Subtitling British Slang in *Peaky Blinders* into Thai

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ABSTRACT

Slang evolves over time, with meanings that constantly shift. This poses a challenge for translators and subtitlers, who must possess cultural knowledge and apply appropriate translation techniques to retain the intended meanings. Studies on English–Thai translation of British slang are rarely found. This study aims to identify the translation techniques used, and to examine whether the type of slang influences the translation choices in the series *Peaky Blinders*, Seasons 1–3, on Netflix. The translation typology proposed by Gottlieb (1997) and the types of slang proposed by Mattiello (2008) were adopted in this study. Twenty-two British slang words were identified. The results revealed that five translation techniques were used, including transfer (41%), condensation (23%), expansion (8%), dislocation (5%), and deletion (5%). In addition, hybrid techniques were also resorted to, including imitation and condensation (8%), expansion, paraphrase, and imitation (5%), and expansion, condensation, and imitation (5%). Two slang types were identified, namely group- and subject-restriction (64%) and informality and debasement (36%). Due to the strong gangster context in Peaky Blinders, most slang terms belonged to the group- and subject-restriction category. This type of slang influenced the translation choices, with the translator most frequently employing the transfer technique. As a result, some slang terms were only partially translated, and their connotative meanings were not fully conveyed.

INTRODUCTION

While watching the British TV series Peaky Blinders, one will hear "Pick it up, pikey." and may wonder what 'pikey' means. In Green's Dictionary of Slang (Green, 2025) 'pikey' is defined as 'a working-class person, considered loutish and tasteless by their middle-class counterparts'. English language users from other parts of the world may not recognise this word, one of many British slang words in Peaky Blinders. Most people may know slang as unconventional words or phrases used by a group of people in informal conversations. Hotten (1860, p. 44) states that "Slang is the language of street humour, of fast, high, and low life". Most slang words do not last long and eventually disappear, but sometimes a slang term becomes part of everyday language, and its meaning gets added to dictionaries. While slang evolves over time, for translators and subtitlers the challenge remains, as cultural knowledge and suitable translation techniques are required for the transfer of meanings.

With the advancement of technology, subtitling has become widely used in the entertainment industry to give audiences access to foreign content. Subtitling, one of the main audiovisual (AV) modes along with dubbing and voiceover, has emerged because of the growth of mass communication in new multimedia formats (Díaz-Cintas, 2013, p. 273). Peaky Blinders, available in Thailand exclusively on Netflix, is a period TV series that has not been dubbed in Thai partly due to technical and, most importantly, financial reasons. A range of British accents is present throughout the series, some of which may pose comprehension challenges, particularly for non-English speaking viewers. Subtitles then have an essential role in this series; they would allow the audience to comprehend and enjoy the content of the series.

Despite the increasing interest in audiovisual translation (AVT), studies on the translation of English-Thai slang remain scarce. Some research, such as Saisa-Ard and Tasanameelarp (2024) and Renata and Lahay (2024), has examined the translation of slang in films and identified various translation techniques used in subtitles. However, these studies do not address British slang, particularly in historical contexts like that of Peaky Blinders, which features regional, cultural, and class-based slang influenced by Irish, Jewish, and Italian communities. This study seeks to address this gap by analysing the translation of British slang into Thai and exploring the challenges of subtitling slang in English period dramas for Thai audiences. This study also contributes to the understanding of slang translation and the preservation of cultural nuances in media. By analysing British slang in Peaky Blinders, it offers deeper insight into how non-standard language, cultural references, and historical slang are handled in translation, particularly an AV kind.

In this study, we seek to examine the translation techniques employed in translating the English slang in Peaky Blinders and answer whether the type of slang influences the choice of translation techniques.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of slang

In dictionaries, there is no unique, clear-cut definition of slang, as this concept has evolved over time. According to Hotten (1860, p. 6), "slang represents that evanescent, vulgar language, ever changing with fashion and taste, which has principally come into vogue during the last seventy or eighty years, spoken by persons in every grade of life, rich and poor, honest and dishonest." This definition suggests that slang is not exclusive to any particular social class but is employed by individuals from diverse social backgrounds. Moreover, Hartmann and Stork (1972, p. 210) state that "slang is a variety of speech characterised by newly coined, rapidly changing vocabulary, often used by the young or by social and professional groups for 'in-group' communication, thus preventing understanding by the broader speech community." Their definition underscores the exclusive nature of slang as a means of communication within specific groups. Cambridge International Dictionary of English (Procter, 1995, p. 1349) explains that "slang is an informal language,

often containing words and meanings that may not be polite and that remains in use for only a short time."

Over time, the definition of slang has remained relatively stable; both historical and contemporary perspectives generally regard slang as informal language. In Peaky Blinders, much of the slang used in Seasons 1–3 appears across characters from diverse backgrounds, frequently encompassing vulgar, rude, and in-group expressions. Consequently, the definition provided by Hartmann and Stork (1972) is particularly pertinent, framing slang as a linguistic device for group identity, power relations, and historical authenticity. Furthermore, in the series, slang reinforces the gang's exclusivity, mirrors their social background, and enhances the realism of the dialogue.

