

Translation strategies in the Indonesian subtitles of the *Women Talking* movie: A study based on Gottlieb's translation theory

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Abstract

*Audio-visual translation (AVT) is an essential part of making films accessible across languages and cultures. However, there is little research on subtitling procedures in films with social and ideological complexity. This study aims at analyzing the types of translation strategies employed in the Indonesian subtitles of "Women Talking" (2022) based on Gottlieb's classification of translation strategies (1992) as well as investigating the most frequently used translation strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles of the movie. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, a total of 300 of 1,318 subtitle units were purposively selected and analyzed using documentation and qualitative content analysis. The findings showed that 8 out of 10 of Gottlieb's translation strategies were identified, including Transfer, Paraphrase, Condensation, Imitation, Expansion, Deletion, Decimation, and Resignation strategies, while Transcription and Dislocation were absent. Transfer strategy is the most frequently used strategy with 160 occurrences (53.33%), followed by Paraphrase (50 occurrences, 16.67%), Condensation (30 occurrences, 10.00%), Imitation (17 occurrences, 5.67%), Expansion (15 occurrences, 5.00%), Deletion (15 occurrences, 5.00%), Decimation (12 occurrences, 4.00%), and Resignation (1 occurrence, 0.33%). The prevalent use of Transfer strategy suggests the translator's preference for retaining the original content via literal translation, but Paraphrase and Condensation were used to address linguistic and technical limits of subtitling. The results indicate that the translation of Indonesian subtitles of *Women Talking* put semantic correctness at the top of the priority list while still keeping the readability for Indonesian viewers.*

Keywords: audio-visual translation; Gottlieb's theory; movies; subtitles; translation strategies

INTRODUCTION

Translation has always been an important part of communication. Many people assume that translation is simply the process of changing text from one language to another. Translation is not just about replacing words. It involves conveying ideas and meanings between languages accurately, considering linguistic details and cultural context (House, 2023). Translators work with two different languages, navigating elements such as words, phrases, clauses, and

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sentences. The translator's primary task is to find the closest equivalent in the target language that accurately conveys the original meaning (Hadi et al., 2021). By studying translation theory, people can develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of what translation is and how it works.

Translation is often defined as the process of transferring the meaning of a text from one language to another, as Newmark (1988) suggests. This process involves more than simply converting words; it requires the adaptation of meaning, tone, and cultural nuances to ensure the message is communicated effectively in the target language. As Baharuddin et al. (2021) highlight, translation aims to express the same meaning in the target language as it does in the source language, preserving the integrity of the original message. This is particularly important when translating content in the field of audio-visual media, where translation helps bridge linguistic and cultural divides, making content accessible to diverse audiences.

Within the field of audio-visual media, translation plays an essential role in making films, TV series, and other multimedia content available to people who speak different languages. Subtitling, a key form of audio-visual translation, has become increasingly popular, as the global demand for translated content continues to grow. Subtitling involves converting spoken language into written text that appears on the screen, making it possible for viewers from different linguistic backgrounds to enjoy media without losing the essence of the original dialogue (Ramadhan et al., 2021). The popularity of global entertainment has encouraged viewers from diverse regions to enjoy films, TV series, and multimedia content beyond their native languages.

The process of translating the spoken language of a film or television show into the target language, usually through dubbing or subtitles, is known as audio-visual translation. Subtitling is a type of audio-visual translation where spoken words are changed into written text on the screen. Audio-visual translation is a growing field, especially in the film industry (Corrius & Zabalbeascoa, 2011). Particularly, subtitles are essential for maintaining the conversation's core while modifying it to fit the target audience's linguistic and cultural conventions (O'Connell, 1998).

As the demand for subtitled films continues to increase, advancements in technology have improved the subtitling process, making it easier to produce accurate and culturally relevant subtitles (Xinfei, 2024). This is particularly significant as films are shared across borders and audiences encounter increasingly complex or sensitive topics. Subtitling involves overcoming challenges such as cultural differences, time constraints, and the limited space available on the screen, which can make it difficult to capture the full meaning of a film. The translator needs to determine if the translation is good and makes sense for the audience. However, it's common for audiences to come across translations that are not the same as the original. These translations might give a different meaning, leading to confusion for the viewers (Eryanto et al., 2024). To address these challenges, Gottlieb (1992) proposed ten subtitling strategies, each with a unique purpose. These strategies include Expansion, Paraphrase, Transfer, Imitation, Transcription, Dislocation, Condensation, Decimation, and

Resignation. These strategies help translators navigate linguistic and cultural differences and adapt content for different audiences.

Although there has been a lot of research on audio-visual translation strategies, most of the research has been conducted on popular films and commercial media. Critical films have received less attention when it comes to subtitling, especially those that deal with complex social issues (Cintas & Remael, 2020). By concentrating on the translation strategies used in the *Women Talking* movie, a film that deals with difficult subjects such as gender, power, and community. Looking at how these themes are translated through subtitles gives us a chance to study subtitling in a more detailed way. It allows us to see how meaning is kept or changed in films that need careful attention to cultural and thematic details.

