

Translations of Racist Discourse from English to Malay Language in the Subtitles of the *Rush Hour* Movie Franchise

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Abstract

Movies frequently feature depictions of reality in various aspects, such as the projection of racist discourse in everyday dialogue. However, translating racist discourse, particularly in the movie subtitles requires careful consideration of the target audience, source text, and cultural context to present appropriate subtitles. Despite few studies on English-to-Malay translations of subtitles, there is a gap in the exploration of translation strategies of racist discourse in English movies. Hence, this study aims to identify the racist discourse in the *Rush Hour* movie franchise and investigate the strategies used in translating racist discourse in the Malay subtitles. This qualitative study utilised Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory to identify and categorise the racist discourse and Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies to analyse the strategies used in translating racist discourse. The results reveal that all three types of racist discourse were evident in the movies, namely 1) affect, to show negative emotions and responses towards others, driven by racial, ethnic or religious differences (e.g., *I will slap you so hard, you'll end up in the Ming dynasty*); 2) appreciation, referring to rigidly using certain traits as ample reasons for unfavourable judgements (e.g. *First I get a bullshit assignment, now Mr. Rice-A-Roni... don't even speak American*) and 3) judgement, which describes negative judgements of people's behaviour when seen as aligned with their racial or ethnic differences (e.g., *Hey! Slow down Chen/Chin! Hell is wrong with you?*). The top five subtitling strategies in the Malay subtitles of racist discourse in the movies, i.e. paraphrase, transfer, imitation, decimation, and resignation were also presented and elaborated. The findings of this study may benefit translators, subtitlers, and screenwriters for them to consider the sociocultural norms and context in the translation process.

Keywords: *translation, racist discourse, subtitles, English-Malay translation, intercultural communication*

Introduction

The United States of America is a diverse country with many people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, as often portrayed in the media such as movies. Hollywood films have been under more scrutiny in recent years due to racism or racist themes, which can be seen through how specific groups of people are portrayed on screen (Schacht, 2019). Although the film industry today is more sensitive to issues of culture than it was in the past, many movies still perpetuate stereotypes about certain groups of people particularly through racist and offensive language in the dialogues of the movies (Filmer, 2011). Such is also the case with the popular comedy movie franchise, *Rush Hour*. Its box office commercial success in 1998 which grossed over \$245 million worldwide has led to two sequels: *Rush Hour 2* (2001) and *Rush Hour 3* (2007) (Stallings, 2023). Kim and Brunn-Bevel (2019) note that Hollywood incorporates foreign-born directors and

actors to attract global audiences, and Hollywood features racial-ethnic minorities mostly in action and comedy films because ‘they are safe bets in returns of investment’ (p.52).

In response to the wide viewership of Hollywood movies in other parts of the world, movie subtitles accommodate those who like to view the content with the original audio. Subtitles can also be considered an aid to comprehension because there are viewers who cannot comprehend the dialogues without them completely. When it comes to racist discourse in movies, it is a challenge for translators or subtitlers to translate them as they can be extremely offensive and explicit. At the same time, it is also difficult to properly channel the right meaning in the target language. Additionally, racist discourse poses intricate problems during translations, particularly when rendered into Malay subtitles. Translators and subtitlers of the Malay language face challenges in navigating the translation of racist discourse to preserve its context and essence. Another challenge is to find translation strategies that can accommodate the translation of racist discourse. Mujaddadi (2016) stated that translation is a complex and drawn-out process that involves multiple languages and is deeply entwined with culture. A translator may occasionally encounter difficulties that go beyond the straightforward semantic similarity of words. The presence of racist epithets in the source text is one of these difficulties.

Hence, this study aims to investigate the subtitling of racist discourse from English to Malay language in the *Rush Hour* movie franchise. More specifically, the present study is focused on identifying the racist discourse in the English dialogues of the *Rush Hour* movie franchise and analysing the strategies used in translating racist discourse in the Malay subtitles of the *Rush Hour* movie franchise.

Literature Review

Racist Discourse and Racism in Movies

Racist discourse refers to all talk or text about race or racialized issues (Zavala & Back, 2020; Doane, 2006), which is shaped by the evolving nature of racial conflict and racial ideas in the larger society. Van Dijk (2004) explains that racist discourse manifests itself in two main types: (1) racist discourse about the group being discriminated against and (2) racist discourse directed at the specific subjects of discrimination. Even though racial slurs are single words or utterances, they constitute a racist discourse since they are politically incorrect, directly insult the group they are used to refer to and are the first instance of racist discourse (or one of its 24 traces).

