

## INACCURACY IN INDONESIAN SUBTITLES OF THE KING'S SPEECH MOVIE (2010)

Dessy Burliani<sup>1</sup>; Menik Winiharti<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Binus University  
Jl. Kemanggisan Ilir III no.45, Kemanggisan/Palmerah, Jakarta Barat 11480  
menikwiniharti@yahoo.com

**Received:** 23<sup>th</sup> February 2016/ **Revised:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016/ **Accepted:** 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**How to Cite:** Burliani, D., Winiharti, M. (2016). Inaccuracy in Indonesian Subtitles of The King's Speech Movie (2010). *Lingua Cultura*, 10(1). 57-62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21512/lc.v10i1.923>

---

### ABSTRACT

Movie subtitles is a product of translations, so the rules of translations must be followed. The research explored how translation mistakes in Indonesian subtitles of "The King's Speech" Movie (2010) and distort the meaning of the original utterances. The data were the dialogues in English and their Indonesian translations. Qualitative method was applied in this research. The analysis was done by comparing the meaning of the original utterances and their Indonesian subtitles. It is found that the types of mistakes that mostly occurred in the Indonesian subtitles of the movie were ambiguity and omission mistakes. To avoid these mistakes, the context of the original utterance must be considered. In general, it can be concluded that accuracy in subtitling should be taken into account.

**Keywords:** translation inaccuracy, Indonesian subtitles, the King's Speech

### INTRODUCTION

Translation is a process of transferring the meaning from one language to another language with the closest natural equivalent. (Larson, 1998; Nida & Taber, 2003) It reproduces the message into another language by making good grammatical and lexical adjustments. (Nida & Taber, 2003)

The best translation should not sound like a translation. It should be natural, as what Nida & Taber (2003) have proposed. Meanwhile, Larson (1998) has proposed accuracy, clarity, and naturalness as criteria for an objective evaluation of a translation. It is important for a text to be accurate, which means that a translation should convey every information from the source language. A translation should also provide clarity which means that the translated message should be understandable, without causing ambiguity. It should also be natural in the target language in that it has to be adjusted with the target language's grammatical structure and idiomatic form.

As one tool that enables people who speak different languages to understand each other, translation is applied in some aspects of human life, such as business, education, and even entertainment industry. In entertainment industry, especially in Indonesia, many, if not all, foreign movies are equipped with Indonesian translation in a form of subtitle. As the application of translation, subtitles and dubbing also have the same principles as the translation, which is to transfer the meaning from the original language into the

target language. Gonzales (2009) has stated that audio visual translation concerns with transferring the multimedia texts into another language and/or culture. Meanwhile, Zojer (2011) has pointed out that a good translator does not merely master both the source language and the target language, but he/she should have a "detailed knowledge of the culture of the country or countries in which the source language is spoken." On the other hand, Bittner (2011), has found that in providing a subtitle, there is a "shifting ground on which the subtitles has to translate dialogue into subtitles: while in some cases the ideal translation is the result of purely linguistic considerations, in others it follows contextual clues at the expense of semantic appropriateness." While focusing on the target text a translator will produce, he/she should be aware of source text, text form, culture, politics, client, the translator him/herself, and the institution behind. Furthermore, Chuang (2006) has pointed out that the materiality could affect the way a spoken utterance was translated. He suggested that a translator should integrate the meanings of a certain section of dialogues, moving images and music.

One type of audio-visual translations is subtitling. Subtitles or captions are transcriptions of the dialogues that are shown on the screen. It usually consists of 2 lines with maximum 35 to 40 characters (Munday, 2012). With regard to this, Caimi (2009) has stated that one important point is that "subtitles should convey the relevant information and linguistic nuances contained in the original dialogue to satisfy second language audience needs." In other words,

the target of the translation of languages in the audio-visual media is that the audience can comprehend the language of the translation.

