

A Study of Translation Strategies Used in the *Diary Of Tootsie's*

LGBTQ Slang

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is 1) to identify Baker's translation strategies on LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 on Netflix as pro-subbing and YouTube as fan-subbing., 2) to identify the different types of LGBTQ slang found in research question 1, and 3) to analyze how translation strategy affects the socio-cultural attitudes towards Thai LGBTQ community. This research employed a qualitative research method to process the data collection and data analysis. The data of this research were taken Thai LGBTQ slang words found in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 on Netflix and YouTube. The findings represented that translation by paraphrase using an unrelated word was the most common translation strategy used in Netflix (15 slang) and YouTube (14 slang), and translation by a more general word (superordinate) was the least used translation strategy use in Netflix and YouTube (1 slang). Second, ambiguous terms in five characteristics of LGBTQ language in Thai were the most frequent use of these categories (8 slang) to conceal the true meaning of the slang terms that convey the sexual meaning. The swear and taboo words (2 slang) were the least used in these categories. Last, English translation of the slang terms has no effects on the Thai LGBTQ community as well as the findings clearly indicate that the slang have represented a positive attitude rather than negative attitude towards the Thai LGBTQ community.

Keywords: *Diary of Tootsie*, LGBTQ, LGBTQ slang, Translation strategies, TV series, Pro-subbing, Fan-subbing

Introduction

LGBTQ is an acronym connected with human sexuality which describes a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (Grinberg, 2019). This term LGBTQ was first introduced to the world in the 1990s and was used to replace more pejorative words such as gay, queer or fag in reference to the LGBTQ community beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s (Shankle, 2006).

Baker (1992) stated that “non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text” (p. 20). Different translation strategies are needed to apply in different types of non-equivalence. Baker (1992) described the various common problems of non-equivalence at word level and some common strategies to deal with. First, some words in source language have to deal with culture in target language, which include religious, custom, belief, or food. Second, some concepts or word in source language sometimes could not find the translation in target language or some concepts or words are too complicated to translate into target language.

The study is focused on the translation methods from Thai to English on slang which appear in a LGBTQ Thai series which is popular among Thai LGBTQ, *Diary of Tootsie*. There are several slang words that emerge in the dialogues in this series which are used or understood among the Thai LGBTQ community. This series has been available on both Netflix and YouTube with English subtitles. The slang words and in the series need to be translated correctly into English, as such this study also focuses on the analysis of slang translation from Thai to English. Furthermore, the study also focuses on those LGBTQ slang words that might affect the attitudes towards the Thai LGBTQ community which are represented via this series.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is focused on the translation strategies used in the *Diary of Tootsie's* LGBTQ slang. The three objectives of this study are achieved by the following:

1. Baker's translation strategies (Baker, 1992) are adopted to identify the LGBTQ slang English translation and to find the frequently used strategies in two online platforms.

The checklist (in table 3.1) is employed to collect the data from the series, and identify the strategies use, then find the frequently used strategies.

2. The collected LGBTQ slang are identified based on five characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai to find the frequently used characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai. The checklist (in table 3.2) is employed to identify the characteristics use and the frequently used characteristics.
3. LGBTQ slang English translation are employed to establish interview question on the effect of socio-cultural attitudes towards Thai LGBTQ community.

Literature Review

LGBTQ in Thailand

In the past, Thai society did not recognize the term LGBTQ, they only recognized the term *Kathoey* which means transgender females who dress, act, and/or do surgery to become women. On the other hand, this term *Tom* is used to refer to women who like women, they also are called handsome girls in Thai. Homosexuality and transgenderism have had a long presence in Thai history. Because their behavioral practice that did not act as the same as heterosexual standards. According to Theravada Buddhism beliefs, homosexuality and transgender identities in Thailand have become a tolerated subculture, but society's attitude towards this community falls well short of acceptance (Jackson, 1999). It has yet to be formally addressed and included in national legislation and public policies.

The LGBTQ issues in Thailand have been similar to other countries in ASEAN. LGBTQ rights and same-sex marriage are still not recognized by Thai government. LGBTQ activism in Thailand had started in the late 1980s. It had rapidly grown in Thailand leading to LGBTQ rights and the recognition in law during the early twenty-first century (Jackson, 2011). However, LGBTQ rights issues had not been mentioned in public as much as it should have been. Jackson (2011) noted that "Thailand has lacked LGBT political activism until relatively recently in part emerges from a Eurocentric misperception of what constitutes queer politics" (p.39).

