

# **Assessing the quality of the English subtitle adaptation of web cartoon series *Taximan Talla***

**Ngeukeu Yossa Noemie Samira**

*Professional Translator*

*ngeukeuyossanoemiesamira@gmail.com*

**Ayonghe Lum Suzanne**

*ASTI, University of Buea*

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the quality of English subtitles and attempts to correct challenges related to adaptation in the web cartoon series '*Taximan Talla*'. Following a pilot study that applied Pedersen's FAR model, the research study pursues three objectives: to identify, describe, and analyse the subtitling strategies employed by the subtitler, to evaluate the attitudes of the English-speaking audience towards the English subtitles of the web cartoon series, and to propose more suitable subtitling strategies for the series. Data collection combines content analysis to extract excerpts from the corpus and questionnaires and observation for audience reception. Corpus data was analysed using Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), while quantitative data is processed with Microsoft Excel. Findings are presented in the form of frequency tables and pie chart where required. Results of the study revealed that: substitution (46%) and condensation (16%) were the most frequently applied subtitling strategies; audience reception is generally average. Based on these results, transfer (32%) and expansion (26%) are proposed as more suitable strategies for enhancing the quality of the web series' English subtitles.

Consequently, it is recommended that the audience should be taken into consideration and thus prioritise target culture-oriented strategies when subtitling particularly expressions with a certain cultural or societal identity.

**Key words:** *Adaptation, audience, reception, translation, subtitle quality assessment*

### **Résumé**

Cette étude évalue la qualité de l'adaptation des sous-titres anglais de la série de dessins animés en ligne Taximan Talla. Elle examine la qualité des sous-titres anglais et tente de corriger les problèmes liés à l'adaptation. À la suite d'une étude pilote qui a appliqué le modèle FAR de Pedersen, la recherche poursuit trois objectifs : identifier, décrire et analyser les stratégies de sous-titrage utilisées par le sous-titreur, évaluer l'attitude du public anglophone à l'égard des sous-titres en anglais de la série animé en ligne, et proposer des stratégies de sous-titrage plus adaptées à la série. La collecte de données combine l'analyse de contenu pour extraire les éléments du corpus, et questionnaires et observation pour la réception par le public. Les données du corpus ont été analysées à l'aide des études descriptives de traduction (DTS) de Toury, tandis que les données quantitatives ont été traitées avec Microsoft Excel. Les résultats sont présentés sous forme de tableaux de fréquence et de graphiques circulaires lorsque cela est nécessaire. Les résultats de l'étude ont révélé que : la substitution (46 %) et la condensation (16 %) étaient les stratégies de sous-titrage les plus fréquemment utilisées ; la réception par le public est généralement moyenne. Sur la base de ces résultats, le transfert (32

%) et l'expansion (26 %) sont proposés comme stratégies plus appropriées pour améliorer la qualité des sous-titres anglais de la série web. Par conséquent, il est recommandé de prendre en considération le public et donc de privilégier des stratégies axées sur la dimension culturelle de la cible lors du sous-titrage, en particulier pour les expressions ayant une certaine identité culturelle ou social.

**Mots-clés :** *Adaptation, évaluation de la qualité des sous-titres, public, réception, traduction,*

### **1. Introduction**

Cameroon is a multilingual country which is home to 273 living indigenous languages, 9 extinct indigenous languages (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2025), two official languages; English and French and two lingua francas; Camfranglais and Cameroon Pidgin English. Cameroon's complex language status comes from a complex heritage from a dual colonial rule from Britain and France. Post independence, the state declared English and French Cameroon's official languages with constitutional equality (Rosendal, 2008) and adopted an official bilingualism status (Ayonghe, 2014) as well as guaranteed the protection of national languages in Cameroon. But these were not fully implemented. Since different fragments of language policies were used by the colonial masters, there was disorder and no combine language policies documents which could be used by all parties concerned. National languages were taught in various parts of the country as stated by Ayonghe (2014). In various Catholic schools in Douala and in the Department of African Languages of the University of Yaoundé. However, the idea was suppressed because of fear of ethnic destabilization and revolt. Hence, Cameroon chose these foreign languages to avoid language conflict (Ayonghe, 2014). English and French now took precedence in official settings and the entire country.

