

Formulaic Language: Translation Strategies of Malay Sayings and Proverbs in the Film *Magika* (2010)

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Abstract

This study examines the linguistic and cultural translation of a Malay film, focusing on a subset of formulaic language, namely sayings and proverbs. It employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing the content analysis method, to thoroughly compare the film's dialogues with the accompanying English subtitles, with a specific emphasis on the translator's choices in this translation process. The results reveal that the communicative intent of the identified sayings and proverbs in the film is generally well-preserved and transferred into the English subtitles. While there are similar expressions in the target language, the translator often opted for the literal translation of the Malay sayings and proverbs to capture the characters' conversational styles and context. The analysis highlights the importance of translators' proficiency in both source and target languages as well as cultural competence in both communities.

Keywords: *formulaic language, sayings, proverbs, translation strategies, culture*

Introduction

Proverbs are significant in language, culture, and communication. According to Ghazali, Suryani, Zubir, Hamid, Chulan, Rusaidi and Radzi (2021), a proverb is defined as a brief saying that expresses advice or truth in a non-literal manner. They serve to subtly soften one's message to facilitate more effective communication. Proverbs are a form of formulaic language consisting of pre-established series of words stored in our memory until they are uttered (Gibbs, 2007). Translation, on the other hand, involves transferring knowledge from a source text into a target text (Freeman, 2009). It also promotes the exchange of information across linguistic and cultural boundaries. As cultural disparities in proverbs exist between languages, a deep understanding of cultures is essential for accurate translation, hence bridging the linguistic gap between different cultures.

Translation plays a fundamental role in augmenting the charm of foreign films, enabling them to be appreciated by a global audience. The intricate tapestry of cinematic discourse is woven with the threads of knowledge transfer, intricately shaped by the nuances of cultural and linguistic differences. This association is rooted in the idea, as suggested by Martin-Jones (2006), that a nation's identity and culture find their most compelling expression through cinematic discourse, particularly in the dialogues spoken by characters. In the realm of cinematic discourse, this knowledge transfer materialises in the form of film subtitles. Looking ahead, Alkatnai (2021) has projected a continued surge in demand for the translation industry. This projec-

tion implies that the sector will remain relevant to the global population's needs as long as there is a desire for foreign films. As emphasised by Azizah (2018), a comprehensive understanding of film subtitles can enhance foreign language acquisition, indirectly heightening the enjoyment and appreciation of the content being viewed. This study delves into the realm of Malay formulaic language within a Malay film, drawing comparisons to the English translations that are present in the subtitles.

Problem Statement

The popularity of streaming services such as *Netflix* has engendered an escalating desire for foreign cinema (Burroughs & Rugg, 2014). The accessibility of global content at one's fingertips has underscored the essential role of subtitle translation in expanding the viewership of foreign films to a worldwide audience. In this context, it becomes imperative for translators to meticulously craft subtitles that faithfully convey the intended messages present in the original film scripts. The precision of such translation endeavours facilitates a broader and more profound appreciation of the myriad cultures and languages, transcending one's native linguistic domain, and thereby fostering cross-cultural understanding and interconnectedness on a global scale. Nevertheless, the heavy dependence on automated machine translation presents a notable challenge within the translation industry. Although automatic translation is quicker than hand translation, it falls short of possessing the requisite cultural acumen to interpret expressions imbued with figurative significance, such as proverbs (Rahman & Norwawi, 2013). As a result, audiences hailing from diverse cultural and linguistic milieus may only attain a superficial understanding of the narrative, in contrast to those who are proficient in the source language and intimately acquainted with its associated culture. This, in turn, has the potential to disrupt the emotional momentum carefully cultivated by the film.

Thus, cultural awareness is essential for the effective transmission of the originally intended meaning in subtitle translation, thereby forestalling potential misunderstandings and disputes. This must be accomplished without compromising the audience's capacity to appreciate and enjoy foreign films. Hence, the present research aims to undertake an examination of film subtitles, with a specific focus on a subset of formulaic language, namely sayings and proverbs. Past studies into the figurative aspects of formulaic language like proverbs mostly concentrated on the aspect of language acquisition, as exemplified in studies by Wray (2002) and Conklin & Schmitt (2012). It seeks to address the research gap by identifying sayings and proverbs in the Malay dialogues of the film *Magika* (2010) and comparing them to the English translation of the proverbs in the subtitles of the film, with a specific emphasis on the translator's choices in this linguistic and cultural translation process.

