


Translation Techniques of Humor and Wordplay in the Subtitles of Sergio Pablos' *Despicable Me* (2010)

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the translation analysis of exclamatory sentences said by the main character, Belly Conklin, in the novel *We'll Always Have Summer* by Jenny Han from English to Indonesian. This study aims to analyze and identify the expressions of emotion in exclamatory sentences based on Charles Darwin's theory (1872) of expressions of emotion and to analyze the cultural meaning and pragmatic meaning in the translation of exclamatory sentences based on Yule's theory (1996) of pragmatics. This study uses qualitative methods. The findings show that most of the exclamatory sentences said by the main character express the emotion of joy (54.55%), followed by anger (36.36%) and sadness (9.09%), with no emotion of fear or disgust found. In addition, most of the exclamatory sentences contain both cultural meaning and pragmatic meaning (54.55%), while the rest only contain pragmatic meaning (45.45%), and no sentences containing only cultural meaning were found. The implication of this study emphasizes the importance of understanding the context of the story, culture, and pragmatic aspects in the translation process, especially in literary works. Expressions of emotion can change in intensity in translation, and failure to understand the context can lead to errors in capturing the characters' intentions. Therefore, a thorough understanding of cultural context and pragmatics is necessary to produce accurate and meaningful translation. This study is also relevant in the translation of movie dialogues and other literary texts.

Keywords: *Expressions Of Emotion, Cultural Meaning, Pragmatic Meaning, We'll Always Have Summer*

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INTRODUCTION

Humor is one of the most complex text types to translate because it depends on wordplay, culture, and context. These elements often have no direct equivalent in the target language (Chiaro, 2010; Attardo, 2020; Vandaele, 2002). Translation is a multidisciplinary practice that combines language, culture, and communication to transfer meaning from the source to the target language (Munday, 2016; House, 2015; Olohan, 2021; Schäffner, 2021; Baker & Saldanha, 2019). Empirical studies such as Dwiastruti et al. (2018) and Pedersen (2017) show that translating cultural references in modern subtitling requires flexible techniques and context-based strategies. Molina & Albir (2002) explain that translation is a strategic process that includes various techniques to achieve equivalence in meaning, function, and style. In the audiovisual context, translation is not only about word equivalence, but also needs to adapt to the limitations of space, time, and multimodal display. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021) emphasise that subtitling humor requires creativity to fit screen constraints, while Dynel (2021) highlights the role of visual cues and sound in conveying jokes effectively. This challenge becomes even more complex when humor and wordplay are involved, as both rely heavily on social customs, sounds, and cultural references that often have no direct equivalent in the target language.

In animated films such as *Despicable Me* (2010), humor often cannot be translated word-for-word. To thoroughly understand the humor in this film, it is important to identify the five main types that appear. (1) Puns or wordplay arise from sound similarities and double meanings, such as in the sentence "I said dart gun, not fart gun," which translates to "Aku bilang senjata penenang, bukan senjata kentut," with a discursive creation technique to keep the funny effect even though the original sound is not retained. (2) Cultural references depend on the audience's understanding of certain cultural elements, such as in the sentence "We stole the Statue of Liberty! The small one from Las Vegas," which is translated literally, but can lose its humorous effect if the audience does not know that there is a replica of the statue in Las Vegas. (3) Nonsense humor arises from nonsensical utterances or expressions, such as "Bananaaaa!" by the Minions, which is not translated because the fun comes from the pronunciation and visual context, not from the meaning of the word. (4) Exaggeration is seen in exaggerated statements, such as "He's so fluffy, I'm gonna die!" which is adapted to "Dia imut banget, aku bisa mati," and still conveys exaggerated expressions in a style appropriate for Indonesian audiences. (5) A literal twist occurs when an absurd statement is uttered with great seriousness, such as 'We are going to steal the moon!', which is translated literally as 'Kita akan mencuri bulan!' and remains funny because it is supported by the visual context and storyline. Each type of humor presents its own challenges in translation and requires sensitivity to context and culture to ensure the comedic effect is preserved (Chiaro, 2010; Attardo, 2020; Zabalbeascoa, 2020; Pedersen, 2011; Thohiriyah, 2023). Similarly, Zabalbeascoa (1996) emphasizes that jokes in dubbed television comedies often require discursive creation to maintain a humorous effect.

To overcome these challenges, a flexible and contextual framework is needed. Molina & Albir (2002) developed a classification that includes 18 translation techniques, such as literal translation, adaptation, discursive creation, amplification, and modulation. This framework allows translators to choose the most appropriate strategy based on the type of humor encountered and the technical limitations of subtitling. In the audiovisual context, direct translation is often inadequate; humor arising from specific word choices or styles of language often requires creativity and cultural adaptation to remain acceptable and understandable to the audience (Venuti, 2012; Gambier, 2016; Gottlieb, 2005; Alwazna, 2022; Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2021). Therefore, a deep understanding of these techniques is essential for assessing the success of conveying humorous elements from the source language to the target language.

