

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the foundation of the research by presenting the background of the study and explaining the reasons why the topic is significant to investigate. It outlines the research problems and objectives, clarifying the focus on the analysis of subtitling strategies and factors of meaning loss in AI-generated subtitles on TikTok. In addition, this chapter describes the research significance, defines key terms used throughout the study, and explains the organization of the writing in order to provide a clear structure for the discussion in the following chapters.

1.1 Background of the Research

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has become one of the most significant technological innovations in modern society. According to Dwivedi et al. (2021), AI has transformed various sectors, including business, education, healthcare, transportation, and communication. In communication, AI improves digital interactions through intelligent interfaces and real-time information processing (Shneiderman, 2020). One important development is AI-based translation, which helps users overcome language barriers, although concerns regarding accuracy, naturalness, and cultural interpretation remain (Alisherovich, 2025).

Communication is the process of transferring thoughts and feelings through understandable means (Nasution & Tambunan, 2022), while language is considered the most powerful communication tool in society (Apriyanto, 2020). However, differences in language often create barriers in interaction, making translation essential for effective cross-linguistic communication. Catford (1965) defines translation as the replacement of textual material from one language into equivalent material in another language, while Nida (1964) emphasizes that effective translation should produce a similar response in the target audience. In social media,

especially audiovisual platforms, translation is widely applied through subtitling to help audiences from different linguistic backgrounds understand each other.

A textual, additive, synchronous, polysemiotic translation of spoken discourse into another language is known as subtitling (Gottlieb, 1992). Because translators must fit meaning into constrained screen time and space, subtitling entails both linguistic transmission and spatial-temporal restrictions. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2014), subtitling is one of the most limited translation techniques, necessitating inventive modification to maintain humor, tone, and meaning. Accessibility has been transformed by the advent of AI-generated subtitles, such as TikTok's auto-caption and auto-translate functions, however translation quality has also come under scrutiny.

TikTok is ranked as the fifth most popular social network worldwide based on monthly active users (Statista, 2025). The platform allows users to create and share short videos globally and has become one of the most widely used entertainment applications. To improve accessibility, TikTok provides AI-based features such as Auto-Generated Captions, which automatically convert audio into subtitles using speech recognition technology (TikTok, 2021). These subtitles can also be translated into other languages, including Indonesian and English, supporting cross-cultural communication. However, the quality of AI-generated translations still faces challenges, particularly in translating humor, idioms, and culturally specific expressions. As a result, subtitles often contain awkward wording, mistranslations, and loss of meaning, causing international audiences to misunderstand the intended emotions or messages in videos, especially satire content.

Satire is an art that uses language to criticize or mock a subject by presenting it in a ridiculous way and provoking reactions such as amusement or anger (Abrams & Harpham, 2012). Unlike comedy, which mainly aims to entertain, satire often targets individuals, social groups, or particular behaviors. Abrams (as cited in Resti, 2015) identifies several elements of satire, including parody, irony, allegory, and

humor. According to Newmark (1981), translation can be divided into semantic translation, which prioritizes fidelity to the original text, and communicative translation, which emphasizes the response of target readers. In translating satire, communicative translation is considered more appropriate because it seeks to maintain the intended emotional effect on readers. Therefore, translating satire requires creativity and careful attention to preserve the original meaning and emotional impact. However, AI-based automatic translation systems often lack emotional and contextual awareness, which can result in meaning loss when translating satirical content.

Meaning loss is a common issue in translation that occurs when semantic, cultural, stylistic, or pragmatic elements of the source text cannot be fully transferred into the target language. This happens because differences between the source language (SL) and target language (TL) make complete equivalence difficult to achieve. Crystal (1987) states that some degree of information loss is unavoidable in translation since no two languages share identical systems of meaning. Similarly, Newmark (1988) explains that meaning loss may result from cultural and linguistic differences, variations in language use between writer and translator, differing theories of meaning, and limitations or lack of clarity from the translator. These factors show that translation is not simply replacing words, but also interpreting and reconstructing meaning. Therefore, translators need to carefully analyze a text before translating it to understand its communicative purpose (Newmark, 1988). As a result, competent translators are essential because translation requires creativity, contextual sensitivity, and the ability to effectively convey meaning in the target language.

This research was motivated by previous studies on translation in digital platforms, audiovisual texts, literary works, and machine translation systems. These studies provided theoretical and methodological foundations for understanding translation errors, humor translation, meaning transfer, and the challenges of machine translation in interpreting implicit meaning.

