



Analysis of Translation Techniques in Indonesian Subtitles of Interstellar Movie

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Abstract. *This study examines the translation techniques in Indonesian subtitles of Interstellar (2014), applying Vinay and Darbelnet's framework. Through a qualitative descriptive analysis of 1,903 English-Indonesian subtitle pairs from Google TV, the research identifies the distribution patterns of seven translation procedures: borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Results indicate literal translation dominates with 636 instances (33.42%), followed by modulation (489 cases, 25.70%) and transposition (362 cases, 19.02%). Borrowing accounts for 247 cases (12.98%), while equivalence, adaptation, and calque represent 3.57%, 2.84%, and 2.47%, respectively. The nearly balanced use of direct techniques (48.87%) and oblique techniques (51.13%) demonstrates strategic approaches in professional translation. The predominance of literal translation suggests structural compatibility between English and Indonesian, while significant modulation and transposition usage reveal necessary adaptations for cultural and linguistic differences. Technical terminology often favors borrowing, and cultural references require adaptation. This research provides empirical evidence for professional audiovisual translation practices.*

Keywords: Film; Subtitle; Translation Technique

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji teknik penerjemahan pada subtitle Bahasa Indonesia Interstellar (2014) dengan menerapkan kerangka kerja Vinay dan Darbelnet. Melalui analisis deskriptif kualitatif terhadap 1.903 pasang subtitle Bahasa Inggris-Indonesia dari Google TV, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi pola distribusi tujuh prosedur penerjemahan: peminjaman, kalke, penerjemahan harfiah, transposisi, modulasi, kesetaraan, dan adaptasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan penerjemahan harfiah mendominasi dengan 636 contoh (33,42%), diikuti oleh modulasi (489 kasus, 25,70%) dan transposisi (362 kasus, 19,02%). Peminjaman mencakup 247 kasus (12,98%), sedangkan kesetaraan, adaptasi, dan kalke masing-masing mewakili 3,57%, 2,84%, dan 2,47%. Penggunaan teknik langsung (48,87%) dan teknik tidak langsung (51,13%) yang hampir seimbang menunjukkan pendekatan strategis dalam penerjemahan profesional. Dominasi penerjemahan harfiah menunjukkan adanya kesesuaian struktural antara bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia, sementara penggunaan modulasi dan transposisi yang signifikan menunjukkan adanya adaptasi yang diperlukan untuk perbedaan budaya dan bahasa. Terminologi teknis sering kali lebih menyukai peminjaman, dan referensi budaya memerlukan adaptasi. Penelitian ini memberikan bukti empiris untuk praktik penerjemahan audiovisual profesional.

Kata Kunci: Film; Teknik Penerjemahan; Teks

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital streaming platforms has significantly increased global demand for audiovisual translation, particularly subtitling services. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) emphasize that subtitling has become the predominant mode of audiovisual translation, enabling cross-cultural media consumption while preserving original audio authenticity. This growth has created an urgent need for a systematic analysis of professional translation practices employed in subtitle production.

Subtitle translation operates within unique constraints that distinguish it from traditional text-based translation. Pedersen (2011) notes that translators must accommodate character limitations, synchronization requirements, and reading speed considerations while maintaining semantic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. These multidimensional constraints create complex decision-making environments that require systematic investigation to understand professional translation strategies.

The English-Indonesian language pair presents compelling analytical opportunities due to structural and cultural differences between these linguistic systems. Hatim and Mason (2013) argue that cross-linguistic translation research contributes essential insights into how typological differences influence translation strategy selection, particularly in specialized contexts like audiovisual translation.

Current audiovisual translation research predominantly focuses on European language pairs, creating significant gaps in understanding translation practices across diverse linguistic contexts. Chaume (2020) emphasizes the importance of expanding research to include non-Western language pairs to develop comprehensive theoretical frameworks. Investigation of English-Indonesian subtitle translation addresses this scholarly gap while contributing empirical evidence regarding Southeast Asian translation practices.

Science fiction cinema provides optimal research corpora for translation analysis due to its combination of specialized terminology, universal themes, and culture-specific references. Gottlieb (2005) demonstrates that genre-specific translation studies reveal systematic patterns in professional translation decision-making. *Interstellar* (2014) exemplifies these characteristics through its integration of scientific concepts, emotional dialogue, and cultural elements, making it ideal for comprehensive translation technique analysis.