Literature Review

This section explains existing discrepancy in defining and categorizing formulaic language, translation strategies for translating idiomatic expressions and cultural words, and the conceptual framework.

Related Terminologies to Describe Formulaic Language

The study of formulaic language is a challenging yet intriguing endeavour, marked by a notable lack of consensus in its definition. This discrepancy arises from the diversity of perspectives held by various scholars and the nomenclature they employ to categorise this linguistic phenomenon. This lack of homogeneity has given rise to a multitude of terms and a fragmented representation of formulaic language. This definitional divergence has resulted in a host of issues. Wray (2002), as cited in Schmitt (2010), listed terms which cut across the field of formulaic language, which in return, has undermined the clarity of the concept itself (see Table 1).

Table 1: Related Terminologies to Describe Formulaic Language (Wray, 2002, p. 119)

No.	Terminologies Describing Formulaic Language	Description	Example
1.	Chunks	Clusters of words that can be found together in a language.	At the end of the day
2.	Collocation	A set of two or more words that are typically combined together to convey certain meaning.	Big decision
3.	Conventionalised Forms	Expressions with degree of pre-patterning in which utterance is lined to standardised communication situation.	When I grow up
4.	Formulaic Speech	Expressions that are learned as unanalysed wholes and are utilised by native speakers on specific instances.	How do you do?
5.	Formulas	Verbal expressions with a set structure.	Hang on/Wait a minute
6.	Holophrases	A single word which conveys complex idea.	Children saying 'eat' to mean ' <i>I want to eat</i> '.
7.	Multiword Units	A lexical unit made up of two or more words to produce a new concept.	By and large

8.	Prefabricated Routines	Words or sentences uttered on a daily basis.	Good morning!
9.	Ready-made Utterance	Phrases that are unconsciously stored in our minds and are employed according to context.	I see

The Characteristics of Formulaic Language

When fresh ideas from different perspectives are established, the result of the final product may provide several overlapping definitions rather than a single comprehensive one and it does not necessarily include the elements from the previous theories. To illustrate this, Coulmas (1979) introduced the concept of formulaic language, which chiefly accentuates syntactic and phraseological features. Melčuk (1998) and Cowie (1998), as highlighted by Wood (2010), segregated the concept into two different categories which are semantic features and syntactic features. This division led to the recognition of numerous facets within formulaic language, including its syntactic dimension. Consequently, Coulmas (1979) devised a set of criteria to categorise formulaic language based on its syntactic attributes. In his efforts, Coulmas (1979) classified the concept of formulaic language according to the properties of phrases as they are employed within sentences, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Characteristics of Formulaic Language (Coulmas, 1979, p. 41)

No.	The Characteristics of Formulaic Language	Explanation	Example
1.	At least two morphemes long	Contains two or more words.	Take out
2.	Coheres phonologically	Phrases which have words that shares the same sound.	No pain no gain
3.	Individual elements are not used concurrently in the same form in other environments.	Used as a single unit and cannot be separated.	A stone's throw away
4.	Grammatically advanced compared to other languages	Grammatical structures that are not usually used by second language learners.	Rumour has it that
5.	Community-wide formula	Expressions that are widely uttered on a daily basis.	Hang out/Wait a minute

6.	Repeatedly used in the same form	Commonly used with repeated structures.	In my opinion
7.	Idiosyncratic chunk	Word patterns that are frequently used together in the same order.	Take your time
8.	Situationally dependent	Only used for specific situations	Good night
9.	May be used inappropriately	Words or phrases which are mis-used by speakers who are not native to a language.	The mismatch between the use of the word 'with' and 'which' by non-native English speakers