However, some foreign movies are equipped with some unsuitable subtitles. The subtitles may contain some errors that possibly make the audience confused. One example comes from a movie entitled *American Beauty* (1999). In one of the lines, there is an utterance: “*nobody’s getting fired yet*”. The Indonesian subtitle provided is “*takkan ada yang dipecat*” which shows a different meaning from the message in the original utterance. Based on the context of the movie, it should be “*belum ada yang dipecat*”. The difference of meaning could actually distort the understanding of the audience since the message of “*takkan*” and “*belum*” are totally different. For people who can understand the original language, the meaning of the dialogue can be understood. However, for people who only rely on the subtitle to understand the meaning, this kind of mistakes can be a problem toward the whole understanding of the movie’s story.

With regard to the errors in subtitling, Olúdáre (2013) has proposed that visual and thematic thrust are not the only components to consider in providing subtitles. The industry should equally consider the grammaticality and accuracy of the subtitles so that the audience who do not speak the source language can gain the benefit. Meanwhile, Rahayu (2004) explored the mistakes that mostly occur in the *American Beauty*’s Indonesian subtitle. She has found that (1) two kinds of mistakes that occur are the misleading mistakes and the nuanced mistakes, (2) the misleading mistake is the one which mostly occur, and (3) The general quality of the subtitle is good. Furthermore, Samsidi (2009) has discovered the misleading translation of the Indonesian subtitle in *Love Actually* movie. She has found that there are two types of misleading mistakes that occur, referential and linguistics mistakes. The referential mistake is the one which mostly occur while the linguistic mistake is found less.

Reading the Indonesian subtitles in English movies is always interesting since the mistakes may always occur. This study investigates the translation mistakes that occur in a movie’s subtitle. It identifies the types of the mistakes and provides suggestion for the mistakes found.

## METHODS

The media that is used to be analyzed is *The King’s Speech* movie (2010) by Tom Hooper in the form of the original DVD with Indonesian and English subtitles. From this movie, the two versions of the subtitles – Indonesian and English – become the focus of the study. *The King’s Speech* movie has been chosen because of its historical and cultural background, which delivers British’s values and also some specific British utterances from the 1920s, which are mostly different from British English nowadays. Moreover, this movie is about politics and contains some political terms. Its subtitle is a good sample to be investigated since the subtitle of this movie must deliver the meaning from British English, also British political terms to Indonesian.

To understand the whole story, the movie is watched for three times. Then it is watched again to record the Indonesian subtitle. While all the processes with the DVD have been done, the next step is to get the original English script from the internet. It is obtained from [imsdb.com](http://imsdb.com). This script is needed to make sure that the dialogues from the subtitles in the DVD are correct.

After the data are collected, the next step taken is analysis. The English dialogues and Indonesian subtitles are compared to find whether the Indonesian translations convey the original messages. Thus, the main focus of the analysis is of accuracy. The analysis mostly consults *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (2009). From the comparison, any meaning differences found are listed as meaning mistakes. These mistakes are then classified according to the grammatical structure, whether the subtitle has a mistake in terms of changing the structure, or it is a reference mistake. Afterward, a better subtitle with a more accurate meaning is suggested in order to fix the mistakes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

*The King’s Speech* (2010) tells the story of King George VI, known as Bertie. He has a speech difficulty, which makes him stammering when he speaks in front of people. Bertie tries to cure his stammering habit. One day, his wife, the Duchess of York, asks him to meet Logue, who then trains him to speak in front of people. Logue has changed Bertie’s life by curing his speech difficulty, as well as his mind. He then becomes a friend and helper of Bertie.

In this movie, the Indonesian subtitles consist of 1.365 lines. There are 34 lines having mistakes in terms of accuracy. These mistakes can be classified into some categories which are based on the structure or grammar. The followings are examples of each category.

Ambiguity happens when a word has more than one meaning. Ambiguity may cause the translation to have differences in meaning.

In this kind of mistake, there are some words which have two or more meanings. A word can be translated into an Indonesian word whose meaning is not suitable for the context or the speaker’s intended meaning.

