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## Assessment of Suitability of Hausa Films Subtitled in English for Use in ESL Classroom

### Abstract

The use of technology in classes across the world tackles some of the difficulties facing instructors and the students of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). Nowadays many countries are using subtitles to teach languages which is considered as extension of using technology in teaching English. Subtitle is a rendering of a dialogue into a written text, which is usually used in order to teach or to communicate with people who speak a different language from the film dialogue. Therefore, the main and initial aim of this paper is to see the possibility of using Hausa film to teach English to pupils in the primary school. Three Hausa films were selected as a sample. These films are *Kwamandan mata* (The leader of the women), *Mansoor* (The name of a male person) and *Al'ummarmu* (Our people). Two researchers watched the films two times to be familiar with the content and select target words and sentences. After the second watch. The researchers concluded that the selected films could not be used in the classroom, because of the number of errors found in them. These errors are not limited to but include the incorrect use of tenses, concord violation, improper use of prepositions and using unnecessary words as well as the omission of necessary items. Other part of the findings revealed that punctuation marks are not properly utilised. Thus, the study recommends that subtitles in the classroom, must be a good

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The English language which is the primary language in countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Liberia, United States of America, Jamaica among others, also serves as the global language which is considered as a second language in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Malaysia and foreign language in countries like Qatar, Jordan and many other and also serves as an official language (Crystal, 2003). Some African countries use the language in the classroom right from the primary school to the tertiary level. Several studies show that to write in English is considered the most challenging task among ESL learners and users across the globe (Habali and Fong, 2016; Hernández, 2016; Insua, 2016). The English language, which is a global medium of communication spoken as a second language (L2) by Nigerian citizens across the country, became the official language due to the multi-lingual nature of the country. The English language is widely used as a medium of instruction in

Nigerian schools in primary and tertiary education (Kamal, 2014). Regardless of the role and position of the language in Nigeria, several unacceptable errors are found in both written and spoken language. This problem is also common among the producers of Hausa films when providing English subtitles in their films. Thus, the present study was conducted to find out the possibility of using Hausa films subtitled in English in the classroom despite the errors committed by the translators.

Subtitle is a written translation of the initial discussion or utterance that appears on the screen in a line of text, usually placed at the bottom of the screen. Subtitles appear and vanish to concur with the part of the original dialogue in time and are generally applied as a post-production operation to the screen image. This definition defines the best characteristic features of subtitle in terms of content (written translations), location (screen bottom), appearance (synchrony) and output (post-production activity). It is mainly found in audiovisual things, such as cinema, television, video, DVD, Laserdisc, CD-ROM, computer games, Internet and live performances (Luyken, O'Connell, 2007).

Research shows that studies on Audiovisual Translation (AVT), specifically those dealing with interlingual subtitling, have gained much consideration. Since the subtitle aims to communicate with second language learners or to non-native viewers of a particular subtitled film, that is why Hasrin and Abu Bakar (2018) argued that good subtitles can be produced based on the translator's good skills and adequate experience, which always aid him/her to select appropriate strategies, which fit well with the subtitling work while wrong subtitles will definitely affect viewers' understanding.

Narrowing down to the Nigerian context, it is irrefutable that studies on subtitles received poor attention as compared with other film's aspects (Adamu, 2014). This poor attention leads to producing bad subtitles in the Kannywood industry (Ibrahim, 2019). On the other hand, several studies affirmed that subtitling is one of the major challenges faced by the Hausa film industry that called for urgent intervention by researchers (Ibbi, 2014; Lere, 2014; Usman, 2014; Umar, 2015; Ibrahim, 2013; Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2018; Ibrahim, 2019). Therefore, this paper will explore the use of subtitle in the Hausa film industry using the error analysis theory proposed by Corder, with the aim of assisting the Hausa film industry to produce quality subtitles, which would be used in ESL classes. By carryout this study, the researchers hoping that, it is findings will assist the Hausa film translators to produce a good and sound subtitle which will eventually be used to advance teaching English using subtitle, as it was shown by many studies (Sabouri, Zohrabi and Osbouei, 2015; Ebrahimi and Bazaee, 2016; Adebileje and Akinwale, 2017).