Recent studies in the Indonesian context show growing interest in how humor and wordplay are translated in audiovisual media. Thohiriyah (2023) analysed humor strategies in Indonesian subtitles and highlighted how audience reception influences translation choices. Rahmawati and Nababan (2020) examined cultural jokes in *Deadpool* subtitles, finding that adaptation and discursive creation are frequently used. Delabastita (1996) highlights how wordplay in subtitling demands translators combine literal strategies with creative solutions. Díaz-Cintas (2008) discusses how audiovisual translation evolved with the rise of digital streaming platforms like Netflix. Dewi & Nababan (2024) confirm that viewers' cultural knowledge strongly influences humor reception in translated animated films. These recent studies strengthen the relevance of analyzing humor and wordplay in Indonesian subtitle practice.

Previous studies have discussed strategies for translating humor in audiovisual texts, but most are limited to evaluating the final results without exploring the translator's decision-making process. Chiaro (2017) argues that failure to transfer the function of humor often leads to hidden meanings being misunderstood or lost. Zabalbeascoa (2005) also explains that cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target languages can create humor gaps due to the absence of appropriate equivalents. Research by Sevastiuk (2023) and Chiaro (2004) emphasises the importance of context in determining humor translation techniques. However, most of these studies have not specifically mapped the types of humor that emerge and their relationship to the techniques used. This indicates a research gap that needs to be bridged with a more systematic and data-driven approach.

This study aims to fill this gap by analysing 35 humorous data in the subtitles of the film *Despicable Me* (2010) using the classification of humor types from Chiaro (2010), Attardo (2020), and Pedersen (2011), as well as translation techniques from Molina & Albir (2002). Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study not only identifies the translation strategies employed but also evaluates the extent to which these techniques are able to preserve the humorous effect in the target language. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to audiovisual translation studies and provide practical insights for professional translators in selecting the most appropriate techniques for effectively transferring humor across languages.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the translation techniques used in the Indonesian subtitles of *Despicable Me* (2010) for humor and wordplay. The population comprises all humorous instances within the film's subtitles, with a purposive sampling method selecting 35 representative data points that exemplify various humor types such as puns, cultural references, nonsense humor, exaggeration, and literal twists. The primary instruments used were a detailed data sheet to record each instance, including the source and target utterances, humor category, and translation technique, alongside the official subtitles and the original English script. The data collection process involved scene-by-scene viewing of the film to identify and match humorous expressions, followed by categorization based on established humor theories (Chiaro, 2010; Attardo, 2020; Pedersen, 2011). Each instance was then analyzed to determine the translation technique applied, using Molina & Albir's (2002) classification, and to assess how effectively the humor was preserved in the translation, considering audiovisual cues and contextual factors. The analysis employed content analysis and descriptive methods to identify patterns in technique usage across humor types, providing insights into the appropriateness and success of different strategies in maintaining the comedic effect within the constraints of subtitle translation. Overall, this systematic approach offers a comprehensive understanding of how humor is translated in audiovisual media and the impact of various techniques on preserving the intended humor for Indonesian audiences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings to answer the research questions on what translation techniques were used and how effective they were in preserving the humor and wordplay in the subtitles of *Despicable Me* (2010). The classification of humor types refers to the theories of Attardo (2020), Chiaro (2010), Pedersen (2011), and Dynel (2011). A total of 35 identified humor data were categorized into five main types based on this classification.

The distribution of humor and wordplay types is presented based on frequency of occurrence, from most to least frequent, as shown in the following table:

Table 1 Types of Humor and Wordplay in *Despicable Me* (2010) by Attardo (2020), Chiaro (2010), Pedersen (2011), and Dynel (2011)

No.	Type of Humor/Wordplay	Number of Instances	Percentage
1	Pun	12	34.3%
2	Cultural References	8	22.9%
3	Nonsense Humor	7	20.0%
4	Exaggeration	5	14.3%
5	Literal Twist	3	8.5%
Total		35	100%

The subtitles contain 35 instances of humor. The most common type is pun or wordplay (12 cases, 34.3%), which relies on sound and meaning similarities (Attardo, 2020). This type of humor relies on similarities in sound and meaning, as explained by Attardo (2020). Zabalbeascoa (1996) analysed how jokes in dubbed television comedies require discursive creation to maintain the humorous effect, which is also seen in examples from *Madagascar 3*. Cultural references rank second with 8 instances (22.9%), referring to specific cultural elements

familiar to the source language audience, such as references to the Las Vegas version of the Statue of Liberty. Nonsense humor is found in 7 instances (20.0%) and is often uttered by the Minion character, such as 'Bananaaa!', which is funny because of the way it is pronounced, not because of its meaning. Exaggeration was found in 5 data points (14.3%), such as in the sentence "He's so fluffy, I'm gonna die!" which was translated as "Dia imut banget, aku bisa mati." The least common type of humor is a literal twist, found in 3 data points (8.5%), such as in the sentence "We are going to steal the moon!" which is translated literally as "Kita akan mencuri bulan!" but remains funny due to the visual context.

The humor data were analysed to identify which translation techniques were used to transfer each type from English (SL) to Indonesian (TL). The classification of translation techniques refers to Molina & Albir's (2002) theory, which divides translation techniques into 18 categories. However, in this study, only six techniques were found to be most frequently used.

