in large crowds, review your personal security plans, stay in contact with family.	00:02:41,932 --> 00:02:48,689 <i>Ya, waspadai kerumunan besar, tinjau rencana keamanan pribadi, tetap terhubung dengan keluarga.</i>

In the movie, this utterance is made by Katherine following the bombing. In her capacity as ambassador, she is expected to function as the on-site leader. She is addressing the crisis by ensuring the safety of her staff. Her utterance constitutes an order; therefore, the translator must ensure that the meaning conveyed in the target language is as accurate as possible. As seen in the example above, the translator translated the full expression. It is translated completely and accurately, no addition or modification. Most importantly, it does not lose its meaning.

Condensation Strategy

Condensation Strategy in subtitling is about shortening the utterance in the target language due to redundancies and unimportant elements and it is in the normal speed. Although some elements are omitted, in this strategy, it leaves the whole meaning. One of the examples is provided below:

English (SL)	Indonesian (TL)
00:25:55,116 --> 00:26:02,080 You said yourself, you can't run around the building asking your colleagues if they think your head of government shot up his own ship.	00:25:55,116 --> 00:26:02,080 Kau sendiri bilang, tak boleh sembarangan menanyai kolega soal kepala pemerintahanmu mungkin menyerang kapalnya sendiri.

In the movie, Mrs. Park as the head of CIA, Katherine Wyler as the ambassador, and Dennison as the British foreign secretary are talking about the possible person who ordered the attack. In the source language, the result of the translation is shorter because the word "you" and the clause "if they think" are omitted. Although they are omitted, the meaning conveyed is maintained accurately as possible.

Paraphrase Strategy

Paraphrase strategy in subtitling is a strategy where the phraseology of the source language cannot be reconstructed in the same syntactic way in the target language. One of the examples is provided below:

English (SL)	Indonesian (TL)
00:29:02,094 --> 00:29:04,429 He has half his government looking for her.	00:29:02,094 --> 00:29:04,429 <i>Dia mengerahkan banyak orang untuk mencari Roylin.</i>

In the movie, Roylin has an important role. Katherine is so sure that she is connected with the bombing attack in London. However, Roylin is missing. Katherine is also sure that Trowbridge is the one who orders the attack. If he knows that Roylin is missing, it means that he has a full authority in finding her. From the result of the translation above, the phrase “half his government” is translated using paraphrase strategy becomes “**mengerahkan banyak orang**” in the target language. The phrase “half his government” is a noun phrase in the source language, however, the result becomes a verb “mengerahkan” followed by an adjective phrase “banyak orang”. Applying this strategy makes the result better and more acceptable rather than transferring each word completely.

Expansion Strategy

Expansion Strategy in subtitling is adding some elements due to cultural differences in the target language. One of the examples is provided below:

English (SL)	Indonesian (TL)
00:30:37,940 --> 00:30:41,150	00:30:37,940 --> 00:30:41,150
It doesn't look like it was intended to be a mass casualty event.	<i>Tampaknya pengeboman itu tidak mengincar korban massal.</i>

In the movie, Katherine is talking to the White House’s secretary to discuss about the bombing in London. They talk about the casualties and thus far there are three Americans, the embassy staffs, who are hospitalized. In the example above, it can be seen that in the source language there is no “bombing” that is stated directly. However, there is a word “it” that refers to the “bombing”. While in the target language, the result of the translation is expanding because there is an addition of the word “**pengeboman**”. If it is translated literally, it will not make sense. Although there is an addition, the meaning conveyed is maintained and even becomes more acceptable.

Imitation Strategy

Imitation strategy in subtitling is a strategy used by retaining the same forms. This applies with names of people, places, international greetings, and so forth. One of the examples is provided below:

English (SL)	Indonesian (TL)
00:21:33,396 --> 00:21:35,023	00:21:33,313 --> 00:21:35,273
I told Margaret Roylin .	<i>Aku memberi tahu Margaret Roylin.</i>

In the movie, Margaret Roylin is closely related to the bombing in London because Katherine tells her that her husband, Mr. Wyler, is in London. As seen in the example above, Margaret Roylin is a name, therefore, it must be retained. It cannot be translated in the target language.

Decimation Strategy

Decimation strategy in subtitling is an extreme form of condensation where perhaps for reasons of discourse speed, even potentially important elements are omitted. One of the examples is provided below:

English (SL)	Indonesian (TL)
00:06:36,875 --> 00:06:39,294	00:06:35,416 --> 00:06:39,294
Ordered a strike on his own warship, which may or may not be connected to the bomb that just went off in his own city .	<i>Menyerang kapal perangnya sendiri, yang mungkin saja berkaitan dengan bom di London.</i>

In the movie, Katherine is talking with Mrs. Park. She expresses how untrustworthy the British government is at the moment. Thus, she suspects that the Prime Minister is behind

the bombing, the inside house. As seen in the example above, the long sentence uttered by Katherine is condensed extremely. The phrase “or may not” is omitted in the target language and a clause “that just went off in his own city” is translated into “*di London*” in the target language.

