Students' Strategies in Translating Humorous Text

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the problems that students experienced and strategies that students used in translating humorous text. The writer conducted this study using the theory of translation problems and strategies by Baker (2018). This writer conducted this study using a qualitative approach in which she collected and analyzed the data herself. The findings of this study support Baker's (2018) statement that some of the problems that may appear during translation process are culture-specific concept, the source language concept is not lexicalized in the target language, the source and target language make different distinction in meaning, the target language lacks a specific term (hyponym), differences in expressive meaning, and differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms. In addition, Text in the source language is translated in several different strategies namely translation by more general word, translation by more neutral or less expressive word, translation by paraphrase using related words, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation, and translation by omission. More studies involving other types of humor and other translation theories are recommended to create variations in this field.

Keywords: humorous text; translation problems; translation strategies

INTRODUCTION

In the era of Society 4.0, translation becomes a skill that is needed to be mastered. Its role is vital as it becomes a bridge that connects two different languages. Communication between two people from different countries will not be possible without translation. Translation, according to Newmark (2001), is "a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language" (p.7). Translation is hard because it demands language, culture, and knowledge proficiency. According to Coban (2015), translators are required to have cultural and linguistic competence and text competence. By having those skills, translators will be able to translate accurately and naturally.

Humor has become an essential part of human life. It has become a powerful communication tool that can unite people. Romero & Pearson (2004) defined humor as an amusing communication that connects, directs, and energizes an individual, group, or organization. In America especially, humor made its debut in a magazine called *Puck*, inspired by the British humor magazine called *Punch*. After the success of *Puck*, humor magazines began to appear everywhere in universities (Karstensen, 2018). This shows that humor is a great communication tool for entertaining people. However, since humor is available in many languages and it is hard for people from different countries to understand, it is necessary to translate humor from the source language into the target language. Köksal & Yürük, (2020) mentioned that translating humor is necessary because it helps transmit the joke through space and time to make it more understandable. In other

words, without the translation, people who do not know the language of the joke will not get the joke.

Unfortunately, even though translating humor is necessary, humor is difficult to translate. According to Lutviana & Mafulah (2017), one of the difficulties in translating humor is transferring the funny effects into the target language. Nowadays, humorous texts can be found anywhere and are available in many languages. Attardo (2020) described the humorous text as a text with the perlocutionary goal of being perceived as funny.

The writer uses humorous text because it is not only funny but also beneficial for both students and teachers. Schmitz (2002)argues that translating humor in translation classes has many benefits. First, humor allows educators and students to take a break from the formally assigned texts. Since humor mainly occurs at specific moments in social relations, it would be best for educators to maintain humorous textbooks for use at specific moments in the classroom (Schmitz, 2002). Second, humorous materials can add variety to the class, supply a change of pace, and reduce the pressure that numerous learners feel during the learning process (Schmitz, 2002). Last, humor can improve students' proficiency in translation (Schmitz, 2002).

The writer collected the data from thirty students in the English Department batch 2019. The writer shared a *Qualtricks* survey consisting of one humorous story, and a question about difficulties students experience when translating the humorous text. From that survey, the writer would like to know the problems students usually face when translating humorous texts and the strategies they use to solve those problems.

 The writer chose those thirty students in the English Department batch 2019 and batch 2020 because they have taken the Introduction to Translation course in which they learned how to translate the humor and are given the same humorous text. Therefore, the data will be homogeneous because it consists of English Department batch 2019 and 2020 students who will be given the same humorous text. Homogeneous data are taken from a single population (International Institute of Climate and Society, n.d.) According to Bornstein et al., (2013), homogeneous data have many advantages. One of them is that the cost of collecting homogeneous data is typically low. The writer used Baker's (2018) Translation Strategies theory to analyze the students' strategies for translating humorous text. The writer chooses Baker's (2018) Translation Strategies theory because it has been proven by many studies that these strategies are applicable to all kinds of texts, including humorous text (Widiyanto, 2014; Fitriyani, 2010)). Moreover, the writer used Baker's (2018) Translation Problems theory to analyze problems that students encounter when translating humorous texts.