Table 2 Translation Techniques Used for Humor and Wordplay in *Despicable Me* (2010) by Molina & Albir (2002)

No.	Translation Techniques	Number of Instances	Percentage
1	Literal Translation	15	42.9%
2	Discursive Creation	7	20.0%
3	Adaptation	5	14.3%
4	Modulation	4	11.4%
5	Borrowing	2	5.7%
6	Amplification	2	5.7%
	Total	35	100%

Based on the table above, a total of 35 translation techniques were used to convey humor and wordplay in the subtitles of the film *Despicable Me* (2010). The most frequently used technique was literal translation, used 15 times (42.9%). This finding indicates a tendency for translators to use direct equivalents from the source language. However, as explained by Molina & Albir (2002), literal techniques are often ineffective in the context of culturally based humor or sound ambiguity, as they can eliminate the desired comedic effect.

The discursive creation technique was used 7 times (20.0%) and served to create new humorous expressions in the target language that did not have direct equivalents, such as the translation of "fart gun" to "senjata kentut." The adaptation technique was applied 5 times (14.3%) to adjust expressions to align with the style and cultural norms of the Indonesian language. The modulation technique appeared in 4 data (11.4%) by changing the perspective or way of conveying meaning. Meanwhile, the borrowing and amplification techniques were each used 2 times (5.7%), namely to retain distinctive sound elements (such as "Bananaaa!") and add information to make the humorous meaning easier for the target audience to understand.

These findings indicate that although literal techniques dominate, translators also utilise various other techniques to preserve meaning, humor, and cultural acceptability in subtitles. These results align with Thohiriyah's (2023) opinion, which emphasises that the success of humor translation depends not only on word equivalence but also on the ability to maintain the audience's emotional response.

Discussion

After presenting the findings on the types and distribution of humor and the translation techniques used in the subtitles of the film *Despicable Me* (2010), this section further discusses how each type of humor functions in the interactions between characters and the extent to which the comedic effect of the source language can be retained in the Indonesian translation. Referring to Molina & Albir's (2002) theory on translation techniques and the categories of humor from Attardo (2020), Chiaro (2010), and Pedersen (2011), this discussion outlines representative examples of each category to evaluate the effectiveness of translation strategies in preserving the message and nuances of humor in an audiovisual context.

Humor and Wordplay

To understand how humor and wordplay function in the film *Despicable Me* (2010), this discussion analyzes selected examples categorized into five main types based on the theories

of Attardo (2020), Chiaro (2010), Pedersen (2011), and Dynel (2011). The primary focus is not only on frequency but also on the function of humor within the narrative context, character interactions, and how these comedic elements are translated into Indonesian through subtitles. Each type of humor is discussed by highlighting the translation techniques used, its visual and verbal context, and to what extent its comedic effect can be maintained in the translated text, referencing the classification of techniques by Molina & Albir (2002).

Pun (Wordplay)

Puns or wordplay are the most common type of humor found in the film *Despicable Me* (2010), accounting for 12 instances (34.3%). According to Attardo (2020), puns arise from linguistic ambiguity that exploits similarities in sound or double meanings in an expression. In this film, puns are used by characters such as Gru and Dr. Nefario to create spontaneous comic effects. The main challenge in translating puns is how to maintain their comedic effect in the target language.

Extract 1: (00:08:53)

SL: "I said dart gun, not fart gun."

TL : "Aku bilang senjata penenang, bukan senjata kentut."

BT : "I said tranquilizer gun, not fart gun."

In this scene, Gru corrects a Minion's mistake when he says "dart gun," but it is misheard as "fart gun." The pun appears because the words sound alike in English, but this effect cannot be kept directly in Indonesian. The translator uses the discursive creation technique (Molina & Albir, 2002) by changing "dart gun" to "senjata penenang" and pairing it with "senjata kentut." Although the similar sound is lost, the contrast between a serious weapon and a silly idea still makes the line funny. This shows that discursive creation is helpful for puns that cannot be translated literally, as it keeps the playful effect clear for Indonesian viewers.

Extract 2 (00:21:10–00:21:13)

SL: "Oh no, I meant cookie bots. Boogie bots are part of my dance revolution plan."

TL: Oh tidak, maksudku robot kue. Robot joget itu bagian dari rencana revolusi dancemu.

BT: "Oh no, I meant cookie robots. Dancing robots are part of your dance revolution plan."

In this scene, Dr. Nefario says "cookie bots" but mixes it up with "boogie bots," which sound similar but mean different things. The joke comes from the mix-up that switches between food and dancing robots. The translator uses discursive creation by choosing "robot kue" and "robot joget" to rebuild the wordplay in Indonesian. This keeps the funny contrast clear, even though the original sound similarity cannot be copied exactly. According to Molina & Albir (2002), discursive creation is useful when a literal translation would not keep the humor, so inventing a new version helps maintain the playful effect for Indonesian viewers.

Extract 3 (00:37:08–00:37:10)

SL: "Gelato!"