### **The Subtitle in the classroom**

Several studies claimed that subtitle plays a vital role in teaching English in some countries. For instance, researchers, such as Sabouri, Zohrabi and Osbouei (2015), Ebrahimi and Bazaee (2016), Adebileje and Akinwale (2017), Peters (1979), Koskinen, Wilson and Jensema (1985 & 1986), Bean and Wilson (1989), Milone (1993) and Linebager (2001), maintained that subtitling produced positive results in teaching reading in the United States. There is evidence that it has a significant impact in language learning among both adult and youngers learner across the globe (Black, 2021). Kothari (1998) also argued that subtitle provides a significant contribution to teaching literacy among adult learners, especially those living in remote areas. Karimah (2019) found that students in Indonesia increased vocabulary learning from the movies which used subtitles. Mardani and Najmabadi (2016) revealed that subtitle provides a significant contribution to teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Iran. In line with the above findings, the current study explores the use of English subtitle in the Hausa

film industry to see whether the films are appropriate to be used for teaching and learning English in classrooms.

Aksu-Ataç and Köprülü-Günay's (2018) investigation revealed that most of their participants believed that watching films with subtitles helped them to learn new vocabulary and improve their reading and listening skills as well. A study on Thai subtitles revealed that the subtitle has a positive effect to learners' listening and content comprehension (Napikul et al., 2018). In addition, Hasrin (2018) found that teaching English to Malay students using subtitle played a vital role and assisted them in learning new vocabulary as well as comprehend meaning, especially using the subtitle of the film in Bahasa Malaysia. It has a positive impact on learning new vocabulary in ESL classes (Yildiz, 2017). Similarly, Sirmandi and Sardareh's (2016) study showed that Iranian EFL learners acquired more new English vocabularies through watching video clips with subtitles (BBC World clips). Recently, Muhammad and Tajuddin, (2023) argued that subtitle played an important role in the classroom, but in order to used subtitle in teaching and learning environment, such subtitle must be excellent one.

### Types of Subtitle

Nowadays, most of the subtitles used, especially in teaching and learning English as a second and foreign language, can be classified into three. They also incorporate almost all the other types discussed by researchers. These three are:

1. **Standard subtitle:** In this type of subtitle, utterances of the dialogue are subtitled in the language of viewers. For example, an English film subtitled in Hausa and watched by Hausa people. Since English is considered a second language for Hausa people, it could be said that standard subtitle is a combination of viewers' L1 subtitle and L2 dialogue.
2. **Bimodal subtitle:** This is a situation where both the film dialogue and the subtitle are in the same language. For instance, watching a Malay film with a Malay dialogue English subtitle.
3. **Revised subtitle:** is a situation where film dialogue is in L1 and the subtitle in L2. For example, Hausa films are subtitled in English (Zanon, 2006; Kanellopoulou, 2019; Mardani and Najmabadis, 2016; Yildiz, 2017; Karimah, 2019).

### Methodology

This study used a case study of the qualitative approach to show the subtitle errors that are committed by Hausa film translators and provide a lasting solution to them that would assist them to produce a good and sound subtitle. Using subtitles in English language teaching in Nigeria, as it is utilised in ESL/EFL classes in many countries, is neglected or investigated at a minimal level. Creswell (2014) argued that qualitative research is a 'type of education research' in which the participants' knowledge is essential for investigating a phenomenon. In addition, in a qualitative study, researcher(s) selects the participants who can provide information which will assist for answering research questions (Muhammad, 2014)

### Sample of study

Many Hausa films with English subtitles are produced in the industry; only three (3) films were selected as a sample of this study. The researchers only selected the films produced from 2015 to 2020. We decided to select the sample of films produced within the mentioned years when almost all Hausa film producers started to provide films with English subtitles as compared with the previous years in which very few subtitled their films into English (Ibrahim 2019). The researchers used purposive sampling while selecting the three Hausa

film, because not all films are subtitled in Hausa film industry. Therefore, only films subtitled in English were selected for watching. This is because a researcher can select a sample of any study based on the needs of research objectives (Creswell 2014). Hence, the profiles of the selected films are presented in Table 1:

**Table 1: A list of 3 Films Selected**

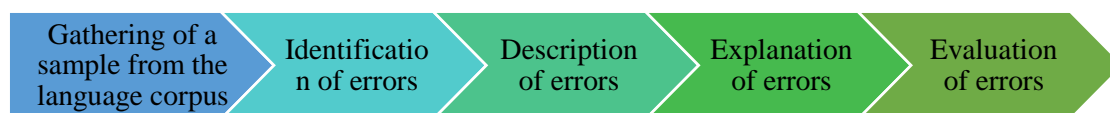
S/ N	Name of film	Year	Company	Producer	No. of viewers
1.	Kwamandan Mata	2015	Kayi Nauyi Movie Tone	Iliyasu Abdulmuminu Tantiri	150,682
2.	Mansoor	2017	An Ali Nuhu Movie	Naziru Danhajiya	238,614
3.	Al'ummarmu	2019	M&M Film Production	Hayatudden Yakubu	187,740

### Research Procedure

This study intends to use the above three films to teach English in Primary Five. The intended population are aged between ten to twelve years and comprise both boys and girls. Unfortunately, during watching the selected films before taking them to the classroom, many errors were identified by the researchers. Therefore, this study realised that such films were not suitable for to be used for teaching due to the higher level of errors. Hence, the researchers decided to explore the errors committed in the films, using the error analysis theory proposed by Corder (1974). During data collection, the selected films were watched three times and all the sentences with errors were extracted for analysis.

### Data Analysis and Discussion

The collected data were analysed using the error analysis theory (EA), which was proposed by Corder. Corder (1974) argued that errors are significant in the sense that teachers can know the progress of learners and the strategies to use to improve teaching methods as well as learners' abilities toward learning. In the procedure for analysing the errors found in the Hausa films subtitled in English, the researchers took five steps identified by Corder into consideration. Furthermore, Corder (1974) added that "It is very difficult to assign the cause of failures in comprehension to an inadequate knowledge of a particular syntactic feature of a misunderstood utterance". He also maintained that most of the studies conducted by previous researchers in relation to second language learning through the use of error analysis were conducted purposefully to improve teaching L2. For the data analysis, the five steps in the Figure below were used to guide the researchers:



*Figure 1: Steps of error analysis (Corder 1974)*

Figure 1 shows how the steps were used for error analysis to analyse the collected data. In error analysis, the initial step is to collect the data sample, which was collected from Hausa films. The next step is the identification of errors. Below the researcher identified all the subtitles that had errors. In Step three, the researchers caterorised the errors into different types, such as improper use of tenses, violation of grammatical rule of concord and the omission of necessary items, among others. Error analysis is a description of errors. Step four and step five deal with the explanation and evaluation of the committed errors. So, the

name of the film and the time of each subtitle are attached to the sample of each sentence extracted from the selected films.

### ***Incorrect use of tense***

For Comrie (1985:9), tense is “a grammatical expression of location in time”. But Clifford (1980:22) argued that explanation of tenses always goes together with the word event or action. This refers to the time which action took place. Hence, below are the errors committed with regard to using tenses found from the subtitles

Error 1: ‘It wasn’t my fault *Mansoor*, your father **insist** on that and tried to **talked** with him out of it’. (1:07:43-50, *MANSOOR*)

In English, simple past tense is used to show events or actions started and finished in the past and mostly the verb takes “-d or -ed” as inflection in the case of a regular verb (Nwoko, 2015; Michaelis, 2021). The event in the above sentence took place in the past, and the verb highlighted in bold (*insist*) is misused. The errors committed in the sentences should be corrected by adding past tense marker “-ed” at the end of the verb “insist”. In addition, the verb “talked”, which is used after infinitive ‘to,’ makes the sentence incorrect. Because in English, when a base form of a verb is used with “to” to make it infinitive, the verb must remain as it is. It does not take any inflection. Therefore, the use of “to talked” in Sentence (1) is grammatically wrong. Thus, Sentence (1) should be corrected and rewritten as: *It was not my fault Mansoor, your father insisted on that and tried to walk with him out of it.*

