

TRANSLATION METHODS OF A FANSUB BY KYUUBISUBS OF EPISODE 74 OF THE *FAIRY TAIL* ANIME

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Abstract

To make foreign films such as Japanese anime accessible to other viewers, subtitling can be used to provide a written translation directly on the picture. But what translation methods would subtitles use, especially those of a fansub? This research examined a particular episode of the Fairy Tail anime using a fansub created by KyuubiSubs. This research also used the theory of translation methods as outlined by Newmark (1981). It was found that individual lines of the subtitling trended toward source-language methods with other methods having different effects. Ultimately the subtitles were judged to have a literal translation method.

Keywords: translation methods, subtitling, fansub, anime

I. INTROUCTION

Subtitling is a method that is applied to foreign films or television shows to make them accessible to viewers who may not know understand the original language. Subtitling utilizes written captions that are placed on the screen and represent a translation of the spoken dialogue. The fact that translation makes up a part of the process is an important one, as it makes the original dialogue accessible in a different language that viewers can understand.

Subtitling is especially prevalent in the world of Japanese anime, which most often has dialogue in the Japanese language and needs a method like subtitling in order to be able to be understood by people who do not speak Japanese. This leads to an interesting phenomenon known as “fansubs”, where subtitling is done not by professional translators, but amateur ones.

Technology plays a crucial role in the development and proliferation of fansubs, as it is what enables fansubs to be created and distributed; some fansubs have a unique appearance thanks to technology (Munday 2008: 190). But no matter how it is created, fansubs as part of subtitling still employs translation to make the original work understandable by viewers.

One of the most popular anime in recent memory is *Fairy Tail*. This anime is based on the manga or Japanese comic written and illustrated by Hiro Mashima. The series as a whole tells about the adventures of a group of wizards and the tribulations they have to endure in their lives. Mashima explained in an interview with Aoki (n.d.) that fresh off his previous hit *manga Rave Master*, he wanted to create something that was more light-hearted, and thus he placed more real-life

inspirations into the series. The result is that *Fairy Tail* has a more eclectic and amusing set of characters.

amounts. Based on the degree of influence, the eight translation methods are word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation,



Figure 1. Translation methods (Newmark, 1981)

The setting and inspirations for *Fairy Tail* has a quality of richness, which makes the anime worthwhile to be analyzed for its language in translation, in particular for its translation methods. Munday (2008: 190) additionally mentioned that fansubs as well lack in proper research, and therefore it would be helpful to conduct research in this area. This would accompany studies like those done by Akbar (2014) where a specific language feature is examined and strengthen understanding of the fields, fansubs and translation likewise.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Munday (2008: 5) describes translation as the process by which a text originally in one language is transferred to another language; the resulting product is also called a translation. This kind of translation is called an "interlingual" translation because the language of the text is changed in the process, and this is what is commonly recognized as translation. Translation itself can be examined from a number of different views.

One of these views, formulated by Newmark (1981) as a theory, actually consists of eight specific views. The theory of translation methods as proposed views translation as being influenced by the source or target languages in differing

communicative translation, idiomatic translation, free translation, and adaptation. These are represented in the figure below.

Based on additional information from Banjar (2011), Hizbullah (2011) and "Translation Procedures & Strategies" (2009), some definitions can be made regarding the translation methods above. Word-for-word translation simply transfers meanings of words regardless of context. Literal translation is translation by individual grammatical structures. Faithful translation simply transfers contextual meaning into the target grammar. Semantic translation transfers contextual meaning in consideration of its appearance. Communicative translation transfers contextual meaning in consideration of its understanding. Idiomatic translation transfers entire messages with some differences, especially in figurative expressions. Free translation transfers messages with a great amount of differences. Adaptation transfers messages in completely different expressions, almost amounting to a re-writing. Translations that fit one of these definitions can be labeled by the corresponding method, and this can apply to translations done for subtitling as well.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research examined a particular subtitling of one episode of the *Fairy Tail* anime. It explored how translation methods were manifested in the written subtitles for the original Japanese dialogue. Since the research involved an audiovisual material where certain characteristics were fleshed out, it was technically a content or document analysis, where the content or document is the episode itself (Ary et al. 2002: 442, Neuman 1997: 272-273). It was also a qualitative research because it was intended to find out the shape of translation methods in the fansub.

The *Fairy Tail* anime consists of many episodes that are strung together in smaller story lines composed of several episodes. However, the anime also has several episodes that do not tie into these extended storylines; they are “filler” episodes that do not develop the overall plot or characters. In order to avoid cross-referencing plot or character elements and to keep the research manageable, this research used just one of these “filler” episodes with a storyline unique to that episode. A fansub created by the fansub producer KyuubiSubs of the *Fairy Tail* anime was selected as the subject of the research.