TL: "Gelato!"

BT: "Gelato!"

In this short scene, a Minion randomly shouts "Gelato!" in an exaggerated tone, adding absurdity because the word is unrelated to the situation. The humor comes from the suddenness and silly pronunciation, not from meaning. The translator keeps the original word unchanged using the borrowing technique (Molina & Albir, 2002). This is appropriate because the term is universally understood, and the comedy relies on sound and expression. Keeping 'Gelato!' preserves the Minion's nonsense style without unnecessary modification.

Cultural References

Cultural reference is the second most common type of humor found in this film, with 8 data (22.9%). According to Pedersen (2011), cultural references include elements that can only be understood by the audience if they are familiar with the culture of origin, such as famous place names, popular figures, or typical habits of a society. Humor arises from irony, cultural contrast, or the use of characters that have a certain image.

Extract 4 (00:17:55-00:18:00)

SL: "We stole the Statue of Liberty! The small one from Las Vegas."

TL: "Kami mencuri Patung Liberty! Yang kecil dari Las Vegas."

BT: "We stole the Statue of Liberty! The small one from Las Vegas."

In this scene, Gru boasts about his past crimes to impress the girls, saying they stole the Statue of Liberty, but humorously adds that it was only the small replica in Las Vegas. The humor depends on the audience recognising the contrast between the famous monument and its imitation. The translator uses a literal translation, which is appropriate (Molina & Albir, 2002) because the joke is clear with visual support. However, some Indonesian viewers may not realise there is a replica in Las Vegas, so the irony could be clearer if amplification were added, such as "Yang tiruan di Las Vegas." Still, the visual clue helps maintain the intended joke.

Extract 5 (00:26:41-00:26:45)

SL: "I watched Oprah once. She said you should do what you love."

TL: "Aku pernah nonton Oprah. Dia bilang kita harus melakukan apa yang kita sukai."

BT: "I once watched Oprah. She said we should do what we love."

In this scene, Gru tries to sound wise by quoting Oprah, a famous American TV host known for inspirational advice. The humor comes from the contrast: Gru, a villain, pretends to be motivated by a wholesome talk show line. The translator uses a literal translation: "Aku pernah nonton Oprah. Dia bilang kita harus melakukan apa yang kita sukai." This is suitable because Indonesian audiences are generally familiar with Oprah as a pop culture icon. According to Molina & Albir (2002), literal translation works well when the reference is widely recognised and does not need further explanation. In this case, the quote's irony is clear from Gru's tone, so no additional adaptation is necessary.

Extract 6 (00:38:20-00:38:23)

SL: "Does this count as annoying?"

TL: "Apakah ini termasuk menyebalkan?"

BT: "Does this count as annoying?"

In this scene, Agnes innocently asks Gru, "Does this count as annoying?" after making repetitive, annoying noises. The humor arises from irony: the audience knows she is definitely being annoying, but her flat expression and sweet tone create a funny contrast. The subtitle uses a literal translation: "Apakah ini termasuk menyebalkan?" which matches the original line well. According to Molina & Albir (2002), literal translation is appropriate here because the meaning is clear. However, the ironic effect relies heavily on Agnes's voice and expression, so the text alone might not fully deliver the joke. An alternative could be modulation, like "Aku nyebelin ya?" or amplification with "Hehe, aku nyebelin nggak?" to highlight Agnes's innocent but mischievous tone. This shows that for irony-based humor, non-verbal elements play an important role in making sure the joke is understood by the audience.

In general, the techniques used in translating cultural references are borrowing and literal translation. Their effectiveness depends on the audience's level of familiarity with the cultural elements being referred to. In certain cases, additional techniques such as amplification or modulation can maintain the humor effect more optimally. This aligns with Pedersen's (2011) theory that cultural references require adaptation, while Molina & Albir (2002) stress context-oriented strategies. This result is similar to Pedersen (2011), who explains that cultural references in subtitles often require careful adaptation to ensure audience understanding.

Nonsense Humor

Nonsense humor is the third most common type of humor in *Despicable Me* (2010), with 7 data points or 20.0% of the total. According to Chiaro (2010), this type of humor is characterized by utterances that have no clear meaning, sound random or nonsensical, but are still funny because they are supported by visual expressions, pronunciation, and absurd situations. In this film, nonsense humor is mostly spoken by the Minions, who often speak with strange or meaningless words, but it creates a distinctive comical effect. The main

challenge in translating this type of humor lies in how to maintain the cuteness that arises not from the meaning of the words, but from the sound, rhythm, and visual context of the characters. This type of humor receives special attention because it is a form of expression unique to the Minions, which often has no literal meaning but still creates a comical audiovisual effect. Therefore, translators need to consider audiovisual support elements to effectively convey the humor in Indonesian subtitles.

Extract 7 (00:23:34–00:23:37)

SL: "Bananaaaa!"

TL: "Bananaaaa!"

BT: "Bananaaaa!"