Pidgin English and Camfranglais came from Cameroonian youngster's desire to communicate and speak their mind freely under layers of mixed words (Vakunta, 2014). The term Camfranglais is attributed to Professor Ze Amvela (Vakunta, 2014) who commented in the footnotes of a paper saying the term Camfranglais covers what has been called Franglais (Kouega, 2013) Camfranglais is from the need for the youngsters to veil many of their dislikes and likes, ambitions and fears (Kouega, 2013). Its composite nature originates from the fact that Cameroon is an ex-colony of France and Britain. This linguistic conundrum evolves not only with English and French, but equally by borrowing terms from Pidgin English, national languages (Vakunta, 2014). It is laced with humour, and digs into the daily happenings of the society and the nature of the society itself.

Pidgin English originated from the Slave Trade years (Kouega, 2007), it resisted German ban, was used for crusades and made its way to playgrounds and campuses, and today, into spoken media scene (Ekanjume-Ilongo, 2016). English and national languages enriched it, and post reunification with French Cameroon, French equally influenced it. Camfranglais is mostly used in the French-speaking regions while Cameroon Pidgin English in the English-speaking regions. The multilingual nature of the country allows code switching and code mixing, and languages mutually exert some influence on one another (Echu, 2004, p. 22). An estimated 5% of Cameroonians are native speakers of Pidgin English (Neba et al., 2006, p. 41) which reconciles with the fact that 2 out of the 10 Cameroon regions are English-speaking. Both lingua francas were built by history, social realities and linguistic mixes. They are distinct and should be respected and represented. The web series analysed in this paper is set in a fictitious city which mirrors the Cameroonian society notably because of the names of

neighbourhoods and the French language variety spoken. It contains cultural and linguistic elements that make it highly relatable to the Cameroonian audience (Elements like the presence of ‘Waspito’ which is an e-Health mobile app created and used in Cameroon, the accent, the neighbourhoods, and meals presented). Taking these into consideration, some questions arise concerning the issue of ‘what would be an ideal subtitle for this heterogeneous audience (as Cameroon is made up of approximately 250 ethnic groups (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2014) and how could the quality of the subtitles be assessed’.

The concept of quality is multifaceted, especially in audiovisual translation as research in AVT quality assessment is recent. To the point that some think it to be as elusive as happiness (Pedersen, 2017). In spite of the fact that quality seems to be a much-debated concept and context dependent, Jan Pedersen came up with the idea of the contract of illusion (Pedersen, 2007, p. 47). This is for interlingual subtitling and is a perspective through which Pedersen assesses quality of interlingual subtitles and on which is based the FAR model.

Various scholars having various notions and proposing various assessment models for subtitle quality like the NER (Number of Words, Editing, and Recognition errors) model for live subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing or SDH (subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing) subtitles, devised by Romeo-Fresco and Pérez to calculate accuracy. Romero-Fresco and Pérez’s NER model set the pace for Pedersen’s FAR model in 2017, which Hu considers a “comparatively functional one” (Hu, 2021, p. 298). The model focuses on assessing functional equivalence, acceptability of subtitles, or how well the subtitles follow target language norms.

This study will apply these concepts, particularly considering the perspective of viewers as key stakeholders, as their perception directly influences a subtitle's quality (Szarkowska et al., 2021).

The *Taximan Talla* web series is originally Cameroonian but reaches only part of the Cameroonian population as it is originally in French whereas Cameroon is bilingual and has two official languages; English and French. To solve the issue, the author decided to use subtitles (first in 2022 with another animation then in 2023 with the web cartoon series) for it to equally reach the English-speaking audience in Cameroon.

Thus, the research problem raises the following questions: 1) What subtitling strategies were used in the *Taximan Talla* series? 2) What is the attitude of the English-speaking audience in Cameroon towards the English subtitles of the series, *Taximan Talla*? 3) Which subtitling strategy can be used to adapt the English subtitles *Taximan Talla* series to English-speaking audience in Cameroon?

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this research are therefore to:

- a) Identify, describe, and analyse the subtitling strategies used in the *Taximan Talla* series.
- b) Assess the attitude of the English-speaking audience in Cameroon towards the English subtitles of the *Taximan Talla* series.
- c) Propose subtitling strategies able to adapt the English subtitles of *Taximan Talla* to the English-speaking audience in Cameroon.

### **3. Review of related literature**

#### *Sociocultural contexts and subtitling strategies*

Abdelaal (2019) in his study aimed at identifying the subtitling strategies used in subtitling culture-bound terms in the American movie (The American Pie) using Pedersen's typology (2005, 2011) and equally assess the quality of the translation of these terms using Pedersen's FAR model (2017). The results showed that most of the strategies proposed by Pedersen were used alongside other translation strategies. New subtitling strategies like the use of euphemistic expressions and formal language were used to render informal language. Results for the overall quality showed that most subtitles were of good quality though there were few cases of serious error problems. This research explores culture-bound terms which are tied to a society and how well they have been subtitled, similar to the present research with a difference at the level of the society and it includes a language of lesser diffusion.

