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The Propositional and Expressive Meanings Transfer in English to Indonesian Sexual Slang Translation

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Abstrak

Untuk menerjemahkan slang seksual dari bahasa Inggris ke bahasa Indonesia, seorang penerjemah harus memiliki pemahaman komprehensif mengenai makna proposisional dan ekspresif dari kedua bahasa tersebut. Pentransferan dua makna ini sangat penting dalam menentukan keakuratan dan keberterimaan terjemahan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkategorisasi slang seksual berdasarkan makna proposisionalnya, menganalisis strategi penerjemahan dalam mentransfer makna proposisional dan ekspresif, serta menilai dampak transfer tersebut terhadap keakuratan dan keberterimaan terjemahan slang seksual. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif dan menerapkan pendekatan sampel total dan purposif untuk mengumpulkan data dari dialog berbahasa Inggris film *The Guru* dan takarir bahasa Indonesianya. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi penerjemahan dengan tingkat keakuratan paling tinggi adalah menerjemahkan dengan kata atau frasa yang makna proposisional dan ekspresinya sama. Sebaliknya, strategi penerjemahan dengan tingkat keberterimaan paling tinggi adalah menerjemahkan dengan kata atau frasa yang makna proposisionalnya sama tetapi makna ekspresifnya dikurangi.

Kata Kunci: *Ekspresif, Proposisional, Transfer, Penerjemahan, Slang Seksual*

Abstract

To translate sexual slang from English to Indonesian, one must comprehensively understand both languages' propositional and expressive meanings. The transfer of the meanings is crucial in determining the accuracy and acceptability of the translation. This study aims to categorize sexual slang based on its propositional meaning, analyze the translation strategies of transferring the propositional and expressive meanings, and assess the impacts of the strategies on the accuracy and acceptability of the translation. This study utilizes descriptive-qualitative methods and applies total and purposive sample approaches to gather data from the English dialogue of *The Guru* movie and its Indonesian subtitles. This research demonstrates the translation strategy achieving a high level of accuracy involves words or phrases with similar propositional and expressive meanings. In contrast, the translation strategy with a high level of acceptability involves words or phrases with similar propositional but less expressive meanings.

Keywords: *Expressive, Propositional, Transfer, Translation, Sexual Slang*

INTRODUCTION

The majority of people exhibit hesitancy while discussing sexual topics in a public setting. Engaging in frank and candid discussions about sex is generally regarded as disrespectful in everyday conversations. When discussing sexual issues, professionals tend to use highly technical language, while others prefer to use euphemisms (Report of the Commission of Obscenity and Pornography, 1970). In the meantime, when talking about sex, young people tend to use slang (Goldstein, Haeberle, & McBride, 1971). Andersson & Trudgill (1990) define slang as words or uses of words or expressions that are highly informal, often fashionable, and, therefore, temporary. Despite knowing the definition of slang, judging what slang is and is not when we look at a foreign language is hard. Therefore, to know the meaning of slang, we need good knowledge (Andersson & Trudgill, 1990).

Zhou and Fan (2013) assert that young people employ slang to establish group identity and exclude outsiders. They play with words, rename things and actions, invent new words, and even mutilate or misapply the old words for novelty. Instead of using the term vagina, they prefer to refer to it as pussy. Another instance is the term coitus, which refers to the sexual intercourse between a male and a female that involves the penetration of the penis into the vagina. Coitus is mainly used by doctors or health professionals when explaining health matters as it sounds clinical (Pranzarone, 2008). Young individuals often employ sexual slang, such as make love, fuck, or banging beaver, to describe the same activity.

Sexual language is commonly used in casual conversations, including movie dialogues. In order to fully comprehend the significance of slang used in a film, it is imperative to possess identical cultural comprehension as the individual employing it. In the era of extensive globalization, American films featuring explicit sexual language have been infiltrating the Indonesian entertainment industry. The movies have been translated from English to Indonesian with subtitles due to the low English competence among most Indonesians, as indicated in the annual report by EF Education First (EF English Competence Index, 2020). A subtitle or caption is the written representation of the speech in a film or TV show displayed on the screen simultaneously with the spoken words (Gottlieb, 2001). Translating sexual slang in movies presents challenges since it requires effectively conveying the content from the source language (SL) and ensuring it is culturally appropriate in the target language (TL).

The precision of a translation depends on the conveyance of the propositional significance of a word or a statement. Cruse in Baker (2018) states that propositional meaning refers to the connection between a word or speech and its corresponding reference or description in a real or fictional universe. However, the acceptability of a translation is exclusively tied to the TL's culture. When evaluating the acceptability of a translation, one crucial issue that translators must focus on is the accurate transfer of the expressive meaning from the SL to the TL. The expressive meaning of a statement cannot be evaluated for its truth or falsehood, as it pertains to the speaker's emotions or attitude rather than the literal meaning of the words and utterances (ibid).