Language and Gender

Some languages in this world have their own gender in the language system. It is called gendered languages or how some languages code for things like sex and gender differently. For

instance, in English, there is a pronoun, used to identify individual persons according to their sex categories (male or female) “he” and “she” (Holmes & Wilson, 2015). Speaking of Thai language, this language also has a gender system in grammar in Thai language. Obviously, there are words or phrases spoken to distinguish the biological sex. In gender language system in Thai, there are words used when a person would like to finish the sentence. For example, Thai women would say “Kha” while Thai men would say “Krup” after finishing the sentence. In addition, the terms in occupation could cause the professions as being appropriate for only men or women (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Such as fireman, stewardess, businessman and so on. These words specify what occupation is appropriate in which gender by identifying the suffixes.

Systemic Functional Linguistics in Translation

Halliday (1961) as who defined the development of Systemic Functional Grammar. As a grammar theory, SFL is a resource to associate with the grammar of all human languages, and it suggests an approach of ideas to the grammar in terms of how language is used. So, a language's grammar is described as a system which helps people interact with other people and make any sense of their world experiences (Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 2010).

House (2015) adopted the model of Hallidayan register concepts of field, tenor, and mode. Field was the concept of text or its subject matter such as the field of activity, topic, or content of the text. Included the social action in term of “degrees of generality, specificity or granularity in lexical items according to rubrics of specialized, general and popular” (House, 2015, p.64).

Tenor referred to “the participants relationship in terms of author’s provenance and stance, social role relationship, and social attitude” (House, 2015, p.64). House (2015) explained the concept of relationship between the speakers and the listeners in terms of social power and social distance as well as social attitude, and the role between speakers and listeners as well as the degrees of formality.

Mode consisted of the medium that referred to spoken or written “(which can be ‘simple’, e.g., ‘written to be read’ or ‘complex’, e.g., ‘written to be spoken as if not written’), and the degree to which potential or real participation is allowed for between writer and reader” (House,

2015, p.64). Also, the participation could be a simple monologue with no addressee participation that built into the text (simple), or with various addressee-involving linguistic mechanisms characterizing the text (complex).

Slang

Slang is not long-lived and is used to specify in-groups and out-groups (Coleman,2004). It rapidly changes by new meanings replacing old meanings or some words completely disappear from usage. Unlike slang, idioms are a pattern of language and have been fixed (Baker,1992) and used for communication in each language.

Jargon, like slang, is the terms that are used and spoken among a group, but jargon is considered as slang by different professional groups; conceivable science, profession, trade, and occupation that require its own terms to communicate within the group. For example, 10-4 means “OK” or “Got it”, or FTP stands for “Failure To Pay” (Ong et al., 2013).

Moreover, vernacular has not developed a standard variety, undergone codification, or established a literary tradition (Van el at, 1998).

Baker’s Translation Strategies

Baker (1992) mentioned that the strategies used by professional translators for dealing with various types of non-equivalence by the following:

1. Translation by a more general word (superordinate)

This strategy helps the translator to deal with a lack of specificity that occasionally occurred in the target language. (Baker, 1992,)

2. Translation by a more neutral or less expressive word

When some words do not have equivalents in the target language to illustrate the certain meaning from the source language, the neutral or less expressive word is used to translate (Baker, 1992).

3. Translation by cultural substitution

The concept of the source culture when it is hard to understand for the readers in the target language, then the translators are required to find the familiar terms in the target language to replace them (Baker, 1992, p. 31).

4. Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation

The translators must use a loan word to deal with cultural concepts in order to represent a similar feature (Baker, 1992).

5. Translation by paraphrase using a related word

This strategy is used to convey the meaning of the source language by using other associated words to make the original meaning clearer (Baker, 1992).

6. Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words

When some source text could not be lexicalized in the target text, then the other words are employed to achieve a degree of precision in exact propositional meaning (Baker, 1992).

7. Translation by a more neutral or less expressive word

When some words do not have equivalents in the target language to illustrate the certain meaning from the source language, the neutral or less expressive word is used to translate (Baker, 1992).

8. Translation by illustration

When the word lacks an equivalent in the target language that refers to a physical object, the translator can show the picture of that object to explain for the readers or audiences' understanding (Baker, 1992).

Relevant Research

Khongbumpen (2008) analyzed Baker's translation strategies used in translating an article entitled *Vimanmek* Mansion Museum from Thai into English in *Focus Bangkok*. The result has been revealed that there only seven translation strategies have been used in the article and the most frequent translation strategy applied was translation by omission (43.81%), followed by using more general words (17.14%), using loan words (12.38%), using cultural substitution

(8.57%), more neutral or less expressive words (7.62%), paraphrase using unrelated words (5.72%), and the less was paraphrase using related words (4.76%) (Khongbumpen ,2008).

Prasetyo (2016) investigated the translation strategies used in the subtitles of the movie *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. Baker's (1992) translation strategies were adopted and developed to analyze the slang translation from English into Indonesian. The results were shown that seven translation strategies were applied in the movie; the most frequently used strategy was translation using an equivalent target language expression (37.40%), followed by using an unrelated word or phrase with a similar expressive meaning (29.56%), using a loan word or loan word with explanation (13.91%), omission (10.43%), using a more neutral or less expressive related word (3.48%), using an unrelated word or phrase with a dissimilar expressive meaning (3.48%), and the least used, using target language slang expression (1.74%) (Prasetyo, 2016).