Pratiwi (2023) carried out a study which aimed at examining the translation quality assessment of Indonesian subtitles in the short animation "The Present". The researcher chose this corpus because it was easily accessible and has been viewed several times by the public, especially children. Here, a descriptive qualitative method was used for the data collected from the movie. At the end of this, the results proved that the subtitles were inaccurate as they were ambiguous and there were many meanings which could be derived from the translations, the subtitles were not acceptable since some terms were unfamiliar to the target audience, and subtitles were not readable. It aligns with the present study in terms of assessing the quality of subtitles and focuses on a sociocultural audience (Indonesia) even though the corpus and audience differ.

### *Subtitle quality assessment*

El-Sayd (2024) assesses the quality of the Arabic Movie “Extracurricular” on Shahid using the FAR model. The study aims at assessing the quality of Arabic subtitles into English, finding the most frequent types of errors in the movie according to the FAR model, and how to improve on the qualities of the subtitles after assessment with FAR model. The findings of the assessment show that the vast majority of errors are in acceptability especially in grammar. Also, following the subtitling evaluation using FAR model, subtitlers can avoid a number of errors.

Ludera et al. (2024) assessed the quality of interlingual subtitles (English-Polish) produced by professionals and novices. Data used for this study was an unexplored one from a subtitling process research study by Orrego-Carmona et al. (2018). The aim of this research was to find out if expertise in interlingual subtitling has an impact on the quality of the subtitles. It was done by assessing subtitle quality. The FAR model was first used to assess the quality of subtitles produced by the participants. In addition to the FAR model, a set of quality parameters like text condensation was considered. It was hypothesized that professionals will have better quality than the subtitles produced by novices. However, the professionals did not have better quality than novices in terms of scores though they had better condensation skills. The study provided subtitling trainers with clues about areas most problematic for students.

Koglin et al. (2022) carried out research assessing the quality of post edited subtitles. A quantitative and qualitative approach was used here. In a world increasingly tech inclined, this research sought to assess the quality of post edited machine translated subtitles of a movie trailer (Koglin et al. 2022). In this research, the

FAR model, audience reception and translators' opinion were taken into consideration to assess the quality of subtitles. The researchers compared FAR scores to audience reception and translators' rating. The results showed that the post edited subtitles had good quality in terms of meaning and target language norms but not in terms of technical parameters. The final remark stated that assessing the quality of subtitles is very complex as there are multiple connotations of quality. It aligns with the study since it equally assesses the quality of interlingual subtitles and it is both qualitative and quantitative. Nevertheless, it focuses just on a movie trailer and takes into account post edited machine translated subtitles whereas this study focuses on excerpts from a web cartoon series and the subtitles are solely human translated.

In the same light, Koglin et al. (2023), still carried out a study on assessing machine- translated post-edited subtitles but this time, the focus was exclusively on translators' perception and examine the technical and linguistic aspects which the participants may have faced. Data was collected through questionnaires, Likert-type scale, written verbal protocol. Sixty-eight participants were used in this study, all of them being professional translators. Participants answered questions, viewed the movie trailer, and assessed the quality using a Likert type scale, participants equally responded to a written protocol. All of these constituted the quantitative and qualitative data which was analysed using IBM SPSS. The qualitative and quantitative data from the protocol answers were triangulated with the quantitative results from the Likert-type scale. The results of this research showed that 28.1% were very satisfied with the post-edited subtitles whereas 48.4% were just satisfied, meaning that post-edited subtitles are acceptable.

Pedersen (2017) came up with a quality assessment model for interlingual subtitles. Back then, there only existed one for intralingual subtitling. His model is an error model based on the NER model and focuses on functional equivalence; meaning, acceptability; natural target language and readability. In other words, determining if the subtitles are fluent and respect the norms of subtitling. This error analysis model was tested on Swedish fansubs (Pedersen, 2017). The model is tentative and generalised so that it can be localised to fit the norms or guidelines of good subtitling practice. It was developed using existing models, empirical data, best subtitling practice and eye-tracking studies. The model is designed in such a way that the contract of illusion is respected and not broken. This contract of illusion simply means that the viewer watches a subtitled movie or video and intentionally pretends they are not reading a subtitle and replaces the original audio with the subtitles. This helps in maintaining maximum viewer experience.