METHOD

For this study, the writer used a qualitative approach. The data were the sentences in thirty humorous texts translated by the English Department batch 2019 and 2020 students in English (source language) as well as in Indonesia (target language). In getting the data, the writer shared a *Qualtrics* survey consisting of one humorous story and a question about the difficulty(s) they experienced during the translation process. In the translation process, the writer allows the respondents to use a dictionary to assist them in translating the humorous text. The writer used a two-digit numbering system to make it easier for the writer to collect the data. The two-digit numbering system represented the students and the paragraphs of the humorous story. So, for example, a.1.1 means the data was taken from the "a" paragraph of the humorous story, the first

student out of thirty students, and the first sentence in that paragraph. This two-digit would be named as code in the table later.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings that the writer found. This section will be divided into parts. The first part discusses the problems that students experienced when translating humorous text. The second part discusses the strategies that the students used in translating the humorous text.

Problems Students Experience when Translating Humorous Text

This section explains the problems that students experience when translating humorous text. The analysis and findings that the writer has done for this section are based on Baker's (2018) Translation Problems theory. Translators often face problems in translating, especially if there is no equivalent between both languages. Therefore, they need to know several translation problems to find the appropriate strategies.the writer found problems that students experienced when translating humorous text are the source language concept is not lexicalized in the target language, the source and target language make a different distinction in meaning, the target language lacks a specific term (hyponym), differences in expressive meaning, and differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms.

Those problems are found because the story contains many terms that are quite hard to differentiate the meaning, namely culture specific terms and medical terms. For example, the words "pokes" and "nudges" mean *mencolek* and *menyenggol* in Indonesian. It is hard to differentiate the meaning because those are almost similar activities depending on the context. Each of those problems will be further explained in each section below. Medical terms like prognosis, lab report, and cat scan are things that will only be known by someone who works in the medical field or someone interested in medicine. Interestingly, the writer did not find problems like semantically complex words, superordinate lacks in the target language, and the use of loan words in the source text.

The Source Language Concept is not Lexicalized in the Target Language

Baker (2018) argued that a problem occurs when the source-language idea has been known in the target culture but has not been lexicalized. Table 1 is a good illustration of this problem.

Table 1
Table of Concept is not Lexicalized in the Target Language

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems

| b.1.4 | The vet opens the back door and in bounds **a gray tabby.** | Si dokter membuka pintu belakang dan masuklah **seekor kucing abu-abu.** | The source language concept is not lexicalized in the target language |

Table 1 shows that the source language concept is not lexicalized in the target language because there is an equivalent for the word "gray", which is "abu-abu" but there is no equivalence for the word "tabby" in Indonesian. Thus, the word "tabby" is known in Indonesian but not lexicalized. In Table 4.3, the student found the word "tabby" hard to translate even though the student knew it refers to a cat. Hence, the student translated it as "seekor kucing abu-abu." Another good example of this problem can be seen in Table 1 below.

The Source and Target Language Make Different Distinctions in Meaning
        Baker (2018) argued that problems might also arise if the target language has one or more distinctions in meaning than the source language because what one language perceives as important may not be important or relevant for other languages. Table 2 is a good illustration of this problem.

Table 2
Table of Words Make Different Distinctions in Meaning

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems
b.12.4	The vet opens the back door and **in bounds** a gray tabby.	Dokter hewan membuka pintu belakang dan **dalam batas-batas** tabby abu-abu.	The source and target language make different distinction in meaning

        Table 2 shows that the source and target language makes different distinctions in meaning because the words "in bounds" and "dalam batas-batas" make different meanings. The word in bounds in English means running and jumping at the same time or hopping like a rabbit. Meanwhile, the word *dalam batas-batas* in English means within boundaries or limits, which is totally different from what in bounds means. In Table 4.4, the student translated in bounds as *dalam batas-batas* because the students thought it means the same, meanwhile it is totally different. The word in bounds in English means running and jumping at the same time or hopping like a rabbit. Meanwhile, the word *dalam batas-batas* in English means within boundaries or within limits.