In this scene, a Minion suddenly shouts "Bananaaaa!" in an exaggerated tone while chasing the fruit, creating nonsense humor through absurd repetition and funny pronunciation. The word itself is not humorous in meaning, but becomes funny through the Minion's voice and over-the-top delivery. The translator keeps the original word unchanged using the borrowing technique (Molina & Albir, 2002), which is appropriate because 'banana' is a universal word that does not need translation. The nonsense effect relies entirely on sound and performance, so retaining it exactly preserves the intended joke for Indonesian viewers without distortion.

Extract 8 (00:10:50–00:10:52)

SL: "Bee-do! Bee-do! Bee-do!"

TL: "Bee-do! Bee-do! Bee-do!"

BT: "Bee-do! Bee-do! Bee-do!"

In this scene, a Minion runs around making a loud "Bee-do!" siren sound while pretending to be an emergency vehicle. The humor is created through the absurdity of the repeated nonsense sound and the Minion's serious attitude while doing it. Since the word "Bee-do" has no real meaning, the translator keeps it unchanged using borrowing (Molina & Albir, 2002). This decision works well because the comedic effect depends entirely on sound, repetition, and visual cues, not on literal meaning. Keeping "Bee-do!" intact ensures Indonesian viewers enjoy the same playful and chaotic effect as in the original.

Extract 9 (00:48:11–00:48:14)

SL: "Poulet tikka masala!"

TL: "Poulet tikka masala!"

BT: "Poulet tikka masala!"

In this scene, a Minion randomly shouts "Poulet tikka masala!" which is the name of an Indian chicken dish, completely unrelated to what is happening. The nonsense effect appears because the phrase is used out of context, turning a normal food name into something absurd and funny when shouted. The translator keeps the phrase unchanged through borrowing (Molina & Albir, 2002), which is appropriate because the foreign term itself sounds humorous when delivered by the Minion in a playful tone. Keeping it as "Poulet tikka masala!" lets Indonesian viewers experience the same strange and silly vibe intended by the original scene.

Exaggeration

Exaggeration is the fourth most frequent type of humor in *Despicable Me* (2010), with 5 data (14.3%). According to Dynel (2011), this type of humor arises from statements that are exaggerated to the extreme to become unrealistic, but still acceptable in a comedic context. In this movie, exaggeration often arises from child characters such as Agnes and Edith, who express admiration or excitement with great exaggeration. The translation techniques used include literal, adaptation, and modulation, depending on the context and language style used by the characters.

Extract 10 (00:41:12–00:41:15)

SL: "He's so fluffy, I'm gonna die!"

TL: "Dia imut banget, aku bisa mati!"

BT: "He's so cute, I could die!"

In this scene, Agnes shouts, "He's so fluffy, I'm gonna die!" when she sees a big, fluffy unicorn toy. The humor comes from how she reacts too strongly to something cute, which

makes the line funny. The Indonesian subtitle translates this directly as “Dia imut banget, aku bisa mati!” using the literal technique (Molina & Albir, 2002). This keeps the meaning clear, and the funny effect stays because the audience can see Agnes’s expression and hear her excited tone. No change is needed because the visuals and voice already help the subtitle deliver the joke well.

Extract 11 (00:19:05–00:19:08)

SL: “This is the best day of my life.”

TL: Ini hari terbaik dalam hidupku.

BT: “This is the best day of my life.”

Agnes’s simple line shows an extreme expression to convey her overwhelming happiness. The sentence uses overstatement to highlight how delighted she feels. The translator chose a literal translation, transferring each word directly without changing the structure or message.

BT shows identical results to SL, indicating that the denotative meaning remains intact. However, as Chiaro (2010) explains, this type of humor is highly dependent on visual support and intonation. If these audiovisual elements are not captured by the audience, then the comic effect may be weakened even though the sentence structure has not changed. This supports Attardo's (2020) view that exaggeration works when context and performance support the comic effect.

Literal Twist

Literal twists are the least common type of humor found in the film *Despicable Me* (2010), appearing in 3 instances (8.5%). According to Dynel (2011), literal twists occur when a statement that should be understood as absurd is instead conveyed or interpreted literally, creating a comical effect due to the discrepancy between meaning and logic. In this film, this type of humor primarily emerges through the characters' dialogue, where they state absurd things in a serious tone. The technique used is typically literal translation, as the humor stems from the literal meaning, which inherently sounds unconventional.

Extract 12 (00:20:07–00:20:11)

SL: “We are going to steal the moon!”

TL: “Kita akan mencuri bulan!”

BT: “We are going to steal the moon!”

In this scene, Gru announces his plan by saying, “We are going to steal the moon!” The humor appears because the statement is so impossible that it sounds absurd when said seriously. The subtitle translates it directly as “Kita akan mencuri bulan!” using the literal technique (Molina & Albir, 2002). This is suitable because the line’s funny effect depends on the contrast between Gru’s serious tone and the absurd idea. The literal translation works well since the audience can see and hear Gru’s confident delivery, which keeps the joke clear without needing any changes.

Extract 13 (00:18:47–00:18:50)

SL: “I go to sleep every night with a gun under my pillow.”

TL: “Aku tidur setiap malam dengan pistol di bawah bantal.”

