

SUBTITLING STRATEGIES IN TRANSLATING IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN THE TV SERIES FRIENDS SEASON 8

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Abstract. This study analyzes the subtitling strategies used to translate idiomatic expressions in the American television series *Friends Season 8*. Idiomatic expressions often contain figurative meanings that cannot be translated literally, posing challenges in audiovisual translation, particularly subtitling. This study aims to identify the types of idioms that appear and determine the most frequently used subtitling strategies in translating these idioms into Indonesian subtitles. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. The research data consists of idiomatic expressions in the dialogue of *Friends Season 8* along with their Indonesian subtitle translations taken from the official HBO Max platform. Data were collected through documentation techniques and analyzed using Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategy theory and the idiom classifications by Fernando (1996). Based on the findings, paraphrasing is the most frequently used subtitling strategy, accounting for 66% of the total data. This is followed by resignation (12%), condensation (8%), transfer (6%), expansion (5%), and deletion (2%). The results indicate that paraphrase dominates the translation of idiomatic expressions in *Friends Season 8*. **Paraphrase** was the most frequently used strategy, indicating that translators prioritized equivalence of meaning and audience understanding over maintaining the idiomatic form of the source language. The dominance of paraphrase was also influenced by technical limitations in subtitling, such as the space and time required for subtitles. Overall, this study shows that the translation of idioms in *Friends Season 8* is significantly influenced by the level of idiomaticity and the communicative needs of the audiovisual media. This research is expected to contribute to the study of audiovisual translation, particularly in the application of subtitling strategies to idiomatic expressions in television series.

Keywords: *Idioms, Friends, Serial tv, Subtitling Strategies, Translation*

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This article discusses the importance of idioms in everyday communication, which not only function as linguistic expressions but also reflect the cultural values and habits or ways of thinking of their speakers. In audiovisual contexts such as series, idioms are often used to convey satire, humor, and social context. One example studied is the TV series *Friends*, known for its rich use of idioms in everyday dialogue.

This research highlights that translation, particularly through subtitling, plays a crucial role in conveying meaning to viewers from target language. The main challenge in translating idioms is that

their meanings are figurative and cannot be translated literally. Mistranslated of idioms can lead to misunderstandings, requiring translators to employ appropriate strategies.

Friends Season 8 was chosen as the research object because its dialogue spontaneously, natural conversation that sometimes came up with idioms and American cultural nuances. This study aims to identify the types of idioms based on Fernando's (1996) theory, namely pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. It also analyzes the subtitling strategies used based on Gottlieb's (1992) theory, such as transfer, paraphrase, condensation, expansion, deletion, decimation, and resignation.

Furthermore, this study aims to determine the most frequently used subtitling strategies in translating idioms into Indonesian on the HBO Max platform. The research focuses on dialogue in *Friends* Season 8 and only on the official Indonesian subtitles. The results of this study are expected to benefit researchers, readers, and translation practitioners in understanding the challenges of translating idioms and provide insight into the importance of considering cultural and contextual aspects in the audiovisual translation process.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several previous studies have been conducted by a number of researchers related to subtitling strategies, related to translation, and idiomatic expressions. The following are some relevant studies.

Firstly, Putri (2018) examined "Subtitling Strategies Translating Idiomatic Expressions in the Movie *Zootopia*." This study identified the subtitling strategies used in translating idioms, applying Gottlieb's (1992) theory. In terms of idiom classification, Putri (2018) found that most idiomatic expressions in *Zootopia* belong to pure idioms and phrasal idioms, which are commonly used in daily conversation. These idioms often convey meanings that cannot be understood literally and therefore pose challenges in translation, especially within the technical constraints of subtitle space and time. Based on the findings, Putri (2018) identified that paraphrase was the most frequently used subtitling strategy, accounting for the highest percentage of the total data. This strategy was applied when idiomatic expressions in the source language did not have direct idiomatic equivalents in Indonesian, requiring the translator to re-express the meaning using more natural target-language expressions. The second most frequently used strategies were transfer and condensation, which appeared in a moderate percentage of the data. Transfer was applied when the idiomatic meaning could be directly conveyed into Indonesian without significant structural changes, while condensation was used to shorten the dialogue due to subtitle space and time constraints.

