

PUNCTUATION IN SUBTITLING: A STUDY OF IGBO NOLLYWOOD FILMS

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Abstract

*Subtitling, a key component of audiovisual translation (AVT), replaces spoken dialogue with on-screen text, making films accessible to non-Igbo speakers and the hearing impaired. This study examines punctuation in the subtitling of Igbo Nollywood films, focusing on errors, stylistic accuracy, and potential cultural misrepresentation. The study analyses two Igbo films, *Ònyé bù ònà m* and *Àkà ázú ò yá*, using Gotlieb's subtitling strategies and Toury's descriptive translation theory as the theoretical framework. Findings indicate that punctuation significantly enhances subtitle readability and audience comprehension. Improper punctuation alters meaning, leading to misinterpretation of dialogue and narrative intent. The study highlights common errors such as missing commas, incorrect capitalization, and misplaced punctuation marks, all of which affect the effectiveness of subtitles. However, despite these issues, the study finds no evidence that punctuation errors contribute to a misrepresentation of Igbo culture in Nollywood films. Given the importance of accurate subtitling, the study recommends that media outlets assess the proficiency of subtitlers within their organizations and implement quality control measures. Proper punctuation in subtitles ensures that meaning is preserved and that Igbo Nollywood films effectively communicate with a broader audience. The study concludes that failure to apply correct punctuation results in loss of meaning, affecting the overall viewer experience. By addressing these challenges, Nollywood can improve its global reach and linguistic accuracy in film translation.*

Keywords: Subtitling, Punctuation, Igbo Nollywood Films, Audiovisual Translation, Cultural Representation, Readability.

1.0 Background of the Study

Language is a fundamental tool for communication, allowing individuals to express ideas, emotions, and cultural identities. In today's globalized world, translation plays a crucial role in facilitating cross-cultural communication by ensuring that messages are accurately conveyed from one language to another. Translation is more than just a linguistic process; it involves an intricate balance of language, culture, and context. As Nwike (2015, 2021, 2021, 2022, 2023) and Nwike, Agbede and Ndubuisi (2021) argue, translation is an information transfer process where the message of the source text is rendered precisely in another language, allowing the target audience to fully grasp the intended meaning. The field of translation has evolved significantly, expanding from literary and textual translation to audiovisual translation (AVT), which is essential for media dissemination across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Audiovisual translation, particularly subtitling, is one of the most effective ways to bridge language gaps in the film industry. Subtitling allows audiences who do not understand the original language of a film to engage with its content through written translations displayed on the screen. Nollywood, Africa's largest film industry, has increasingly relied on subtitling to make its films accessible to wider audiences, both within Nigeria and internationally. The Igbo-language film industry, a significant part of Nollywood, has particularly benefited from subtitling, as it allows non-Igbo speakers to enjoy and appreciate Igbo films. According to Uchenna (2010), subtitling has contributed to the rising popularity of Igbo-language Nollywood films, making them more accessible to diverse viewers and expanding their cultural impact.

However, while subtitling facilitates communication, the effectiveness of subtitles depends on several factors, including linguistic accuracy, timing, readability, and punctuation. Punctuation plays a critical role in subtitling, as it helps convey meaning, tone, and emphasis, ensuring that subtitles align with the original speech in a coherent and comprehensible manner. Despite this, punctuation is often overlooked in Nollywood subtitles, leading to misinterpretations, ambiguities, and disruptions in viewer comprehension. Many Igbo Nollywood films contain subtitles with errors in punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure, which can distort the intended meaning of dialogues. For example, films such as *Ọnyé Bù Nnà M* and *Àkà Ázú Dì Yá* feature numerous grammatical inconsistencies, including incorrect punctuation and capitalization errors, which impact the overall viewing experience.

The neglect of punctuation in subtitling is not merely a linguistic issue but also a cultural one. Subtitling errors in Igbo Nollywood films can misrepresent Igbo language and culture, leading to negative perceptions among non-Igbo viewers. As a result, some audiences may assume that Igbo speakers are not proficient in English, reinforcing stereotypes and undermining the credibility of the industry. Again, the lack of standardized subtitling practices in Nollywood contributes to inconsistent quality, as many filmmakers prioritize rapid production over linguistic accuracy. The influence of hurriedly produced subtitles on the international reception of Nollywood films highlights the need for a more systematic approach to audiovisual translation in the industry.

