



Accuracy, Acceptability and Readability in the Translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* Movie Subtitle

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Abstract

The translation of non-academic texts as movie subtitles has its level of complexity, so translation errors often occur. An assessment is needed to maintain the quality of the translation of movie subtitles. Thus, the researchers were interested in investigating the translation quality of movie subtitles by analyzing the level of accuracy, acceptability, and readability in the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitles. The study applied a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. The data consisted of English and Indonesian subtitle transcripts of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie and the results of the research questionnaire. The research questionnaire was filled by raters who are a graduate of an English education/English literature study program, and experienced in translating non-fiction texts. This study applied the translation quality assessment model by Nababan (2012). From the results of the assessment of each aspect, a weighting obtained score of 2.2, indicated that the translated text was less accurate, less acceptable, and less readable for the target audience. This finding underscores the importance of balancing those three criteria in a translation. It can encourage those working in the translation and subtitling industry to create subtitles that are accurate, accessible to a wide range of audiences, and culturally relevant.

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INTRODUCTION

Translation can be done in a wide range of texts and contexts. In addition to the translation of academic texts, many translators also translate non-academic texts. For example, the translation of film subtitles or what is often called subtitling or screen translation. However, not all subtitled texts are satisfactory. Translation errors can affect or even mislead the audience's understanding of the plot, setting, and character in the movie. Furthermore, cultural differences pose a challenge because the translated text is frequently perceived as unrelated to the customs or culture of the target language community. This is where the Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) is needed.

Before conducting this study, the researchers also conducted a preliminary study to see the important role of TQA in maintaining the quality of a translation. This preliminary study was conducted by observing one of the Sherlock Holmes movie series entitled *The Hounds of Baskerville*. From the observation of the subtitle transcript, the researchers found some errors in the translation. For example, the phrase *'human clone'* was translated to *'manusia kloning'* where the correct translation should be *'kloning manusia.'* *'Jane's Defence Weekly, bound copies'* was translated into *'Pertahanan Jane Mingguan, salinan terikat'* where Jane's Defence Weekly is the name for a weekly magazine about the military and corporations, should not need to be translated into Bahasa Indonesia. Then, the sentence *'Just...just a minute, you saw what?'* was translated to *'Hanya ... hanya satu menit, kau melihat apa?'* where in the context of the ongoing conversation situation in the movie, the correct translation should be *'Sebentar, kau lihat apa tadi?'* although the translation is literarily accurate. The expression *'cheers!'*, which is a slang in British English and commonly used in the British culture to say *'thank you'* was translated literally to *'bersulang!'*, also showed the importance of cultural understanding in translating language so as not

to cause translation errors that confuse the audience of the movie.

Furthermore, the relevance of translation quality assessment (TQA) is now getting stronger (Manipuspika, 2021). Professional translators, their clients, researchers, and trainee translators need TQA for different reasons (Williams, 2009). Among many translation quality assessment (TQA) models, most research conducted in translation quality assessment was theoretical and descriptive (Waddington, 2001). Newmark (1988) is a scholar, among others, who set the criteria for a good translation. According to him, a good translation can fulfill the intention of the original and convey the facts acceptably. This is in line with Leonard Forster (1958) in Venutti (2000) who stated that a good translation is 'one which fulfills the same purpose in the new language as the original did in the language in which it was written.' Meanwhile, Nord (1995) tried to define the nature of translation errors and classified translation errors into four categories: pragmatic, cultural, linguistic, and text-specific. House (2006) described that research on texts as units larger than sentences has influenced translation studies; however, the notion of context, its relation to the text, and its role in translation has received much less attention.

Assessment of translation quality can be done in the field of translation produced in the context of teaching practice translation courses (Nababan et al., 2012). The translation quality assessment is also conducted on literary texts such as novels. Unlike translation in other fields, translation of literary works has its characteristics (Sohabab, 2021). Some researchers also conducted translation quality assessments of film subtitles, and they used a variety of models. Film is a depiction of the social conditions of a society, it is manifested in the form of images and sounds, while the themes and stories originate from a description of the condition of the community itself (Allen, 1985). Some researchers who have conducted studies on Translation Quality Assessment including. Marhamah and Holila (2021) who

