

Decoding Humor Translation for *The Boss Baby* Movie

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Translating humor, especially, verbally expressed humor is, somehow, a challenge for every translator. This research generally aims at decoding the translation of verbally expressed humor by subtitling. Specifically, the research is designed to answer the two questions; firstly, what kind of humor existing in the movie and what translation techniques are used to translate the verbal humor into subtitle form. This research is going to be done by classifying the verbal humor in the Boss Baby movie based on Berger's classification (1993) in the very beginning process of the research. The next step is analyzing the translation techniques based on Molina and Albir's translation techniques (2002). By knowing the techniques used in translating the humor in the movie, this research is hoped to give a picture on what is the best technique to be used in translating humor. In the end of the analysis, the researcher will give suggestion for, if any, improper translation technique used in translating the humorous line that cause a less accurate translation. The data of the research will be taken from the newest movie of Disney, The Boss Baby (2017).

Keywords: verbal humor, translation techniques, subtitling

A. BACKGROUND

In everyday life, people often laugh at others' mistake, weirdness, or even at others' bad fortunes. Things that evoke laughter, which we all know as humor, cannot be separated from our everyday life. It is in line with Aristotle who define humor as an imitation of men worse than average; worse, however, not as regards any sort of fault, but only as regards on particular kind, the Ridiculous (Berger, 2013: 210). It implies that humor is actually a replication of human's life which is silly and absurd. These silliness and absurdity will evoke laughter when they are posed in a certain way of telling.

Chiaro (in Carra, 2009: 133) states that jokes travel badly. She states that anyone who has ever tried to translate an English joke into another language will know that it is no easy task. She adds that when a joke in a foreign language is translated into English, the results will tend to be disastrous too. This leads to a number of studies which are done to see how far a humorous text can be translated. Humor translation will be a success when it can arouse the same effect, readers' or audiences' laughter, in both languages. Because of this requirement, translating humor becomes prominent. Humor translators are not only obliged to deliver the intended meaning of the source language to the target language but they are also to make sure that the target language's audiences will laugh the way source language's audiences do.

B. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Humor is ability to smile and laugh and to make others do so (Walker in Radochova, 2013: 24). This statement clearly portrays what humor is that humor is one of so many reasons for people to smile or laugh. Theoretically, humor has been studied long ago and there has been many theories about it. Amongst so many theories on humor, one basis theory is incongruity. It is, basically, a theory which says that humor is the result of miss-matching between the expectation and the reality. Schopenhauer (in Berger, 2016: 490) defines incongruity as the following:

"The cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real object which have been thought through it in some relation and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity."

Literally, incongruity means inconsistent, odd, strange, absurd and not conforming. This means that humor will evoke laughter when the audiences are served with an odd, strange, inconsistent, absurd, and not conforming statement which is later called as punch line.

Later on, humor is classified into four categorizations under which all techniques of humor can be subsumed (Berger, 1993: 17):

- Language : the humor is verbal,
- Logic : the humor is ideational,
- Identity : the humor is existential, and
- Action : the humor is physical or non verbal.

Amongst the four only language category which covers all humors which include the use of language in producing humor. This kind of humor, which includes the use of language in its production, is called verbally expressed humor by Chiaro (2009). According to Ritchie (in Meirelles, 2010: 9) verbally expressed humor is the humor conveyed in language, as opposed to physical or visual humor, but not necessarily playing on the form of the language. It implies that verbally expressed humor is a way of telling humor without considering physical or visual gesture. It is the kind of humor which uses the uniqueness of language to evoke laughter.

Under verbally expressed humor category, there are some techniques of humor defined by Berger. Those techniques used in humor are infantilism, insult, allusion, bombast, exaggeration, facetiousness, irony, misunderstanding, puns/ wordplay, repartee, ridicule, sarcasm, and satire (Berger, 2013: 47). All of those techniques use language to express the funny punch line. In this research, humor line in the movie will be classified into those techniques to be further analyzed.

After classifying the humor found in the movie as the source of data, this research goes on to the classification of the translation techniques used in translating the funny lines into Indonesian subtitle. To have the translation done, a translator needs appropriate techniques to be used in translating the text. According to Molina and Albir (2002: 509), translation techniques are procedures to analyze and classify how translation equivalence works. This shows that translation techniques are very useful in solving the problem in translation. Molina and Albir also emphasize that translation techniques are those which directly deal with the product of translation. It is in line with this research as it tries to analyze the translation product of humor. Therefore, the 18 translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir will be used to analyzed the humor translation product. Those techniques are adaptation, amplification, borrowing, calque, compensation, descriptive, discursive creation, established equivalent, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition, and variation.