#### **4. Methodology**

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research designs for data collection and analysis. It includes a critical review of the corpus using Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (Toury, 1995) focusing on subtitling strategies used, audience reception, and overall quality to propose other subtitling strategies. A pilot study was conducted using the FAR Model to analyse the 50 excerpts and confirm the problems found in the English subtitles. Data was collected using content analysis by viewing and extracting English subtitle excerpts. Questionnaires were distributed to 20 respondents (English-speaking audience in Cameroon) who were then, observed by the researcher to get audience input as part of

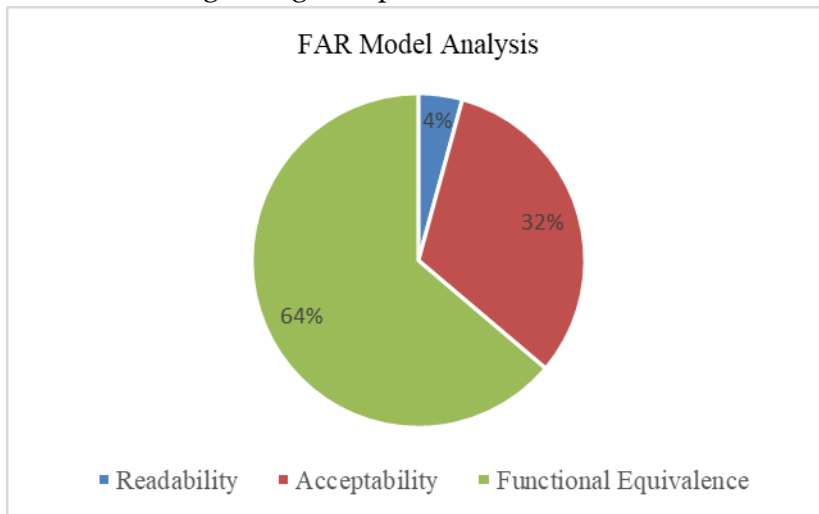
quantitative data. The results are presented in the form of pie charts and tables for clarity and comparative insight.

### 5. Findings

This section of the study presents results of data collected and analysed from corpus, questionnaires, and observation.

#### *Test study using FAR Model*

In order to confirm our research problem and identify problem areas, a pilot study was conducted by the researcher. This entailed viewing the corpus and identifying the problem with the subtitles. A small group of four individuals (researcher included) watched the corpus and determined that the subtitles are comprehensible to any native English speaker but slightly unnatural for Cameroon Pidgin English speaker.



The test study sets the pace of this research by identifying the problem in the English subtitles. In order to reduce subjectivity and avoid a cumbersome work, readability errors were generally set at 0.25, acceptability at 0.5, and functional equivalence errors at 1. The error score is set this way due to the level of severity of each

element; functional equivalence errors are usually considered more serious since it affects viewers' comprehension and ability to follow the plot the most (Pedersen, 2008). The seamless blend between subtitles and movie is the basis for the contract of illusion so, breaking it is the most serious error. Hence, the error score scale places functional equivalence errors at 1; which is serious error, acceptability (which has to do with idiomaticity) at 0.5; which is standard and readability (grammar, spelling errors) at 0.25, which is minor error and does not disrupt the viewer that much.

The above chart proves that 64% functional equivalence error and 32% acceptability error confirmed the research problem and that the subtitles are acceptable to a larger audience but not to the English-speaking Cameroonian audience as there are fluency and naturalness gaps.

#### *Effectiveness of subtitling strategies used in Taximan Talla*

<b>Subtitling Strategy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Condensation	8	16
Decimation	3	6
Deletion	2	4
Expansion	1	2
Imitation	2	4
Paraphrase	4	8
Substitution	23	46
Transfer	7	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table above presents the frequency of subtitling strategies used in the corpus under study. Studies reveal that Substitution (46%), Transfer (14%), and Condensation (16%) are the most used subtitling strategy in *Taximan Talla* with substitution being at the top. This shows that most of the subtitles had to be modified, word changed in order to pass across the message, sentences were

shortened and meaning globalised, then structures were maintained in the target language. Thus, although the subtitler might copy the source language structure, the use of unfamiliar words, terms or phrases hinder full understanding and sometimes loss or change of meaning by the target audience this study focuses on.

In terms of effectiveness of the subtitle strategy, the analysis grid shows that 19 out of 23 times the substitution strategy was inadequate and 4 out of 23 times it was acceptable but still sounded unnatural to the target audience of this study. Condensation strategy is inadequate 6 out of 8 times and just acceptable once. Lastly, the transfer strategy is inadequate 5 out of 7 times and acceptable 4 out of 7. It says that though Transfer is one of the least used by the subtitler, it maintains meaning and captures the target audience better than the other two.