The first example comes from the first line of the subtitle, at the beginning of the movie, when the Duke of York, at that time, is told by the radio officer, to get ready because he would have his speech in two minutes. This is the first utterance of the movie. The Duke of York is sitting down while the officer is telling him to get ready, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Lexical Ambiguity Mistake

English utterance: Radio Officer: <b>You’re live</b> in two minutes, Your Royal Highness.
Indonesian subtitle: <b>Giliranmu</b> dalam 2 menit, Yang Mulia.

The officer said, “*You’re live in two minutes, Your Royal Highness.*” The officer clearly states what the Duke of York would do. The Duke would have a speech which would be broadcasted live, in front of English people in the stadium and also to the people who are at home.

The words *you’re live* is translated into *giliranmu*. *Giliranmu* literally means *your turn*. In this case, the meaning of *you’re live* can be delivered by using *giliranmu* if it is seen without a context. However, in the movie, there is a context that has to be considered by the subtitle. *Giliranmu* does not deliver clearly the context in which

the Duke will have a speech. *Giliranmu* only delivers that the Duke will do something, but that does not deliver what he would do. Without translating the utterance clearly, the audience will not know what would happen next since it is the first scene. *You're live* has to be interpreted clearly by the audience to understand the storyline. Therefore, the suggested translation is “*Anda akan siaran langsung dalam dua menit, Yang Mulia.*”

There is one mistake related to noun phrase. This mistake in the structure of noun phrase affects the meaning that is delivered to the audience.

The sentence is spoken by The Duchess when Logue asks her how could she find him. She answers that she knows him from the President of the Society for Speech Therapists, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Noun Phrase Mistake

English utterance: The Duchess: The President of <b>The Society For Speech Therapists</b> .
Indonesian Subtitle: Presiden dari <b>Terapis Pidato Sosial</b>

The noun phrase *The President of The Society For Speech Therapists* is translated into *Presiden dari Terapis Pidato Sosial*. The two of them are noun phrases. Both *The Society for Speech Therapists* and *Terapis Pidato Sosial* modify the noun *president*. However, the translation delivers inaccurate meaning. In the original utterance, *The Society for Speech Therapists* modifies *president*. Inside the structure of *The Society for Speech Therapists*, *Society* is the head, while the word *speech therapists* modifies the word *society*. From the meaning perspective, *The Society for Speech Therapists* means a society of the therapists that has specialty in helping people with difficulty in speaking. In other words, this is a community of speech therapists.

On the other hand, *Terapis Pidato Sosial* does not deliver the original structure and meaning. *Terapis pidato sosial* does modify the word *president*. However, the head of this noun phrase is *terapis* which means *therapist*. It refers to *social therapists for speech*, whose meaning is unclear. Therefore, the two heads of the noun phrases are different. The subtitle does not deliver the original utterance.

In addition, the word *society* and *speech* are translated inaccurately. Thus, it makes the meaning of the whole phrase incorrect. The first mistake happens to the word *society* which is translated into *sosial*. The word *sosial* cannot be used to represent the meaning of *society*. The meanings of these two words are different. *Sosial* means *social* in English. *Social* is an adjective while the word *society* is a noun. They are clearly different. In this context, *society* should be translated into *masyarakat* or *kumpulan*. The second mistake can be spotted in the translation of the word *speech*. It is translated into *pidato*. However, what the word *speech* means in this context is the another meaning, which is the ability to speak. This meaning should be translated into the word *wicara*. Thus, the suggested translation is *Presiden dari Masyarakat Terapis Wicara*.

There are some collocations used in the movie. However, only one collocation that is mistranslated by the translator. The collocation mistake happens when David, who has become a King, tells Bertie that he has to give up

his position for love. David tells him that he has made a decision to leave the throne for Bertie. David wants to leave his throne to marry Mrs. Wallis Simpson because the King is not allowed to marry a widow, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3 Collocation Mistake

English utterance: Bertie, the decision's <b>been made</b> . I...
Indonesian subtitle: Bertie, keputusan <b>telah ditetapkan</b> .

David tells Bertie about the decision he has made. He has to leave his position and gives it to Bertie.

