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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**TRANSLATING SLANG: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
ENN VELDI'S AND TEA'S ESTONIAN-ENGLISH
BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES**

BA thesis

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**TARTU
2024**

ABSTRACT

This BA thesis comparatively analyses the slang entry translations found in Enn Veldi's Estonian-English dictionary and the TEA Estonian-English dictionary and aims to answer the following research question: How similarly are slang entry translations handled in Enn Veldi's Estonian-English dictionary and the TEA Estonian-English dictionary? To answer this question, the thesis analyses all entries marked as slang in the dictionaries, 399 in total, to uncover the most common way of translating in the dictionaries, which in turn is used as the base to critically analyse the similarities and differences in slang entry translations in the dictionaries, alongside the positives and the problems that stem from different translations.

The thesis starts with an introduction, where the author provides a short insight into bilingual dictionaries and slang, followed by the literature review, which discusses the topics of slang, bilingual dictionaries and translation from the points of various authors, with the aim of providing a background for the analysis both in the form of a slang definition as well as problems that have arisen in dictionary entry translations. The empirical study consists of an overview of the analysis, as well as the analysis itself, followed by the discussion on the findings. The thesis ends with the conclusion.

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INTRODUCTION

Bilingual dictionaries can be considered linguistic tools that provide the user with information about the vocabulary of a source language, expressed through a target language. Due to this, it is of utmost importance that the translations provided to the entries in bilingual dictionaries give users information that is accurate and can be utilised when speaking a different language. It is important to keep in mind that language does not simply consist of words to be learned – language is representative of its corresponding culture, resulting in informal language being a vital part of any language. Informal language also provides an insight to the different views and characteristics of the culture(s) tied to the language. For instance, Braçaj (2015: 476) highlights the importance of culture representation through language phenomena, such as informal language, and subsequently slang.

Dictionaries tend to be composed with the aim of providing users with information that can be utilised to acquire vocabulary as well as hone language use and revise existing vocabulary, an idea further elaborated on by Haas (1962: 174-175). Due to this, it could be said that there is vast amount of potential in dictionary research, especially when it comes to the quality of information provided, namely the consistency of definitions – how meanings of entries are conveyed in monolingual dictionaries and how language-to-language translations are carried out in bilingual dictionaries.

Informal language can be divided into subcategories, the most notable being slang, a linguistic phenomenon that is believed to be on the rise in popularity, as indicated by surveys, such as one conducted by Talbot (2023), where ~80% of respondents across four generations admitted to using slang on a day-to-day basis. Although defining slang as a linguistic term might appear to be a difficult task, many authors have defined the term in a concise and comprehensible way. One such definition has been established by Mattiello (2008: 31-35), who through many viewpoints defines slang as a constantly changing, heavily informal type

of vocabulary, distinct from other informal speech due to its exclusivity to specific social groups and contexts.

This bachelor's thesis aims to comparatively analyse Enn Veldi's Estonian-English dictionary and the TEA Estonian-English dictionary in regard to how slang entries and their translations are handled. This includes the utilisation of ways to translate slang and the semantic differences of the translations at face value. These ways of translation are 'functional equivalence' and 'synonymy'. Functional equivalence means that the source entry is matched with a culture-neutral equivalent from the target language that functions similarly, and subsequently expresses the source language in a genuine way (Mahmoud 2007: 4). On the other hand, synonymy indicates that the source entry is matched with a near-equivalent entry in the target language, which may often result in shortcomings in the accuracy of the translations (Mahmoud 2007: 5). With two dictionaries chosen for analysis, the research question of the thesis surfaces: How similarly are slang translations handled in Enn Veldi's Estonian-English dictionary and the TEA Estonian-English dictionary?

The first part of this thesis discusses existing literature and research conducted on the topics of slang, bilingual dictionaries and translation. The literature review aims to provide a background for the analysis by defining slang and indicating common problems in dictionary entry translations. The second part of the thesis analyses Enn Veldi's Estonian-English dictionary (EVD) and the TEA Estonian-English dictionary (TEA) by first comparing how slang as a linguistic phenomenon is approached in the dictionaries and how many slang entries in total can be found in the dictionaries. Additionally, the analysis explores if and how functional equivalence and synonymy are utilised in slang translations. Then, the translations in EVD and TEA are compared via examples of various slang entry translations to discover the similarities and differences in translation. The thesis ends with a discussion of the findings, followed by the conclusion.