In order to generate a satisfactory translation, translators must serve as a conduit between cultures, possessing a comprehensive awareness of the SL and TL's cultures. They must possess not only the skill to speak two languages but also the ability to understand and navigate two different cultures (Hatim & Mason, 1990). When translating sexual slang from English to Indonesian for public consumption translators must take into account the 2008 Indonesian Pornography Law No. 44. It defines pornography as any form of media, including pictures, sketches, illustrations, photos, writings, voices, sounds, moving images, animation, cartoons, conversations, gestures, or any other messages that are intended to arouse sexual desires or involve sexual exploitation. Translating such content in a way that violates this law is prohibited. English-Indonesian translators are responsible for creating a translation in the TL that is culturally appropriate and complies with the Law while ensuring accuracy. A practical approach to accomplish this objective is carefully analyzing the propositional and expressive meanings conveyed during the translation.

Studies in expressive meaning transfer have been carried out in different languages and media. For instance, Techacharoenrungrueang and Luksaneeyanawin (2014) have done studies on the transfer of expressive meaning of English-Thai metaphors in novels, and Xue (2013) did a study comparing the portrayal of expressive meaning transfer in two Chinese-English versions of a novel entitled *Hong Lou Meng*. While the two previous studies provide valuable insight into the expressive meaning transfer in a written work: a novel, this study aims to investigate the transfer of both propositional and expressive meanings in a film dialogue containing sexual slang.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative investigation conducted as a single-embedded case study. This study utilized the total sampling technique to gather all instances of sexual slang in *The Guru* (2002), a sex comedy film distributed by Universal Pictures America. The film centers on an Indian man who immigrates to the United States intending to pursue a conventional profession but unexpectedly finds himself becoming a sex guru. The domain analysis conducted by Spradley (1980) was utilized to categorize sexual slang kinds according to their propositional meaning by identifying basic semantic features.

Once the data had been gathered, the subsequent phase involved utilizing the purposive sample technique to select three English-Indonesian translation experts (referred to as *raters*) who served as key informants. These raters then assessed the accuracy and acceptability of the sexual slang translations by completing an open and closed questionnaire. Baker's (2018) translation strategy emphasizes a more neutral and less expressive interpretation, which was utilized and modified to demonstrate the transfer of propositional and expressive meanings from the SL to TL. In order to evaluate the effects of the strategies on the translation quality, Nababan's (2012) translation quality assessment was employed and modified to examine the influence of the strategies on the accuracy and acceptability of the sexual slang translation, as demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Translation Accuracy Assessment Instrument

Translation Category	Score	Description
Accurate	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The propositional meaning of the SL is transferred perfectly into the TL. Both expressions in the SL and TL refer to the same

		thing in the real or imaginary world.
Less Accurate	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The propositional meaning of the SL is transferred partly into the TL. • There is a loss of the SL message in the TL's expression.
Inaccurate	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The propositional meaning of the SL is not transferred into the TL. • The TL's expression refers to something different from the SL or deleted.

Table 2. Translation Acceptability Assessment Instrument

Translation Category	Score	Description
Acceptable	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expressive meaning of the SL is transferred into the TL with full consideration of the TL's cultural appropriateness. • The translation sounds natural and does not feel like a translation. • There are no problems with the choice of lexical items.
Less Acceptable	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expressive meaning of the SL is transferred into the TL with full consideration of the TL's cultural appropriateness, but it sounds clumsy. • The translation feels like a translation. • There are problems with the choice of lexical items
Unacceptable	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expressive meaning of the SL is freely transferred into the TL without full consideration of the TL's cultural appropriateness. • The translation is culturally forbidden and extremely clumsy. • It feels like a translation or is not translated into the TL.

Adapted from Nababan, Nuraeni, and Sumardiono (2012)

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. The sexual slang types based on their propositional meaning

In order to determine and categorize sexual slang, the criteria established by Andersson & Trudgill (1990) for identifying words or phrases in the dialogue were employed, with the added requirement that they pertain to sexual topics. The data are

further examined utilizing Spradley's (1980) taxonomy approach to categorize them according to their propositional significance. Based on the taxonomic study, four categories of sexual slang terminologies have been identified: 1) related to sexual organs, 2) related to sexual processes, 3) related to sexual activities, and 4) related to individuals and their societal identities.

1.1 Terminology related to sexual organs

Sexual organs are the reproductive or genital organs found in males and females. The male reproductive system comprises the internal structures, including the testes, epididymis, vas deferens, prostate, and exterior structures, namely the scrotum and penis (Gurung, Yetiskul, & Jialal, 2022). Conversely, the female reproductive system comprises the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, vagina, and vulva (Rosner, Samardzic, & Sarao, 2022). The slangs in the dialogue are displayed in Table 3 with its Indonesian translation.