Despite the growing body of research on translation and audiovisual translation, little academic attention has been given to the role of punctuation in Nollywood subtitling. Most studies focus on translation accuracy and linguistic fidelity, while the technical aspects of punctuation, such as the correct use of commas, periods, ellipses, and question marks, remain underexplored. Given the increasing global reach of Nollywood films and the importance of subtitles in their accessibility, this study seeks to address this gap by analysing punctuation usage in Igbo Nollywood film subtitles. By examining how punctuation is applied in subtitling, this study aims to evaluate its impact on meaning, readability, and audience comprehension. It also assesses whether punctuation errors contribute to the misrepresentation of Igbo culture and language in Nollywood films. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for subtitlers, translators, and filmmakers, helping to improve the quality of Nollywood subtitles and enhance the viewing experience for global audiences. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on audiovisual translation, linguistic clarity, and the preservation of meaning in Igbo-language films.

1.1 Scope and Delimitation of the study

The focus of this study is punctuation in subtitling, specifically in Igbo Nollywood films. *Àkà ázú dì yá* and *Ọnyé bù nnà m* are the films that were used in this study. Because subtitles are employed to analyse media pieces like dramas that are aired on television or in films, this study approaches subtitles from the perspective of translation rather than literature. The goal of this study is to examine the punctuation errors in the two films used for the study, assess the stylistic accuracy of the Igbo films that have been subtitled, and ascertain if the discovered errors in the films bring about a Nollywood misrepresentation of Igbo culture. Based on this, special attention is only paid to the objectives of the study. Herein, instead of approaching punctuation as a stylistic element, it was studied from the perspective of a general grasp of what it is. This is due to the possibility that people may employ specific symbols to create unique effects in specific circumstances to convey a particular piece of information. As a result, these symbols may not be universally understood, which presents a problem to those who come across such works.

1.2 Poetic License: Definition and Application

Poetic license, also known as artistic, literary, dramatic, historical, or narrative license, refers to the deliberate deviation from conventional rules of language, facts, or artistic norms to achieve a specific effect, usually for dramatic or aesthetic purposes. According to Nayeli (2013) and Nwike (2023), poetic license is a literary device with many names and forms, originating from the Latin words *poeta* (poet or maker) and *licentia* (to be permitted). This concept grants creators the freedom to manipulate language, structure, and factual accuracy to enhance artistic expression. Poetic license is widely used across various forms of media, including literature, film, television, theatre, and poetry. Writers and

filmmakers often employ poetic license to create compelling narratives, alter historical events for dramatic impact, or break grammatical conventions for stylistic effect. For example, in poetry, poets may bend grammatical rules, use unconventional syntax, or omit punctuation to create rhythm, mood, or emphasis. Similarly, in films and historical dramas, directors may modify real-life events or characters to make a story more engaging or fit within a particular narrative framework.

However, while poetic license allows for creative freedom, it can sometimes lead to misinformation or misinterpretation, particularly in contexts where accuracy is crucial. In the case of subtitling, for example, excessive use of poetic license such as altering punctuation, omitting key details, or distorting meaning can hinder comprehension, especially for audiences relying on subtitles for language learning or accessibility. This is particularly relevant for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as subtitles serve as their primary means of understanding dialogue and narrative context.

In the context of Igbo Nollywood film subtitling, the balance between poetic license and linguistic accuracy is essential. While filmmakers may use poetic license to enhance storytelling, the improper use of punctuation in subtitles can negatively affect readability and meaning. If punctuation errors are widespread, they may misrepresent the original speech, making it difficult for non-Igbo speakers or those using subtitles for educational purposes to grasp the intended message. This study, therefore, focuses on punctuation accuracy in a broad sense, aiming to assess whether Igbo Nollywood subtitles maintain linguistic integrity while considering the artistic and creative liberties that filmmakers may employ. By evaluating how punctuation is used in these subtitles, the study seeks to contribute to the discourse on audiovisual translation, accessibility, and the role of poetic license in shaping film narratives.