1. SLANG IN BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES: STRATEGIES AND PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION

Various authors, such as Haas (1962), Al Kasimi (1983), Martin-Rutledge (1998) and Adamska-Salaciak (2014), have conducted research surrounding bilingual dictionaries, most commonly discussing word forms and meaning inconsistencies when translating both the formal register as well as informal and culture-specific items, such as slang. This literature review gives an overview of slang, alongside both what has been studied regarding hardback bilingual dictionaries and the translations of their entries, as well as what has not been researched much. Online dictionaries are included in some sections for comparison and a deeper understanding of the difficulties proposed by the authors.

1.1 Slang: definition and characteristics

According to Amari (2010: 1-5), defining slang tends to pose problems, since it is difficult to clearly identify and distinguish it from other types of informal language. In contrast, the following authors have discussed the definition of slang and the unique characteristics tied to the phenomenon.

Mattiello (2008: 31-35) expresses the definition of slang through a combination of multiple viewpoints. She states that slang can be considered a non-standard, informal language phenomenon where typically the common morphological rules are disregarded. Dalzell and Victor (2015: 9) agree with this point, adding that slang defies all normal meaning and formality of a language. In addition, Mattiello (2008: 31-35) and Yule (2022: 315) collectively agree that, albeit informal in its nature, slang can provide both richness to a language alongside a sense of identity and belonging to a social group or subgroup. Pedersen (2007: 5), Adams (2012: 1-11) and Dalzell & Victor (2015: 9) all elaborate on

social groups, arguing that slang is vital to social groups, the identification of those groups, and the feeling of belonging to said groups.

How slang is defined and characterised can be approached differently, since characteristics of any item can be partly shared with any other; however, the definition stays unique to said item. Mattiello (2008: 31-39) considers slang to be characterised by the unique way it can defy any rules of word order alongside the distinctly narrow concepts conveyed through slang words, which can only stem from the collective minds of social groups. In addition, Dalzell & Victor (2015: 9) argue that slang could at times be an influence on 'regular' language by making it express new, unique meanings through semantic shifts and the rare occurrences of slang entries coined into non-slang vocabulary. Pedersen (2007: 5) also believes that slang "has a very definite expiry date", suggesting that inevitably, the words formed by an older generation lose their viability as new, never-seen-before formations from a new generation flood in to take the spotlight.

From the various authors who have expressed their viewpoints on the definition and characteristics of slang, a definitive explanation can be formed for the context of this thesis. To sum up, slang is a constantly changing and heavily informal type of vocabulary, able to defy syntactic rules, that is distinct from other informal speech due to its exclusivity to specific social groups and contexts. Slang is characterised by the unusual construction of the words, relying on different semantic shifts to make the words conform to their social groups of origin.

1.2 Bilingual dictionaries: vital aspects of information

It could be said that not every dictionary can be considered viable for reliable academic use. In her research, Haas (1962: 174-175) claims that to find out whether a bilingual dictionary can be considered adequate or not, various criteria checks can be

conducted. What Haas (1962) considers most important is that a dictionary provides the exact and proper translations for its entries, both from one language to another and vice versa. Albeit this point not being as recent, it is still further elaborated on by Al Kasimi (1983: 50), who argues that an adequate bilingual dictionary needs to provide more than just translations. Al Kasimi (1983: 50) further explains that not only do the translations of the entries have to be correct, but that information such as example sentences, the pronunciation of the word and the multiple meanings of the word, should usually be present in one dictionary, to prevent the need to turn to multiple other sources to comprehend each entry to the fullest. This point is further emphasised by Martin-Rutledge (1998: 133-137), who in her empirical study found that, at least when discussing complex dictionary entries, example sentences should be present in all bilingual dictionaries for the users' ability to utilise new dictionary entries in their language correctly.