analyzed the translation quality of subtitle text in Greta's movie using Nababan's model and found that the translation quality was good. Kullab et al. (2023) assessed Translation Quality Assessment using House's model and found that the model can be beneficial to translators aiming to assess the TQA of a work of fiction by allowing the model to precisely capture the function of the narrative and among characters' levels to better assess their translation quality. Amin Mozaheb et al. (2021) used the framework proposed by Baker (2018) and House (2015) and applied it to two translations to examine the quality of translation as well as thematic structures in both the source text and its target texts. There are many factors in the evaluation of the translation that depend on the social evaluative judgment, that would be made as a result of the comparative process of translation criticism, or the linguistic analysis because the linguistic analysis is the thing that provides grounds for arguing social evaluative judgment (Alavipour & Noroozi, 2020). McDonald (2020) A study by A-Adba (2021) focused on the relationship between the source text and the target text to identify mismatches, classify them into overt and covert errors, and categorize the related overt errors into seven categories, namely not translated, slight change of meaning, significant change of meaning, distortion of meaning, breach of the target language system, creative translation and cultural filtering. Latifah et al. (2022) Meanwhile, Alaa and Al Sawi (2023) assessed the strategies applied by professional translators in rendering culturally specific references from Egyptian Arabic into English in the Feathers movie using Pedersen's model. This current study differed in terms of the object, where the object of study was the subtitles of Sherlock Holmes "*The Hounds of Baskerville*". This study also used three raters to assess the translation product. In addition, the model used in assessing the translation quality of the movie subtitles was the rubric proposed by Nababan et al. (2012). Thus, the results of the analysis must be different and will enrich

and complement the findings of these previous studies.

Based on the findings of the preliminary study and the gaps with previous studies, the researchers were interested in conducting a study in to analyze the translation in more depth. This study was conducted to analyze (1) the accuracy level, (2) the acceptability level, and (3) the readability level in the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitles. This study was based on the model proposed by Nababan et al. (2012) on the translation quality assessment. From the results of the study, the researchers can assess the quality of the translation of the film subtitles based on the aspects of accuracy, acceptability, and readability. In addition, this study was expected to be a positive contribution to the field of translation by proposing recommendations for future studies, especially in the assessment of translation quality.

METHOD

In answering the research questions about accuracy, acceptability and readability level in the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitle, the researchers used a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. To validate the analysis results, the researchers were assisted by raters, who consisted of three professional translators. The results then were calculated and analyzed to describe and draw conclusion.

To collect the data, the researchers used a document analysis protocol. The data in this study consisted of the transcripts of English and Indonesian subtitles of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie and the results of the research questionnaire. For the research questionnaire, the researchers used a translation quality assessment rubric from Nababan et al. (2012), which included the aspects of accuracy, acceptability, and readability. The questionnaire contained transcripts of subtitles in the form of sentences, which then was assessed by the raters based on these three aspects of Nababan's rubric.

Nababan defined translation accuracy as whether the source language text and the target language are equivalent or not in terms of the similarity of content or message between the two languages. Furthermore, a translation is considered accurate if the meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences, or texts from the source language is translated into the target language accurately; without distortion of meaning. This is what is emphasized in Nababan's quality assessment, that an accurate translation will produce a translation that is easily understood by the target readers. Furthermore, translation techniques are being considered as a solution to the equivalence problem. The questionnaire has three categories to assess the accuracy aspect, namely score 1 – 3. Score 3 if the translated text is accurate. Score 2 if the translated text is less inaccurate. Then, score 1 if the translated text is inaccurate.

Acceptability refers to whether the translation is carried out following the rules, norms, and culture of the target language at both the macro and micro levels. Acceptability is important because readers will reject even the most accurate translation in terms of meaning and message if it violates the rules, norms, and culture of the community in the target language. For example, delivering an Indonesian translation using English rules will result in an unnatural and less readable translation product. As accuracy, acceptability, is assessed using three categories. Score 3 for an acceptable translation, score 2 for a less acceptable translation, and score 1 for an unacceptable translation.

The readability aspect refers to how easily the target readers can understand the translation. As accuracy and acceptability, readability is also assessed in three categories. Score 3 if the translated text has a high level of readability. Score 2 if the translated text has a moderate level of readability. Score 1 if the translated text has a low level of readability.

After the assessment results from 3 raters were obtained, the researchers then calculated the average score of accuracy, acceptability,

and readability aspects from each rater. The next step was that the researchers calculated the weighting of the average score of the three aspects. The average scores were calculated using the AVERAGE formula in Microsoft Excel. This application was chosen to help the researchers in analyzing the results of the questionnaire. This weighting procedure was conducted to obtain the final score of the quality assessment of the translated text. The researchers used a weighting score from Nababan et al. (2012). The final results of the weighting showed the conclusion of the translation quality assessment of Sherlock Holmes *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitle.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the researchers present the findings in quantitative and qualitative formats. The data in this study included the results of the Indonesian translation of each sentence or expression expressed by the characters in *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie, which the researchers calculated to be a total of 606 items. The raters assessed the quality of all of these items based on the aspects of accuracy, acceptability, and readability.