Despite attempts to steer clear of discussions around race and racism in portraying American society, Hollywood productions have over time, worked to dispel prejudices and unfavourable perceptions about African Americans (Maiza & Adi, 2019). Racism persists in Hollywood movies, particularly within the genre of comedy where African American actors often appear, and their stereotypes are employed for comedic ef-

fect (Trofimova, 2020). Additionally, Asian people have been unfairly confined to supporting roles and stereotypes in the Western mainstream media (Treon, 2022). A study conducted by the Geena Davis Institute of Gender in Media revealed that movies that depict Asian American characters usually opt for characters signifying the model minority stereotype, which includes nerds, doctors, and martial artists (McTaggart et al., 2021). While humour in films can serve complex roles in challenging and reinforcing stereotypical narratives, it also raises moral concerns when it includes abusive or stereotyping elements (Borsotti & Bjørn, 2022).

Categorisation of Racist Discourse

The present study partially adapted Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory, following the work of Mouka et al. (2015) to identify the types of racist discourse in the *Rush Hour* movie franchise. The framework allows for analyses of the meanings by which texts convey positive or negative assessments of attitudes, by which the intensity or directness of such attitudinal utterances is strengthened or weakened, and by which speakers or writers engage dialogically with previous speakers or with potential respondents to the current proposition (White, 2015). There are three high-level attitude types: affect (a personal emotional state, feeling, or reaction), appreciation (an aesthetic evaluation of semiotic and natural phenomena, events, and objects) and judgement (an ethical appraisal of a person's character, behaviour, and skills). According to Li (2021), the Appraisal Theory of Attitude is concerned with the way that people express their emotions, their sense of worth, the values that their surroundings uphold, and how they appraise and assess the things in their environment. The following table provides descriptions and categorisation of attitude:

Table 1: Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory of Attitude (p. 42-45)

Categorisation of Attitude	Explanation	Example (Mouka et al. 2015, p.51-52)
Affect	Characterises negative emotions and emotional reactions towards others, principally instances that are indicative of hate and anger based on or evoked by racial/ethnic/religious differences.	"Take your fucking pizza piece and go the fuck back to Africa" (Do the Right Thing, 1989)
Appreciation	Characterises negative evaluations of others based on their inherent characteristics, or on characteristics that are presented as such, dogmatically used as sufficient reasons for negative evaluations.	"She smells like fish and chips and guacamole" (American History X, 1998)
Judgement	Characterises negative evaluations of the behaviour of others, judged as people that act in relation to their racial/ethnic/religious difference	"Look at these little fucking sewer rats" (This is England, 2006) [referring to young immigrants playing in a yard]

Translating and Subtitling Racist Discourse

Translators may occasionally encounter difficulties that go beyond the straightforward semantic similarity of words, especially when dealing with explicitly racist content, racial terminology, and African American Vernacular English, which may be difficult to convey in another language (Trupej, 2017). Hatim & Mason (1997) mentioned that the translation and subtitling of racist discourse is an intercultural mediation between two sociocultural systems. Many racist discourse entail references to characters, literary texts, or historical events, which implies that the translation involves the related cultural traditions of the two languages compared. According to Mujaddid (2016), the meaning of racist discourse cannot be fully realised unless references to the contexts are maintained through suitable subtitling strategies.

Previous studies on the translation of racist discourse in subtitles have focused on analysing the challenges of translating racist discourse and developing strategies to address them. Mouka et al. (2015) analysed subtitles in racism-related movies to better understand cross-linguistic racist discourse annotation and translation. The findings reveal that translators often mitigate or omit racial slurs in the subtitles. Another study by Trupej (2017) explored strategies for translating racist discourse about African Americans into Slovenian. The study emphasised the importance of understanding the cultural and historical context of racist discourse and the need for sensitivity in the translation of such content. It also discussed the use of various translation strategies to address the complexities of racist discourse to preserve the original content's effect and meaning while translating it into the target language.