Difference in Physical or Interpersonal Perspective
        Baker (2018) argued that physical perspective refers to how a translator chooses words that have more than one meaning. The chosen word depends on the relation of the people to one another or place, and things to other things. Table 5 is a good example of this problem.

Table 5
Table of Difference in Perspectives

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems
c.3.1	The cat jumps onto the table and looks the hamster up and down and **nudges** it with her paw for a few minutes before looking up and shaking her head.	Sang kucing kemudian melompat ke atas meja dan melihat sang hamster dari atas ke bawah sambil **menyentuhnya** dengan tangannya selama beberapa menit, dan kemudian melihat keatas sambil menggelengkan kepalanya.	Difference in physical or interpersonal perspective

Table 5 shows a difference in physical and interpersonal perspectives based on the relationship between cat and hamster, the cat would not just touch the hamster to check whether it is still alive. Since the cat is a trained cat that has checked "patient" many times, the cat should not have just touched it. It must have at least pushed the hamster a little because touching did not require any power but pushing did. Thus, in Table 4.8, the student should have translated the word "nudges" as *menyenggol* as it required more power than touching or *menyentuh*.

Difference in Expressive Meaning

Baker (2018) says that sometimes the word in the target language can have the same propositional meaning but a different expressive meaning. Even though the expressive meaning is subtle, it can give more context to the sentence. However, it is often harder to translate the expressive meaning when the target language item is more emotionally charged than the source language item. This often happens to the topics like religion, politics, and sex that are hard to discuss (Baker, 2018). Table 6 is a good example of this problem.

Table 6
Table of Difference in Expressive Meaning

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems
b.11.4	The vet opens the back door and **in bounds** a gray tabby.	Dokter hewan membuka pintu belakang dan **datanglah** seekor kucing tabby abu.	Differences in expressive meaning

Table 6 shows a difference in expressive meaning because the word "in bounds" proportionally means "come" or *datanglah*; however, expressively, it means someone comes while running and jumping or hopping like a rabbit. Therefore, the student should have translated it as *melompatlah masuk* because it will translate the expressive meaning well.

Differences in Frequency and Purpose of using Specific Forms
        Baker (2018) says even when a given form has a ready-made equivalent in the target language, the frequency with which it is used, or the purpose for which it is used may be different. Table 7 is a good example of this problem.

Table 7
Table of Differences in Frequency and Purpose of Specific Forms

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems
d.8.3	"Well," says the vet, "there's my prognosis, the lab report, and **the cat scan**."	Yah," kata dokter hewan, "Ada prognosis saya, laporan lab, dan **cat scan**."	Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms

        Table 7 shows a difference in frequency and purpose of using specific forms because of the frequency of use of the word "CAT scan" in Indonesian and English. The word "CAT scan" is rarely used nowadays because of the inconvenience of mentioning it (Miñano, 2015). However, both "CAT scan" and "CT scan" mean the same. According to Mitra (2021), a CT scan is a computer process of multiple X-ray images taken from different angles around the body that allows doctors to see deeper without surgery. In Table 4.10, the student found it hard to translate the word

"cat scan" because there is a difference in the frequency of the word "cat scan" since that word is rarely used by doctors nowadays.

The Word Lacks a Specific Term (Hyponym)
Baker (2018) mentions that most languages have general words or "superordinates" but not many specific words or "hyponyms." This is because each language only makes a distinction in meaning that makes sense in its own environment. Table 8 is a good example of this problem.

