

Research article

Multimodality in Audio Visual Translation of Children's Animated Films

Ni Putu Meira Purnama Yanti^{1*}, I Gusti Ayu Agung Dian Susanthi², Agus Darma Yoga Pratama³

Master of Linguistics, Universitas Warmadewa

ORCID

I Gusti Ayu Agung Dian Susanthi: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0779-3907>

Abstract.

Multimodality is also highly relevant to translate: a significant number of the texts being translated nowadays are multimodal, ranging from user manuals, websites, textbooks, and comics to audiovisual products such as videogames and films. This research aimed to identify the multimodality elements in translating children's animated film from English into Indonesian. The research conducted through descriptive qualitative method through observation with documentation and note taking techniques. The results of the analysis showed that "Barbie of Swan Lake" and "Tinkerbell" presents comprehensive multimodality elements including visual, audio, spatial, gestural, and linguistic. Linguistic element in this case, referred to the existence of subtitles. The subtitles were not always related to the context of depicted story and multimodality elements. This happens because of several difficulties of translating children's animated films regarding children's references, fantasy depiction, joke undertone, and many more. The accurateness of the message of these films were in three criteria, namely poor, good, and sufficient.

Keywords: children's animated films, multimodality, relational context, message accuracy

Corresponding Author: Ni Putu Meira Purnama Yant; email: meirapurnamayanti@gmail.com

Dates Published 04 July 2022

Publishing services provided by
Knowledge E

© Ni Putu Meira Purnama Yant et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ISCL 2021 Conference Committee.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication nowadays has become primarily multimodal. People encounter the combinations of modes – words, images, sounds, gesture, and so on. Multimodality is also highly relevant to translate: a significant number of the texts being translated nowadays are multimodal, ranging from user manuals, websites, textbooks, and comics to audiovisual products such as videogames and films. The translation and the translational enquiry of such texts needs to include a careful consideration of both the individual meaning-making resources involved and the way they tie together to form a multimodal entity.

According to (Kress, G. and Leeuwen, 2006), multimodality is the combination of different semiotic modes such as language and music. It is about the diverse ways


OPEN ACCESS

in which a number of distinct semiotic resource systems are both coded and co-contextualized in making of text-specific meaning (Baldry, A.P. and Thibault, 2006). It is an analysis of the rules and principles that allows viewers to understand the meaning potential of relative placement of elements, framing, salience, proximity, color saturations, styles of typeface (Machin, 2007). Therefore, every semiotic mode is meaning momentum and multimodality focuses on the study of the interrelationships between various communicative modes, no matter whether they are visual or auditory, words or image.

(Kress & Leeuwen, 2005) assume that image, color, music, typography and other visual modes. In their view, image and other visual modes can represent objects and their relations in a world outside the representational system, so there are many ideational choices available for visual sign-making in visual communication. In addition, Bull and Anstey (2010) state that there are five semiotic system. These semiotic systems are linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial. Linguistic is related to some aspects such as vocabulary, generic structure and the grammar of oral and written language. Visual involves dimensional works of art, photographs, illustrated written or verbal discourse, and so on. Audio comprises volume, pitch, and rhythm of music, and sound effects. Gestural is about movement, speed, stillness in facial expression and body language and posture. Spatial refers to proximity, direction, position of layout and organization of objects in space. These multimodalities are interrelated in meaning-making for expressive and informative purposes of audio-visual translation.

Audiovisual translation (AVT) has become more and more necessary throughout history due to globalization, the growing cultural exchange between societies, and the ever-growing demand of multimedia materials. According to (Chiaro, 2008), dubbing and subtitling, the two most common forms of audiovisual translation. These enable audiences whose native language is different to the one from the original film to learn more about various cultures, while at the same time being able to understand the spoken content. When a film is dubbed, it means the visual parts (and often the background noises and the soundtrack) remain the same, whilst the spoken fragments are translated into another language and are visually adapted to the actors' lip movements and gestures. The goal is to achieve the illusion that the different characters are really speaking the target language. Subtitles, on the other hand, are added as translated text to the original version of the film or series (most of the time on the lower part of the screen), and act as a linguistic aid to enable viewers to follow what is going on the screen.