In order to conduct the research, there were two items that were required. First was a transcription of the subtitles; this could be easily done by the researcher by simply writing down how the subtitles actually read and looked like. Second was a literal interpretation in English of the original Japanese dialogue so that the research can still be conducted albeit in an indirect manner. For this, the researcher collaborated with Iizuka Tasuku, M.A to produce a literal interpretation in English that can be compared with the subtitles. The translation methods were determined through a comparison of these two items.

IV. FINDINGS

After examining the episode, it was found that the episode contained 248 lines, but only 245 of these lines were relevant in the subtitling. As for translation methods, all of the methods were found to have appeared to occur, except for the translation methods of word-for-word translation and adaptation. Further, these translation methods could be subdivided into patterns representing particular aspects of the lines that allowed them to be classified as one of the eight translation methods.

With 102 lines, literal translation was the translation method that was found to appear in the lines. These were found to have occurred in five patterns. 39 of these lines were found to have been so short that even if they had differences, they were practically the same as the literal interpretation. Five of these lines are detailed here.

Tabel 1. Example group 1

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
35	Gray	What, what? The town of Onibus?	What's this? Onibus Town?
41	Happy	Who is Rabian?	Who's this Rabian?
44	Happy	Ohh! Frederick and Yanderica!	Oh, Frederick and Yanderica!
58	Happy	Me?	Me?
61	Gray, Lucy, Natsu	Why Fried?	Why Fried?!

Eight other lines were found to have names addressed in some way, and these were also practically the same. The following are five of these lines.

Tabel 2. Example group 2

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
3	Natsu	There is Lucy, Gajeel and Juvia...	There's Lucy... Gajeel... Juvia...
27	Warren	I think so, like Gildarts.	Yeah, like Gildarts.
29	Natsu	Yeah, Gildarts.	Gildarts, huh...
126	Max, Warren, Reedus, Cana	Natsu!	Natsu!
178	Lucy, Charles	Erza!	Erza!

Ten lines had fillers or distinct expressions that only made sense when translated literally, and these can be seen in the following five lines:

Tabel 3. Example group 3

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
37	Wendy	Let's see... "Thank you very much!"	Let's see... "Thank you very much!"
80	Wendy	Thank you very much, Fried!	Thank you so much, Fried-san!
110	Happy	Hey, let's take a break!	Hey, let's take a break!
150	Wendy, Happy	Looks delicious!	It looks delicious!
152	Wendy, Happy	Let's eat!	Let's eat!

27 lines were found to have directly translated from the literal interpretation as they appeared similar to the literal interpretation. These five lines represent this group of lines.

Tabel 4. Example group 4

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
128	Natsu	Ooohh, I don't want to get on the train! But if I don't, I can't get on to Onibus! But I don't want to get on!	Ooohh, I don't want to get on the train!! But if I don't, I won't be able to get to Onibus! But I don't wanna get on!
148	Wendy	Is Fried good at cooking?	Is Fried-san good at cooking?
153	Happy	As I thought, it is not the way of cooking...	As I thought, it's not the method of cooking...
157	Erza	Is there no other food?	Is there no other type of food?
175	Lucy	Is this really the right way?	Is this really the right way?

The remaining 18 lines with literal translation had changes that appeared substantial but actually did not detract from the meaning as in the literal interpretation, and thus they were literally translated. These are five of these 18 lines.

Tabel 5. Example group 5

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
123	Max	They couldn't stand it after all, I suppose.	I guess they couldn't resist it in the end.
160	Announcer	The train between Onibus and	The shuttle train service between

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		Magnolia will be coming. This train will depart immediately, heading for Onibus.	Onibus and Magnolia is arriving. This train is heading for Onibus, and will depart immediately!
184	Fried	There is no place to hide in this desert. We have to run away.	There is no place to hide in this desert. We can only run.
197	Fried	This is not good. This place will be swallowed by a sandstorm soon.	This isn't good. This place will be overwhelmed by a sandstorm very soon.
205	Lucy	No wonder it's heavy!	No wonder you're heavy!

Faithful translation was found to have been represented by 72 lines, and these lines can be subdivided into four patterns. 25 lines were relatively short and had only minor changes, but still forced the lines to show off just the bare contextual meaning. This can be seen in the five lines shown here.