Table 3. Terminology related to sexual organs

SL	TL	Propositional Meaning
wand	<i>tongkat</i>	penis
pork-sword	<i>pedang babi</i>	penis
baloney	<i>sosis</i>	penis
pony		
Mr. Happy	<i>Tn. Happy</i>	penis
pencil dick	<i>penis pencil</i>	small penis
pussy	<i>alat kelamin</i>	vagina

1.2 Terminology related to sexual processes

This classification pertains to an event or process that affects the reproductive organs of both males and females, specifically the penis and vagina. The information is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Terminology related to sexual processes

SL	TL	Propositional Meaning
hard	<i>tegang</i>	erection
wood	<i>tegak</i>	erection
get it up	<i>tegak</i>	erect (the penis)
come	<i>orgasme</i>	orgasm

1.3 Terminology related to sexual activities

This classification pertains to sexual slang that refers explicitly to human sexual behaviors and how an individual participates in sexual activities. The range of sexual activities encompasses both solitary behaviors, such as masturbation, and acts involving multiple individuals, such as oral sex and vaginal intercourse (Walker, Schlozman, & Alpert, 2021). Brown (2013) suggests that sexual behaviors encompass actions aimed at arousing the sexual desire of others or attracting partners, such as kissing, touching, and stimulating erogenous zones. The information is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Terminology related to sexual activities

SL	TL	Propositional Meaning
wax the dolphin	<i>beronani</i>	masturbation
beating meat	<i>beronani</i>	masturbation
screw	<i>bercinta</i>	sexual intercourse
sucking face	<i>berciuman</i>	kissing
swapping spit	<i>ciuman</i>	kissing

1.4 Terminology related to individuals and their societal identities

This categorization pertains to individuals and the designations they receive from society, encompassing psychological and physical attributes. They are commonly employed to categorize an individual or individuals based on their physical appearance or sexual performance. The information is displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Terminology related to individuals and their societal identities

SL	TL	Propositional Meaning
stud	<i>jantan</i>	men who are good at sexual intercourse
perv	<i>makhluk aneh</i>	pervert (people obsessed with sex)
poontan	<i>cewek</i>	women prostitute
g		
hooker	<i>pelacur</i>	women prostitute

2. Baker's translation strategies to transfer the propositional and expressive meanings from English into Indonesian

This study utilized Baker's (2018) translation strategies, which employed a more neutral and less expressive word, to identify the approaches employed in conveying both

the propositional and expressive meaning from the SL to the TL. The strategy is then specified into three: 1) translation employing words or phrases with similar propositional and expressive meanings, 2) translation employing words or phrases with similar propositional but less expressive meanings, and 3) translation employing words or phrases with dissimilar propositional and expressive meanings.

2.1. Translation employing words or phrases of similar propositional and expressive meanings

This strategy entails identifying a word or phrase in the SL and TL with similar propositional and expressive meanings. Similar propositional meaning means it has to correspond to the objective reality, while the expressive meaning should convey the speaker's psychological state or emotional element at the time of utterance. Put simply, this strategy transmits both propositional and expressive meanings between the SL and TL on an equal level. The approach can be easily observed in the translation of the word *hooker* into *pelacur*.

Context of the situation:

Ramu's friends, Lexi and Vijay, argue about the proceeds of every Guru's T-shirt sold.

Vijay	:	You smell like a Bombay
(SL)		<i>hooker</i> .
Vijay	:	<i>Baumu seperti pelacur</i>
(TL)		<i>Bombay</i>

Both *hooker* and *pelacur* have the same propositional meaning, as they both refer to women who engage in prostitution or receive payment for sexual activities. Regarding the expressive meaning of the translation, the term *pelacur* in the TL accurately conveys the expressive meaning of the SL. If *hooker* is translated as *wanita nakal*, *wanita tuna susila*, or *kupu-kupu malam*, it would have a lower level of expressiveness compared to the original term.

2.2. Translation using words or phrases with similar propositional but less expressive meanings

Translators can select words or phrases that maintain a connection to objects or concepts in the physical world but are simultaneously less emotive. They should not completely disregard the propositional meaning of the SL when translating it into the TL as stated by Baker (2018) that words that only contribute to the emotional meaning can be deleted from a statement without changing the informational content.

This research showed that all the words or phrases employed by the translator in the TL as equivalents of the ST are comparatively less expressive. This results from Indonesia's cultural and societal values, prohibiting individuals from engaging in or expressing anything filthy, vulgar, or forbidden in public. Thus, the transfer of the propositional meaning remains unchanged at the identical level. Conversely, the conveyance of expressive meaning occurs at varying degrees of expressiveness. An instance of this is the translation of the term screw to *bercinta*, which retains the same propositional meaning but lacks the expressive power in the TL.

Context of the situation:

Dwain, the film director, is giving a film pre-shooting direction to his leading actors, Ramu and Sharrona.

