

## Audiovisual Translation of Slang Words and Phrases and Their Types of Equivalence in 50/50 Movie

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### ABSTRACT

The study aims to identify the types of slang, subtitling strategies applied, and the types of equivalence discovered in the movie subtitle. There are three different theoretical frameworks employed in this study in order to analyze the data, those are the classification of types of slang based on the lexical meaning proposed by Finnegan et al. (1992) and the word-formation process proposed by Yule (1996), the subtitling strategies as proposed by Gottlieb (1992 in Ghaemi and Benyamin, 2010); and the types of equivalence by Kade (1968 in Pym, 2010). Descriptive Qualitative approach was employed as the research design in this study. There are 370 slang words and phrases as the collected data which were taken from 50/50 movie subtitle. The result revealed that out of 12 classifications of types of slang, there were 8 types identified, and Synonymy (55.14%) was the most frequent type of slang applied in the movie subtitle. Similar to the types of slang, there are 7 out of 10 subtitling strategies applied in the movie subtitle, and the most-used strategy applied in the movie subtitle was Transfer (43.43%). Furthermore, in types of equivalence, there are 3 out of 4 types with the most frequent type applied in the movie subtitle was One to Several equivalence (95.9%). In addition, in the combination of three analyses, Synonymy-Transfer-One to Several equivalence was mostly appeared simultaneously in the movie subtitle which has 73 occurrences. Therefore, it can be concluded that types of slang, subtitling strategies, and types of equivalence are correlated to each other. It happened because the subtitling strategies as the strategies which were used to translate the slang words and phrases resulted in the translated version of the slang that were classified into types of equivalence.

**Keywords:** *Slang words and phrases, Types of Slang, Subtitling Strategies, and Types of Equivalence.*

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, there are many studies conducted in audiovisual translation. It is because audiovisual translation has become one of the most interesting topics to discuss in translation studies (Janecova, 2012). One of the interesting topics in audiovisual translation which is related to linguistic studies is translating slang. It has been increasingly popular from year to year. Now, it can be easily found in many media, like movie. Since slang in one country is different to the others, it is necessary to bridge the meaning of slang in one country to another within a movie by the translation process to make the audiences understand the meaning of the slang delivered in the movie.

Translating slang in media like movies is more challenging because there are several problems commonly faced by the translators when translating slang in movies as it declared by Rittmayer (2009). Those problems are (1) translating slang expression from source language into the target language is not always equivalent or it has more than one equivalent in the target-language

culture, because the slang expression is shaped by source-language culture and it causes the translators to choose a suitable equivalent to use it in the target text; (2) censorship causes the translators to extremely alter the text into target language.

Therefore, there are some specific ways perceived suitable to overcome the difficulties in translating slang as mentioned above. One of them is to determine the slang items by identifying the types of slang first. They types of slang could be classified based on their lexical semantics (Finnegan et al., 1992) and the word formation process (Yule, 1996). Additionally, to translate slang of one language to another, subtitling mode needs to be taken. Hence, Gottlieb's (1992 in Ghaemi and Benyamin, 2010) theory on ten subtitling strategies is suitable to use in translating the slang in movie subtitle. Furthermore, to examine the equivalent of the translated text, it is necessary to identify the equivalence of the slang translation. Equivalence is defined and classified by many scholars with their own terms. According to Pym (2010), equivalence is the relation between the

source text and its translation. Regarding to answer the third research question of study, four types of equivalence proposed by Kade (1968 in Pym, 2010) seems suitable to be employed due to his equivalence theory focuses on the level of word and phrases.

There were many studies on translating slang that have been conducted that were considered related to the present study. For example, the studies conducted by Ghaemi and Benyamin (2010), Kusumah (2014) that concerned on the subtitling strategies used in interlingual subtitling of movies. The other studies from Barzegar (2008), Eriksen (2010), Nugraha's (2013) were also focused on the subtitling strategies used in movies subtitles, but the data were specific on slang and colloquial expressions. Moreover, Blonskytė and Petronienė's (2013) study also focused on slang translation, but in a novel.