Accuracy Aspect

The accuracy assessment was conducted by 3 professional translators experienced in translating non-academic texts. The accuracy assessment was conducted by assessing the overall data in the form of the Indonesian translation of each sentence or expression spoken by the characters, totaling 606 items. Before conducting the assessment, the researchers briefed and explained Nababan's rubric for assessing the translation quality of the movie subtitles to the raters. The accuracy parameter was assessed based on the quality of the equivalence of the meaning of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, and sentences in the English subtitles as the source language after being translated into the target language text, namely Indonesian. The expected accuracy in equivalence is the absence of

meaning distortion between the source language and the target language. After obtaining the score for each item from the raters, the average score was calculated to obtain an overview of the quality of the accuracy of the Indonesian translation text. The accumulated scores from each rater then were calculated again to find the final score of the accuracy of the subtitle. Details of the accuracy assessment results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Average Score of Accuracy in the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* Movie Subtitle.

	Accuracy Score
Rater 1	2.1
Rater 2	2.2
Rater 3	2.4
Average Score	2.2

Based on the results of the accuracy assessment, the raters assessed that the level of accuracy of the translation of the movie subtitles was inaccurate. In addition to scoring the accuracy of the Indonesian subtitles of *The Hounds of Baskerville*, the researchers also asked the raters to provide reasons and rationalizations for the scores they had given. Based on the data, the researchers found several important points. First, not all names of objects have to be translated into Bahasa Indonesia. In the transcript of the movie subtitle, several titles of books and magazines investigated by the main characters were mentioned. One of them was *Jane's Defence Weekly* - a weekly magazine about the military and corporations, which translated to '*Pertahanan Jane Mingguan*'. All three raters gave a score of 1, which indicated that the translation was inaccurate. According to the raters, the name of the magazine should not need to be translated into Bahasa Indonesia and should be preserved as the original version. This was because in the target language context, there was no magazine with that name, which means the name had no equivalent in Indonesian. The same rule applied to street names, institution names, school names, companies, and people's names

that did not need to be translated. If the translator or in this case, the subtitler, still translates these names into Indonesian, the translation will be inaccurate and confusing for the audience.

The second finding was that the accuracy aspect in practice did not only mean that the translation was literal or faithful but also related to the acceptability aspect. For example, the sentences '*There are horrors beyond imagining*' which was translated to '*Ada kengerian di luar imajinasi*' and '*It was worth a try*' which was translated to '*Itu layak dicoba*', obtained a score of 2 from the raters. Where all three raters considered the translations inaccurate because they sounded unnatural, even though the meaning was accurate in literal. This finding contradicted Nababan's theory of accuracy which only defines accuracy at the level of literal equivalence. So far, the researchers have not found any other theory or previous studies that can explain this phenomenon. The researchers considered that the finding of this phenomenon could be a novelty of this research, which might be explored further in future research on translation.

Acceptability Aspect

The acceptability assessment was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of 606 items and assessed by 3 raters. The acceptability parameter was based on the translation quality assessment rubric by Nababan et al. (2012). According to Nababan, the acceptability aspect is seen from whether the translation is acceptable or not in terms of its naturalness, familiarity, and conformity with the grammar of the target language. Furthermore, according to Nababan, accuracy is in line with acceptability. The more accurate the translation, the higher the acceptability value. The acceptability assessment category used a scale of 1 to 3. A score of 3 if the translation was acceptable, 2 for a less acceptable translation, and 1 for an unacceptable translation. Similar to the accuracy aspect, the acceptability aspect was also assessed by accumulating the acceptability

scores of the three raters to find the average score. The results of the acceptability assessment can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Average Score of Acceptability in the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* Movie Subtitle

	Acceptability Score
Rater 1	2
Rater 2	2.1
Rater 3	2.3
Average Score	2.1

Based on this assessment result, the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitle was considered unacceptable. In addition, the researchers also found that according to the raters, the translations of the movie subtitle mostly used the literal and faithful translation methods which strongly preserve the structure of the source language. This was affirmed by the raters with the argument that movie subtitles were a very long type of text and had a high level of difficulty. This was because movies are literary works, such as novels and poems, which require excellent translation skills. In addition, movies were also closely related to the social culture in the source language so an understanding of culture was also required. With the high level of complexity, according to the raters, the subtitler inevitably found difficulties in translation practice so the most common solution was to translate it literally while trying to keep faithful. Especially for long sentences that were difficult to find equivalents in the target language. These sentences were translated by paying attention to the structure of the source language, resulting in less acceptable translation products in the target language. For example, the expression *'Is that when you had the idea, after the TV show went out?'* was translated literally to *'Apa itu ketika kau memiliki ide, setelah acara TV itu muncul?'* which, according to the raters, did not conform to the Indonesian language structure and was therefore unacceptable. A more acceptable

translation should be *'Apakah kau memiliki ide itu setelah melihat acara TV itu?'*

According to raters 1 and 2, overly preserving the source language structure will result in a translation product that is not widely used in the target language. For example, in the sentence *'He seems pretty concerned about you'* which was translated into *'Dia tampaknya cukup peduli tentangmu'*, which the raters considered unacceptable. This was because, in Indonesian context, the sentence *'Dia tampaknya cukup peduli tentangmu'*, was considered too rigid because it retained its English form. Hence, the sentence was uncommon in Indonesian conversation, making it appear less natural.