Haas (1962) also expresses that there are other aspects that should still be considered important, such as the implementation of vocabulary from various fields of research, i.e., academic and professional language, to make the dictionary usable for a wider audience. She also agrees with Al Kasimi (1983: 50) by claiming that pronunciation aids should be a common feature in bilingual dictionaries. However, what Haas (1962: 174) considers arguably as important as the correctness of the translations is that, as a bilingual dictionary, the information is equally balanced between its two languages, claiming that bilingual dictionaries should never be one-sided in the amount of information provided for both the source and target language.

1.3 Bilingual dictionaries: common translation flaws

According to Haas (1962: 175), there are no bilingual dictionaries that can be considered 'perfect', claiming that adding numerous different pieces of information is a

difficult task, bound to result in shortcomings in the overall quality of the dictionary. This is reiterated and further elaborated on by Laufer and Melamed (1994: 565), who express that the biggest shortcomings in bilingual dictionaries often come down to the lack of precision in detail when it comes to the various entries within said dictionaries. They further iterate that this sort of detail is, in most cases, present and often strictly controlled specifically in monolingual dictionaries, which need to present entries as precisely as possible.

Laufer and Melamed (1994) express concern about the meanings provided through translations, emphasizing that bilingual dictionaries often provide a small number of translations for the entries, which in turn can potentially either result in skewed translations or fail to carry over the meaning due to semantic shifts and discrepancies between the languages. Szende (1999: 200) presents a possible solution to the lack of additional information in bilingual dictionaries. According to the author, it might be possible to present as much information as possible using example sentences that express as many different meanings of the entries as possible while still being comprehensible for the user. To reiterate, Al Kasimi (1989: 50) agrees with these proposals, stating that bilingual dictionaries should have more information for each entry than currently provided. The author has not only stated this as a suggestion, but also as a form of criticism towards bilingual dictionaries as a whole, since, according to the author, actual grammatical information in these dictionaries is nearly non-existent (Al Kasimi 1989: 50).

Kotze (1999: 95) agrees with the problem of lack of information within bilingual dictionaries, exclaiming that in most cases, bilingual dictionaries consist of entries that are very limited in how they are shown. This means that each entry does not elaborate much at all when it comes to the previously mentioned context, word meaning, or any other additional information, only providing an entry with very few equivalents. This widespread flaw may also lead to users not being able to understand the desired language's lexicon to

its fullest. In addition, to understand a language's lexicon, it is important to learn how to utilise new vocabulary in any context, both to practice the vocabulary and to also understand the different unique cultural aspects tied to said language. This point is further elaborated by Szende (1999: 198), who claims that to lexicographers all entries in both monolingual and bilingual have their own sort of 'definition ranges' that are formed by analysing how the entries are used in language. This includes situations that give direct context to the entries as well as how similar entries may appear in different contexts. Context is vital, and the literature seems to suggest that since bilingual dictionaries lack that additional level of context, they may often fall short of providing the user with sufficient information.

1.4 Approaching slang in bilingual dictionaries

To reiterate, according to Amari (2010: 1-5), slang is usually considered a grey area that may pose various problems to lexicographers since slang is difficult to distinguish from other types of informal speech. In addition, it can be tricky to convey meanings of these culture-specific entries, since there is a huge difference in whether and how certain concepts are realised through slang in different cultures. As explained earlier by Mattiello (2008: 31-35), Adams (2012: 1-11) and Yule (2022: 315), slang is closely tied with culture and narrow group-specific meanings. In addition, these various connotations and undertones that come with this authentic cultural creativity, which are relevant when talking about slang, often end up overlooked since there is simply insufficient context provided.