Another relevant research to the second objective, Permpoon (2013) has studied gay language of subtitle translation from two films: *Plon Na Ya* (episode 1) and *Wai Bum Cheer Kra Hum Lok*. The objective was to analyze the characteristics of Thai gay language (Nuntiwatwipa, 2004), which have represented in six characteristics: a) gay terms, slang and fixed expressions, b) gay terms of address and pronouns, c) gay swear and taboo words, d) gay phrases with rhymes and alliteration, e) ambiguous gay terms, and f) gay language particles and suggestive gay terms. Consequently, Permpoon has found that gay terms, slang, and fixed expressions was employed the most with 28 words found, while the ambiguous gay terms and gay language particles and suggestive gay terms was employed the least with just 2 words (Permpoon, 2013).

Research Methodology

Qualitative research was selected to apply in this study. The research questions used translation analysis method to identify the translation strategies since the series had been represented with several LGBTQ slang terms in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 on Netflix and YouTube, and LGBTQ slang were identify based on characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai. Moreover, semi-structured interview was involved in this study to establish online interview questions on Google Form to support quantitative research findings reliably.

Research Question

The research question posed at the beginning of the research include the following:

1. What are the translation strategies used in translating LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1, the frequency of translation strategies used?
2. What types of slang and are found in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1?
3. How the slang words and in the English translation affect the socio-cultural attitudes towards Thai LGBTQ community?

Research Context

After simultaneous heartbreaks, online diary writer Gus and his squad of LGBTQ best friends navigated the ins and outs of dating to find true love. Their private affairs were becoming a viral sensation. But they were determined to find love even if it means being reckless.

Participants

The participants for this study were defined as the participants who were recruited on Twitter. 30 Thais on Twitter were selected in order to express their opinion about LGBTQ slang translation which the researcher received from *Diary of Tootsies*. As such a convenience sampling method was selected to specify only Thais on Twitter. Before doing the interview, the participants were asked to do a Thai to English translation test on LGBTQ slang to test their English knowledge. After that, the participants were asked to do an interview about their opinion of the translated slang words into English which appeared in the subtitles of the series. Because there were Thai LGBTQ slang words, the participants were also asked about if they have ever heard those words in their everyday lives to record the information to support the research questions.

Data Collection

The translation strategies used in translating LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 and the frequency of translation strategies used by the following steps:

1. To watch *Diary of Tootsies*, season 1, twelve episodes on Netflix and YouTube.
2. To collect LGBTQ slang with Thai spoken transcripts and English translated text.

3. To apply Baker's translation strategies in identifying translation strategies used and the frequently used in translating LGBTQ slang on Netflix and YouTube.
4. To compare the results from two online streaming platforms.

Research Question 2

The different types of LGBTQ slang found in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 in the following steps:

1. To apply five characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai on LGBTQ slang found in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1.
2. To identify the characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai and the frequently used.

Research Question 3

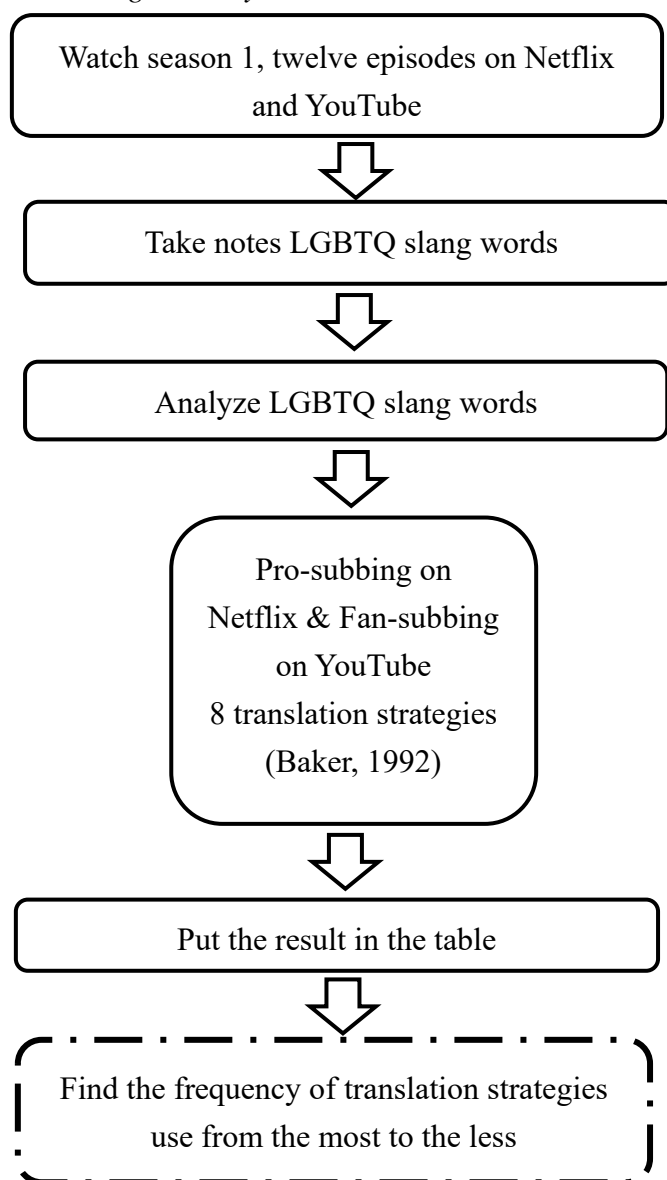
The interview of how translation strategy affects the socio-cultural attitudes towards Thai LGBTQ community in the following steps:

1. To invite between 30 Thais on Twitter to do the interviews.
2. All interview questions were posted on Google forms and sent a link to do survey.
3. To gather the information from the interviews.
4. To summarize the interview results to represent of how translation strategy affects the socio-cultural attitudes towards Thai LGBTQ community.

Data Analysis

To answer research question 1, LGBTQ slang found in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 were identify based on Baker's translation strategies (1992). The process of data analysis was shown as follows:

Figure 1 *Translation strategies analysis*



The procedures in analyzing the data were as follows:

1. The checklist was adopted to identify LGBTQ slang based on Baker's translation strategies.
2. There were two checklists, one for Netflix and another for YouTube.
3. The results were revealed the frequency of translation strategies used in order from the most to the least used translation strategies.
4. The results from Netflix and YouTube were compared to see the differences.

Table 1 Checklist to be used to identify the translation strategies of LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 on Netflix.

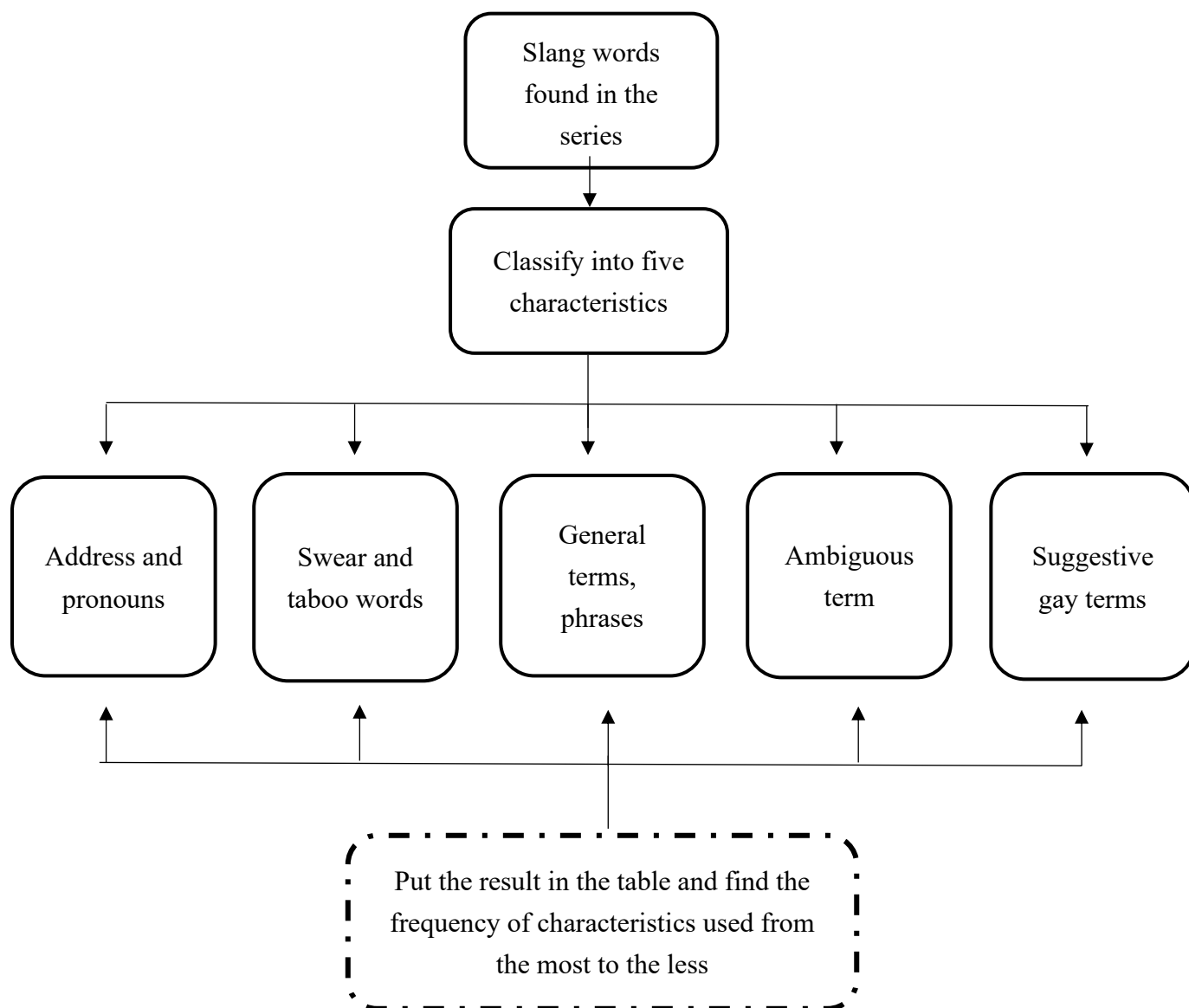
No.	Source term (Thai)	Target term (English)	Translation strategy	Episode/ Part	Minute
1.	อรรถรส	Just kidding	An unrelated word	7	6.42
2.	เล่นใหญ่	Exaggerate things	A more neutral or less expressive word	8	4.28
3.	อย่าอู้ดอู้ด	So, go	Omission	3	9.24