Tabel 6. Example group 6

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
5	Happy	Like a "Maneki Neko"!	You mean like a Fortune Cat?
12	Mirajane	But I think it's important to gain experience through small jobs.	I think it's important to build up your experience with the smaller jobs first, though.
14	Gray	I agree; she should	I agree, maybe she

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		accept a request from a faraway town.	should pick up a request from a town further away.
16	Max	You said you want to be useful to everyone...	You want to be of use to everyone, huh...
52	Charles	If it is so, you can do what you want. I won't join you.	Do as you please, then. I'm not going along.

In contrast, 22 relatively short lines had more substantial changes, but these lines still managed to show just the contextual meaning. Below are five of these lines.

Tabel 7. Example group 7

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
51	Wendy	That is not true! I can prove that I can finish this job.	That's not true! I'm sure I can fulfill this job well enough!
55	Mirajane	Wait! Do you intend to go alone?	Wait! Don't tell me you're intending to do this all alone?
60	Fried	If that is what you say, Master...	Since those are your orders, Master...
69	Reedus	I think there is no worry if Fried goes with her.	It shouldn't be a problem since she has Fried with her.

Some longer lines were relatively unmodified compared to the literal interpretation, but they likewise just showed off the contextual meaning. There were 13 of these lines, and five of them are shown here.

Tabel 8. Example group 8

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
34	Mirajane	Speaking of which, I found the right job for you. They are looking for a wizard who can heal the heart. The reward is not that good, but it's fitting, isn't it?	Talking about that, I have just the right job for you. It's a request for a mage who can heal the heart. The reward's not much, but I think it suits you.
50	Charles	You are just much too nice. And in a big town where you have never been and you have a big job that is something you cannot do yet.	You're much too nice for your own good. Besides, going to a town you've never been to before, and taking on such a big job... I don't think you're up for it yet.
53	Lucy	Hold on, why are you guys fighting over this? You don't need to get irritated	Wait a minute, why are the both of you fighting over this?

		about this, Charles.	You don't have to be so worked up over this, Charle.
71	Station Officer	The train that goes to Onibus Station is suspended because of a problem on the rail! I repeat! The train to Onibus is suspended!	The train heading for Onibus Station is suspended because of damage to the rail track! I repeat! The train to Onibus Station has been suspended!
72	Fried	We have just started, and this is your first trial. What will you do now, Wendy?	Looks like it's time for your first test already. What will you do now, Wendy?

Other longer lines appeared to have been greatly modified, but the contextual meaning was still retained. 12 lines represent this pattern, of which five are shown in the table below.

Tabel 9. Example group 9

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
40	Wendy	"All the actors in my theatre group have left, and the plays have continued to fail. My body and	"All the members in my troupe have left, and every stage performance I've had has been a

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		soul are torn into pieces. Please encourage, cheer me up. Thank you very much – Rabian.”	failure. My body and soul is all worn out. Please help make me feel better. Thank you very much. Rabian.”
57	Makarov	Wait, wait! Wendy finally has just gotten used to the way of work in our guild. We can't just suddenly send her alone to a faraway place. Who has been there before... That's right, Happy!	Hold it right there! Wendy has finally just gotten familiar with the way our guild works. We can't let her travel so far out of town alone. Those who've been there before... That's right... Happy!
66	Makarov	If it is not needed, you do not need to assist her, because Wendy does not learn from it.	Don't do more than you have to, or Wendy won't be able to learn anything from it.
74	Wendy	No thanks. I want to do as much as I can with my own strength. That is why	Thanks, but I'd like to complete this job with as much of my own strength as

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		I want to try to walk to Onibus!	possible. That's why I'm considering walking all the way to Onibus!
79	Fried	I respect what Wendy wants to do for this job. I was set by the Master. It is a rule. Rules must be obeyed.	I have to respect Wendy's decision for this job. That's what the Master said. In other words, you can say that it's a rule. And rules must be obeyed.

Semantic and communicative translations were represented by 34 and 14 lines respectively, but the patterns that represented these lines overlap the methods. In the first pattern, there were reference changes that occurred in the lines. 18 lines changed references in order to have a better appearance and therefore were semantic translations; below are five of these lines.

Tabel 10. Example group 10

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
45	Gray	Wendy, I don't mean to say something bad, but my advice is to not take that job.	Wendy, I'm not trying to discourage you, but you shouldn't do it.
47	Lucy	Low wages,	Underpaid

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		heavy physical work, and it is not easy to go home!	and overworked! Plus he wouldn't even let us leave!
68	Lucy	I wonder if it is all right.	Will she really be all right?
82	Happ y	Do we have to walk all the way there?	Are we really going to walk that far?
85	Fried	You have to use the words in a right way. As a rune user, I know well the importance of the words.	You must use the right words. As a rune user, I understand perfectly well the importance of using the correct words.