As mentioned in Hartmann's (2003: 264) book, lexicographers often attempt to convey the meanings of slang entries by attempting to match a slang entry with specifically another slang entry present in the target language, which Mahmoud (2007: 4) refers to as synonymy, or synonym translation. This is mostly done in an attempt to keep the dictionaries "genuine" by connecting entries of a similar type. However, when an instance of slang arises

in a language, it may often have more than one meaning and its lifespan is generally shorter than an average, standard entry. This further proves the point made in Hartmann's (2003: 264-265) book, which states that uncertain translations arise most often when handling slang, since in the process of translating slang entries into other slang entries, the corresponding entries chosen may not be widely in use in the target language. There are many faults that could possibly result in skewed slang translations, such as misunderstanding the undertones of slang entries in a language, using less known, subarea-specific entries that are perhaps not used much elsewhere, or simply using obsolete entries to attempt to convey phrases or words, closely tied with one language or one culture, in another language.

Adamska-Salaciak (2014: 24) emphasizes the impossibility of synonym translation, stating that from language to language, slang words differ far more from each other than non-slang words. There is never certainty in the fact that language A has the exact same sayings and expressions as language B, making it simply impossible to translate these slang entries using exact counterparts consistently and reliably. Adamska-Salaciak (2014: 24) considers this theory and subsequently expresses the potential of providing a culture-neutral term, as accurate as possible, as the translation of a slang entry. This way of translating is referred to by Mahmoud (2007: 4) as 'functional equivalence', claiming that this way of translating is the most genuine in expressing the source language. Braçaj (2015: 476) further elaborates on the nearly untranslatable nature of slang entries by expressing how there is a possibility that, if a valid equivalent is not found in the target language, an equivalent could simply just be created as a completely new word. This solution has many grey areas. Namely, there is the problematic nature of these newly coined equivalents – these words must fit the target language, and subsequently the target culture, as an entry that could possibly be adapted by said culture. Each culture-specific term is bound to its origin in some way, in most cases for a very long period of time as well, and replicating this sort of authentic nature

of an entry is an incredibly difficult task. Braçaj (2015: 476) also claims that, as slang is closely tied with culture, "...the two notions of culture and language appear to be inseparable" (Braçaj 2015: 476).

Dabaghi and Bagheri (2012: 183) agree with this idea, expressing that that cultural aspects can be drastically more tedious to find ways around when translating culture-specific entries. The authors further mention the existence of Venuti's ways of "domesticating" and "foreignizing" (Dabaghi and Bagheri 2012: 183-184) when it comes to dealing with the issue of cultural representation in literary translations. The authors criticise domesticating as a detriment to culture-specific source entries, since during the process of domesticating slang terms, more emphasis is usually placed on how the translated entry would act and work in the target language, rather than focusing on the cultural undertones tied to the source entry (Dabaghi and Bagheri 2012: 183-184). Although these translation strategies are almost always talked about in the context of literary translations, they can still be potentially paralleled with bilingual dictionary translations.

To sum up, the literature defines slang as a constantly changing and heavily informal type of vocabulary, distinct from other informal speech due to its exclusivity to specific social groups and contexts. Furthermore, the literature suggests that general problems in how entries are translated in bilingual dictionaries stem from the lack of information provided for each entry. However, slang translations seemingly differ – according to the literature, the main difficulties and subsequently the flaws with slang translations stem from slang being a representation of culture. This makes it vital for the translations to carry over cultural concepts as well as possible, and the literature agrees with this point.

2. ANALYSIS OF SLANG TRANSLATIONS IN ENN

VELDI'S AND TEA'S ESTONIAN-ENGLISH BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES

In this section, the author first establishes the research aims and choices of dictionaries for the analysis, followed by the methodology. Afterwards, the analysis is conducted through examples, comparisons and explanations. This is followed by a discussion of the results of the analysis.

2.1 Analysis aim and selected dictionaries

The aim of this analysis was to discover and compare how slang entries were handled, in terms of the authors' approaches to slang and the semantic similarities and differences in slang translations, in Enn Veldi's Estonian-English dictionary (from now on the EVD) and the TEA Estonian-English dictionary (from now on the TEAD). These dictionaries were selected for the analysis due to both being published around a similar time, while also being the most recent paperback Estonian-English dictionaries to have been published to a general audience.