BT: “I sleep every night with a gun under my pillow.”

In this scene, Vector says, “I go to sleep every night with a gun under my pillow.” The humor comes from the unexpected idea that someone would sleep with a weapon so casually, which sounds absurd but matches Vector’s over-the-top personality. The subtitle keeps this line in a literal form: “Aku tidur setiap malam dengan pistol di bawah bantal.” According to Molina & Albir (2002), a literal translation is suitable here because the meaning is clear and the absurd twist is already obvious through the context and Vector’s tone. No change is needed because the line works well with the visuals and the character’s attitude.

Extract 14 (00:47:33–00:47:36)

SL: “I’ve made a fart gun. Although I don’t see why.”

TL: “Aku membuat senjata kentut. Tapi aku tidak tahu kenapa.”

BT: “I made a fart gun. But I don’t know why.”

In this scene, Dr. Nefario says, "I've made a fart gun. Although I don't see why." The humor appears because building a weapon like a fart gun is silly and pointless, which sounds funny when he says it so seriously. The subtitle translates this directly as "Aku membuat senjata kentut. Tapi aku tidak tahu kenapa." using the literal technique (Molina & Albir, 2002). This works well because the joke comes from the absurd idea itself, so the meaning stays clear and the funny effect remains obvious through the character's deadpan delivery. No adaptation is needed because the visuals and tone already support the line's humor.

Translation Techniques

Translation techniques play an important role in transferring humor and wordplay elements from the source language to the target language, especially in audiovisual contexts such as movie subtitles. When translating humor, two important techniques that often arise are discursive creation and amplification. Discursive creation is particularly useful for translating puns or wordplay that cannot be retained by creating a new version that still produces a humorous effect. Meanwhile, amplification is used to add a little explanation so that the humor remains understandable to Indonesian audiences, especially when it comes to foreign cultures or uncommon references (Molina & Albir, 2002). Humor, with its dependence on context, wordplay, and cultural nuances, poses its own challenges for translators who must not only convey meaning but also maintain the humorous effect intended by the scriptwriter (Chiaro, 2010; Attardo, 2020). The choice of translation technique directly affects how the target audience understands the intention and effect of humor in the translated text. For this reason, Molina & Albir's (2002) classification of translation techniques is a relevant and frequently used framework in the analysis of humor translation.

This study identified a total of 35 occurrences of humor and wordplay in the Indonesian subtitles of the film. All data points were then analysed based on the translation techniques used, according to Molina & Albir's (2002) classification of 18 techniques.

Literal Translation

Literal translation is the most frequently used technique in the translation of subtitles for the film *Despicable Me* (2010), accounting for 15 out of 35 data points (42.9%). This technique involves translating directly from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) without making many changes to the structure or meaning of the sentence (Baker, 2012). Therefore, the form and word order in the translation tend to be very similar to the original version.

This technique is commonly found in types of humor such as exaggeration and literal twist. It reflects the translator's tendency to choose a safe and direct approach, especially in the context of subtitles that are limited by duration and character count (Vandaele, 2002).

However, the application of literal translation in humor risks causing a shift in meaning or loss of comedic effect, as humor often depends on context, sound, or cultural implications that are not explicitly stated in the text.

Extract 1 (00:19:05–00:19:08)

SL: "This is the best day of my life."

TL: "Ini hari terbaik dalam hidupku."

BT: "This is the best day of my life."

In this excerpt, Agnes utters the sentence after experiencing a pleasant moment. The comic tone is driven by how an everyday situation is portrayed with exaggerated enthusiasm by a child character. The translation is literal with no change in structure or meaning. Although the translation is accurate in terms of meaning, the comical effect of this exaggerated expression depends heavily on Agnes' high intonation and facial expressions. The almost identical BT shows that the meaning is maintained, but without the audiovisual context, the humorous response from the audience may be diminished due to the loss of performative elements.

Extract 2 (00:20:07–00:20:11)

SL: "We are going to steal the moon!"

TL: "Kita akan mencuri bulan!"

BT: "We are going to steal the moon!"

In this quote, Gru states his absurd plan in a serious tone, which creates a comical effect because it makes no sense. Literal techniques are used directly without adjusting the style of expression. The humorous effect is still conveyed because the visual context-including Gru's serious expression and the evil scientist's narration-reinforces the absurdity of his speech. The identical BT shows a fixed structure, but once again, the success of humor in TL relies heavily on audiovisual support, not text alone.

Discursive Creation

Discursive creation is a translation technique used to create an equivalent that is entirely new, unexpected, and can only be understood in a certain context, according to Molina & Albir (2002). This technique was found 7 times (20.0%) in the Despicable Me (2010) subtitle data. This technique is commonly used to transfer types of humor such as puns and wordplay that are difficult to translate literally because they involve sound play, ambiguity of meaning, or specific cultural context.

This technique gives the translator the freedom to find new forms of humor in the target language that can produce a comical effect similar to the original version. Discursive creation is especially useful when the joke element in the source language does not have a direct equivalent, or if translated literally, it loses its humorous element.

Extract 3 (00:12:42 - 00:12:46)

SL: "I said dart gun, not fart gun."