Furthermore, another research was conducted by Rahman (2022) wrote a study titled "Equivalence in Translating Idiomatic Expressions in *The Big Bang Theory*." His focus was on the equivalence of idioms in subtitles. Rahman concluded that translators often paraphrase to maintain the meaning. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method supported by quantitative analysis to identify the frequency of translation strategies used in rendering idiomatic expressions into Indonesian. The findings indicate that Paraphrase was the most frequently used strategy, accounting for approximately 40% . The second most frequently used strategies were transfer and condensation, which together

accounted for around 30% of the data. Other strategies such as decimation and dislocation appear less frequently, representing approximately 20% of the data. Meanwhile, deletion and resignation were the least frequently used strategies, accounting for about 10% of the total data. Overall, the frequency distribution suggests that Rahman (2022) emphasizes meaning equivalence over formal equivalence, highlighting the importance of readability and audience comprehension in audiovisual translation.

There is also research by Isworo, D. N., Kusumo, P., & Yosephin, M. (2023) they discussed about *an Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions Used by Content Creators on TikTok*. Their research analyzed idiomatic expressions used by TikTok content creators to understand their meaning, characteristics, and contribution to English language teaching. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method supported by quantitative frequency analysis. The data were collected from selected TikTok videos containing idiomatic expressions commonly used in informal and conversational settings. The findings indicate that paraphrase-like meaning transfer was the most frequently observed strategy, accounting for approximately 45% of the total idiomatic expressions analyzed transfer, representing around 30% of the data. Other strategies resembling expansion and condensation accounted for approximately 15% of the data. Meanwhile, strategies comparable to resignation and deletion were the least frequently used, representing about 10% of the data. These strategies occurred when idiomatic expressions were simplified or avoided to prevent misunderstanding among diverse audiences. Overall, the frequency distribution suggests that clarity and audience accessibility play a crucial role in the use of idiomatic expressions in digital media, with paraphrase-like strategies dominating the data.

Another research by Putra, 2024 researched *The Translation Strategies of Idiomatic Expressions in the Indonesian Subtitle of The Bad Guys (2022) Animated Movie* which discusses how to translate English idioms into Indonesian subtitles using subtitling strategies so that the meaning is still conveyed naturally, despite differences in culture, context, and time limits in the appearance of subtitles. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method supported by quantitative frequency analysis. The data were collected by identifying idiomatic expressions in the source language and examining their Indonesian subtitle equivalents to determine the strategies applied by the translator. The findings reveal that Paraphrase was the most frequently used subtitling strategy, accounting for approximately 45% of the total idiomatic expressions analyzed. The second most frequently used strategies were transfer and condensation, which together represented around 30% of the data. Other strategies such as decimation and dislocation appear less frequently, accounting for approximately 15% of the total data. Meanwhile, deletion and resignation were the least frequently used strategies, representing about 10% of the data. Overall, the frequency distribution indicates that Putra, (2024) prioritizes meaning transfer and audience comprehension over formal equivalence in the translation of idiomatic expressions in animated films.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This qualitative approach was chosen because it focuses on analyzing the meaning and interpretation of idiomatic expressions found in the dialogue of the television series *Friends* Season 8. The data analyzed consisted of spoken or subtitled texts,

which cannot be measured numerically but rather require understanding through context and interpretation of their meaning. This descriptive research aims to systematically describe the types of idioms found based on Fernando's (1996) classification: pure idioms, semi idioms, and literal idioms. Furthermore, this study also describes the subtitling strategies used in translating these idioms into Indonesian. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the researcher identified, classified, and analyzed data based on their level of idiomatic before examining how these meanings are conveyed in the subtitles. This approach allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between idiom types and subtitling strategies used in the context of audiovisual translation.