However, it cannot be ensured that all subtitles presented accurate meaning or message of the original version of the film. Several linguistic units in the subtitles are not certainly related to the context due to several challenges to deal with. Like the subtitles on the children's animated films. According to (Tinland, 2017) children's animated films often have exaggerated features and facial expressions. Moreover, some obscure children cultural references and even jokes tone. The subtitles that are not always in sync with the multimodal elements of the children's animated films and linguistics can affect the accuracy of meaning or message of the original version of the film.

Many studies on audio-visual translation have been carried out. However, most of these studies only discuss the translation strategies and techniques used, as well as the implicit meaning or message conveyed. Dewi (2016) in her study entitled *Audiovisual Translation of English Idioms in Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows Movie: An Analysis of English to Indonesian Subtitle*, found that the pure idiom has the largest number of the total idioms found in the movie and the most frequent strategies used by the translator is paraphrase which is used 41 times or reaches 41% of the total usage. In addition, Yuan (2019) conducted a study entitled *Audiovisual Translation: A Contrastive Analysis of The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, with the results of the study about the translation methods and techniques used through contrastive analysis.

These become consideration of the researcher to conduct further studies about audio-visual translation especially subtitling using multimodality approach. The approach makes this study more comprehensive, because the analysis involves all multimodal elements, that can be linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, or even spatial. Regarding the scope of discussions, there are three points highlighted like the multimodality elements, relational context of linguistics unit, and meaning accuracy found in the selected children's animated films, namely "Barbie of Swan Lake" and "Tinkerbell". This research aimed to identify the multimodality elements in translating children's animated film from English into Indonesian. The research conducted through descriptive qualitative method through observation with documentation and note taking techniques.

2. METHODS

Children's animated films, namely "Barbie of Swan Lake" and "Tinkerbell". These films were taken from digital media, YouTube. "Barbie of Swan Lake" and "Tinkerbell" were selected as the data source of this research due to the uniqueness of depicting the

stories through the animations with several elements like magic, myth, wonder, and the extraordinary things. These films also consist of visual imagery, imaginative themes, and the plots that involve journey, helpful, and friendly creatures or supernatural beings, and settings in fantastic, far-away worlds. These characteristics are very appropriate and interesting when taking account into the analysis of multimodality in subtitling with the scope of discussions about multimodality aspects and their implications to relational context of linguistic units and meaning or message accuracy.

Regarding data collection, the researcher used the observation method along with documentation and note-taking techniques. First, the researcher watched the children's animated films with Indonesian subtitles attentively. Second, the subtitles were identified by considering multimodality elements and the relational context of linguistic units. The selected subtitles then were collected by screen-capturing. The duration of the scenes was also noted. Afterwards, the collected data were presented in the table systematically. The components in the table include name of children's animated film, screen capture of the subtitles, and the duration.

The collected from the data source were deeply analyzed by using descriptive qualitative method. The analysis was concerned about multimodality modes, relational context of linguistic units, and the accuracy of meaning or message found in the selected children's animated films by applying the theories from (Anstey, M., & Bull, 2010) and Larson (1998). Meanwhile, in determining the accurateness of meaning or message in the selected children's animated films, the researcher used accurateness criteria in the translation proposed by (Machali, 2000) and (R, 2017). The accurateness criteria in the translation are divided into four, namely very good, good, sufficient, and poor. Very good if the subtitles presented the message of the original version of the film without any distortion. The linguistic units are very related to the context and the multimodality elements of the film. It is readable and understandable. The accurateness can be said good, when necessary addition and deletion appear yet the message is preserved and kept being related to the context of the film. The multimodality elements are also presented goodly through the subtitles. Sufficient if unnecessary additions appear. The message of the original version of the film is hardly preserved. Several additions are not certainly related to the context, and they might not depict the multimodality elements well. The accurateness can be said poor when the addition, deletion and difference alter the message of the original version of the movie. The addition and even deletion are not related to the context. Too many awkward expressions in the subtitles. It is very hard to understand. The result of the analysis used formal and informal method. Formal method is the method to present the result of the analysis by using table, while,

informal method is the method to present the result of the analysis by using sentences to explain it.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, there were four animated children’s films that were selected as data sources, namely “Barbie of Swan Lake” and “Tinkerbell”. These films consist of several scenes. The scenes along with the subtitles can be seen below.