This study establishes two primary objectives contributing to translation studies. First, to identify and analyze translation technique distribution in Indonesian subtitles of *Interstellar*, determining which procedures predominate in professional audiovisual translation practice. This quantitative analysis provides empirical evidence regarding systematic translation strategy preferences in English-Indonesian contexts.

Second, to provide a comprehensive classification and analysis of translation technique applications according to Vinay and Darbelnet's framework, examining how specific techniques function within audiovisual translation constraints. This qualitative analysis investigates factors influencing technique selection, including linguistic compatibility, cultural complexity, and technical limitations, contributing to a theoretical understanding of professional audiovisual translation practices.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

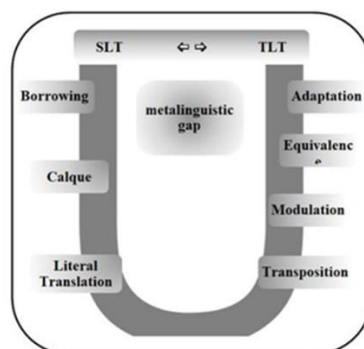
Audiovisual Translation and Subtitling

Audiovisual translation represents a specialized domain within translation studies that encompasses various forms of interlingual transfer in multimedia contexts. Chaume (2020) defines audiovisual translation as the practice of translating audiovisual texts, which includes multiple modes of meaning-making such as verbal, visual, and acoustic elements. This multidimensional nature distinguishes audiovisual translation from traditional text-based translation practices, requiring translators to navigate complex semiotic relationships between different communicative channels.

Subtitling, as a specific mode of audiovisual translation, presents unique challenges and constraints that significantly influence translation decisions. Cintas and Remael (2014) emphasize that subtitling involves the rendering of spoken dialogue into written text displayed on screen, subject to spatiotemporal limitations that fundamentally shape translation strategies. These constraints include character limits per subtitle line, duration restrictions based on reading speeds, and synchronization requirements with audiovisual content. The interplay between these technical constraints and linguistic considerations creates a distinctive translation environment that demands specialized analytical approaches.

Translation Techniques Framework

The theoretical foundation for analyzing translation techniques in this study draws upon the seminal work of Vinay and Darbelnet (2000), whose methodology for translation provides a comprehensive framework for categorizing translation procedures. Their systematic approach identifies seven distinct translation techniques arranged along a continuum from direct translation methods to oblique translation strategies, representing different degrees of departure from source language structures.



Source: Safi, S. H., & Nasser, L. A. (2022)

Figure 1. U Diagram involving the seven Procedures of Vinay & Darbelnet

The framework conceptualizes translation techniques as existing along a spectrum between Source Language Text (SLT) and Target Language Text (TLT), with techniques positioned according to their proximity to either linguistic system. This conceptualization acknowledges the metalinguistic gap that translators must navigate when transferring meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Direct Translation Techniques

a. Borrowing

Borrowing involves the direct incorporation of source language elements into the target text without translation. This technique is positioned at the extreme source language end of the spectrum and is commonly employed for proper nouns, technical terminology, or culturally specific concepts that lack direct equivalents in the target language.

b. Calque

Calque represents the borrowing of syntactic structures or expressions from the source language, creating literal translations that maintain source language organizational patterns. This technique produces expressions that may initially appear foreign to target language speakers but can become integrated into target language usage over time.

c. Literal Translation

Literal Translation represents the most direct form of interlingual transfer, where source language structures are preserved in the target language without significant modification. This technique is typically employed when linguistic structures between source and target languages demonstrate high compatibility, allowing for direct transfer of meaning without substantial adaptation.

Oblique Translation Techniques

a. Transposition

Transposition refers to changes in grammatical categories or word classes between source and target languages. This technique accommodates structural differences between languages, allowing translators to maintain semantic equivalence through syntactic adaptation while moving toward target language norms.

b. Modulation

Modulation involves changes in the point of view or perspective between source and target texts while maintaining equivalent meaning. This technique addresses differences

in how languages conceptualize and express similar ideas, requiring translators to shift cognitive frameworks while preserving semantic content.

c. Equivalence

Equivalence represents the use of target language expressions that convey equivalent meaning through entirely different linguistic structures. This technique is particularly relevant for idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and situational contexts that require complete reformulation for target audience comprehension.

d. Adaptation

Adaptation involves the most significant departure from source language structures, requiring substantial cultural and linguistic modification to achieve functional equivalence in the target context. This technique addresses cases where direct translation would result in cultural incomprehension or inappropriate register, demanding creative intervention by the translator to bridge the metalinguistic gap between source and target cultures.