The present study focuses on the types of slang based on the lexical meaning and word formation process and also to discover the subtitling strategies and types of equivalence

used in the movie which are found and applied in *50/50* movie.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Audiovisual Translation**

The definition of audiovisual translation could be revealed as transferring meaning in the audiovisual media from one language to another. It is in line with Chiaro (2013) who defines audiovisual translation as transferring verbal components from one language to another which are contained in audiovisual works and products. There are number of modes type of audiovisual translation. However, according to Chiaro (2013), only dubbing and subtitling are the main modes for screen translation products.

### **Subtitling**

Since the main focus of the study is to discover slang words and phrases found in movie subtitle, only subtitling theory which is discussed in this sub-chapter.

According to Cintas (2003 in Ghaemi & Benyamin 2010) subtitling is the concept that has undergone the greatest growth and most commonly used in

translation among the other audiovisual translation modes. It is because subtitling is the most economical and quickest method to implement. In addition, Gottlieb (2001 in Chiaro, 2013) defines that subtitling is translating verbal message in different language in filmic media in one or more lines of written text presented on the screen in sync with the original messages.

### **Subtitling Strategies**

There are ten subtitling strategies as proposed by Gottlieb (1992 in Ghaemi & Benyamin, 2020). Below are the ten subtitling strategies.

1. **Expansion** is used when the original text needs an explanation because of some cultural nuance are not retrievable in the target language.
2. **Paraphrase** is used in cases where the phraseology of the original cannot be reconstructed in the same syntactic way in the target language.
3. **Transfer** means to the strategy of translating the source text accurately and completely.
4. **Imitation** is used to maintain the same forms, commonly used for names of people and places.
5. **Transcription** is used in those cases where a term is unusual even in the source text, such as the use of third language or nonsense language.
6. **Dislocation** is used when the original dialogue employs some kind of special effects.
7. **Condensation** is typically strategies used to shorten the text in the least obtrusive way possible.
8. **Decimation** is an extreme form of condensation for possibly reason of discourse speed, even potentially important elements are omitted.
9. **Deletion** is total elimination of parts of a text.
10. **Resignation** is a strategy that is used when no translation solution can be found and meaning is inevitably lost.

## **Slang**

As a phenomenon of language, slang is considered as non-standard variety of language that is commonly used to denote certain informal or faddish usage of nearly anyone in the speech community (Southerland & Katamba, 1997). In addition, Mattiello (2005) also states that speakers use specific slang because they want to create their own identity with the aspects such as social status, age, education, etc.

## **Types of Slang**

Since slang is defined as an ever-changing language (Eble, 1996 in Arua & Alimi, 2009), especially in cases of its lexical formation, meaning and function, Mattiello (2008) claims that slang could be classified based on the slang formations which are frequently produced by recognizing the rules of their word-formation and their semantic, the slang words are complex and far from the standard language. Thus, slang words and phrases found in *50/50* movie subtitle are classified based on the lexical semantics (Finnegan et al., 1992) and the word formation process (Yule, 1996).

- Classification of slang based on the lexical semantics.

According to Finnegan et al. (1992), there are some types of lexical semantics, such as synonymy, metonymy, hyponymy, metaphor. Furthermore, some scholars believe that slang could be classified into several types of slang, such as metonymy, synonymy, euphemism, metaphor (Mattiello, 2008). The present study employs Yule's (1996) theory on the lexical semantics and the word formation process, which are as follow:

1. **Synonymy** is defined as the meaning of two words or more are very closely related, which are often intersubstitutable in sentences.
2. **Antonymy** happens when two words have opposite meanings.
3. **Hyponymy** is defined as the meaning of one word is included in the meaning of another word.
4. **Metonymy** is defined as the relatedness of meaning which are found in polysemy is essentially based on similarity.

5. **Metaphor**, according to Finnegan et al. (1992), metaphor is a kind of analogy that compares something to something else that is different to the literal meaning.

- Classification of slang based on the lexical semantics.

There are some classifications of word formation process that form slang, as stated by Mattiello (2008), those are reduplication, acronyms, initialisms, blends, clippings, elliptic rhyming slang, back-formation, derivation, etc. In addition, Yule (1996) also proposed classifications of word-formation which are as follow.

1. **Compounding** is producing a single word by joining two separate words.
2. **Blending** is producing a single new term by combining two separate words.
3. **Clipping** is process of reducing the element of word, like more than one syllable is reduced to shorter the word.
4. **Backformation** is defined as process of reducing a word one type (usually a noun) to form

another word of a different type (usually a verb).

