



English-Indonesian Equivalence of Humorous Slang Expressions in Selected Key and Peele YouTube Subtitles

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-07-27 Revised: 2026-10-17 Accepted: 2026-10-18 Keywords: humorous slang; audiovisual translation; subtitle translation; translation equivalence; meaning change DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.12029 Corresponding Author: I Nyoman Anom Angastya Pramana anomangastyapramanaa@gmail.com English Literature, Faculty of Foreign Language, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar	<i>This study investigates the translation strategies and semantic shifts involved in rendering humorous slang from selected Key and Peele comedy sketch videos into Indonesian subtitles. Utilizing a qualitative-descriptive framework, 53 slang expressions were analyzed by cross-tabulating Patridge's slang categories, Nida's translation equivalence framework, and practical categories of meaning change. The findings reveal that Fresh and Creative slang was the most frequent category (32 data, 60.4%), followed by Flippant slang (12 data, 22.6%), Imitative slang (7 data, 13.2%), and Clipping (2 data, 3.8%), with no instances of Acronym slang identified. Dynamic Equivalence emerged as the primary translation strategy (40 data, 75.5%), whereas Formal Equivalence was used far less frequently (13 data, 24.5%). In terms of semantic shift, No Meaning Change was the most common outcome (24 data, 45.3%), followed by Loss of Meaning (19 data, 35.8%) and Gain of Meaning (10 data, 18.9%). The results indicate that while Dynamic Equivalence effectively produces natural, communicatively functional subtitles, it frequently involves trade-offs that reduce sociolectal identity, vulgarity, and interpersonal comedic force. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that evaluating the translation of audiovisual humor requires looking beyond literal semantic equivalence to consider how pragmatic impact and expressive tone are adapted within subtitle constraints.</i>

1. Introduction

Language is an essential medium of communication through which speakers express ideas, emotions, social relationships, and identities. In informal communication, speakers frequently use slang to create a casual atmosphere and express particular social or interpersonal meanings. The translation of humorous slang presents a dual challenge in

audiovisual translation. A translator needs to transfer the informal and social meaning of the source expression while also considering the comedic function created by the expression in its audiovisual context. Humor may depend on exaggeration, figurative language, cultural references, word choice, interpersonal relationships, or characterization. In subtitling, these difficulties are further influenced by constraints of space, time, readability, and target-language naturalness. Therefore, translating humorous slang does not simply involve replacing a source-language expression with a target-language equivalent. A translation may communicate the central or referential meaning of an expression while reducing other elements, such as informal register, vulgarity, wordplay, characterization, pragmatic force, or comedic intensity.

Previous research on slang translation in audiovisual and digital media can be organized into four distinct thematic groups. The first theme concerns slang classification and linguistic characteristics. Scholars utilizing (Allan and Burridge, 2006) theoretical framework categorize informal expressions based on structural and contextual formations, such as *Fresh and Creative*, *Flippant*, *Imitative*, *Acronym*, and *Clipping*. Journal articles and master's theses in this domain demonstrate that slang is closely connected to context, social relationships, and cultural background, which makes linguistic classification an important initial stage before analyzing translation strategies.

The second theme addresses audiovisual humor translation and culturally embedded expressions. Recent journal articles indicate that humor in subtitles often requires contextual and culturally sensitive translation because humorous expressions may depend on linguistic creativity, non-verbal cues, and cultural knowledge (Liu & Amirdabbaghian, 2025; Pilyarchuk, 2024). Other journal articles similarly show that subtitle translation frequently involves adaptation and communicative choices to make informal expressions understandable and natural for target audiences (Naqiyya et al., 2024; Rahmi, 2025).

The third theme focuses on translation equivalence and translation strategies. Applying Nida (1964) concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence, research articles show that dynamic equivalence is frequently applied in translating English slang because it prioritizes communicative meaning and natural readability for target-language audiences (Rahmadani & Kurnia, 2023). Other journal articles demonstrate the importance of paraphrasing, adaptation, expansion, and micro-level communicative strategies—such as those outlined in Baker (2018) translation taxonomy—when handling informal or culturally specific register (Renata & Lahay, 2024). However, selecting dynamic equivalence or communicative paraphrasing should not be interpreted as evidence that all aspects of humor are automatically preserved, since changes in form may also result in changes to stylistic, pragmatic, or expressive intensity.

