

Subtitling Strategies and the Preservation of Satirical Implicatures in *From the Ashes: The Pit*

Strategi Subtitling dan Pemertahanan Implikatur Satir dalam Film *From the Ashes: The Pit*

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Abstract

Satirical utterances in audiovisual texts convey criticism through implicit meanings and rhetorical contrasts, making them vulnerable to shifts in cross-cultural subtitling. This exploratory case study examines how Arabic satirical implicatures are preserved, reformulated, or weakened in the official Indonesian subtitles of *From the Ashes: The Pit*. Twenty-three satirical utterances were identified through exhaustive criterion-based sampling and analyzed using a three-level model integrating Gottlieb's subtitling strategies, Simpson's and Zabala's rhetorical-functional frameworks, Relevance Theory, and audiovisual constraints. Four strategies were identified: transfer (11), paraphrase (9), condensation (2), and resignation (1). The corpus comprised irony (10), cynicism (7), and sarcasm (6). The findings suggest that satirical implicatures were preserved when the subtitle retained the target of criticism, evaluative stance, and sufficient verbal or audiovisual cues. Paraphrase and condensation could also maintain satire when formal changes preserved these functional elements, whereas resignation produced the clearest contextual ambiguity. These findings are limited to this single-film exploratory corpus.

Keywords: Arabic–Indonesian subtitling; audiovisual translation; satirical implicature; satire translation; subtitling strategies

Abstrak

Tuturan satir dalam teks audiovisual menyampaikan kritik melalui makna implisit, pertentangan retorik, dan petunjuk kontekstual sehingga rentan mengalami pergeseran dalam penerjemahan subtitle lintas budaya. Studi kasus eksploratif ini mengkaji bagaimana implikatur satir berbahasa Arab dipertahankan, dirumuskan kembali, atau dilemahkan dalam subtitle resmi bahasa Indonesia film *From the Ashes: The Pit*. Data terdiri atas 23 tuturan satir yang diidentifikasi melalui sampling menyeluruh berbasis kriteria terhadap keseluruhan film. Dialog bahasa Arab ditranskripsikan secara manual, diverifikasi oleh ahli bahasa Arab, diselaraskan dengan penanda waktu adegan, lalu dibandingkan dengan subtitle bahasa Indonesia. Analisis memadukan strategi subtitling Gottlieb, model wacana satir Simpson, pendekatan fungsional Zabala, Teori Relevansi, dan konsep keterbatasan audiovisual. Ditemukan empat strategi, yaitu transfer (11), paraphrase (9), condensation (2), dan resignation (1). Korpus mencakup ironi (10), sinisme (7), dan sarkasme (6). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa implikatur satir cenderung bertahan ketika subtitle mempertahankan sasaran kritik, sikap evaluatif, serta petunjuk verbal atau audiovisual yang memadai. Paraphrase dan condensation juga dapat mempertahankan satire ketika perubahan bentuk tidak menghilangkan unsur fungsional tersebut, sedangkan resignation menghasilkan ambiguitas kontekstual paling jelas. Temuan ini terbatas pada korpus eksploratif dari satu film.

Kata kunci: implikatur satir; penerjemahan audiovisual; penerjemahan satire; strategi subtitling; subtitle Arab–Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Can a film convey the same meaning when viewed by audiences from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds? This question has become increasingly relevant as digital streaming platforms facilitate the international circulation of audiovisual productions. Audiovisual translation has consequently developed into a significant field of translation studies, encompassing subtitling, dubbing, accessibility, reception, and multimodal meaning-making (Pérez-González 2014; Wang and Daghigh 2024). Films distributed through global streaming platforms require translation not only to make spoken dialogue linguistically accessible but also to communicate cultural references,

interpersonal attitudes, emotional nuances, and implicit meanings to audiences from different backgrounds.

One example is the Saudi Arabian drama-thriller *From the Ashes: The Pit*, which portrays three students trapped in a basement and forced to overcome their personal conflicts to survive (Netflix 2025). The interactions among the characters frequently contain criticism, mockery, rhetorical questions, exaggerated expressions, and indirect verbal attacks. These expressions contribute to characterization and social commentary but also present considerable challenges for subtitlers because their intended meanings cannot always be recovered from their literal wording alone.

Subtitling converts spoken dialogue into written text displayed on screen while operating under spatial, temporal, synchronization, segmentation, linguistic, and readability constraints (Gottlieb 1992; Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007, 2021). Translators must determine which linguistic elements can be transferred directly and which need to be reformulated, condensed, substituted, or omitted. Although these adjustments enable viewers to process subtitles within a limited display duration, they may also alter pragmatic meaning, interpersonal force, cultural nuance, and the relationship between verbal dialogue and visual information.

These constraints become particularly significant when the source dialogue contains satire. Satire is not merely a linguistic form but a rhetorical mode of criticism involving a speaker or satirist, a target, and an evaluative stance toward that target (Simpson 2003). Satirical meaning may be realized through irony, sarcasm, cynicism, exaggeration, incongruity, or other forms of direct and indirect verbal attack. Its interpretation depends on rhetorical contrast, shared contextual knowledge, evaluative positioning, and the relationship between what is explicitly expressed and what is actually intended (Attardo 1994; Hutcheon 1994; Vandaele 2002; Simpson 2003).

In the present study, irony, sarcasm, and cynicism are treated as distinct but potentially overlapping rhetorical realizations of satire. Irony involves an evaluative contrast between an utterance's apparent meaning and the criticism intended by the speaker. Sarcasm conveys a more openly hostile, insulting, threatening, or humiliating attack, whereas cynicism expresses distrust or a disparaging judgment concerning another person's motives, conduct, sincerity, or values. These categories are operationally distinguished to prevent satirical utterances from being classified solely on the basis of subjective impressions.