A number of reviewed studies have investigated translation strategies in movie subtitles using Gottlieb's theory (1992) with different results. In the studies conducted by Manullang and Marpaung (2020), Pramataana (2021), Triana et al. (2023), Asrima and Nur (2023), Zulfa and Meilasari (2020), and Then-Kok (2026), it was found that the transfer was the most frequently used strategy. However, in some other studies, such as those conducted by Panjaitan et al. (2023), Irwan et al. (2021), Purnawati and Karimah (2026), Fitri and Noverino (2023), and Hasibuan et al. (2023), it was identified that paraphrase was the most commonly used.

Considering the importance of translation strategies in the subtitles of audio-visual media and understanding how the differences used in applying strategies in movie subtitles across different genres, this study sought to examine the types of translation strategies employed in the Indonesian subtitles of *Women Talking* movie based on Gottlieb's classification of translation strategies as well as to investigate the most frequent strategy employed in *Women Talking* movie. This study offers a new perspective by exploring how translators handle the film's themes and adapt them in a way that makes sense in the target culture. In doing so, this study helps us understand how different translation strategies are applied in complex stories. What makes this study unique is that it focuses on a film that challenges translators to remain faithful to the source-language dialogues while making it understandable and enjoyable for foreign audiences who may not share the same language or culture.

METHODS

Research Design

The descriptive qualitative method was used in this study to describe the translation strategies in the Indonesian subtitles of *Women Talking*. Siedlecki (2020) explained that the descriptive method was a research approach designed to describe or examine research findings without drawing broader implications. Qualitative research was a method used to explore and understand events or experiences by gathering and examining non-numerical information such as written texts, videos, or audio recordings (Bhandari, 2025). Descriptive qualitative research involved describing, recording, analyzing, and interpreting the nature, structure, or processes of phenomena, with the main focus on the

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present situation, examining how an individual, group, or object behaved or functioned at that moment. It often included some form of comparison or contrast (Manuel & Medel, 1976). The qualitative descriptive method was chosen because it aligned with the research objective, which was to provide an in-depth study of the translation strategies used in film subtitles. This method was ideal for analyzing and interpreting data in a detailed and context-specific manner, with a focus on the characteristics and behavior of the subtitling process.

Source of Data

The source of data in this study is the movie *Women Talking* (2022), directed by Sarah Polley and produced by Plan B Entertainment, Hear/Say Productions, and Orion Pictures. The data consist of the English dialogues and their corresponding Indonesian subtitles. The English dialogues serve as the source language (SL), while the Indonesian subtitles function as the target language (TL). The researchers collected utterances containing the translation phenomena relevant to the objectives of the study, such as translation strategies, translation techniques, or translation shifts.

The movie's duration is 144 minutes containing a total of subtitles with 1,318 sentences in the target language (Indonesian). 300 out of 1,318 sentences were selected as the samples for data analysis. The samples of utterances were purposively selected to represent various speakers, scenes, and communicative contexts throughout the film. The data in this study took the form of information consisting of language expressions such as words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The data were derived from the script of the dialogues among the actors and actresses in the movie. All of these data were organized in such a way that they were ready for analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted through documentation by obtaining the movie, its original dialogue script, and its Indonesian subtitle files, then repeatedly watching the film while comparing the source-language dialogues with their target-language subtitle equivalents. The relevant subtitle pairs were extracted and organized into a data classification table. The data were subsequently analyzed using Gottlieb's (1992) framework of subtitling strategies. Each subtitle pair was identified, coded, and classified according to the applicable strategy. The frequency of each strategy was then calculated to determine patterns of use, while representative examples were qualitatively interpreted to explain how meaning was transferred from the source language to the target language within the linguistic and technical constraints of subtitling. To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, all subtitle units were re-examined following the initial coding process to ensure consistency in the classification of translation strategies.

Research Instruments

A research instrument was a tool used by researchers to collect, measure, and analyze data. In this study, two instruments were employed in line with the data collection methods. The first instrument was the researchers, who served as the primary tool for gathering and analyzing data by watching the movie, focusing on both the original and translated subtitles. The researchers identified and