No	Title of Children’s Animated Film	Scree Capture	Duration
1	Barbie of Swan Lake		4 minutes 24 seconds
2	Barbie of Swan Lake		14 minutes 32 seconds
3	Tinkerbell		3 minutes 34 seconds

Figure 1

The first data comes from the Barbie of Swan Lake movie, especially in the first scene. The first scene refers to Barbie walking while carrying a petromax lamp as the lighting to her sisters’ bed room. She went to his sisters’ room. She checked whether all of his siblings were asleep or not. All elements of multimodality are clearly depicted. The audio elements refer to the sound effects of animals that sound characteristically at night in quiet and calm situation. Visualization in this scene is shown from several beds with blankets and pillows. In addition, there are also wardrobes, tables, and many more. The color of room wall is brown, which gives a warm and comfortable situation. The gestural element can be seen in Barbie’s smiling face. Her smile symbolizes her

gratitude because she could see her siblings still healthy and able to sleep well. The spatial aspect can be seen from the positions of some objects like beds and wardrobes in the bedroom, also petromax lamp. The beds were located next to each other with accompanying objects such as pillows and blankets. The wardrobes were easier to reach by his younger siblings. The petromax lamp that Barbie held also in the right position, which was not so close to the eyes. While the linguistic element refers to the subtitle "*oh iya kamu*". In the original version, Barbie did not say anything. So, it can be said that the expression that appear in the subtitle is as the result of addition from the translator. The phrase "*oh iya kamu*" in the subtitle is certainly not related to the context. It is clear that the context depicted is that Barbie just wants to check whether all of her siblings are sleeping comfortably or not. She did not talk to anyone. She just smiled while holding a petromax lamp as lighting. She smiled without mumbling. Not only that, the the phrase "*oh iya kamu*" in the subtitle is also inconsistent with all the multimodality elements depicted. This can affect the accuracy of the message to be conveyed in this scene. The accuracy of the message in this scene is in the poor category. The addition of the phrase "*oh iya kamu*" looks odd and changes the message of the original version of the film. Although all the multimodal elements are well illustrated, the phrase "*oh iya kamu*" which is not in accordance with the context has caused a distortion of the meaning or message conveyed.

The second data also comes from the Barbie of Swan Lake movie, especially in the third scene. After Odette succeed to save Lila, a friendly purple unicorn who is also Odette's friend. She liked to go to the town and almost caught by the people in the town. Lila then escaped to the magical forest. Suddenly, Lila was tied up by ropes. Odette attempted to take something for cutting the ropes. Then, she found a purple crystal. She took it. She used the crystal to cute the ropes. Actually, her effort was successful. Few minutes later, a beautiful fairy appeared. The fairy walked over to Odette and Lila. Odette apologized to the fairy for taking the crystal. The multimodality elements that can be seen in this scene including five things, namely, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and linguistic. The audio elements used refer to Tchaikovsky's classical music which depicts a beautiful symphony. Besides, there are also distinctive sound effects when fairies come to Odette and Lila in the Magical Forest. Gestures of the characters consist of facial expressions, gestures, and body postures. The expression on the face of the fairy who smiled widely saw Lila with Odette. She was happy because Odette, a beautiful girl who was very kind, could find and take the crystal. The magic crystal was then used to help anyone who is in trouble and as a tool against all forms of evil that will be made by the evil wizards. The fairy stood, with his right hand holding a fairy wand while

his left hand holding nothing. The position of the two fairy's hands at waist level while talking to Odette and Lila. According to Olla (2016), the position of both hands parallel to the waist shows that someone is explaining something in a relaxed and comfortable manner, without feeling forced or pressured. While the position of Odette and Lila also stood while listening to the fairy. The visualization leads to the depiction of the fairy wearing a purplish white dress with an additional flower crown on the forehead. The purplish white color symbolizes the kind and gentle nature of the fairy. He also held a white fairy wand. This fairy wand is so magical that it is usually used for good things. The flower crown on the fairy's forehead adds to the elegance of the fairy. While Odette also looks elegant and beautiful with long brownish yellow hair. Then, Lila is purple unicorn symbolized a pony with two horns. Lila represents someone who is wise, independent, and peaceful. Someone who also spreads positivity and hope that goodness always wins. From the linguistic point, it can be seen from the subtitles "*Jangan begitu, kami telah menunggu kau begitu lama*" as the translated version of the expression uttered by the fairy to Odette "*Please, don't do apologize, we've been waiting for you long*". The subtitle can convey the message of the original version in good criteria. Even there are some omissions of the expression, the message is preserved and appropriate to the context of the story in the film. The multimodality elements also make a great impression in the message conveyed.

