

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The evolution of cinema as a global medium of communication has necessitated a sophisticated approach to linguistic mediation, particularly through the art of subtitling. As a bridge between cultures, subtitling does not merely involve the literal replacement of words from a source language to a target language but rather requires a complex negotiation of cultural nuances, social registers, and idiomatic expressions (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2020). One of the most challenging elements in this process is the translation of slang. Slang represents the most dynamic and ephemeral layer of a language, acting as a marker of identity, social class, and contemporary urban culture (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2020). In the context of Indonesian cinema, the use of *bahasa gaul* or slang is an essential tool for directors to establish realism and character depth. However, when these films are exported to an international audience, the preservation of this socio-cultural identity becomes a significant linguistic problem.

Scholarly interest in the translation of non-standard languages has grown significantly in recent years. Previous studies have highlighted that slang functions not only as a lexical curiosity but also as a marker of social identity and group membership within particular communities (Allan & Burridge, 2006).

Researchers have noted that translating slang involves navigating the tension between preserving the source culture's flavor and ensuring the target audience's comprehension. In this study, "film subtitle slang" refers to the textual representation of oral, colloquial speech within the constraints of the screen. Unlike literary slang, subtitle slang must convey the immediate emotional and social context of the spoken word while adhering to strict spatial and temporal limits, often requiring the translator to condense the message without losing its stylistic impact.

The film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* stands as a pertinent object of study due to its heavy reliance on localized Indonesian slang that is deeply rooted in specific social environments. The dialogue within this film is not merely a vehicle for plot progression but serves as a semiotic layer that defines the tension, the atmosphere, and the social standing of the characters involved. For an English-speaking audience to fully grasp the intensity of the narrative, the subtitles must go beyond basic semantic transfer. They must attempt to find an equivalent that carries the same emotive and social weight as the original Indonesian slang. This is often difficult because slang is frequently "untranslatable" in a direct sense, leading translators to employ various techniques that may unintentionally alter the original message.

It is crucial to distinguish subtitling from other forms of translation. Unlike literary translation, subtitling is strictly governed by technical constraints, including spatial limitations that generally restrict subtitles to two lines per frame and temporal limitations determined by viewers' reading speed (Díaz-Cintas &

Remael, 2020). These constraints often compel the translator to condense or simplify the original dialogue. Consequently, when encountering slang, the translator faces a complex decision-making process: whether to preserve the source culture's flavor (exoticization) or to adapt the term for immediate target audience comprehension (domestication). To analyze these decisions effectively, a comprehensive taxonomy of translation strategies is required, allowing for a precise examination of how slang is rendered under such restrictive conditions.

Two major translation approaches have been widely discussed in translation studies to explain how meaning can be conveyed across languages (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2020). While general translation theories exist, they often fail to address the multimodal nature of film. For example, the dynamic equivalence theory proposed by Nida (1964) provides a strong foundation for achieving a similar emotional impact on the reader, while Newmark (1988) proposes a communicative approach that emphasizes the importance of conveying meaning naturally in the target language. However, both approaches were primarily developed for written texts that lack the spatial and temporal limitations found in audiovisual media. Therefore, this research adopts the subtitling strategies proposed by Henrik Gottlieb (1992). Gottlieb's framework introduces the concept of "diagonal translation," which specifically addresses the transformation from oral source language (SL) into written target language (TL) in audiovisual translation. His strategies, such as condensation, decimation, and deletion, provide a more appropriate analytical framework for examining how Indonesian slang is adjusted to fit the English subtitle format.

Furthermore, the transition from Indonesian slang to English subtitles often results in a phenomenon known as meaning shift. Based on Larson's (1984) meaning-based translation theory, translation should transfer the meaning of the source language into the target language using natural expressions. In the case of slang, meaning shifts may occur when the emotional tone, social register, or cultural nuance of the original expression changes in the subtitle.

1.2 Research Questions

The presence of slang in *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* creates a significant challenge for translation, leading to the following research questions:

1. What subtitling strategies are used to translate Indonesian slang into English subtitles in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*?
2. What meaning shifts occur in the translation of Indonesian slang expressions in the English subtitles of *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*?
3. How do the subtitling strategies used in translating Indonesian slang expressions influence meaning shifts in the English subtitles of *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*?

1.3 Research Objectives

Aligned with the problems identified above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the subtitling strategies used to translate Indonesian slang expressions into English subtitles in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*.