The sentence *Bertie, the decision's been made* is translated into Bertie, *keputusan telah ditetapkan*. In this context, based on *Oxford collocations dictionary* (2009) it needs to be considered that *the decision's been made* carries more than just a literal meaning. In Indonesian, the expression *the decision's been made* should be translated into *keputusan telah diambil*. Even though the literal meaning of the expression is *keputusan telah dibuat*, in Indonesian *keputusan* and *diambil* are words that form collocation. It is more natural to use the word *diambil* than *dibuat*. Thus, the suggested translation should be *Bertie, keputusan telah diambil*.

The mistakes of this kind occur regarding the incorrect interpretation of a pronoun. In this case, the translator mistranslated the pronoun, when the pronoun actually represents something else.

The mistake in this example happens on the pronoun *she*. Lionel is picked up by his son using an old car they have. As soon as he enters the car, Lionel talks to his son about the car, while patting the dashboard of it. He addresses the car as *she*, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4 Pronoun Mistake

English utterance: Logue: <b>She's</b> still sounding a bit rough. His son: You make me drive too slowly, Dad.
Indonesian subtitle: <b>Dia</b> masih terdengar agak kasar/ Kau paksa aku menyetir begitu pelan, Ayah.

It is a usual thing in English to address a thing as a *she*. However, it is unusual in the Indonesian language. The word *she* addresses the car. In Indonesian word, the pronoun that is usually used as a translation of *she* is *dia*. However, in the Indonesian language, *a car* cannot be substituted with the word *dia*. The word *dia* is usually used to refer to living things, mostly humans. Consequently, the word *dia* is not suitable in this case. Indonesian pronouns that can be used to refer things like *car* are *ini* and *itu*. *Ini* is more suitable for the context since *ini* is used for an object which is close in distance. However, the usage of *ini* does not deliver a clear meaning. The audience might not understand what *ini* refers to. Therefore, an addition should be made to make the message clearer. The sentence is about a car, so the word *mobil*, which means *car*, should be added. Thus, *she* in this

context should be translated into *mobil ini*.

Some of the subtitles do not translate the English words. They are typed in English. It is not a problem if there is no Indonesian definition for the words, or it is a quotation. However, some of the English words have Indonesian definition, yet they are not translated.

The mistake which displays inaccuracy is the part when Lionel Logue is explaining what he would do to the Duke of York to help him. Logue uses a medical term, which is not translated into Indonesian words. Though, an Indonesian word exists for this English word, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5 Not Translated Part Mistake

English utterance:
strengthening your <b>diaphragm</b> . Simple mechanics.
Indonesian subtitle:
memperkuat <b>diaphragm</b> . Mekanisme sederhana.

The word *diaphragm* is written as it is in the subtitle. It is not translated into an Indonesian word. However, there is an Indonesian word for it, which is *diafragma*. The untranslated word *diaphragm* will lead into confusion somehow. Therefore, it should be translated, as what the translator does to the word “mechanics”, that is translated into *mekanisme*.

There are also mistakes that are caused by omitting one or more words from the utterances. In this example, the words are spoken by the Duke of York as an anger expression towards his therapist. Earlier, the therapist has forced him to insert some ice cubes into his mouth to relax his muscle. After being alone, he releases his anger by saying the sentences below, as seen in Table 6.

Table 6 Omission Mistake

English utterance:
Duke of York: Insert marbles. He can insert his own <b>bloody marbles</b> .
Indonesian subtitle:
Masukkan es batu. Dia bisa masukkan sendiri ke mulutnya.

The words *bloody marbles* are not translated in the subtitle. It is omitted from the sentence. Those words refer to ice cubes. In the first sentence, the word *marbles* is translated into *es batu*. However, on the second sentence, *bloody marbles* is not translated. Instead, the word *ke mulutnya* is added. It makes sense; however, it is inaccurate to convey the anger of the Duke.

The word *bloody* expresses anger. To convey the right feeling of the context, it is a must to insert a word that represents his anger. *Bloody* is a curse word. To express the feeling in the original utterance, the Indonesian word that is suitable is *sialan*. It is rough, but it is suitable for the feeling and the context. Thus, the translation should be *Dia bisa masukkan sendiri es batu sialan itu*.