Consider, A= Substitution B=Condensation C=Transfer

<b>Subtitling strategy</b>	<b>Value/Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	Inadequate 19	83
	Acceptable 4	22
B	Inadequate 7	87
	Acceptable 1	13
C	Inadequate 3	43
	Acceptable 4	57

### *Audience Reception*

Audience reception here is made up of both questionnaire and participant observation. Data from questionnaire is presented in 4 sections representing the 4 different sections of the questionnaire. Consider the following frequency tables noting that M=Male, F=Female, %=Percentage, Fr=Frequency

*Demographics*

Research by subtitling professionals like Karamitroglou (1998) and Tang (2008) have highlighted the influence of social variables in audience reception. Reading speed, cognitive abilities and cultural sensitivities depend on the age and educational class of a person. Average viewers are between the ages of 14–65 and their reading speed is estimated to be from 150 to 180 words per minute; about 2.5 to 3 words per second (Karamitroglou, 1998).

Data from questionnaire reveals that:

- a) 80% of the respondents are 18–25 years, 15% are 26–32 years and 5% are 33–49 years
- b) For the fact that no respondent was above 50 years, it will not be represented. Consider, M=Male, F=Female, %=Percentage, Fr=Frequency
- c) 45% of respondents are male and 55% are female
- d) Since majority fall under the average viewer age range, participants have the cognitive and technical competence to read and appreciate the subtitles of the web series.

All respondents (100%) live in Buea and none are resident in Yaoundé. Showing their experience with Cameroon Pidgin English.

Age/Residence	Buea				Total	
	M	%	F	%	Fr	%
A	5	25%	11	55%		
B	3	15%	0	0%		
C	1	5%	0	0%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

*Linguistic background*

Where E=English-speaking regions, F=French-speaking regions,

- a) 90% of the respondents understand Pidgin English
- b) 10% of the respondents were born in the French-speaking regions and are familiar with Camfranglais, the variant used in the web series, meaning they understand it.
- c) None of the people who grew up in the English-speaking regions understand Camfranglais
- d) 75% of them grew up in the English-speaking regions, thus understand Cameroon Pidgin English
- e) 15% grew up in the French-speaking regions and understand Cameroon Pidgin English

<b>Background/</b>	<b>Camfranglais</b>		<b>Pidgin English</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Fr</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>%</b>
E	0	0	15	75		
F	2	10	3	15		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

Note that it is commonly known that your environment shapes you. It is most obvious in this scene as where you grow up you learn the language commonly spoken. In English-speaking regions (E), they speak English and in French-speaking regions, they speak French.

*Viewing ‘Taximan Talla’*

This section of the questionnaire had to be filled after viewing the web series. It presents the general impression of the English subtitles taking into consideration respondent’s understanding of the original and their ability to read and understand the subtitles.

- a) 80% of respondents understood the English subtitles
- b) 15% partially understood the subtitles

c) 5% did not understand the subtitles completely

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	16	80
No	1	5
Partially	3	15
I don't know	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

*Audience appraisal*

This fourth section explores the overall viewer’s experience reading the English subtitles of the web series. Subtitling ensures optimum viewer’s experience for the target audience. This table evaluates that of the respondents of this study taking into account their interest and appreciation (satisfaction) on the web series while viewing the subtitles.

- a) This part of the questionnaire presented a 5-point Likert scale where respondents had to rate their satisfaction level from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.
- b) Where VS=Very Satisfied, S=Satisfied, N=Neutral, D=Dissatisfied, VD=Very Dissatisfied
- c) 50% of the respondents were satisfied with the subtitles. Which means that half of the respondents enjoyed the experience
- d) 20% were dissatisfied and could not fully immerse into the web series
- e) 15% were neutral and 15% were very satisfied with the subtitles

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>%</b>
VS	3	15
S	10	50
N	3	15
DS	4	20
VDS	0	0

*Observation*

This research used participant observation. This means that the researcher observed the participants themselves. This happens during the filling out of the questionnaire when respondents start viewing the corpus. The researcher has as objective to track eye movements and notice the participants' behaviour or reactions when watching the web series. This is to check if the contract of illusion has been breached. There were 20 respondents, hence 20 participants to observe. There were several reactions which are now classified under Success (S), Neutral (N), Failure (F).