This study integrates four complementary frameworks to address the limitations of purely strategy-based analysis. First, Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling taxonomy (comprising expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, and resignation) is employed to formally classify the observable operation performed on the source utterance, whether it is transferred directly, reformulated, shortened, or left unresolved. Second, Simpson's (2003) model of satirical discourse and Zabalbeascoa's (1996) functional approach are combined to identify the non-literal rhetorical attack; these frameworks shift the analytical focus from what the words literally mean to who is being targeted, how the speaker evaluates the target, and whether this rhetorical function survives in the target text.

Third, Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995) serves as the pragmatic explanatory lens. Rather than being a coding tool, Relevance Theory explains why a subtitle succeeds or fails: a satirical implicature remains recoverable when the target-language text, combined with the available scene context, provides sufficient cognitive effects (i.e., the intended criticism) without forcing the viewer to expend unnecessary interpretive effort. Fourth, the audiovisual constraints framework (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007, 2021) accounts for the technical conditions such as spatial limits, display duration, synchronization, and readability that may motivate reduction or segmentation, irrespective of the satirical intent. The relationship among these frameworks is sequential and explanatory: a formal operation (Level 1) alters the availability of a rhetorical trigger (Level 2), which subsequently affects the inferential accessibility of the critical meaning (Level 3), all under specific technical constraints. This sequence prevents the study from reducing translation success to strategy frequency alone.

Previous studies of humor translation have shown that humorous effects may be weakened when linguistic incongruity, cultural knowledge, or contextual triggers are not adequately reconstructed in the target subtitle. Nguyen and Le (2024), for example, identified different strategies for rendering humor in the English–Vietnamese subtitles of *Modern Family*. Mohebbi (2023) emphasized the importance of cultural conceptualization in translating culture-specific jokes, while Xia, Amini, and Lee (2023) demonstrated that humorous loads may be lost when linguistic and contextual mechanisms are not reproduced in the target version. Collectively, these studies show that retaining the informational content of an utterance does not automatically preserve its humorous or rhetorical function.

A similar issue arises in Arabic audiovisual translation. El-Farahaty and Alwazna (2024) demonstrated that cultural references and sensitive meanings in Arabic–English Netflix subtitles may be retained, substituted, or lost according to their cultural accessibility and the strategies employed. Adawiiyah and Ma'nawi (2025) found that the negotiation of cultural terms affects equivalence in Arabic–Indonesian subtitles, whereas Yuliani, Al Farisi, and Supriadi (2025) highlighted the importance of multimodal and pragmatic information in Arabic–Indonesian subtitle translation.

Arabic audiovisual translation also involves the relationship between spoken colloquial varieties and standardized written forms. Transferring colloquial Arabic into written subtitles may cause shifts in register, culturally marked expressions, characterization, and humorous meaning (Al-Abbas and Haider 2021). Culture-specific expressions may therefore require retention, specification, substitution, generalization, or omission depending on their accessibility and functional importance to the target audience (Pedersen 2011). These findings challenge the assumption that lexical completeness or structural similarity necessarily produces functional equivalence.

In the specific Arabic–Indonesian context, cultural proximity and distance operate simultaneously. On one hand, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia share a common Islamic moral and ethical framework, which facilitates the cross-cultural recognition of satirical attacks on hypocrisy, materialism, and religious insincerity. On the other hand, significant divergences exist in rhetorical directness and verbal aggression. Saudi colloquial Arabic frequently employs hyperbolic insults, blunt rhetorical questions, and explicit physical threats to convey satire, whereas Indonesian audiovisual norms, particularly in official subtitling, tend toward formalization and indirectness (Yuliani et al. 2025). Moreover, the subtitling register often adopts Standard Indonesian, which may neutralize the informal, gritty, and aggressive register of Saudi 'āmmiyyah (colloquial Arabic). This register shift is critical because the pragmatic force of a satirical attack is often carried by non-standard lexical choices and the socio-cultural weight of specific insult metaphors, which may lack a direct equivalent in the target subtitling norm. Consequently, a subtitle that is grammatically correct and semantically complete may still fail to deliver the interpersonal hostility or cynical distrust intended by the original dialogue, unless the translator actively identifies the cultural implicature behind the colloquial expression.

Several previous studies have applied strategy-based frameworks to audiovisual texts. Asrima and Nur (2023) examined Gottlieb's strategies in the Indonesian subtitles of *The Imitation Game*, while Sutopo, Farouk, and Said (2020) investigated subtitling techniques in *Pride and Prejudice*. Other studies have addressed cultural negotiation, humor loss, and translation quality. Siregar and Zawawi (2025), for example, examined translation accuracy and the representation of satire in Arabic literary translation. Although these studies provide important descriptions of translation strategies and outcomes, they do not sufficiently explain the mechanism through which a formal strategy interacts with a rhetorical form, cultural assumption, multimodal cue, and technical constraint to determine whether a satirical implicature remains recoverable.

The unresolved issue is therefore not merely that *From the Ashes: The Pit* has not previously been examined, because such an argument would represent only a topic gap. The more substantive knowledge gap concerns the limited theoretical explanation of why identical subtitling strategies may produce different functional outcomes when applied to different forms of satire. Transfer may preserve satire when the rhetorical mechanism and cultural assumptions are transparent across Arabic and Indonesian, but it may weaken the message when viewers lack the contextual information needed to recover the criticism. Conversely, paraphrase or condensation may alter the verbal form while preserving the target, evaluative stance, and rhetorical force.

The specific contribution of this study lies in developing a three-level analytical model for assessing the preservation of satirical implicatures in Arabic–Indonesian subtitles. Rather than claiming novelty merely from applying an established taxonomy to a previously unexamined film, the study tests the conditionality of Gottlieb's strategies across three rhetorical mechanisms irony, sarcasm, and cynicism. Each utterance is evaluated through three connected dimensions: (1) the formal transformation of its verbal form, (2) the preservation or modification of its rhetorical attack and evaluative stance, and (3) the accessibility of its implicit meaning through verbal, cultural, contextual, and audiovisual cues. This model enables the analysis to explain not only which strategy is used but also how and under what conditions that strategy contributes to the preservation, reformulation, weakening, or loss of satirical meaning.

