

Techniques Used to Translate the Subtitles of Humor in the *Fresh Off the Boat* Series

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ABSTRACT

This study is about translation techniques used to translate the humor in the *Fresh Off the Boat* series subtitle from English to Indonesian. This study intends to determine the proper technique that can be used for every kind of humor yet preserve its funniness. The writer used Molina and Albir's (2002) theory of the eighteen-translation technique and Shade's (1996) theory for the types of humor. This study applied the qualitative method. The data that has been collected found only seven types of humor out of the twelve types of humor theory by Shade (1996). Additionally, from the eighteen techniques stated by Molina and Albir (2002), the translator only used six techniques to translate the types of humor in the *Fresh Off the Boat* series subtitles. The most suitable technique to translate humor is literal translation, while the most unsuitable technique is borrowing.

Keywords: *Fresh Off The Boat*, subtitles, translation techniques, types of humor

INTRODUCTION

According to Munday (2001), the concept of translation is to change the original language in written text (Source Text or ST) into different languages in both written (Target Text or TT). By using translation, people can communicate and deliver what they want to say in many different alternative languages. However, translation is challenging due to errors and misunderstandings. Translation techniques can be helpful tools for translators to translate because Molina and Albir (2002) believe that this study can utilize and classify how translation equivalence is successful and minimizes the mistakes of translating.

As for humor, humor is a complex phenomenon that varies among individuals due to its daily existence and its ability to make others laugh. It can be defined as anything that individuals find humorous and likely to make others laugh. Therefore, translating humor is way more difficult than translating in general. According to Chiaro (1996, as cited in Kuusisto, 2009), many translators frequently find themselves ruining a joke in the humor text that they translate by explaining it in excessive detail, especially when the translators find the words that are untranslatable. Hence, the main purpose of this study is to analyze the types of humor and translation techniques used to translate the humor from English to Indonesian in the subtitles of the *Fresh Off the Boat* series on Disney+.

Fresh Off the Boat itself is a humorous series helmed by Nahnatchka Khan and developed by 20th Century Fox Entertainment for ABC (Goodman, 2015). There are six seasons of the series in total, and this study only concentrates on several episodes which are the funniest episodes of the series according to the Series with Sophie website (Sophie, n.d.). The ten best voted episodes from all of the six seasons according to the website with most of the funniest episodes coming from season three (Sophie, n.d.). The episodes are season 2 episodes 23, season 5 episode 5, season 3 episode 14, season 3 episode 23, season 3 episode 9, season 1 episode 13, season 2 episode 19, season 3 episode 1, season 3 episode 24, and season 3 episode 6.

As a result, the writer is curious to discover the types of humor and the techniques used to translate the subtitles of all episodes stated above because those episodes got the highest vote out of all the episodes. To analyze the types of humor that occurs in the subtitles of the *Fresh Off the Boat* series the writer uses Shade's (1996) theory. The writer uses Molina and Albir (2002) theory about translation techniques to discover the techniques used to translate the humor in the *Fresh Off the Boat* series subtitles.

METHODS

The writer used qualitative methods for this study. There were two sources of data for this study, the first source of data was the English translation subtitles of the *Fresh Off the Boat* series. The second source of data was the Indonesian translation of the subtitles of the *Fresh Off the Boat* series. Therefore, there were two pieces of data. The first data the writer collected was the English verbal humor in the subtitles of the *Fresh Off the Boat*, and the second data was the Indonesian translation of the English verbal humor subtitles of the *Fresh Off the Boat* series. In order to collect the data, the first step that was done for this research was to watch the series focused on season 3 episode 23, season 5 episode 5, and season 3 episode 14 on Disney+. Second step was to download the subtitles transcript. Then, the writer picked out the humorous part by referring to the types of humor theory by Shade (1996) and highlighted the humor part in the transcription. Moreover, the writer utilized a one-digit system to analyze the English and Indonesian translations of the *Fresh Off the Boat* series subtitles, with No 1 representing the first text with both languages spoken by the characters.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the results of the finding and the writer's analysis. This analysis was done based on the theory stated by Shade (1996) and Molina and Albir (2002). There are only found 7 types of verbal humors out of 12 types of humor in the top 3 funniest episodes of the *Fresh Off the Boat* series, according to the Series with Sophie website (Sophie, n.d). The 7 types of humor are puns, jokes, satire, anecdote, irony, sarcasm, and wit. Additionally, out of the 7 types of humor, the translator only used 6 techniques out of 18 techniques to translate the humor. However, not all the techniques can preserve the humor appropriately. Some of the humor can be diminished because of the wrong technique that the translator used to translate the subtitles. This happens because some types of humor depend on the words or linguistic component of the subtitles. The detailed explanation can be seen below.