5. **Conversion** means the function of a word is changed, such as noun becomes adjective, noun becomes verb.
6. **Acronyms** is defined as some new words are formed from the initial letters of a set of the other words.
7. **Derivation** is where a word is added by suffix.

### **Translating Slang**

In translating slang, some obstacles are frequently encountered by the translators. As stated by Rittmayer (2009) that there are two common problems encountered by translators. First, slang expression in source text and the target text is not always equivalent or even has more than one equivalent that causes the translators have to choose one of them that might have slightly different connotations. Second, censorship is the main problem in translating slang. It might happen because of either they themselves or they are being imposed by somebody.

Beside the censorship, it is also found that slang tends to be neutralized. It is in line with Mailhac (2000 in Eriksen, 2010, p.33) who says that “there is [a] tendency for film translations of slang to ‘tone down and neutralise’ ST slang expressions in the TT, weakening the tone of the original source text”.

Even though there are some slang words neutralized, it is believed by some scholars that neutralizing the slang words is one of solution in translating slang (Ulvydienè & Abramovaitè, 2012). Concerning the issue of translating slang, Newmark, Mattiolo, Drodze and Vogule (in Ulvydienè & Abramovaitè, 2012) claim that there are three optional strategies to translate slang such as stylistic compensation, literal translation, and stylistic softening. These techniques are believed could maintain slang in the target text. Similar to the techniques above, transfer strategy in subtitling can also maintain slang in the target text. It is in line with Newmark (1988) who argues that transfer strategy is used to deliver the whole message from the subtitle to the reader/spectator or from the text to

the reader without having any addition or omission.

### **Equivalence in Translation**

Translation is really related to equivalence. It is supported by Pym (2007) who says that talking about translation is talking about any kind of equivalence. It could be assumed that equivalence really influences the translation. In addition, Pym (2010) also states that equivalence is when one text is translated into the target text, it should have the same value (in any level, such as at word level of form, function and meaning).

There are several types of equivalence proposed by scholars, but this study employs Kade’s (1968 in Pym, 2010) four types of equivalence at level of words and phrases, since the main data of this study are in the form of words and phrases. Below are four types of equivalence at the level of words and phrases:

1. **One-to-one:** an item of source language corresponds to an item of target language.
2. **One-to-several or several-to-one:** where an item in one language corresponds to several

in another language or some items in one language correspond to only one item in another language.

3. **One-to-part:** it is only partial equivalent that are available, resulting in “approximate equivalence”.
4. **One-to-none:** in target language, there is no equivalent available.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive qualitative research approach in order to analyze the data because the data is slang words and phrases, considered as a social phenomenon, and they are in the form of text. Quantitative data analysis was also employed in this study in order to support the descriptive qualitative research approach to show the number or percentage of the data findings. According to Babbie (2010), quantitative method deals with number, focusing on logic, numbers, and unchanging static data. The percentages are based on the classifications of each analysis.

The data were gathered from *50/50* movie, both the dialogues in English and the subtitle in *bahasa Indonesia*. In analyzing the data, the classification of types of slang based on the lexical semantics (Finnegan et al., 1992) and the word formation process (Yule, 1996) was employed in order to answer the first research question. Then, subtitling strategies (Gottlieb, 1992 in Ghaemi & Benyamin, 2010) was also employed to identify the subtitling strategies applied in the movie subtitle. The last, to answer the third research question, types of equivalence (Kade, 1968 in Pym, 2010) was also employed. It is used to identify the types of equivalence in the movie subtitle. The data findings of each analysis were shown by the percentages. Then they were interpreted in general. Lastly, conclusions and suggestions were made based on the data findings of the study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are three analyses investigated in the study (1) the types of slang found in the movie dialogues, (2) the subtitling strategies applied in the



movie subtitle, (3) the types of equivalence found in the movie subtitle.