Error 2: ‘He **comes** yesterday’. (1:30:13-15, *MANSOOR*)

As explained in the previous sentences, when a sentence talks about an event that took place in the past, the appropriate tense to be used in such a sentence is past tense (Kirkpatrick, 2014; Hirtle, 2007; Warner, 1993). Therefore, using “comes” in Sentence (2) is an error. To correct the subtitle and produce grammatically correct subtitle, the sentence should be rendered as: *He came yesterday.*

Error 3: ‘What if the medicine given to me **was** admired by everybody’. (0:16:00-09, *KWAMANDAN MATA*)

The error committed in Sentence Three is due to the use of the wrong verb copular “was”, because “is” the correct word to be used here ‘is’ and not ‘was’. Both ‘was’ and ‘is’ are used with third person singular to indicate tense, but ‘was’ indicates past tense, and ‘is’ present tense (Nwoko, 2015; Murthy, 2007; Clifford 1975; Comrie, 1976). Based on the original dialogue uttered in Hausa, the tense must be present and not past tense. Therefore, the sentence should be rendered as: *What if the medicine given to me is admired by everybody?*

Error 4: ‘She can **lost** capital’. (0:41:19-21, *AL ’UMMARMU*)

In this context, the correct verb to be used should be “lose” and not “lost,” because “lost” is used to indicate past tense, not future or past participle tenses. Therefore, Sentence (4) above should be rendered to: *She can lose capital.*

Error 5: ‘Did he **tolds** you about the abroad?’ (0:12:19-22, *AL ’UMMARMU*)

The error committed in Sentence (5) above is also related to tense. As previously explained, “told” is used to talk about a past event, while “tell” is used as simple present tense (see also Nwoko, 2015). Based on the utterance articulated, the correct verb to be used in this sentence should be “tell” and not “tolds”. Again, if someone wants to use “told” to show past events, it does not require “-s.” Hence, Sentence (5) should be corrected as: *Did he tell you about the abroad?*

### ***Error in Subject-Verb Agreement (Concord Violation)***

The rule of concord states that a verb in a clause or sentence must agree with its subject both in person and number. This means that if the subject is singular in the nominal



item, the verb that follows it must be in the plural form to agree with the subject (Nwoko, 2015; Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973). Thus, the errors found from the data that related to concord are presented below:

Error 6: 'I'd love to see this **happen** before I die.... I know it will be amazing'. (0:20:02-09, *AL'UMMARMU*)

Error 7: 'I will make someone **deal** with you if you do not compose yourself'. (0:11:30-36, *AL'UMMARMU*)

From Sentences (6-7), all the errors committed are due to subject-verb agreement, which violates the grammatical rule of concord (Nwako, 2015; Muhammad, 2017; Igaab and Altai, 2017). In Sentence (6), the word "this" is singular and the verb that follows it must be in the plural. Thus, using "happen" is an error because a bound morpheme '-s' needs to inflect to the verb in order to have agreement between the subject and the verb. A similar error also committed in Sentence (7) needs to be inflected to the verb 'deal', because there is no agreement between the subject 'someone' and the verb 'deal'. Therefore, to correct the errors and provide well-formed constructions, the two sentences should be rendered as:

- *I would love to see this **happens** before I die.... I know it will be amazing.*

- *I will make someone **deals** with you if you do not compose yourself.*

### ***Omission of Preposition***

This section presents some sample of data that contains an omission of the preposition in English subtitles. An omission is one of three errors committed about prepositions; the other two are substitution and addition (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982). Below are some illustrations that extracted from the data:

Error 8: 'Who **ask** you to look men'? (0:47:07-10, *MANSOOR*)

Error 9: 'God willing I will come back and meet you normal'. (0:25:36-39, *KWAMANDAN MATA*)