4.1 Translation with Borrowing Technique

Borrowing is a kind of translation technique in which words or phrases are taken straight from another language. There are a few examples of borrowing techniques that the writer analyzes.

Table 4.2

Example of Jokes Translation with Borrowing Technique Found in the *Fresh Off the Boat* Subtitles

No	Types of Verbal Humor	Text	
		English	Indonesian
13	Jokes	So at the grocery store last week, a stranger came up to me and asked which aisle the soy sauce was in.	<i>Jadi, di toko pangan minggu lalu... Orang asing menghampiriku</i>

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		<p>Did you tell him it was in "<u>Aisle Slap</u>"? No. I did know where it was, so I told him. But afterwards in the car, I screamed for like 10 minutes.</p>	<p><i>dan bertanya... ...di lorong mana kecap berada. Apa kau bilang ada di <u>Aisle Slap (akan kutampar)?</u> Tidak, aku tahu letak kecap itu, jadi kuberi tahu dia. Tapi, kemudian di dalam mobil, aku berteriak selama 10 menit.</i></p>
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Table 4.2 shows the example of a joke, specifically the words "Aisle Slap." Shade (1996) explained that a joke is a popular kind of humor that provokes laughter and usually uses figurative language, meta-morphological, and absurdity. For this context, the word "Aisle slap" is considered a surface structure based on the alternative grouping word type of joke because the words "Aisle slap" have similar pronunciations (homophone) like "I'll slap." This part is also humorous because this scene is marked with the indicator of joke types of humor such as, a surprising shift in viewpoint and the use of wordplay. The humor context is that during that time a stranger was asking Elaine (the mother's friend) about where the soy sauce was. Elaine was visibly annoyed by those questions, which made the mother say to Elaine to answer the question the soy sauce was in the "Aisle slap" which means that Elaine should slap the stranger for asking inappropriately.

The main reason this humorous scene is a joke is because the word "aisle" which means a long, narrow space between the rows of shelves in a large shop (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) is used to convey the annoyance experienced by Elaine. The word Aisle is homophone with I'll which expresses Elaine's extreme annoyance at the stranger to the point that Elaine really wanted to slap the stranger for being annoying.

For this example, the translator directly borrows the words "Aisle slap," and does not change the word into Indonesian. The translator used mixed techniques to translate this word. The first one is borrowing, and the second is the description technique. The translator aims to preserve the humor while utilizing the borrowing technique. However, the type of humor is puns, which is humor that occurs by playing words. As in the example, the words "Aisle slap" in English have a similar pronunciation to "I'll slap," and the Indonesia translation is "Aisle slap (akan kutampar)," the humor disappears because in Indonesia it cannot be pronounced as it was. Although the translator does not change the word because the translator hopes to retain the humor, the meaning of the humor cannot be delivered.

The use of the borrowing technique for puns is unsuitable because jokes are played with words that correspond with the original language (source language). The borrowing technique cannot deliver the wordplay of the jokes.

4.2 Translation with Establish Equivalent Technique

Translation with Establish Equivalent technique is used by using a term in the target language where the meaning is the same as a word in the source language.

