THE WORDPLAY OF 'THE BIG BANG THEORY' MOVIE SUBTITLE

Sang Ayu Isnu Maharani

Udayana University

isnu.maharani@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study aims to describe the type of wordplay in the subtitle of the movie entitled 'The Big Bang Theory' and also to describe the technique applied in translating the wordplay.

This study is a descriptive qualitative and library study. The data was collected through observation and note taking techniques. The framework of this study is Delabatista (1993) concerning with types of wordplay translation and Humanika (2012) about the techniques to translate the wordplay.

This study found that there are three types of wordplay; they are the phonological structure (homonymy and homophony), the lexical development (idiom) and the syntactic structure. The techniques of translating wordplay found consist of literal translation, loan translation, situational translation and no translation.

Keywords: Wordplay, translation, movie subtitle, 'The Big Bang Theory'

I   INTRODUCTION

Translation study has been enormous importance in the world as it penetrated and required in all aspect of human life. To bridge a culture for instance, translation is certainly needed. To understand a culture of a country or region we need to be able to translate the value within. The culture can be reflected in various elements, as we can see for instances in the lifestyle; the way people speak, the way people eat, the way people entertain themselves and so on. The example of the way people entertain themselves is watching movie.

To understand foreign movies, we are certainly required the translation (oral or written). The oral translation of the foreign movies is known as dubbing and the written form of the translation is usually called subtitles. Both types of the translations are often found in the foreign movies broadcasted in private television stations in Indonesia. Foreign movies refer to movies which are imported from outside of Indonesia such as Indian, Istanbul, and America or better known as Hollywood movies. Movies comprises with various genre such as horror, tragic, romantic, and comedy. The comedy movie can easily be notified through its humor

Translating humor is not an easy work to do for the translator since humor is usually created and dependent on the structure of language; people also appreciate humor differently. Chiaro (2005:1) suggests translating humor as "a notoriously arduous task the results of which are not always triumphant". Spanakaki (2007) in her journal mentioned "When trying to translate humor, culturally opaque elements and language-specific devices are expected to make the translator's work difficult, while some elements are ultimately not

transferred at all'. According to Vandaele in Spanakaki, the appreciation of humor may vary individually and so does the appreciation of a well or poorly translated text or subtitle.

This study tries to reveal a more specific instance of humor which known as wordplay. The wordplay can be defined as humorous play on words which is very dependent on the structure of language. The translation of wordplay in of one the comedy movies entitled 'The Big Bang Theory' is the focused of this study. Put together, it aims:

> (i) to describe the types of wordplay found in the movie 'The Big Bang Theory'

> (ii) to describe technique applied by the translator to translate the wordplay in the movie of 'The Big Bang Theory'.

The findings of this study is expected to be able to bring insights to twofold contributions, namely both theoretical and practical implication

II   MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data for this study were collected from English subtitle of the comedy movie 'The Big Bang Theory' and the translation in Indonesian subtitle. To be specific, the data in this study were words and phrases of wordplay found in 'The Big Bang Theory' movie subtitle. It was taken from the eighth seasons and the episode used for this study was taken randomly. The steps taken to collect the data includes watching the movie to get insight of the wordplay phenomena, printing the subtitle of the movie both in English and Indonesian, identifying the wordplay includes in the subtitles, categorizing the wordplay in accordance to type and the technique of translation.

The method of collecting data of this study was done through library research. The technique used for this study was note taking. The finding of this study is presented descriptively and it is a qualitative research. According to Firmin (2008:190) qualitative research is frequently related with words. The research instrument is the writer of this study.

III   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter elucidates the understanding of translation, wordplay, subtitle and also a glimpse of information about the comedy movie of 'The Big Bang Theory'.

3.1   TRANSLATION

There are various definitions of translation proposed by scholars. This study includes definition proposed by Hatim and Munday (2004), Larson (1998) and earlier scholars such as Nida (1975) and Catford (1965).