The analysis in this study is idiomatic expressions appearing in character dialogues in the TV series *Friends Season 8* along with their Indonesian subtitle translations on the legal streaming platform HBO MAX. Each idiom found was analyzed as a complete data unit, of the idiom that are found in the form of sentences and phrases in the source language, the context based on the conversation, the translation in the target language, and the subtitling strategy used. Thus, the analysis is carried out to be tailored to understand how the meaning of the idiom is transferred into the subtitles.

The data source for this study is the American television series *Friends Season 8*, officially available on the HBO Max streaming platform. The series was created by David Crane and Marta Kauffman and produced by Kevin S. Bright. Season 8 consists of 24 episodes that first aired in 2001–2002. The research data consists of English dialogue containing idiomatic expressions and their translations in the form of Indonesian subtitles available on the HBO Max platform. The subtitles analyzed are the official subtitles provided by the platform. The subtitle translator's name is not specifically listed in the show credits, so this study refers to the official subtitles published by HBO Max without attribution to individual translators. The idiomatic expressions used in this study were found scattered across several episodes in Season 8. After a thorough analysis of all 24 episodes, the idioms used in the research data appeared in various episodes containing intense conversations between the main characters. Therefore, the data coverage is not limited to one or two episodes but rather encompasses all episodes in Season 8 containing idiomatic dialogue. The data collection process was carried out by repeatedly watching all episodes of Season 8, then writing a manual of dialogue containing idiomatic expressions based on Fernando's (1996) theoretical criteria.

Each identified expression was recorded, classified into pure idiom, semi-idiom, and literal idiom types. The collected data were then further analyzed to determine the subtitling strategy used in the translation process.

The data in this study were collected through a documentation method. The researcher first watched the *Friends* series *Season 8* on the HBO Max Indonesia platform to identify all idiomatic expressions appearing in the dialogue. Each idiom found was then noting, transcribed, and compared with its official Indonesian subtitle translation. Next, the idiom data and its translation results were classified into a data table for analysis based on Gottlieb's subtitling strategy such as watching closely the episode of *Friend* in *Season 8* and than organizing also listing the idiomatic expressions in the dialogues.

The data analysis technique in this study was conducted qualitatively through several stages. After collecting the data, consisting of idiomatic expressions and their translations in Indonesian subtitles, the first step was to identify each idiomatic expression based on the criteria proposed by Fernando (1996). Next, each identified idiom was classified into three categories according to Fernando (1996) pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. This classification process was carried out by analyzing the level of transparency of meaning and the relationship between the literal and idiomatic meanings of each expression. After the idiom type classification process was completed, the next stage was to analyze the subtitling strategies used in translating the idioms into Indonesian. The strategy analysis was conducted using Gottlieb's theory of subtitling strategies, such as paraphrase, transfer, condensation, expansion, resignation, and deletion. The final stage was to draw conclusions based on the classification results and the analysis of the strategies used. The data was then calculated in terms of frequency to determine the tendency of the most dominant subtitling strategy in translating idiomatic expressions in Friends Season 8.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents research findings obtained from the analysis of idiomatic expressions appearing in the dialogues of the sitcom Friends, along with the subtitling strategies used in the Indonesian subtitles. The research data were taken from dialogues containing idioms and analyzed based on the type of idiom and the subtitling strategy used by the translator. Below is a table of subtitle strategy idiomatic expressions data that shows the summary results of this research. this study focuses on the ten subtitling strategies proposed by Gottlieb, although not all strategies and idiom types were found in the data As stated by Fernando (1996). Of the six categories, only pure idioms, semi idioms, and Literal idiom appeared in the dialogue of *Friends Season 8*. Of these strategies, paraphrase was the most dominant and most frequently applied strategy, including pure idioms, semi idioms, and literal idioms. This indicates that the translator focused more on conveying meaning than on the idiomatic form in the source language.