In this study, a satirical implicature is considered preserved when the Indonesian subtitle retains the target of criticism, the speaker's evaluative stance, and sufficient verbal or audiovisual cues for the intended nonliteral meaning to remain contextually recoverable. It is categorized as reformulated when its linguistic form changes but these functional components remain accessible. It is categorized as weakened when one or more components remain identifiable but the interpersonal force, contextual coherence, or inferential accessibility is reduced. It is categorized as lost when the

subtitle obscures the target, substantially alters the evaluative stance, removes the principal inferential trigger, or produces an interpretation unrelated to the source utterance. These criteria prevent translation effectiveness from being inferred solely from the frequency of a particular subtitling strategy.

Based on this analytical problem, the study addresses the following main research question: How are satirical implicatures preserved, reformulated, weakened, or lost in the Arabic–Indonesian subtitles of *From the Ashes: The Pit*?

This main question is elaborated through three sub-questions:

1. What subtitling strategies (Gottlieb 1992) are employed to render the identified satirical utterances, and under what linguistic or technical conditions are they applied?
2. How do these strategies affect the preservation of the satirical target, the speaker's evaluative stance, and the dominant rhetorical mechanism (irony, sarcasm, or cynicism)?
3. Which verbal, visual, acoustic, cultural, and contextual cues enable the intended satirical implicatures to remain inferentially accessible to the target audience, and in which instances do alterations to these cues reduce that accessibility?

By addressing these questions, the study moves beyond the numerical classification of subtitling strategies and explains the conditions under which particular translation choices preserve, reformulate, weaken, or remove satirical meaning. Because the study does not include audience-reception testing, the term “recoverability” refers to a textually and multimodally supported analytical assessment rather than direct evidence of Indonesian viewers' actual interpretations.

METHODS

This exploratory qualitative case study examined a single bounded audiovisual text: the Saudi Arabian feature film *From the Ashes: The Pit* (Netflix 2025), with a runtime of approximately 89 minutes. The case-study design was chosen because the identification and translation assessment of satirical utterances require close interpretive attention to linguistic form, pragmatic intention, social relationships, rhetorical mechanisms, cultural assumptions, and multimodal audiovisual cues, rather than broad statistical generalisation. The source data consisted of the original Saudi Arabic audio track, while the target data were the official Indonesian subtitles displayed on-screen during Netflix playback. The film was selected as an information-rich case because its character interactions contain recurrent criticism, rhetorical questions, mockery, distrust, and interpersonal attacks suitable for examining satirical translation.

The study employed criterion-based exhaustive sampling within this single film. The entire feature was viewed from beginning to end, and every utterance that simultaneously fulfilled five operational criteria was entered into the dataset. An utterance was included when: (1) it contained an identifiable person, behaviour, attitude, or social practice as the target of criticism; (2) it expressed a negative, dismissive, distrustful, or aggressive evaluative stance; (3) its critical or non-literal meaning was supported by verbal, acoustic, visual, or situational evidence; (4) it could be classified according to a dominant rhetorical mechanism (irony, sarcasm, or cynicism); and (5) it had a corresponding Indonesian subtitle in the official Netflix version. Ordinary humour without a critical target, neutral teasing, and literal disagreements were excluded. This procedure yielded a complete dataset of 23 satirical utterances and their corresponding subtitles for the examined film. Although the dataset is numerically small, the 23 utterances represent all cases that met the five operational criteria within this bounded audiovisual text. In qualitative case-study research, the adequacy of a dataset is determined not by sample size but by the completeness and depth of analysis within the defined case boundary (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014), and each utterance in the present study was examined across multiple analytical dimensions (formal strategy, rhetorical mechanism, inferential accessibility, and functional outcome) to achieve comprehensive rather than statistical coverage. The findings are therefore descriptive of this bounded case and are not treated as statistically generalisable patterns.

Data collection proceeded through repeated audiovisual documentation. The researchers first viewed the film to map its narrative structure and character conflicts. During a second viewing, potentially satirical utterances were provisionally identified and recorded. Each relevant scene was replayed multiple times to document the timestamp, speaker, interlocutor, preceding dialogue, subsequent response, visual actions, vocal delivery, and situational context. The Indonesian subtitles were transcribed manually from the on-screen display during Netflix playback, paused when necessary, and checked against the corresponding audio segment. When a single Arabic utterance was distributed across more than one subtitle frame, the frames were combined only when they formed

one complete communicative act. Conversely, successive statements were treated as separate units when they had distinct targets, evaluative positions, or rhetorical functions.

Because the version accessed by the researchers did not provide a ready-made Arabic transcript, the spoken dialogue was manually transcribed from the original audio in a five-stage procedure. First, each identified segment was replayed repeatedly at normal and reduced speeds to establish its lexical, grammatical, dialectal, and prosodic features. Second, the Arabic dialogue was transcribed independently of the Indonesian subtitle to prevent the target text from influencing the source reconstruction. Third, the initial transcript was checked against intonation, stress, facial expression, gesture, visual action, preceding dialogue, and the interlocutor's response. Fourth, Saudi colloquial forms were retained whenever they contributed to interpersonal, pragmatic, cultural, or satirical meaning, because transforming spoken colloquial Arabic into standardised written form can obscure register, characterisation, and pragmatic force. Fifth, the completed Arabic transcript was aligned with its timestamp and corresponding Indonesian subtitle, then checked against the original audio a final time. To strengthen dependability, the completed transcripts were reviewed by an Arabic-language specialist familiar with colloquial expressions, who compared the written transcript with the original audio rather than relying on the Indonesian subtitle. Ambiguous lexical items and culturally marked utterances were resolved through repeated listening and discussion until agreement was reached. A literal English gloss was subsequently prepared for each utterance to facilitate transparent comparison; this gloss served only as an analytical aid and was not treated as an alternative translation.