examined the translation strategies used based on Gottlieb's framework. The second instrument was the observation sheet, which was used to document specific examples of translation strategies found in the subtitles. These sheets included the original text in English, the translated version, and the corresponding strategy applied, as classified by Gottlieb.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the selected subtitle units were reviewed, coded, and classified according to Gottlieb's (1992) classification of subtitling strategies that included expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, and resignation. The categorized data were then organized and quantified to determine the frequency and distribution of each strategy. In the data display stage, the results were presented in tables and supported by representative examples to illustrate the application of each strategy in the Indonesian subtitles of *Women Talking*. While Gottlieb's framework was employed to identify and classify the translation strategies, Nida's (1964) theory of formal and dynamic equivalence was used as a supporting analytical framework to interpret how the selected strategies contributed to the preservation of meaning and the naturalness of expression in the target language. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting patterns of strategy use, identifying the most frequently employed strategies, and examining their implications for achieving equivalence between the source and target texts. To enhance the reliability and trustworthiness of the analysis, the coding results were independently reviewed by an expert translator from the Indonesian Translators Association (*Himpunan Penerjemah Indonesia/HPI*). Any discrepancies in classification were discussed and resolved through consultation until agreement was reached, ensuring consistency in the categorization of the translation strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the findings of the study based on the two research questions, focusing on the analysis of translation strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles of *Women Talking* (2022). Using Miles and Huberman (1994) qualitative data analysis framework, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, a total of 300 subtitle units were analyzed and categorized according to Gottlieb's subtitling strategies. The results were discussed in detail in relation to each research question to highlight the types and frequency of strategies that were applied by the translator of the movie.

RQ1. Types of Gottlieb's translation strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles of the Women Talking movie

The first objective of this study is to identify the types of Gottlieb's translation strategies applied in translating the Indonesian movie subtitles. Table 1 shows

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the frequency and percentage of each strategy used, arranged in descending order from largest to smallest frequency.

Table 1. Frequency of Gottlieb's (1992) translation strategies used in the Indonesian movie subtitles of *Women Talking*. (Arranged in largest to smallest percentage order).

No	Translation strategies	Subtitle units	
		Freq. (#)	Perc. (%)
1	Transfer	160	53.33
2	Paraphrase	50	16.67
3	Condensation	30	10.00
4	Imitation	17	5.67
5	Expansion	15	5.00
6	Deletion	15	5.00
7	Decimation	12	4.00
8	Resignation	1	0.33
9	Transcription	0	0.00
10	Dislocation	0	0.00
Total		300	100%

The table above shows the frequency of translation strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles of *Women Talking* movie based on the largest to the smallest percentage order. After analyzing 300 samples from the dialogues of *Women Talking* movie, it was found that the translator used 8 out of 10 strategies of Gottlieb's theory. The dominantly used strategy is transfer, which appears in 160 subtitle units (53.33%), indicating a strong preference for direct translation. The second most common is paraphrase, used in 50 subtitle units (16.67%), and followed by condensation with 30 subtitle units (10.00%). Imitation was employed in 17 subtitle units (5.67%), both expansion and deletion strategies were equally frequent with 15 subtitle units each (5.00%), and decimation was found in 12 subtitle units (4.00%). The least occurrence of strategy was resignation strategy that only appeared in 1 subtitle units (0.33%). Meanwhile, both the transcription and dislocation strategies were absent in the *Women Talking* subtitles. This pattern suggests that the translator prioritized strategies that preserve the original meaning while enhancing clarity and accessibility for the target audience.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of the findings, each identified subtitling strategy is discussed in detail. Representative examples from the corpus are presented to demonstrate how the strategy is applied in translating the English dialogues into Indonesian and how the translation maintains the intended meaning in the target language. The examples are presented in the order of frequency as listed in Table 1.

1. Transfer

Transfer, identified in 53.33% of the translation strategies identified in the findings, is employed when the source-language dialogue is translated directly into the target language while preserving its semantic content and communicative function. Unlike other subtitling strategies, transfer does not involve omission, addition, or reformulation, resulting in a translation that remains faithful to the original message.

SL: *Or that we were lying to get attention.*

TL: *Atau kami berbohong untuk dapatkan perhatian.*

In the above example, the SL *Or that we were lying to get attention* is translated into *Atau kami berbohong untuk dapat perhatian* by applying the transfer strategy. The translator renders the message directly into the target language without omitting, adding, or reformulating the original meaning. Both the semantic content and the syntactic structure are largely preserved, resulting in a faithful translation that accurately conveys the speaker's message. Based on the context, the sentence is delivered when Autje, the narrator, recounts how the men in their colony responded to women's confessions about the harassment they experienced.

From Nida's dynamic equivalence perspective, the translation successfully conveys the original meaning in a natural and culturally appropriate manner for the target audience, ensuring clarity and maintaining the intended impact.

2. Paraphrase

Paraphrase, which accounted for 16.67% of the translation strategies identified, is employed when the source-language expression cannot be translated literally without producing an unnatural or misleading expression in the target language. Instead, the translator reformulates the message using different lexical or grammatical structures while preserving its intended meaning and communicative function.

