

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The way a language is spoken and how it is translated, as explained by Dung (2024), really depends on the cultures of the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). Culture determines how the meaning of a language and its translations are constructed and understood across different linguistic contexts. One important role of culture in translation is helping translators understand and convey idioms, metaphors, and cultural references that cannot be directly translated into another language. Apart from that, the pragmatic elements of language, such as discourse frameworks, formality levels, and social rules, are also influenced by the cultural environment. These aspects must be taken into account by translators to create translations that are not only linguistically correct but also culturally appropriate for the target readers.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, translation is the process of translating one word or text from one language into another. It can also be understood as the relocation, transfer, or movement of words or texts from one language to another. Following the explanation above, Mutar and Halo (2024) describe a main duty of a translator as transferring the meanings or idioms from one language to another. They further describe that, apart from maintaining the author's intended meaning, a translator is responsible for providing a translated text that is understood and naturally accepted by the target readers.

Nowadays, reading materials have evolved from simple written or printed texts to multimodal platforms, making reading a widely digital activity (Fradana et al., 2025). Such a transition can be seen by the emergence of reading applications on phones, laptops,

personal computer, etc. For example, applications such as Wattpad, Libby, Kindle, Line Webtoon, Kaokaopage, and many others are available online. Some applications provide a platform for reading in the form of text and paragraphs similar to printed novels. While others provide a form of reading in the shape of illustrations such as comic books. Webtoons are one example of the applications that offer a reading experience that combines text, audio, and illustrations. Equivalent to comic books, it uses panels, speech bubbles, and character dialogues to tell a story, but with a more variety of stories to choose from in one application.

Due to the diversity of reading applications, translators had to adjust their translation strategy to each platform. Multimodal translation becomes more complicated when meaning is derived from more than just text, and translators need to comprehend how verbal and visual components interplay (Wang et al., 2025). Considering the many linguistic forms that translators have to deal with, Junaid et al. (2023) stated that onomatopoeia is one of the most difficult linguistic forms that translators find complicated to translate because it imitates and describes sounds through words. Such as sounds that can come from animals like the "Woof" of a dog or the "Meow" of a cat, from actions such as the sound of sniffing or the sound of pain, or "Ouch!" coming from human.

The use of onomatopoeia in multimodal storytelling plays an important role in conveying scenes, especially in reading applications such as Webtoon. Fradana et al. (2025) explain how the use of onomatopoeia provides additional information about what is happening within the story and acts as a visual component whose font, size, and placement contribute to the story's atmosphere. This shows that every genre relies on onomatopoeia. From fantasy, romance, action, thriller, mystery, and horror. Among the many Webtoon stories that are available on the platform, *School Bus Graveyard*, a Webtoon written by an American author initialed as Red was selected as the main source of data for this study. It

is a Webtoon that is categories in the genre of mystery and confined survival with many scenes that require frequent use of onomatopoeia.

School Bus Graveyard is a story about a group of teenagers who unintentionally become trapped in a mysterious alternate world inhabited by unknown creatures during a school field trip. This alternate world that would appear every single night whenever they fall asleep, forcing them to survive against various life-threatening situations. As they struggle to survive and escape, the narrative features several scenes that require the use of onomatopoeia, such as running, combat, arguments, anxiety, screams, the clatter of objects, the chill of nature, and more. Consequently, the Webtoon contains a wide variety of onomatopoeic expressions, making it an appropriate source for analyzing the translation of onomatopoeia from English into Indonesian.

This study focuses on onomatopoeic words in *School Bus Graveyard* Season 1, following earlier research on the types and translation of onomatopoeia such as previous studies by Yuria and Ardi (2024) or Puspitasari (2022). What sets it apart is the comparatively small amount of research that uses Javier Franco Aixelá's Culture-Specific Items (CSI) theory to examine onomatopoeia translation, particularly in the focus on multimedia or digital comics within the mystery and confined survival genre. Previous research mainly identifies types of onomatopoeia or employs general translation strategies. Rather than using CSI, most current comic translation research uses models such as Vinay and Darbelnet, equivalency modulation, or generic domestication/foreignization strategies. To better understand how CSI strategies are used to translate onomatopoeia in Webtoons, this study analyzes, identifies, and categorizes onomatopoeic words and their translations using a qualitative approach.

1.2 Research Question

- 1) What types of onomatopoeia are found in the Webtoon *School Bus Graveyard* (Season 1) based on their sound source?
- 2) What are the strategies used by the translators in translating onomatopoeia?