The analytical procedure integrated multiple frameworks sequentially rather than applying them in parallel. First, Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling taxonomy was used to identify the formal operation performed on each Arabic utterance, such as transfer (direct rendering), paraphrase (lexical or structural reformulation), condensation (reduction of peripheral elements), or resignation (inadequate representation). Second, Simpson's (2003) model of satirical discourse and Zabalbeascoa's (1996) functional approach were applied to identify the satirical target, the speaker's evaluative stance, the dominant rhetorical mechanism (irony, sarcasm, or cynicism), and whether that rhetorical function survived in the Indonesian subtitle. Third, Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995) served as a pragmatic explanatory lens to assess whether the intended criticism remained inferentially accessible; an implicature was considered recoverable when the subtitle, together with the available audiovisual cues, provided sufficient contextual effects without forcing the viewer into disproportionate interpretive effort. Fourth, Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007, 2021) constraints framework was used to examine whether spatial limits, display duration, synchronisation, or readability could plausibly explain a particular formal adjustment. This sequence—formal operation → treatment of the rhetorical trigger → change in inferential accessibility → functional outcome—ensured that the analysis traced the specific mechanism connecting a translation choice to its satirical result, rather than assuming that a strategy label automatically determined success or failure.

To reduce impressionistic classification, irony, sarcasm, and cynicism were defined operationally. Irony was identified when an utterance created an evaluative contrast between its apparent meaning and the criticism actually intended by the speaker—often appearing to praise, encourage, or agree while contextually communicating the opposite negative evaluation. Sarcasm was identified when an ironic incongruity or ridicule was realised through an openly hostile, insulting, threatening, or humiliating interpersonal attack, thus requiring more explicit aggression than the irony category. Cynicism was identified when an utterance conveyed distrust or a negative judgment regarding another character's motives, sincerity, habitual conduct, or moral values. Because the three categories may overlap, each utterance was assigned to the category representing its dominant communicative function in the complete scene.

Each utterance was evaluated for its functional outcome using four diagnostic indicators: (1) visibility of the satirical target, (2) continuity of the speaker's evaluative stance, (3) preservation of the principal inferential trigger, and (4) availability of supporting contextual or audiovisual cues. A satirical implicature was classified as preserved when the Indonesian subtitle retained the target, evaluative stance, rhetorical mechanism, and sufficient verbal or multimodal cues for the non-literal criticism to remain contextually recoverable. It was classified as reformulated when its linguistic form changed but the target, stance, and principal inferential trigger remained functionally accessible. It was classified as weakened when one or more functional components remained identifiable but the interpersonal force, rhetorical clarity, contextual coherence, or inferential accessibility was reduced. It was classified as lost when the subtitle obscured the target, substantially altered the evaluative stance, removed the principal inferential trigger, or produced an interpretation unrelated to the satirical function of the source utterance. These categories assessed textual and multimodal recoverability rather than actual audience reception; terms such as “accessible” and “weakened”

refer to evidence-based analytical judgments supported by the subtitle and scene context, not to psychological measurements of viewer interpretation.

The researchers maintained a structured coding matrix for all 23 utterances, containing fields for the identification number, timestamp, speaker, Arabic transcript, literal gloss, official Indonesian subtitle, scene context, satirical target, evaluative stance, rhetorical mechanism, inferential trigger, Gottlieb strategy, linguistic change, relevant visual/acoustic cues, possible audiovisual constraint, functional outcome, and analytical justification. An audit trail containing initial transcripts, revised transcripts, coding decisions, category definitions, and analytical notes was maintained throughout. The dataset was coded in two separate rounds: the first identified potentially satirical utterances and assigned provisional strategies and rhetorical categories; the second re-examined each item against the operational definitions and the full audiovisual scene, with particular attention to distinguishing strategy from functional outcome. Inconsistent or uncertain classifications were reconsidered by replaying the scene, rechecking the Arabic transcription, comparing the surrounding dialogue, and examining relevant visual and acoustic cues. All analytical decisions were discussed until a contextually supported interpretation was reached. The complete set of 23 coded utterances is presented in the findings section (Table 1) to allow readers to inspect the relationship among source utterance, subtitle, strategy, rhetorical mechanism, and functional outcome across the entire dataset. The audiovisual material was accessed through a lawful Netflix account and used exclusively for non-commercial academic research and critical analysis; only brief dialogue excerpts necessary to support the discourse analysis are reproduced, and no audiovisual clips or subtitle files were redistributed. The study did not involve human participants, audience testing, interventions, or personal records, and therefore no human-participant ethical approval was required.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Findings

This exploratory case study identified 23 utterances that met the operational criteria for satire in *From the Ashes: The Pit*. Because criterion-based exhaustive sampling was applied to one film, the 23 utterances represent all eligible cases identified within this bounded audiovisual text rather than a representative corpus of Arabic–Indonesian audiovisual translation.

Four of Gottlieb’s (1992) subtitling strategies were identified: transfer in 11 instances, paraphrase in nine, condensation in two, and resignation in one. The rhetorical classification identified ten instances of irony, seven of cynicism, and six of sarcasm.

These numerical distributions are reported to answer the descriptive question of which strategies and rhetorical mechanisms occurred in the film. They are not used as measurements of translation effectiveness. Strategy frequency and functional effectiveness represent two different analytical questions: frequency indicates how often a formal operation occurred, whereas effectiveness concerns whether a particular subtitle retained the satirical target, evaluative stance, rhetorical mechanism, and inferential cues. Consequently, the greater frequency of transfer does not by itself demonstrate that transfer was more effective than paraphrase, condensation, or resignation.

Table 1. Distribution of Subtitling Strategies and Rhetorical Mechanisms

Analytical Dimension	Category	Frequency
Subtitling strategy	Transfer	11
	Paraphrase	9
	Condensation	2
	Resignation	1
Rhetorical mechanism	Irony	10
	Cynicism	7
	Sarcasm	6
Total utterances		23

Irony was operationally identified through a contrast between the apparent meaning of an utterance and its intended criticism. Sarcasm involved an openly hostile, insulting, threatening, or humiliating attack, whereas cynicism conveyed distrust or a negative judgment concerning another character’s conduct, motives, sincerity, or values. The higher number of ironic utterances is treated only as a characteristic of the examined film and does not indicate that irony is generally more prevalent or more successfully translated than the other rhetorical mechanisms.