One important aspect that should be discussed too here is the fact that verbally expressed humor is going to be translated into Indonesia by way of subtitling it. It means that something uttered is transformed into its written form. There must be such adjustment for this kind of change. Subtitling is a term under audiovisual translation which is defined by Chiaro (in Meirelles, 2010: 7) as the inter-lingual transfer of verbal language when it is transmitted and accessed both visually and acoustically, usually but not necessarily, through some kind of electronic device. Audiovisual translation is not only covering subtitling but also dubbing. By subtitling, the translation should ideally reflect as closely as possible the structure of the original humorous sequence, taking into account contextual variables and using the appropriate language (Asimakoulas, 2004: 827). This means that subtitling is not an excuse to produce less accurate translation regarding the limited space and time. Therefore, translator should manage to produce a highly accurate translation for the subtitled version.

This research is descriptive qualitative in nature. According to Merriam (1988), qualitative research is descriptive because the researcher is interested in processing and understanding the material through words or pictures. Here, the data in the form of humorous utterances from the *Boss Baby* movie are processed and understood by the researcher to answer certain questions that have been design beforehand. This research is done by, first, finding the humorous utterances from the *Boss Baby* movie by using Berger's classification (1993) of humor techniques. The next step is listing the translation of each humorous utterance found earlier and defining whether there is a change in humor classification or not. The final step is sorting the humorous utterance and their translation based on the translation techniques used in translating them.

The data of the research, as what have been mentioned beforehand, is taken from a movie produced by Disney in 2017 under the title *Boss Baby*. This movie is a fantasy cartoon which tells story about a family having a new baby. This baby, unlike other normal babies, can talk and even act

as adult do. This baby is actually in a mission to find a new puppy that threatens the Baby Corps where he works. In his undercover mission, the only son of the family finds his true identity. To finish the mission and to leave the family, the son named Tim finally helps the baby to finish the baby's mission. In the end of the movie, after all challenges they get through, they finally decide to be brothers forever. This easy watching movie is not only full of positive messages but also packaged in a very interesting way completed with many humorous scenes.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Finding

This research finds 35 humorous scenes in the *Boss Baby* movie with 11 different techniques of humor according to Berger's classification. The result is as the following:

Table 1. Techniques of Humor Found in *Boss Baby* Movie

Techniques of Humor	Total	Percentage
Infantilism	3	8.6 %
Insults	2	5.7 %
Bombast	4	11.4 %
Exaggeration	6	17.1 %
Facetiousness	3	8.6 %
Irony	8	22.8 %
Misunderstanding	1	2.8 %
Puns/ Wordplay	1	2.8 %
Repartee	5	14.2 %
Ridicule	1	2.8 %
Sarcasm	1	2.8 %
Total	35	100 %

The table shows that most humorous utterances in the *Boss Baby* movie are created by irony technique by 22.8 %. It is then followed by Exaggeration technique by 17.1 %. After classifying the humorous utterances from the movie, the researcher finds what translation techniques are used to translate those utterances. Below is the table showing what translation techniques used in translating each techniques of humor.

Table 2. Translation Techniques in Translating Technique of Humor

Techniques of Humor	Translation Techniques
Infantilism	Calque, Established Equivalent, Linguistic Compression, Reduction
Insults	Amplification, Established Equivalent
Bombast	Borrowing, Calque, Established Equivalent, Linguistic Compression, Literal Translation, Reduction, Transposition, Variation
Exaggeration	Amplification, Established Equivalent, Linguistic Compression, Modulation, Reduction, Variation
Facetiousness	Borrowing, Calque, Established Equivalent, Generalization, Linguistic Compression, Reduction, Variation
Irony	Borrowing, Established Equivalent, Linguistic Compression, Reduction, Transposition, Variation
Misunderstanding	Borrowing, Established Equivalent
Puns/ Wordplay	Established Equivalent, Reduction
Repartee	Amplification, Borrowing, Calque, Established Equivalent, Linguistic Compression, Reduction, Variation

Ridicule	Established Equivalent, Linguistic Compression
Sarcasm	Compensation, Established Equivalent

After classifying what translation techniques used in translating each humorous technique, the researcher sees what translation techniques are mostly applied to translate humor in the *Boss Baby* movie. In the next section, then, the researcher will try to analyze why such translation technique is more dominant than the other in the case of translating humor for subtitling.