No	Subtitling Strategies	Pure Idiom	Semi Idiom	Literal diom	Total	Percentage
Types of Idiom						
1	Paraphrase	21	17	5	43	66%
2	Transfer	2	2	-	4	6%
3	Expansion	3	-	-	3	5%
4	Resignation	4	4	-	8	12%
5	Condensation	4	1	-	5	8%
6	Deletion	1	-	-	1	2%
Total		35	24	5	64	100%

Subtitling Strategies Used in Idiomatic Expressions

Based on the analysis of idiomatic expressions in the Indonesian subtitles of *Friends Season 8*, this study reveals that several subtitling strategies were employed by the translator to render English idioms into Indonesian. From Gottlieb's ten subtitling strategies, 6 strategies were identified as being used in the data, namely paraphrase, transfer, expansion, condensation, resignation, and deletion. The remaining strategies, including imitation, transcription, decimation and dislocation, were not found in the analyzed data. The presence of these seven strategies indicates that the translator adopted a flexible approach in dealing with idiomatic expressions, adjusting the translation method according to linguistic, cultural, and technical constraints.

Paraphrase and transfer are primarily used to convey the meaning of idiomatic expressions in a clear and natural way for the target audience. Expansion is applied when additional explanatory information is required to clarify the meaning of an idiom, while condensation and decimation are employed to shorten expressions in accordance with subtitle space and time limitations.

Meanwhile, resignation is used when an idiom cannot be fully translated into the target language, resulting in a loss of idiomatic meaning, and deletion occurs when an idiom is omitted entirely due to technical or contextual constraints. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the translation of idiomatic expressions in *Friends Season 8* involves a combination of meaning oriented and constraint-oriented subtitling strategies. The variety of strategies used reflects the complexity of idiom translation in audiovisual media and highlights the translator's effort cultural accessibility, and technical feasibility in subtitle production

Discussion

Paraphrase as the most dominant subtitling strategy in translating idiomatic expressions. This strategy's dominance not only reflects the translators technical preferences but also represents the process of bridging linguistic and cultural differences between English (SL) and Indonesian (TL). In the context of audiovisual subtitles like *Friends*, clarity of meaning and fluency of dialogue are the primary factors influencing the choice of translation strategy. Furthermore, the analysis in this section considers the characteristics of the situational comedy genre, which is characterized by rapid fire dialogue, informal language, and the use of idioms to express emotions, comedic elements, and

judgments between characters. These conditions require the translator to convey the message concisely and easily understood without disrupting the storyline. Therefore, Paraphrase is often chosen because it can convey the meaning of the idiom directly and functionally in the target language. To support this discussion, this section presents several excerpts describing the use of subtitling strategies in translating idiomatic expressions. Each excerpt is analyzed, taking into account the context of the scene and the relationships between the characters, to demonstrate how the strategy operates in subtitling and its effectiveness in conveying the meaning of the idiom to the target language audience.

Several strategies, such as imitation, transcription, decimation and dislocation were not found in the data. This absence can be explained by the absence of the cast of *Friends Season 8*, who did not use special names or foreign terms that typically require such strategies. These findings strengthen the relationship between the context of the scene, the type of idiom used, and the subtitling strategy chosen. In line with the research problem formulation, which aims to identify the subtitling strategies