The present study specifically investigates the translation of racist discourse presented in the Malay subtitles of the *Rush Hour* movies. Therefore, Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies were employed to analyse the subtitling strategies reflected in the Malay subtitles. Gottlieb (1992) provides an exhaustive list of ten subtitling strategies, as presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Gottlieb's (1992, p. 245) Subtitling Strategies

Subtitling Strategy	Explanation
Extension	Expanded expression, adequate rendering (culture-specific references)
Paraphrase	Altered expression, adequate content (non-visualised, language-specific items)
Transfer	Full expression, adequate rendering (slow, unmarked speech)
Imitation	Identical expression, equivalent rendering (proper nouns, international greetings, etc.)
Transcription	Non-standard expression, adequate rendering (intended speech defects)

Dislocation	Differing expression, adjusted content (musical or visualized language-specific item)
Condensation	Condensed expression, concise rendering (mid-tempo speech with some redundancy)
Decimation	Abridged expression, reduced content (fast speech, low redundancy speech)
Deletion	Omitted expression, no verbal content (fast speech with high redundancy)
Resignation	Deviant expression, distorted content (incomprehensible or ‘un-translatable’ speech)

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design using content analysis methods to identify racist discourse in the *Rush Hour* movie franchise and analyse the strategies used to translate them in the Malay subtitles. Purposive sampling technique was employed by including all three movies from the *Rush Hour* movie franchise. Chief Inspector Lee, played by Jackie Chan and Detective James Carter, played by Chris Tucker, two police investigators from different nations and jurisdictions, are the main characters of the movies where they work together to fight crime and frequently find themselves in humorous and disastrous circumstances (McGrotty, 2022). The first *Rush Hour* movie which was released in 1998 was set in Los Angeles, *Rush Hour 2* (2001) was set in Hong Kong and *Rush Hour 3* (2007) was set in Paris. Each movie has different intercultural interactions which are portrayed humorously. This movie franchise was chosen over other movies because it is globally and widely known for its situational and satirical humour, particularly on racial remarks, which received mixed criticism and reviews.

The data collection procedure begins with thoroughly viewing the *Rush Hour* movies and English subtitles of the movies for the first time. To have a clear understanding of the dialogues of the film, English subtitles were used while watching the movies. Next, the Malay subtitles of the movies were downloaded from <https://subdl.com>. The *Rush Hour* movies were referred to understand the contextual factors associated with the Malay subtitles. Then, timestamps of the scenes indicating racist discourse through words and phrases that might be stating, implying, or referencing racist discourse in the movies were recorded, as shown below:

Table 3: Timestamp, dialogue of a scene with racial discourse and its Malay subtitle

Timestamp	English dialogue	Malay subtitle
28:36	“But I’m Chinese” “Yeah, but you’re with him. And	“Tapi saya Cina” “Ya, tapi awak berada bersamanya,

	they are the most violent people on Earth. Always starting a war, always killing people. Americans make me sick”	dan mereka ialah orang paling ganas yang saya kenal. Sentiasa memulakan perang, sentiasa membunuh orang. Amerika membuat saya sakit”
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Content analysis was employed as the method for determining how the English dialogues and subtitles are translated into Malay subtitles. To analyse the data, the identified scenes and subtitles were isolated and broken down, sentence by sentence. Through the coding process, the types of racial discourse were identified and categorised based on Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal Theory of Attitude. Next, the racist discourse was compared closely with their Malay subtitles across the dataset. Following that, Gottlieb’s (1992) subtitling strategies were employed to identify the subtitling strategies reflected in the Malay subtitles. The contexts in which the racist discourse occurs were examined to determine how they informed the translated texts.

Findings

The dialogues from the *Rush Hour* movie franchise containing instances of racial discourse were identified and categorised based on Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal Theory of Attitude. Examples were extracted to elaborate on the types of racial discourse found across the dataset. Following that, the subtitling strategies reflected in the Malay subtitles of the English dialogue will be presented.

Racial Discourse in the Dialogues of the *Rush Hour* Movie Franchise

The three subsystems of attitude based on Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal Theory were identified. Each of the categories is elaborated further in the ensuing subsections.

Affect

The Affect type of racial discourse describes unfavourable feelings and responses to others, especially when they are suggestive of hate and fury motivated by or sparked by racial, ethnic, or religious differences. The first example of the Affect type of racial discourse can be seen in the excerpt below. The white American FBI agent expressed his aversion to Carter for not wanting the FBI operation to be joined by LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) or “some Chung-King cop”.

Example 1

Timestamp	Excerpt
19:32 (<i>Rush Hour 1</i>)	“The truth is, this is an FBI operation, and I don’t need any help from LAPD or some <i>Chung-King</i> cop. You got it?”