Shafira and Nugroho (2023), in “Translation Error Types Analysis on TikTok Indonesian-English Auto-Translation Content,” analyzed translation errors in TikTok’s auto-generated subtitles using a descriptive qualitative method and Vilar’s classification. The findings showed that AI-generated subtitles often produced structural and lexical inaccuracies. Similar to the present research, the study examined TikTok auto-translation from Indonesian into English using qualitative methods. However, their study focused on translation error types, while the present research examined factors of meaning loss using Newmark’s (1998) theory and specifically analyzed satirical content.

Mulyati and Nugroho (2023), in “Translation of Verbal Humor in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Movie,” analyzed subtitling strategies, types of verbal humor, and subtitle acceptability using qualitative and quantitative methods. The study found that humor translation required careful strategy selection and contextual adaptation. Both studies focused on subtitle translation and humor-related discourse, but Mulyati and Nugroho examined human-translated film subtitles and translation acceptability, whereas the present research analyzed AI-generated TikTok subtitles and meaning loss in satirical short videos.

Adhikary (2019), in “Loss of Meaning in Translation: The Case Study of a Nepali Novel ‘Basain’,” explored meaning loss in literary translation, especially cultural elements, through a qualitative descriptive approach. The similarity with the present research lies in the focus on meaning loss. However, Adhikary analyzed a human-translated novel using House’s theory, while the present research examined AI-generated subtitles using Newmark’s theory and incorporated subtitling strategy analysis.

Siregar and Zawawi (2025), in “Artificial Intelligence in Translating Literary Texts: An Accuracy and Satirical Representation of the Arabic Short Story,” investigated translation accuracy and satire representation in a literary text translated using ChatGPT. The findings showed that AI could produce structurally accurate translations but still struggled with irony and implicit meaning. Similar to

the present study, their research focused on machine translation and satire. However, they examined literary texts and translation accuracy, while the present research focused on AI-generated subtitles in TikTok videos and factors of meaning loss in satirical audiovisual content.

In “An Analysis of Translation Loss in The Jewel Smurfer,” Lurisari (2019) examined translation strategies that caused meaning loss in a comic translated from English into Indonesian. Using a qualitative descriptive method and Molina and Albir’s theory of translation techniques, the study found that space limitations and translator decisions contributed to meaning loss. This study was similar to the present research because both focused on meaning loss and translation strategies as contributing factors. However, Lurisari analyzed human-translated comic texts, while the present research examined AI-generated Indonesian-to-English subtitles on TikTok. Furthermore, this research applied Gottlieb’s (1992) subtitling strategies instead of Molina and Albir’s techniques. The research gap lies in the analysis of AI-generated audiovisual subtitles and how automated translation systems interpret satirical discourse on digital platforms.

The researchers chose to study meaning loss because AI-generated translations on digital platforms often contain inaccuracies and unnatural phrasing. These errors may cause misunderstandings between content creators and audiences, especially among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. TikTok’s AI-generated subtitle feature was selected as the object of this study because TikTok is one of the most widely recognized digital platforms worldwide.

According to Dataloka (2025), Indonesia has the highest number of TikTok users, reaching 194.37 million users. This large user base indicates that a vast amount of content is created and shared daily, making TikTok an important platform for translation studies, particularly for Indonesian content translated into English. The high number of Indonesian creators also increases the potential for local content to reach global audiences, highlighting the importance of understanding how AI translates Indonesian language and culture. This study

focuses on the TikTok account @dipalelu, which is well known in Indonesia for its satirical content. The account's creative use of language and humor makes it interesting to analyze. By examining how TikTok's AI translates satire in Dipalelu's videos, this study aims to explore how AI interprets meaning, context, and cultural elements in translation.

By studying the subtitling strategy and loss of meaning factors of translation in TikTok videos, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into the role of translation as a medium of cross-linguistic communication in the digital era. By examining the subtitling strategy and loss of meaning factors of translation, the researchers can show how AI translating a language helps AI development for the future, the development of cross-linguistics in digital communication, and how context plays an important role in the interpretation of meaning.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the background above, the researchers formulate the following research questions:

1. What subtitling strategies used by TikTok's AI-generated subtitles to translate Indonesian satire into English, and how the strategies affect the translation?
2. What factors that influence loss of meaning in the satire translation by TikTok's AI-generated subtitles?