Table 4.3

Example of Puns Translation with Establish Equivalent Technique Found in the *Fresh Off the Boat* Subtitles

No	Types of Verbal Humor	Text	
		English	Indonesian

11.	Puns	Valedictorian, Chica Cohen. [Applause.] Next valedictorian? At our school, everyone is valedictorian so they don't feel left out. They're <u>pal-edictorians</u> .	<i>Sekarang aku ingin memperkenalkan pembaca pidato berikutnya, Chica Cohen! Pembaca pidato berikutnya? Di sekolah kami, semua menyampaikan pidato ...agar tak merasa terbuang. Mereka <u>pembaca pidato</u>.</i>
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In table 4.3, the example shows puns translation using established equivalent technique. This part is humorous because there is the indicator of puns, such as the implied meaning of the wordplay “valedictorian” to “pal-edictorian,” which the two words have a distinct meaning but have the similar sound. In the matter of humor, the father thought that Emery (the second child) is the only one to give speech as a valedictorian, but it turns out that the valedictorian term in their school is changed into “pal-edictorian” which means everyone in that school got the chance to give speech because it is not valedictorian but “pal-edictorian.”

The word “Pal-edictorians” is the wordplay of “Valedictorian” and it is translated as “*Pembaca pidato*.” In this example, the translator adapted the word “pal-edictorian” with “*Pembaca pidato*.” According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), the word valedictorian means a student who talks during the group's graduation ceremony, which marks the completion of their studies, and is often the one with the greatest academic record in the school.

The translator tries to use the similar term of valedictorian by translating it into “*pembaca pidato*” in order to maintain the cultural references of valedictorian as a speech giver. As in the Indonesian language, there is no specific term for students who give a speech at the graduation ceremony, the more general term used in Indonesia and have the same meaning with “Pal-edictorian” is “*Pembaca pidato*” which is the main reason the translator chose to translate it into “*pembaca pidato*” by using establish equivalent technique. The translator tries to maintain the meaning of pal-edictorian so that it can have the same meaning as the original term.

For this context, the humor is gone because the type of humor occurs there is the wordplay of “valedictorian” into “pal-edictorian.” Therefore, as it is translated into “*pembaca pidato*” the humor is gone because there is no such humor in the word “*pembaca pidato*.” This shows that the borrowing technique cannot work properly to translate wordplay humor like puns, because wordplay type of humor is difficult and is not easy because there is different cultural interpretation of the word and can cause a mismatch between the different languages.

4.3 Translation with Linguistic Amplification Technique

Adding a language component such as syntax, morphology, phonology, and semantics to the texts is called Linguistic Amplification technique.

Table 4.4

Example of Sarcasm Translation with Linguistic Amplification Technique Found in the *Fresh Off the Boat* Subtitles

No	Types of Verbal Humor	Text	
		English	Indonesian
25.	Sarcasm	Three ciders? Who's the extra glass for? What the hell are you doing	<i>Tiga cider? Untuk siapa satunya lagi? - Sedang apa kau di sini?</i>

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	here? What the hell are you doing here? - Jessica invited me. - Jessica invited me.	- <i>Apa yang kau lakukan di sini?</i> - <i>Jessica yang mengundangku.</i> - <i>Jessica mengundangku.</i>
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An example of sarcasm using the linguistic amplification technique is shown in Table 4.4. The situation where Honey (the neighbor) notices another glass of cider and assumes Jessica (the mother) had merely invited her is a humorous example of sarcasm at this table. Subsequently, the situation turns out that Jessica had brought Honey's rival, Sarah, as well. When the two characters meet at the bar, their mutual invitation from Jessica sets up a mocking conversation between them. The humorous moments start when both characters explain the reason for coming to the invitation sarcastically.

The translator added language components such as the word “*yang*” to the translation as can be seen in Table 4.5. According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia dictionary (n.d.), the word “*yang*” is a word that states that the next part of the sentence explains the word in front (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia dictionary, n.d.). The literal translation for the word “*yang*” is “that.” The word “that” is used as a determiner, a demonstrative pronoun, and a relative pronoun, which have the same meaning and function as the word “*yang*.” As can be seen in the table, the Source Text (ST) only said “Jessica invited me,” which the literal translation for that one is “*Jessica mengundangku.*” By adding the word “*yang*” the translator wants to clarify who invited the character.