2.2 Methodology

This comparative analysis of the EVD and the TEAD initially focused on whether and how the author(s) had established slang in their dictionaries. The ways of establishing slang varied from simple mentions of the phenomenon in, for example, the foreword to the phenomenon being fully acknowledged in the list of abbreviations at the beginning of the dictionary. It was important to consider that, due to the dictionaries being published at different times, the authors may have established slang differently from one another, which

naturally unbalanced the number of slang entries. For slang entries, one criterion had to be met: it was vital that each entry was specifically marked as slang for any analysis to be possible.

After showing how slang entries were established in both dictionaries, the comparative analysis focused on 1) the ways of translation that were utilised in both dictionaries; and 2) the semantic similarities and differences in slang translations. It was important to see and understand whether the slang translations matched or differed in: 1) the reflections of the meaning of the original entries; and 2) the overall clarity of the information provided. Afterwards, the similarities and differences were discussed in the context of the literature review. Monolingual dictionaries, such as the EKSS (*Eesti keele seletav sõnaraamat*) and the Cambridge English dictionary were addressed to aid the semantic comparison. The literature review was also considered throughout the analysis, with various authors' points being revisited when needed.

2.2 How the dictionaries presented slang

Whenever bilingual dictionaries are composed, it is important to consider how informal entries, such as slang, are approached. There are various possible approaches, most notably blending said slang entries together with non-slang entries without distinguishing these two differing types of entries. This, however, was not the case in the chosen dictionaries where, instead, the second and subsequently more widespread option had been chosen – slang words were established as separate headwords. In both the EVD and TEAD, this was done by establishing the phenomenon with the abbreviation *sl* in the list of abbreviations, among other classifications of entries, such as field-specific vocabulary. These abbreviations were used as markers for slang entries, with the abbreviation usually directly preceding or following the slang entry.

While counting the slang entries, it was discovered that the EVD, advertised to have a considerable amount of slang, provided 217 slang entries (including non-slang entries with slang translations), while the TEAD provided approximately 182 entries (including non-slang entries with slang translations). As previously mentioned, different authors have a different approach to which entries should be marked as slang. This resulted in the number of shared, or overlapping, entries – the same entries being marked as slang – to be low. Below is a table indicating the findings of the slang entry numbers.

Table 1. Number of slang entries in both dictionaries

	Enn Veldi's dictionary	TEA dictionary	Total
Number of slang entries	217	182	399
Number of overlapping slang entries (entries marked as 'slang' in both dictionaries)	29		
Number of slang translations provided to non-slang entries	26	41	67

During the process of counting slang entries, the oddity of slang translations being assigned to non-slang entries arose. This was considered during the comparison.

2.3 Analysis of slang translations in the EVD and the TEAD

2.3.1 Most common ways of translation

As previously discussed by Mahmoud (2007: 1-7), there exists two common ways of translating slang – synonymy and functional equivalence. When analysing slang entry translations in the EVD and the TEAD, synonymy appeared as the dominant way of translating in both dictionaries. To reiterate, synonymy refers to slang entries in the source

language matched with slang entries in the target language (Mahmoud 2007: 5). In both dictionaries, many of the translations for slang entries seemed to be some form of slang words, ranging from words that are still quite common in everyday speech to words that are either drastically falling in usage or (near) obsolete now, which proved the inconsistency of this way of translating.

Functional equivalence was not found in either dictionary. As explained by Mahmoud (2007: 4), this way of translating is characterised by neutral translations given to slang entries, usually eliminating inaccurate representations of the original entries. Albeit this way of translation not being present in either dictionary, translations that could be considered complete opposites were instead discovered. In some cases, neutral/non-slang source language entries were provided with slang words as translations in both dictionaries. While this did not align with the two ways of translating expressed by Mahmoud (2007), it was highly resemblant of Venuti's 'domesticating', discussed by Dabaghi and Bagheri (2012: 183-184). To reiterate, domesticating refers to when more emphasis is placed on how a translated entry would interact in the target language, while the source language often gets overlooked (Dabaghi and Bagheri 2012: 183-184).