The relationship between formal strategy and functional outcome was examined through an explanatory sequence rather than assumed to be automatic or deterministic. First, Gottlieb’s taxonomy

identified whether an element was transferred, reformulated, reduced, or inadequately represented. Second, Simpson's and Zabalbeascoa's frameworks identified how that formal operation affected the satirical target, evaluative stance, and rhetorical mechanism. Third, pragmatic and audiovisual analysis determined whether the remaining verbal, visual, acoustic, and contextual cues still made the intended criticism recoverable. The analytical sequence can therefore be represented as follows:

formal operation → *treatment of the principal rhetorical trigger* → *change in inferential accessibility* → *functional outcome*.

This sequence does not claim experimental causality. Instead, it provides a mechanism-based explanation of how a particular source–target change is associated with the preservation, reformulation, weakening, or loss of satirical function within each scene.

1. Paraphrase

The paraphrase strategy involves reformulating the source utterance when its original structure or lexical selection cannot be reproduced naturally in the target language (Gottlieb 1992). In the present corpus, paraphrase did not simply make the subtitles “easier to understand.” It frequently made implicit contextual information more accessible while retaining the satirical target and evaluative stance. The following examples represent cynicism, irony, and sarcasm.

1.1 Paraphrase in Cynical Satire

Original Audio	والله ما عندي مواصفات، بس أهم شي يكون جاهز
Translation	Tidak ada hal khusus, asalkan keuangannya siap.
Type of Satire	Cynicism

The translation employs paraphrase because the source construction is lexically and structurally reformulated in Indonesian. The phrase “ما عندي مواصفات,” literally meaning “saya tidak memiliki kriteria,” is translated as “tidak ada hal khusus.” More importantly, the word “جاهز,” which generally means “ready,” is rendered contextually as “keuangannya siap.”

At the strategic level, the translator explicates the type of readiness intended in the conversation. Rather than retaining the semantically broad word “siap,” the subtitle specifies financial readiness because the surrounding interaction concerns the requirements for a prospective husband. This reformulation reduces the possibility that Indonesian viewers will interpret “ready” as emotional, physical, or general preparedness.

At the rhetorical-functional level, the target of the cynical criticism is a materialistic standard for choosing a partner. The speaker's evaluative stance is conveyed through the reduction of personal requirements to financial capacity. The translation retains this criticism because “keuangannya siap” makes the material consideration explicit without removing the speaker's dismissive attitude toward other personal qualities.

From a pragmatic perspective, the matchmaker context supplies the assumptions needed to interpret the statement as a cynical comment on marriage criteria. The implicature is therefore reformulated rather than merely transferred: its lexical form changes, but its target, negative evaluation, and contextual trigger remain recoverable. This finding supports Aisyah and Budiman's (2023) observation that paraphrase can preserve communicative meaning through lexical and structural adjustment. However, the present analysis further demonstrates that its success depends on retaining the rhetorical target and not simply on producing a natural target-language sentence.

1.2 Paraphrase in Ironic Satire

Original Audio	كل شي بنتي ليه؟ يعني بنتك ملاك متريية؟
Translation	Semua salahnya? Kenapa? Putrimu malaikat?
Type of Satire	Irony

The translator restructures the source utterance and omits the lexical element “متريية.” Nevertheless, the expression “Putrimu malaikat?” retains the most important inferential trigger of the irony. The word “malaikat” appears positive at the propositional level, but its intended function is not to praise the child. It questions the interlocutor's assumption that her daughter is faultless. The satirical target is therefore the parent's excessive defense of the child, while the speaker adopts a critical and disbelieving stance toward that behavior.

The rhetorical question preserves the contrast between the apparent compliment and the intended criticism. Indonesian viewers do not need the omitted element “متريية” to recover this contrast because the culturally familiar metaphor of an “angel” as a faultless person remains available in the

target language. In Zabalbeascoa's functional terms, the linguistic form is reformulated while the principal rhetorical mechanism is retained.

The omission also makes the subtitle more concise and conversationally natural. However, its preservation of irony results not from brevity alone but from retaining the lexical trigger "malaikat," the critical target, and the interrogative form. The satirical implicature is therefore categorized as reformulated but preserved. This extends Aisyah and Budiman's (2023) argument by showing that omission does not necessarily weaken irony when the omitted material is not the primary inferential trigger.

1.3 Paraphrase in Sarcastic Satire

Original Audio	شكلك يا انظر شتي يا ما سمعتي كيف كانت تترقي عليكي
Translation	Kau pasti tuli jika tak mendengar dia mengejekmu.
Type of Satire	Sarcasm

This utterance is paraphrased because its Arabic construction is rendered through a more direct and idiomatic Indonesian expression. The translator uses "Kau pasti tuli" to emphasize that the interlocutor has failed to recognize that she is being mocked. At the rhetorical level, the satirical target is the interlocutor's lack of awareness, while the speaker's stance is openly belittling. The word "tuli" functions as an insult rather than as a literal reference to hearing ability. It intensifies the speaker's judgment that the interlocutor should have noticed the ridicule directed at her.

The reformulation preserves sarcasm because the target-language expression reproduces the hostile interpersonal force and supplies an immediately accessible inferential trigger. The subtitle does not merely report that the character failed to hear something; it ridicules her failure to understand the situation. The satirical effect is therefore maintained through a familiar Indonesian expression even though the source syntax is not reproduced. This finding is consistent with Hayon et al. (2025), who argue that paraphrase may preserve meaning and emotional nuance in audiovisual translation. More specifically, this example demonstrates that paraphrase succeeds when it reproduces the rhetorical force of the insult rather than only its informational content.