- a) 50% did not appreciate as they quickly lost interest and did other things while watching
- b) 30% appreciated and were immersed in the web series. c) 20% remained indifferent

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>%</b>
S	6	30
N	4	20
F	10	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

There were respondents who just viewed a single episode and started answering, some kept bringing the series backward because they had not had time to read the subtitles before they disappeared. There were respondents who burst out laughing when a funny instance came, others smiled and were focused. Also, there were those who just listened silently till the end, while others easily got distracted. With these diverse responses and reactions, it is clear that people react differently to subtitles.

As concerns audience reception, data has shown that most (50%) respondents understand and are comfortable using the English subtitles provided. However, observation proves most (50%) do

not have a good viewers' experience with the subtitles as they are. The above implies that the English subtitles might not be completely adequate, but they are acceptable and understandable to native English speakers. Though there is room for improvement and more target-audience oriented translations/subtitles.

*Proposed subtitling strategies*

In order to improve on the quality of the subtitles and obtain better naturalness for the target audience, other subtitling strategies were suggested to correct those used in the original.

Proposed subtitling strategies for 'Taximan Talla'

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Expansion	16	32
Paraphrase	6	12
Transfer	14	28
Imitation	4	8
Condensation	4	8
Decimation	1	2
Substitution	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table above shows the subtitling strategies proposed to best suit the target audience identified in this study, the frequency, and percentage. Once a strategy is proposed, the corresponding translation suggestion is equally given.

- a) Expansion (32%) and Transfer (28%) occur the most and show that these two strategies are preferable and bring out subtitles which suit the target audience of this study.
- b) Note should be taken that there are some areas where two strategies are proposed just to indicate that the suggestions are not closed or limited. Other strategies can

be used too and sometimes, there are two strategies identifiable in one subtitle.

The above implies that the English subtitles might not be completely adequate, but they are acceptable and understandable to native English speakers. Though there is room for improvement and more target-audience oriented translations/subtitles.

*Compiled corpus analysis*

In order to better illustrate, the table below is presented. It shows time stamps, subtitle strategy used in the web series, proposed subtitles by researcher and proposed subtitle.

SN	Time	Strategy used	Proposed	Proposed
1	00:01:51	Substitution	Condensation	Na my beans!
2	00:02:49	Transfer	Imitation	Pay the dépôt
3	00:00:14	Transfer	Decimation	Massa!
4	00:00:39	Substitution	Expansion	we go touch ball for evening
5	00:01:30	Imitation	Expansion	... with correct achu
6	00:00:10	Substitution	Expansion	That man wey get
7	00:00:20	Condensation	Expansion	Ei deny for gimme okok make
8	00:03:05	Substitution	Transfer	I don hear, paa
9	00:00:39	Deletion	Expansion	... and that French man their
10	00:00:55	Deletion	Paraphrase	That kind strong quartier
11	00:02:03	Substitution	Paraphrase	No talk for me like say we be
12	00:00:06	Decimation	Expansion	Jong sotey!!
13	00:00:10	Transfer	Transfer	I jong 20 bottles
14	00:00:27	Substitution	Transfer	You be my real G!
15	00:00:36	Substitution	Expansion	Boy! Ei be tasje sotey!
16	00:01:56	Transfer	Expansion	Here, all tin na vam vam
17	00:01:58	Decimation, rephrase	Paraphrase	Dem go awash you, you go wash hand
18	00:02:15	Substitution	Transfer	Wey plenty banga men dem
19	00:02:34	Transfer	Transfer	Ok, we go wait the perika for
20	00:00:39	Substitution	Substitution	
21	00:00:21	Substitution	Substitution	alaska for 100
22	00:00:32	Transfer	Substitution	Drop me for post