The third data is taken from Tinkerbell film. In this scene, Tinkerbell with her friend, Terence, flew happily to a summer fairy camp on the mainland. Tinkerbell was happy to see all friends surround the camp. Suddenly, a blue bird came with a brownish yellow pear. Actually, in the pear there was a big mouse. The multimodality elements appeared in this scene are visual, spatial, audio, gestural, and linguistic. Visual elements can be seen through the depicted of Tinkerbell, as the fairy who was pretty, cheerful, and having thin wings. She also had two eyes, feet, body, like humans. Her hair was brownish yellow. She tied her hair neatly with a green rubber that makes her more beautiful. She wore green dress. The shape of the dress was like a beautifully arranged leaf. Green represents harmony and freshness of life. Besides, there was a big mouse with grey skin in the brownish yellow pear. The pear is like a magnet for mouse. The visualization also come from the situation around the summer camp. There were full of green leaves with a beautiful sky. Spatial refers to the setting of the story, that is, Tinkerbell and the mouse in the surrounding summer camp on the Manland. In creating marvelous atmosphere of the story, there is also the use of audio. The audio elements refer to the back-sound and voice from the characters (Tinkerbell and mouse). Gestural aspect can be seen when Tinkerbell uses her right hand to touch a forehead of the

mouse. It is like body language that show affection and care to the mouse. The facial expression of the mouse is very pleasure and calm. Related to the linguistic aspect, it can be seen from the subtitle in the form of phrase “*Hiya, Cheese!*”. At first, this subtitle is very related to the context of the story, in which, Tinkerbell met with a mouse for the first time and she said hello to the mouse. However, the existence of the word “cheese” in the subtitle can mislead the audience, especially children. In fact, there is not found cheese in the depicted story. It is precisely a mouse in the pear. At second, it can be said that the subtitle has not relational context with the visual elements in the film. Even though, many people are familiar if the cheese is closely related to mouse, but it does mean that children also understand it easily. This kind of situation leads to the accuracy of the message in sufficient criteria. There is unnecessary addition that inappropriate with the context of the story and multimodality elements. The message of the original version is quite hard to understand.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of analysis above, it can be concluded that children’s animated film “Barbie of Swan Lake” and “Tinkerbell” presents comprehensive multimodality elements including visual, audio, spatial, gestural, and linguistic. Visual aspects come from the characters, picture, and many more. Audio elements are taken from song, music, and voice of the characters. Spatial refers to the position of the objects and the characters. Linguistic element in this case, refers to the existence of subtitles. The subtitles are not always related to the context of depicted story and multimodality elements, due to several children terms, fantasy situation, and many more. The accurateness of the message of these films are in three criteria, namely poor, good, and sufficient.

References

- [1] Anstey M, Bull G. Helping teachers to explore multimodal texts. *Curriculum and Leadership Journal*. 2010;8(16).
- [2] Baldry AP, Thibault P. *Multimodal transcription and text*. London: Equinox; 2006.
- [3] Chiaro D. *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. New York: Routledge; 2008.
- [4] Kress G, Leeuwen, T. *Reading images*. Geelong: Deakin University Press; 2006.
- [5] Kress G, Leeuwen T. *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Arnold; 2005.
- [6] Machali R. *Translator guidance*. Jakarta: PT. Grasindo; 2000.

- [7] Machin D. Introduction to multimodal analysis. London: Hodder Arnold; 2007.
- [8] Kusumastuti R A. The acceptability of Indonesian – English translation of the scene plaques in front Vredeburg Museum based on Larson's Theory. Thesis, Sanata Dharma University.; 2017.
- [9] Tinland C. Translating cartoons for children. 2017. <https://mastertcloc.unistra.fr/2017/10/16/translating-cartoons-children/> cite 2 february 2021