Subtitling slang

Subtitling refers to a translation procedure that includes a written text and is normally shown on the bottom of the screen. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014, p. 9) state that "all subtitled programs are made up of three main components: the spoken word, the image, and the subtitles". The viewer's ability to read the image and text at a particular speed and the actual size of the screen are how the three elements work together. The dialogue and image must be displayed along with the subtitles.

Companies commissioned to produce subtitles often use the 'six-second rule' to determine how long a subtitle should remain on screen, typically allowing a maximum of two lines with 32 to 41 characters each (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, p. 276). Netflix (n.d.), on which Peaky Blinders is streamed, specifies the character limitation for Thai subtitles at 35 characters per line, excluding all composite characters. Consequently, translators and subtitlers must condense spoken language to fit these constraints. This task becomes even more challenging when subtitling slang, as its dynamic, informal, and culturally specific nature presents subtitling difficulties that differ from subtitling standard language. Furthermore, slang is frequently regarded as low-status language, typically used by individuals who do not employ formal expressions in communication (Hashish & Hussein, 2022, p. 752). For this reason, commissioned translators may overlook the nuances of slang terms, leading to a reduction or loss of meaning when transposing them.

Types of slang

Mattiello (2008) discusses the sociological properties of slang and states that these properties are derived from slang's nature and functions. Slang is categorised as either speaker-oriented or hearer-oriented. The speaker-oriented properties appertain to social identity and group solidarity whereas the hearer-oriented properties apply to the listener's interpretation and reaction to slang (Mattiello, 2008). This study focuses on speaker-oriented properties for analysing slang found in the series Peaky Blinders. As Peaky Blinders is a historical crime drama set in 1919 Britain about a street gang run by Thomas Shelby, the interpretation of social identity and group solidarity is especially relevant. Therefore, analysing speaker-oriented properties is more pertinent than examining hearer-oriented properties, such as

audience reactions to the speaker's use of slang, within the context of the series. Each category is explained as follows:

1. Group- and Subject-restriction

Both group restriction and subject restriction are directly related to each other since the speaker who are in the specific group mostly have the same interests, concerns, values, pastimes, and habits which lead to similar conversational topics and related areas for discussion. For instance, the preferential topics of young men are sexuality and attraction for the opposite sex, as shown in this exchange drawn from *Grease* (1978):

Kenickie:	How was the action at the beach?
Danny:	It was <u>flipping</u>.
Sonny:	Yeah, crazy, huh?
Danny:	I did meet this one <u>chick</u>, she was sort of <u>cool</u>.
Sonny:	You mean she <u>puts out</u>?
Danny:	Come on, Sonny, is that all you ever think about?

(as cited in Mattiello, 2008, pp. 214–215)

From this conversation, it shows that three students are close and familiar with the summer holiday vacation plan. They belong to the same gang, the 'T-birds'. As a result, they use slang to represent their beliefs and experiences of their group as a marker of social identity and group exclusiveness.

The use of rude or taboo expressions—such as 'flipping' (a euphemistic substitute for a strong expletive) and 'put out' (referring to the act of offering oneself for sexual intercourse)—alongside creatively redefined lexical items—such as 'chick' (denoting a girl) and 'cool' (meaning excellent or admirable)—functions as a means for adolescent males to assert in-group distinctiveness and social cohesion. This distinctive linguistic behavior reflects their conscious effort to differentiate themselves from adult society and mainstream language norms. By constructing their own vocabulary, they establish group identity and negotiate status within their community (Mattiello, 2008, pp. 214–215).

2. Secrecy and Privacy

Sometimes, some criminals and drug traffickers use private slang terms to communicate with each other. They also require privacy to conceal the information from the public or police. An illustrative example of covert slang expressions is offered in the dialogue taken from *Trainspotting* (1996):

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> Renton: So, we've just come from Tommy's funeral and you're telling me about a _skag_ deal?
> Begbie: Yeah.
> Renton: What was your price?
> Sick Boy: Four Grand.
> (as cited in Mattiello, 2008, p. 216)

From this conversation, it shows that the buyers wanted to buy heroin from the drug trafficker. They used the word 'skag' instead of heroin because they did not want the police to know that they were dealing drugs (Mattiello, 2008, p. 216).

3. Informality and Debasement

The speaker intentionally shifts from the standard language and reduces formality. The speaker conveys closeness by intending to be informal. The conversation between old friends taken from _There's Something about Mary_ (1988) is a case in point.

> Sully: Healy, you _dog_.
> Healy: Sully. Look at you.
> Sully: You hot _shit_. You look _fucking pisser_.
> (as cited in Mattiello, 2008, pp. 217–218)

To express their close relationship, the speakers use colloquial words. Specifically, Sully refers to his friend as 'particularly fine' or 'impressive' by using the slang words 'dog' and 'shit' as well-known insulting phrases (Mattiello, 2008, pp. 217–218).

