

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Audiovisual translation (AVT), also known as multimedia translation, media translation, screen translation, and multimodal translation, is one of the branches of translation studies which involves the translation of verbal elements within audiovisual contents. It focuses on the practices, processes, and products that are involved in the transfer of multimodal and multimedial content across languages and/or cultures (Perez-Gonzalez, 2020). There are several types of AVT, namely subtitling, dubbing, and voice-over. One of the most commonly known and widely utilized methods of AVT is subtitling.

Subtitling has been described as a translation practice that consists of rendering in writing that is usually at the bottom of the screen, the translation of the original dialogue exchanges uttered by different speakers into a target language, as well as all verbal information or things that are audibly transmitted in the soundtrack that appears written on-screen (Bogucki & Deckert, 2020). Subtitling is a crucial facilitator when it comes to the expansion of the audience due to its ability to reach more viewers globally. Apart from the fact that subtitles help with the comprehension of foreign audiences, it also aids specially-abled people, such as the deaf and the hard of hearing, to access audiovisual contents. Subtitling acts as a wrecking ball for language barriers as well as a bridge of accessibility for the disabled.

Despite the significant benefits subtitling brings, the process of subtitling itself comes with some challenges, humor being one of them. Humor can sometimes be

deemed as untranslatable, however, many comedies are watched with subtitles and travel successfully across linguistic borders (Cintas & Remael, 2021). Humor is a broad term that covers anything people say or do that others find funny and that makes them laugh which includes both the mental processes involved in creating and recognizing humor, as well as the feeling of enjoyment and amusement that it brings (Martin & Ford, 2018). According to Attardo (2020), a non-controversial humor situation involves a reaction of laughter after someone said something funny, humorous, amusing, droll, or the like. While we may have an intuitive understanding of what humor is, pinpointing its exact definition proves to be a tricky undertaking that definitions and approaches when it comes to humor have accumulated over time and are still evolving. It is imperative to note that humor is a form of communication which depends on some degree of commonalities regarding linguistic and/or socio-cultural background, and knowledge of the world (Cintas & Remael, 2021). It can be inferred that without the aforementioned common grounds, It would be difficult to translate humor, especially when it involves culture-bound terms (Dore, 2020).

Culture-bound terms, otherwise known as cultural references (CRs), involve items tied to a community's culture, history or geography, and they often present significant challenges in translation (Cintas & Remael, 2021). Additionally, according to Ranzato (2016), the significance of cultural references in localizations often diminishes when translated word-for-word. To ensure the target audience understands, these references need to be adapted. It can be underlined that a word, a phrase, or a sentence containing culture-bound terms should not be simply translated without understanding its appropriate equivalent in the target

language. A balance is needed between staying true to the original cultural meaning and adapting the content for the target audience's understanding (Sari et al., 2024). Furthermore, Cintas and Remael (2021) classifies cultural references into two main groups, which are real-world references that consist of geographical, ethnographic, as well as socio-political references and intertextual cultural references that comprise overt and covert intertextual allusions. Each one of the types poses different degrees of translation challenges.

As a result, such situations entail translation strategies in order to mitigate the gap of comprehension between different cultural backgrounds. There are numerous translation strategies formulated by experts. One of those subtitling strategies was proposed by Cintas and Remael (2021). Their strategies are specifically constructed for cultural references and are classified into 9 categories: loan, literal translation, calque, explicitation, substitution, transposition, lexical recreation, compensation, and omission. Cintas and Remael's (2021) theory is deemed as the most appropriate theory to use in this study because their subtitling strategies are catered for cultural references which aligns with the purpose of this study that not only aims to identify the types of culture-bound terms in the context of humor found in a sitcom (situational comedy) show called *Modern Family*, but also to analyze the kinds of subtitling strategies being used to translate them. Numerous researchers have previously conducted similar studies which analyzed the translation strategies of humor and culture-bound terms in audiovisual contents.

The first study entitled *Humor Translation Revisited: The Case of Woody Allen's "Annie Hall" Subtitled into Persian* was conducted by Kianbakht (2015).

The researcher used a descriptive comparative approach to investigate the subtitling strategies adopted in Persian translation of humor of Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* and to also determine which strategy was the most frequently utilized. Gottlieb's (2001) classification of subtitling strategies was applied as the theoretical framework of this study. The findings showed that out of fifty five humorous elements, the most frequently used strategy was transfer with 15 implementations, while on the contrary, both decimation and deletion appeared once as the least frequently used strategy.

The second research, *Analyzing Humor in Translation Strategies and Techniques in The Amazing World of Gumball: The Boss*, was done by Hajuningdyah (2024). The study implemented a descriptive qualitative method to examine the translation strategies, techniques, and humor classification of the English-Indonesian subtitles of this television series. The research employed several theories, such as Gottlieb's (1998) subtitling strategies, Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques, and Raphaelson-West's (1989) humor classification. The findings of the study revealed that the most frequently applied translation strategy is transfer, whereas literal translation was employed the most for the translation technique. The research also found instances of linguistic, cultural, and universal humor within the series.

