



Making Sense of Translated Movies: A Pragmatic Analysis of Movies Translated from English to Luganda

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Abstract

This study examined the phenomenon of pragmatic equivalence in translated movies from English to Luganda. We investigated the procedures employed by translators to achieve pragmatic equivalence, including cultural substitution, universalization, and limited universalization. Equally, we identified and analyzed the pragmatic challenges faced by translators, including cultural references, idiomatic expressions and humor. We also explored effective strategies to maintain pragmatic equivalence, including cultural adaptation, creativity, flexibility, and collaboration between translators, film makers, and cultural experts. In this study, we employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Data was collected through content analysis of selected Luganda translated movies. In-depth interviews were conducted with Luganda movie translators, and questionnaires were distributed to movie viewers from different cinema halls. The findings revealed that translators prioritized conveying the intended message and engaging the target audience, while adapting to cultural and linguistic nuances. The study further identified significant challenges in translating cultural references, idiomatic expressions, humor, and highlighted the importance of cultural adaptation, creativity, and flexibility in maintaining pragmatic equivalence. Based on the study findings, the study recommends increased collaboration with cultural experts to enhance translation quality in Uganda.

1. Introduction

The global film industry has witnessed a significant increase in the translation of movies from English to other languages and vice-versa. Such translation commonly takes the form of subtitling/captioning, dubbing or audio tracking different

languages. According to Dwyer (2005), all films are inherently foreign from the very beginning, yet translation has enabled them transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries, thus facilitating their spread. International movies have therefore been widely translated from source languages of Chinese dialects like Mandarin and Cantonese, Asian dialects such as Hindi, Korean, Filipino, and European dialects such as Spanish, French, German, Turkish, Russian, plus Arabic dialects, as well as in some African languages. Most of these movies are widely subtitled or dubbed to English language which is the most widely used language in modern cinema, accounting for 81.4% (Follows, 2023). In Africa, the most commonly used source languages in movies include Kiswahili, Zulu, and West African accents such as Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (Osasere, 2018).

It is worth noting that pragmatics has attracted attention of many researchers such as Taguchi and Kadar (2023) as well as Aruna (2018) who have gained interest in this field and defined it in differently. House et al, (2003) defines pragmatics as a type of knowledge that makes people detect the intercultural interaction structures and speech act strategies in order to resolve problems of misunderstanding encountered in the international social settings. Whereas Hafdhi (2023) views it as the study of relations between languages. The field of pragmatics is concerned with the use of language in social contexts and the way people comprehend meanings. For purposes of this study, Aruna's (2018) definition is adopted, which emphasizes how the intended meaning from source language (SL) is conveyed by a translator in target language (TL).

Translation itself is described as a process of changing an original text in the original language, also referred to as Source Language (SL) into a different language, considered as Target Language (TL) by the translator (Munday, 2008). In the context of movies, translation plays a critical role in conveying messages from one language to another. Majola (2006), cited in Achen and Openjuru (2012), affirms that majority of the population not well versed with English find it easier to understand foreign and exotic cultural processes such as Hollywood/Bollywood movies when rendered or presented in their local languages. According to Tatiana (2023), Bollywood recognizes the importance of reaching out to diverse audiences. To cater for foreign-speaking viewers, movies are often translated into multiple languages, subtitles and dubbed versions, allowing people from different linguistic backgrounds to enjoy the cinematic experience (Rasmussen, 2010). These movie translations not only break language barriers but also foster cultural exchange, promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity. Importantly, a

translator's task is to reflect the language and culture of the source language in the target language (Gentzler, 2017). It is therefore important for film translators commonly known as VJs (Video Jockeys) to strive for pragmatic equivalence.