From Sentences (8-9) above, all the errors committed are due to the omission of prepositions in different places. For instance, in Sentence (8) the preposition "at" is omitted, because there is the need to write the preposition before the last word of the sentence "men". But in Sentence (9), the omitted preposition is "by", which is omitted from the beginning. Thus, the collected versions of the sample sentences with errors in omission should be corrected and rewritten as follows:

*Who asks you to look **at** men?*

***By** God willing I will come back and meet you normal.*

### ***Using Wrong Articles***

One of the types of errors found from the data is related to the article, which are used in the English language to show definiteness. Articles indicate a noun as specific or unspecific (Crompton, 2011). Teachers try to explain why the error of articles must be eradicated in students' writing because they consider it an unacceptable phenomenon in all circumstances (Master, 2007). Errors related to the use of a wrong article is presented below:

Error 10: 'There is no problem, we can spend **a** night here'. (0:22:18-20, *KWAMANDAN MATA*)

Error is committed in Sentence (10) because of using the wrong article "the." In order to correct the committed error, the article "a" must be replaced with the definite article "the" because the word "night" refers to a specific upcoming night. Therefore, Sentence (10) should be rendered as: *There is no problem, we can spend **a** night here.*

### ***Adding Unnecessary Items***

Addition in writing is a situation where an unrequired item appears in a sentence. When this occurred, it is called addition error (Hikmah 2020). Many errors related to the addition of unnecessary items from the data were found from the data. The explanation of this kind of error is presented below:

Error 11: ‘We can’t succeed unless we **be** unite ourselves’. (0:32:34-38, KWAMANDAN MATA)

Error is committed in Sentence (11) because of adding unnecessary “be”. To correct the error and produce a grammatically correct sentence, the word “be” must be removed. Therefore, Sentence (11) should be rendered as: *We cannot succeed unless we unite ourselves.*

### ***Omission of Necessary Items***

As mentioned earlier, an omission occurs when a necessary item is omitted from a sentence. This renders it ungrammatical. Apart from the omission of prepositions and articles in many sentences, many other omissions are found from the data. The sentences with such kind of omission are presented below:

Error 12: ‘Am sure you know my parents.’ (0:53:04-7, MANSOOR)

The error committed in Sentence (12) is of a necessary item (pronoun ‘I’). Because using the word “Am” here is incorrect since the pronoun “I” is omitted. Hence, to correct the error committed in the sentence, the sentence should be rendered as: *I am sure you know my parents.*

Error 13: ‘Ask Alhaji Hamisu who your biological father’? (0:53:18-23, MANSOOR)

The error committed here is because of the omission of copular “is” that must be put between the subject “who” and its complement, “your biological father”. Thus, to correct the error, Sentence (13) should be rendered as: *Ask Alhaji Hamisu who is your biological father.*

Error 14: ‘Its better you explain the situation to us before it gets late’ (0:15:11-15, MANSOOR)

Error 15: ‘Its true you are not my parents’. (0:54:30-32, MANSOOR)

An error or the omission of an apostrophe is committed in Sentences (14 and 15). The writer does not write a contrastive form correctly by removing an apostrophe where he writes “its” instead of “it’s”. Hence, the sentences should be rewritten with the apostrophe as:

- *It’s your duty to protect her.*

- *It’s true you are not my parents*

These are many errors committed in the selected films but only the samples were analysed above. But the summary of the extracted errors is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** *Summary of the errors extracted from the data*

<b>Error</b>	<b>Subtitle in the Movie</b>	<b>Type of Error</b>	<b>Corrected Version</b>
1	It wasn’t my fault <i>Mansoor</i> , your father <b>insist</b> on that and tried to <b>talked</b> with him out of it.	<i>Incorrect use of tense</i>	<i>It was not my fault Mansoor, your father insisted on that and tried to walk with him out of it.</i>
2	He <b>comes</b> yesterday.		<i>He came yesterday.</i>
3	What if the medicine given to me <b>was</b> admired by everybody’		<i>What if the medicine given to me isadmired by everybody?</i>
4	She can <b>lost</b> capital.		<i>She can lose capital.</i>