Different Forms of Idioms and Formulaic Language

Another issue which arises due to the complexity of the definition of formulaic language is the usage of non-literal expressions such as proverbs which are addressed differently by different scholars. While there are those (Coulmas, 1979; Wray, 2002) who do not emphasise proverbs as a type of formulaic language, there are scholars who take a contrastive stance. Amidst the debates, Gibbs (1994) outlines a set of principles that could help clarify its clouded concept which takes account into the non-literal nature of phrases and expressions in a language. Conklin and Schmitt (2012) quoted Carter and Schmitt (2004) to describe how formulaic language serves as a means of communicating ideas and messages in the literal or figurative sense. This interpretation indirectly aligns with Gibbs' (1994) theory. Wray and Perkins (2000) have made an effort to define formulaic language as sequences of words or sentences stored in the human mind and retrieved during speech. This notion resonates with the concept of proverbs, as people often memorise proverbs as single functional units. Responding to these intricacies, Gibbs (1994) compiled a list of various forms of idioms and formulaic language as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Different Forms of Idioms and Formulaic Language (Gibbs, 1994, p. 3)

No.	Different Forms of Idioms and Formulaic Language	Explanation	Example
1.	Sayings	A short saying which expresses widely accepted truth or advice based on experience and common sense.	Let the cat out of the bag
2.	Proverbs		An apple a day keeps the doctor away
3.	Phrasal verbs	Merge two or more words to convey a specific action.	To take off

4.	Idioms	Expressions in phrase form with figurative meaning but contain no moral worth.	Hot potato
5.	Binomials	Phrases which contain a pair of words linked by 'or' or 'and'.	Spick and span
6.	Frozen similes	A figure of speech that contrasts two dissimilar items commonly introduced with 'like' or 'as'.	As fast as lightning
7.	Phrasal compound	The use of two or more words to create a single notion.	Dead-line
8.	Incorporating verb idioms	Idioms which utilise the usage of verbs in them.	Babysit
9.	Formulaic expressions	Expressions that are frequently used and unintentionally retained in our memory.	Ouch!

With all the complexity surrounding formulaic language, perhaps the best way to define the concept based on the context of the current study is to search for a common ground among the three theories presented above. Proverbs, according to Gibbs (1994), share a number of key features with Wray's (2002) and Coulmas' (1979) descriptions. As the concept of proverbs matches the characteristics and terminologies proposed by Wray (2002) and Coulmas (1979), the comparison further qualifies proverbs to be regarded as a formulaic language.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 summarises the relationship between all the relevant variables in the study (see next page).

A competent literary translator needs to be both bilingual and bicultural (Papadakis et al, 2022) to be able to seamlessly combine knowledge of lexis and grammar (linguistic knowledge) together with knowledge of cultural references and connotations (cultural knowledge). An accurate interpretation of the communicative intent of the source text as well as accurate translation of it into the TL involve the employment of translation strategies by drawing on language and cultural competencies. However, connotations, particularly, can invoke heterogeneous reactions from the international audiences, especially when a language such as the English language is widely spoken by non-native speakers with divergent cultural up-bringsings.