used in translating idioms in the television series *Friends* and their application based on idiom type, presents findings regarding the use of subtitling strategies according to Gottlieb for three types of idioms: pure idioms, semi idioms, and literal idioms. Of the 64 idiom data analyzed, there is a tendency for certain strategies to be predominantly used by subtitle translators. The analysis results indicate that paraphrasing is the most frequently used strategy, with a total of 43 data points. This strategy dominates the translation of all idiom types, particularly pure idioms (21 data points). This finding addresses the first research problem by indicating that *Friends* subtitle translators prefer strategies oriented toward conveying meaning rather than preserving the idiomatic form of the source language. In the context of a television series like *Friends*, which deals with fast paced dialogue and situational comedy, the use of paraphrase allows the idiom's message to remain comprehensible to the target language audience. The transfer strategy ranks second with a total of 4 data points and is used relatively evenly across all three idiom types. This finding strengthens the answer to the second research question regarding the relationship between idiom type and the subtitling strategy used. The resignation strategy was found in 8 instances, used in pure and semi idioms. The use of this strategy indicates the translator's limitations in transferring idioms with cultural content or typical American language habits. In the context of *Friends*, several idiomatic expressions lack Indonesian equivalents, resulting in some meanings or comedic nuances not being fully conveyed in the subtitles.

Furthermore, the condensation strategy (5 instances) reflecting an adaptation to the fast paced and dense dialogue characteristic of *Friends*. This strategy allows the subtitles to remain concise and readable without sacrificing the core message. Meanwhile, the expansion strategy (3 instances) and deletion (1 instance) were used very limited. The minimal use of these strategies suggests that the translator tends to avoid adding or removing excessive information as it can disrupt the flow of the dialogue and create comedic effect. Overall, the dominance of pure idioms, with 43 data points, indicates that the dialogue in the *Friends* series is rich in idiomatic expressions that are not transparent. This finding directly answers the research problem formulation by showing that the clearer the type of idiom used, the greater the tendency for translators to use paraphrasing strategies as the primary solution to maintain the understanding of meaning in Indonesian subtitles

Technical Terms Subtitle Strategy and Type of Idiom

Excerpt 1 - Data no. 2

SL : It's not a big deal

TL : nggak masalah

The strategy used in the above utterance is a paraphrase strategy. The expression "it's **not a big deal**" is classified as a pure idiom according to Fernando (1996), because its meaning cannot be interpreted literally from its constituent lexical elements but is intended to calm the company. The idiom "it's **not a big deal**" is used to express that a situation is considered unimportant, not serious, or not worth making a big deal about. In the Indonesian subtitles, this expression is translated as *nggak masalah* using a paraphrase strategy. This strategy was chosen because the idiomatic meaning of the source language cannot be translated literally without resulting unnatural translation in the target language. Based on the idiom type classification, "it's **not a big deal**" is considered a pure idiom because its meaning is not directly related to the lexical meaning of the phrase "big deal" as *urusan besar* in the literal sense. The expression is used idiomatically to underestimate the importance of a situation. Therefore, the translator translated this idiom into a more common and easily understood target

language, *nggak masalah* which conveys a semantically equivalent meaning. In the context of the scene when Ross asks Joey how he feels about Rachel's return as a housemate, "how do you feel about Rachel moving back in? I'm sorry if Emma's presence is also a bother to you" then Joey accepts it happily "Hey man, it's okay, it's **not a big deal** I'm happy to do it" this expression appears as a response to a situation that is considered unnecessary to big problem. The translator chooses the Paraphrase strategy to simplify the meaning of the idiom into a straightforward and explicit statement, so that the audience can quickly understand the attitude shown in the dialogue without having to interpret the figurative meaning of the source language. The use of the paraphrase strategy in this context also supports the readability of the subtitles because the translation is natural, and in keeping with TL habits. Therefore, the translation of the idiom "it's **not a big deal**" using the paraphrase strategy can be considered effective in conveying the core meaning of the dialogue and maintaining a smooth storyline,

even though the idiomatic elements of the source language are not formally maintained.