Table 2 Checklist to be used to identify the translation strategies of LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 on YouTube.

No.	Source term (Thai)	Target term (English)	Translation strategy	Episode/ Part	Minute
1.	อรรถรส	Fooligans	An unrelated word	7/1	7.51
2.	เล่นใหญ่	Act drama queen	A more neutral or less expressive word	8/1	5.34
3.	อย่าอู้ดอู้ด	Stop fussing	An unrelated word	3/2	2.39

To answer research question 2, five characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai (Permpoon, 2013) were adapted into analyzing LGBTQ slang found in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1. The process of data analysis was shown as follows:

Figure 2 LGBTQ language characteristics



The procedures in analyzing the data were as follows:

1. LGBTQ slang in Thai were collected to identify into five characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai by the following table:

Table 3 Checklist to be used to identify characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai of LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1.

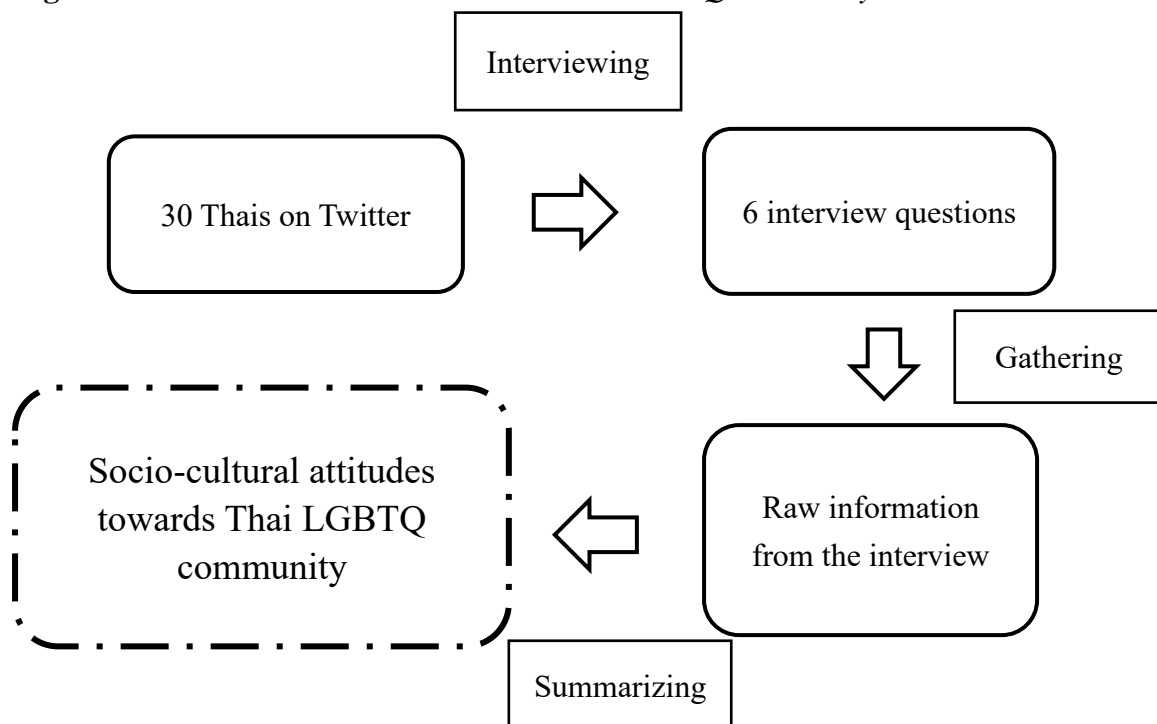
No.	Source term (Thai)	Meaning	Characteristics of LGBTQ slang in Thai
1.	ตุ๊ดล่ำกำมปู	A gay with big muscles	Address and pronouns terms