For this example, the translation can still deliver humor even though there is a word component added to the texts. Adding the word component emphasizes the sarcasm humor because the addition of the word “*yang*” is adapted to Indonesian culture. Also, the type of humor that appears here is not a wordplay type of humor that needs to focus on the linguistic component, so adding a word component does not affect the humor.

4.4 Translation with Literal Translation Technique

Literal translation technique used to translate each word to word and phrase to phrase without any specific term reducing or adding more words.

Table 4.5

Example of Sarcasm Translation with Literal Translation Technique Found in the *Fresh Off the Boat* Subtitles

No	Types of Verbal Humor	Text	
		English	Indonesian
5.	Sarcasm	So, our big graduation present is dinner at your restaurant, which we eat at all the time? <u>That's incredible!</u> [Chuckles.]	<i>Jadi, hadiah kelulusan kami adalah makan malam di restoran Ayah... ...yaitu tempat makan kita selalu? <u>Itu luar biasa!</u></i>

This example portrays the sarcasm type of humor because as the father gives their children a ‘big’ gift as a celebration of their graduation is to eat in the place where all of them always go. The children were expecting something ‘big’ and different as this is a graduation celebration, but it turns out that they did not get what they were expecting. The word “That’s incredible” sounds like gratitude and acceptance, perhaps the children are not enjoying the gift and the gift is not what they were expecting. This illustrates sarcasm because, despite saying

“That’s incredible!” There is a hidden sneer in the words they said because their true sentiment is frequent visits to the restaurant.

For table 4.6 the translation technique used to translate the humor is literal translation. Literal translation technique is the technique to translate each word by word or phrase by phrase. In table 4.6, the words “That’s incredible!” translated word by word into “*Itu luar biasa!*” without changing the position and meaning of the English translation. However, the way it is translated with literal translation technique does not affect the humor. Considering the humor has the opposite meaning of what the character tried to say and that meaning still occurs in the translated version.

Table 4.6

Example of Sarcasm Translation with Literal Translation Technique Found in the *Fresh Off the Boat* Subtitles

No	Types of Verbal Humor	Text	
		English	Indonesian
7.	Sarcasm	" <u>Boo</u> "? That's the word of a ghost.	" <u>Pacar</u> "? Itu kata-kata setan.

This table shows an example of sarcasm. Sarcasm itself is the type of verbal humor that contains mocking and disrespect toward others. The mother's sarcastic comment regarding the child's lover, "boo is a ghost word," is what constitutes the sarcasm in the table above. The girlfriend's adorable nickname, "Boo," was given to her by Eddie, the first son, and the character hopes that other characters, such as the mother, would respect it. It turned out that Eddie had not anticipated the reception he would receive. The humor arises when the mother starts to mock the son's girlfriend which shows that the mother disrespects the girlfriend and does not agree that the son has already had a girlfriend.

According to table 4.6, the translator used a literal translation technique to translate the sarcasm type of humor. The text “boo? that’s the word of a ghost” translated into “pacar? *Itu kata-kata setan.*” is translated word by word without reducing the word and the meaning of the source text. Boo itself means someone you care about, especially a boyfriend, girlfriend, or other close friend (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). For this part the translator decided to translate it into “pacar,” because according to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia dictionary (n.d), pacar means “friends of the opposite sex who are permanent and have a relationship based on love; beloved.” This shows that the translator uses the term boo as a noun for a person instead of the general meaning of boo as to make an expression of strong disapproval or disagreement (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). For this example, the use of literal translation technique affected humor. The humor cannot be translated, or the humor is gone because the word ‘boo’ translated into ‘pacar’, instead of using the same word which is ‘boo’. Because the humor is in the word ‘boo’ itself.

4.5 Translation with Reduction Technique

The reduction technique is used to extinguish a word from the Source Text (ST) when translated into the Targeted Text (TT).