4. Time restriction, ephemerality, and localism

Slang in this category relates to the speaker's generation, regional origin, and the slang's life. Some slang words might appear and disappear quickly in a certain period which may be associated with the speakers' age. They reveal the speaker's creativity. However, when the speaker gets older, s/he may no longer use it. The following example is taken from _Frankie and Johnny_ (1991):

> Uncle John: I have said _tooties, dolls, gals, chicks, babes_ when I was young…
> (as cited in Mattiello, 2008, p. 220)

Uncle John is already an adult. He remembers the slang terms from the good old days when he was 17. Now, he no longer uses those words since he is no longer a young man (Mattiello, 2008, pp. 220–222).

Related studies

Saisa-Ard and Tasanameelarp (2024) examined translation strategies and translation techniques in the Thai subtitles of American teen movies on Netflix released between 2017 and 2022, totaling nine titles. Their analysis was based on the techniques for slang translation proposed by Saibua (1982), Baker (1992) and Pinmanee (2006). Six techniques were used (slang for slang, referential meaning equivalence, slang reprimanding with euphemism, omission, euphemism and transliteration). They concluded that the translators tended to opt for more polite words or omit to translate offensive slang.

Renata and Lahay (2024) also researched into the translation of slang words in movie subtitles from English into Indonesian. They analysed the subtitles of slang words in the *Chappie* (2015) movie. They aimed to identify slang words, and translation techniques used in the movie *Chappie*. Descriptive qualitative methods were used to analyse the types of slang based on Partridge's (2015) theory and their analysis of the translation was based on Gottlieb's (2005) translation strategies. There were five out of 11 types of slang (society slang, public house slang, slang in public school and university, slang in theatre, and slang in medicine). Four out of 10 translation techniques were used (paraphrasing, transfer, resignation, and transcription).

While the previous studies have examined slang translation, the translation of British slang into Thai has been under-researched. Given that Saisa-Ard and Tasanameelarp's (2024) research delved into subtitling practices in the same language pair, English into Thai, the typologies chosen by the researchers were not formulated specifically for subtitling. The chosen typology for slang categorisation by Renata and Lahay (2024) also places emphasis on the locale, not the sociological properties of slang. The place at which a slang term is uttered in *Peaky Blinders* is much less crucial than the social identity of the speaker who utters that slang term. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the specific subtitling techniques used for British slang and to examine whether certain types of slang dictate the use of particular translation techniques.

METHODOLOGY

The significance of *Peaky Blinders* lies in its rich portrayal of post–World War I British society, particularly through its depiction of various gangster groups in Birmingham. This period drama showcases multiple perspectives by developing characters from Irish, Italian, Jewish, and Gypsy communities across all six seasons. As a result, the series is especially valuable for studying the language used by its characters. Each community's slang acts as a unique means of communication, with specific words reflecting their identities. The original UK series, with each season featuring six episodes, was released on September 12, 2013, and Thai audiences have been able to stream the series since 2022.

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine the types of slang and the translation techniques used in the Thai subtitles of British slang in *Peaky Blinders*, Seasons 1–3. To answer the first research question, Gottlieb's (1997) typology is

employed for the analysis of translation techniques. His typology focuses specifically on subtitling practices; all ten subtitling techniques in his typology are techniques which can be used to solve subtitling problems to create acceptable subtitles. All ten translation techniques are explained as follows:

1. 'Expansion' is used to provide more details to clarify the meaning of the source text in the target text. It is used when a cultural reference in the source text needs more explanation.
2. 'Paraphrase' is employed when no formal equivalents are available in the target text by still maintaining the original meaning.
3. 'Transfer' refers to a straightforward translation from the source text to the target text in which the original meaning close to the original is kept.
4. 'Imitation' is resorted to when it is necessary to preserve the original's tone, style, and emotion.
5. 'Transcription' is used to convert colloquial or spoken language into written text, often for analysis or formal documentation. It is mostly used for dialogues, particularly when it is important to preserve the original wording for analysis or reference.
6. 'Dislocation' refers to moving a phrase or part of a sentence to a different position in the text or subtitle, usually to better match the viewer's reading rhythm.
7. 'Condensation' is a process of reducing the source text and is employed due to limitations on space and reading speed.
8. 'Decimation' is an advanced form of condensation in which only the main idea is kept.
9. 'Deletion' is used to reduce parts of the text that do not affect comprehension and to shorten the length of the subtitles.
10. 'Resignation' is used when in the source text, there is a culturally specific item that cannot be directly translated; it is then left untranslated and is replaced by something that is more visual in the target culture.

Examining the frequency of slang types and translation techniques will enable the researchers to determine whether the type of slang influences the translator's choice of techniques.

Data collection

The researchers watched 18 episodes across three seasons, with each episode being approximately one hour long, resulting in a total of about 18 hours of material. We spent around two weeks extracting British slang from these episodes. First, the researchers watched all episodes of *Peaky Blinders* in Seasons 1–3, recorded all slang words, placed the slang words as the source text (ST) and the Thai subtitle as the target text (TT). Second, the researchers excluded the American slang and retained only the British slang. Green's

Dictionary of Slang (Green, 2025) was used for verification. After obtaining the British slang, the researchers proceeded to analyse the types of slang and identify the translation techniques used by the translator [1] in *Peaky Blinders*.