SL: *Let's stay on track.*

TL: *Mari tetap fokus.*

In this example, the SL *...stay on track* is reworded into TL *tetap fokus*, which conveys the intended meaning in a way that is natural and culturally appropriate. A direct translation of TL such as *tetap di jalur* would sound awkward and less idiomatic in Indonesian. Based on the context, this dialogue is delivered by Greta during a women's discussion on how to respond to the violence they have just experienced in order to bring the conversation back on track and keep the focus on the main purpose of the discussion, especially if it starts to drift or becomes overly emotional. From the perspective of Nida's dynamic equivalence, the translation effectively communicates the intent and tone of the original utterance, ensuring clarity and relevance in the given context to the target audience.

3. Condensation

Condensation, comprising 10.00% of the strategies, is employed when the source-language utterance is shortened in the target language by omitting less essential lexical elements while preserving the core meaning and communicative function. This strategy enables the subtitle to comply with the temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling without compromising the audience's understanding.

SL: *Everyone get back to your seats.*

TL: *Semuanya, duduklah.*

In the above example, the SL *Everyone get back to your seats* is shortened to TL *Semuanya, duduklah,* eliminating the phrase *get back to* and directly translating *everyone* as *semuanya.* Greta delivers this dialogue when the women start losing focus or getting involved in off-topic discussions or actions

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during their meeting. As one of the more mature and influential figures, Greta tries to guide the group back to focusing on their important discussion about their decisions. Based on Nida's dynamic equivalence, the translation remains natural and functional, as '*duduklah*' (sit down) conveys the same command, and the omission of 'get back to your seats' does not change the overall meaning significantly in the target language. The urgency and clarity of the command are preserved.

4. Imitation

Imitation, found in 5.67% of the translation strategies, is employed when a lexical item in the source language, particularly a proper name, place name, or institutional term, is retained unchanged in the target language. This strategy is commonly used because such elements are generally recognized as fixed references that do not require translation.

SL: *Your grandmother, Agata.*
TL: *Nenekmu, Agata.*

In the above example, the proper name 'Agata' is retained in the translation, as proper names do not require alteration. The TL phrase '*Nenekmu*' (SL: Your grandmother) is the standard and natural translation for 'Your grandmother' in Indonesian. This sentence is part of Autje's future narration as she tells a story to Ona's child. She talks about how Agata, the child's grandmother, played an important role during a key moment when the women in the colony had to make a big decision. Before they start the discussion, Agata washes the children's feet in the colony, a symbolic act inspired by Jesus at the Last Supper event. From the perspective of Nida's dynamic equivalence, this translation sounds more natural and fluid in Indonesian context, maintaining the meaning and the reference to the character without any loss in clarity or cultural relevance.

5. Expansion

Expansion, identified in 5.00% of the analyzed subtitle pairs in the findings, is employed when additional lexical or contextual information is introduced in the target text to make the intended meaning more explicit or comprehensible for the target audience. This strategy is typically used when a literal translation would result in ambiguity or fail to convey the communicative intent of the source text.

SL: *Again.*
TL: *Terjadi lagi.*

In this example, the SL '*Again*' is expanded into TL '*Terjadi lagi*' which means 'Happened again' in Indonesian, rather than rendering the utterance in its TL literal meaning as '*Lagi*'. This expansion strategy adds context to the original word, making it clearer to the target audience. Based on the context, the dialogue is delivered by Autje, the narrator, to highlight the repetitive nature of the violence experienced by the women in their colony. From the perspective of Nida's dynamic equivalence, the translation captures the meaning and feels natural in Indonesian, as '*terjadi*' (happened) provides the necessary context for the expression, making the sentence complete and easily understood by Indonesian audience.

6. Deletion

Deletion, identified in 5.00% of the translation strategies used in the movie subtitles, is employed when one or more elements of the source-language utterance are omitted in the target-language subtitle because they are considered non-essential to the overall message or can be inferred from the context. This strategy is frequently used to satisfy the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling while preserving the primary communicative intent.

SL: *He will come to your house just long enough.*

TL: *Dia akan ke rumahmu.*

In the above data, the TL '*Dia akan ke rumahmu*' simplifies the SL 'He will come to your house just long enough' significantly by omitting the phrase '...just long enough,' which is an essential detail in the source text. This omission is an example of a deletion strategy, where the translator removes a part of the original sentence that carries important information. Greta delivers this when talking about Klaas, who will return soon. She made it clear that Klaas would only come for a short time, likely with a clear purpose: to spread fear or violence, considering Klaas's violent nature. From Nida's dynamic equivalence perspective, the translation is functional and conveys the main idea, but it loses the specific nuance of the original, which implies the limited duration of the visit. A more complete translation could be: '*Dia akan ke rumahmu sebentar saja,*' which would preserve both the meaning and the natural flow of the sentence in Indonesian.

7. Decimation

Decimation, employed in 4.00% of the translation strategies, is employed when the source-language utterance is reduced more substantially than in condensation, resulting in the omission of several lexical elements while retaining only the most essential information. This strategy is typically adopted when severe spatial and temporal constraints require a more drastic reduction of the subtitle.