Movie translation has gained significant prominence worldwide. In Uganda, for example, numerous movies have been translated from English to local languages like Luganda, Lumasaba, Lusoga, Runyankole, Rugbrat among others, to cater for the local audience. Among these, Luganda remains the most dominant target language because of its widespread use (Ssempuuma, 2011). Ssalongo Jjingo (also known as) a.k.a VJ Jjingo, one of the most popularly known movie translators in Uganda and a proprietor of Kajjansi films, has greatly contributed to this growing trend. Despite extensive literature on pragmatic equivalence in translation, particularly within the realm of literary genres, there remains a notable gap in research focusing on the translation of movies from and into English and Luganda. Existing studies such as Gentzler (2017) and Baker (2018) highlight challenges such as differences in translating complex utterances, addressing expressions without equivalents in TL, handling cultural references and adhering to screen time constraints while maintaining emotional and tonal fidelity. In light of the above gaps, this research aimed at a comprehensive analysis of movies translated from English to Luganda, with a specific focus on establishing pragmatic equivalence while considering the linguistic and cultural details vital in translation between the two languages.

2. Theoretical Framework

There are several translation theories relevant to this study, including Catford's translation theory (1965), Nida's translation theory (1964), Larson's translation theory (1984), Newmark's translation theory (1988), and Skopos translation theory (1980s) proposed by Hans Vermeer. However, the Skopos theory was selected for this study because it emphasizes the purpose or intended function of translation, which distinguishes it from equivalence-based approaches that focus mainly on linguistic correspondence of form and content. Skopos theory emerged in Germany in the late 1970s, marking a shift from formal, linguistics-oriented translation approaches toward functionally and socio-culturally oriented translation (Denc & Denc, 2019). Initially formulated by Reiss in the 1970s, it was further transmitted by Vermeer in the 1980s and advanced by Nord in the 1990s, one of its prominent second-generation scholars (Denc & Denc, 2019). The theory posits that any translational action is a purposeful activity and not merely a linguistic transfer (Nord, 2012). The Skopos rule, according to Nord (1997), states that the primary principle determining any translation process is the purpose (Skopos) of the overall translation, and each text

should be translated to deliver an acceptable function in the target language. Vermeer (1989) emphasizes that equivalence within the Skopos theory is dynamic and context-dependent, focusing on achieving the same communicative function in the target culture as the original text.

Further more, this study adopted the skopos theory because it supports the rendering of translated movies from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) in terms of meaning, message and intended purpose. In analyzing these movies, attention was put on pragmatic challenges and strategies translators should employ to achieve pragmatic equivalence. Previous researchers using the Skopos theory such as Liangqiu and Donghui (2018) and Alsager and Almohizea (2023), support its applicability in studying audiovisual translation, particularly in assessing how the intended function of the original text is conveyed in the target context. Pragmatics, as a subfield of linguistics, concerns how language is used in social contexts and how meaning is interpreted in communication (Griffiths, 2006; Aruna, 2018; Ekoru, 2021). Achieving pragmatic equivalence requires translators to carefully analyze the contextual meaning in the SL and render it effectively in the TL.

Although the skopos theory emphasizes translator freedom and purpose-driven translation, such freedom is not absolute in audio visual translation. Movie translators operate under constraints such as time, space, multimodality and audience expectations, all of which limit complete ownership of the translation. This study therefore aligns with the skopos theory in the sense that translation choices are guided by a communicative purpose while remaining sensitive to practical movie constraints. Nevertheless, the existing literature on translation theories, particularly the Skopos theory, emphasizes the significance of purpose and context in the translation process. However, there is a notable gap in research specifically addressing the pragmatic challenges encountered by translators in Ugandan movie translation. While the Skopos theory highlights the translator's role in achieving pragmatic equivalence, the complexities involved in translating culturally-specific content, especially in informal settings like "*bibandas*", has not been adequately explored (Musinguzi, 2004). Furthermore, the relationship between the translator and the original text's intent, as articulated in Nord's loyalty principle, remains under-examined in movie translations where humor and local relevance often take precedence over fidelity to the source material. In doing so, this study provided empirical insights into translator decision-making in contexts where both purpose and audience reception shape translation outcomes.