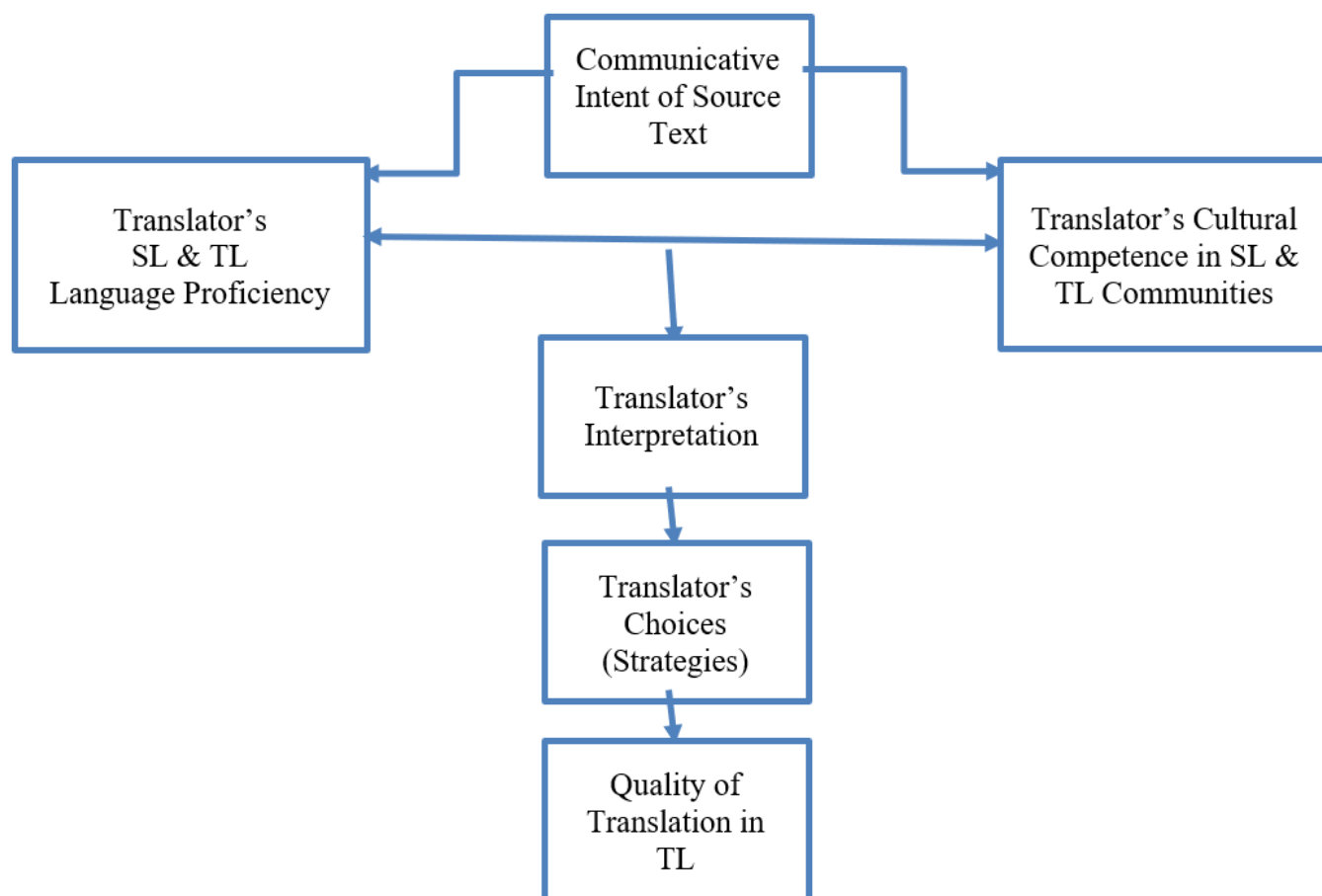


Figure 1: Linguistic and Cultural Translation of Formulaic Language in Malay Films

Al-Jarrah et al (2018) make an intriguing argument that a quality translation should not convey just one interpretation of the source text. Rather, it ought to keep open all potential understandings based on the evidence present in the source text. An effective translation enables the audience to determine the explicatures (meanings inferred from the language) and implicatures (meanings inferred from the context).

Translation Strategies for Idioms and Cultural Words

Two of the prominent frameworks for translation strategies of idioms and cultural words are presented by Baker (2018) and Newmark (1988).

Baker (2018) formulated four strategies that can be employed for translating idioms or cultural words:

1. Paraphrasing: When the TL has no equivalent idiom that can replace the idiom of the SL, the meaning of the idiom will be explained using TL words which do not make up an idiom.

2. Omission: Used when a translator decides not to translate the idioms as there is no equivalent in the TL and explaining the meaning might be lengthy.
3. Using an idiom that has a similar meaning and form: Employed when the TL's idiom shares identical meaning, structures and lexical items as the idiom from the SL and therefore poses no issue towards the translator.
4. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form: A strategy used when a translator encounters idioms that have different structures and lexical items but still share the exact same meaning.

Newmark (1988), as cited by Saleh (2019), on the other hand, suggested several strategies that can be used to translate cultural-bound words that are not necessarily idioms. Note that the third strategy is equivalent to Baker's (2018) paraphrasing strategy.

1. Literal translation: The SL grammatical constructs are translated literally (word by word) to the nearest TL equivalent.
2. Modulation: The message of the SL words is changed according to the different viewpoints or culture of the TL.
3. Paraphrasing: When a cultural-bound word has no equivalent translation in the TL, the meaning of the words will be explained in the TL.