2.3.2 Similarities in slang translations

As discussed, both the EVD and TEAD dominantly utilised synonymy as a way of translation. However, during the analysis of the slang translations in the EVD and the TEAD, nearly no other similarities surfaced. The most notable similarity found between the two dictionaries was the similarity in the translations provided for some overlapping slang entries, ranging from synonymous translations to direct matches in the translations. Below are examples of these similar translations in tables. The examples consist of the dictionary name alongside the source language entry, which is followed by the translation(s), of which

the slang translation(s) are indicated with the abbreviation (*sl*) preceding the slang word. Each example ends with additional information about the semantics.

Table 2. Similarities in overlapping slang entries in the EVD and the TEAD – direct matches.

Enn Veldi (2002: 483)	papp – (<i>sl</i>) <i>dough</i>
TEA (2005: 452)	papp – (<i>sl</i>) <i>dough</i>

Papp in Estonian is a word used to generally describe cardboard (material). It is also a very widely used slang term that refers to money (EKSS 2009) (Loog 1991). Dough is an English word generally used to describe the mixture of flour, water and yeast, used for various baking recipes. It is also a slang term, deemed slightly old-fashioned in present day, that refers to money (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). Here, both dictionaries had provided completely identical translations for the original entry.

Table 3. Similarities in overlapping slang entries in the EVD and the TEAD – synonymity.

Enn Veldi (2002: 279)	koputaja – (<i>sl</i>) <i>snitch</i>
TEA (2005: 269)	koputaja – (<i>sl</i>) <i>nark</i>

Koputaja in Estonian is a slang term that refers to an individual, usually a criminal, that gives authorities, such as the police, crucial information about other criminals (EKSS 2009). Snitch and nark are synonymous English slang terms that refer to a criminal that gives authorities information about another individual committing something illegal (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). Here, albeit the dictionaries provided different words for the translations, the words provided are absolute synonyms (synonyms that have the exact same meaning).

2.3.3 Differences in slang translations

The analysis of slang translations uncovered noticeable differences in slang translations in the EVD and the TEAD. The first difference stemmed from differences of the information provided by slang words used to translate many overlapping slang entries. In addition, it was important to discuss non-overlapping entries since they provided two categories of differences: 1) one dictionary acknowledged an entry as slang, translating it appropriately, but the other did not; and 2) one dictionary acknowledged a word, used to translate a slang entry, as slang, but the other did not. Not only did these differences show semantic variation, but also the author's differing approaches to slang. Below are examples of each type of difference uncovered, using tables that are followed by additional information.

Table 4. Overlapping slang entries translated with slang words that provided different information.

Enn Veldi (2002: 73)	eit – (<i>sl</i>) <i>broad</i> , (<i>sl</i>) <i>mama</i>
TEA (2005: 81)	eit – (<i>sl</i>) <i>bag</i>

Eit in Estonian refers to an elderly lady, mostly used in a positive context. However, it has a slang variant that refers to an old lady in a condescending, near-derogatory manner (EKSS 2009) (Loog 1991).

Broad in English is an offensive term used to describe a woman (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). Mama is an English slang term, more commonly used in American English, that refers to an exceptionally attractive woman. (Cambridge dictionary 2024). Bag is an English is a slang term used to insultingly refer to a woman (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). Although here, the EVD and TEAD both provided near synonyms as translations for the source language entry, *broad* and *bag* respectively, the EVD also provided a translation with a completely opposite connotation that is not present in the TEAD.

Table 5. The same entry translated as slang in the TEAD, but not in the EVD.

Enn Veldi (2002: 148)	idu – <i>embryo (in botany), germ (in biology)</i>
TEA (2005: 148)	idu – <i>germ (in biology), sprout (in botany), dunce (sl)</i>

Idu in Estonian is generally used to refer to the first growth stage of a plant or, in biology, a microbe. However, the word has a slang meaning – the word can be used to show aggression towards someone by yelling, which indicates that the recipient is not that smart in a condescending manner (EKSS 2009). Both dictionaries provided non-slang translations in germ as in a microbe, alongside sprout and, which are absolute synonyms since both refer to the first stage of a plant (Cambridge Dictionary 2024).