Previous Research in Subtitle Translation

Recent scholarship in subtitle translation has demonstrated the practical application of translation technique analysis in audiovisual contexts. Fitria (2019) conducted a comprehensive analysis of translation techniques in the subtitle translation of "Bajrangi Bhaijaan," revealing the predominance of literal translation strategies in Hindi-English-Indonesian translation chains. This research demonstrated how cultural and linguistic proximity influences translation technique selection, with literal translation proving effective for culturally neutral dialogue while more complex techniques were required for culture-specific content.

Building upon this foundation, Fitria (2020) extended the analytical framework to examine translation techniques in "Crazy Rich Asians," focusing specifically on English-Indonesian subtitle translation. The study revealed significant variation in technique usage based on dialogue content, with modulation and transposition frequently employed to address structural differences between English and Indonesian. These findings suggest that translation technique selection is influenced by both linguistic factors and the specific demands of audiovisual contexts.

Contemporary research has also explored the intersection of translation techniques with cultural adaptation strategies. Denpasar, Putu, and Utami (2023) investigated the translation of taboo expressions in "Project X," demonstrating how cultural sensitivity requirements in

subtitle translation necessitate sophisticated technique combinations. Their analysis revealed that culturally sensitive content often requires multiple translation techniques working in combination, highlighting the complexity of audiovisual translation decision-making processes.

The analysis of translation shifts in recent audiovisual productions has further refined the understanding of technique application patterns. Sugiantari, Utami, and Permana (2023) examined adjective phrase translation in "Red Notice," revealing how grammatical category shifts reflect deeper patterns of cross-linguistic adaptation. Their research demonstrated that translation techniques operate not merely as isolated strategies but as integrated approaches to managing linguistic and cultural differences in multimedia contexts.

Data Source

The primary data source consists of parallel English-Indonesian subtitle pairs extracted from the science fiction film *Interstellar* (2014), obtained through the Google TV platform. The selection of audiovisual material as the data source is theoretically grounded in the significance of subtitling within contemporary translation practice. Cintas and Remael (2014) demonstrate that audiovisual translation, particularly subtitling, constitutes a specialized domain of translation studies requiring distinct analytical approaches due to its unique spatiotemporal and technical constraints.

Interstellar was selected as the specific corpus for several methodological reasons. The film presents rich scientific terminology, complex narrative structures, and diverse dialogue types that offer comprehensive translation challenges. These characteristics provide an optimal dataset for examining the complete spectrum of translation techniques employed in professional subtitle translation, ensuring the research findings possess both depth and breadth of analytical coverage.

3. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze translation techniques utilized in Indonesian subtitles of the film *Interstellar*. Qualitative descriptive methodology is particularly appropriate for translation studies as it enables researchers to provide comprehensive summaries of linguistic phenomena in their natural context (Stanley, 2023). This approach facilitates an in-depth examination of translation practices while maintaining systematic analytical rigor without being constrained by predetermined theoretical assumptions.

The selection of qualitative descriptive methodology aligns with the fundamental nature of translation research, which seeks to understand and describe translation processes through detailed textual analysis. Glynn (2021) emphasizes that qualitative research methods in translation theory offer valuable insights into the complexities of translation practices by allowing systematic examination of linguistic and cultural phenomena within their contextual framework. The research object encompasses two primary dimensions of translation analysis:

First, translation technique dominance focuses on identifying and analyzing the most frequently employed translation techniques in Indonesian subtitles of *Interstellar*. This dimension seeks to determine which translation procedures predominate in audiovisual translation contexts and examine the underlying factors contributing to their prevalence.

Second, translation technique classification involves systematic categorization of each translation instance according to the seven translation procedures established by Vinay and Darbelnet (2000). This classification process enables a comprehensive understanding of how different translation techniques function within the constraints of subtitle translation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of translation techniques employed in the Indonesian subtitles of *Interstellar* reveals significant patterns in the distribution and application of the seven translation procedures established by Vinay and Darbelnet (2000). The examination of 1,903 subtitle pairs demonstrates a clear preference hierarchy among translation techniques, with direct translation methods dominating the overall translation strategy.