The fourth theme involves semantic gain and loss in translation. Drawing on Larson (1998), journal articles and academic theses analyze how shifts between source and target expressions involve semantic addition (*Gain*), reduction (*Loss*), or preservation (*No Meaning Change*). Because informal slang carries emotional intensity, cultural associations, and interpersonal tone, a translation that maintains the central message may still experience a loss of expressive or contextual meaning. Conversely, a translator may add information to make an expression more comprehensible or natural for target-language viewers.

Although previous studies have examined slang classification, audiovisual humor translation, translation strategies, and equivalence, these dimensions are often investigated separately. Limited attention has been given to how slang type, translation equivalence, and semantic meaning change interact within the same audiovisual corpus, particularly in humorous comedy sketches. The selected *Key and Peele* comedy videos, *Mr. Garvey Is Your Substitute Teacher* and *An Office Prank Goes Way Too Far*, provide a relevant corpus because their dialogue contains informal and expressive speech, exaggerated characterization, sociolectal influences such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and pragmatic uses of language that contribute directly to comedic situations.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses three research questions regarding humorous slang translation in the selected *Key and Peele* comedy text videos: what types of humorous slang occur in the English dialogue, what forms of translation equivalence are used in the Indonesian subtitles, and what types of meaning change occur in the translation. The objective of this study is to examine 53 identified humorous slang expressions from the selected corpus across these three interconnected dimensions. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated framework, offering a cross-tabulated account of how slang formations correlate with translation equivalence choices and semantic shifts. Ultimately, this study contributes to audiovisual translation research by demonstrating how translators navigate trade-offs between semantic meaning, informal register, pragmatic force, and comedic expression in humorous comedy text videos.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to identify and describe humorous slang expressions, their translation equivalence, and the meaning changes occurring in Indonesian subtitle translations. The qualitative approach examined the linguistic and contextual characteristics of each expression and its rendering, while frequency and percentage calculations served as descriptive summaries rather than inferential statistics. The source-language (SL) data consisted of English dialogues from two selected *Key and Peele* comedy videos obtained from their official YouTube channel, while the target-language (TL) data comprised the corresponding Indonesian subtitles. Specifically, the primary data were drawn from [Mr. Garvey Is Your Substitute Teacher](#) (retrieved 31 August 2021) and [An Office Prank Goes Way Too Far](#) (retrieved 19 August 2019) with the retrieved Indonesian subtitle version kept unchanged throughout the analysis to ensure consistency.

Data collection was conducted using documentation and note-taking techniques. The videos were repeatedly watched to analyze dialogue, non-verbal cues, and situational context, after which the English dialogues and Indonesian subtitles were transcribed and aligned. The identification of slang and the identification of its humorous function were treated as two distinct procedures. An expression was classified as slang when its linguistic form or use matched Allan and Burridge (2006) criteria, covering Fresh and Creative, Flippant, Imitative, Clipping, or Acronym categories. Its humorous function was established separately by analyzing its context, including character interaction, exaggeration, register mismatch, and comedic intent, yielding a total of 53 humorous slang expressions. The unit of analysis was defined as one individual slang expression paired with its corresponding Indonesian subtitle translation, meaning that when an utterance contained multiple slang expressions, each was treated as a separate datum. For

expressions exhibiting multiple slang characteristics, a primary category was assigned based on its dominant formation process.

The analysis proceeded in three distinct stages. First, expressions were classified into slang types based on Allan and Burridge (2006). Second, translation pairs were categorized according to Nida (1964) framework into Formal Equivalence, which preserves SL lexical structure and form, or Dynamic Equivalence, which prioritizes natural TL communicative effect, while micro-level strategies were further contextualized using Baker (2018) taxonomy. Third, based on Larson (1998), translations were analyzed for meaning change and categorized into Gain of Meaning involving semantic or emphatic additions, Loss of Meaning involving omission or reduction of tone, vulgarity, or pragmatic force, or No Meaning Change indicating retention of core referential meaning.