2.1 Challenges for Achieving Pragmatic Equivalence in Movie Translation

Baker (1992) identifies four types of equivalence: dynamic, grammatical, textual and pragmatic, with the latter deemed particularly relevant for audiovisual translation. In the case of movie translation in Uganda, this involves adapting English-language movies to Luganda in ways that preserve meaning, tone, and communicative effect for the local audience. However, translating movies presents multiple pragmatic challenges. Linguistic challenges, including idiomatic expressions, wordplay, colloquialisms, syntactic and lexical differences, dialectal variations, tense shifts, and sociolinguistic complexities such as slang, further complicate the translation process (Istiqomah, 2019; Holmes, 2021). To overcome these challenges, translators often substitute unfamiliar concepts with culturally relevant equivalents, adapt content for local comprehension, or employ creative strategies that maintain audience engagement while preserving the intended function of the original text. These adaptations, guided by the Skopos principle, help to achieve pragmatic equivalence by ensuring that the TL text fulfills the same communicative purpose as the SL text. Translators should also navigate cultural references, idiomatic expressions, humor, and expressions that do not have direct equivalents in the TL. They should also synchronize dialogue with actors' lip movements, maintain emotional and tonal accuracy to ensure that audiences remain engaged with the story (Issy, 2003; Baker, 2018).

The translation of idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms and figurative language presents other major challenges in translation, often requiring strategies like transcreation that prioritize audience engagement over faithful adherence to the source language material. This leads to the introduction of humor, dramatization and even personal additions to the translated scripts, hence deviating from the original version's intention and purpose. For instance, in the movie "*Wheel*" directed by *Dee McLachlan*, where *Omutaka Ice P*, a prominent movie translator in Uganda, rendered "You're not used to it" as "*Ogenda kumanyiila embeela*" deviating from the more appropriate translation "*Tokimanyidde*". Such instances illustrate how meaning can easily shift away from the intended message, resulting in pragmatic non-equivalence. Many translators find difficulties in translating multilingual movies more so, when the languages involved are unfamiliar to them, thus resorting to use of own words that may not be related at all to the movie (Bassnett, 2022).

2.2 Strategies for Achieving Pragmatic Equivalence in Movie Translation

A translation strategy refers to a systematic approach or plan employed by translators to navigate the challenges of rendering content from one language into another. It

involves a set of conscious decisions and methodologies used to tackle linguistic, cultural, and contextual disparities between the source and target languages (Nida, 2018). A translator applies a strategy when s/he encounters a problem while translating a text; this means that when translators render texts literally, they apply no translation strategies. Bergen (2006) mentions that strategies are neither obvious nor trivial. Many novice translators think that translating word-for-word is a perfect way of translation yet at certain points, translators are given freedom over their translations in the skopos theory. This means that a translator owns the translation and can make changes where need be as long as they are in line with the source language's purpose.

Broeik (1981) offers the following suggestions for translating idiomatic expressions: distinguishing between ordinary expressions and metaphors, having access to the resources of translating a single metaphor and being aware of different contexts. Direct Translation (Literal Translation) involves rendering the source text into the target language word-for-word, aiming for utmost fidelity to the original. It is useful for technical or legal texts where precision is crucial. Cultural adaptation (localization), on the other hand, focuses on adapting cultural elements, idiomatic expressions, and references from the source culture to make them understandable and relevant to the target audience. It ensures that the translated content resonates culturally with the audience.

However, the above positions are not adopted wholesomely in the present article. While scholars provide strong theoretical foundation for translation strategies, their discussions are largely general and, in some cases, oriented toward written or technical texts. In movie translation, where meaning is constructed through dialogue, visuals, sound, and timing, strategies such as direct translation may preserve semantic meaning but often fall short of achieving pragmatic equivalence, particularly in conveying implied meanings and speaker's intentions. In comparison with earlier studies that broadly discuss translation strategies and idiomatic translation (Broeik, 1981; Miremadi, 1991;), the current study shifts the focus from general strategy classification to the achievement of pragmatic equivalence in movie translation. Existing studies (Bergen, 2006) pay limited attention to how translators negotiate meaning beyond the literal level in audiovisual contexts. Consequently, a gap emerges in the existing literature regarding empirical investigations of how translation strategies are employed to preserve pragmatic meaning in movie dialogue. The present study addressed this gap by examining the strategies used in movie translation with specific attention to how pragmatic equivalence is achieved between

the SL and TL. Thus, the present study did not reject existing theories of translation strategies but critically rebuilt on them by examining their effectiveness pragmatic equivalence in movie translation.