Table 4.7

Example of Irony Translation with Reduction Technique Found in the *Fresh Off the Boat* Subtitles

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No	Types of Verbal Humor	Text	
		English	Indonesian
23.	Irony	And that'll be \$20 for the Joan Baez record. <u>Oh.</u> <u>I</u> thought it came with the blender.	<i>Piringan hitam Joan Baez itu harganya 20 dolar. <u>Aku</u> kira ini jadi satu dengan blendernya.</i>

The table above provides an example of an irony type of humor that is translated with the reduction technique. This example is considered as irony because this scene found the indicator humor of irony which is the reverse of the literal meaning and there is the intended meaning like sarcasm. In this part, the mother already knows that the blender is not coming with the vinyl record. In other words, the mother tried to steal the vinyl without being noticed but the seller noticed it and said that the vinyl would cost \$20, then the mother acted like she unintentionally took the vinyl with her and mistaken that the vinyl was free (trying to make a scene).

For table 4.7 above, the translator used the reduction technique to translate the irony type of humor because the translator removed the word "Oh." which shows a shock expression of the mother when the seller noticed her action. In the translated one, it is reduced and the translator did not put any shock expression to replace it. Also, in the English subtitle there are double "I" which express that the mother is stuttering because get caught red handed by the seller. But in the Indonesian subtitle the double "I" was removed and just translated into "Aku" while it can be translated into "A-aku" to shows the stuttering.

However, the humor in Table 4.7 can still be preserved because the intended meaning that the mother said can be delivered and understood. Also, the humor that appears is not linguistically humorous, because the humor needs the viewer's knowledge to understand the humor.

4.6 Translation with Transposition Technique

Transposition technique is the technique used by shifting a grammatical classification of the source text (ST).

Table 4.8

Example of Wit Translation with Transposition Technique Found in the *Fresh Off the Boat* Subtitles

No	Types of Verbal Humor	Text	
		English	Indonesian
6.	Wit	So Eddie's bringing his girlfriend. Girlfriend?! What girlfriend? Um Alison? I've mentioned her several times. <u>I just said "my boo, Alison"?</u>	<i>Jadi, Eddie mengajak pacarnya. Pacar? Pacar apa? Alison? <u>Aku beberapa kali menyebutnya. Kubilang "pacarku, Alison" tadi.</u></i>

Table 4.8 shows an example of wit. The humor happens because there is a misunderstanding between Eddie (the first son) with the mother. The rise of incongruity between the two characters in understanding the situation. The son thinks that the situation

about Alison (the son's girlfriend) has been clearly explained, but the mother does not remember and understands that the one that the son is talking about is the girlfriend. This situation describes the wit clearly, wit is a type of verbal humor which includes an amusingly incongruity idea and can lead to misunderstanding (Shade, 1996). The scene causes confusion and a funny conversation between the two characters, and both characters try to figure out what is going on.

For wit type of humor, the translator used transposition to translate the humor. The way the translator changes the structure of the text. As the English version is "I (S) just (Adv) said (V), "my boo, Alison" (O)" and as it is translated without changing the structure will be '*Aku (S) barusan (Adv) bilang (V) "pacarku, Alison" (O)*' but to make it more suitable the translator change it into "Kubilang (S+V) '*pacarku, Alison*' (O) *tadi (Adv)*." This is because that structure and the placement of the adverb in the back is way more suitable in the Indonesian context.

The translator chose to translate the example of wit type of humor using transposition technique to maintain the humor and for the example stated above the technique does not affect the humor, because the misunderstanding between the mother and the son still can be seen. The main reason for choosing to translate the texts using transposition technique is to maintain naturalness and fluency, as the translator moved the preceding adverb "*tadi*" to the end of the phrase in Indonesian to fit the more natural and common Indonesian structure.

CONCLUSION

By utilizing Molina and Albir's (2002) eighteen-translation techniques and Shade's (1996) theory of humor types, the findings reveal that there are only 7 types of verbal humor out of 12 types of humor in the top 3 funniest episodes of the Fresh Off the Boat series, according to the Series with Sophie website (Sophie, n.d). The 7 types of humor are puns, jokes, satire, anecdote, irony, sarcasm, and wit. Additionally, out of the 7 types of humor, the translator only used 6 techniques out of 18 techniques to translate the humor. However, not all the techniques can preserve the humor appropriately. Some of the humor can be diminished because of the wrong technique that the translator used to translate the subtitles. This happens because some types of humor depend on the words or linguistic component of the subtitles.

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