SLANG EXPRESSIONS IN THE ENGLISH *CLUELESS* MOVIE TEXT AND THEIR SUBTITLING STRATEGIES IN THE BAHASA INDONESIA SUBTITLING TEXT

By: Fitri Evrilia Timur

Yogyakarta State University

etimorty@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aims to describe the types of slang expressions found in the movie, the subtitling strategies employed by the subtitler and the degree of meaning equivalence of the slang expressions in the English *Clueless* movie text, and their Bahasa Indonesia subtitling text. This research was descriptive qualitative. The data were all slang expressions taken from the *Clueless* movie's dialogues and its subtitle. There are two instruments of the research, the researcher and the data sheet. The research findings show 96 data indicated as slang expressions. Slang expressions occurring in the English *Clueless* movie text fall into the New Invention type as the dominant type, followed by the Standard Expression type. Out of 10 strategies, there were eight subtitling strategies employed in translating the slang expressions wherein Transfer was the most dominant strategy followed by Paraphrase, Condensation, Expansion, Deletion, Decimation, Resignation and Imitation. Subsequently the translation of slang expressions in this movie have high degree of equivalence indicated by frequency of equivalent meaning compared to non-equivalent one. The implication was that the slang expressions used in the movie were successfully transferred in terms of meaning to the TL, thus made them readable to the audience.

Keywords: slang, subtitling strategies, meaning equivalence

BACKGROUND

Translation is a crucial part of communication which plays an important role as a bridge in connecting one language to another to make communication among people with various languages possible. Translation is, in fact, a complex and massive activity; it is not only about

changing one language to another while at the same time still keeping the meaning, but about how to translate the meaning from the source language to the target language as accuratly as possible to avoid misinterpretation, misunderstanding and ambiguity.

In fact, some expressions are difficult to be transferred into another language because they are peculiar to that language, such as slang expressions. People will find it difficult to get the information, and the message, and to enjoy a movie if they do not master the language well or at least are familiar with it. Slang words, usually called *slangs*, are informal types of an English language which are commonly used in conversation among people in a casual occasion. It is also closely bound to particular groups of people (race, culture, age, occupation, or even gender) as users.

Slang expressions are widely used in Hollywood movies especially in those of comedy genre. *Clueless* is one of the movies that blows up the slang expressions used to express the life of teenagers during the '90s. The reason for doing the research about slang is that it is interesting to analyze. The use of slang terms often appears in daily conversations which make the writer curious about this kind of expressions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is categorized as the qualitative. The data of this research were collected from original VCD or DVD of *Clueless* movie. The main data were all English slang expressions in the movie's dialogues and their translation in Bahasa Indonesia subtitling text. This research used two kinds of instruments: the researcher and the data sheet. The trustworthiness is gained by using credibility and dependability. To achieve credibility, the researcher undertook deep and detail observation of the data and applied some theories from the experts related to this research. Furthermore, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Oxford Dictionary of Slang, Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions, urbandictionary.com* are employed to validate and confirm the data. Besides, to achieve the concept of dependability which refers to the stability of the changes in data over time and conditions (Moleong, 2010:325), the researcher examined both the process and the product of this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

In this study, the researcher found 96 slang expressions used by the characters in *Clueless* movie. The researcher first analyzed the types of slang based on Willis's theory. The table below shows the categorizations, the frequencies, and the percentage related to the types of slang found in the observed movie.

Table 1. **The Types of Slang in** *Clueless* **Movie**

No	Types of Slang	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Standard Expression	42	43.75%
2.	New Invention	54	56.25%
	Total	96	100%

According to Gottlieb (in Ghaemi and Benyamin, 2010: 42), there are 10 subtitling strategies. However, in this case the subtitler applied 8 strategies out of 10 in translating the slang expressions. There are two subtitling strategies that are not used by the subtitler; transcription and dislocation. Below are the strategies used in the Indonesian subtitling of *Clueless* movie.

Table 2. **The Subtitling Strategies**

No	Subtitling Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Transfer	59	61.49%
2.	Paraphrase	17	17.70%
3.	Condensation	6	6.25%
4.	Deletion	5	5.20%
5.	Expansion	5	5.20%
6.	Decimation	2	2.08%
7.	Resignation	1	1.04%
8.	Imitation	1	1.04%

Total	96	100

This researcher adopted Bell's theory to assess the equivalence of the translation product in terms of meaning.