Transcreation (Creative Translation) prioritizes conveying the spirit, tone, and emotions of the original text rather than adhering strictly to literal translation. It involves reimagining the content so that it evokes similar feelings or responses in the target audience. In translation studies it is recognized as a creative strategy that maintains intent and effect rather than form (Katan, 2014; Newmark, 1988). Compensation as a translation strategy involves finding alternative ways to convey meaning or effect when direct equivalence is not possible (Newmark, 1988). On the other hand, omission refers to deliberately leaving out non-essential elements that may not make sense in the target culture. As for addition, it involves including extra explanations or details to enhance understanding (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995; Pedersen, 2011).

In the context of the current study, these strategies were examined as pragmatic tools rather than being purely formal techniques. In movie translation, where meaning is co-constructed through dialogue, context, performance, and implied communicative intent, transcreation, simplification, compensation, omission, and addition are strategies that translators can adopt to preserve the communicative effect and achieve pragmatic equivalence between source and target languages. Transcreation, or creative translation, finds support in the works of Nikolic (2017), who discusses creative approaches in audiovisual translation. His research focuses on the challenges of preserving the essence and impact of the original content while adapting it creatively for the target audience. These strategies serve as guiding principles for translators, allowing them to navigate the complexities of language, culture, and context to produce translations that effectively convey the intended message while meeting the needs and expectations of the target audience.

3. Methodology

The researchers adopted a descriptive survey research design supported by a mixed-method approach. This design was selected because it allowed the researchers to collect comprehensive information about participants' attitudes, beliefs, and practices without manipulating variables, thereby offering a clear snapshot of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2014). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches strengthened the study (Trajan, 2023) by allowing inductive exploration of themes while providing numerical data to validate emerging patterns. The research

process consisted of examining translated movies, engaging translators (Video Jockeys), and collecting audience perspectives to understand how pragmatic equivalence is achieved during movie translation.

The study population comprised of three groups: fifty (50) movies translated from English into Luganda between 2013 and 2024; fifteen (15) VJs actively involved in translating movies into Luganda; and one hundred (100) audience members who consumed Luganda-translated films. From this population, a sample of fifteen (15) movies were purposively selected to represent a wide range of genres such as action, adventure, romance, comedy, and family films. Additionally, five (5) VJs were selected conveniently due to accessibility and their professional involvement in the translation industry, consistent with Etikan et al. (2016) who emphasize convenience sampling as suitable for accessing willing and available participants. Furthermore, a sample of sixty (60) audience members were sampled conveniently from video halls and theatres from Mbale city, Eastern Uganda to capture consumer experiences with translated films. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), enabling identification of patterns related to pragmatic equivalence and cultural adaptation in translation. Equally, descriptive analysis was also used for quantitative data respectively.

4. Results and Discussion

In an attempt to discover the possible strategies of maintaining pragmatic equivalence in the translation of movies from English into Luganda, the researchers employed a mixed-research method where questionnaires to the audience and interviews to the translators and content analysis were used as tools for data collection. In this section, interviewees are termed as respondent one (R1) and respondent two (R2) and so on.

The general objective of the study was to analyze pragmatic equivalence in movies translated from English into Luganda. To achieve this objective, the researchers analyzed fifteen (15) movies which were: *The Lost City*, *marry me*, *For the love of money*, *Gone Girl*, *The Land of Bad*, *The Martian*, *The Price We Pay*, *Black Warrant*, *Me before You*, *The River Wild*, *Lust*, *Pets united*, *Moana*, *Dracula*; *The Dark Prince* and *Flight 666*. The researchers also considered numerous movie genres which were animation, adventure, fantasy, science fiction, action, family, thriller, action adventure, romantic drama, comedy, horror, crime and tragic romance. For the data set, movie scripts dominated the landscape at 46.7%, indicating a strong focus on translating original content like screenplays and stories from English into Luganda. Movie dialogues followed at 26.7%, highlighting the challenges of translating

conversational dynamics and cultural nuances. Movie reviews accounted for 6.7%, showing consideration for how Luganda-speaking audiences would react to the translations. Equally, movie translator sources made up 20.0%, facilitating the translation process and enabling global access to English movies for Luganda speakers. This dataset offered valuable insights into the complexities of translating movies from English into Luganda, shedding light on the pragmatic aspects of language translation in film-making.