Table 1 Type of Translation Technique Used in the Subtitle “Interstellar” Movie

No.	Translation Technique	Data	Percentage (%)
1.	Literal Translation	636	33.42%
2.	Modulation	489	25.70%
3.	Transposition	362	19.02%
4.	Borrowing	247	12.98%
5.	Equivalence	68	3.57%
6.	Adaptation	54	2.84%
7.	Calque	47	2.47%
Total		1903	100%

The quantitative analysis presented in Table 1 indicates that literal translation constitutes the most frequently employed technique, accounting for 636 instances or 33.42% of all translation decisions. This predominance suggests that the linguistic structures between English and Indonesian demonstrate sufficient compatibility to allow for direct transfer of meaning without substantial modification. The high frequency of literal translation aligns with Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) assertion that this technique represents the most economical

translation solution when source and target languages possess comparable syntactic and semantic frameworks.

The second most prevalent technique is modulation, comprising 489 instances (25.70% of the total corpus). This substantial representation indicates that translators frequently needed to adjust the point of view or perspective to accommodate cultural and linguistic differences between English and Indonesian conceptual frameworks. The significant application of modulation reflects the necessity of cognitive adaptation in cross-cultural communication, particularly when dealing with idiomatic expressions and culturally-specific references prevalent in contemporary American cinema.

Transposition emerges as the third most common technique with 362 occurrences (19.02%), demonstrating the importance of grammatical adaptation in subtitle translation. The frequent use of transposition suggests that, despite the overall compatibility between English and Indonesian structures, significant syntactic adjustments remain necessary to achieve natural target language expression. This finding supports Vinay and Darbelnet's (2000) observation that transposition serves as a crucial bridging mechanism between languages with different grammatical organizations.

Borrowing

Tabel 2. Example of Borrowing 1

Data.	Timescode	Source Language	Target Language
No.4	00:01:30:05	Computer says you're too tight.	Komputer bilang kau terlalu riskan.

This example demonstrates direct borrowing, where the English term "computer" is directly transferred into Indonesian as "komputer" with phonological adaptation to Indonesian sound patterns. According to Vinay and Darbelnet (2000), borrowing represents the most direct form of lexical transfer, typically employed when the target language lacks equivalent terminology or when source language terms have gained international recognition. Muñoz-Miquel (2012) emphasizes that borrowing in audiovisual translation often occurs with technological terminology that has become universally accepted across languages. The retention of "computer" reflects the global standardization of technological vocabulary, where direct incorporation facilitates immediate audience comprehension without requiring cultural or linguistic mediation.

Calque

Tabel 3. Example of Calque

Data.	Timescode	Source Language	Target Language
No.1178	01:39:17:01	The gravity is a very, very pleasant 80 percent of the Earth's.	Gravitasinya lebih ringan 80 persen dari Bumi.

This example demonstrates calque through the structural borrowing of the English comparative construction. The Indonesian translation "Gravitasinya lebih ringan 80 persen dari Bumi" maintains the English syntactic pattern of expressing gravity comparison. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) define calque as borrowing the syntactic structure of the source language while translating the individual lexical elements. Baker (2018) notes that calque in scientific contexts often preserves technical precision while adapting to target language phonological patterns. The phrase structure "gravity is... 80 percent of Earth's" is directly mirrored in Indonesian as "gravitasinya... 80 persen dari Bumi," demonstrating how calque maintains conceptual organization patterns from the source language while facilitating technical comprehension through familiar structural frameworks.

Literal Translation

Tabel 4. Example of Literal Translation

Data.	Timescode	Source Language	Target Language
No.1	00:01:14:16	My dad was a farmer.	Ayahku seorang petani.

This literal translation demonstrates perfect structural and semantic correspondence between English and Indonesian. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) identify literal translation as the most economical procedure when source and target languages exhibit compatible syntactic and semantic frameworks. Nornes (2007) argues that literal translation in audiovisual contexts preserves the original's communicative directness while maintaining natural target language expression. The word-for-word correspondence (My dad = Ayahku, was = (zero copula), a farmer = seorang petani) illustrates the structural compatibility between English and Indonesian in expressing familial and occupational relationships.