In this context, Chung-King cop is implied to be Lee, an inspector who is of Chinese origin. Chung-King is a reference made to a 1994 film “Chungking Express”, a film about two Hong Kong policemen chasing their romance and love lives. By saying this, the agent diminished Lee and his ability as a police officer. This is especially apparent with the use of the word “some”, which further emphasises his superiority over Lee and highlights his low regard for him as someone who is of a different race and not from America.

Example 2

Timestamp	Excerpt
4:25 (<i>Rush Hour 2</i>)	“I will slap you so hard, you’ll end up in the Ming dynasty”

The excerpt above shows a specific instance which occurs when Carter employs a combination of light blackmail and playful teasing towards Lee, who is of Chinese descent. Carter warns Lee about the potential consequences if he were to deceive him. Notably, Carter invokes the historical significance of the Ming dynasty, an imperial dynasty that existed in China long ago. By alluding to the "Ming dynasty," Carter not only emphasises Lee's Chinese heritage but also threatens to send him back to such an ancient era. Interestingly, there was another example where Lee said to Carter, “I’ll bitch-slap you back to Africa!”. These examples serve to illustrate the presence of racially charged jokes that were exchanged between individuals of different races. Despite the comedic nature of these interactions, they aim to depict a level of respect that exists between the characters, building on the dynamics established in the earlier *Rush Hour 1* movie, and showing the closeness in their friendship.

Example 3

Timestamp	Excerpt
10:03 (<i>Rush Hour 3</i>)	“You and I both know them Iranians were terrorists!”

In this scene, Carter tries to defend his actions to his superior by giving the reason behind his decision to detain Iranian scientists whom he deemed suspicious. He resorted to stereotyping by linking them to Iran's support for Al-Qaeda terrorism. Carter is adamant that the people he detained are terrorists just because they are of Iranian descent. This representation supports the negative generalisations connected with racist discourse when Carter mentions that the nationality of someone inherently qualifies them as a terrorist. The depictions of the Affect type of racist discourse can be seen clearly from the examples presented. The different contexts, settings, situations, and intentions of the characters collectively converge on a singular explanation: the utilisation of racist discourse is consistently tied to the cultural backgrounds of the individuals receiving it.

Appreciation

The Appreciation type of racist discourse describes the dogmatic use of traits that are utilised as sufficient justifications for unfavourable judgements as negative evaluations of others based on their inherent features or on attributes that are portrayed as such, as seen in Example 4 below:

Example 4

Timestamp	Excerpt
21:05 (<i>Rush Hour 1</i>)	“I cannot believe this shit! First I get a bullshit assignment, now Mr. Rice-A-Roni... don’t even speak American”

The first example of the Appreciation type of Racial Discourse is seen in the excerpt above where Carter refers to Lee as “Mr. Rice-A-Roni” upon picking Lee up at the airport and meeting him for the first time. Carter had the impression that Lee could not communicate in English as he did not react to what was said to him, much to Carter’s annoyance. “Mr. Rice-A-Roni” implies the name of a brand he simply created, which is a boxed food with a mixture of rice and pasta. Rice and pasta, the meal in Asia and America respectively, heavily describes Lee, an Asian who does not ‘mix’ well with American culture. Carter reacted and spoke that way as he was irritated with Lee’s lack of understanding of him, which led to him making a derogatory remark about Lee’s cultural background.

Example 5

Timestamp	Excerpt
11:28 (<i>Rush Hour 2</i>)	“Move aside, Kobe”

In this example, Carter was running up the stairs, trying to help Lee who was in a fight. Halfway through the stairs, he bumped into an old Chinese lady, blocking her way down the stairs. The lady called Carter “Kobe”, referring to the professional basketball player, Kobe Bryant. The lady makes this remark when he sees Carter, who reminds her of the basketball player, as they are both African Americans. The three instances mentioned earlier highlight the use of language that seemingly compliments or acknowledges individuals based on their cultural backgrounds, which can also be degrading. Racist discourse is employed due to the traits and attributes concerning the cultural backgrounds of the individuals being targeted thus categorised as the appreciation type.