Because data coding was conducted by a single researcher, no intercoder agreement index was computed; however, to establish analytical reliability and credibility, the researcher conducted repeated iterative reviews of dialogue transcripts, video scenes, theoretical definitions, and coding decisions. For instance, an expression like "listen up" translated as "dengarkan baik-baik" was categorized as Fresh and Creative slang using Dynamic Equivalence with Gain of Meaning because the TL adds explicit emphasis, whereas "stand your ass up" translated as "berdirilah" represented Flippant slang using Dynamic Equivalence with Loss of Meaning due to the omission of the vulgar intensifier "your ass", and "go to war" rendered as "pergi berperang" represented Fresh and Creative slang translated through Formal Equivalence with No Meaning Change.

3. Results

The analysis identified 53 humorous slang expressions in the two selected *Key and Peele* YouTube comedy text videos. The findings are presented according to three analytical dimensions: slang type, translation equivalence, and meaning change. The results are then integrated through cross-tabulation to show how different slang types were translated and how their meanings changed in the Indonesian subtitles.

4.1 Distribution of Humorous Slang Types

Table 1. Distribution of Humorous Slang Types

No.	Slang Type	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Fresh and Creative	32	60.4%
2.	Flippant	12	22.6%
3.	Imitative	7	13.2%
4.	Clipping	2	3.8%
5.	Acronym	0	0%
Total		53	100%

Table 1 shows that Fresh and Creative slang was the predominant category in the source-language data, with 32 data or 60.4% of total expressions. Flippant slang accounted for 12 data (22.6%), followed by Imitative slang with 7 data (13.2%). Clipping slang occurred in 2 data (3.8%), while no Acronym slang was identified in the corpus.

The predominance of Fresh and Creative slang indicates that the source-language dialogue relied heavily on novel, metaphorical, or expressive linguistic forms to build characterization and comedic effect. Flippant slang was also notable, particularly in

expressions involving aggressive, playful, or irreverent wording. In contrast, Clipping was limited to two expressions, and Acronym slang did not occur in the selected dataset.

4.2 Translation Equivalence

Table 2. Translation Equivalence

No.	Equivalence Type	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Dynamic Equivalence	40	75.5%
2.	Formal Equivalence	13	24.5%
Total		53	100%

AsAs shown in Table 2, Dynamic Equivalence was used far more frequently than Formal Equivalence. Dynamic Equivalence occurred in 40 data (75.5%), whereas Formal Equivalence occurred in 13 data (24.5%).

This distribution indicates that the Indonesian subtitles frequently prioritized natural communicative meaning over structural literalness. However, the use of Dynamic Equivalence should not automatically be interpreted as complete preservation of humor. A translation may communicate the main message naturally while still reducing aspects such as informal register, vulgarity, cultural associations, or pragmatic force.

4.3 Meaning Change

The third analysis examined whether the translation involved a gain, loss, or retention of meaning. The categories were operationalized based on Larson's (1998) framework of meaning transfer.

Table 3. Distribution of Meaning Change

No.	Meaning Change	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gain of Meaning	10	18.9%
2.	Loss of Meaning	19	35.8%
3.	No Meaning Change	24	45.3%
Total		53	100%

Table 3 indicates that No Meaning Change was the most frequent category, occurring in 24 data (45.3%). Loss of Meaning occurred in 19 data (35.8%), while Gain of Meaning occurred in 10 data (18.9%).

The occurrence of No Meaning Change suggests that many expressions successfully retained their central referential meaning in the Indonesian subtitles. Meanwhile, Loss of Meaning was also substantial, indicating that some source-language expressions contained linguistic or pragmatic elements that were reduced in translation. These losses primarily involved expressive intensity, vulgarity, interpersonal tone, sociolectal markers, and contextual nuances. Gain of Meaning occurred when the target-language expression contained additional explanatory information, explicit emphasis, or expanded contextual interpretation compared with the source expression.