1.3 Style and Stylistic Precision

Style refers to the distinctive way in which language is used in speech or writing, encompassing elements such as word choice, sentence structure, tone, and figurative expressions. It is an essential aspect of communication, as it helps convey meaning effectively while reflecting the writer's or speaker's personality, cultural background, and artistic intent (Crystal, 2008). In literature and media, style plays a crucial role in shaping how messages are perceived by audiences, influencing engagement, clarity, and emotional impact.

Stylistic precision, on the other hand, refers to the accurate and deliberate application of language elements to ensure clarity, coherence, and appropriateness in communication. According to Leech and Short (2007), stylistic precision involves maintaining consistency in grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary to enhance readability and comprehension. In audiovisual translation, including subtitling, stylistic precision ensures that translated content accurately represents the source language while maintaining proper linguistic conventions.

In the context of Igbo Nollywood film subtitling, stylistic precision is particularly important, as errors in punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure can alter meaning and reduce the effectiveness of communication. When subtitles lack proper stylistic precision, they may confuse viewers or misrepresent the intended message. As Nwike (2023, 2021) and Nwike, Olaide, and Obiora (2021) note, poorly constructed subtitles in Nollywood films often result in misinterpretations, particularly for audiences who rely on them for language learning or accessibility.

1.4 Punctuation: Importance and Examples

Punctuation refers to the system of symbols used in writing to clarify meaning, indicate pauses, and enhance readability. It plays a crucial role in structuring sentences, preventing ambiguity, and guiding the reader's interpretation of a text (Truss, 2003). Proper punctuation ensures that messages are conveyed accurately, maintaining both grammatical correctness and stylistic precision. Punctuation marks help to organize written language and reflect spoken language features such as intonation and pauses. According to Crystal (2008), punctuation not only affects readability but also contributes to the stylistic quality of a text. Misplaced or missing punctuation can alter meaning significantly, sometimes leading to confusion or misinterpretation. For example, consider the following sentences:

1. **Let's eat, Chinenye!**
2. **Let's eat Chinenye!**

The first sentence, with the comma, suggests that the speaker is inviting Chinenye to eat. The second sentence, without the comma, gives the unintended meaning that the speaker is suggesting eating Chinenye. This example highlights how punctuation directly affects meaning. However, the following are the **common punctuation marks and their functions according to** Crystal (2008):

1. **Comma (,)** - Used to indicate a pause, separate items in a list, or clarify meaning.
 - Example: *He enjoys reading, writing, and painting.*
 - Without the comma: *He enjoys reading writing and painting.* (unclear)
2. **Period (.)** - Marks the end of a declarative sentence.
 - Example: *The film was excellent.*
3. **Question Mark (?)** - Indicates a question.
 - Example: *Are you coming to the conference?*
4. **Exclamation Mark (!)** - Expresses strong emotion or emphasis.
 - Example: *That was amazing!*
5. **Apostrophe (')** - Used to show possession or contractions.
 - Example (possession): *Chinenye's book is on the table.*
 - Example (contraction): *It's raining outside.* (Instead of *It is raining outside.*)
6. **Quotation Marks (" ")** - Used to enclose direct speech or quotations.
 - Example: *He said, "I will be there soon."*
7. **Ellipsis (...)** - Indicates omitted words or a trailing thought.
 - Example: *I don't know... maybe we should ask someone else.*
8. **Colon (:**) - Introduces a list, explanation, or quotation.
 - Example: *He bought three things: apples, oranges, and bananas.*
9. **Semicolon (;)** - Connects closely related independent clauses or separates complex list items.
 - Example: *I have a big test tomorrow; I can't go out tonight.*

In applying punctuation in audiovisual translation, it is pertinent to say that it is especially important in subtitling, as it helps to convey meaning within limited screen space. In Nollywood films, improper punctuation in subtitles often results in misunderstandings. According to Nwike (2021, 2023), many Igbo Nollywood films contain subtitles with punctuation errors, affecting their readability and effectiveness in conveying meaning. For example, a subtitle from an Igbo Nollywood film may read:

1. **"what are you doing here"** (incorrect – missing capitalization and punctuation)
2. **"What are you doing here?"** (correct – proper capitalization and question mark)

Such errors can lead to confusion for viewers, particularly those relying on subtitles for language learning or accessibility. So, punctuation is a fundamental aspect of written language that ensures clarity, accuracy, and effective communication. Whether in everyday writing or subtitling, the correct use of punctuation enhances comprehension and prevents ambiguity. Given its importance, filmmakers and translators must prioritize proper punctuation in subtitles to maintain linguistic integrity and improve viewer experience.