Judgement

The Judgement type of racist discourse describes unfavourable assessments of how other people behave when perceived as acting following their racial or ethnic differences. An example of this type of racial discourse is presented as follows:

Example 6

Timestamp	Excerpt
1:24:55 (<i>Rush Hour 1</i>)	“Yeah, I’ve been looking for your sweet-and-sour chicken ass”

In this example, Carter employed a racially charged term to belittle and demean the other person who is a Chinese villain. This phrase reflects the Judgement type of racist discourse because Carter was angered and satisfied that he finally met his rival who had been taunting him and killing people mercilessly. By mentioning "sweet-and-sour-chicken ass", Carter refers to the popular Chinese food while at the same time labelling the body part of that Chinese villain with a type of cooking common among the Chinese.

Example 7

Timestamp	Excerpt
14:34 (<i>Rush Hour 2</i>)	“Hey! Slow down Chen/Chin! Hell is wrong with you?”

Here, Carter was crossing a street in China and a car drove past him at high speed. Shocked and angered, Carter called the driver Chen/Chin, assuming the driver was Chinese. Carter resorted to expressing his anger by using the judgement type of racist discourse as he almost got hit by the car.

Example 8

Timestamp	Excerpt
54:48 (<i>Rush Hour 2</i>)	“Today was amazing. The guns, the shooting. Now I understand what it is to be an American”

In this example, a French taxi driver made a remark on his own experience and mentioned his perception of what it means to be American. Example 8 is considered as the Judgement type of racist discourse as the speaker portrayed a limited and skewed understanding of American identity. The driver made a negative generalization of America and Americans based on his knowledge about what they did in the past, associating them with criminal behaviours and a propensity for violence. Hence, he stereotypes them all to be the same, which is to always resort to violence. However, this generalisation was not supposed to apply to Carter although he is American since he uses guns and shoots in his capacity as a police officer who is fulfilling his duty. These examples highlight the use of derogatory language, stereotypes, and generalisations to demean or belittle individuals based on their racial or ethnic backgrounds. The different contexts, settings, and intentions of the characters lead to an understanding that the judgement type of racist discourse arises due to biases and prejudices associated with the cultural backgrounds of the individuals targeted regardless of what they did, which has little to no connections with their background.

Subtitling Strategies Reflected in the Malay Subtitles of Racial Discourse in *Rush Hour* Movie Franchise

Gottlieb’s Subtitling Strategies (1992) sees ten strategies of subtitling. However, this paper will only highlight the top five strategies reflected in the Malay subtitles based on the analyses, namely paraphrase, trans-

fer, imitation, decimation, and resignation. The excerpts from the dataset will complement the explanation of each strategy.

Paraphrase

The Paraphrase subtitling strategy modifies language and sufficient content such as non-visual or linguistic items (Gottlieb, 1992). The expressions of words were altered and changed according to the meanings of the phrases. Paraphrasing refers to the alteration of the source text to an acceptable version in the target language.

Example 9

Timestamp	English dialogue	Malay subtitle
10:11 (<i>Rush Hour 3</i>)	“Cause they cure cancer in rats, that doesn’t mean they won’t blow shit up!”	“Sebab mereka boleh sembuhkan kanser pada tikus, itu tak bermakna mereka tidak akan mengganas!”

In this excerpt, ‘they’ as mentioned in the English dialogue refers to the Iranian characters in the movie. Through the dialogue, it is implied that the Iranians are labelled as terrorists who have the will and ability to set off bombs, and they cannot be trusted just because they can cure cancer in rats. However, in the Malay subtitle, the dialogue is translated and paraphrased to bring a direct meaning of what Carter implied in his statement because “itu tak bermakna mereka tidak akan mengganas!”, which translates to “that doesn’t mean they won’t terrorise!” Both the original dialogue and translated subtitles expressed racial discourse, and the translator’s intention was clear to make the meanings relatable in Malay language as it is in English language.

Transfer

Gottlieb (1992) described the transfer subtitling strategy as giving ample rendering with full expression, such as slow, unmarked speech in its translation. Generally, the words expressed are in full expression, with the use of correct and complete words. Koponen (2018) explains transfer as nearly identical translation of the source text.

Example 10

Timestamp	English dialogue	Malay subtitle
19:42 (<i>Rush Hour 2</i>)	“All y’all look alike!”	“Kamu semua nampak sama!”

The dialogue was spoken by Carter after punching Lee in the face. Carter gave this remark and mentioned that all Chinese look like Lee. This appears in the Malay subtitle as “Kamu semua nampak sama!”, which is exactly as it is in the English dialogue. The translations are word-by-word from English to Malay language, in which “kamu” means “all”, “semua” means “y’all” which is another form for “you all”, “nampak” means “look” and “sama” means “alike”. The meanings for both phrases are not lost and are well-displayed by the translator as the words have the same definition in both languages.