Table 1: Quality of the Translation from English into Luganda

Item	Frequency	Percent
Translator used correct terminology consistently	3	20.0
Translation conveys the meaning of the source text accurately	6	40.0
The style is true to the source material	3	20.0
Translated movie sounds just as well as the original one	1	6.7
Culture-specific aspects have been correctly adapted	2	13.3
Total	15	100.0

Source: Researchers' Primary Data (2024)

While evaluating the translation quality depicted in table 1, the study revealed a strong performance across various aspects, with a significant proportion of translations (40.0%) accurately conveying the meaning of the source text, demonstrating a high level of comprehension and transfer of content. Additionally, a notable percentage of translators (20.0%) consistently employed correct terminology, showcasing their expertise in the subject matter and attention to detail. Furthermore, a substantial number of translations (20.0%) successfully captured the style of the source material, indicating a strong ability to replicate tone, voice, and narrative flow. A notable percentage of (13.3%) successfully adapted culture-specific aspects, demonstrating cultural sensitivity and awareness. While a smaller percentage of translations (6.7%) achieved a seamless equivalence to the original movie, suggesting a low level of fluency and naturalness. Generally, the results indicated a high level of translation quality, with a focus on accuracy, terminology, cultural adaptation, and style, highlighting the translators' ability to produce high-quality translations that effectively communicated the intended message.

Nonetheless, the analysis of linguistic changes revealed a range of adjustments made to ensure effective communication in the target language. Semantic changes with (40.0%) were the most frequent, indicating a focus on adapting the meaning and

connotation of words or phrases to convey the intended message in the target language additions with (20.0%) were made to enhance clarity or provide additional context. While deletions (20.0%) were employed to condense information or remove unnecessary elements. Modifications (20.0%) were used to rephrase or reword sentences for better flow respectively. The linguistic changes demonstrated a thoughtful and detailed approach to translation, which balanced fidelity to the source text with the need to communicate effectively in the target language. These findings were in agreement with what respondents who were interviewed affirmed to as quoted;

“Some words mostly in Sci-Fi and romantic dramas have no equivalents in Luganda. Some words are too obscene and yet we have a young audience as well, so in such cases, we at times add our own words in order to explain the meaning of a term in detail or delete and instead use a familiar word for the adults that children cannot understand.” [R1, R2]

Another objective of this study was to analyze the procedures taken in carrying out the translation of movies from English into Luganda. In order to fulfil this objective, the researchers used data from movie analysis and interviews from translators. However, out of the sample size of five respondents, only two respondents accepted to voluntarily be interviewed, the rest preferred not to take part and declined to help in the findings of the study, this greatly affected the diversity of the findings.

Table 2: Technique Used in Translating Movies from Luganda into English

Item	Frequency	Percent
Text-based film analysis	1	6.7
Topic-based analysis	4	26.7
Picture and sound approach	3	20.0
Psychoanalytical	5	33.3
Historical approach	1	6.7
Thematic analysis	1	6.7
<i>Total</i>	15	100.0

Researchers' Primary Data (2024)