This mistake deals with articles, *a* or *the*. In Indonesian, articles are translated into *kata sandang* or *artikel*.

This kind of mistake occurs in a context when the Duke of York is delivering his speech for the first time. He is stammering. When the King stutters, he utters *the* for a few times. Therefore, the classifier *the* is repeated a few times. In the subtitle, the sentence is separated into three lines of subtitles, as seen in Table 7.

Table 7 Classifier Mistake

English utterance:
From His Majesty.. <b>the... the...</b> the King...
Indonesian subtitle:
Dari yang Mulia... <b>suatu... suatu...</b> Sang Raja

*The* can be translated into *suatu*. However, in the sentence context, *the* accompanies the noun word *King*. *Suatu* usually refers to a thing, not a person, while *King* is a person. The mistake happens because this sentence is separated into three lines. Two *the* words are separated from *the King*. The two words are translated without looking at the sentence as a whole. That is why *suatu* is used even though the next line is right by using *Sang*. Therefore, instead of *suatu*, *Sang* is supposed to be used because the three lines form one sentence, in which the word *the* is the classifier for the word *King* no matter how many times it is repeated.

Tenses deal with time – past, present, and future. The mistakes of this type may occur when the translation does not really transfer the intended message regarding the time when an event happens. The context of the subtitle in this example happens in Logue’s office, at the first time when the Duchess of York visits him. She enters an empty office when a sound from a room is heard. It is Logue who is speaking from the restroom. He is saying that he is currently in the restroom, as seen in Table 8.

Table 8 Tenses Mistake

English utterance:
The Duchess: Is anyone there? Logue : <b>I'm just in the loo.</b>
Indonesian subtitle:
Ada orang disana? / <b>Aku baru saja ke toilet.</b>

The sentence *I'm just in the loo* is using present tense. This tense is used to state present condition. However, the translation *Aku baru saja ke toilet* shows that Logue has just returned from the rest room. The word *baru saja* signals that the event has already happened. If it is retranslated into English, it will be *I have just been in the loo*. The subtitle gives the audience the sense of present perfect tense. Moreover, it makes an inaccurate understanding of the situation. The event is happening, not has just happened. Logue is still in the restroom when he says that. Thus, the suggested translation is *Aku baru di toilet*. *Baru* in Indonesian here means *masih* (still in English).

The mistake happens when a word or a phrase in an utterance is mistranslated into words that do not have same

or similar meaning with the utterance.

In this example, the utterance occurs at the time the MC has some words before he lets the Duke speak. The MC gives an opening speech before the Duke starts his speech. The MC is talking about the opening ceremony, where the King addresses his people using radio, as seen in Table 9.

Table 9 Unrelated Translation Mistake

English utterance: MC: Using the new invention of radio, the opening ceremony was the first time, His Majesty the King addressed his subjects on the <b>wireless.</b>
Indonesian subtitle: Menggunakan penemuan baru dari radio, upacara pembukaan merupakan pertama kalinya, Yang Mulia Raja bicara pada rakyatnya melalui <b>media elektronik</b>

*Wireless* literally means a device that does not use cables or wires. It is also specifically shown in some dictionaries that wireless, which the MC refers to, is a radio system. On the other hand, the translation uses *elektronik* which means *electronic devices* in English.

At first, it might seem right since radio is an electronic device. However, that is not what the utterance intends to. By using the word *wireless*, the utterance actually does not mean about electronic or wires. *Wireless* in this context refers to radio, as the radio wave is not transmitted by wires, but it is transmitted using air. Therefore, the usage of the word *elektronik* is not relevant because it is unrelated to the meaning of the utterance. Thus, the correct subtitle for the utterance would be *Menggunakan penemuan baru dari radio, upacara pembukaan merupakan pertama kalinya, Yang Mulia Raja bicara pada rakyatnya melalui radio.*

From 1,365 lines of the Indonesian subtitles found in the movie, there are 34 lines that show mistakes in terms of accuracy. These mistakes can be categorized into nine types. The distribution of the mistake occurrences can be summarized in Table 10.