TL: "Aku bilang senjata penenang, bukan senjata kentut."

BT: "I said tranquilizer gun, not fart gun."

In this quote, Gru corrects a misunderstanding between the word's 'dart' and 'fart.' The humor arises from the wordplay between two terms that sound similar but have very different meanings, one is technical and professional, while the other is crude and funny. If translated literally as 'senjata panah,' the wordplay with 'senjata kentut' would be lost because in Indonesian, the words "panah" and 'kentut' do not sound similar.

The translator chose to use the discursive creation technique by creating a new equivalent, 'senjata penenang,' which, although it does not sound similar to 'kentut,' still makes sense in the context of the sentence and allows for contrast with 'senjata kentut.' The back translation of this translation becomes 'tranquilizer gun,' which no longer contains the sound play but still conveys the logical meaning and produces a comparable humorous effect in the target culture.

This technique shows the translator's flexibility and creativity in maintaining the humor function. Although the sound play in the source language cannot be maintained, the comedic effect is still adapted to the cultural context of the Indonesian audience. This is in line with Thohiriyah's (2023) opinion that the success of humor translation largely depends on the translator's sensitivity to the cultural context and ability to make creative adaptations.

Extract 4 (00:21:10-00:21:13)

SL: "Oh no, I mean the cookie bots. Boogie bots are part of my dance revolution plan."

TL: "Oh tidak, maksudku robot kue. Robot joget itu bagian dari rencana revolusi dancemu."

BT: "Oh no, I mean the cookie robots. Dancing robots are part of your dance revolution plan."

In this quote, the humor arises from the mispronunciation of 'cookie bots' and 'boogie bots,' which sound similar. Since no equivalent in Indonesian can maintain the similarity in sound, the translator created a new pair of terms, 'robot kue' and 'robot joget.' Although it does not replicate the wordplay of the original, this translation still creates a clear contrast in meaning and context, thereby preserving the humorous effect in the translated version.

The use of discursive creation here reflects a functional approach, where preservation of the humor function takes precedence over maintaining the sound form. BT shows a shift in form but a consistent effect: a play between two similar terms with very different purposes. With this creative adaptation, the translator ensures that the humorous effect remains acceptable and comprehensible to the Indonesian audience.

Adaptation

Adaptation is a translation technique used when an element in the source language does not have an equivalent cultural counterpart in the target language, requiring adjustment to preserve its meaning and effect according to Molina & Albir (2002). This technique was used 5 times (14.3%) in the subtitle data for *Despicable Me* (2010), particularly in types of humor such as exaggeration and puns that contain culturally specific expressions.

This technique allows translators to replace language elements or sentence structures with other forms that are more appropriate and familiar in the target culture, without losing the core meaning or communication purpose of the source language.

Extract 5 (00:41:12-00:41:15)

SL: "He's so fluffy, I'm gonna die!"

TL: "Dia imut banget, aku bisa mati!"

BT: "He's so cute, I could die!"

This back translation shows that the exaggerated expression is adjusted naturally, so Indonesian viewers still feel Agnes's excitement.

In this quote, Agnes expresses her exaggerated joy while hugging a unicorn doll. The phrase 'so fluffy' is translated as 'imut banget' (really cute), which, although not a direct equivalent, still manages to convey the same intensity of emotion. The expression 'imut banget' feels more natural in the context of Indonesian and retains its playful meaning.

The adaptation technique is used to adjust the expression "so fluffy" to sound funny and acceptable to Indonesian audiences. The BT results show a change in the form of the expression, but the exaggerated message to be conveyed is still preserved. This demonstrates the success of the adaptation technique in transferring humor based on local cultural perceptions. This adaptation also reflects the translator's sensitivity to the context of the character (children), who tend to express emotions excessively in a funny and adorable way.

Modulation

Modulation is a translation technique that changes the perspective or manner of conveying meaning from the source language into a more natural and appropriate form in the target language, according to Molina & Albir (2002). In the subtitles of *Despicable Me* (2010), this technique was found 4 times (11.4%), particularly in humor involving exaggeration and cultural references that required adjustments to the manner of expression to better suit the language habits of Indonesian viewers.

Modulation is used to avoid the stiffness of literal translation and convey the message in a style that is more easily accepted by the audience. This technique allows the translator to change the perspective of the delivery without losing the meaning or humor intended in the original sentence.

Extract 6 (00:45:20-00:45:23)

SL: "That's wicked cool!"

TL: "Itu keren banget!"

BT: "That's very cool!"

In this quote, the expression 'wicked cool' is slang in American English used to emphasise the excessive coolness of something. If translated literally as 'itu jahat keren,' the meaning of excessive praise and the humorous effect would be lost. Therefore, the translator uses modulation techniques by changing the emphatic expression 'wicked' to 'banget' in Indonesian.

BT indicates a shift from the original form to an expressive form in the TL that retains the function of excessive praise. By altering the phrase without losing the strong tone of praise, the translator maintains the intensity of expression while preserving the humorous effect of the sentence. This demonstrates that modulation techniques are effective in handling expressions that are difficult or less relevant when translated directly into the Indonesian cultural context.