Study findings revealed the techniques used in translating movies from English into Luganda, including the psychoanalytical approach with (33.3%), which predominantly explored psychological nuances of characters. This was followed by topic-based analysis (26.7%), which emphasized understanding cultural context, historical approach, followed by the picture and sound approach (20.0%), which

considered multimedia aspects. Whereas the least used techniques were text-based film analysis (6.7%), which focused on linguistic accuracy but was relatively underutilized, equally, historical approach (6.7%), which examined temporal aspects but was less prominent, and thematic analysis (6.7%), which identified broader messages but was also relatively under-utilized, all had equal representation. The emphasis on psychoanalytical and topic-based analysis suggested that understanding the human experience and cultural context was crucial, while the low frequency of text-based film analysis and the historical approach indicated that linguistic accuracy and historical context were not primary concerns, indicating that translators prioritized creating translations that resonated with the target audience at a deeper level rather than merely conveying literal meaning. These findings are in agreement with what Baker (2018) emphasizes that effecting translation goes beyond literal word-for-word conversion, it necessitates the adjustment of idiomatic expressions, cultural references and contextual distinctions to ensure the translated text's quality within the target culture.

Further analysis of the cultural adaptation procedure used by translators revealed that cultural substitution or naturalization accounted for 6 instances (40%) of the total. Notably, this involved replacing cultural elements with equivalent ones from the target culture while ensuring the translation resonated with the local audience and maintained its cultural essence while facilitating understanding and connection. This was followed by an absolute universalization in 5 instances (33.3%). In contrast, limited universalization was used in 4 instances (26.7%). This highlighted a strong emphasis on cultural adaptation, with cultural substitution or naturalization being the most frequently used. This suggested that the translators prioritized cultural relevance and resonance with the target audience. This approach was justified by the importance of cultural context in shaping meaning, and its prevalence indicated a thoughtful and detailed approach to translation. These findings contend to what R2 said in the interview:

“I substitute words according to our culture here though at times, I have to just be lenient most especially with words that have no direct equivalents. I simply speak a word the way it is spoken in the original movie and the audience sinks in it and digests it slowly as the movie plays on.”

In addition, R1 also stated:

“Some words in my genre of specialty (sci-fi) bare no equivalent in Luganda, for example the word ‘capsule’ from a space ship. I simply term it as ‘akombo’ and by calling it so in a couple of scenes in that same movie, I create a new word that the

audience well digests.”

He added:

“If there is completely no equivalent word, at times I pass it or say it the very way it was said in the original movie.”

In a bid to achieve pragmatic equivalence while translating idiomatic expressions, this study revealed that translation by omission and compensation was widely employed by (46.7%) of the English-Luganda movie translators. This involved omitting English idioms and replacing them with Luganda expressions that conveyed the same meaning but with a different form or structure, followed by translation by paraphrase at 40.0% which involved the rephrasing of English idioms in Luganda while maintaining their original meaning. Whereas the use of an idiom of similar meaning and form was at 6.7%, this involved replacing the English idiom with a Luganda equivalent that mirrored its meaning and structure. The use of an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form also appeared at 6.7% respectively. This entailed replacing the English idiom with a Luganda expression that conveyed the same meaning but with a different structure.

While achieving another objective that focused at the pragmatic challenges faced in translating of movies from the source language to the target language, the study revealed a range of challenges. These included: word choices which emerged as the most significant hurdle, accounting for 53.3% cases. This highlighted the complexity of selecting appropriate target language words to convey the intended meaning, nuance and tone of the source text. Interpreting idiomatic expressions posed another significant challenge, encountered in 20% cases which required careful consideration of cultural context and figurative language. Cultural references and semantic challenges followed, each accounting for 13.3% cases, underscoring the importance of understanding cultural nuances and resolving ambiguities in meaning. This demonstrated a high degree of linguistic and cultural competence, ensuring a translation that effectively conveyed the source text’s intended meaning and impact. These findings aligned with what R1 said in an interview;

“Most movies, especially ones not released from Hollywood, tend to not have ready transcripts/dialogues available online. Unlike Hollywood released movies, these movies much rely on subtitles for example Bollywood and Nollywood movies. These movies however tend not to well merge their subtitles with the original audio or video of the movie. This thus means you literally have to recreate your own script by watching the movie multiple times so as to get well versed with scenes and overall movie context or

intention.”