However, the TEAD additionally provided an accurate slang translation in dunce, which in English is a slang word that refers to someone who is either slow to learn or lacking in intelligence (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). The EVD, on the other hand, did not acknowledge the original entry as a slang word, which leaves the entry incomplete in regard to the information provided.

Table 6. The same entry translated as slang in EVD, but not in the TEAD.

Enn Veldi (2002: 113)	hangeldaja – <i>dealer, trafficker, (sl) fence</i>
TEA (2005: 117)	hangeldaja – <i>dealer, trafficker</i>

Hangeldaja in Estonian generally refers to a person who often deals with purchasing and selling goods that are often obtained through illegal methods, such as stealing or fraud. However, there are no available slang meanings for the original entry in Estonian (EKSS 2009). The two dictionaries both provided overlapping translations for this entry. Dealer in English refers to a person who either sells legal or illegal goods, the meaning is varied. Trafficker in English refers to a person who sells illegal goods, mostly illegal substances

(Cambridge Dictionary 2024). Neither translation carries over the exact meaning of the original entry, which is not the case for the slang translation provided by the EVD.

Fence in English, aside generally meaning a typically wooden structure that divides two areas, has a slang use, referring to a person who trades stolen goods (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). Here, the slang entry provided by the EVD gives better information about the original entry than the two non-slang translations provided by both dictionaries.

Table 7. A word used to translate the same entry acknowledged as slang in the EVD, but not in the TEAD.

Enn Veldi (2002: 578)	retsidivist – <i>(sl) crook, (sl) hoodlum</i>
TEA (2005: 533)	retsidivist – <i>punk, hoodlum</i>

Retsidivist in Estonian refers to a type of criminal, a repeat offender – a criminal who has committed more crimes after serving a sentence (EKSS 2009). The two dictionaries provide multiple unique translations. Crook in English refers to a person, most often a criminal, with the tendency to lie. Punk in English is a slang word referring to a young man involved in criminal activity (Cambridge Dictionary 2024).

Both dictionaries also translated the original entry with the word hoodlum, a word in English that refers to a person who is usually violent and also part of a criminal group (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). Here, neither unique translation provided an accurate enough description of the original entry. The overlapping translation also failed to convey the meaning of the original entry; however, the translation was also not marked as slang in both dictionaries. Hoodlum in English is not considered a slang word (Cambridge Dictionary 2024), making the information provided in the EVD not accurate.

One other aspect stood out – in this case, the EVD marked both its translations as slang, though neither word is usually considered slang in English. On the contrary, the TEAD

provided a translation that is considered slang in English (punk), though the translation was not marked as slang.

2.4 Discussion

The comparative analysis of slang translations and ways of translating in the EVD and the TEAD identified the main way of translating slang entries, synonymy. This was the dominant way slang entries were translated in both dictionaries, which in turn provided a stable framework, through which slang translations were analysed. During the analysis, it was discovered that the EVD and TEAD had very little similarities in regard to slang translations. The two dictionaries, at times, provided similar translations to some overlapping entries. Although various differences, such as slang entries translated with words conveying different meanings, as well as which words were considered slang and which were not, made the dictionaries contrast one another in most cases.

As stated by Adamska-Salaciak (2014: 24), synonymy translation of slang is seemingly an impossible task. However, the analysis contrasts this point by showcasing that, while synonymy translation could at most times result in confusion on the context and connotation(s) of the source language entries, there were still many exceptional cases where the correlation between the entries of the two languages stayed intact. These cases provided the reader with the same meaning(s) and connotation(s) of the entries in both languages, proving that this way of translation is not as unviable as the author has claimed it to be.

The analysis revealed that the varied approaches to slang in the EVD and the TEAD resulted in many differences in slang translations. The most notable difference discovered were instances where both dictionaries considered the same source entries as slang, though provided said entries with different slang translations that at times provided a contrasting connotation that did not exist for the original entry. Considering this, the analysis agrees

with Braçaj (2015: 476), who expressed that slang words have very specific implications which should be approached with caution. Namely, the analysis discovered that when providing a source entry with multiple equivalents that express different meanings connotations, the perception of the original entry may become blurry, since it is not always certain whether the original entry holds all the same connotations and meanings as provided by the translations.