2. Transfer

Transfer occurs when the principal semantic content and communicative structure of the source utterance are rendered relatively directly in the target language (Gottlieb 1992). It was the most frequently identified strategy in the examined film. Its frequency remains relevant because it describes the formal composition of the dataset and answers the first research question. However, the functional outcome of every transfer item must be coded independently. The three cases discussed below were selected to illustrate transfer across irony, sarcasm, and cynicism. They should not be interpreted as evidence that all 11 transfer cases necessarily produced identical outcomes. The complete item-level coding table must disclose the functional outcome of every transfer item, including any case categorized as reformulated, weakened, or lost.

2.1 Transfer in Ironic Satire

Original Audio	داحين مو شغل الخطابة أحسن من شغل الفَراشة؟
Translation	Menjadi seorang makcomblang lebih baik daripada janitor, bukan?
Type of Satire	Irony

Gottlieb's transfer strategy is employed because the occupational comparison and rhetorical-question structure are substantially retained. "شغل الخطابة" is translated as "makcomblang," while "شغل الفَراشة" is rendered as "janitor."

At the rhetorical-functional level, the comparison between the two occupations constitutes an attack on social evaluation and occupational status. The speaker responds defensively to her child's dismissive attitude by presenting her current occupation as preferable to her previous one. The literal comparison therefore carries an implied criticism of the child's judgment.

The irony remains recoverable because the lexical opposition between "makcomblang" and "janitor," together with the rhetorical ending "bukan?," provides sufficient contextual cues. The question does not genuinely request information but reinforces the speaker's self-defense and challenges the child's attitude. In relevance-theoretical terms, the contextual effort required to infer the criticism is relatively low because the occupational contrast and the surrounding exchange support the intended interpretation.

This is therefore a case in which transfer preserves both the semantic proposition and the rhetorical mechanism. Its success is conditional on cultural transparency: both occupations and the social

comparison between them are understandable in Indonesian without additional explanation. Transfer produces a preserved outcome in this instance because it retains the occupational opposition and the rhetorical-question structure that jointly function as the principal trigger of the irony. Both occupations and the evaluative comparison between them remain understandable in Indonesian. The preservation therefore results from the cross-cultural accessibility of the rhetorical mechanism, not from direct lexical correspondence alone.

2.2 Transfer in Sarcastic Satire

Original Audio	تحب أفرش وجهك بأرض المدرسة ولا تحترمي نفسك
Translation	Kau mau aku mengepel lantai dengan wajahmu?
Type of Satire	Sarcasm

The threatening image in the Arabic utterance is transferred relatively directly into Indonesian. The expression “تحب” is pragmatically rendered as “kau mau,” producing a rhetorical threat rather than a literal question about preference.

The satirical target is the interlocutor, while the speaker’s evaluative stance is openly aggressive and humiliating. The image of using someone’s face to mop the floor operates as a hyperbolic threat intended to degrade the target. Because this figurative image is retained, the Indonesian subtitle reproduces the verbal aggression and interpersonal hostility of the source utterance.

The transfer retains the principal rhetorical trigger: the image of mopping the floor with the interlocutor’s face. Because the figurative image remains readily interpretable in Indonesian, the subtitle preserves the physical threat, the target, and the degrading evaluative stance. The functional outcome is therefore connected to the continued accessibility of the humiliating image rather than to structural similarity alone.

From Zabalbeascoa’s functional perspective, the dominant rhetorical mechanism is retained because a hyperbolic threat in the source remains a hyperbolic threat in the subtitle. No additional cultural explanation is required to infer the speaker’s hostility.

2.3 Transfer in Cynical Satire

Original Audio	وانت يا مشاعل وحشتك المشاكل؟
Translation	Masha’el, kau rindu berada dalam masalah?
Type of Satire	Cynicism

The subtitle closely retains the structure and principal lexical content of the Arabic utterance. The rhetorical question “kau rindu berada dalam masalah?” is not intended to obtain an actual response. The target is Masha’el’s repeated involvement in conflict. The speaker communicates a distrustful and disparaging judgment by suggesting that Masha’el misses trouble and may therefore deliberately return to it. The proposition that she “misses” problems implies that conflict has become habitual or even desirable.

Transfer preserves the cynical implicature because the figurative association between missing something and repeatedly seeking it is accessible in both languages. The subtitle retains the identity of the target, the rhetorical question, and the negative evaluation of her conduct. The outcome is therefore preserved because the required contextual assumptions remain accessible without reformulation.

2.4 Functional Interpretation of Transfer

The three detailed cases demonstrate the conditions under which transfer can preserve satire, but they do not establish an inherent superiority of transfer. In each example, preservation depends on a culturally accessible rhetorical mechanism: an occupational comparison, a hyperbolic threat, or a rhetorical attribution of attachment to conflict. A direct translation could produce a different outcome when the source depends on an opaque dialectal expression, an unfamiliar cultural association, or a rhetorical trigger that has no comparable force in Indonesian.

Accordingly, the prominence of transfer in the frequency table and its evaluation at the functional level are not inconsistent. Frequency describes the number of formal transfer operations, whereas the subsequent analysis explains the outcome of individual operations. Effectiveness cannot be inferred by counting how often a strategy occurs.

3. Condensation

Condensation reduces the length or structural complexity of a source utterance while retaining its essential meaning (Gottlieb 1992). In audiovisual translation, condensation is particularly relevant when the spoken utterance contains repetitions, discourse markers, or clause sequences that would produce an unnecessarily long subtitle. The important analytical question is whether the omitted elements are peripheral or whether they function as essential triggers of the satirical meaning.

3.1 Condensation in Ironic Satire

Original Audio	أجلسوا تضاربوا وضيعوا وقت وتعالوا وقت الاختبار أشحتوا إجابات
Translation	Teruslah bertengkar dan buang-buang waktu. Saat ujian, kalian saling minta jawaban.
Type of Satire	Irony

The source utterance contains a sequence of imperative and temporal elements. The subtitle compresses this sequence into two concise statements while preserving the contrast between the students' current behavior and its later consequences. The literal form appears to instruct the students to continue arguing and wasting time. Contextually, however, the speaker is reprimanding them and warning that they will later depend on one another for answers during an examination. The satirical target is the students' irresponsible behavior, and the evaluative stance is critical rather than genuinely encouraging.