Nevertheless, the respondents noticed various challenges in translated movies, with the majority (50.0%) citing differences in word choice. This suggested that translators’ selections of words to convey meaning varied from the original content. Phrase structure at 23.3% was another notable challenge, indicating that the organization and arrangement of words in sentences differed in translated versions. Idiomatic expressions at 26.7% were also altered, which could have significantly impacted the cultural and contextual nuances of the original content. Most respondents interviewed agreed to the fact that a translation can never be word-for-word. This was also in agreement with what Baker (2018) emphasized as per the analysis above.

The proposed strategies for addressing linguistic challenges in Table (3) revealed a diverse range of approaches. Official equivalent emerged as a strong contender, accounting for 33.3% of cases, demonstrating a focus on finding established equivalents and transferring words and phrases directly. Whereas paraphrase and verbatim transfer followed closely, each accounting for 26.7% and 20.0% respectively, highlighting the importance of rephrasing and rewording to convey complex ideas and nuances. Direct translation was proposed at 13.3%, underscoring the need for literal translation in specific contexts. Notably, generalization was proposed in only 6.7% of instances, indicating a cautious approach to broadening or simplifying complex concepts. By proposing these strategies, the translators demonstrated a thoughtful and multi-faceted approach while navigating linguistic challenges, prioritizing clarity, accuracy, and effective communication.

Table 3: Strategies for Addressing Linguistic Challenges

Item	Frequency	Percent
Official equivalent	5	33.3
Direct translation	2	13.3
Generalization	1	6.7
Verbatim transfer	3	20.0
Paraphrase	4	26.7
Total	15	100.0

Researcher’s Primary Data (2024)

Furthermore, the strategies used to achieve pragmatic equivalence revealed the use of direct translation (66.7%), which involved translating terms verbatim into

Luganda, and transcreation (33.3%), which entailed adapting terms to convey the same meaning and function in the target language and culture. The predominance of direct translation suggested a focus on preserving the original meaning and terminology, while the use of transcreation indicated a consideration for cultural relevance and fluency. These findings indicated that translators aimed to strike a balance between fidelity to the source text and cultural adaptability to achieve pragmatic equivalence.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study scrutinized the complexities and pragmatic considerations involved in translating movies from English into Luganda. The study underscores that translation of movies into Luganda is both an artistic and analytical endeavor. The findings confirmed that the translation of audiovisual materials extends far beyond lexical substitution; it is a sophisticated process grounded in pragmatic equivalence, contextual sensitivity, and cultural negotiation. Translators consistently prioritized conveying intended meaning and audience experience rather than adhering to literal translation. This approach ensured that the emotional tone, communicative intent, and narrative coherence of the source text were preserved for Luganda-speaking audiences.

This study further revealed that translators employed a combination of psychoanalytical, topic-based, and contextual analysis techniques to unpack the deeper meanings embedded in source texts. These methods enabled them to anticipate translation challenges and craft solutions that aligned with linguistic norms and cultural expectations in the target language. The findings also highlighted the centrality of cultural adaptation in translating idiomatic expressions, humor, and context-dependent references. Such elements proved particularly challenging due to their reliance on shared cultural knowledge. As a result, translators relied heavily on creativity, cultural intuition, and adaptive strategies such as cultural substitution, absolute and limited universalization, and naturalization.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were proposed to enhance the quality and cultural relevance of movie translations from English into Luganda; First, translators should continue prioritizing audience engagement and contextual appropriateness. Institutions and film-production stakeholders should establish clear guidelines that help translators maintain a balance between accuracy and cultural sensitivity. More structured training programs are also needed to deepen translators' understanding of both linguistic complexities and the sociocultural realities of target

audiences. Secondly, translators should be encouraged to adopt flexible and film-specific analytical approaches. Developing a standardized framework that guides translators in applying psychoanalytical and topic-based analysis would ensure consistency and improve decision-making processes. Thirdly, a comprehensive guide dedicated to culturally sensitive translation should be developed. Training should emphasize innovation, creativity, and risk-taking, as these qualities are essential for bridging cultural and linguistic gaps. Creating a digital repository of previously successful translations would allow translators to learn from tested strategies and avoid repetitive challenges.

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