RESULTS

Types of slang

As presented in Table 1, most slang words in *Peaky Blinders* were categorised into the two main types 'group- and subject-restriction' and 'informality and debasement'. Fourteen words can be categorised as 'group- and subject-restriction', in line with the series' focus on gang culture and ethnicity. The characters in the series use slang as a way to blend in and assert group membership. For example, the word 'copper' is used to refer to a police officer, reflecting a shared group identity. In this context, slang is used to express the characters' beliefs, experiences, and affiliations. Eight words were categorised as 'informality and debasement'. Racist or discriminatory expressions used against people from various social classes or ethnicities are detected due to the series' themes, which revolve around crime, illegality, and political tension.

None of the slang words fell into 'time-restriction and ephemerality, localism' and 'secrecy and privacy'. The category 'time-restriction, ephemerality, and localism' is the type of slang that deals with the placement of slang within a specific time and space, which may also be associated with the speaker's age. However, in the series, no slang words related to the age of the speakers were found. There is also no character development, such as transitions from youth to adulthood or flashbacks, in which slang might be tied to a particular period. Regarding 'secrecy and privacy' type, the researchers found that when characters need to share secretive information, they switch languages instead of using slang. For example, in Season 1, Johnny Dogs tries to stop an argument between the Lee family and Thomas Shelby by speaking Romani, the native language of the Gypsy community.

Table 1. Types of slang in *Peaky Blinders*

No.	Type of slang	Frequency	Percentage
1	Group- and subject-restriction	14	64%
2	Informality and debasement	8	36%
3	Time-restriction, ephemerality and localism	0	0%
4	Secrecy and privacy	0	0%
	Total	22	100%

After the British slang words were categorised, the translation techniques specific to subtitling as proposed by Gottlieb (1997) were identified to discover which techniques were most frequently employed by the translator and which were less commonly used.

Translation techniques

The translator employed a variety of techniques when dealing with British slang words in *Peaky Blinders*. The most frequently adopted technique was 'transfer' (41%). Most slang words in the series appear to be directly translated, presumably to preserve the source text meaning as much as possible without disrupting the sentence structure, such as 'copper', 'cosh', and 'punters'. The second most frequently used technique was 'condensation' (23%). This method was adopted to solve the translation problem of five words; however, some part of the original meaning was omitted as can be seen in the case of 'tenner', 'paddies' and 'gyppo'.

The other employed translation techniques included 'expansion', 'deletion' and 'dislocation'. 'Expansion' accounted for 8%. Some slang words or idiomatic expressions require additional clarification in the target text to ensure that the context is accurately understood by the target audiences. This method is particularly useful for culturally specific terms, such as 'shopped' and 'clinked up'. 'Deletion' accounted for 5%. The only slang word that was deleted is 'Fenians'. In the source text, the sentence "There are the IRA Fenians." was translated into Thai as "ยังมีกลุ่มไออาร์เอ" with 'Fenians' being omitted. 'Dislocation' also accounted for 5% and was used in one example where the meaning had to be adapted.

There are also cases in which multiple techniques were needed for the translation of a single slang word. For example, some slang words required a combination of 'condensation and imitation' (8%) to maintain both the tone and render a simplified meaning, such as 'pikey' and 'tinker'. Additionally, two words required the adoption of three techniques due to their complexity. One involved 'expansion, paraphrase, and imitation' (5%) as the translator added explanatory elements, rephrased the original slang, and imitated the style to convey the intended meaning; the case in point is 'toe-rag'. Another slang term was translated by using the techniques 'expansion, condensation, and imitation' (5%) for the translator attempted to balance between adding context, shortening certain parts, and preserving stylistic features, which can be seen in the case of 'mongrel'. These hybrid techniques were used less frequently but they demonstrated the translator's efforts in handling more complex or culturally bound slang terms.

The techniques 'paraphrase', 'decimation', 'resignation', and 'transcription' were not found (0%). 'Paraphrase' involves modifying word choices to better fit the target text. However, this technique was used in combination with other techniques. When there is no equivalent word in the target text, the translator can then adopt the technique called 'resignation' by leaving that word untranslated and replacing it by something that is more visual in the target culture. The British slang in *Peaky Blinders* could mostly be translated into Thai, but some meanings were sacrificed. 'Decimation', the significant reduction of the text, is typically used in cases of expansive or repetitive language. However, the dialogue in *Peaky Blinders* is generally concise and contextually clear, leaving no need for this extreme form of reduction. 'Transcription' which involves keeping a word in its original form, is typically applied to proper nouns, specialised terms, or culturally bound expressions.