The condensation removes or simplifies peripheral grammatical material, but it retains the principal ironic trigger: the apparent command "Teruslah bertengkar" contrasts with the speaker's actual disapproval. It also retains the consequence "Saat ujian, kalian saling minta jawaban," which makes the criticism inferable. The strategy is therefore consistent with subtitle economy because a multi-clause spoken utterance is converted into two readable units without eliminating the rhetorical opposition. The satirical implicature is categorized as reformulated but preserved. This supports Sulistijani and Parwis (2019), who explain that condensation can shorten dialogue without eliminating its central message. The present case further demonstrates that condensation preserves irony when the omitted material is not essential to the contrast between apparent meaning and intended criticism.

3.2 Condensation in Sarcastic Satire

Original Audio	موني بالله قفلي لي فمك أفتحية لما ن تبي تاكلي بس، أوكي؟
Translation	Mona, diam. Buka mulutmu hanya untuk makan.
Type of Satire	Sarcasm

The subtitle omits the emphatic expression "بالله" and the closing discourse marker "أوكي." It also condenses "قفلي لي فمك" into the more economical command "diam." The degrading proposition, however, is retained through "Buka mulutmu hanya untuk makan." This expression does more than request silence: it implies that Mona's speech, opinions, or participation have no value. The target is Mona's contribution to the interaction, while the speaker's stance is openly hostile and dismissive.

The omission of the emphatic and closing markers slightly reduces the interpersonal intensity of the original delivery, but it does not eliminate the primary sarcastic attack. The central inferential trigger restricting the interlocutor's mouth to the function of eating remains explicit in the subtitle. The outcome is therefore best categorized as preserved with slight attenuation, rather than as completely unchanged. This finding is consistent with Aisyah and Budiman (2023) regarding the use of condensation to shorten subtitles. Nevertheless, the example also illustrates that preservation is gradual rather than absolute: the central sarcasm survives, although some emphatic force is reduced through omission.

4. Resignation

Resignation occurs when an element of the source utterance cannot be adequately represented in the target subtitle, resulting in substantial ambiguity, displacement, or loss of contextual meaning (Gottlieb 1992). Unlike condensation, which removes peripheral elements while retaining the communicative core, resignation affects an element necessary for interpreting the intended message.

4.1 Resignation in Ironic Satire

Original Audio	يا حظك لو أنا أبوي يذاكر لي كنت جيتكم وأنا مفروشة
Translation	Kau beruntung! Jika ayahku membantuku belajar, aku akan di sini dengan mata hitam.
Type of Satire	Irony

The opening expression “Kau beruntung!” establishes a comparison between the interlocutor, who receives educational assistance from her father, and the speaker, who apparently does not receive comparable support. This part of the subtitle retains the speaker’s dissatisfied or envious evaluative stance. The difficulty occurs in the rendering of وأنا مفروشة as “dengan mata hitam.” Within the surrounding discussion about studying with a parent, the Indonesian expression does not establish a clear semantic or pragmatic relationship with the educational context.

The audience may still recognize that the speaker is comparing her circumstances with those of her friend. However, the precise consequence or self-description communicated by the final Arabic expression cannot be confidently reconstructed from the Indonesian subtitle. The resignation weakens the ironic implicature because it disrupts an important inferential connection. The general comparison and evaluative stance remain partially accessible through “Kau beruntung,” but the unclear final phrase reduces contextual coherence and obscures the complete intended criticism. The outcome is therefore categorized as weakened rather than lost because part of the comparative evaluation remains identifiable.

This case is consistent with El-Farahaty and Alwazna’s (2024) observation that culturally or contextually marked meanings may become inaccessible when an unsuitable equivalent is selected. The difficulty is not simply lexical reduction but the failure to reconstruct a contextually necessary link. Because resignation is represented by only one utterance, this result should not be generalized. It provides an initial indication that contextual weakening may occur when an essential expression is replaced by a target-language phrase that cannot be coherently integrated with the surrounding scene.

Cross-Strategy Discussion

The comparison of the selected cases shows that formal strategy and functional outcome need to be analytically separated. Gottlieb’s taxonomy identifies the formal operation applied to an utterance, but the strategy label alone does not determine whether the satire is preserved. The analysis indicates a mechanism-based relationship. A formal operation first retains, specifies, reformulates, reduces, or obscures a linguistic element. The importance of that element to the rhetorical mechanism then determines whether the target and evaluative stance remain visible. Finally, contextual and audiovisual cues may reinforce, compensate for, or fail to repair the linguistic change. The functional outcome therefore emerges from the interaction among strategy, rhetorical trigger, contextual assumptions, and multimodal evidence.

In the selected transfer cases, satirical meaning remained accessible because the occupational contrast, hyperbolic threat, and rhetorical question could be reproduced directly and understood without additional cultural explanation. However, their preserved outcomes do not mean that transfer is universally successful. Direct reproduction remains conditional on the accessibility of the source rhetorical mechanism. The paraphrase examples show that formal modification can retain or clarify satire when the reformulation preserves the target, negative evaluation, and principal inferential trigger. Financial specification made the cynical target more explicit, the metaphor “malaikat” retained the ironic contrast, and the idiomatic reference to deafness reproduced the sarcastic insult.

The two condensation cases produced different outcomes. The first retained the ironic contrast because the omitted material was peripheral, while the second reduced part of the sarcastic intensity because the omitted elements contributed to the interpersonal force. The single resignation case produced contextual ambiguity because the target-language phrase failed to reconstruct a necessary inferential connection. These findings directly explain why strategy frequency cannot serve as a measure of effectiveness. Transfer was the most frequently identified formal operation, but its prominence answers only how the source utterances were rendered. Functional effectiveness was established separately by examining what happened to the target, evaluative stance, rhetorical trigger, and contextual accessibility in each item.