1.5 Subtitle Strategies

Style adds value to all that people do. It might be argued that certain potential difficulties come with adopting diverse approaches to tasks. Translations using this technique is particularly noticeable in audiovisual translations (AVT). Based on this premise, it may be possible to determine that there is a formal constraint as the space factor of a maximum of 2 lines and 35 characters, as well as the time factor, in audiovisual translation when subtitling is the center point of discourse, as Spanakaki (2007) pointed out. According to Schwarz (2003), the tempo difference between spoken and read language is the primary cause of the subtitle's core issue. This indicates that a text reduction is required due to both spoken language and reading speed. In light of this, a strategy to reduce potential subtitling issues must be developed. Based on the aforementioned, Lörcher (1991) defines strategies as methods that result

in the most effective resolution of a translation issue. Nonetheless, Nwike (2023) brought attention to a few Gottlieb (1992) film subtitle techniques, which are as follows:

1. When there is a cultural nuance that the target language does not convey, expansion is used to clarify the original content.
2. It is used when the source material's phraseology cannot be recreated in the target language in the same syntactic fashion.
3. Transfer requires a complete and accurate translation of the original data.
4. Imitation adopts the same forms, typically using the names of individuals and locations.
5. Transcription is used when a phrase is unusual, even in the source data. employing a third language as an illustration.
6. Dislocation is used when the original employs a special effect of any kind. When a silly song is used in a cartoon film, for instance, the effect is more important than the content.
7. The process of compressing data in the least observable way possible is called condensation.
8. Decimation is a kind of extreme condensation in which, to expedite, even possibly crucial elements are removed.
9. The total eradication of a piece of data is called deletion.
10. Resignation is used when no translation solution can be found and meaning is unavoidably lost.

Accordingly, Gottlieb (1992) offers a fundamental classification of the different audiovisual translation modalities. This is because, despite some evolving problems, strategies are still the foundation of subtitle analysis. Nonetheless, Toury's research will help create high-quality subtitles that the intended audience will find universally acceptable. Thus, the theoretical foundation and frameworks for this investigation will be provided by this theory, as well as the Gottlieb (1992) subtitling procedures that were previously addressed. This is since they are the best theory and approach that work well together to highlight this study.

2.0 Toury's Descriptive Translation Theory

Toury developed a theory in 1984 that is centered on the descriptive theory of translation. Toury (1984) approached it from the perspective of a methodical descriptive analysis that concentrated on the study of translation. According to Toury, descriptive studies of translational events are the only empirical endeavours that can lead to the development of a general theory of translation. Because he views translation as a practical phenomenon that takes place in the literary polysystem of the culture in which it exists, Toury supports a target-oriented approach to translation.

2.1 Research methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design. The area of this study is audiovisual translation (subtitling) specifically, a literary translation which houses book and media pieces. The population of this study comprises all the Igbo films in the Nollywood entertainment industry. In the Nollywood industry, there are Hausa and Yoruba Nollywood, and they equally do subtitles. This study, however, is not looking at them but only the Igbo films of the Nollywood industry. Again, this study adopted non-probability sampling, where all the Nollywood Igbo films that formed the population of the study did not have a chance of being selected. The main instrument used to obtain data for the research is the films used for the study. The analysis entails a series of focused examinations of the data to find out the results, hence, a thematic analysis.