Petrova (2016, as cited in Makarova, 2021) argues that while the presence of universal values among international audiences may imply a straightforward process of literal translation from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL), the tendency towards literal translation can stem from inexperienced translators struggling to apply the theory of sentence actual division and discern the communicative intent of the utterance which therefore confines the volume of potential knowledge transfer to audiences.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing the content analysis method, to thoroughly analyse the traits of language use and words in media texts by connecting them to a central concept (Neuendorf, 2017). This allows for in-depth insights into how proverbs are translated in the cinematic discourse, particularly in the film *Magika* (2010). Additionally, a contrastive analysis is incorporated, which involves a systematic comparison of the film's dialogues with the accompanying subtitles. This analytical approach serves to elucidate the extent to which disparities or congruities between the two can shed light on the diverse cultural and linguistic underpinnings that influence the translation process (Hauser & Luginbuhl, 2012).

The purposive convenience sampling method is employed for data selection. The selection of the film *Magika*, which is accessible at no cost on *YouTube* was underpinned by a deliberate choice to engage

with a film profoundly enriched with local cultural elements and values, particularly in the realm of formulaic language. *Magika* is a prime example of cinematic storytelling that vividly represents various aspects of Malay culture and highlights the beauty of the Malay language. Directed by Edry Abdul Halim and produced by *KRU Studios*, this 2010 Malaysian musical fantasy film unfolds a narrative of two protagonists, Malek and Ayu. Their accidental fall into an ancient well leads to their confinement in the magical world of *Magika*. In this magical realm, the siblings meet numerous characters from Malay folklores while searching for a way out of this mystical world. The aspiration to return to contemporary Malay cultures serves as a thematic impetus, fostering a notable prevalence of proverbs in the dialogues of the film's characters.

The film *Magika* (2010) was run through the *Speech-To-Text* application for the transcription of the script. Owing to the fact that it is free, *Speech-To-Text* was used to convert the spoken text of the film into written text as the Malay language is one of the languages made available by the developer. The accuracy of the transcription was then checked by the second researcher.

The analysis involved an inductive examination of the transcribed dialogues to identify instances of sayings and proverbs, following the framework proposed by Gibbs (1994). To support the coding process, the Oxford Fajar; *Kamus Peribahasa* authored by Rahman (2017) was consulted as a secondary reference, facilitating the provision of validated English definitions for the Malay sayings and proverbs. Coding units were established at lexical, phrasal, clausal, and sentential levels, acknowledging the diverse forms in which proverbs can manifest. Manual coding, contextualised within different scenes, was meticulously conducted to have more control over the data and maintain the integrity of the analysis, aligning with the principles outlined by Saldana (2016). The identified items were subsequently extracted for further analysis and discussion. The accuracy of the translation in conveying the intended meaning was carried out by comparing the identified Malay proverbs with their English subtitles.

Findings

The first proverb coded from the data is '*isi bakul angkat sendiri*' which is commonly used in the Malay language as advice for one not to think too highly of oneself (Rahman, 2017). It was uttered by Badang (Bad) to Ayu as shown in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1: SP(1)

Malay Dialogues		English Subtitles		Minutes
Bad:	Oh, kalau macam tu, Ayu pun <i>handsome</i> .	Bad:	If that's the case, Ayu, you're handsome too.	42:45

Ayu:	Bad, tak. Tak, bukan. Ayu ni ma-na boleh panggil <i>handsome</i> . Ayu perempuan, jadi orang macam Ayu Bad kena cakap lawa, jelita, cantik.	Ayu:	No, Bad. That's wrong. You can't call Ayu handsome. Ayu's a girl, so for me you have to say beautiful or pretty.	
Bad:	Isi bakul angkat sendiri.	Bad:	You're complementing [sic] yourself.	

Bad was provoked to use the proverb as Ayu was referring to herself as 'pretty'. Although literally, it refers to the act of 'getting into a basket and carrying it yourself', metaphorically, it suggests that Bad felt that Ayu was complimenting herself. The English translation of the subtitle captures the content of the proverb. However, it should be noted that despite the availability of a similar proverb in the English language – '*blow one's own horn*', the translator opted to paraphrase using the literal expression 'You're complementing [sic] yourself'.

The second proverb coded as shown in Excerpt 2 is '*jaga tepi kain orang lain*' which expresses a piece of advice 'to not meddle in other people's affairs' (Rahman, 2017). It was used by Nenek Kebayan to Bad when he suddenly barged into her hut.