Cultural accessibility also shaped the recoverability of satire. The Arabic utterances relied on colloquial expressions, social relationships, occupational associations, insults, and context-dependent evaluations. A direct equivalent was sufficient when these associations remained understandable in Indonesian. Reformulation became necessary when a broader or dialectally marked expression required contextual clarification. The audiovisual environment was equally important. Viewers interpret subtitles together with intonation, facial expressions, gestures, visual actions, preceding dialogue, subsequent responses, and character relationships. From a relevance-theoretical perspective, the satirical implicature remains recoverable when these cues supply sufficient contextual effects without requiring disproportionate interpretive effort (Sperber and Wilson 1995).

At the same time, spatial and temporal limitations may encourage the reduction or restructuring of dialogue so that subtitles remain readable and synchronized with the scene (Díaz

Cintas and Remael 2007, 2021). Such reduction does not necessarily eliminate satire, but it may weaken it when the omitted element carries an important emphatic or interpersonal function. Overall, the findings provide provisional patterns within one exploratory film case. They do not establish general tendencies concerning Saudi Arabic, Indonesian subtitles, Netflix translation, or audiovisual satire more broadly. Observations concerning transfer and paraphrase remain restricted to the identified items, while the patterns involving condensation and resignation are particularly tentative because those categories contain no more than two instances.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory qualitative case study examined how subtitling strategies interacted with rhetorical mechanisms, contextual inference, and audiovisual constraints in the Arabic–Indonesian subtitles of *From the Ashes: The Pit*. Within the bounded dataset of 23 satirical utterances, four subtitling strategies were identified: transfer in 11 instances, paraphrase in nine, condensation in two, and resignation in one. The rhetorical classification comprised ten instances of irony, seven of cynicism, and six of sarcasm.

These frequencies describe only the composition of the examined film and should not be interpreted as evidence that one strategy is inherently more effective than another. Although transfer was the most frequently identified strategy, its numerical prominence does not establish its superiority. Strategy frequency answers how often a formal operation occurred, whereas functional effectiveness depends on whether each subtitle retained the satirical target, the speaker's evaluative stance, the principal rhetorical trigger, and sufficient contextual or audiovisual cues.

The analysis indicates that satirical preservation cannot be determined solely from lexical similarity between the Arabic dialogue and the Indonesian subtitle. Transfer preserved the satirical function in the discussed cases when rhetorical mechanisms such as occupational contrast, hyperbolic threat, and rhetorical questioning remained culturally and contextually accessible in Indonesian. Paraphrase also maintained or clarified satirical meaning when lexical or structural reformulation made an implicit judgment more accessible without neutralizing the target or evaluative stance.

The relationship between strategy and functional outcome was therefore conditional rather than automatic. A formal strategy affected the satirical function through the specific rhetorical element it retained, clarified, reduced, or obscured. The resulting outcome depended on whether that element served as the principal inferential trigger and whether verbal, visual, acoustic, cultural, and situational cues continued to support the intended criticism.

The findings also indicate that direct transfer is not necessarily preferable to formal modification. A relatively direct subtitle may retain the proposition but weaken the criticism when an expression depends on inaccessible cultural or dialectal assumptions. Conversely, paraphrase may alter the linguistic form while preserving the communicative function by clarifying the satirical target or reconstructing the rhetorical force through a more accessible Indonesian expression.

The observations concerning condensation and resignation must be interpreted particularly cautiously because they were represented by only two and one instances, respectively. The two condensation cases suggest an emerging distinction between the omission of peripheral material and the omission of elements contributing to interpersonal force. The single resignation case illustrates how contextual coherence may be weakened when an important source expression is rendered through an unclear target-language phrase. These observations are provisional and require confirmation through a substantially larger dataset.

The study contributes to audiovisual translation research by applying a three-level analytical model that distinguishes formal operation, rhetorical-functional consequence, and pragmatic-audiovisual accessibility. Gottlieb's taxonomy identifies what happens to the linguistic form, while Simpson's and Zabalbeascoa's frameworks explain what happens to the satirical target, evaluative stance, and rhetorical attack. Relevance Theory then explains whether the remaining verbal and multimodal cues make the intended criticism contextually recoverable, while the framework of audiovisual constraints accounts for the technical conditions that may motivate reduction or reformulation.

This integrated model does not claim a deterministic causal relationship between a subtitling strategy and a particular outcome. Instead, it provides a mechanism-based explanation of how a translation choice may influence the availability of the rhetorical trigger and, consequently, the contextual accessibility of the satirical implicature within a specific scene.

Practically, the analysis suggests that subtitlers should not focus exclusively on semantic correspondence or textual brevity. Before selecting a translation strategy, they should identify the target of criticism, the speaker's evaluative stance, the rhetorical mechanism, and the contextual

assumptions required to interpret the utterance satirically. Attention should also be given to intonation, facial expression, gesture, visual action, character relationships, and preceding dialogue because these multimodal elements may reinforce or compensate for changes in the subtitle.

The conclusions of this study are limited to one Saudi Arabian film and a small exploratory dataset of 23 utterances. They do not establish general tendencies for Saudi Arabic, Indonesian subtitles, Netflix productions, or Arabic–Indonesian audiovisual translation as a whole. The assessment of preservation was based on textual and multimodal analysis rather than audience-reception evidence. Therefore, terms such as “preserved,” “reformulated,” and “weakened” refer to analytically supported contextual recoverability, not verified interpretations shared by all Indonesian viewers.

Future research should examine larger and more diverse datasets drawn from multiple Arabic dialects, genres, production contexts, and streaming platforms. Comparative studies should also evaluate whether the same formal strategy produces different functional outcomes across irony, sarcasm, and cynicism. Audience-reception methods, including interviews, comprehension tests, questionnaires, and eye-tracking, could provide empirical evidence concerning how Indonesian viewers actually process and interpret translated satirical implicatures. Comparisons between official and independently produced subtitles may further clarify how professional constraints and translation practices influence the preservation of satire across languages and cultures.

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