2.	รับ	A receiver in sex	LGBTQ language particles and suggestive LGBTQ
3.	รุก	A giver in sex	LGBTQ language particles and suggestive LGBTQ

2. The results were to find the most and the least frequently characteristic used.
3. There was an explanation with an example(s) in each characteristic.

To answer research question 3, as the framework of data analysis was mentioned in the previous section, the process of data analysis will be shown as follows:

Figure 3 *Socio-cultural attitudes towards Thai LGBTQ community*



The procedures in analyzing the data were as follows:

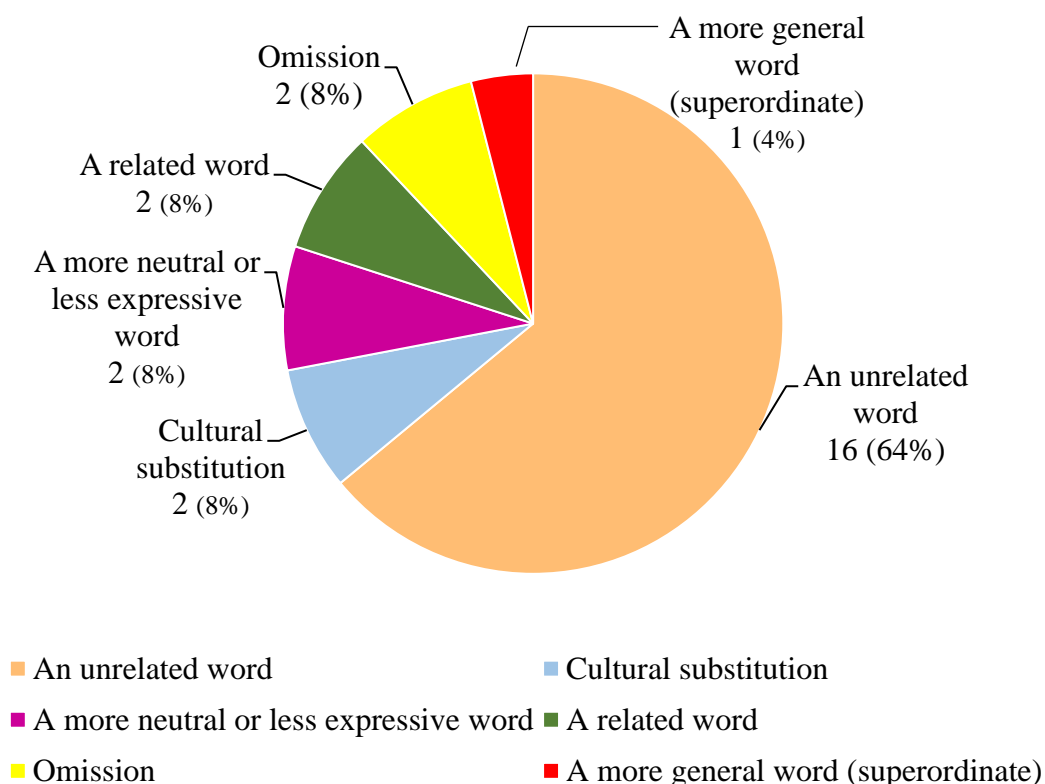
1. The data collected from the interviews were analyzed to represent the effect of socio-cultural attitudes towards Thai LGBTQ community.
2. The results were shown the participants attitudes on slang English translation towards Thai LGBTQ community.

Findings and Discussion

Research Question 1

The findings of the analysis of translation strategies used to translate *Diary of Tootsie* on Netflix and YouTube using Mona Baker's eight translation strategies. Figure 1 through eight discussed how the translator used seven of the Baker's eight translation strategies.

Figure 4 Frequency of translation strategies of LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie* on Netflix



In figure 4, six of eight translation strategies were applied in *Diary of Tootsie* from Netflix. Translation by using an unrelated word was found the most frequently used strategy (16 slang), followed by cultural substitution (2 slang). Meanwhile, the translation strategies by paraphrase using a related word, by a more neutral or less expressive word and by omission were found using on 2 slang. Finally, there was only 1 slang using translation by a more general word (superordinate). The next section will explain the translation strategies with an example.