2.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section fixed punctuation errors in Igbo Nollywood films used for the study by presenting and analysing them. This was done by employing Gottlieb (1992) subtitle strategies, and the translation theory of Toury (1984). The purpose of this study is to examine the punctuation errors in the two films used for the study, assess the stylistic accuracy of the Igbo films that have been subtitled, and ascertain if the discovered errors in the films bring about a Nollywood misrepresentation of Igbo culture. The following are some instances of punctuation utilised in the study's chosen films:

Table One: Showing the use of transfer strategy of Gotlieb (1992) in *Ákà ázú ò yá*

The errors in the film subtitle of *Ákà ázú ò yá* are highlighted in italics. The film's transcription is to be found under the heading *Asụsụ Igbo*. The errors are as follows:

S/N	Asụsụ Igbo	Film's subtitle/punctuation errors	Correct punctuation	Strategy
1	Ma chekwara o, kedụ ihe ị bịa ebe a ime?	But wait a minute, why are you <i>here</i>	But wait, what have you come here to do?	Transfer
2	Agara m be unu, nne gị gwa m na ị gawara ubi.	I was at your house and your mother told me you were on the farm so I come to look for you	When I arrived at your house, your mother informed me that you had gone to the farm.	Transfer

While the film's transcriptions and subtitles lack punctuation, which could mislead viewers who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as foreigners learning the Igbo language, the appropriate subtitle of the source information can be seen under the correct punctuation in the same table, where numbers 1 and 2 were rendered using a transfer strategy while maintaining the right punctuation in the expressions.

Table 2: Showing use of the 'transfer strategy' of Gotlieb (1992) in *Ònyé bù nnà m*

The erroneous punctuation in the film *Ònyé bù nnà m* is listed in the table below. The errors are as follows:

S/N	Asụsụ Igbo	Film's subtitle/punctuation errors	Correct punctuation	Strategy
1	Ọ bughị Nneka?	Is it not Nneka §	Is it not Nneka?	Transfer
2	Kee ụdị ihe bụ ihe a?	What type of thing is this §	What type of thing is this?	Transfer
3	Chere, ihe a ị na-akọwa abụ ezie?	Wait do you mean what you're saying §	Wait, do you mean what you are saying?	Transfer
4	Chere Nneka, ị na-ekwusikwa ihe a ị na-ekwu ike?	Wait Nneka so you're actually serious about what you're are saying §	Wait, Nneka, are you serious about what you are saying?	Transfer
5	Dịka gini?	Like what §	Like what?	Transfer
6	Kee ihe ị na-akọ ihe a?	What are you even saying §	What are you saying?	Transfer
7	Í na-ege m ntị?	Are you listening §	Are you listening?	Transfer
8	Okwa ị mara nwata nwanyị a dị ọcha na-aga achọta m toro ogologo?	Do you know that very young girl that do visit me §	I hope you know the tall and fair-complexioned young girl that visits me?	Transfer
9	A na-ekwu ka a na-ekwu, nwata nwanyị nọrọ n'elu akwa piwa ekwentị ya	Just in same time the girl started browsing through phone in bed	At the same time, the girl began scrolling through her phone in bed.	Transfer
10	Maka ha piwakwaraa ihe a, uche ha apụọ	Cos once they start that chatting they lose concentration	They lose concentration once they start conversing on chat.	Transfer
11	Ọ gini me?	What happened §	What happened?	Transfer
12	Kee etu I mee	How are yiou §	How are you?	Transfer