Table 2. Frequency of each translation technique used

No.	Translation technique	Frequency	Percentage
1	Expansion	2	8%
2	Paraphrase	0	0%
3	Transfer	9	41%
4	Imitation	0	0%
5	Transcription	0	0%
6	Dislocation	1	5%
7	Condensation	5	23%
8	Decimation	0	0%
9	Deletion	1	5%
10	Resignation	0	0%
11	Imitation and condensation	2	8%
12	Expansion, paraphrase and imitation	1	5%
13	Expansion, condensation and imitation	1	5%
	Total	22	100%

Table 3. British slang words found in *Peaky Blinders*, Seasons 1–3, as the source text, the Thai translation as the target text, the specified types of slang, and the translation techniques used

No.	Source Text	Target Text	Type of slang	Translation technique
1	Copper	ตำรวจ	Group- and subject-restriction	Transfer
2	Fenians	พวกไออาร์เอ	Informality and debasement	Deletion
3	Cosh	กระบองพับ	Group- and subject-restriction	Transfer
4	Tenner	เงินนิดหน่อย	Group- and subject-restriction	Condensation
5	Didicoy	ยิปซี	Group- and subject-restriction	Condensation
6	Pikey	ไอ้กระจอก	Informality and debasement	Imitation and condensation
7	Cooped up	ถูกขัง	Group- and subject-restriction	Transfer
8	Shopped	บอกตำรวจ	Group- and subject-restriction	Expansion
9	Tinker	ไอ้ยิปซี	Informality and debasement	Condensation and imitation
10	Toe-rag	ไอ้โจรกระจอก	Informality and debasement	Expansion, paraphrase and imitation
11	Paddies	พวกไอริช	Informality and debasement	Condensation
12	Punters	ลูกค้า	Group- and subject-restriction	Transfer
13	Whinging	ครวญคราง	Group- and subject-restriction	Transfer
14	Cockneys	พวกลอนดอน	Group- and subject-restriction	Condensation
15	Toffs	พวกหัวสูง	Group- and subject-restriction	Transfer
16	Sport	เอากัน	Group- and subject-restriction	Transfer
17	Sport	อำนาจ	Group- and subject-restriction	Dislocation
18	Tittle tattle	ข่าวลือ	Informality and debasement	Transfer
19	Clinked up	จับนายเข้าคุก	Group- and subject-restriction	Expansion

No.	Source Text	Target Text	Type of slang	Translation technique
20	Battered	ทำร้าย	Group- and subject-restriction	Transfer
21	Mongrel	ไอ้หมาลอบกัด	Informality and debasement	Expansion, condensation and imitation
22	Gyppo	ยิปซี	Informality and debasement	Condensation

Textual analysis

To understand the meanings, historical contexts, and cultural connotations, the slang words found in Peaky Blinders were analysed. The series features many context-specific slang terms. To verify whether all the meanings in the source text were conveyed in the target text, textual analysis was conducted. Green's Dictionary of Slang (Green, 2025) was used as the main reference to find both the origins of slang and its meanings. Furthermore, The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary (Hawkins & Allen, 1991), Cambridge International Dictionary of English (Procter, 1995), Collins Online Dictionary (HarperCollins Publishers, n.d.), Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged (Merriam-Webster, 2002), and World Wide Word (Quinion, 2001) were used for meaning verification. The slang words selected for close analysis were chosen based on their significance within the series, their potential impact on the audience's understanding, and the translation challenges they presented.

Fenians
ST: There are the IRA Fenians.
TT: ยังมีกลุ่มไออาร์เอ
           [The back translation is: "There is the IRA group."]

In this scene, Inspector Campbell informs the policemen about the presence of rebels, such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Fenians in Small Heath and they need to be eliminated. The word 'Fenians' refers to the Irish nationalists, especially those who were associated with the IRA. The term IRA was created in 1919. The IRA's purpose was to use armed force to render British rule in Ireland ineffective and thus to assist in achieving the broader objective of an independent republic. However, the IRA operated independently of political control and in some periods took the upper hand in the independence movement. The IRA employed guerrilla tactics, including ambushes, raids, and sabotage, to force the British government to negotiate (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025).

The word 'Fenians' is categorised as 'informality and debasement' because in British English, 'Fenians' is often used as an offensive term and the speaker in this context is expressing hatred toward this group of people.

According to Green's Dictionary of Slang (Green, 2025), 'Fenian' is defined with variants such as "Irish cold", "three cold Irish", and "three of Irish cold", a pun referring to

the dead body (cold body). Historically, 'Fenians' refers to Irish nationalists, particularly members of the Fenian Brotherhood, connected to historical events, such as the execution of three Fenians for the Phoenix Park murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Henry Burke on 6 May 1882.

In the series, the phrase 'IRA Fenians' was translated as "พวกไออาร์เอ" which can be translated back into English as 'the IRA group'. The word 'Fenians' was omitted in the translation, indicating that the translator employed the 'deletion' technique. Essentially, an offensive term was cut in the translation. The reason the translator omitted the word 'Fenians' was possibly because the translator assumed that the audiences were not familiar with the historical background of Fenians and deleting this word in the Thai subtitle would not significantly affect the comprehension of the story.

In brief, the use of the 'deletion' technique led to the removal of the insulting tone of the original slang and the meaning is not fully conveyed. This translation choice will lead the target audiences to think that the IRA and the Fenians are one and the same, while in fact, they were gradually eclipsed by the IRA (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2025).

Didicoy
ST: His mother was a Didicoy whore.
TT: แม่ของมันเป็นกะหรี่ยิปซี
        [His mother was a Gypsy whore.]

In the scene, after Thomas Shelby finishes his deal with Johnny Dogs, he hears a group of three people laughing, and this annoys him. He walks straight toward them and angrily asks if they are laughing at his brother. One of the group members insults Thomas' mother, saying, "His mother was a Didicoy whore."