Figure 5

Frequency of translation strategies of LGBTQ slang in Diary of Tootsie on YouTube

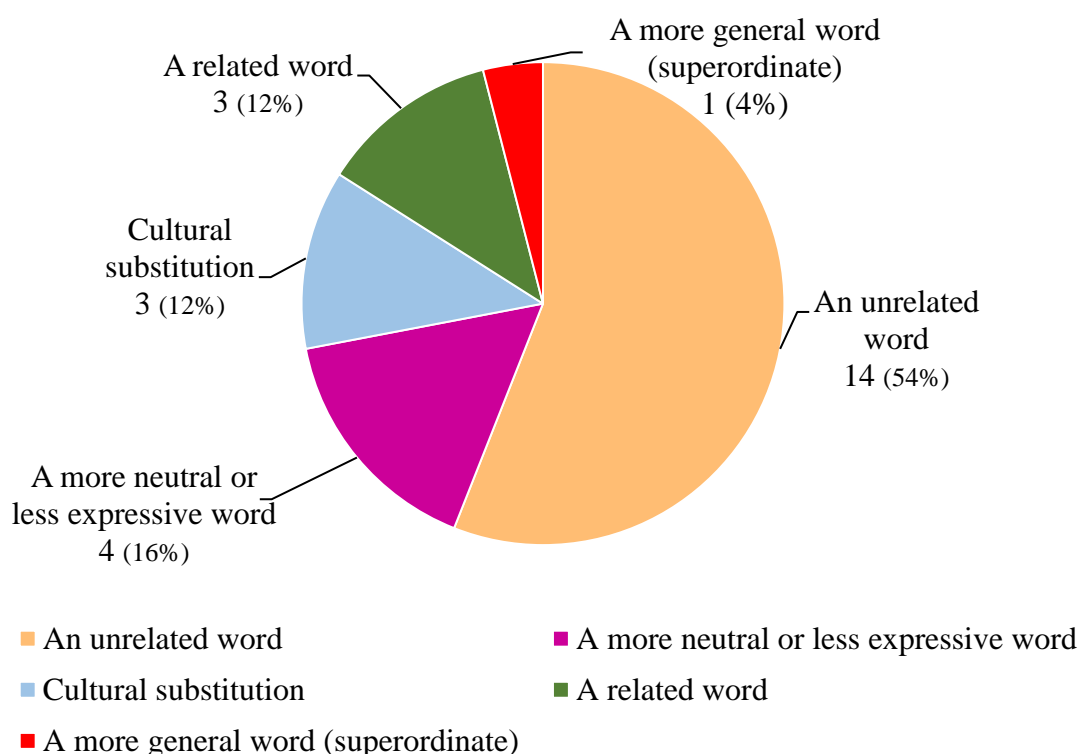


Figure 5 noted the five translation strategies that were applied in in *Diary of Tootsie* from YouTube. The most frequently used was translation by using an unrelated word (14 slang). Translation by a more neutral or less expressive word was applied in 4 slang words. While translation by cultural substitution, and by paraphrase using a related word was used in 3 slang translations. Lastly, only 1 slang was translated by a more general word (superordinate). Next section explained the translation strategies with examples.