1.3 Research Purposes

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the researchers is intended:

1. To identify what subtitling strategies used by TikTok's AI-generated subtitles to translate Indonesian satire into English and how the strategies affect the translation.
2. To analyze what factors that influence loss of meaning in the satire translation by TikTok's AI-generated subtitles.

1.4 Research Significances

In the fields of translation, artificial intelligence, social media, and communication, this research has important significance both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to knowledge about the subtitling strategies used by TikTok's AI-generated translation and to provide insights into the loss of meaning that occurs in TikTok's AI-generated subtitles. Practically, this research may offer valuable insights for social media platforms, especially TikTok, to improve their AI translation systems. It is also expected to help content creators better understand how their content is translated and perceived by international audiences. Furthermore, this study may help translators become more critical and careful in producing translations.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Cross-linguistic Communication

Cross-linguistic communication refers to interactions between individuals who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Qing Wen, 2023). In this type of communication, participants use different language systems, which may lead to misunderstandings if meaning is not properly conveyed. Therefore, cross-linguistic communication requires effective mediation, often through translation, in order to ensure that messages can be understood accurately across languages and cultures.

2. Translation

Translation is the process of transferring meaning from one language into another while attempting to preserve the original intention of the author (Newmark, 1988). It involves not only replacing words from the source language with those of the target language but also conveying the message, tone, and purpose embedded in the original text. Therefore, translation requires an understanding of linguistic structure as well as contextual and cultural elements to ensure that the intended meaning is accurately communicated.

3. Audiovisual Translation

Audiovisual translation refers to the translation of audiovisual products in which verbal language interacts with visual and acoustic elements (Díaz Cintas, 2009). Unlike written text translation, audiovisual translation operates within a multimodal environment where meaning is conveyed not only through spoken or written language, but also through images, sound effects, music, gestures, and timing. Therefore, the translator must consider the interaction between these semiotic elements in order to produce a coherent and functionally equivalent translation.

4. Subtitling

Subtitling is a form of audiovisual translation in which spoken discourse is rendered into written text that appears on the screen (Gottlieb, 1992). It is an additive and synchronous mode of translation, meaning that the original audio remains audible while the translated text is displayed simultaneously. Subtitling operates under spatial and temporal constraints, requiring condensation, reformulation, and synchronization with the audiovisual content in order to ensure readability and clarity.

5. Subtitling Strategies

Subtitling strategies refer to the techniques used to render spoken discourse into written subtitles while considering the technical constraints of audiovisual media (Gottlieb, 1992). Since subtitles must fit within limited screen space and display time, translators need to select, condense, reformulate, or omit certain elements of the original speech. These strategies help ensure that the essential meaning of the source language is conveyed clearly and efficiently in written form without disrupting the audiovisual experience.

6. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is a branch of computer science concerned with the development of systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as perception, reasoning, learning, and decision-

making (McCarthy et. al., 1956). In this research, AI is discussed in relation to its application in language processing.

7. Satire

Satire is an art that uses language to mock or criticize a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking responses from readers such as amusement or anger (Abrams & Harpham, 2012). The subject in satire can be a person, social groups, certain types of people, etc

8. Loss of Meaning

Loss of meaning refers to the reduction, distortion, or omission of meaning that occurs when a message is transferred from the source language into the target language. According to Newmark (1988), loss of meaning is inevitable in translation due to linguistic, cultural, and stylistic differences between languages.

1.6 Organization of Writing

This research is organized into five chapters as follows:

a. Chapter I

This chapter presents the background of the research, statement of problem, research purposes, research significances, definition of key terms, and organization of writing. It provides an overview of the research problem and establishes the rationale for conducting the study.

b. Chapter II

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework underlying the study. It covers theories of cross-linguistic communication, translation, audiovisual translation, subtitling, subtitling strategies, artificial intelligence in translation, AI-generated subtitles, satire, and the concept of meaning loss in translation along with its influencing factors. These theories serve as the foundation for analyzing the data.

c. Chapter III

This chapter explains the research design, sample of data, source of data, technique of collecting data, and technique of analysis data. It also describes

how the subtitling strategies and meaning loss factors are identified and analyzed in the study.

d. **Chapter IV**

This chapter presents the research findings and discusses them in relation to the theoretical framework. It analyzes the subtitling strategies applied in the subtitles and examines instances of meaning loss based on the identified factors.

e. **Chapter V**

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the study, draws conclusions based on the research objectives, and offers suggestions for future research, AI developers, content creators and practical implications related to audiovisual translation and AI-generated subtitles.