Dwain : You see her, you screw her, we go
(SL) home.

Dwain : *Kau melihatnya, bercinta, lalu kita*
(TL) *pulang.*

The Indonesian word *bercinta* is derived from *cinta*, which translates *to love*. In a specific context, *bercinta* refers to engaging in sexual intercourse. The translator diminished the degree of expressiveness and straightforwardness of the term screw by opting to employ the word *bercinta*. Therefore, the translator wisely chose to maintain the propositional meaning of the word screw while minimizing its emotional meaning. In Indonesian, the term *mengentot* carries the same propositional and expressive meaning as the English screw. However, if the translator were to include the term *mengentot* in the translation, it would be deemed highly offensive within Indonesian culture. It might potentially be subject to censorship by the Indonesian Film Censorship Institute due to its violation of the 2008 Indonesian Pornography Law.

2.3. Translating using words or phrases with dissimilar propositional and expressive meanings

The term dissimilar in propositional meaning transfer refers to the translator's deliberate choice of words or phrases in the TL that do not immediately correspond to the same concept in the actual world. Meanwhile, in terms of expressive meaning, it means a situation where a translation can have a greater or lesser degree of expressive meaning than the original text. This strategy addresses the disparity between the TL's propositional and expressive meanings of equivalence. Furthermore, the distinct expressive meaning

once again pertains to a reduced level of expressive equivalence in the TL due to the cultural differences between the SL and TL.

Put simply, the translator translated the sexual slang without maintaining the intended meanings and emotions. Employing this technique may cause perplexity among the target audience as the resulting translation cannot convey the same message as the SL in terms of the factual and emotional significance of the translated text. Therefore, this strategy's transfer of propositional and expressive meanings occurs at dissimilar levels. An instance of applying this strategy is the translation of the SL *perv*, which comes from the word *perv* to *makhluk aneh* in the TL.

Context of the situation:

Pretending to be a Swami Bu (someone with expertise in Indian religiosity), Ramu shares his wisdom with his audience.

Ramu : Because the universe isn't run by a big old perv.

(SL)

Ramu : *Karena semesta tidak dijalankan oleh makhluk*

(TL) *aneh.*

The term *makhluk aneh*, which can be translated as *a weird creature*, has dissimilar propositional and expressive meanings compared to *perv* as it relates to a separate entity in the physical realm and possesses a lesser degree of expressiveness. *Makhluk* is unable to convey the message in the SL since it does not explicitly pertain to individuals fixated on sexual matters. The term *maniak seks* could be considered the most suitable alternative to the term *perv* in the TL, as it carries a similar propositional meaning but with lesser expressive implications.

3. The effects of the translation strategies on the accuracy and acceptability of propositional and expressive meanings transfer

Using Spradley's (1980) componential analysis in translation research necessitates the integration of both linguistic and translation factors (Santosa, 2021). The linguistic variable in this study pertains to categorizing sexual slang varieties according to their propositional meaning. The translation variables in this research are Baker's translation strategies employed by the translator and their impacts on the accuracy and acceptability. Three translation experts (*raters*) were requested to evaluate the accuracy and acceptability of the propositional and expressive meaning transfer using an open-ended questionnaire. It

allows them to evaluate each translation using the translation quality assessment established by Nababan et al. (2012).

The effects of translation strategies on accuracy and acceptability levels can be observed as the outcomes of the propositional and expressive meanings transfer from the SL to the TL. Table 7 displays the findings of the assessment.

Table 7. The effects of the translation strategies on the accuracy and acceptability

No	Translation Strategies	Accuracy Level	Acceptability Level
1	Translation employing words or phrases with similar propositional and expressive meanings	100% accurate	87.5% acceptable
2	Translation employing words or phrases with similar propositional but less expressive meanings	84.2% accurate	89.5% acceptable
3	Translation employing words or phrases with dissimilar propositional and expressive meanings	100% inaccurate	100% less acceptable

Table 7 unambiguously demonstrates the strategies that yield great accuracy and acceptability. In terms of accuracy, the strategy exhibiting a high level of accuracy is translation employing words or phrases with similar propositional and expressive meanings. Regarding acceptability, the most effective strategy is to translate using words or phrases with similar propositional but less expressive meanings, as it helps to tone down the expressive meaning of the SL to align with the culture of the TL.

CONCLUSION

When translating sexual slang from English to Indonesian for public usage, translators should first consider the cultural context of the TL. Hence, using similar propositional but less expressive meanings to interpret the SL is a viable approach to achieve the objective as it adapts to Indonesian culture while retaining the propositional meaning. This strategy yields a high degree of acceptability and is deemed correct in the

TL as it would be more likely to meet the criteria set by the Indonesian Film Censorship Institute and not be considered violating the 2008 Indonesian Pornography Law.

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