Imitation

The Imitation subtitling strategy uses similar expressions and analogous rendering to its meaning, such as proper nouns, greetings from around the world, the same forms of words and so on. Koponen (2018) mentions that the imitation strategy is the retention of phrases or words from the source texts, such as names, places, or brands.

Example 11

Timestamp	English dialogue	Malay subtitle
12:35 (<i>Rush Hour 3</i>)	“You down with that, Snoopy?”	“Awak selesai dengan ini, Snoopy?”

An example of the imitation strategy is presented in Example 13 above. The word “Snoopy” from the English dialogue is a way to refer to men of African American origin, with specific reference to a famous Black rapper, Snoop Dogg. This racist discourse labels African American men with a particular name. The Malay subtitle keeps the name and spelling of the word “Snoopy” as a proper noun, which retains the meaning and context of the phrase.

Decimation

Decimation is defined by Gottlieb (1992) as reduced expression and content, with rapid speaking or little repetition. Important points and elements are omitted, which confuses the recipients of the subtitles. However, Koponen (2018) notes that this strategy can result in the loss of the intended message.

Example 12

Timestamp	English dialogue	Malay subtitle
35:10 (<i>Rush Hour 3</i>)	“Come on crouching tiger, don’t hide that Dragon”	“Cepat Buster, jangan sembunyi-kan naga itu!”

In Example 12, “Crouching tiger” refers to Lee who is reserved and shy, and “dragon” refers to his genitalia. This is also a reference made to the Chinese idiom “crouching tiger, hidden dragon” which means a hidden talent. The translator omits “crouching tiger” entirely and replaces it with “Buster” in the Malay subtitle, which is slang to call a guy. This eliminates the Chinese idiom implied in the original sentence, which may confuse the audience as the word “naga” (i.e., “dragon”) suddenly appears in the dialogue. While the meanings of both sentences are not entirely changed, the initial intended meaning of the sentence was altered when the translator removed the racist discourse. It will affect how audiences perceive the dialogue said by the actors, which reduces the quality of the movie as a comedy film.

Resignation

The Resignation subtitling strategy gives unusual speech patterns and warped content where the words are incomprehensible or “untranslatable” (Gottlieb, 1992). There are no translation solutions found, causing loss of meaning in the translated subtitle.

Example 13

Timestamp	English dialogue	Malay subtitle
27:10 (<i>Rush Hour 1</i>)	“Assume I kick your little Beijing ass right now”	“Saya tak takut awak”

This example of Resignation strategy can be found in *Rush Hour 1*. The dialogue “Assume I kick your little Beijing ass right now” is translated into “Saya tak takut awak” in the Malay subtitle, which is said by Carter to Lee. In the English dialogue, Carter is threatening to kick Lee’s buttock, referring to it as “Bei-

jing ass” to refer to his Chinese origin. However, Malay subtitle appears as “Saya tak takut awak”, which brings the meaning “I am not afraid of you”. In the translation, the racial discourse was completely dropped and the translator used a sentence that gives a different meaning to the dialogue. The translator could not find the correct way to accurately translate the Racial Discourse and the meanings became lost and failed to be delivered to the audience.

Discussions

This study aimed to investigate the racial discourse in the *Rush Hour* movie franchise, and analyse the subtitling strategies employed in the Malay subtitles. It was found that all three types of racial discourse following Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal Theory of Attitude appeared in the movies. Additionally, the second part of the findings section has revealed the five subtitling strategies following Gottlieb (1992) reflected in the Malay subtitles, which were explained along with examples.

In terms of the types of racial discourse found in the movies, the analysis revealed that all three types of racist discourse based on Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal Theory of Attitude, namely 1) affect, to show negative emotions and responses towards others, driven by racial, ethnic or religious differences (e.g., “I will slap you so hard, you’ll end up in the Ming dynasty”); 2) appreciation, referring to rigidly using certain traits as ample reasons for unfavourable judgements (e.g. “First I get a bullshit assignment, now Mr. Rice-A-Roni... don’t even speak American”) and 3) judgement, which describes negative judgements of people’s behaviour when seen as aligned with their racial or ethnic differences (e.g., “Hey! Slow down Chen/Chin! Hell is wrong with you?”). The findings from the analysis revealed that racist discourse under the affect type is associated with both positive and negative emotions. Some derogatory remarks were thrown when the characters were feeling annoyed and/or angry. Other racist discourse was also used in a light and teasing manner, which brought the two characters to connect better at the interpersonal level.