SL: *There's no cup or anything.*

TL: *Tidak ada cangkir.*

In this example, the SL sentence 'There's no cup or anything' is translated in to TL as '*Tidak ada cangkir.*' The sentence is shortened to fit the subtitle space, and the core meaning is retained, but secondary details are omitted. The phrase '...or anything' implies that no other containers were available, not just the cup, but this nuance is excluded in the translation. In this dialogue, August wants to give Ona some water, but he realizes that he does not have a cup or anything else to put it in, so August uses his hands to give the water to Ona. From the perspective of Nida's dynamic equivalence, the translation is more natural and clear in Indonesian context, though it omits the extra detail. The simplified translation is likely chosen to make the subtitle more concise and easier to read, fitting the subtitle context and timing. However, if it were important to convey the idea of SL '...anything', a more complete TL could be '*Tidak ada cangkir atau apa pun*' instead of the translator's preferred choice.

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8. Resignation

Resignation, employed in 0.33% of the translation strategies, is employed when the translator is unable or chooses not to reproduce a source-language element in the target language because it contributes little to the communicative meaning or cannot be conveyed effectively within the constraints of subtitling. As a result, the element is left untranslated.

SL: *Hmm.*

TL: ---- (Not translated)

In this example, the absence of a translation for SL interjection 'Hmm' reflects the use of the deletion strategy. The translator chose to leave the translation of this nonverbal expression out of the subtitles, likely because it is not essential to the meaning or context of the dialogue. This expression is delivered by Agata as she shows agreement or understanding of what Autje just said. From the perspective of Nida's dynamic equivalence, the deletion strategy ensures that the subtitle remains concise and does not distract the audience with unnecessary elements, maintaining focus on the critical parts of the dialogue in the movie.

9. Transcription and Dislocation

Transcription and dislocation were not found in any of the subtitle units in the data set. The former is employed when the source-language dialogue contains unfamiliar expressions, foreign-language elements, or non-standard linguistic forms that are reproduced in the target language with little or no modification. This strategy is typically applied to preserve the original form of lexical items that have no direct equivalent or are intentionally retained for authenticity. The latter, meanwhile, is employed when the translation prioritizes reproducing the communicative or aesthetic effect of the source-language utterance rather than its literal meaning. This strategy is commonly used in translating songs, rhymes, humor, or wordplay, where preserving the intended effect is more important than maintaining lexical equivalence.

Neither the former nor the latter strategy was found in the corpus. The absence of the former reflects the lack of foreign or non-standard linguistic elements requiring transcription, whereas the latter was unnecessary because the film contains no songs, wordplay, or other stylistic features that would warrant dislocation.

RO2. Most frequently used translation strategies in the Indonesian Subtitles of *Women Talking*

In translating audio-visual subtitles, various strategies can be used to effectively convey the meaning and context of the source-language dialogues to the target audience. The analysis of 300 utterances in *Women Talking* movie reveals that the dominant used strategy is **transfer**, found in 160 subtitle units (53.33%), reflecting a preference for direct translation, followed by paraphrase found in 50 subtitle units (16.67%), indicating the need for rewording to enhance understanding. Resignation strategy was identified as the least commonly used strategy in the movie found in just 1 subtitle unit (0.33%). Below is a bar chart illustrating the distribution of translation strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles of *Women Talking*.

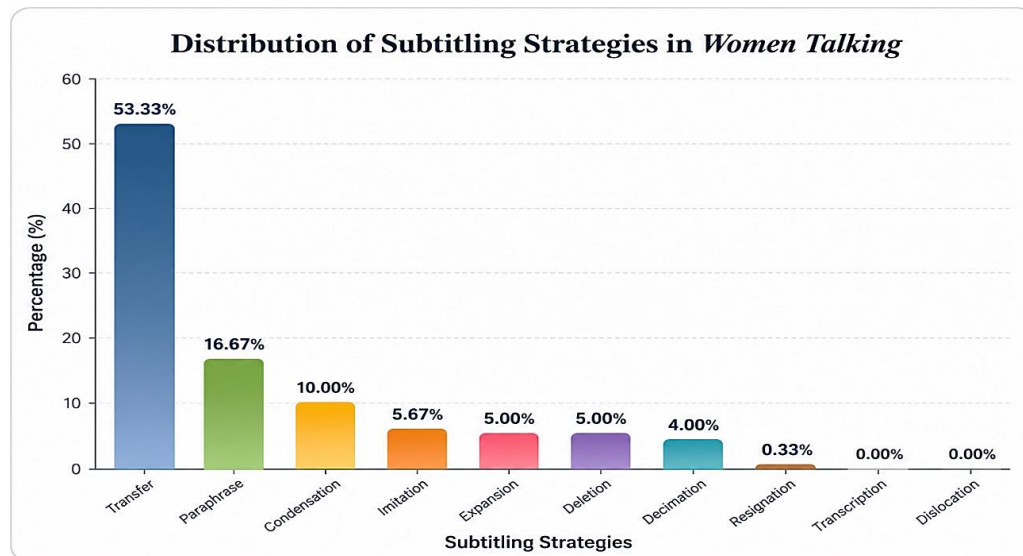


Figure 1. Distribution of subtitling strategies in *Women Talking* (2022) based on Gottlieb's theory.