Table 8
Table of Word Lacks a Specific Term

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems
b.5.4	The vet opens the back door and in bounds **a gray tabby.**	Sang dokter hewan membuka pintu belakang dan munculah **kucing betina abu-abu.**	The target language lacks a specific term (hyponym)

Table 8 is considered as target language lacking a specific term (hyponym) because there is no specific equivalence for the word "gray tabby" in Indonesian. The word "tabby" cannot be translated into Indonesian as tabby is not any specific breed of cat but a cat's coat pattern that can present in any breed of cat (Purina, n.d.). According to Purina (n.d.), he word "tabby" came from a striped silk called *Atabi,* which was made in Attabiah, the Middle East then was brought to Britain. People in Britain thought the pattern of the "tiger cat" is similar to that striped silk then they called it the "tabi cat" which eventually became "tabby cat" and Garfield is a good example of a tabby cat. In Table 4.11, the student found it hard to translate the word "gray tabby" because there is no equivalence for the word "tabby" in Indonesian. Since the word "tabby" is uncommon in Indonesia, it is even harder for the student to translate it. Hence, instead of translating it *tabby abu-abu* the student translated it as *kucing betina abu-abu* because the student thought the word "tabby" refers to gender of the cat which is female and male. In this case, the student thought it refers to female cat which is why the student translated it as *kucing betina abu-abu.*

Strategies that Students Used in Translating Humorous Text
The writer found the strategies that students used in translating the humorous text are translation by more general word, translation by more neutral or less expressive word, translation by paraphrase using related words, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation, and translation by omission. Those strategies were used due to the problems that students experienced when translating the humorous text. When translating the humorous text, the students experienced several problems, such as culture-specific concepts, the source language not lexicalized in the target language, and different expressive meanings. Those problems require strategies such as translation by more general word, translation by more neutral or less expressive word, and translation by paraphrase using related words. By doing so, the students

were able to translate the humorous text appropriately. Interestingly, the writer did not find strategies namely translation by cultural substitution and translation by illustration.

Translation by More General Word
According to Baker (2018), translation by a more general word is popular for dealing with a wide range of non-equivalence, particularly propositional meaning. Baker (2018) believes this strategy can be applied to most languages. Table 4.14 below is a good example of this strategy.

Table 9
Table of Translation by More General Word

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems	Translation Strategies
c.3.1	The cat jumps onto the table and looks the hamster up and down and **nudges** it with her paw for a few minutes before looking up and shaking her head.	Sang kucing kemudian melompat ke atas meja dan melihat sang hamster dari atas kebawah sambil **menyentuhnya** dengan tangannya selama beberapa menit, dan kemudian melihat keatas sambil menggelengkan kepalanya.	Difference in physical or interpersonal perspective	Translation by More General Word

Table 9 was translated using the more general words because the student could not find the proportional meaning of the word "nudges". In Indonesian, "nudges" should be translated as *menyenggol* but since the student could not find the right word, the student translated it using a more general word: *menyentuh*. *Menyentuh* is considered to be a more general word because it still has something to do with hands or paws in this case.

Translation by More Neutral or Less Expressive Word
Sometimes a word in the source language is too expressive or not available in the target language, so the translator uses more neutral or less expressive words. Baker (2018) defines expressive meaning as meaning that is related to the speaker's feelings or attitude. Table 10 is a good example of this strategy.

Table 10
Table of Translation by More Neutral Word

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems	Translation Strategies
c.8.1	The cat jumps onto the table and looks the hamster up and down and nudges it with her **paw** for a few minutes before looking up and shaking her head.	Kucing melompat ke atas meja dan melihat hamster ke atas dan ke bawah dan menyenggol hamster itu dengan **tangannya** selama beberapa menit sebelum melihat ke atas dan menggelengkan kepalanya.	The source language concept is not lexicalized in the target language	Translation by More Neutral / Less Expressive Word

Table 10 was translated using more neutral or less expressive words because the expressive meaning of the word "paw" is unclear in Indonesian. Some Indonesian people see "paws" as hands and others as "feet." In Table 4.14, since the student could find the right equivalence of the word "paw" in English and since it is not lexicalized in Indonesian, the student translated it using the less expressive word, which is hand or *tangan* which is not right but still fits the context and better than leave it untranslated.

Translation by Paraphrase Using Related Words
Translation by paraphrase using a related word is utilized when the source item concept is lexicalized in the target language with a different form (Baker,2018). Table 11 is a good example of this strategy.