The third study, that was proposed by Murthy & Ishlahiyah (2024), is entitled *Unsolved: The Translation Analysis of Culture-Bound Terms*. This descriptive qualitative research utilized the culture-bound terms classification theory delivered by Newmark (1988) and the theory of translation technique by Molina & Albir (2002) in order to analyze the types of culture-bound terms and

the translation techniques being used in the English-Indonesian subtitles of the series called *Unsolved*. The result of the study presented that the types of culture-bound terms found were social organization, material culture, social culture, ecology, gesture & habit, with social organization being the type to appear the most. As for the translation technique, borrowing was employed the most while reduction and variation were employed the least.

The fourth research titled *Procedures Used in Translating Cultural Words of the Movie, "Eat Pray Love"* was executed by Halim & Asmarani (2019). The research applied a descriptive qualitative method in order to investigate the types of cultural words present in the movie by implementing Newmark's (1988) cultural references classification as well as the translation procedures used to translate those words from English to Indonesian by utilizing Vinay & Darbelnet's (2000) translation procedures theory. The findings revealed that material culture and social organization were the types of cultural words to occur the most. On the other hand, borrowing was applied the most as the translation procedure, whereas literal and transposition were applied the least.

The fifth study was titled *The Translation of Humour based on Culture-bound Terms in Modern Family. A Cognitive-pragmatic Approach*. This qualitative research was carried out by Perez (2017) for the purpose of analyzing the translation solutions of the English-Spanish subtitles and dubbing of culture-specific jokes in the first two seasons of *Modern Family* by implementing an adapted version of the translation solution theory proposed by Haywood et al. (2009) and the Relevance Theory framework. The result showed that exoticism

was the most frequently used solution in both subtitles and dubbing, which indicated a tendency to adopt solutions that are oriented toward the source culture.

The common theme between the first two studies above and this research topic is located in the data source of the study, which is humorous audiovisual contents and also the objective of the study that aims to analyze its subtitling strategies. The first two previous studies implemented Gottlieb's theory as their subtitling strategies unlike the current study. The first study aims to investigate the subtitling strategies adopted in the English-Persian translation of humor of Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* by employing Gottlieb's (2001) subtitling strategy, whereas the second study not only examines the translation strategies by utilizing Gottlieb's (1998) theory, but also the techniques and humor classification of the English-Indonesian subtitles of *The Amazing World of Gumball: The Boss* by applying Molina and Albir's (2002) theory and Raphaelson-West's (1989) humor classification.

Moreover, the similarities between the third and fourth research with the current research also lies in the data source and the objective. Comparable to the current study, the third and fourth studies both aimed to classify culture-bound terms in audiovisual contents and also to analyze the English-Indonesian translation of those terms. Although humor was not included as the focus of the studies, the culture-bound term aspect still overlaps with the current study's topic. Both the third and fourth study utilized Newmark's (1988) culture-bound terms classification, but the two differ in translation theories. While the third study employed Molina & Albir's (2002) translation technique, the fourth study implemented Vinay & Darbelnet's (2000) translation procedures theory.

As for the common ground between the current research and the fifth previous study, it is also situated in the data source, which is culture-bound terms used in humor in *Modern Family*, as well as the purpose of the study, which is to analyze the translation strategies used to translate the culture-bound terms. A contrasting aspect can be found in the target language that the original content was translated to, which for the current study was Indonesian, while the fifth study was Spanish. Furthermore, despite the fact that both studies used *Modern Family* as the data source, which differed in season choices, the current study investigated the types of culture-bound terms that appeared, unlike the previous study which exclusively focused on translation analysis.

In contrast to earlier findings, this research offers a more integrated topic by combining the analysis of culture-bound terms and its classification, humor, and subtitling strategies within the English-Indonesian subtitles of *Modern Family* season five. Unlike the first and second studies, which mainly focused on humor translation, or the fourth and fifth study, which centered solely around culture-bound terms classification and translation, or even the fifth study which covered the translation of culture-bound terms used in humor but still lacked the classification, this study encompasses all these dimensions. By employing Cintas and Remael's (2021) cultural references classification to identify culture-bound terms in humorous scenes and their subtitling strategies to analyze the translations of those terms in the English-Indonesian subtitles of *Modern Family* season five, this research not only addresses the individual aspects covered by the previous studies, but it also combines them to offer a more nuanced topic while also

analyzing them with a different and more recent theories, thereby filling a gap in the existing literature.

