

The Role of Translation Techniques in Preserving Illocutionary Acts: A Case Study of *Shadow and Bone* Season 1 Episode 1

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Abstract. This research aims to identify the types of illocutionary acts present in the dialogues of characters in *Shadow and Bone* Season 1 Episode 1, as well as to investigate how translation techniques help maintain the original illocutionary force. Based on Searle's (1979) theory, five categories of illocutionary acts are identified: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Furthermore, this study applies Molina and Albir's (2002) theory of translation techniques to analyze how the Indonesian subtitles convey both the meaning and function of the original utterances. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the utterances are categorized by illocutionary type and analyzed in terms of how they are translated. The findings indicate that representative acts are the most frequently occurring, followed by directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. This study highlights the importance of illocutionary acts in shaping narrative development, character relationships, and message delivery in audiovisual media. Furthermore, it underscores the relevance of applying both pragmatic and translation theories to understand how language achieves communicative goals across languages.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, illocutionary acts, pragmatics, translation techniques, shadow and bone.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Communication is a fundamental aspect of human life, enabling individuals to share information, express emotions, and influence others. In the context of verbal communication, language serves not only as a tool for conveying information but also as a means to perform actions that impact social relationships (Shalekhah et al., 2020; Sitio & Nugroho, 2023; Suryaningtyas et al., 2019). Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on how language is used and understood in different situations depending on the context. Yule (1996) explains that pragmatics is the study of meaning as intended by the speaker, how meaning is shaped by context, and how social relationships affect the way utterances are understood.

One key concept in pragmatics is the speech act, first introduced by J.L. Austin (1962) and later developed by John Searle (1979). According to Searle, illocutionary acts—speech acts done through spoken or written language—are divided into five categories: **representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations**. Each type of illocutionary act reflects a particular communicative function, such as stating facts, giving orders, making promises, expressing feelings, or delivering declarations that alter social status. These five types of speech acts are essential in analyzing how speakers create meaning and intention in conversation (Larassati et al., 2019; Meilany & Nugroho, 2024).

According to Basari and Nugroho (2017), in audio visual media like films and series, speech acts become more complex due to the element of translation, particularly in the form of subtitles that

bridge language and cultural differences between native speakers and target audiences. Subtitle translation must not only preserve the semantic meaning of the dialogue but also retain the illocutionary force of the utterance to ensure that the speaker's intent is effectively communicated in the target language.

In this context, Parker and Riley (2014) argue that pragmatics is a discipline that can be applied to translation, as it explores how language is influenced by the situational context of communication. Catford (1965) states that the primary difficulty in translation is identifying a suitable equivalent in the target language to accurately convey the meaning of the source text. Therefore, translation involves not just substituting words, but also considering pragmatics to maintain the communicative intent. Molina and Albir (2002) highlight several translation techniques, such as **adaptation and amplification**, which help in transferring illocutionary meaning more effectively in different cultural contexts.

This research examines the illocutionary acts in the first episode of season one of the *Shadow and Bone* series on Netflix, and how these acts are either maintained or changed in the Indonesian subtitles. Set in a complex fantasy world, the series presents character interactions that are rich with commands, promises, emotional expressions, and narrative declarations. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study aims to demonstrate that language not only functions as a tool to drive the plot but also serves as a means of character development, relationship building, and conveying power dynamics (Muhaya & Nugroho, 2024). Furthermore, this research explores how translation techniques help maintain the communicative intent of the original utterances, providing insights into the relationship between pragmatics and translation studies in the audio visual context.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Research on speech acts and illocutionary acts has been extensively developed in the field of pragmatics, especially in understanding how language is used in social communication. One of the fundamental studies on speech act theory was proposed by Austin (1962), who stated that language is not only used to convey information, but also to perform actions that can affect the social world. He categorized speech acts into three essential components: locutionary acts, which involve the actual act of saying something; illocutionary acts, which refer to the intended meaning or purpose behind the utterance; and perlocutionary acts, which focus on the effect the utterance has on the listener. Later, Searle (1979) expanded on this by organizing illocutionary acts into five main groups: directives, declarations, commissives, expressives, and representatives.