13	Nwanne gi nwoke asịrọ gi, i si ya	If your does not say to you you'll say to him	You will say something to your brother if he does not say something to you.	Transfer
14	Kee ka m ga-esi mara nke m ga-ekwe kịtaa?	How will I know which one to believe right now §	How will I know which one to believe right now?	Transfer
15	Ngwanu biko ka anyi mee sooso otu maobu ka anyi mee obere, sooso obere.	Ok then. Please, just once Or lets do half. Just half	That is all right. Please, let us only do it once or half of the time.	Transfer
16	Kee ihe i sirị na o bu ya na-eme gi?	What did say is wrong with you§	What exactly did you say was wrong with you?	Transfer
17	Ihe m na-akogheri bu na adi m ime. O kwa ihe m na-agwa gi na m achoghi ka o mee	The rubbish am talking is that am pregnant Same thing I was warning you I wouldn't like to happen	What I am saying is that I am pregnant. It is exactly what I was implying when I said I did not want it to happen.	Transfer
18	Onye?	Who §	Who?	Transfer
19	Kedu ka i siri chota ebe a?	How did you locate this place §	How did you locate this place?	Transfer
20	O bu etu a ka mma?	Is this the best way §	Is this the best way?	Transfer
21	Ihe nke a putara bu na m aghotaghi agwa gi nke ikpe azu a	What this means, is that I don't understand your behavior this lastly	What this means is that I do not understand your behaviour recently.	Transfer
22	Esisiela m nri, bia ka i rie nri.	I'm done cooking. Come have dinner	I have finished cooking, come and eat.	Transfer
23	O nweghi ihe m mere. O nweghi ihe m maara m mee gi.	I don't know what I did. I don't know if I did anything to you	I have no idea what I did. I am not aware of anything I did to you.	Transfer
24	Ahukwara m gi n'anya, o bughị ring ga-ebutere mu na gi esemokwu	I love you. its not ring that should bring us quarrel	I love you, and it is not a ring that will bring problems between us.	Transfer
25	Nne m, kee ka o ga-esi di mma?	My dear. how will it be well	My dear, how will it be well?	Transfer
26	Ajuola m gi ma mmadu abuo nwere obi oku a na-ebi n'otu ulo.	Does two people that with temper problem stay in one house §	I have asked you if two people with temperament issues can live in the same house.	Transfer
27	Ihe m chorọ kịtaa bu etu mu na nwa m nwanyị ga-esi na-adi na mma.	The only thing I want right now is how be in good terms with my daughter	My primary concern right now is how to maintain a good relationship with my daughter.	Transfer
28	Kee ka i ga-esi ebe i si tiri bata bia na-achọ onye ga-enye gi ugwu?	How can you just from wherever barge in here looking for who will give you respect §	How do you just show up and start seeking someone who will respect you?	Transfer
29	Mu na ezinaulo m na ndi be anyi na-adi gi ka ndi ara.	I and my family all seem to you like crazy ones	To you, my people and I appear to be insane.	Transfer
30	O gaghi ege gi nti maka na o taka ahuhu.	She wont listen to you. shes suffered a lot	She will not listen to you because she has suffered a lot.	Transfer

31	Papa biko ewenalụ m iwe, i nụ?	Papa please don't be angry with me ok §	Please, Papa, do not get annoyed with me, ok?	Transfer
32	M ka ga-abia hụ gi. O kwanụ ọrụ, ọrụ karịrị m ahụ, biko ewela iwe	I will still come and see you its just work I am very much occupied with work please do not be angry	I will still visit you. Please, do not be offended; I am quite busy with work.	Transfer

To preserve punctuation significance for the target viewers' comprehension, the stylistic precision of the subtitle has been suitably portrayed the way it should look on the screen. Therefore, it is evident from the preceding table that when punctuation is employed correctly, target viewers are provided with accurate information. However, there will be meaningless losses in the source material when the major information is flawed because of improper punctuation. The researcher employed Toury's descriptive translation and Gotlieb's strategies, which emphasize the similarity of two information sources, to accurately and efficiently convey the information from the source language. In any written language, punctuation is crucial since it directs the reader's attention. For example, in table 2, number one, the film's subtitle can be used to derive the following examples: *O bughị Nneka?* in the film titled *Ònyé bù ònà ònà*. For instance, it has been demonstrated that the phrase "*O bughị Nneka*" will be difficult for a person with hearing loss to understand without the question mark. The remaining examples in the above table can be said to be similar. The phrase *O bughị Nneka* might mean one of two things, depending on the situation. For example, *O bughị Nneka* can imply "it is not Nneka," while *O bughị Nneka?* with a question mark denotes "Is it not Nneka?" Therefore, there is a substantial difference between the functions of a punctuation mark in a sentence and a simple statement or phrase.