The word 'Didicoy' is categorised as 'group- and subject-restriction' type of slang because it specifically refers to a person who is a half-breed Gypsy. In the series, the word 'Didicoy' is used by a character who is a Gypsy himself. The meaning of this word is deeply rooted in cultural identity and social boundaries, which can lead to misunderstandings and make the word inaccessible to outsiders.

In the Thai subtitle, 'Didicoy' is translated as "ยิปซี" (Gypsy). Based on Collins online Dictionary (HarperCollins Publishers, n.d.), 'didicoy' refers to a half-breed Gypsy or people who are not true Roma. The term 'true Roma' refers to individuals who identify as part of the Romani ethnic group, a dispersed Indo-Aryan people with a shared cultural heritage, language, and a traditional nomadic history rooted in Northern India. Translating this slang term literally as 'half-breed Gypsy' or 'people who are not true Roma' would result in the subtitle that is too long and confusing. Therefore, the translator chose to use the word "ยิปซี" which is already used throughout the series to represent various Gypsy-related slang words. However, the meanings in the source text that refer to 'half-breed' or 'people who are not true Roma' are omitted. This decision reflects the use of the 'condensation' technique, which allows the audiences to instantly grasp the meaning. At the same time, the connotation of

'one who is not of pure Romani descent' is erased as the term 'didicoy' is used to express prejudice and imply that a person is of 'less pure' heritage or culture.

Pikey
ST: Pick it up, pikey.
TT: หยิบขึ้นมา ไอ้กระจอก
             [Pick it up, dud.]

In the scene in which this slang term is uttered, Billy Kimber and his gang visit the pub to negotiate with the Lee family regarding a fixed horse race. Tommy offers to support Billy's side. To seal the agreement, Billy tosses a coin and says, "Pick it up, pikey.", indicating that Tommy should accept the deal without hesitation.

The word 'pikey' is categorised as 'informality and debasement' type of slang as it is considered profane and vulgar. In this scene, the speaker uses the word to emphasise a perceived social divide between himself and the other gang. According to Green's Dictionary of Slang (Green, 2025), 'pikey' is defined as "a vagrant, a gypsy" and is a derogatory term referring to the Gypsy, Roma, and traveler communities. It is predominantly used in the UK and Ireland and is widely regarded as offensive.

In the Thai translation, pikey is translated as "ไอ้กระจอก" which roughly means 'loser'. The translator disregarded the meaning in the source text yet attempted to maintain the derogatory and insulting tone. The translation technique used is 'condensation', the reduction of both the meaning and structure of the original expression. The translator condensed 'pikey' into "กระจอก" in the target text, removing the specific cultural reference to gypsies but retaining an insulting tone that can be easily understood by the Thai audiences. Since Thai lacks a direct equivalent that carries both the cultural and offensive weight of 'pikey', the translator adapted the term to preserve the negative tone rather than the literal meaning.

Additionally, the imitation technique is employed to convey the rudeness and emotional intensity in the source text. By adding the prefix "ไอ้"[2] to "กระจอก", the translator added to the insult to maintain the speaker's aggressive tone. However, the ethnic and cultural specificity of 'pikey' is lost in the Thai translation due to the sacrifice of meaning 'a gypsy' or 'vagrant'.

Toe-rag
ST: You've bit off more than you can chew, you little toe-rag.
TT: นายฝันสูงเกินตัว ไอ้โจรกระจอก
             [You dream beyond your capacities, you petty thief.]

In the scene, when the Shelby family is about to take over the legal horse betting business from Billy Kimber, Billy sees this as a threat to his operations and, in a moment of desperation, seeks to eliminate Thomas Shelby. During this confrontation, he uses the word 'toe-rag' to insult Tommy, signaling both contempt and a desire to assert dominance.

The word 'toe-rag' is categorised as 'informality and debasement' type of slang as it breaks from formal or standard usage and shifts toward a less formal register. The term used reflects Billy's attempt to lower Tommy's status, showing disrespect toward someone he sees as overreaching. According to World Wide Words (Quinion, 2001), in the early 19th century, 'toe-rag' referred to strips of cloth that convicts or tramps wrapped around their feet as a substitute for socks. In the prison culture, this term has evolved to describe inmates perceived as weak or cowardly, those who wore toe-rags to protect their feet from rough prison floors, while stronger inmates walked barefoot on the cobblestones. Over time, 'toe-rag' became a broader term of abuse, used mainly among lower social groups, such as circus performers and traveling acrobats. As noted in World Wide Words (Quinion, 2001), the term was eventually adopted as a general insult.