Another major difference between the EVD and the TEAD that was uncovered was the difference in approaches when marking words as slang. As claimed by Haas (1962: 174), equal representation of both languages in a bilingual dictionary is very important. This point was proven in the analysis, where it was found that in many cases, a word that was marked and translated as slang in one of the dictionaries, was not translated as such in the other dictionary. This often resulted in either incorrect translations or one-sided translation that usually left out crucial information about the original entry. There were also instances where the words used to translate source entries were marked differently in the two dictionaries – the same word used to translate the same entry was marked as slang in one dictionary, yet not marked at all in the other dictionary. This also often resulted in inaccurate translations and the inability for the dictionaries to provide sufficient information about the original entries.

To sum up, while the EVD and the TEAD utilised a similar way of translating (synonymy), the translations themselves still differed in most cases. The differences stemmed from multiple aspects, such as the choice of equivalents to translate with and the approach to marking words as slang. The latter caused the most issues, namely incorrect translations and crucial information about the original entries left out. With these differences, the analysis showed how, albeit the EVD and TEAD were published at a similar time, the slang translations still mainly differed. The problems that stemmed from the different slang

translations further proved how slang translation can still be problematic in bilingual dictionaries. However, it is important to consider that the analysed bilingual dictionaries can still in some cases provide accurate slang translations, although consistency should not be expected when approaching these dictionaries.

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to analyse the translation of slang in two Estonian-English bilingual dictionaries – Enn Veldi’s Estonian-English dictionary and the TEA English-Estonian dictionary. A common way of translation utilised in the dictionaries was first established, through which the slang translations were analysed and compared. The research focused on the similarities and differences of slang translations, that stemmed from how overlapping source entries were translated, as well as how the slang was marked in the source entries by the authors.

The motivation behind this thesis was prompted by the intricate background and intriguing identity of translation in bilingual dictionaries, alongside the uncertain and unique nature of slang as a linguistic phenomenon. The literature review discussed and established the definition of slang alongside existing arguments towards how translation should be handled in bilingual dictionaries, resulting in the surfacing of different issues, such as the seemingly impossible task of presenting culture through informal vocabulary, as well as the importance of equality in the representation of languages in bilingual dictionaries.

For the analysis, two Estonian-English bilingual dictionaries were chosen – Enn Veldi’s Estonian-English dictionary, published in 2002, and the TEA Estonian-English dictionary, published in 2005. These dictionaries were not only analysed for the slang translations provided in them, but also how slang was approached by the authors, including slang marking in entries as well as the number of total slang entries in the dictionaries.

Both dictionaries provided slang as a headword in their lists of abbreviations using the abbreviation (*sl*). A total of 399 combined slang entries were found from the dictionaries, of which 29 overlapped. This meant that in the two dictionaries, 29 words were marked as slang in both. Upon analysing all the discovered translations, the main way of translating in both dictionaries, the synonymy translation, was established. With this method as the base, all slang entries in both dictionaries were analysed to find similarities and differences in the translations. Although some similar translations occurred, the two dictionaries mainly differed both in terms of how overlapping entries were translated as well as the differences stemming from how authors marked entries as slang, which differed greatly. This research illustrates the differences between translating slang in two Estonian-English bilingual dictionaries, but also raises the question of whether these differences between slang translations are similar in other bilingual dictionaries.

Overall, it is apparent that, albeit Enn Veldi's Estonian-English dictionary and the TEA Estonian-English dictionary share a primary way of translating slang, the two dictionaries approach slang in different ways, which poses the need for further research regarding slang as a linguistic phenomenon and slang translations.

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RESÜMEE

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Translating Slang: a Comparative Analysis of Enn Veldi's and TEA's Estonian-English Bilingual Dictionaries

Slängi tõlkimine: Enn Veldi ja TEA eesti-inglise kakskeelsete sõnaraamatute võrdlev analüüs

Bakalaureusetöö

2024

Lehekülgede arv: 27

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