Table 10 Translation Mistakes Distribution

Mistakes Categories	Amount (lines)
Ambiguity	9
Noun Phrase	1
Collocation	1
Pronoun	3
Not translated	1
Omission	9
Classifier	1
Tenses	2
Unrelated Translation	7
Total	34

## CONCLUSIONS

Subtitle is one product of translations. Therefore, it should follow the criteria of translation, which are accurate, clear and natural. (Larson, 1998)

Subtitle has to consider the context in conveying the meaning beyond the original utterance. Therefore, the translation of the subtitles has to be accurate. However, translation mistakes may occur in movie subtitles. These mistakes may lead to confusion, especially for the audience who do not understand the original utterance in the source language.

In *The King's Speech* movie (2010), there are some mistakes that occur in the Indonesian subtitles. The result of the analysis has found that out of 1.364 lines of the subtitles there are thirty-four mistakes that occur in the movie. From these mistakes, they are categorized into nine groups: ambiguity (double meaning), noun phrase, collocation, pronoun, not translated, omission, classifier, tenses, and unrelated translation. From these groups, the type of the mistakes that mostly occur in *The King's Speech* movie are ambiguity and omission mistake.

Some suggestions regarding the correct subtitles have been provided in terms of accuracy. In order to produce an accurate translation, a translator has to consider the context in which the original utterances occur. It is important for the translator to understand the context of the story because the context helps the translator convey the meaning accurately.

## REFERENCES

- Bittner, H. (2011). The quality of translation in subtitling. *trans-kom*, 4(1), 76-87. Retrieved from [http://www.trans-kom.eu/bd04nr01/trans-kom\\_04\\_01\\_04\\_Bittner\\_Quality.20110614.pdf](http://www.trans-kom.eu/bd04nr01/trans-kom_04_01_04_Bittner_Quality.20110614.pdf)
- Caimi, A. (2009) Subtitling: Language Learners' Needs vs. Audiovisual Market Needs. In J. D. Cintas & G. Anderman (Eds.), *Audiovisual Translation: Language Transfer on Screen*. (240-251). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chuang, Y-T. (2006). Studying subtitle translation from a multi-modal approach. *Fédération des Traducteurs (fit) Revue Babel*, 52(4), 372-383. Retrieved from <http://academic.csuohio.edu/kneuendorf/frames/subtitling/Chuang.2006.pdf>
- Gonzales, L. P. (2009) Audio Translation. In M. Baker & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (13-20). London: Routledge.
- Larson, M. L. (1998). *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: University Press of America.
- McIntosh, C., Francis, B., & Poole, R. (2009). *Oxford collocations dictionary: for students of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Munday, J. (2012). *Introducing translation studies: theories and applications*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Nida, E. A., & Taber, C. R. (2003). *The theory and practice of translation*. Leiden: Brill.
- Olúdáre, J. F. R. (2013). Yorùbá Movies and the Problem of Subtitling. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 12(1), 9-13. Retrieved from: <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol12-issue1/B01210913.pdf>
- Rahayu, B. (2004). *The Indonesian subtitles of the English utterances spoken by the characters in American Beauty* (Thesis). Retrieved from [http://dewey.petra.ac.id/catalog/ft\\_detail.php?knokat=1000](http://dewey.petra.ac.id/catalog/ft_detail.php?knokat=1000)

- Samsidi, A. H. (2009). *The Misleading Translation Mistakes of Indonesian Subtitles in the Movie Love Actually* (Thesis). Retrieved from [http://dewey.petra.ac.id/catalog/ft\\_detail.php?knokat=11566](http://dewey.petra.ac.id/catalog/ft_detail.php?knokat=11566)
- Zojer, H. (2011). Cultural references in subtitles: A measuring device for interculturality? *Fédération des Traducteurs (fit) Revue Babel*, 57(4), 394-413. Retrieved from <http://academic.csuohio.edu/kneuendorf/frames/subtitling/Zojer.2011.pdf>