Based on Figure 1 above, it was clear that the transfer strategy is the most frequently used translation strategy, accounting for 53.33% (16 subtitle units) of all cases. This means that the translator mostly kept the original text without significant changes, likely aiming to maintain accuracy and stay true to the original meaning. The dominant use of this strategy suggests that many of the film's dialogues could be directly translated into the target language without major difficulties. Following it, paraphrase strategy appears 16.67% (50 subtitle units) in the subtitles, the second most frequently used, indicating that some parts of the dialogue needed to be reworded to make them more understandable in the target language. This often happens when direct translation doesn't work due to differences in sentence structure or idiomatic expressions between the two languages. The third strategy commonly used is condensation, identified in 10.00% (30 subtitle units) of the total strategies, which involves shortening or simplifying the original dialogue while still preserving the core message. This is applied to meet space and timing constraints, making the subtitles more concise without losing essential meaning.

Imitation, deletion, expansion, and strategies share almost the same percentages of use, respectively, with 5.67% (17 subtitle units), 5.00% (15 subtitle units), 5.00% (subtitle units), and 4.00% (12 subtitle units) of the total strategies. The use of imitation strategy is meant to preserve names, places, or cultural references exactly as they appeared in the source language. Its moderate use indicates that there are some elements in the movie, such as character names or proper nouns that did not require translation or adaptation due to their recognizability or universality. Deletion involves omitting certain words or phrases entirely. This usually occurred when the omitted content was considered non-essential or redundant, allowing the translator to prioritize more important information and ensure subtitles remained readable and well-timed. Expansion strategy involves adding explanatory information that was not

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explicitly stated in the original text but was necessary for the target audience to fully understand the meaning. The limited use of this strategy suggested that most of the dialogue in the movie is already clear and does not require additional clarification. In addition, decimation strategy involves drastically reducing the amount of translated content. This might have been used when visuals strongly supported the message, or when subtitles needed to be extremely brief.

Last but not least, resignation strategy was found in just 0.33% (1 subtitle units) of the total subtitling strategies and is typically employed when translation is nearly impossible, and meaning is inevitably lost.

To conclude, the prevalent application of the transfer method indicated that the translator sought to maintain the original meaning via direct translation. Techniques such as paraphrasing and compression were employed to accommodate linguistic and subtitle limitations, hence enhancing clarity and readability. Simultaneously, deletion, imitation, and expansion were employed judiciously to optimize space, maintain cultural components, and offer clarification where required. The minimal employment of resignation and the lack of transcribing and dislocation further indicated that the discussion in *Women Talking* was predominantly direct and translatable. The translation demonstrated a balance between adherence to the source text and the practical requirements of subtitle display.

Discussion

The findings of the present study are consistent with several previous studies examining the translation strategies in movie subtitles such as in the studies conducted by Triana et al. (2023), Pramata na (2021), Manullang and Marpaung (2020), Asrima and Nur (2023), and Zulfa and Meilasari (2025). All of these reviewed studies support the findings of the current study that revealed the transfer strategy as the dominantly used strategy in translating English movie dialogues into Indonesian subtitles. The complete list is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Distribution of Gottlieb's (1992) translation strategies in the reviewed studies supporting the current study's findings in which the transfer strategy tops in all lists.

No.	Translation Strategy	Current study (2026) n = 300		Manulang & Marpaung (2020) n = 425		Zulfa & Meilasari (2020) n = 40		Pramatana (2021) n = 1,199		Asrima & Nur (2023) n = 122		Triana (2023) n = 1,337		Then-Kok (2026) n = 1576	
		%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
1	Transfer	53.33	1	75.06	1	25.00	1	71.64	1	24.59	1	44.05	1	47.53	1
2	Paraphrase	16.67	2	8.71	2	20.00	2	16.51	2	17.21	3	10.70	3	11.99	3
3	Condensation	10.00	3	0.94	7	17.50	3	0.92	7	9.02	5	5.98	5	10.91	4
4	Imitation	5.67	4	0.24	8	0.00	9	2.92	4	10.66	4	21.02	2	4.63	5
5	Expansion	5.00	5	2.35	5	12.50	4	0.33	9	9.02	6	0.00	10	0.89	7
6	Deletion	5.00	6	0.24	10	5.00	7	3.00	3	22.95	2	3.74	6	21.07	2
7	Decimation	4.00	7	1.18	6	7.50	6	1.83	6	5.74	7	1.12	9	0.89	8
8	Resignation	0.33	8	4.71	4	2.50	8	0.92	8	0.00	10	3.66	7	0.00	10
9	Transcription	0.00	9	0.24	9	10.00	5	1.92	5	0.82	8	1.94	8	0.25	9
10	Dislocation	0.00	10	6.35	3	0.00	10	0.00	10	0.00	9	7.78	4	1.84	6
Total		100		100		100		100		100		100		100	