Excerpt 2: SP(2)

Malay Dialogues		English Subtitles		Minutes
Bad:	♪ Hey! Nenek Kebayan, lepaskan dia... usah undang masalah. ♪	Bad:	♪ Hey! Nenek Kebayan, let him go...don't ask for trouble. ♪	47:31
Nenek Kebayan:	♪ Jangan menyibuk, jaga tepi kain orang lain! ♪	Nenek Kebayan:	♪ You just stay out of this! ♪	

The proverb was connotatively used in this context by Nenek Kebayan when she was offended by Bad who tried to meddle in her business despite having nothing to do with it. The content of the proverb is captured in the translation of the English subtitle. Nevertheless, the translator chose to summarise Nenek Kebayan's line using a phrasal verb (multiword lexemes) 'You just stay out of this'. Although it captures the meaning of the Malay proverb, it is interesting to note the availability of a similar English proverb - *keep your nose out of other people's business* is again ignored.

The third proverb is '*hutang emas boleh dibayar, hutang budi (dibawa mati)...!*' which means that one cannot repay the act of kindness with money and therefore should always remember it (Rahman, 2017). The proverb was uttered by Bad towards Awang Kenit as shown in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3: SP(3)

Malay Dialogues		English Subtitles		Minutes
Awang Kenit:	Jangan, jangan bunuh aku!	Awang Kenit:	No, don't kill me!	50:15
Bad:	Hutang emas boleh dibayar, hutang budi...!	Bad:	You owe me one!	

After losing a fight, Awang begged Bad not to kill him. Although the proverb highlights 'emas' (gold) as one of its subjects, Bad uses it metaphorically to refer to his act of kindness in sparing Awang's life with the hope that Awang would return his favour. Since a similar saying or proverb is unavailable in the English language, the translator opted to paraphrase its content using unrelated words - 'You owe me one' - compressing the forty characters into only fifteen characters in the target language. While the translation semantically conveys the meaning of the Malay proverb, it fails to capture the literary nuances and cultural significance that are associated with the expression.

According to Rahman (2017), the proverb "*air dicincang tidak akan putus*" presented in Excerpt 4 emphasises the futility of quarrelling between siblings, as any disagreements will eventually be resolved.

Excerpt 4: SP(4)

Malay Dialogues		English Subtitles		Minutes
Pokok:	♪ Oh, kita bersaudara! Tak guna gaduh gaduh. Kerna air dicincang tidak akan putus . ♪	Trees:	♪ Oh, we're siblings! There is no point quarrelling. Because blood is thicker than water ♪	53:01

It is a lyric sung by the talking trees to Malik and Ayu. The trees uttered the proverb after seeing Ayu and Malik got into an argument for petty reasons. The proverb may sound nonsensical when taken literally, but its non-literal meaning serves as a valuable piece of advice for the siblings to work towards resolving their disagreements. The successful translation of the proverb lies in the translator's ability to substitute it with an English proverb that shares the same meaning - "*blood is thicker than water*". By doing so, the Eng-

lish subtitle is able to encapsulate the literary effect and cultural content of the original proverb on maintaining positive sibling relationships.

The last proverb identified is '*air yang tenang jangan disangka tiada naga*' which was uttered by Bad to Ayu and Malik as shown in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5: SP(5)

Malay Dialogues		English Subtitles		Minutes
Malik:	Jom. Abang, mana naga yang abang cakap tu bang? Tak nampak pun.	Malik:	Let's go. Wait, where's the dragon you told us about? I haven't seen it.	1:15:00
Bad:	Entahlah. Barangkali masih menyorok. Tapi, air yang tenang jangan disangka tiada 'naga' .	Bad:	I don't know. Maybe it is still hiding. However, a calm water doesn't mean there's no 'dragon' .	
Malik & Ayu:	Buayalah!	Malik & Ayu:	It's crocodile!	

The actual proverb is actually '*air yang tenang jangan disangka tiada buaya*' which means 'to not assume one is coward just because the person is quiet' (Rahman, 2017). However, Bad ignored the metaphorical aspect of this proverb and took the meaning literally as he wanted his friends to be vigilant of the Tasek Chini dragon (a popular local myth), therefore altering the subject of the proverb from 'crocodile' to 'dragon'. The translator chose to literally translate the proverb as 'a calm water doesn't mean there's no dragon'. This was done to ensure that the comedic effect in the source language is restored in the subtitles. However, foreign audience who are unfamiliar to the local myth may not be able to capture it or in worst case scenario might misinterpret the line.