Table 3. Translation Techniques Used in Translating Humorous Utterances

Translation Techniques	Total	Percentage
Amplification	5	5.3 %
Borrowing	9	9.6 %
Calque	5	5.3 %
Compensation	1	1.1 %
Established Equivalent	30	32.0 %
Generalization	1	1.1 %
Linguistic Compression	13	13.8 %
Literal Translation	1	1.1 %
Modulation	2	2.1 %
Reduction	11	11.7 %
Transposition	3	3.2 %
Variation	13	13.8 %
Total	35	100 %

2. Discussion

Each discussion taken from the movie will be completed by the dialogue preceding the punch line or the funnies part that evoke laughter. It is useful to get the context and understand why it is funny. As it is shown by the finding of the research, most humor technique found in the movie is irony. Based on the description given by Cambridge Dictionary, irony is a situation in which was intended to have a particular result has the opposite or a very different result. In short, it can be said that irony portrays something which is totally different. The example from the movie is as the following:

ST:

T: *What was the big boss baby lady screaming about?*

B: *She's demanding actual result. Pet convention is in 2 days, and I've got nothing.*

B: *That's her! Don't answer it!*

B: ***Stress nap!***

TT:

T: Bos Besar Bayi Perempuan itu berteriak soal apa?

B: Dia menuntut hasil. Konvensi hewan peliharaan 2 hari lagi, aku belum dapat petunjuk.

B: Itu dia! Jangan dijawab!

B: **Tidur siang stres!**

The dialogue happens when the boss baby lady is angry because she has got no information from the baby. The baby who finds out that he will be fired if he is not giving any information is very panic when his boss on the phone. The irony is shown in his utterance "*stress nap!*" which is translated into "*tidur siang stres!*". It is said to be irony because in reality, normal people will find difficulty to have a nap in a stressful condition. This irony is the punch line of this scene that can evoke audience's laughter. According to the analysis, this punch line is translated by using established equivalent and naturalized borrowing. There is no change of humor technique in translating this punch line which means both ST and TT are irony. Therefore this translation can be said accurately translated.

The other example is in the following dialogue:

ST:

T: *That's your plan? You're gonna write a book report? That's so boring.*

B: *No, Templeton.*

Memos are for important things.

A memo can bring people together.

A memo can be a call to arms...

A manifesto, a poem.

A memo can change the world.

T: *Wow! When you explain it like that...*

It still sounds boring.

TT:

T: Itu rencanamu? Menulis laporan buku?

Membosankan

B: Tidak, Templeton.

Memo untuk hal-hal penting.

Memo dapat menyatukan orang.

Memo bisa menjadi panggilan untuk perang...

Sebuah manifesto, puisi.

Memo dapat mengubah dunia.

T: **Setelah dengar penjelasanmu...**

Tetap saja membosankan.

This humorous part pictures the conversation between Tim and the Baby when Tim asks what a memo is. The baby starts to explain in a rhetoric way. He explains a memo as if it is very important and contributed a lot to human's life. Audience must expect that Tim will respond in a serious way too or at least Tim shows his interest on what the baby talks about. But, what surprising is because Tim answers by saying "Wow! When you explain it like that... it still sounds boring". It seems that Tim has no interest at all on what memo is. It must be really different from what is expected by the baby after he explains it. Tim's answer is the punch line of this dialogue. It is translated by using reduction, linguistic compression, transposition, and established equivalent. This one is also translated accurately because there is no change of humor technique in the translation.

The second most used humor technique is exaggeration or the act of making something more noticeable than usual. In other words, exaggeration tries to amplify or to overstate something which is actually a usual thing. For example:

ST:

T : *Right from the start, he was yelling at people,*

Ordering everyone around.

One thing was clear. He was the boss

He set his office right smack dab in the middle of the house.

He conducted meetings.

Lots and lots of meetings.

Even in the middle of the night.

If things weren't done to his immediate satisfaction...

he had a fit

TT:

T : Dari awal, dia membentak orang.

Selalu menyuruh orang

Satu hal yang jelas. Dia adalah bos.

Dia mengatur kantornya persis di tengah rumah.

Dia mengadakan rapat.

Banyak rapat.

Bahkan pada tengah malam.

Jika dia tidak puas dengan sesuatu...

Dia marah besar.

Here, in the example, Tim is meeting his new baby brother for the very first time which is a very strange thing for him. This humor is set up by using exaggeration method. Different people must react differently when they meet a new baby brother or sister for the first time. This part of the movie can be an example of someone's reaction when the period of meeting new family member happen. But, to make it interesting and funny, the script writer adds something in the language so that it becomes more obvious than the other. Translation techniques that are used in this section are established equivalent, linguistic compression, variation, and modulation. Linguistic compression used in translating this part contributes positively in the accurateness of the translation because it does not delete the important message of the text. In addition, the translation of the part of the movie is considered accurate for there is no change of humor technique in the target text.