Deletion Strategy

Deletion strategy in subtitling is the total elimination of parts of a text. It was used to deal with non-verbal content, repetition, filler words and tag questions and, in some cases, swear words which were not common and/or appropriate in the target language or target culture. One of the examples is provided below:

English (SL)	Indonesian (TL)
00:21:07,662 --> 00:21:10,831 What did he say to you at Chatham House? Grove?	00:21:07,662 --> 00:21:10,832 <i>Apa yang Grove katakan padamu di Chatham House?</i>

In the movie, Katherine is talking with her husband, Mr. Wyler. She is curious about Mr. Wyler and Grove’s conversation before the bombing happens. As seen in the example above, “Grove?” in the source language is completely deleted in the target language. The translator applies this strategy to avoid repetition. Therefore, the pronoun “he” in the source language is substituted with “Grove” in the target language. Even though there is a deletion, the meaning in target language is retained accurately.

CONCLUSION

This research aims at finding the subtitling strategies used in translating Katherine Wyler’s utterances in *The Diplomat* TV Series Season 2 Episode 1 from English into Indonesian using Gottlieb’s theory. Based on Gottlieb’s model, there are ten (10) strategies that can be applied to translate movie or tv series subtitles. They are expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, and resignation. In this research, there are seven (7) strategies found. The findings of the research indicate that the most frequently employed strategy is strategy with 66 data. This strategy marks the highest because short phrases or expression like “yeah”, “yep”, “thank you”, and many more uttered by Katherine Wyler appear constantly and they translated completely without addition or modification. The second is condensation strategy with 40 data. This strategy marks the second most frequently employed strategy because some unimportant elements found and the translator decides to omit them without losing the meaning. Move on to the next strategy found is paraphrase strategy with 35 data. It can be concluded this strategy marks the third most frequently employed comparing to the other strategies left. This happens due to the utterances in the original text have different structure in the target language e.g. active sentence is translated into passive sentence in the target language. The other strategies found are expansion strategy with 16 data, imitation strategy with 7 data, deletion strategy with 4 data, and the last is decimation strategy with 3 data. Furthermore, three strategies were not discovered. They are resignation, transcription, and dislocation. Resignation strategy is applied if there is no solution and the meaning is completely lost. However, based on the findings, from 155 utterances, all of them are translated into the target language accurately. Transcription strategy is applied if there is a third language or nonsense language found. However, the tv series is in English from beginning to end. Dislocation strategy is applied if the subtitles contain humor or silly songs. The effect is more important than the dialogue itself. However, the tv series is about politics, a serious one. It is clear that translation, particularly subtitling, is a challenging

task. A translator must have the basis and guidance to produce an optimum translation product.

The present research is limited to the discussion of subtitling strategies employed in the translation of Katherine Wyler's utterances. It is recommended that future researchers continue to explore the strategies employed from different casts. Additionally, the evaluation of the translation quality of subtitles from English into Indonesian can be taken into consideration.

REFERENCES

Abdelaal, N. M., & Sarhani, A. A. (2021). Subtitling strategies of swear words and taboo expressions in the movie "Training Day". *Heliyon*, 1-9.

Aisyah, T. Z., & Budiman, A. (2022). FRENCH SUBTITLING STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES USED IN INDONESIAN FILM MARLINA SI PEMBUNUH DALAM EMPAT BABAK . *International Review of Humanities Studies* , 796-814.

Alaa, A. M., & Sawi, I. A. (2023). The analysis and quality assessment of translation strategies in subtitling culturally specific references: Feathers . *Heliyon*, 1-15.

Bartrina, F., & Espasa, E. (2005). Audiovisual translation. In M. Tennet, *Training for the new millennium* (pp. 83-100). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Cahn, D. (Director). (2023). *The Diplomat* [Motion Picture].

Ghaemi, F., & Benyamin, J. (2010). Strategies Used in the Translation of Interlingual Subtitling. *JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES* , 39-49.

Jelić, M. (2012). *Theoretical and practical aspects of subtitling movies: case study of the movie 'In the Loop' and its translation into Croatian*. Osijek.

Manik, N. N., Puspani, I. A., & Mulyawan, I. W. (2024). Subtitling Strategies Applied in The Subtitle of The Movie "The Greatest Showman" from English to Indonesia . *Udayana Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1-4.

Moreau, E. (2024). The Subtitling Strategies Adopted to Render the Four-Letter Words Fuck, Shit and Their Variants in the French Version of Orange Is the New Black: A Corpus-Based Study. *Anglo Saxonica*, 1-15.

Valerio, A. (2013). Translation and ideology: a critical reading. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 986 – 996 .

Wang, Z. (2023). A Study of Subtitle Translation from the Perspective of Functional Equivalence Theory Taking the Movie "La La Land" as an Example. *Proceedings of the 2023 5th International Conference on Literature, Art and Human Development (ICLAHD 2023)*, 337-345.

Xiaorui, Z., & Amirdabbaghian, A. (2024). Assessing Translation of Humor in The English Subtitles of Goodbye Mr. Loser. *Journal of Digital Sociohumanities*, 75-91.