In Green's Dictionary of Slang (Green, 2025), toe-rag is defined simply as 'a general term of abuse', reinforcing its status as a derogatory and dismissive term. The slang word 'toe-rag' is translated into Thai as "ไอ้โจรกระจอก" which means 'petty thief'. The insulting tone was preserved in the Thai subtitle while the form was adapted. The phrase "ไอ้โจรกระจอก" is more culturally resonant for Thai viewers, clearly conveying the idea of someone lowly or contemptible. The translation technique used was 'paraphrase', which refers to the decision taken by the translator to interpret the original term rather than directly translating it. Moreover, the translator added 'ไอ้โจร' to fit the scene where Billy is accusing Tommy of trying to steal his business. The use of 'โจร' aligns with Thai cultural understanding, where the term can refer broadly to someone who engages in immoral or illegal behavior. The 'expansion' translation technique was adopted as the translator provided additional details to enhance the audience's understanding. In addition, the prefix "ไอ้" serves to mimic the original emotional intensity of Billy's insult. The use of the 'imitation' technique was also used, seeing as the translator sought to preserve the offensive tone and emotional charge of the original dialogue. While the specific cultural meaning of 'toe-rag' was altered, the final translation "ไอ้โจรกระจอก" nonetheless conveyed the speaker's disrespect and the confrontational nature of the scene.

In sum, in translating 'toe-rag' into Thai, a combination of techniques, namely 'paraphrase, expansion, and imitation' were employed. Though the literal meaning is lost, the translator managed to render a culturally relevant term for the Thai audiences.

Sport
ST: Mind you, I think Tommy enjoys the sport.
TT: ระวังนะ ทอมมี่ชักติดใจในอำนาจแล้ว
        [Be careful, Tommy is obsessed with having power.]

In this scene, the police officer tells Arthur Shelby that Thomas "enjoys the sport", referring to Thomas' order for Arthur and John to burn the Italian's pub to drive them out and protect the Peaky Blinders' territory.

The word 'sport' is categorised as 'group- and subject-restriction' type of slang. In the scene, the police officer points out that the gang is too big to be bothered by such matters.

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They deal with Russia yet still concern themselves with relatively small issues like burning pubs and eliminating the Italians from their territory. However, without explicitly explaining what 'sport' means, both the speaker and the listener in the conversation still understand the intended meaning.

There are multiple meanings of the word 'sport' in Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged (Merriam-Webster, 2002, p. 2206), but the one relevant to this conversation is "to make public and usual, ostentatious display or use of: show off". In the subtitle, however, 'sport' is translated as "อำนาจ", the meaning is dislocated and the original sense of the word is lost. The translator shifted the point of view, a process that can be described as the 'dislocation' technique. If 'sport' would have been translated as "โชว์พาว"[3], the use of Thai slang would become an equivalent. The target text "ระวังนะ ทอมมี่ชักติดใจในอำนาจแล้ว" is also an unnatural rendering.[4]

Mongrel

ST: Well, here is what you need to do, you fucking mongrel.

TT: นี่คือสิ่งที่คุณต้องทำ ไอ้หมาลอบกัด

        [This is what you need to do, you dog, always biting on the sly.]

In the scene, Father John Hughes threatens Thomas Shelby, demanding that he obeys all of his orders to ensure the safety of his kidnapped daughter. The reason behind her being kidnapped is Thomas Shelby's attempt to betray Father John Hughes.

The word 'mongrel' is categorised as 'informality and debasement' type of slang. In the series, Father John Hughes uses this word to insult and threaten Thomas Shelby. By adding the word 'fucking' before mongrel, the insult becomes even more offensive, further highlighting the aggression in his speech.

According to Collins Online Dictionary (HarperCollins Publishers, n.d.), 'mongrel' is defined as "a plant or animal, especially a dog, of mixed or unknown breeding; a crossbreed or hybrid" and "a person of mixed race". In the Thai subtitles, mongrel is translated as "ไอ้หมาลอบกัด", where the translator added the word "ลอบกัด", literally meaning "to stealthily bite someone", which reflects the action of betraying someone. The translation technique used was 'expansion'; additional meaning is introduced to convey the speaker's intent more clearly.

Although the original meaning referring to a dog of mixed or unknown breeding is preserved, the racial connotation in reference to 'a person of mixed race' is omitted. The technique 'condensation' was also employed. Furthermore, the word "ไอ้" is added to maintain the threatening and offensive tone of the original dialogue. The use of the 'imitation' technique was then detected.

It should be pointed out that the meanings of the British slang terms 'Didicoy', 'tinker', 'gyppo', and 'pikey' were only partially conveyed. The slang term 'Didicoy' specifically refers to someone of mixed Gypsy heritage, but in the Thai subtitle it was translated simply as "ยิปซี" erasing the aspect of mixed heritage. The terms 'tinker' and 'gyppo' both carry strong offensive connotations in English, but in the Thai subtitles, they were also rendered

as "ยิปซี", resulting in translations without any offensive tone. Finally, 'pikey' is an extremely derogatory term in British English, yet in the Thai subtitle, it appears as "ไอ้กระจอก" which expresses an insult but loses the original ethnic and cultural reference. While the Thai subtitles make the slang more accessible for Thai audiences, this comes at the expense of accuracy and cultural depth. The translator's choices led to partial meanings and the omission of contextual details and historical background. As a result, the connotative meanings contained in the British slang terms—meanings the target audience might have grasped—are lost.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Most slang terms were categorised as 'group- and subject-restriction' type of slang, such as 'cosh', 'tenner', and 'Didicoy', followed by 'informality and debasement' type of slang, such as 'Fenians', 'pikey', 'toe-rag', and 'tinker'. Five translation techniques were identified in the study: transfer, condensation, expansion, dislocation, and deletion. Additionally, to translate some slang terms, a combination of two or three techniques was employed, such as 'imitation and condensation', 'expansion, paraphrase and imitation', and 'expansion, condensation and imitation'.