Transposition

Tabel 5. Example of Transposition

Data.	Timescode	Source Language	Target Language
No.64	00:05:03:22	Why don't you start minding your own business, old man?	Urus saja dirimu sendiri, Pak Tua.

This transposition involves multiple grammatical shifts, including the elimination of the rhetorical question structure and the transformation of the imperative meaning. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) explain that transposition can involve complex restructuring when target language preferences differ significantly from source language patterns. Gottlieb (2005) notes that transposition in audiovisual translation often accommodates cultural and linguistic pragmatic differences. The shift from "Why don't you" to "Urus saja" (just take care of) demonstrates how transposition can transform rhetorical questions into direct imperatives while maintaining the confrontational tone and pragmatic function of the original utterance.

Modulation

Tabel 6. Example of Modulation

Data.	Timescode	Source Language	Target Language
No.3	00:01:22:08	Of course, he didn't start that way.	Tentu, awalnya dia bukan petani.

This modulation involves a shift in temporal perspective from negative past action to positive initial state. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) explain that modulation changes the point of view while maintaining equivalent meaning through different cognitive approaches. The English "he didn't start that way" focuses on what the subject did not begin as, while the Indonesian "awalnya dia bukan petani" (initially he was not a farmer) emphasizes the original state. Hatim and Mason (2014) argue that modulation in audiovisual translation accommodates different conceptualization patterns between languages. This shift from negative past action to positive temporal marker ("awalnya" - initially) demonstrates how modulation can transform temporal focus while preserving the semantic content that the person's current profession differs from their original occupation.

Equivalence

Tabel 7. Example of Equivalence

Data.	Timescode	Source Language	Target Language
No.29	00:03:23:20	...upside-down.	...terbalik.

This equivalence demonstrates direct semantic correspondence through different linguistic realization. The English "upside-down" and Indonesian "terbalik" achieve identical meaning through distinct morphological structures. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) identify equivalence as achieving identical situational meaning through completely different linguistic expressions. Gottlieb (2005) emphasizes that equivalence in audiovisual contexts preserves communicative function while accommodating target language lexical preferences. The compound adjective "upside-down" corresponds to the simple adjective "terbalik," illustrating how languages can express identical spatial concepts through varying morphological complexity. This equivalence maintains the precise meaning of inverted orientation while utilizing the most natural Indonesian expression for spatial reversal.

Adaptation

Tabel 8. Example of Adaptation

Data.	Timescode	Source Language	Target Language
No.225	00:17:32:13	Popcorn at a ballgame is unnatural.	Jagung berondong di pertandingan bisbol tidaklah alami.

This adaptation demonstrates cultural food and sports context preservation through explicit cultural reference. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000) explain that adaptation maintains situational equivalence while accommodating cultural differences in audience knowledge. The combination of "popcorn" (jagung berondong) and "ballgame" (pertandingan bisbol) requires cultural adaptation for Indonesian audiences unfamiliar with American baseball culture. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) emphasize that adaptation in audiovisual translation bridges cultural knowledge gaps while maintaining thematic coherence. This translation preserves the critique of artificial cultural associations while making the specific American cultural context accessible to Indonesian viewers through explicit terminology.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed translation techniques in Indonesian subtitles of *Interstellar* using Vinay and Darbelnet's framework, examining 1,903 subtitle pairs. The quantitative analysis reveals literal translation dominance (33.42%), followed by modulation (25.70%) and transposition (19.02%), indicating structural compatibility between English and Indonesian while requiring significant adaptations for cultural and grammatical differences.

The nearly balanced distribution between direct techniques (48.87%) and oblique techniques (51.13%) demonstrates that English-Indonesian audiovisual translation demands sophisticated strategic decision-making balancing source language fidelity with target language naturalness. Technical terminology employs borrowing for accuracy and standardization, while cultural references require adaptation or equivalence for audience comprehension.

This research contributes empirical evidence to translation studies by documenting systematic patterns in professional English-Indonesian audiovisual translation. The findings validate Vinay and Darbelnet's framework applicability to contemporary audiovisual contexts while establishing baseline data for quality assessment and comparative studies. The implications extend to translator training programs and industry standards, emphasizing competency development across the complete spectrum of translation techniques within Southeast Asian audiovisual translation contexts.

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