Research Question 2

Figure 6 Characteristics of LGBTQ slang found in *Diary of Tootsie*

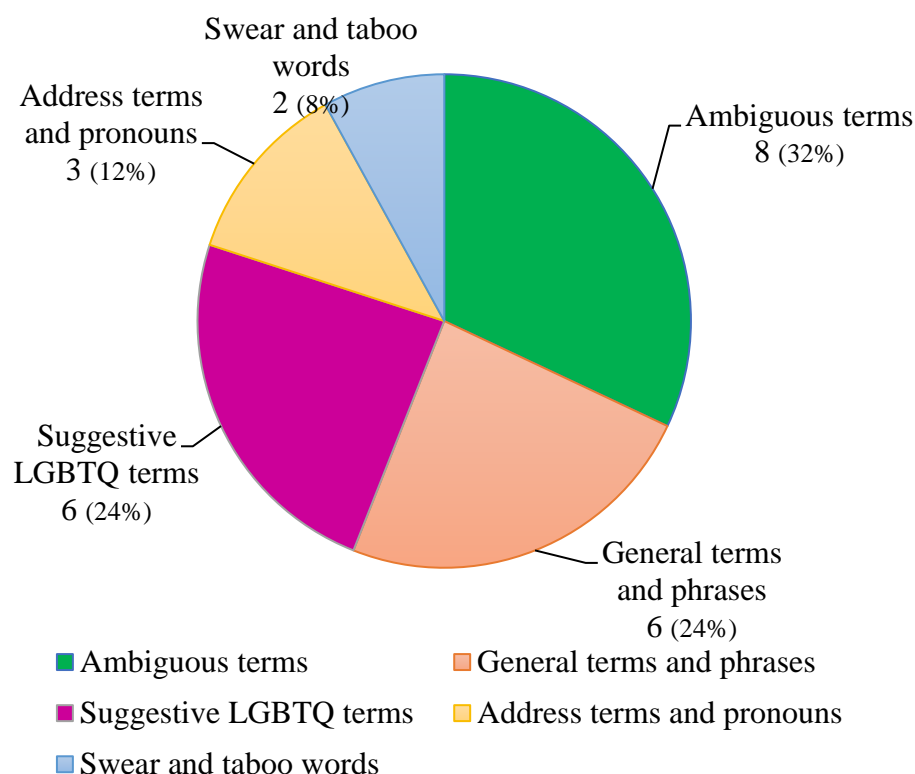


Figure 6 revealed that LGBTQ slang in Thai found in *Diary of Tootsie* was identified based on five characteristics of LGBTQ language in Thai. An ambiguous terms were found with the most frequency of use on these categories (8 slang). While the general terms and phrases and suggestive LGBTQ terms had equal frequencies (6 slang). Moreover, 3 slang were counted as the address and pronouns to call people. Finally, there was only 1 slang considered as swear and taboo words. The next section explained the translation strategies

Research Question 3

The results from the interview questions about whether or not the English translation of Thai LBGTGQ slang had any effects on the LGBTQ community. The results were represented by the following six interview questions in detail under each table. After that, there was summary of the interviews in order to answer the last research question. The interview results were explained by the following:

Table 4 *How do English translation affect Thai LGBTQ community?*

How do English translation affect Thai LGBTQ community?	Frequency
It does not affect anything	13
Looking unique/ funny/ more polite	6
Making joke on LGBTQ/ insulting	5
No comment	3
The meaning is literal	2
Depend on the situation	1
Learning English translation	1
Total	31

The participants were asked to express their opinion about how the English translation of the slang terms from *Diary of Tootsie* had any effects on Thai LGBTQ community. The result suggests that these English translation of slang terms had no effect on Thai LGBTQ community (13 participants). Some participants said that these English translation of slang terms made Thai LGBTQ slang more unique and funnier, and some English translated slang also changed the terms to be more polite than original terms (6 participants). However, some participants thought these English translations of slang terms made jokes and insulted the LGBTQ community because some slang terms in *Diary of Tootsie* expressed sexual things that would make the audiences misunderstand things about the Thai LGBTQ community (5 participants). On the other hand, there were some opinions that noted the effects from English translation depended on the situation where the speaker was.

Most of the participants said English translation of these slang terms were positive because English translation would help the audience understand the meaning of the slang in their own language (target language) that helped the conversation more relaxing among their close friends. They also mentioned that English translation of Thai LGBTQ slang represented Thai LGBTQ culture, and some slang terms that were translated into English made the slang looked more polite and reduced the harshness in the source language. However, there were some participants who said these LGBTQ slang terms in source language (Thai) focused on sexual terms and

when these terms were translated into target language (English), the audiences probably thought that the Thai LGBTQ community was only about sexual things and might be insulting to Thai LGBTQ people. However, the English translation of these slang terms might have affected in particular circumstances or might have not affected at all.

Conclusion

The results reported that most of LGBTQ slang found in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 in Netflix (15 slang) and YouTube (14 slang) employed the translation strategy by paraphrase using an unrelated word. The research shows that ambiguous terms are the most frequently used of the five characteristics of LGBTQ language in Thai to conceal the true meaning of the slang terms that convey the sexual meaning. Furthermore, the interview section has pointed out that English translation of the slang terms had no effects on the Thai LGBTQ community as well as the findings clearly indicate that the slang have represented a positive attitude rather than a negative attitude towards the Thai LGBTQ community. Thus, the study of translation strategies for LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie* would have positive benefits for both language teachers and language learners. It could also help to develop translation skills for a future career as a translator. Also, this paper could increase readers' understanding of Thai LGBTQ community through Thai LGBTQ series to perceive the LGBTQ aspects in Thailand.

Translation strategies help teachers and translators deal with deal with various problems of translation when they cannot find the closest meaning of the source language to translate the target language used in a different culture, language structure, or meaning. This research focused on identifying Baker's translation strategies on LGBTQ slang in *Diary of Tootsie*, season 1 on Netflix as pro-subbing and YouTube as fan-subbing. Baker (1992) mentioned that the problems of various types of non-equivalence at word level need to be aware when there is no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text. Moreover, this research focused on translation strategies that related to culture. Teachers and translators need to concern with the culture of the target language.

Importantly, the last research question result illustrated the change in Thai society toward LGBTQ community that represented through the media. Most of participants thought the English translation of these English translated slang terms had no effects on Thai LGBTQ

community, the findings also represented the positive attitude rather than negative attitude towards the Thai LGBTQ community. It might relate to the LGBTQ right issue in Thailand people have been realized fundamental rights and gender diversity that everyone should have.

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