Data in Table 2 show that, in the first place, Triana et al. (2023)'s findings in her research entitled "*Subtitling Strategies of English Indonesian Translation Applied in the Toy Story 4 Movie*" revealed that **transfer** strategy was the most dominantly used strategy in the subtitle translation with 44.03% of occurrences, emphasizing the importance of preserving the structure and

meaning of the original text. The transfer strategy, according to Gottlieb (1992), is characterized by its direct and faithful rendering of the source text without omission or significant modification. Both studies suggest that the transfer strategy is a common and reliable approach in subtitle translation, particularly for straightforward dialogue where accuracy and clarity are critical.

Secondly, Pramata (2021)'s findings in her study "*An Analysis of Subtitling Strategies of Indonesian Subtitles on the Movie Entitled Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*" also found that the **transfer** strategy was the most frequently used in the movie subtitles, with 72.8% of the total occurrences. This further supports the idea that maintaining the integrity of the source text is a priority in subtitling, especially for clear and unambiguous statements. Both studies indicate that the transfer strategy helps ensure that the translated message remains accurate and comprehensible for the target audience.

Thirdly, Manullang and Marpaung (2020)'s findings in their study "*Translation Strategy in Toba Dream Movie Subtitle*", identified all the ten types of translation strategies of Gottlieb, with **transfer** strategy, again, being the most frequently used in the movie subtitles with 75.06% of occurrences. This consistency across multiple studies reinforces the argument that the transfer strategy plays a fundamental role in subtitle translation, particularly in cases where the original dialogue carries important thematic or narrative significance.

Fourthly, Asrinda and Nur (2023)'s findings in their research "*Subtitling Strategies from English to Indonesian in The Imitation Game Movie by Lebah Ganteng*" identified that **transfer** was the most frequently employed subtitling strategy that comprises 24.59% of the total strategies used in the movie subtitles. The predominance of the transfer strategy indicates that the translator favored a source-text-oriented approach, aiming to preserve the original meaning of the dialogues while producing accurate Indonesian subtitles.

Lastly, Zulfa and Meilasari (2025)'s findings in their research "*Subtitling Strategies in Wednesday the Series*" revealed that **transfer** was once again the most frequently employed subtitling strategy with 25.00% of occurrences. Their research findings indicate that transfer was the dominant subtitling strategy, reflecting the translator's preference for preserving the original meaning while maintaining a natural and comprehensible translation for the target audience.

The dominance of the transfer strategy in the reviewed studies can be attributed to the dialogue-driven nature of *Women Talking*, a film that centers on discussions of faith, trauma, gender-based violence, and collective decision-making. Unlike action-oriented or comedy films that often require extensive adaptation of humor, slang, or culture-specific references, *Women Talking* relies heavily on verbal interaction and ideological argumentation, making the preservation of the original meaning particularly important. Consequently, the translator frequently employed transfer to maintain the accuracy and nuance of the characters' viewpoints while minimizing the risk of altering sensitive religious, social, and gender-related messages. From the perspective of Nida's (1964) equivalence theory, this strategy helps achieve communicative effectiveness by conveying the intended meaning naturally to the Indonesian

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audience. The predominance of transfer therefore suggests that audience reception is facilitated through greater fidelity to the source text, allowing viewers to engage with the film's central themes and ideological debates in a manner that closely reflects the original dialogue.

In contrast to the findings of the present study, which identified the transfer strategy as the most frequent, several other studies also reported contradicting results that found that it was not transfer but **paraphrase** as the most frequently used strategy as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Distribution of Gottlieb's (1992) translation strategies in the reviewed studies contradicting the current study's findings in which paraphrase strategy tops the lists.

No.	Translation Strategy	Irwan et al. (2021) n = 294		Fitri & Noverino (2023) n = 165		Hasibuan et al. (2023) n = 174		Panjaitan et al. (2023) n = 55		Purnawati & Karimah (2026) n = 50	
		%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
1	Paraphrase	43.54	1	44.24	1	36.21	1	20.00	1	36.00	1
2	Condensation	25.85	2	19.39	2	24.14	3	18.18	2	12.00	2
3	Transfer	24.83	3	12.73	7	12.07	5	18.18	3	10.00	6
4	Imitation	4.08	4	7.88	8	8.62	4	14.55	4	10.00	4
5	Dislocation	1.02	5	7.27	5	5.75	6	7.27	6	10.00	3
6	Transcription	0.68	6	3.03	10	5.17	2	7.27	8	10.00	5
7	Decimation	0.00	7	3.03	6	4.60	7	7.27	7	4.00	8
8	Deletion	0.00	8	2.42	4	3.45	10	7.27	5	4.00	7
9	Expansion	0.00	9	0.00	9	0.00	8	0.00	9	2.00	9
10	Resignation	0.00	10	0.00	3	0.00	9	0.00	10	2.00	10
Total		100		100		100		100		100	