4.3 Relationship among Slang Type, Translation Equivalence, and Meaning Change

To address the relationship among the three analytical dimensions, the 53 data were cross-tabulated according to slang type, translation equivalence, and meaning change.

Table 4. Cross-Tabulation of Slang Type, Equivalence, and Meaning Change

Slang Type	Dynamic + Gain	Dynamic + Loss	Dynamic + No Change	Formal + Gain	Formal + Loss	Formal + No Change	Total
Fresh and Creative	7	8	5	0	1	11	32
Flippant	1	9	2	0	0	0	12
Imitative	2	1	3	0	0	1	7
Clipping	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total	10	18	12	0	1	12	53

Table 4 demonstrates that the relationship between slang type and translation equivalence was not uniform. Fresh and Creative slang showed the greatest variation, with 20 instances translated through Dynamic Equivalence and 12 through Formal Equivalence. Among these data, 7 involved Gain of Meaning, 9 involved Loss of Meaning, and 16 involved No Meaning Change. The distribution is based directly on the individual entries in the latest dataset.

All 12 Flippant expressions were translated through Dynamic Equivalence. Within this category, 9 expressions involved Loss of Meaning, 2 involved No Meaning Change, and 1 involved Gain of Meaning. This pattern suggests that the translation of Flippant slang frequently involved changes in expressive or pragmatic elements while retaining the main communicative message. For example, expressions such as “stand your ass up” → “Berdirilah” retain the directive meaning but omit the stronger expressive element contained in *your ass*.

Imitative slang consisted of 6 Dynamic Equivalence translations and 1 Formal Equivalence translation. Three of the Dynamic Equivalence cases showed No Meaning Change, two showed Gain of Meaning, and one showed Loss of Meaning. The only Formal Equivalence case, “the usual suspects” → “Para tersangka biasa,” was classified as No Meaning Change.

Both Clipping expressions were translated through Dynamic Equivalence and were classified as having No Meaning Change. These were “I gotta go” → “Aku harus pergi” and “I’ll be right back” → “Aku akan segera kembali.”

Overall, the cross-tabulation shows that Dynamic Equivalence was associated with most of the identified meaning changes, including 10 instances of Gain and 18 instances of Loss, while 12 Dynamic Equivalence translations showed No Meaning Change. Formal Equivalence resulted in 12 cases of No Meaning Change and 1 case of Loss, with no Gain of Meaning identified. Thus, the results indicate that the relationship between equivalence and meaning change is more complex than simply equating Dynamic Equivalence with meaning change: Dynamic Equivalence was used both when meaning was maintained and when additional or reduced meaning occurred.

4. Discussion

The findings show that the translation of humorous slang in the selected *Key and Peele* videos involves an interaction between slang formation, translation equivalence, and meaning change. Rather than treating these dimensions separately, the results indicate that the way a slang expression is formed can influence the translation choices and the extent to which particular semantic or pragmatic elements are retained, added, or reduced.

Fresh and Creative Slang

Fresh and Creative slang was the most frequently identified category, accounting for 32 of the 53 data (60.4%). This category was characterized by expressive and creative combinations that contributed to the distinctive conversational style of the dialogue. Its relatively high occurrence is relevant to comedy because creative expressions can make an utterance more vivid and context-dependent.

The translations of Fresh and Creative slang showed significant variation between Formal and Dynamic Equivalence. This indicates that creative expressions cannot always be translated through a single approach. For example, "I'm for real" → "Aku serius" uses Dynamic Equivalence because the expression is rendered through a natural Indonesian expression that communicates the speaker's intended meaning rather than reproducing the English form. In contrast, "Go to war" → "Pergi berperang" uses Formal Equivalence because the lexical meaning can be transferred relatively directly.