Based on the data findings, there are 370 slang words and phrases found in 50/50 movie. From twelve classifications of types of slang base on the lexical semantics and the word formation process, there were eight types of slang matched to the characteristics of slang words and phrases found in the movie. Those are synonymy that occurred 204 times (55.14%), blending occurred 103 times (27.84%), metaphor appeared 36 times (9.73%), compounding occurred 12 times (3.24%), conversion and clipping have similar occurrences. Each of them occurred 6 times (1.62%). The last was acronyms which appeared twice (0.27%). In this analysis, it is clearly seen that synonymy is the most frequent type of slang appeared in the movie. Below is the example of synonymy.

Alan: *Your dick becomes a constant of disappointment.* (70)

The word 'dick' is categorized as synonymy because it has some similar meaning to the other words, such as 'cock', 'balls'. The word 'dick' could

also be described as a man's genital or a fool man in offensive way (Cambridge Dictionary, 2008; Spears, 2000). However, in the context above, the word 'dick' means someone's genital organ or 'penis'.

In the second analysis, there are seven out of ten subtitling strategies applied in the movie subtitle, those are transfer which has 129 cases (43.43%), paraphrase has 81 cases (27.27%), condensation has 68 cases (22.9%), expansion has 10 cases (3.37%), deletion and imitation are similar, each of them has 2 cases (0.67%). In this analysis, transfer is the most applicable strategy. One of the examples of transfer strategy is as follows.

ST:

Kyle: Why? You don't wanna be late?

TT:

Kyle: *Kenapa? Kau tak ingin terlambat?*

As can be seen in the example above, the language structures of the translated texts are mostly similar to the source texts. That is why the examples above are included in transfer strategy. It is because transfer strategy is used to translate a source text accurately and completely without

adding or omitting any word (Ghaemi & Benyamin, 2010).

Furthermore, in the last analysis, of four types of equivalence, there were three types identified in the movie subtitle, those are one-to-several or several-to-one equivalence, one-to-one equivalence and one-to-none equivalence. One-to-several equivalence occurred 304 times (95.9%), several-to-one equivalence occurred 4 times (1.26%), one-to-one occurred 7 times (2.21%), and one-to-none equivalence occurred twice (0.63%). In this analysis, one-to-several equivalence is the most frequent type of equivalence appeared in the movie subtitle. Below is the example of one-to-several equivalence.

ST:

Kyle: They're for him. He's my buddy. He's really really sick.

TT:

Kyle: *Itu semua untuknya. Dia sobatku. Dia sakit parah.*

From the example above, the phrase 'my buddy' is translated as '*sobatku*' in the target text. The word 'buddy' is a friend (Cambridge dictionary, 2008), and in Dictionary of Slang, 'buddy' means '*teman*' (Luthan,

2001). However, in the context above, 'buddy' is corresponded as '*sobat*'. Furthermore, according to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (2011), '*sobat*' means '*sahabat baik*', or '*teman baik*'. That is why the word 'buddy' is counted as one-to-several equivalence since it corresponds to more than one word in the target text.

Beside those three types of equivalence, there are some slang words and phrases which cannot be corresponded in the target text and cannot be classified into any types of equivalence since they are omitted by certain strategies, such as condensation decimation, and deletion. Below is the example of condensation strategy that omits a slang word.

ST:

Kyle: ... but it's good to see you, dude.

TT:

Kyle: ... *tapi senang sekali bertemu denganmu lagi.*

The word 'dude' in this strategy is omitted but the meaning does not change. It causes no translation for that word in the target text. Thus, this word cannot be classified into any types of equivalence. However, not all slang words and phrases found in one

dialogue that have no types of equivalence. It is just for the slang words and phrases which are omitted in the target text. For example:

ST:

Kyle: ... it's gonna be good, it's gonna be fine.

TT:

Kyle: ...*semua akan baik-baik saja.*

The example above is categorized as decimation strategy since it omits some words and even one sentence in one dialogue. The first phrase 'it's gonna be good' is not translated or omitted in the target text, including the word 'gonna' as slang. Thus, the word 'gonna' in the first phrase cannot be classified into any types of equivalence since it does not have translation in the target text. However, in the second phrase, the word 'gonna' is translated as '*akan*' in the target text which results in one-to-several equivalence. Simply to say, one slang word is omitted, one type of equivalence is lost, although the dialogue is still translated into the target text. It happens because the data of the study is slang words and phrases, which employed types of equivalence that

only focuses on the level of words and phrases.