Consequently, to get it right, picture a scenario in which a non-Igbo speaker is viewing a film and encounters improperly punctuated subtitles. Instead of understanding the message's original meaning, the recipient can interpret it as a simple statement. For example, if the question mark is removed from "Is it not Nneka?" then a non-Igbo viewing the film will not understand the essential point of the source. Stated differently, such a statement is false since it fails to deliver the desired meaning. But an Igbo second language student and an Igbo non-speaker will understand what the actor is asking about Nneka if the proper punctuation is used to convey the relevant information: "Is it not Nneka?" Toury's recommendation was also used to make sure the right information was communicated. When the intended message in Igbo was accurately subtitled into English while preserving the sameness of the original information, as in *O bughị Nneka*§ "Is it not Nneka?" the sameness of meaning implied in the source language information came into play. However, based on the objectives of the study, it can be categorically stated that the encountered errors did not in any way cause misrepresentation of Igbo culture in the Nollywood industry and thus achieve the objectives of the study.

3.0 Findings of the study

Punctuation enhances the readability of the information displayed on the screen. Any text that is not punctuated correctly has the potential to give the reader or intended audience a false impression and lead them to perceive it incorrectly. One may say that the question mark is the punctuation mark that appears most frequently in this study. Based on the objective of this study, the sort of sign that has been used in place of the widely recognised question mark sign is a style because it is consistent. Based on this, it can be said with certainty that the goal of film editors is accomplished if their only intention is to employ punctuation to create a unique stylistic effect. In contrast, the operational definition of punctuation used in this study indicates that the style film editors used is incorrect because it deviates from the established norm and thereby misleads the intended viewers. According to the study's findings, the films used in this investigation provided proof that punctuation affects the message comprehension of the intended viewers. According to this study, information that has been punctuated, whether in text or on a screen, makes written information easier to understand and follow up on. Furthermore, the study discovers that because punctuation consists of signs and symbols, each represents something, thus helping to convey meaning to the intended viewers. Contrarily, as punctuation is only employed in writing and not speech, it has been discovered that punctuation issues are related to the improper

application of punctuation where it is required in written information. To put it another way, the research indicates that punctuation refers to the systematic marking of written content to divide structural units and clarify meaning.

Various punctuation symbols in a language serve different tasks, according to this study's findings, which are based on potential typical punctuation defects when used wrongly. The data analysis indicates that because subtitles are written at the bottom of screens or film's, information that is well-punctuated facilitates cross-fertilization of ideas, and makes it simple to read, comprehend, and act upon the information. Additionally, this study demonstrates that the benefit and importance of punctuation for the target audience goes beyond this particular study to other translation activities and research, including regular reading and writing. Most importantly, it is crucial to point out that in this study, errors in punctuation did not in any way lead to Nollywood misrepresenting Igbo culture. And it is therefore evident at this point that the data presented above in this segment constitutes the study's outcome, which states that the role of punctuation on the target viewer has been established and achieved in this study.

4.0 Conclusion

Some Igbo film subtitles were closely examined due to linguistic differences between the source and target languages. There is more to subtitling than just swapping out a source language voice for a target language equivalent that is displayed on the screen. The researcher focused on punctuation in subtitling, using two Igbo Nollywood films for the study. The goals were achieved. This study concludes that meaning is lost when a translator or someone employed by a media company fails to use appropriate punctuation when it is required. Additionally, the target viewers will not understand the intended message in the original form that it was intended to convey in the source language.

4.1 Recommendations

The researcher advocates the following actions that will significantly enhance future subtitling exercises in light of the study's findings; hence, more studies should be done on audiovisual services in the future, focusing on Nollywood Igbo dubbing and subtitles. Again, the names of the actors should correspond with their various lines in Igbo films with subtitles. Additionally, further studies should look at the reasons behind the artistic choices made by film editors, particularly when it comes to things that follow rules, because breaking them can deceive the intended viewers. Another is that media outlets should assess the level of subtitling activities, expertise, or proficiency within their organisations. This is because subtitling is a language exercise that requires technical proficiency and should not be left to individuals with little to no experience in the field.

Finally, since the study used manual subtitling without emphasizing the use of software in subtitles, extra attention should be given to the use of subtitle software with automatic delay functions in Nollywood Igbo film subtitling to guarantee that the required pauses are placed between subtitles.

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