Excerpt 2 - Data no 10

SL : I thought my number was up

TL : Aku kira aku bakalan mati

The phrase "I thought my **number was up**" falls into the category of pure idioms based on Fernando's (1996) theory, because its meaning cannot be understood literally from the lexical elements *nomor* (in the TL) or *naik* (in the TL). Rather, idiomatically, this expression is used to express the belief that someone will face death or great danger. In this scene, Ross, Joey, and Chandler are accompanying Gery on a night patrol, a police officer. As the atmosphere becomes tense, a gunshot sounds, causing everyone to panic. Gery then calms the three of them by responding that the gunshot was actually just a car back exhaust. When Ross realizes the loud noise was just a car back exhaust, the situation creates a strong comedic effect due to his overreaction to the misunderstanding. The translator employed a Paraphrase strategy by translating the idiom as "I think I'm going to die". This strategy was chosen to convey the idiom's meaning directly and easily understood by the target language audience. If translated literally, such as *aku kira nomor ku habis* then the idiomatic meaning and dramatic effect within the context of the scene would be lost and could potentially confuse the target audience. Therefore, Paraphrase is considered the most appropriate strategy to maintain the meaning and situational context in subtitles.

CONCLUSION (HEADING 1 STYLE)

Based on the process of analyzing this study aims to analyze the subtitling strategies used in translating idiomatic expressions in the television series *Friends Season 8* and to identify the most dominant subtitling strategies. Based on the analysis of idiomatic expressions classified according to idiom type and subtitling strategy, several key conclusions can be drawn. First, the results show that the translation of idiomatic expressions in the subtitles of *Friends Season 8* utilizes various subtitling strategies proposed by Gottlieb. Of the ten subtitling strategies, Paraphrase is the most frequently used strategy in translating idiomatic expressions from English (SL) to Indonesian (TL).

This strategy was chosen because it helps translators easily decide which to apply and convey the meaning of the idiom more clearly and explicitly without having to retain the idiomatic form of the source language, which is often difficult for the target language audience to understand.

The dominance of the paraphrase strategy indicates that translators prioritize comprehensibility, ensuring that it can be easily understood or accepted as subtitles by Indonesian audiences. Given that idioms are expressions whose meanings cannot be interpreted literally, literal translation has the potential to lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, translators tend to translate the meaning of idioms into more common and familiar expressions in Indonesian, even though the idiomatic nuances are not fully preserved. In addition to paraphrase, other strategies such as transfer, expansion, condensation, deletion, decimation, and resignation were also found in the TV series *Friends Season 8*, at a lower frequency. The transfer strategy is used for idioms that can still be translated directly without loss of meaning, while expansion is applied when additional information is needed to clarify the idioms meaning in the context of subtitles. The condensation and decimation strategies are closely related to determining and addressing the technical limitations of subtitling, such as character limits and adjusting the duration of the text display, ensuring concise dialogue information. The resignation strategy is used for idioms that contain many culturally bound elements and are difficult to translate into the target language, so the translator chooses to remove the idiomatic elements. Third, based on the classification of idioms in this study is based solely on Fernando's theory (1996), which divides idioms into three categories: pure idioms, semi idioms, and literal idioms it was found that pure idioms and semi idioms were the most frequently encountered idiom types in the data. These idiom types tend to be translated using the paraphrase strategy due to their high level of idiomatic expressions and distinctiveness of meaning. Meanwhile, phrasal idioms and idioms with more transparent meanings were more often translated using the transfer strategy. Fourth, the relationship between idiom type and subtitling strategy shows that the more complex and opaque an idiom, the more likely the translator is to use the paraphrase or resignation strategy. Conversely, simpler idioms or those that still have a lexical connection to their constituent words are more likely to use the transfer strategy. These findings indicate that the choice of subtitling strategy is not random, but rather is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the idiom and the communicative needs of the subtitle. Overall, this study proves that the translation of idiomatic expressions in the subtitles of *Friends Season 8* is functional and communicative. The translator emphasized conveying the meaning, context, and function of the dialogue rather than maintaining the idiomatic form of the source language. Thus, the results of this study have answered three research questions.

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