Readability Aspect

Readability indicates whether or not a translation is easy to understand (Nababan et al., 2012). The readability assessment was conducted by 3 raters who assessed 606 items. The readability score was obtained by accumulating the readability score from the three raters to find the average score. The results of the readability score can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Average Score of Readability in the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* Movie Subtitle

	Readability Score
Rater 1	2.1
Rater 2	2.2
Rater 3	2.4
Average Score	2.2

Based on the results above, the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitle was considered to have a moderate level of readability which indicated that the translated text was a bit difficult to understand. This was in line with Nababan's theory that the higher the level of accuracy and acceptability of a translation, the more readable it is, and vice versa. It can be seen in the sentence *'Do you want some sauce with that?'* which translated to *'Apakah kau ingin itu di beri saus?'* According to the raters, the translation was inaccurate and

unacceptable so it was difficult to understand. To make it easier to understand, it should simply be translated as 'Kau mau saus?' because in the context of the conversation, it was clear that the character was eating so the sentence was quite easy to understand based on its meaning and context.

After obtaining the scores for the aspects of accuracy, acceptability, and readability, the weighting was then carried out. This weighting aimed to obtain the final conclusion on the translation quality of the movie subtitle. The weighting score for each aspect of the assessment can be seen in the Table 4.

Table 4. Weighting Score in the Translation Quality Assessment According to Nababan et al. (2012)

Aspects of Assessment	Weight
Accuracy	3
Acceptability	2
Readability	1

The total weighting score for the aspect of accuracy, acceptability, and readability of the translation can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Weighting Result of Translation Quality for *The Hounds of Baskerville* Movie Subtitle

	Score	Weight	Sum
Accuracy	2.2	3	6.6
Acceptability	2.1	2	4.2
Readability	2.2	1	2.2
Total			13
Average			2.2

The average score of the weighted results indicated that the translation quality of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitle was less accurate, less acceptable, and less readable to the target readers.

The results of this study showed several points that determined translation quality of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitles. It can also be an input for translators/subtitlers in translating non-fiction texts. The points are; 1) accuracy of the message. This study found that accuracy is not only determined by its literal

meaning but also by clarity of its contextual meaning. According to Marhamah and Holila (2021) that A translated text is considered accurate if it can be accepted by readers both in terms of culturally and naturally. Thus, the accuracy of the meaning of a translated work is also influenced by its acceptability for the target audience. In the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitle, were accurate in literal meaning but the raters considered them as less or inaccurate because the meaning of the translation is not acceptable. This finding underlined the strong relationship between accuracy and acceptability in translation quality assessment. 2) meaning equivalence. Pym, (2007) defined equivalence as a concept that the translation will have the same value as the source text. According to him, the equivalence value can be found in; (1) form level (e.g. two words are translated with two words), (2) reference (e.g. Friday is the day before Saturday), (3) function (e.g. bad luck on 13 Friday applies to British people, while in Spain bad luck on 13 is Tuesday). Furthermore, Baker (2018) emphasized the importance of individual knowledge as a translator in the translation process. The translator must look at the unit of each word to find equivalence in the target language. Baker showed that the target language is looked at in more detail in terms of the structural aspects of the language, such as words, phrases, grammar, text and pragmatics. In the translation of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitle, the researchers found some words/sentences that were inequivalent in Indonesian or which should not need to be looked for equivalents, such as the name of an object. Latifah et al. (2022) 3) ideology of the translation. This study considered that the translation process of *The Hounds of the Baskerville* movie subtitle should be target language-oriented, which in this case was Bahasa Indonesia, to produce a more acceptable and readable translation product. Based on the researchers' observation of the original subtitle transcript, the researchers considered that the translator applied source language-oriented translation. This produced

an Indonesian translation that still used the sentence structure in the source language. In addition, stylistic factors and cultural context of the target text significantly influenced the translation results. McDonald (2020)

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the translation quality from the aspects of accuracy, acceptability, and readability, it can be concluded that the translation quality of *The Hounds of Baskerville* movie subtitle is less accurate, less acceptable, and less readable to the target audience. The results of this study emphasized that in the translation process, it is important to pay attention not only to accuracy but also to acceptability and readability aspects. Understanding the culture and language style of the target text, will produce a good translation product. Furthermore, the researchers suggested future research to study the field of translation in more depth, especially in process-orientated and function-orientated translation, in addition to translation as a product.

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