The other technique of humor that is also commonly used in this movie is repartee. Repartee means a quick and funny answer or remarks in conversation.

ST:

T: *We have to convince them that we're actual brothers.*

B: *Right.*

T: *That we...loooo...*

B: *Loathe?*

T: *No.*

B: *Like!*

T: *No. That we...*

T&B: *La, la, la...*

Le, le, le...

B: *No!*

No way. No. You don't mean...

T: *Love each other.*

B: *I just threw up a noodle and swallowed it.*

TT:

T: Kita harus yakinkan mereka bahwa kita bersaudara.

B: Benar

T: Bahwa kita saling...

B: Membenci?

T: Tidak.

B: Suka!

T: Tidak. Bahwa kita saling...

T&B: Sa, sa, sa...

Se, se, se...

B: Tidak

Tidak. Maksudmu...

T: sayang satu sama lain.

B: **Aku muntah mie dan melannya lagi.**

The above example is a conversation between Tim and the baby. They are planning to show their parents that they have been close to each other. So they plan to pretend they love each other already. But, when Tim is about to mention "love", it seems that this word is really taboo for them who are actually having a bad relationship. In the time Tim already mentions "love each other", the baby suddenly sneeze and the noodle he just ate get out of his nose. The funny remark that the baby make is "*I just threw up a noodle and swallowed it*". The baby's statement is actually showing how weird is idea of they are loving each other for him. It is translated into Indonesia as "aku muntah mie dan melannya lagi" by using variation, established equivalent and amplification techniques. The punch line of the scene is translated well. Unluckily, the context preceding the punch line is not accurately translated. The inaccurate part is when the baby tries to guess what word is going to be said by Tim which begins with the syllable "lo". He guesses the words "loathe" and "like" in which their first syllable is "lo". When it comes to the translation, the word "love" is replaced with "sayang". So, it will be better if the translation of the baby's guess begins with almost the same syllable, for instance, the word "sebal" to replace "membenci".

Bombast is the technique of humor which is also found in the movie for 11.4%. Bombast is defined by Cambridge Dictionary as language that is intentionally difficult, usually to make something sound more important than it is. Sophisticated words or expressions characterize this technique of humor. The example is as the following:

ST:

B: In every situation, I ask myself...

W-W-S-C-B-F-B-B-D?

"What would Super Colossal Big Fat Boss Baby Do?"

TT:

B: Dalam setiap situaasi, aku bertanya...

A-Y-A-D-B-B-B-S-K?

"Apa Yang Akan Dilakukan Bos Besar Bayi Super Kolosal?"

The baby is showing Tim his favorite figure in his company, Baby Corp. He tells Tim how he really wants to achieve promotion as his favorite figure did. So, he says, "*In every situation, I ask myself, W-W-S-C-B-F-B-B-D? What would super colossal big fat boss baby do?*" with eyes wide open, full of awe and pride. What makes it belongs to bombast technique is because the baby tries to sound bombastic by using such code just like a real spy. This part of humor is translated by using established equivalent and calque techniques. Calque technique used by the translator fits this scene perfectly as the temporally equivalent created to translate the expression "*W-W-S-C-B-F-B-B-D*" makes the translation on screen more understandable.

D. SUMMARY

Even though it is not an easy thing to translate humor, there must be a solution to translate them in an accurate way. The use of appropriate translation techniques can be the best solution for humor

translation. Besides, the translator must have enough understanding on the cultural background of the source text too. Here, in the translation of humor for the *Boss Baby* movie on screen, translation techniques play a very important role. For the 11 different techniques of humor, translator uses 12 out of 18 techniques proposed by Molina and Albir. The mostly use translation technique according to the finding is established equivalent. The use of this technique also contributes positively towards the translation accurateness. This shows that the source text is not using specific cultural terms in delivering the humor. That is why established equivalent is enough to transfer the meaning of the source text to the target text. In addition, there are also linguistic compression and reduction that are used by the translator. It is dealing with the fact that this translation is applied on screen, for subtitling. Therefore, for the sake of limited space and time, linguistic compression and reduction are used. Those two translation techniques are also effect positively towards the humor translation accurateness.

Finally, in translating all kinds of text, including humor, there is actually no translation technique which is considered most appropriate. One cannot judge that, for example, established equivalent is the best technique to translate humor. Instead, we have to analyze whether a technique contributes positively or negatively in translation. If it contributes positively, this technique is the best one for that part. If it is not, then, translator must find another way to translate the text. Thus, the best technique is the technique which is used in the best place and time.

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