The Appreciation type of racial discourse can be separated into people’s reactions to things, their composition, and their value where it entails evaluating semiotic and natural phenomena according to how they are appreciated or not in a specific situation (Martin, 2008). Examples of this type are attributed to the characters and features of their origin cultures to whom the racist discourse is directed and can manifest as a form of compliment, yet still carry underlying assumptions and stereotypes about individuals based on their racial or ethnic background. Finally, the judgement type displayed remarks relating to one’s cultural background. Notions of judgement are made to provoke the other party and perpetuate racial stereotypes even when their actions have nothing to do with their culture of origin.

Regarding the subtitling strategies reflected in the Malay subtitles of racial discourse in the movies, the application of Gottlieb’s (1992) subtitling strategies was found relevant in this study as it provided a ba-

sis for analysing the subtitles while building on the findings of previous studies. The strategies employed in the Malay subtitles were found to be based on the context of the dialogues. When the decimation strategy was employed, the translator omitted specific words referring to racist discourse like “nigger” and “crouching tiger”. This finding is consistent with Mouka et al. (2015) who discovered that translators often omit racial slurs in movie subtitles. At the same time, there are other strategies such as the paraphrase strategy, where the racist discourse is rephrased while still holding the same meaning. For example, the English dialogue “...that doesn’t mean they won’t blow shit up!” appears in the Malay subtitle as “...itu tak bermakna mereka tidak akan mengganas!”. The back translation is “that doesn’t mean they won’t terrorise!”. This finding concurs with Thongin (2021) who also found that translators paraphrased and removed unnecessary elements from the source language to make the target language more concise and more natural for the target audience.

Previous studies such as Mujaddadi (2016) have noted that a skilled translator must navigate the complexities in translation with precision and sensitivity. They need to consider the cultural context, historical implications, and the impact of racial discourses on character development and storytelling. By doing so, the translator can ensure that the essence and emotional depth of the original dialogues are conveyed accurately in the target language. The variety of subtitling strategies used in the Malay subtitles of the *Rush Hour* movie franchise has shown the applicability of Gottlieb’s (1992) subtitling strategies to be utilised to depict and portray the source language, especially when translating and subtitling racist discourse which is far more challenging to be translated properly and accurately.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to investigate racist discourse in the *Rush Hour* movie franchise, and the subtitling strategies reflected in the racist discourse in the Malay subtitles. This study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) What are the racist discourses in the *Rush Hour* movie franchise? and (2) How are the subtitling strategies reflected in the Malay subtitles of racist discourse in the movies? Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal Theory of Attitude and Gottlieb’s (1992) subtitling strategies were adopted as frameworks to assist the analysis. This allows for the identification and classification of the types of racist discourse in the movies, as well as the subtitling strategies in the Malay subtitles of the movies. In the *Rush Hour* movie franchise, racist discourse was portrayed in a very diversified way with many different meanings and definitions.

Translating racial discourses effectively can provide insights into the cultural dynamics at play within the narrative. Exploring how these discourses are utilised to express emotions like anger, frustration, or camaraderie can shed light on the characters' relationships and the broader themes of the movies. By grasping the nuances of racial discourses, the translator can uncover hidden layers of meaning that enrich the overall viewing experience. They have the power to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, fostering under-

standing and empathy among diverse audiences. However, this task also comes with great responsibility. The translator must avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes or spreading offensive language. Instead, they should seek ways to adapt the racial discourses thoughtfully, ensuring that the impact remains intact while respecting the sensibilities of the target culture.

Since the study presents qualitative findings to illustrate subtitling strategies of racist discourse in the Malay subtitles, it is recommended that future studies look into translation errors in movie subtitles for a better understanding of this crucial field. Such studies will contribute to improving the quality of translation and enhance the overall audience experience when viewing the movies. Additionally, future researchers may want to consider investigating the subtitling process by conducting interviews with translators and subtitlers to explore the strategies, challenges, and the process of making certain decisions when producing subtitles for English movies. In turn, this will help create more accurate and culturally sensitive subtitles that will benefit audiences of different backgrounds, languages, and cultures. The findings of this study may benefit translators, subtitlers, and screenwriters for them to consider the sociocultural norms and context in the translation process.

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Data availability statement

Data is available upon request to the authors.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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