Discussion

The analysis reveals that the communicative intent of the identified Malay sayings and proverbs in the film are generally well-preserved and transferred into the English subtitles. Briefly, this suggests that non-Malay-speaking local and international audiences can follow the plot of the film and enjoy a meaningful cinematic experience.

Further analysis reveals striking patterns in the quality of the English subtitles. Firstly, it was discovered that in one instance, the translator instinctively employed a translation approach of directly translating a

Malay proverb into a matching English one. Note that the use of total equivalence is only possible when a formulaic expression is familiar to many cultures (Postigo, 2021). This particular translation strategy is commendable as it preserves the literary and cultural significance of the original dialogue, ensuring that the semantic and contextual dimensions are effectively conveyed to the target audience.

Secondly, it is worth noting that in other instances, despite the availability of equivalent formulaic expressions, the translator opted to directly translate the Malay proverbs and sayings. The translator's decision to avoid established English expressions is puzzling. It leads us to question whether it was a calculated strategy or an unintentional act. It could be genuine cases of failing to recall pre-existing formulaic expressions stored in the translator's linguistic memory (refer to Gibbs, 2007). Alternatively, it could be that retrieval was impossible as the expression was never stored in the translator's memory to begin with. This is best explained by the translator's competency in both languages, familiarity with the respective cultures, and experience in the field of translation. In a separate instance, a slight modification to a Malay proverb was used in the dialogue for comedic effect. However, it was not reflected in the subtitles as the literal translation was used with a superficial understanding of the Malay language and culture. The intended meaning, literary effects and cultural values conveyed in the dialogue on the local myth (the dragon of Tasek Chini) were not captured in the film subtitles – reflecting the translator's unfamiliarity and inexperience in translating what Postigo (2021) termed as culturally bound words.

Thirdly, the strategy of paraphrasing (Baker, 2018; Newmark, 1988) is considered when the equivalent proverb in the target language is unavailable. It is also used when the formulaic expression is difficult to understand and cannot be expressed directly in the target language. It is interesting to note that although paraphrasing usually suggests a wordier translation, it is oversimplified in the instance identified in this study (Excerpt 3). Although the omission does not semantically affect the translation, the missing chunk from the expression completely removes the cultural and literary effects of the proverb.

In summary, the findings emphasise the importance of a nuanced and culturally sensitive translation approach in cinematic subtitles, highlighting both successful strategies and areas for improvement in ensuring the faithful representation of communicative and cultural dimensions in cross-language cinematic experiences.

The implications of this study are multifaceted. Firstly, the effective translation strategies of sayings and proverbs in the English subtitles of the film underscores the pivotal role of translators to preserve communicative intent in their translation work. This ensures that foreign moviegoers can easily follow the plot and consequently have a meaningful cinematic experience as much as the locals do. Secondly, translators must preserve the literary and cultural nuances to successfully transfer semantic and contextual dimensions to the target audience. The successful transfer of these aspects could potentially ignite the interest and curiosity of international audiences towards the culture of the SL, obliquely promoting it. However, the transla-

tor's decision to directly translate Malay proverbs despite the availability of equivalent formulaic expressions in the TL prompts the direction for future researchers to investigate on the relationship between quality of translation work - particularly in sayings and proverbs - and translator's competency, cultural familiarity, as well as experience in the field of translation. Thirdly, the translation industry should provide ample opportunities for cultural sensitivity training for translators to ensure that the subtleties and nuances of the source culture are preserved in the translation work. Additionally, production house should only engage qualified, experienced translators to produce accurate and culturally relevant translation. Particularly in translating films, collaborative translation work with native speakers of the source and target languages is the way forward.

To conclude, the surge in demand for film translation has led to a shortage of qualified translators and accordingly a decline in the quality of subtitles. However, high-quality subtitles are crucial to ensure foreign moviegoers can continue enjoying them. To bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps between different communities, translators need to demonstrate linguistic competence as well as exhibit a deep understanding of cultural nuances. By investing in the recruitment and training of skilled translators, we can promote local films while fostering cross-cultural understanding and interconnectedness on a global scale.

Author contributions

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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