5	Did he <b>tolds</b> you about the abroad?		<i>Did he tell you about the abroad?</i>
6	I'd love to see this <b>happen</b> before I die.... I know it will be amazing.	<i>Error in Subject-Verb Agreement (Concord Violation)</i>	<i>I would love to see that this <b>happens</b> before I die.... I know it will be amazing.</i>
7	I will make someone <b>deal</b> with you if you do not compose yourself		<i>I will make someone <b>deals</b> with you if you do not compose yourself.</i>
8	Who <b>ask</b> you to look men?	<i>Omission of Preposition</i>	<i>Who asked you to look <b>at</b> men?</i>
9	<b>By</b> God willing I will come back and meet you normal.		<i>God willing I will come back and meet you normally.</i>
10	There is no problem, we can spend <b>the</b> night here.	<i>Using Wrong Articles</i>	<i>There is no problem, we can spend <b>a</b> night here.</i>
11	We can't succeed unless we <b>be</b> unite our.	<i>Adding Unnecessary Items</i>	<i>We cannot succeed unless we unite ourselves.</i>
12	Am sure you know my parents.	<i>Omission of Necessary Items</i>	<i><b>I</b> am sure you know my parents.</i>
13	Ask Alhaji Hamisu who your biological father?		<i>Ask Alhaji Hamisu who your biological father <b>is</b>?</i>
14	Its better you explain the situation to us before it gets late.		<i>It's your duty to protect her.</i>
15	Its true you are not my parents.		<i>It's true you are not my parents.</i>
16	I am asking about the emotional <b>attachments</b> between two of you.	<i>Error of using the Wrong Word</i>	<i>I am asking about the emotional relationship between the two of you.</i>
17	You will see both the males and females and then makes your choice <b>their</b> .		<i>You will see both the males and females and then make your choice there.</i>
18	The boy is <b>childish</b> .		<i>The boy is foolish.</i>
19	You think you are a boyfriend'		<i>You think you are a teenager?</i>
20	I pray that God will give you <b>people</b> who will take care of you as you had been taking care of us'		<i>I pray that God will give you <b>children</b> who will take care of you as you have been taking care of us.</i>



21	She has too <b>many</b> jealous.		<i>She is too jealousy.</i>
22	I really appreciate your advice; therefore, I will call and tell AIG about this problem in <b>confidence</b> '		<i>I really appreciate your advice; therefore, I will call and tell AIG about this problem in <b>secret</b>.</i>
23	Be ready to tell me <b>whom</b> you fall in love with, see you tomorrow'		<i>Be ready to tell me <b>who</b> you fell in love with, see you tomorrow.</i>
24	<b>Had</b> every Muslim follows his teachings, there will be no disputes among us		<i>If every Muslim follows his teachings, there will be no disputes among us.</i>

## Conclusion

The primary purpose of this paper is to see the possibility of using Hausa films subtitled in English to teach that language in primary school classes. But after selecting the three films and watching them, it realised that they were not qualified to be used in the classroom, because of the higher number of errors committed by the translator. Therefore, the researchers explored and analysed the errors extracted from the films with the aim of providing some recommendations on how to improve the subtitling process in order to produce a good and sound subtitle, which should eventually be used to teach English in the classroom.

There is the need for producers in the industry to employ professional subtitlers who know the grammar of both languages (Hausa and English). That is why Hasuria and Chow (2018) argued that good subtitles can be produced based on the subtitler's good skills and adequate experience, which always aid him/her to select appropriate strategies, which fit well with the subtitling work while wrong subtitles will definitely affect the viewers' understanding.

Moreover, the findings of this study revealed that the errors committed by the Hausa film translators can only be solved, though cooperative work. Providing a good subtitle is not limited to subtitler graphic artist filmmakers also have a role to play. Apart from filmmakers, universities, governments and NGOs also government officials have a role to play to correct the errors committed by the translators.

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