5 lines changed references to illustrate meaning better and were communicative translations as a result. These are shown below.

Tabel 11. Example group 11

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
10	Charl es	She is getting used to it, but she only takes simple jobs around town.	So you say, but the only jobs you allow her to take up are those really simple jobs within this town.
13	Natsu	But I think	But don't

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		you can give her a bigger job?	you think it's about time she tried something big?
134	Wend y	But it's getting dark. Tonight there is no other way but to camp out.	But the sky's turning dark already... Looks like we'll have to camp out tonight.
135	Fried	It's OK. We can use the cave for a place to sleep, but the problem is food.	We can just use the cave we found earlier to sleep in, but we need to find some way to get food.
217	Happ y	You did it!	That's great!

In the second pattern, some of the expressions changed to show off the lines better. 6 lines did so for appearance and were semantic translations, and five of these lines are shown here.

Tabel 12. Example group 12

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
1	Natsu	So far, on Fairy Tail...	Previously on Fairy Tail.
42	Gray	The leader of the Scheheraza de Troupe!	It's the troupe master of the

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
			Scheherazade Troupe!
49	Wendy	Charles, your feelings are often true, but if I can be useful...	Your intuition is rarely wrong, but... If this is something I can do...
108	Wendy	I'm sorry, for me, you too have to be in a difficult position.	I'm sorry, it's all because of me that the both of you end up suffering too...
144	Fried	Around this area, it is the migration route of the flying fish. Now is the season for groups of the flying fish usually to go upstream to lay their eggs.	This vicinity is part of the flying fish migration route. Shoals of flying fish usually pick this season to make their way upstream to lay their eggs.

Three lines with changed expressions did so for the meaning and were communicative translations. They were the following lines.

Tabel 13. Example group 13

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
100	Mirajane	This is bad! The train	Bad news! I heard that

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		going to Onibus has been cancelled!	the train to Onibus has been cancelled!
109	Fried	Don't worry about it. It is for a friend.	It's for the sake of a comrade, so don't worry about it.
151	Fried	It tastes just as good as it looks. Please, don't hesitate to eat.	I can assure you they taste just as good. Go on then, there's no need to stand on courtesy.

In the third pattern, the verbosity of the lines increased or decreased. For 10 of these lines, this resulted in a better appearance, making them semantic translations. Five of the lines are shown below.

Tabel 14. Example group 14

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
15	Wendy	I want to become one who can work, handle bigger jobs, and bring a contribution to everyone!	I'm going to work harder until I'm fit enough to take on a big job and be of use to everyone!
26	Reedus	But the guys who are away right now, if they come back here,	But, those members who are currently away will probably be in for a

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		then probably they will be surprised when they see such a small girl working here.	shock when they get back and see such a young child in our guild.
48	Charles	I also do not agree. You don't need to get such a job. I have a bad feeling.	I'm against the idea too. You don't have to take up that kind of job. I have a bad feeling about it as well.
107	Lucy	Compared to those three people, what is here makes me more worried.	This group makes me more worried than those three.
116	Fried	That's good. It's good I didn't assist her.	Thank goodness... I was right not to interfere...

For 6 other lines, the meaning was illustrated better and these were considered communicative translations. The five lines below represent this.

Tabel 15. Example group 15

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
43	Lucy	Remember	Come on,

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
		the performance before?	don't you remember that play we did?
105	Lucy	You say so, but you came with us anyway.	So you say, but you ended up tagging along, anyway.
106	Charles	Wendy must be going to walk there without the male-cat's and Fried's help. It looks a long journey.	Knowing Wendy, I'm sure she must have refused the male-cat's and Fried's help and decided to walk there. Looks like it's going to be a long journey for her.
173	Wendy	It is meaningless if he steps outside of the magical runes, isn't it?	Isn't it kind of pointless once he leaves the boundaries of these runes?
202	Wendy	Did Erza put on something really heavy?	Could it be that Erza-san is holding on to something really heavy?

Idiomatic and free translations were represented by 21 and 2 lines respectively; likewise, their patterns could be taken

together. The first pattern is the appearance of distinct colloquialisms. There were only 9 of these lines, and all of them were idiomatic translations. Shown here are five lines that represented this pattern.