Numerous studies have been conducted related to illocutionary acts in films or other media. These studies use speech act theory to understand how language is used in character interactions and how illocutionary acts influence character development and plot. Rahayu, Arifin, and Ariani (2018), in "Illocutionary Act in the Main Characters' Utterances in *Mirror Mirror* Movie," identified all five types of illocutionary acts, with directive being the most dominant. They used Hymes' SPEAKING model to analyze the context that influences illocutionary acts. Hutajulu (2019), in "Analysis of Illocutionary Act in the Movie *You Are My Home* English Subtitle," also found that directive acts were the most dominant, indicating the importance of commands and requests in advancing the storyline. A similar finding was revealed by Putri and Mariana (2018) in "The Use of Illocutionary Act in *Wonder* Movie by R.J. Palacio," which analyzed all five types of illocutionary acts and their functions based on the conversational context. Meanwhile, Febrimadani, Arifin, and Setyowatu

(2023), in “Illocutionary Act in *Finding Dory* Film,” highlighted the various functions of illocutionary acts in character communication and their influence on the film’s plot.

In addition to research on speech acts, studies on translation techniques in film subtitles have also received considerable attention. Ghufon, Yolanda, and Mardiyah (2022) conducted a detailed study focusing on the various translation techniques employed in the film *Inside Out*, analysing how these techniques help convey the original meaning to the target audience.

They identified twelve translation techniques employed by the translator, with modulation (26.92%) being the most dominant, followed by amplification, literal translation, borrowing, reduction, calque, compensation, established equivalence, transposition, adaptation, description, and linguistic compression. This study demonstrated how translators applied various strategies to convey meaning accurately while maintaining coherence in the target language.

A similar result was found by Nugraha (2022) in his study on the subtitle of *The Climbers* movie translated from Mandarin into Indonesian. He discovered that the most frequently used technique was modulation (50%). Other techniques identified include borrowing, literal translation, amplification, adaptation, description, established equivalence, substitution, reduction, and variation. These findings show that modulation often serves as a primary strategy for preserving meaning across different cultural contexts.

The aforementioned previous studies offer valuable insights into how illocutionary acts and translation techniques function in film dialogue (Nugroho et al., 2020). However, limited research has combined both aspects—particularly how illocutionary acts are preserved or altered in subtitles through specific translation techniques. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by analysing the types of illocutionary acts found in the Netflix series *Shadow and Bone* (Season 1, Episode 1), and also examined how these acts were translated into Indonesian subtitles using the translation techniques suggested by Molina and Albir (2002). This integrated approach is expected to uncover the pragmatic and translational dimensions of audio visual content more comprehensively.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method aimed at analysing and interpreting language data within its original context. The main focus of this research is to identify the types of illocutionary acts found in character dialogues in the first episode of the first season of *Shadow and Bone*, and to analyze the translation techniques used in the Indonesian subtitle version. This approach allows for an in-depth description of how illocutionary acts are realized in the dialogue and how translation techniques convey their meaning in the target language (Nugroho et al., 2019, 2022).

The primary data sources of this study are the first episode of the first season of *Shadow and Bone*, along with its English and Indonesian subtitle files. The English subtitle is used to identify utterances that contain illocutionary acts, while the Indonesian subtitle is used to examine the translation techniques applied to those utterances.

Data collection begins with watching the episode while opening both the English and Indonesian subtitle files in a text editor (such as Notepad). Utterances containing any of the five types of

illocutionary acts—representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations—are identified based on Searle's (1979) classification and systematically recorded.

These utterances are then matched with their Indonesian translations to analyse the translation techniques employed, following the framework proposed by Molina and Albir (2002), such as modulation, amplification, reduction, transposition, and others.

The collected data are analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach (Pratama et al., 2021). Each utterance is first classified according to its illocutionary act type, then analysed for the translation technique used in the Indonesian subtitle.