1.3 The Objective of the Research

The objectives of this study were to identify the forms of onomatopoeia in *School Bus Graveyard* Webtoon (Season 1) according to their sound sources and to analyze what strategies translators used to translate onomatopoeia based on CSI by Aixela.

1.4 Focus of the Research

This study focuses on the onomatopoeic expressions in Red's Webtoon *School Bus Graveyard*'s first season. To identify the different forms of onomatopoeia according to their sound sources, this study uses qualitative research as its methodological approach. The translation of onomatopoeic words from English into Indonesian was then studied using Javier Franco Aixelá's Culture-Specific Items (CSI) translation strategies to identify its appliances in translating onomatopoeia. Finally, knowing which was the most commonly Aixelá's CSI translation strategy used in the translation of onomatopoeia.

1.5 Method of Research

The data source for this study is the English-language version of *School Bus Graveyard*, available on the LINE Webtoon application. This webtoon consists of 96 episodes, divided into two seasons: Season 1 (episodes 1–48) and Season 2 (episodes 49–96). However, only Season 1 (episodes 1- 48) is analyzed in this study. *School Bus Graveyard* was originally written in English and was officially translated into Indonesian by the internal translation team of LINE Webtoon Indonesia.

The main methodology used in this study was qualitative research. The research data consist of onomatopoeic expressions found in Season 1 of *School Bus Graveyard*. These data were analyzed using Javier Franco Aixelá's Culture-Specific Items (CSI) framework to identify and understand the translation strategies applied and “*Comparative Handbook of Linguistics: Onomatopoeia in the World's Languages*” by Körtvélyessy and Štekauer (2024) to classify what the type of onomatopoeia it was.

Additionally, this study employs purposive sampling to select the research data. According to Gay (2012), purposive sampling is where case selection is driven entirely by academic relevance to the research questions rather than statistical representativeness. Researchers intentionally select data based on specific or relevant characteristics to the study. This study focuses only on Season 1 (episodes 1–48). The reason for selecting only Season 1 is to limit the scope of the research and enable a more in-depth, manageable analysis. On top of that, Season 1 provides sufficient data on onomatopoeic expressions to support the research objectives, thus making it relevant to Gay (2012) purposive sampling.

1.5.1 Data Collection

The data in this study were collected from the English version (Source Text) and the Indonesian version (Target Text) of *School Bus Graveyard* available on the LINE Webtoon application. The scope of the data includes all episodes in Season 1 (episodes 1–48).

The data collection process was conducted through several steps. First, all episodes of Season 1 (episodes 1–48) in the English version were thoroughly read to identify onomatopoeic expressions. Second, these expressions were compared with their corresponding translations in the Indonesian version.

Next, panels containing onomatopoeic expressions were documented by

taking screenshots from both versions. During this process, specific selection criteria were applied. English onomatopoeic expressions that have identical forms, similar Indonesian translation, and the same contextual meaning that appeared more than once would be excluded. In contrast, if the same source-language expression was translated differently or used in a different context, it would be added into the documentation.

Finally, all selected data were recorded and organized into a table. This includes the onomatopoeic expressions (both in English and in Indonesia), translation strategy, type of onomatopoeia, and in which episode you would find it.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

The collected onomatopoeic expressions were first classified according to their sound sources. Based on Körtvélyessy and Štekauer (2024), sound source type of onomatopoeia are divided into two categories: natural sound and artifact sound. Following Gay (2012), purposive sampling was applied; approximately 30% of the identified onomatopoeic expressions were then selected as representative examples for qualitative analysis. Screenshots of the corresponding panels from both the English and Indonesian versions were used to illustrate the translation process based on Aixelá's CSI translation strategies.

Finally, the results were presented in a table to show which technique was predominantly used in the onomatopoeic translation from English to Indonesian in the Webtoon. Although this study primarily employs a qualitative approach, simple frequencies are also used to support the analysis of translation strategies.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Translation: The process of transferring words or text from one language to another. In this study, translation involves transferring onomatopoeic word expression from English to Indonesian while considering the cultural and visual factors of the intended source text.
2. Onomatopoeia: Is a term to describe words that represent or imitate a sound such as *hiss, buzz, bang, and woof*.
3. Multimodality: Refers to digital platforms that use illustrations, videos, and music in addition to text-based books. Through its font, size, and placement in the Webtoon panels, multimodality in this study demonstrates how onomatopoeia functions both verbally and visually.
4. Webtoon: An application that provides illustrations in a series of comics and are officially published online. Over hundreds of stories across several genres, including romance, comedy, action, fantasy, and horror created through episodic digital, vertical-scroll comic format