Tabel 16. Example group 16

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
20	Happy	Lucy, you'd better follow her example!	Lucy could learn a thing or two from her.
33	Warren	Definitely. He's different from us, yes.	Yeah, totally. He's an exception, all right.
39	Natsu	I remember it! I remember the details right now!	Crap, that reminds me of something! I'm remembering it!
103	Lucy	It does. What do you want to do, Charle?	Seems like it. What about you, Charle?
161	Station Officer	Hey, customer, it will depart again! How many times from yesterday have you gone back and forth?	Hey, come on mister, the train's going to take off again! Exactly how many times have you ridden this train from yesterday, anyway?

The remaining 12 lines with idiomatic translation were part of the second pattern, which consisted of lines with distinct phrasing changes that were very much different compared to the literal interpretation. The following are five of the idiomatic translation lines.

Tabel 17. Example group 17

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
8	Wendy	It's not easy to find something really good that suits you.	There's nothing that really jumps out at you, is there?
46	Natsu	He makes a lot of demands!	He's a real slave-driver!
64	Cana	Fried, you have to protect Wendy.	Fried, keep an eye out for Wendy.
70	Cana	But Fried is an inflexible person, and he does things in his own way.	But Fried can be strangely inflexible, and a rather "my pace" kind of guy...
73	Happy	I can fly! Because of that, shall I take you directly to that place?	I can fly! I can take you up in one go and fly you there!

The 2 free translation lines were part of this pattern, and they are shown below.

Tabel 17. Example group 17

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form
	Happy	In our guild, the number of members has increased.	Hey, Natsu, our guild's getting bigger, huh.
93	Lucy	What kind of pre-paration?	For what?

V. DISCUSSION

Most of the lines in the subtitles represented methods that were closer to the source language, as they kept much of the expressions that were similar to the literal interpretation. However, the subtitles also showed tendencies at times to reach for translation methods closer to the target language; these were directed mostly for effects. Overall, the subtitles tried as much as possible to preserve the feeling of the original Japanese-language expressions, but also to evoke other impressions when necessary.

Based on the apparent translation methods of the individual lines, the overall translation method of the subtitles can be determined. The majority of the translation methods were composed of the literal or faithful methods, with the rest of the methods that approach the target language having lower progressions. Therefore, the overall translation method can be characterized as being more or less the literal translation method.

VI. CONCLUSION

The subtitles showed a range of translation methods when considering individual lines as well as different patterns that highlighted the translation methods. However, when considering the overall translation methods, the method that best described the subtitling was the literal translation method, the closest method for the majority of the lines. Yet, those lines that were farthest from the majority of lines were not without reason, as they further clarified meaning or added dramatic effects.

The translation method of the subtitles represented the fact that it was emblematic of the interactions represented in the *Fairy Tail* anime. While many of these interactions were ordinary, some of these interactions were also extraordinary, and these were highlighted while leaving the rest evocative of how the original sounded. By doing this, the subtitles achieved the

primary goal of subtitling, which is to make viewers able to understand just what is happening in the film.

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Appendix
Complete List of Sample of Literal Interpretation, Subtitled Lines, and Determined Translation Methods

Line	Speaker	Literal Form	Subtitle Form	Subtitle Method	Pattern
1	Natsu	So far, on Fairy Tail...	Previously on Fairy Tail.	Semantic	SC2
2	Happy	In our guild, the number of members has increased.	Hey, Natsu, our guild's getting bigger, huh.	Free	IF2
3	Natsu	There is Lucy, Gajeel and Juvia...	There's Lucy... Gajeel... Juvia...	Literal	L2
4	Lucy	...also Wendy and Charles! I think I am something that brings fortune!	Plus Wendy and Charle. I think I am that thing that brings good luck!	Faithful	F1
5	Happy	Like a "Maneki Neko"!	You mean like a Fortune Cat?	Faithful	F1
6	Natsu	Or a "bad luck god"!	Or a jinx?	Literal	L1
7	Lucy	Excuse me!	Excuse me!	Literal	L3
8	Wendy	It's not easy to find something really good that suits you.	There's nothing that really jumps out at you, is there?	Idiomatic	IF2
9	Mirajane	Welcome back. Are you looking for your next job already? Wendy, you seem to be getting used to the jobs here.	Welcome back. Are you looking for your next job already? You seem to be getting familiar with the way things work around here, Wendy.	Faithful	F3
10	Charles	She is getting used to it, but she only takes simple jobs around town.	So you say, but the only jobs you allow her to take up are those really simple jobs within this town.	Communicative	SC1
11	Wendy	Hey Charles!	Hey, Charle!	Literal	L3