The analysis includes examining the function of each utterance within the context of character interaction, and evaluating how the chosen translation technique retains or shifts the meaning of the original illocutionary act. The results of the analysis will be presented comprehensively, highlighting the most frequent types of illocutionary acts and the dominant translation techniques used, as well as their contribution to character communication and narrative development in the episode.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first episode of *Shadow and Bone* season one, the analysis of illocutionary acts reveals that the **representative** type dominates the characters' conversations. This is followed by **directives**, which frequently appear in the form of commands and requests. **Commissive** acts also have an important role, as they show the commitments and promises expressed by specific characters within the story. **Expressive**, which convey feelings or emotions, and **declaratives**, which bring about changes in status or situation, occur less frequently. Based on these findings, it is evident that the dialogue in this episode is heavily influenced by factual statements and instructions, which drive the plot and shape character interactions.

From the translation perspective, the techniques used in the Indonesian subtitles play a major role in preserving the original meanings embedded within the illocutionary acts. Techniques such as **Discursive Creation**, **Established Equivalent**, and **Calque** are frequently used to ensure that the meaning and nuances of communication between characters remain accessible and comprehensible to Indonesian viewers. These techniques prove essential in transferring not only the words but also the communicative functions embedded in them.

Declaration

Excerpt 1

Lieutenant : "For the supply run across the Fold! Sergeant Yure Teplov! Tracker Malyen Oretsev! Corporal Masyelentov!"

Excerpt 2

Letnan : "Untuk persediaan melintasi Lekukan! Sersan Yure Teplov. Pelacak Malyen Oretsev! Kopral Masyelentov!"

1. Context:

In this context, the lieutenant makes a formal announcement regarding individuals assigned to a mission across the Fold. The Fold, in the world of *Shadow and Bone*, is a dangerous region filled

with threats, making this announcement a formal declaration with significant narrative consequences.

2. Illocutionary Act:

This utterance falls under the category of **declaration**, where the lieutenant, through his authority, changes the status of the three individuals mentioned, officially appointing them as part of the mission team. The announcement is not merely informative; it serves to reinforce the lieutenant's authority and formally assign the individuals to their new roles.

3. Translation Techniques: Discursive Creation, Calque, Established Equivalent, and Pure Borrowing

In translating this excerpt, several techniques are applied. First, **Pure Borrowing** is used for character names such as *Yure Teplov*, *Malyen Oretsev*, and *Masyelentov*, preserving their original forms as they are proper names. Next, **Calque** and **Established Equivalent** techniques are used for military ranks, such as *Sergeant* rendered as *Sersan*, *Tracker* as *Pelacak*, and *Corporal* as *Kopral*. The use of calque is evident in the structural adaptation of phrases into the target language. Finally, the term *Fold* is translated as *Lekukan* using **Discursive Creation**, a technique used to invent a new term in the target language that does not have a direct equivalent but remains contextually appropriate within the story world.

Representatives

Excerpt 3

Alina Starkov: "When I got older, I learned that darkness is a place, and it's full of monsters."

Excerpt 4

Alina Starkov: "Saat besar, aku mengetahui bahwa kegelapan itu tempat, dan dipenuhi monster."

1. Context:

This statement is an example of a **representative** illocutionary act, where Alina Starkov expresses her perception of darkness. Here, Alina regards darkness not only as a physical place but also as a concept filled with threats and danger.

2. Illocutionary Act:

The function of this illocutionary act is to convey information or knowledge regarding Alina's perception of darkness. Through this statement, the audience is introduced to a concept of darkness that is central to the story's theme.

3. Translation Techniques: Modulation, Established Equivalent, Linguistic Compression.

In this translation, **Modulation** is applied to change the expression *When I got older* into *Saat besar*. While not a literal translation, both expressions convey a similar meaning and are adjusted to sound natural in Indonesian. The technique of **Established Equivalent** is also used for the phrase *I learned*, which is translated as *aku mengetahui*, a commonly accepted equivalent in various contexts. The phrase *darkness is a place* is translated as *kegelapan itu tempat* using **Linguistic Compression**, simplifying the sentence structure without omitting the essential meaning of the original statement.

Expressive

Excerpt 5

Dubrov : "You Beauty!"

Excerpt 6

Dubrov : "Kau Hebat!"