1.2 Statements of Problem

1. What are the types of culture-bound terms found in humorous scenes in season five of *Modern Family*?
2. What are the subtitling strategies used in the English-Indonesian subtitles of culture-bound terms inside humorous scenes in season five of *Modern Family*?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to identify the types of culture-bound terms that appear inside humorous scenes and to analyze the subtitling strategies in the English-Indonesian subtitles of culture-bound terms used in the context of humor in *Modern Family* season five.

1.4 Research Methodology

This study implements the qualitative approach in order to identify the types of culture-bound terms used in humorous scenes and to analyze the subtitling strategies used to translate them in the English-Indonesian subtitles of *Modern Family*. Leavy (2017) proposes that qualitative research helps in gaining a deep understanding of a topic which often involves inductive designs, which are intended to produce both comprehensive understanding and analytical data. According to Ugwu and Eze (2023), qualitative research aims to obtain a

thorough comprehension of social phenomena in their natural environments. This approach facilitates the analysis of non-numerical data such as textual, aural, or visual contents for the purpose of revealing complex details concerning certain situations being studied or rather to prompt new concepts of research.

The method of this research is the case study design. Coombs (2022) defined case study as a methodological research method utilized to generate an in-depth comprehension of a contemporary issue or phenomenon in a bounded system. Case study research requires a thorough investigation conducted into an individual, group, or event in order to obtain an understanding of a real-life event. The case study design is preferred as a research method when “what,” “why,” and “how,” questions are the focus of the research (Yin, 2018). Case study research aims to acquire comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject matter and to produce new theories or insights. In this instance, the type of case study design that is used based on Yin’s (2018) theory is the single case study design.

The source of data in this research is the English-Indonesian subtitles of culture-bound terms used for humor in *Modern Family* season five. *Modern Family* is an American sitcom that portrays different elements of American culture and societal values (Lin, 2022). This show was chosen for this research due to its use of culture-bound humor rooted in American customs and social dynamics, which presents unique challenges in translation. Season five is selected due to its incorporation of culturally significant themes and its strong rating. This season notably features storylines centered around marriage equality and American customs, which provides plenty of moments that highlight culture-specific humor. The fifth season also received positive reception, with a

90% approval rating on Rotten Tomatoes (n.d.) that reflects both critical acclaim and audience interest. *Modern Family* is an American situational comedy television series produced by Christopher Lloyd and Steven Levitan that aired from September 23rd, 2009 to April 8rd, 2020 for eleven seasons in total (Maxey, 2022). This series revolves around three different types of families which are nuclear, blended, and same-sex families, living in suburban Los Angeles, who are interrelated through a wealthy businessman named Jay Pritchett and his two children, Claire and Mitchell. *Modern Family* is available on several streaming platforms, some of them are NBC, Peacock, and Hulu. Ever since Hulu merged with Disney+, *Modern Family* is now available on Disney+ as well. This research will use Disney+ as the platform to collect data from *Modern Family* season five.

In order to collect and analyze the data, the researcher has to take several steps as follows:

1. Watch *Modern Family* season five on Disney+.
2. Identify and determine the types of culture-bound terms that appear inside humorous scenes in each episode by utilizing Cintas and Remael's (2021) cultural references classification theory.
3. Prepare the transcripts of the English dialogues from the scenes containing culture-bound terms used for humor alongside the corresponding subtitles in Indonesian.
4. Analyze the subtitling strategies for culture-bound terms inside humorous scenes that are found in the English-Indonesian subtitles of *Modern Family* season five by employing Cintas and Remael's (2021) subtitling strategies.

This research utilizes content analysis as the data analysis method of this study. According to Gheyle and Jacobs (2017), content analysis is a research method that makes sense of the content of messages that are often unstructured, whether it is in the form of texts, images, symbols, or audio data. Considering the purpose of the current study, content analysis would assist the researcher to examine the types of culture-bound terms and the strategies used for translating culture-bound terms inside humorous scenes that are present in the English-Indonesian subtitles of *Modern Family* season five.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on identifying the types of culture-bound terms used for humor in *Modern Family* using Cintas and Remael's (2021) cultural references classification and analyzing their English-Indonesian translation strategies by employing Cintas and Remael's (2021) subtitling strategies. The data will be collected from episodes in season five. The data taken are words, phrases, or sentences containing culture-bound terms within humorous elements in the show.

1.6 Organization of Writing

Chapter one consists of the introduction of the study. It explains about the background of the study, which briefly explains about audiovisual translation, subtitling, humor, culture-bound terms, subtitling strategies, five previous studies, and the comparison between those research with this study, statement of problem, research objectives, research methodology, scope and limitations, as well as the organization of writing. Chapter two comprises the theoretical framework of this

study that consists of an in-depth explanation of audiovisual translation, subtitling, humor, culture-bound terms, cultural references classification, cultural references subtitling strategies. It is then followed by chapter three that encompasses the data analysis of this research alongside the discussion. Lastly, it ends with conclusions in chapter four.