Meaning change also occurred across multiple dimensions within this category. For example, "listen up" → "dengarkan baik-baik" was classified as Gain of Meaning because the Indonesian expression provides an additional emphatic element through *baik-baik*. Meanwhile, "check yourself" → "Introspeksi diri" was classified as Loss of Meaning because the target expression communicates the general directive but does not fully reproduce the pragmatic force of the source expression. These examples demonstrate that Dynamic Equivalence should not automatically be interpreted as complete preservation of humorous effect. It can provide a natural and communicatively appropriate translation while still changing elements of register, emphasis, or pragmatic meaning.

Flippant Slang

Flippant slang represented 12 data (22.6%), and all of these expressions were translated using Dynamic Equivalence. This pattern suggests that the playful, irreverent, or exaggerated character of Flippant expressions often required the translator to prioritize communicative meaning rather than maintain the original linguistic form.

Loss of Meaning was particularly prominent in this category. Several expressions containing *ass* or *goddamn* were translated without equivalent vulgar or emphatic elements. For instance, "stand your ass up" → "Berdirilah" retains the directive meaning but reduces the expressive intensity of the source expression. Similarly, "out of your goddamn mind" → "Sudah gila" communicates the intended accusation but omits the intensifying element *goddamn*.

This pattern demonstrates an important characteristic of humorous slang translation: preserving the basic proposition does not necessarily mean preserving the same interpersonal tone. In these cases, the Indonesian subtitles remain understandable and communicatively functional, but some of the source expressions' intensity or informal

character is reduced. Therefore, the translation may retain the basis of the humorous situation without necessarily reproducing every aspect of the original comedic force.

Imitative Slang

Imitative slang accounted for 7 data (13.2%). Most of these expressions (6 data) were translated using Dynamic Equivalence, while one was translated through Formal Equivalence. The category included dialectal contractions and sociolectal imitations such as “y'all,” “man,” “dude,” and AAVE-influenced grammatical structures like “you done messed up”.

Most Imitative slang expressions were classified as having No Meaning Change. For example, “y'all” → “kalian” and “dude” → “sobat” transfer the central referential meaning into Indonesian. However, the use of a semantically corresponding Indonesian word does not necessarily reproduce the same sociolinguistic identity or regional flavor associated with the English expression.

An important example is “you done messed up” → “Kau telah membuat kesalahan besar,” which was classified as Gain of Meaning. By imitating an informal AAVE grammatical construction, the source expression conveys a heightened, confrontational warning. The Indonesian translation makes the seriousness of the mistake explicit through *kesalahan besar*, communicating the intended threat while adding an element of explicitness.

Clipping Slang

Clipping was the least frequent identified slang category, with only 2 data (3.8%), and no Acronym slang was found in the corpus. The Clipping data identified were morphological truncations of standard multi-syllabic words: “sub” (from *substitute*) → “guru pengganti”.

Both Clipping items were rendered using Dynamic Equivalence. Rendering “sub” as “guru pengganti” was classified as No Meaning Change because it successfully preserves the core referential meaning of an acting instructor while expanding the truncated word back into its full target equivalent for complete contextual clarity. Because only two examples were identified, this finding should be interpreted specifically within the selected corpus rather than generalized to *Key and Peele* as a whole. Nevertheless, both examples show that truncated informal source expressions can be rendered naturally in Indonesian without substantial changes to their central semantic content.

Gain of Meaning

Gain of Meaning occurred in 10 of the 53 data (18.9%). The gains generally involved additional contextual, emphatic, or pragmatic information in the Indonesian translation. One example is “pisses me off” → “Benar-benar membuatku marah”. The phrase *benar-benar* adds an explicit intensifying element to the target expression. Another example is “you done messed up” → “Kau telah membuat kesalahan besar,” where *besar* makes the seriousness of the mistake more explicit.

These examples show that gain does not necessarily mean that the translator adds completely new information. It can occur when an implication or intensity in the source expression is made more explicit in the target language. Such additions may help the Indonesian audience understand the intended pragmatic meaning within the limited context of subtitles.