Data in Table 3 above show that in studies conducted by Fitri and Noverino (2023), paraphrase topped the list with 44.24%, followed by Irwan et al. (2021) with 43.54%, Hasibuan et al. (2023) with 36.21%, Panjaitan et al. (2023) with 20.00%, and Purnawati and Karimah (2026) with 36.00%. The contradiction suggests that the selection of subtitling strategies is influenced not only by the linguistic characteristics of the source text but also by subtitle constraints, dialogue density, communicative purpose, and film genre. In addition, different translation approaches may be applied or adopted to render the source-language dialogues into the target language in order to fulfill the linguistic, cultural, and technical requirements of subtitling.

In the comedy movie genre, such as in the movies "When Harry Met Sally" (Purnawati & Karimah, 2026), "Get Hard" (Irwan et al., 2021), and Comic 8 Part 1" (Panjaitan et al., (2023), paraphrase strategy was used more frequently in translating subtitles. The differences can be attributed to the nature of comedy, where humor, cultural references, and wordplay often play a crucial role in translation. Since direct translations may fail to capture the humor or intended impact of the original text, paraphrasing offers a more flexible approach. This strategy allows translators to adapt expressions to better resonate with the target audience while preserving the comedic essence. This supports the notion that translation strategies are highly dependent on genre and communicative function. Unlike drama films, where the transfer strategy is effective in maintaining accuracy, comedy films often require more adaptive translation

strategies to ensure humor is successfully conveyed across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The contrasts between the current findings and the reviewed studies highlight the significance of genre in determining the most suitable subtitling strategy. In *Women Talking*, a drama film with serious and thought-provoking themes, accuracy in preserving the original dialogue is crucial. The movie's dialogues are heavily centered on philosophical discussions and moral dilemmas, where fidelity to the original wording is essential in maintaining the depth and gravity of the conversations. In contrast, the predominance of paraphrase was attributable to the film's frequent use of ambiguous, metaphorical, and figurative expressions, which required reformulation to preserve the intended meaning in the target language.

Furthermore, the present study also adds to the discussion by emphasizing the importance of audience expectations and cultural context in selecting translation strategies. The Indonesian audience's familiarity with certain cultural concepts in *Women Talking* movie may have contributed to the effectiveness of the transfer strategy, whereas humor translation demands additional adaptation to align with local comedic sensibilities. This supports the argument that translation is not merely a linguistic process but also a cultural and contextual adaptation.

To conclude, the findings of the current study highlight the significance of considering genre and communication goal when identifying the most appropriate translation technique in subtitle translation. The transfer strategy is effective in preserving accuracy and clarity; nevertheless, certain genres and text functions may require different methodologies to attain the desired effect in the target language. This study substantiates Gottlieb's framework as a credible model for examining translation tactics, while also emphasizing the necessity for additional research on the impact of diverse audiences and cultural settings on translation decisions.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the background of the study, this study aimed to describe the translation strategies used in the subtitle of the *Women Talking* movie based on Gottlieb's ten classification of translation strategies. However, translation strategies used by the translator in translating subtitles of the *Women Talking* movie were expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, condensation, decimation, deletion, and resignation. There were 300 sampled clauses/sentences items in total, with the following details: Expansion 15 utterances (5.00%), Paraphrase 50 utterances (16.67%), Transfer 160 utterances (53.33%), Imitation 17 utterances (5.67%), Condensation 30 utterances (10.00%), Decimation 12 utterances (4.00%), Deletion with 15 utterances (5.00%), and Resignation 1 utterance (0.33%). Thus, it can be concluded that the transfer strategy was the most commonly used in subtitle translation of *Women Talking* movie in Indonesian. The transfer strategy, in general, helps maintain the naturalness and accuracy of the original text,

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ensuring that the translated version closely matches the structure and content of the source text.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that future researchers interested in studying translation strategies conduct further exploration of translation strategies in different movie genres or languages, examine the impact of various translation strategies on audience comprehension and engagement, as well as explore deeper insights into how translation choices affect meaning retention and cultural adaptation in subtitles.

AUTHOR STATEMENTS

All authors contributed equally to this study. **Auliya Ramdini** conceptualized the study, developed the research design, conducted the data collection, curated the data, performed the data analysis, and prepared the original draft of the manuscript. **Baharuddin** and **Lalu Jaswadi Putera** supervised the research process and contributed to writing, reviewing, and editing the manuscript. **Ahmad Zamzam** participated in providing research resources, validating the findings, assisting with data interpretation, and contributing to reviewing and editing the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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