Saisa-Ard and Tasanameelarp (2024) conducted the study which also focused on the translation of slang from English into Thai. In their research, Flexner's (1975) typology was employed to identify slang terms while their meanings were retrieved from Cambridge Dictionary (2023). Flexner's (1975) typology was not used to categorise slang types, but rather to establish whether a term could be qualified as slang. They identified six translation techniques proposed by Newmark (1988), with faithful translation being used the most frequently. This translation technique involves preserving the source text as much as possible in the target text, which is similar to the 'transfer' technique proposed by Gottlieb (1997). Moreover, the findings in our study also confirm that the 'transfer' technique is being used the most frequently when British slang words were translated.

Renata and Lahay (2024) examined the translation of slang words from English into Indonesian in the movie *Chappie* (2015). It is about an artificial intelligence law enforcement robot that is captured and taught by gangsters. They also adopted Gottlieb's (2005) typology. Their findings revealed the use of paraphrase, transfer, resignation, and transcription. However, they used Partridge's (2015) typology to categorise the slang words. They concluded that 'society slang' is the most common type of slang used in the movie. However, they did not examine whether the type of slang influenced the choice of translation techniques.

In this study, a greater variety of translation techniques were used compared to previous research (in which transfer, condensation, expansion, dislocation, and deletion were observed). While the previously mentioned research revealed comparable results, this study demonstrates the emergence of hybrid techniques, in which two or more translation techniques were combined. This can be attributed to the highly culture-specific and historically bound nature of British slang, which often requires multiple techniques to adequately convey its meanings. The emergence of hybrid techniques highlights the high

level of competency required of translators and subtitlers when dealing with slang, particularly in AV texts such as subtitles.

Eight slang terms classified as 'group- and subject-restriction' were translated into Thai using the transfer technique. This suggests that the types of slang in the series influenced the translation techniques chosen by the translator. The 'group- and subject-restriction' type of slang, such as 'copper' or 'punters', can be literally translated as it does not carry connotations that the 'informality and debasement' type of slang does. The terms 'Didicoy', 'Pikey', 'Tinker', and 'Gyppo' carry nuanced meanings, yet their translations are subject to reduction.

To balance accuracy, naturalness, and cultural relevance in the target text, translators and subtitlers must employ a variety of translation techniques. The dynamic and adaptive nature of slang underscores the importance of skilled professionals in this field. In this study, the Thai subtitles tend to diminish both the offensive and ethnically specific connotations of certain terms. The Thai translator simplifies 'Didicoy', 'Tinker', and 'Gyppo' to the generic 'Gypsy,' which merely denotes an ethnic group, whereas 'Pikey' is not rendered as 'Gypsy' in Thai and its ethnic association is altogether erased. Notably, this form of erasure cannot be solely attributed to industry pressures within AVT, such as demands for rapid turnaround and adaptation for diverse distribution channels and viewing platforms, including mobile devices and on-demand services. When the source/target linguistic and cultural mismatches are present, the effects on quality should be explicitly addressed. Translators and subtitlers should be concerned with making the translated AV text a place where a cultural other is manifested if an ethics of translation as proposed by Berman (cited in Venuti, 2008) is to be followed.

Limitations and recommendations

The researchers collected data from Seasons 1 to 3 of the series as these seasons featured a high frequency of slang usage. Although the researchers attempted to identify the translator by contacting Netflix, we were informed that the translator's name could not be revealed. If the names of the translator(s) would have been revealed, the researchers could compare the translation overall strategy with the translator's previous works to see if the translator change translation techniques to fit the themes of the series.

Future researchers could consider analysing all six seasons of *Peaky Blinders* or replicating this methodology in studies on the translation of American slang in gangster series. As this study does not primarily focus on the analysis of social class in subtitles, it is recommended that the social class of speakers, as reflected by the use of slang, could be examined through an analysis of the Thai subtitles in gangster series and films. Future projects can benefit language learners, as studies on slang can broaden their understanding of informal language used both in their own society and in others. Lastly, studying slang is not limited to books. Films and television series can also serve as valuable resources, especially for learners who do not have the opportunity to be immersed in environments where the language is spoken natively.

NOTES

1. The researchers contacted Netflix regarding the name(s) of the translator(s) and Netflix responded by stating that the name(s) and the number of translators commissioned by Netflix for *Peaky Blinders* could not be disclosed.
2. The low-register prefix in Thai used to express insult.
3. This Thai slang comes from the transcription of two English words 'show' (โชว์) and 'pow(er)' (พาว) and the meaning is 'flexing one's power'.
4. In the target text "ระวังนะ ทอมมี่ชักติดใจในอำนาจแล้ว", the word 'ใน' (*nai*), meaning 'in' is not needed in the sentence.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author declares no conflicts of interest, including relevant or material financial interests related to the research described in this paper.

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