1. Context:

This line is spoken by Dubrov in the context of a boxing arena after Malyen lands a powerful punch on his opponent. Dubrov's statement expresses admiration for Malyen's skill.

2. Illocutionary Act:

Dubrov's utterance serves as an example of an **expressive** illocutionary act, which is used to communicate the speaker's emotions or feelings. In this case, the utterance specifically conveys admiration and appreciation directed at Malyen's actions, highlighting the emotional response elicited by what Malyen has done.

3. Translation Techniques: Established Equivalent, Variation

The translation of this expression uses **Established Equivalent**, where the word *beauty* in the context of praise is rendered as *hebat*, a common Indonesian expression of admiration. **Variation** is also evident in changing *you* to *kau*, reflecting an appropriate pronoun choice that suits the informal and expressive tone of the context.

Directives

Excerpt 7

Sergeant Yure : "Do not, I repeat, do not leave the skiff during the crossing."

Excerpt 8

Sersan Yure : "Jangan, kuulangi, jangan tinggalkan kapal saat menyeberang."

1. Context:

In this instance, Sergeant Yure delivers a strict command to his group not to leave the boat during the crossing. This sentence emphasizes the importance of the instruction for ensuring safety during their journey through the Fold.

2. Illocutionary Act:

This utterance is a **directive** illocutionary act, intended to influence the listener's behavior by giving an instruction or command.

3. Translation Techniques: Transposition, Established Equivalent, Calque.

Transposition is used to rearrange the sentence structure to suit Indonesian syntax—for example, the placement of *Jangan, kuulangi, jangan* maintains the emphasis of the original command. Additionally, the word *skiff* is translated as *kapal* using **Established Equivalent**, since both refer to watercraft, even if not identical in form. The phrase *Do not, I repeat, do not* is translated using **Calque**, preserving the repetition pattern of the source language so that the sense of urgency and strictness remains in the target language.

Commissives

Excerpt 9

Dreesen: "If you can prove that you have a way through the Fold and back, I'll put you on that ship with an advance."

Excerpt 10

Dreesen: "*Jika kau bisa buktikan ada jalan melintasi Lekukan, kutaruh kau di kapal itu dengan uang muka.*"

1. Context:

Dreesen expresses his commitment to providing a reward if Kaz Brekker can prove that he has a way to cross and return from the Fold. This is an example of a *commissive* illocutionary act, in which Dreesen promises to do something in the future if certain conditions are met.

2. Illocutionary Act:

In this case, Dreesen expresses his commitment to offer a spot on the ship and an advance payment if Kaz successfully demonstrates his capability. This falls under the **commissive** category, as classified by Searle (1979).

3. Translation Techniques: Discursive Creation, Reduction.

Discursive Creation is again used to translate *Fold* as *Lekukan*, creating a new term appropriate to the story's world. **Reduction** is also applied in simplifying the beginning of the sentence. The lengthy phrase *If you can prove that you have a way through the Fold and back* is shortened to *Jika kau bisa buktikan ada jalan melintasi Lekukan*. The reduction of *and back* does not remove the core meaning and instead makes the subtitle more concise and digestible.

CONCLUSION

This study has thoroughly explored the types of illocutionary acts present in the first episode of *Shadow and Bone* Season 1, along with an in-depth analysis of how translation techniques are applied to render these acts accurately in the Indonesian subtitles. The findings show that **representative** acts dominate the characters' interactions, followed by **directives, commissive, expressive, and declaratives**. These speech acts shape the storyline and reveal the dynamics between the characters.

In terms of translation, various techniques such as **Discursive Creation, Established Equivalent, Calque, Modulation, and Reduction** were effectively employed to preserve the original meaning and communicative functions of the utterances in the Indonesian subtitles. These techniques helped maintain both linguistic accuracy and cultural context, making the dialogue understandable and engaging for the target audience.

Overall, this research highlights the importance of pragmatics in audio visual translation, especially in ensuring that the illocutionary force of each utterance is conveyed accurately across languages. It also demonstrates how thoughtful translation strategies can bridge cultural and linguistic gaps in global media content.

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