Table 3. **The Degree of Meaning Equivalence**

No	Equivalence of Meaning	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Fully Equivalent		
	a. Complete Meaning	68	70.83%
2.	Partly Equivalent		
	a. Increased Meaning	3	3.14%
	b. Decreased Meaning	12	12.5%
3.	Different Meaning	9	9.37%
4.	No Meaning	4	4.16%
	Total	96	100%

B. Discussion

1. The Types of Slang

a. Standard Expression

Slang expressions classified in this type have the same spelling but give new meaning to the common words, for example:

Datum 52

SL: Nice *stems.*

TL: *Kaki* yang bagus.

[00:48:43/Se/Trf/Com]

The next example is presented in the scene at the classroom when Cher accidently drops her pen. Christian notices that and picks up her pen. He gets a nice view of Cher's legs and comes to her to praise her beautiful legs.

In standard word, *stem* means the main long thin part of a plant above the ground from which the leaves or flowers grow; a smaller part that grows from this and supports flowers or leaves. In this case, the word *stem* as slang expression has almost the same meaning as the word *stem* in standard word. It refers to a particular thing which is long and thin.

As a slang expression, the word *stems* stand for *legs*.

The subtitling strategy employed by the subtitler is Transfer strategy since the subtitler directly transfers the meaning slang expression from the source language into the target language without any modifying of views. This datum has complete meaning because the meaning of the slang expression *stems* is accurately and completely transffered into *kaki* in the target language.

b. New Invention

New invention slang is being created as new word or at least has only slight connections with established or standard words. For instance:

Datum 15

SL: Some teachers were trying to **lowball** me, Daddy.

TL: Beberapa guru mencoba untuk **menurunkan nilai pelajaran** saya, Ayah.

[00:09:36/Ni/Exp/Inc]

The above example is presented in the scene when Mel, Cher's father gets angry of her daughter's report card. She then makes an excuse to defense herself.

Literally, According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary the word *low* means below the usual level and *ball* means a round object. This datum categorized as New Invention type of slang since the slang expression *lowball* is being created as a new word. As slang expression, *lowball* means *degrade*. As we can see in the datum above, the subtitler translates the slang expression into *menurunkan nilai pelajaran* in Bahasa Indonesia. It indicates that the subtitler provides an explanation by adding *nilai pelajaran* to the translated version of the word *lowball*. It is resulted to the degree of meaning equivalence which are increased meaning because there is an addition of information realized by new meaning which are not found in the source language.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions in the previous chapter, some conclusions related to the formulation of the problems can be drawn as follows: 1) the movie employs relatively balanced types of slang with New Invention slang are slightly higher than the Standard

Expression slang. The higher percentage of New invention slang might be due to the nature of slang itself that tends to be ever-changing according to time or era. However, the relatively high use of Standard Expression slang indicates that some slang expressions may retain their popularity across time and generation. 2) in subtitling the movie, Transfer is the most frequently used strategy, followed by Paraphrase, Expansion, Condensation, Deletion, Decimation, Resignation and Imitation. The high percentage of Transfer strategy shows that many slang expressions in the movie can be translated directly while the meaning of the expressions can be maintained. The low percentage of Imitation and Resignation indicates that the movie contains only a few number of specific slang expressions which cannot be translated into the TL. 3) in the case of the degree of meaning equivalence, the translation of slang expressions in *Clueless* movie has high degree of equivalence indicated by the frequency of equivalent meaning (86.45%) compared to non-equivalent (13.55%). These findings indicate that the subtitler succeeds in finding the equivalent meanings for the slang expressions in the TL. The result of this might be that the movie's subtitle can be easily understood by the target audience in terms of the use of slang expressions.

B. Suggestions

In order to widen the knowledge about translation studies in general and audio visual subtitling in particular, the researcher gives some suggestions to translators, to students majoring in

translation and to other researchers. Since language expressions are always bound to the culture of the speakers, a translator should be aware of the cultural aspects of both SL and TL. The knowledge and understanding about the cultural aspects are important for the translators in order to produce both natural and understandable translations for certain expressions, such as slangs. For students majoring in translation, there are so many aspects of translation that can be explored, such as conducting researches in other different kinds of audiovisual translation like dubbing. Moreover, for other researchers wishing to conduct studies of slang translation may possibly use different movie genres as the object of the study. Also, they should explore more about the knowledge of slang theories

to enrich the studies and development of translation studies.

REFERENCES

Bell, R. T. 1991. *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Longman.

Ghaemi, F. and Benyamin, J. 2010. "Strategies Used in the Translation of Interlingual Subtitling". *Journal of English Studies*. Karaj Branch: Islamic Azad University. Retrieved on April 26, 2015

Willis, H. 1964. *Structure Style Usage: a Guide to Expository Writing*. USA: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.