Furthermore, from the three analyses of the study, it can be seen that synonymy, transfer, and one-to-several equivalence in each analysis are the most frequent types and strategy found and applied in the movie. They are also the most frequent analyses which appeared simultaneously in the data findings that appear 73 times. It indicates that synonymy-transfer-one to several equivalence were interrelated each other, particularly synonymy and one to several equivalence. By seeing the definition, the definition of synonymy is close to of one to several equivalence. Synonymy, according to Finnegan et al. (1992) is the meaning of one word is nearly similar to the meaning of the other words. Moreover, one to several equivalence is defined as one word in one language corresponds to more than one word in target language (Pym, 2010). Thus, slang words and phrases contained in the subtitle found in 50/50 movie by nature have more than one meaning in the target language, depending on the context.

The slang words and phrases that were categorized as synonymy maintained and translated by using transfer strategy, so they were not necessary to be omitted or eliminated because this strategy translates the meaning completely and accurately. It is supported by Newmark (1988) who claims that the cultural words (slang) are frequently transferred in order to attract the reader/spectator, to give local colour and a sense of intimacy between the text and the reader/spectator. Thus, the translation of the slang words and phrases which were included as synonymy resulted in form of subtitles that were categorized as one to several equivalence, because both synonymy and one to several equivalence refer to the words or phrases that have more than one meaning both in the source text and the target text.

Therefore, this study reveals that the types of slang, the subtitling strategies, and the types of equivalence are interconnected to each other. It is evidently shown that the slang words and phrases classified based on the classifications of types of slang could be translated by using subtitling

strategies as the guideline to translate them. In addition, the types of equivalence emphasize that the slang words and phrases that have been translated by using the strategies have equal value or so-called equivalent in the target text.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

After the data were analyzed, the result revealed that there were 370 slang words found in the movie subtitle.

Based on the analysis of type of slang, there were eight out of twelve classifications matched the slang words and phrases found in the movie subtitles. Those are synonymy, blending, metaphor, compounding, conversion, clipping, derivation, acronyms. However, the most applied type was synonymy that appeared 204 times.

In the analysis of subtitling strategy, there were seven out of ten subtitling strategies applied in the movie subtitle; transfer, paraphrase, condensation, expansion, decimation, deletion, imitation. However, the most frequent strategy applied in the movie subtitle was 129 times.

Furthermore, out of three types of equivalence identified in the movie (which were one to several or several to one, one to one and one to none), the most frequent type appeared was one to several equivalence. It has 304 cases.

Based on the three analyses that have been conducted in this study, it was identified that synonymy-transfer-one to several equivalence were the most frequent analyses appeared simultaneously in the study which appeared 73 times. Moreover, in each analysis, they also have the highest frequency. In the classifications of types of slang, synonymy was the most frequent type, in term of subtitling strategies, transfer was the most frequent strategy and one to several was the most type of equivalence applied and identified in the movie subtitle. It could be proven that synonymy-transfer-one to several equivalence were interrelated to each other, particularly synonymy and one to several equivalence. Based on the definition, the definition synonymy and one to several equivalence is close to of one to several equivalence. Their meanings are similar to the meanings

of other words. Thus, slang words and phrases contained in the subtitle found in *50/50* movie by nature have more than one meaning in the target language, depending on the context.

The slang words and phrases that were categorized as synonymy maintained and translated by using transfer strategy, so they were not necessary to be omitted or eliminated because this strategy translated the meaning completely and accurately. It is supported by Newmark (1988) who claims that the cultural words (slang) are frequently transferred in order to attract the reader/spectator, to give local colour and a sense of intimacy between the text and the reader/spectator. Thus, the translation of the slang words and phrases which were included as synonymy resulted in form of subtitles that were categorized as one to several equivalence, because both synonymy and one to several equivalence refer to the words or phrases that have more than one meaning both in the source text and the target text.

In conclusion, it is believed the types of slang, subtitling strategies, and types of equivalence are interconnected

to each other. It could be proven by identifying the applied subtitling strategies as the guideline to translate the slang words and phrases found in the movie subtitle. Moreover, the types of equivalence emphasize that the slang words and phrases that have been translated have equal value or so-called as equivalent in the target text.

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