Code	**Source Language**	**Target Language**	**Translation Problems**	**Translation Strategies**

b.1.4	The vet opens the back door, and in bounds **a gray tabby.**	Si dokter membuka pintu belakang dan masuklah **seekor kucing abu-abu.**	The source language concept is not lexicalized in the target language	Translation by Paraphrase using Related Words

Table 11 was translated using translation by paraphrase using related words because the word "tabby" is not lexicalized in Indonesian. In Table 11 the student could not find the equivalence of the word "tabby", thus the student translated by paraphrasing using related word in this case "a gray cat" or *seekor kucing abu-abu,* which is right because the color of the tabby cat is gray.

Translation by Paraphrase Using Unrelated Words
In some circumstances, the paraphrasing method might be used, even though the word defined by the source item is not lexicalized in the target language. Rather than utilizing a similar term, translators frequently employ this method by altering a superordinate or unpacking the meaning of the source item, which is especially true when the source item is semantically complicated (Baker, 2018). Table 12 is a good example of this strategy.

Table 12
Table of Paraphrase Using Unrelated Words

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems	Translation Strategies
c.26.1	The cat jumps onto the table and looks the hamster up and down and **nudges** it with her paw for a few minutes before looking up and shaking her head.	Kucing itu melompat ke meja dan melihat hamster tersebut dari atas sampai bawah dan **mencoloknya** dengan tangannya untuk beberapa menit sebelum melihat keatas dan menggoyangkan kepalanya.	The source and target language make different distinction in meaning	Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words

Table 12 was translated using translation by paraphrase using unrelated words because the student could find the equivalence of the word "nudges" even though it is lexicalized in Indonesian. Thus, instead of finding the right equivalence, the student translated it using an unrelated word, *mencoloknya*. The student should have translated the word "nudges" as *menyenggol* because it means a gentle push. Meanwhile, *mencoloknya* means plugging in.

Translation by Omission

Translators use translation by omission by leaving a word or term untranslated. Even though it looks extreme, leaving a word or term untranslated does not give a negative implication. Baker (2018) says that translators usually do not translate the word or statement when the reader does not require the meaning conveyed by a single item or sentence. Table 13 is a good example of this strategy.

Table 13
Table of Translation by Omission

Code	Source Language	Target Language	Translation Problems	Translation Strategies
c.19.1	The cat jumps onto the table and looks the hamster up and down and nudges it with her **paw** for a few minutes before looking up and shaking her head.	Si kucing melompat ke atas meja dan menatap hamster itu dari atas ke bawah lalu **menyenggol-nyenggol**nya selama beberapa menit hingga akhirnya ia mendongak dan menggeleng.	The target language lacks a specific term (hyponym)	Translation by omission

The sentence in Table 13 was translated by using the omission because the student thought even though it was not translated, the reader would still understand that the cat nudged the hamster using its paw. However, the student should have translated the word "paw" as "kaki" because it would give a clearer perspective on how the cat nudged the hamster.

CONCLUSION

The results of the data analysis showed that the problems that students experienced when translating the humorous text are culture-specific concept, the source language concept is not lexicalized in the target language, the source and target language make different distinction in

meaning, the target language lacks a specific term (hyponym), differences in expressive meaning, and differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms. Based on the analysis, the writer concluded that the same text can be translated using different translation strategies, namely translation by more general word, translation by more neutral or less expressive word, translation by paraphrase using related word, and translation by omission because when the students utilize all those strategies the students only need to find the synonym of the word that is hard to translate, paraphrase from the definition of the word that is hard to translate, or leave it untranslated. The writer deeply realized that this present study is far from perfect, thus for future's studies the writer suggests that other researchers do this kind of research but using other theories of translation other than Baker's (2018) Translation Problems and Translation Strategies theories to see whether that new theory can be applied to all kinds of texts. Moreover, the writer suggests that other researchers do further research on humor since many kinds of humor can be explored.

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