23	00:01:15	Substitution	Expansion	My head juh start shake one time/I juh craze one
24	00:01:18	Condensation	Expansion	Strong don man straight
25	00:01:59	Substitution	Imitation	Mboutman, Clearan
26	00:00:20	Condensation, substitution	Expansion	All man go feelam for skin
27	00:04:45	Imitation, substitutio	Transfer	Dem call me don résé for quartier
28	00:01:01	Expansion	Expansion	One small restaurant
29	00:01:54	Substitution	Condensation	Grand, really...
30	00:00:16	Substitution	Expansion	Ei hang for my neck
31	00:00:50	Substitution	Paraphrase	Tin dem don bad/Outside don
32	00:00:32	Substitution	Expansion, transfer	Nadia, the metisse nga/ngondere
33	00:04:22	Substitution	Imitation	Erreur for mboutoukou na
34	00:01:41	Substitution	Expansion	Ei be want chop wa beans ya
35	00:01:12	Substitution	Condensation	2 council
36	00:01:14	Substitution	Transfer	I get one thasand
37	00:01:56	Condensation	Substitution	Na so ma friend
38	00:02:30	Decimation	Paraphrase	Massa, lef that tok!
39	00:03:31	Condensation	Substitution	Ma sis, you don confirm ei
40	00:00:57	Condensation	Transfer	No do so...
41	00:01:18	Substitution	Expansion	Move big big money from ya
42	00:00:15	Substitution	Transfer	Ei be na ei die?
43	00:00:52	Substitution	Imitation	You be di tok weti with Bop Dylan the
44	00:00:55	Paraphrase	Transfer, imitation	Ei tell me say ei get réseau/schémak
45	00:01:06	Condensation	Transfer	Inside container with fish
46	00:00:40	Paraphrase	Transfer	Uncle oh, that bonbon of sinao sinao in yuhare?
47	00:03:33	Paraphrase	Transf er,	I go handle/gérer her
48	00:01:34	Paraphrase	Condensation	Tsiuups massa.
49	00:02:22	Condensation	Substitution	Jealousy driver! Face your
50	00:00:35	Substitution , transfer	Substitutio n, deletion	And go hustle/find work

## 7. Discussion

The present study builds up existing perspectives about audiovisual translation. Similar to Nfor (2011)'s study on interlingual subtitling grounded in domestication and foreignization, this research highlights the importance of sociocultural approaches in translating. However, this research is target-audience oriented, placing strong emphasis on the audience as an important parameter for quality. This research equally combines an error model like Abdelaal (2019) and qualitative audience reception which addresses the complexity of quality as a concept (Koglin et al., 2022). It equally differs from recent studies on machine-translated subtitles (Koglin et al., 2023) by focusing on human-translated subtitles.

The findings of this study contribute to the ongoing discussion about what constitutes high quality is subtitling. The preliminary study which identified issues with the naturalness of the English subtitles aligns with El-Sayd (2024) whose research also highlighted that the most frequent issues were acceptability and grammatical errors.

This study focused on subtitle quality assessment and carried out analyses at various levels. First, a pilot study using the FAR model which confirmed the problem with the subtitles of the web series *Taximan Talla*. The results of the pilot study showed that 64% of subtitles had a functional equivalence problem; which carries pragmatic equivalence problem and the most serious of errors, followed by acceptability errors (32%) and readability (4%). After this, the corpus was analysed at the macro; the author and his works, synopsis of the movie, and background of the movie, and micro levels; by analysing extracted excerpts. From this, it was discovered that *Taximan Talla* web series is a very interesting 2D

animation cartoon, very relatable to the Cameroonian society as the language is commonly used and the situations presented are common daily happenings. It captures the attentions of viewers and they can easily visualize each episode. However, a full sociocultural immersion is difficult for English-speaking Cameroonians as Cameroon Pidgin English is not fully represented.

From the microanalysis; substitution (46%), condensation (16%), decimation (6%), deletion (4%), equivalence (4%), expansion (2%), imitation (4%), paraphrase (8%), transfer (14%). Substitution is the most used subtitle strategy from the original subtitler and from the effectiveness table, it produces the most (84%) inadequate subtitles which does not immerse the English-speaking Cameroonians, their parlance, and their culture. To attempt correcting this, other subtitling strategies best suited according to circumstances and context have been proposed. The results were that Expansion (32%) and Transfer (26%) are best suited.

As concerns audience reception, it has been established that 80% of respondents are average viewers with good reading speed and cognitive abilities. This is proven in the data which shows that most (50%) respondents understand and are comfortable using the English subtitles provided. However, observation proves most (50%) of them do not have a good viewers' experience as the contract of illusion is broken (proven by the ease with which they lost focus) with the subtitles as they are.

The data analysed was aimed at assessing quality of the subtitles. This quality depended on respecting the contract of illusion through Pedersen's FAR model and audience reception (questionnaires and observation). Thus, the English subtitles might not be completely adequate, but they are acceptable and

understandable to native English speakers (Standard English). Though there is room for improvement and more target-audience oriented translations/subtitles.

This study is an addition to the field of Translation, specifically audiovisual translation as it deals with subtitling. It has explored interlingual subtitling between two languages of lesser diffusion (Camfranglais and Cameroon Pidgin English). It has adequately assessed the subtitle quality of a web cartoon series which is an innovation in the field of Translation Studies.