Loss of Meaning

Loss of Meaning occurred in 19 data (35.8%), making it the second most frequent meaning-change category. The losses were particularly noticeable in expressions containing vulgarity, intensification, or interpersonal force. For example, “silly-ass name” → “Nama yang konyol” retains the negative evaluation of the name but removes the additional expressive element represented by -ass. Likewise, “take your ass” → “Pergilah” preserves the directive but omits the informal and emphatic element of the source expression.

This finding is significant because slang often carries more than referential meaning. It can simultaneously communicate attitude, social identity, emotional intensity, and interpersonal relationships. Consequently, a translation can be dynamically equivalent at the level of communicative meaning while still experiencing loss at the level of register or pragmatic force.

No Meaning Change

No Meaning Change was the largest meaning-change category, occurring in 24 data (45.3%). This indicates that almost half of the identified translations retained the central meaning of their source expressions without a substantial semantic shift. Examples include “I’ve got my eye on you” → “Aku mengawasimu,” “there’s no way” → “Tidak mungkin,” and “sub” → “guru pengganti”.

However, No Meaning Change should be understood primarily in terms of *semantic content*, rather than as proof that every stylistic or humorous feature was preserved. A translation may maintain the central meaning while changing the degree of informality, cultural association, or expressive force. This distinction is especially important for audiovisual humor, where the comedic effect may depend on factors beyond the lexical meaning of an individual expression.

Overall Discussion

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Dynamic Equivalence was the dominant equivalence type (75.5%), while No Meaning Change was the most frequent meaning-change category (45.3%). The results therefore do not support a simple assumption that Dynamic Equivalence necessarily produces meaning loss or, conversely, that it automatically preserves humor.

Instead, the findings suggest that humorous slang translation involves trade-offs between semantic meaning, naturalness, informal register, pragmatic force, and comedic expression. Dynamic Equivalence allows translators to adapt slang to the linguistic and cultural conventions of Indonesian, but this adaptation can involve either gain, loss, or no substantial semantic change. The translation of humorous slang should therefore be evaluated not only according to whether the main meaning is transferred, but also according to what happens to the expressive and pragmatic elements that contribute to the original humorous context.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the translation of humorous slang in selected *Key and Peele* comedy sketch videos, examining how slang types, translation equivalence strategies, and semantic shifts interact in subtitles. By cross-tabulating the 53 identified data items, the analysis demonstrates that the linguistic formation of slang plays a central

role in influencing subtitling choices and the degree to which original expressive, pragmatic, and referential meanings are preserved, altered, or lost.

Fresh and Creative slang was the predominant category (32 data, 60.4%), followed by Flippant slang (12 data, 22.6%), Imitative slang (7 data, 13.2%), and Clipping (2 data, 3.8%). No instances of Acronym slang were observed, confirming that verbal sketch comedy relies primarily on spoken sociolects and informal dialogue rather than text-based abbreviations.

In terms of translation approaches, Dynamic Equivalence was the overwhelming strategy of choice (40 data, 75.5%), whereas Formal Equivalence was applied sparingly (13 data, 24.5%). Dynamic Equivalence was used across all slang categories to ensure natural target-language phrasing, while Formal Equivalence was restricted almost exclusively to Fresh and Creative expressions with direct target-language idioms.

Regarding semantic shifts, No Meaning Change was the most frequent outcome (24 data, 45.3%), followed by Loss of Meaning (19 data, 35.8%) and Gain of Meaning (10 data, 18.9%). These results demonstrate that Dynamic Equivalence does not automatically lead to meaning loss, nor does it guarantee the total preservation of comedic effect.

While Dynamic Equivalence effectively adapts informal dialogue to target-language subtitle constraints, it frequently involves trade-offs. Reductions and losses primarily affect vulgarity, interpersonal aggression, and sociolectal identity “AAVE markers”, whereas gains occur when implicit emotional or emphatic force is made explicit in the target text. Ultimately, evaluating the translation of audiovisual humor requires looking beyond basic propositional equivalence to account for how expressive tone, characterization, and pragmatic impact are re-negotiated within the constraints of subtitling

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