2. To analyze the meaning shifts that occur in the translation of Indonesian slang expressions in the English subtitles of *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri* based on Larson's meaning-based translation theory.
3. To explain how the subtitling strategies used in translating Indonesian slang expressions influence the meaning shifts found in the English subtitles of *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*.

1.4 Research Limitations

To ensure a rigorous and focused academic inquiry, this research is limited in three main aspects. First, the study focuses exclusively on slang expressions found in the dialogue of *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*. Second, the data source is restricted to the official English subtitles provided in the commercial release of the film. Third, the theoretical analysis is limited to Allan and Burridge's (2006) concept of slang, Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies, and Larson's (1984) meaning-based translation theory. This study does not extend its scope to the field of audience reception or the psychological impact of the subtitles on the viewers. This exclusion is intentional, as the primary objective is to conduct a comparative linguistic analysis between the source text (Indonesian audio transcription) and the target text (English subtitles). Therefore, the study prioritizes the accuracy of the translation product rather than the audience's subjective reaction.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research offers significant contributions from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on Audiovisual

Translation by providing a specific case study on Indonesian-to-English translation. Previous studies such as Rahmah et al. (2024), Reza (2021), and Abdelaal (2019) mainly examine slang translation in Western language contexts. This research highlights the unique challenges posed by Indonesian vernacular expressions. It also assesses the applicability of Gottlieb's strategies in the highly restricted environment of film subtitling.

Practically, the results of this study can serve as a valuable reference for professional translators and subtitlers. By understanding the common pitfalls and the type of meaning shifts that occur when translating slang, practitioners can develop better strategies to preserve the cultural and emotional nuances of Indonesian films. Furthermore, for students of linguistics and English literature, this study provides a practical application of complex translation theories to a modern, relevant medium, demonstrating how academic frameworks can be used to critique and improve real-world communication.

1.6 State of the Art

Four previous studies have examined the translation of slang expressions in audiovisual media, particularly in film subtitles. These studies highlight the challenges faced by translators when transferring informal language from the source language into the target language.

First, Rahmah, Wildan, and Fitriyah (2024) investigated the translation strategies used in translating slang words in the subtitles of the film *Inside Out 2*. The study identified various types of slang expressions and analyzed the translation strategies using Baker's (1992) framework. The results show that

translators frequently used strategies such as paraphrase, cultural substitution, and omission to render slang expressions in the subtitles. The study also revealed that slang translation often requires adaptation to maintain clarity and readability for the target audience.

Second, Reza (2021) analyzed slang translation in the subtitles of the television series *Prison Break*. The study focused on identifying the types of slang expressions and the translation procedures used by the translator. Using Allan and Burridge's classification of slang and Baker's translation strategies, the study found that flippant slang was the most dominant type, and translators frequently used strategies that preserved meaning but modified the linguistic form.

Third, Abdelaal (2019) examined subtitling strategies in translating culture-bound expressions in the film *American Pie*. The research found that subtitling is constrained by technical limitations such as screen space and reading time, which often force translators to simplify or modify the original dialogue. As a result, strategies such as condensation, deletion, and paraphrasing are commonly applied in subtitle translation.

Fourth, another study compared official subtitles and fansub translations of slang expressions in the film *Bad Boys II*. The research applied Gottlieb's subtitling strategies and found that transfer, deletion, and paraphrase were the most frequently used strategies in translating slang expressions. The findings demonstrate that translators often reduce or modify slang expressions to make the subtitles more readable and understandable for the audience.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into the translation of slang expressions in audiovisual media, this study differs from them in several aspects. First, while Rahmah et al. (2024) and Reza (2021) mainly applied Baker's translation strategies, this research employs Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies, which are specifically designed for audiovisual translation. Second, unlike previous studies that primarily focused on identifying translation strategies or slang types, this study also examines the meaning shifts resulting from those strategies using Larson's (1984) meaning-based translation theory. Third, this research focuses on Indonesian slang translated into English subtitles in the film *Pengepungan di Bukit Duri*, whereas most previous studies investigated English slang translated into other languages or different audiovisual materials. Furthermore, this study classifies Indonesian slang expressions into four operational characteristics adapted from Allan and Burridge (2006), namely Informal/Colloquial Expression, Social/Group Identity Expression, Emotional/Expressive Expression, and Taboo/Offensive Expression. Therefore, this research provides a more comprehensive analysis by integrating slang characteristics, subtitling strategies, and meaning shifts within a single analytical framework.

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