### *Moving forward*

As concerns the way forward, this study recommends that:

- a) Subtitlers should acquire more skills in the field of audiovisual translation, especially subtitling as there were some technical problems with the subtitles which were sometimes too fast.
- b) Training institutions are encouraged to add more hours for practice of in audiovisual translation course and equally focus on intralingual subtitling as far as language variants are concerned.
- c) In conclusion, this research aimed at assessing subtitle quality of English subtitles in a corpus taking into consideration audience reception. Using Pedersen's FAR model for subtitle quality assessment, the problem was confirmed and then excerpts analysed at the macro and micro textual levels. Then, audience reception was analysed. The results partially confirm the hypotheses but clearly shows that the subtitling strategies used were not 100% effective on the audience as there is room for improvement to maximize viewers' experience.

## 8. Conclusion

The present study aimed at assessing subtitle quality of English subtitles in a corpus taking into consideration audience reception. Using Pedersen's FAR model for subtitle quality assessment, the problem was confirmed and then excerpts analysed at the macro and micro textual levels. Then, audience reception was analysed. The results partially confirm the hypotheses but clearly shows that the subtitling strategies used were not 100% effective on the audience as there is room for improvement to maximize viewers' experience. Thus, the English subtitles might not be completely adequate, but they are acceptable and understandable to native English speakers. Though there is room for improvement and more target-audience oriented translations/subtitles.

## References

- Abdelaal, N. (2019) Subtitling of culture-bound terms: strategies and quality assessment. *Heliyon*, 5(4), 1–27.
- Ayonghe, L. S. (2014). The Role of Audiovisual Translation in the Implementation of Language Policies in Cameroon. *The Translation Journal*, 18(4).
- Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (Eds.). (2025). *Ethnologue : Languages of the world* (28th ed.). SIL International. <https://www.ethnologue.com/>.
- Echu, G. (2004). The language question in Cameroon. *Linguistik online*, 18(1).
- Ekanjume, I. B. (2016). An Overview of Pidgin English in Cameroon. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 3(2), 154–160.
- Hu, Z. (2021, May). A multimodal approach to translation quality assessment of interlingual subtitling: Theoretical reflections. In *7th*

*International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2021)* (pp. 297–309). Atlantis Press.

Karamitroglou, F. (1998). A proposed set of subtitling standards in Europe. *Translation journal*, 2(2), 1–15.

Koglin, A., Moura, W. H. C., De Matos, M. A., & da Silveira, J. G. P. (2023). Quality assessment of machine-translated post-edited subtitles: an analysis of Brazilian translators' perceptions. *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series – Themes in Translation Studies*, 22.

Koglin, A., Silveira, J. G. P. D., Matos, M. A. D., Silva, V. T. C., & Moura, W. H. C. (2022). Quality of post-edited interlingual subtitling: FAR model, translator's assessment and audience reception. *Cadernos de Tradução*, 42, e82143.

Kouega, J. P. (2013). *Camfranglais : A Glossary of Common Words, Phrases and Usages*. Munchen: LINCOM EUROPA.

Neba, A. N. N., Chibaka, E. F., & Atindogbe, G. G. (2006). Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) as a tool for empowerment and national development. *African study monographs*, 27(2), 39–61.

Nikolic, K. (2021). Quality control of subtitles. *Journal of audiovisual translation*, 4(3), 66–68.

Pedersen, J. (2017). The FAR model: assessing quality in interlingual subtitling. *Jostrans: The Journal of Specialised Translation*, (28), 210–229.

Pedersen, J. (2008). 'High Felicity: a speech act approach to quality assessment in subtitling'. Chiaro, Delia, Christina Heiss, & Chiara Bucaria (eds). *Updating Research in Screen Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 101–116

Szarkowska, A., Díaz Cintas, J., & Gerber-Morón, O. (2021). Quality is in the eye of the stakeholders: what do professional subtitlers and viewers think about subtitling? *Universal Access in the Information Society*, 20(4), 661–675.

- Toury, G. (2012). *Descriptive translation studies and beyond*. John Benjamins
- Tang, J. (2008). A cross-cultural perspective of production and reception of Disney's *Mulan* through its Chinese subtitles. *European Journal of English Studies*, 12(1), 149–162. DOI: 10.1080/13825570802151413.
- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2014). *Report of the Independent Expert Mission on minority issues Rita Izsák, A/HRC/25/56*. [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)
- Vakunta, P. W. (2014). Review of 'Camfranglais, A Glossary of Common Words, Phrases and Usages' (2013) by Jean-Paul Kouega. *Pambazuka News: Voices of Freedom and Justice*.