Modulation in this example serves not only to adjust the language but also to maintain the emotional color in the dialogue, which conveys surprise or admiration in a humorous

form. Therefore, this technique is effective in the context of movie subtitles, where the reader only has a short time to understand the meaning while capturing the humorous nuances.

Borrowing

Borrowing is a translation technique that retains terms from the source language directly into the target language without changing their form, according to Molina & Albir (2002). This technique is used when the term has a cultural effect or specific characteristics that cannot be replaced in the target language, especially in audiovisual contexts that rely on sound and expression. In the film *Despicable Me* (2010), this technique was used three times (8.5%), particularly in the type of nonsense humor spoken by the Minion character.

Extract 7 (00:23:34-00:23:37)

SL: "Bananaaaa!"

TL: "Bananaaaa!"

BT: "Bananaaaa!"

In this quote, Minion says "bananaaaa" funnily and exaggeratedly. The word is retained in its original form because the humorous effect arises from the way it is pronounced, not from its meaning. By maintaining the original form, the translator uses a pure borrowing technique. BT results show total similarity between SL and TL, indicating that this technique is effective in preserving the performative elements that are the source of humor.

Extract 8 (00:10:50-00:10:52)

SL: "Bee-do! Bee-do! Bee-do!"

TL: "Bee-do! Bee-do! Bee-do!"

BT: "Bee-do! Bee-do! Bee-do!"

Minions imitate the sound of a siren verbally by repeatedly saying 'bee-do'. This expression has no meaning in ordinary conversation, but it has a comical effect because of its unique sound. Therefore, the borrowing technique is used to preserve its original form and convey a comical effect to the audience. In an audiovisual context, the audience perceives the humor through the tone of voice and expressions of the Minions. This technique successfully preserves the distinctive characteristics of the Minion character, which is the main attraction of this film.

Extract 9 (00:48:11-00:48:14)

SL: "Poulet tikka masala!"

TL: "Poulet tikka masala!"

BT: "Poulet tikka masala!"

In this quote, Minion randomly mentions the name of an Indian food. Since this term is a globally recognized international food name, the translator chose to retain it through the borrowing technique. The strangeness and irrelevance of the context become a source of humor. By retaining this foreign term, the translator maintains the originality and absurdity that are the core of nonsense humor.

Overall, the borrowing technique in translating nonsense humor is very effective because form, sound, and expression are the keys to the effect of humor, not literal meaning. This is in line with Chiaro's (2010) opinion that in audiovisual translation, performative aspects are often more important than the meaning of words in maintaining the success of humor.

Amplification

Amplification is a translation technique used to add explicit information in the target language to clarify the meaning of the source language, according to Molina & Albir (2002). This technique was used in 2 data (5.7%) and is usually chosen when the utterance in the source language is too short or contains meanings that depend on cultural contexts that are not always directly understandable to the target language audience.

Amplification helps the target audience understand certain contexts or nuances that do not appear directly in the source text. This technique is important in humor translation because it allows the translator to insert additional elements to maintain the comic effect without changing the overall structure of the utterance.

Extract 10 (00:17:55-00:18:00)

SL: "We stole the Statue of Liberty! The small one from Las Vegas."

TL: "Kami mencuri Patung Liberty! Yang kecil dari Las Vegas."

BT: "We stole the Statue of Liberty! The small one from Las Vegas."

This quote displays ironic humor through the contrast between pride over the theft of a national icon and the fact that it is only a small replica.

In the TL, the translator translates literally but retains the phrase "from Las Vegas," which provides an important contextual explanation. Although it does not add any new words, the phrase "the small one from Las Vegas" in the Indonesian context can be considered as a form of implicit amplification, as it makes it clear that what was stolen was not the original statue. Viewers who don't know about the replica will still be able to understand the humor of the clue. This technique manages to maintain the ironic element by clarifying the context implicitly.

Thus, the amplification technique, although rarely used, still plays an important role in helping the audience understand culture-based humor or contextual irony. When additional information is needed to explain a situation, amplification is an effective alternative to keep the humor message clear. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2021) argue that modulation and amplification are effective for conveying culture-based jokes in subtitles.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that most exclamatory sentences spoken by the main character, Belly Conklin, in Jenny Han's *We'll Always Have Summer* express emotions primarily of joy (54.55%), followed by anger (36.36%) and sadness (9.09%). The analysis reveals that these expressions are often associated with both cultural and pragmatic meanings (54.55%), emphasizing their contextual and cultural dependence. The findings highlight the importance of understanding emotional, cultural, and pragmatic contexts to achieve accurate translation, as cultural differences can influence the expression and perception of emotions across languages. Nonetheless, the study has limitations, including a small sample size of eleven sentences, which may not fully capture the diversity of exclamatory expressions in the novel. Future research could expand the dataset to include more sentences and explore other emotional states such as fear and disgust, which were absent in this analysis. Additionally, further studies might investigate the translation of exclamatory sentences in different genres or media to provide a broader understanding of pragmatic and cultural considerations in translation practice.

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