Hatim and Munday (2004: 6) define translation as the process of transferring a written text from source language (SL) to target language (TL), conducted by a translator, or translators. Larson (1998:3) states translation consists of transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor

language. This process is achieved through going from the form of the language to the form of a second language by means of semantic structure. It emphasizes that the translation is basically a change of form. The forms of language consist of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, etc. These forms are referred to as belongings to the surface structure of a language.

Nida (1975:33) proposed that translating consists of producing the receptor language closest to the natural equivalent to the message of the SL, first in meaning and secondly in style. In the other hand, Catford (1965:20) proposed translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL).

Hatim & Mason gives general idea of translation; transferring the written text and include the person who conduct the translation, while Larson emphasizes on the result of the TT to be an idiomatic translation. Nida and Catford both concern with the equivalent issue; Nida states the equivalent in meaning and style while Catford tends to explain about the replacement of textual material. The translation of wordplay according to Chiaro (1992) is so difficult because it "touches upon the most essential and highly debatable issues of translation study namely equivalence and transibility. In the translation of wordplay, "the similarity of lexis and syntax in the source and target versions is frequently sacrificed for the sake of dynamic equivalence which entails that an equivalent effect is considered to be more important than equivalence in form and content.

3.2 WORDPLAY

Wordplay defined by Chiaro (1992:2) as the use of language with intent to amuse. Meanwhile Balci (2005:8) states that wordplay is "a portrayal of word or a phrase" with several meanings that has the same sound with a different spelling or the same spelling with a different meaning. Other definition proposed by Delabatista (1993:57). He mentioned that wordplay is the general name indicating the various textual phenomena (i.e on the level performance or parole) in which certain features inherent in the structure of language used (level of competence or langue) are exploited in such a way as to established a communicatively significant, (near) simultaneous confrontation of at least two linguistic structures with more or less dissimilar meanings (signified) and more or less similar forms (signifier). Types of wordplay can be categorized into four types, they are:

3.2.1 PHONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

The English phonological system make use of limited number of phonemes; more over, certain restriction are imposed on the possible combinations of phonemes in certain position within words. As a result, the lexicon of the language will contain numerous groups of words that share one or more morphemes (Delabatista, 1993:102). Further he explained that the relationship established between the components of a phonological wordplay can be in the form of homophony, homonymy and paronymy.

3.2.1.1 Homonymy

It refers to the situation where two word/s or word groups are identical both in sound and spelling but different in meanings.

3.2.1.2 Homophony

It refers to the situation when words or group of words are different in writing but identical in pronunciation.

3.2.1.3 Paronymy

It refers to condition when words or group of words are nearly but not quite identical in spelling and pronunciation.

3.2.2 LEXICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.2.2.1 Polysemy

The difference between polysemy and homonymy is rather subtle because they share similar spelling and pronunciation but different in meanings. However, to differ, both can be identified from the meaning. If the meaning is related, it belongs to polysemy however, if the the meaning is not related it is called homonymy.

3.2.2.2 Idioms

Idioms are defined as word combinations with a sum meaning that is etymologically based on the combination of their component meanings. (Delabatista, 1993: 108)

3.2.3 MORPHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Delabatista (1993:109) states that wordplay can be created through morphological mechanism, such as derivation and composition (or compounding).

3.2.4 SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE

Delabatista (1993:113) stated that syntactic ambiguity can make wordplay opportunity arise.

3.3 TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES FOR WORDPLAY

This following subchapter explains some translation techniques that can be applied translating wordplay from English into Indonesian. Humanika (2012:3) explains that there are eight techniques in the translation of wordplay into Indonesian. The techniques are translation of wordplay to wordplay, using rhetorical device, literal translation, situational translation, editorial translation, compensation, loan translation, deletion. They are elucidated as follows:

3.3.1 WORDPLAY TO WORDPLAY TRANSLATION

This technique gives opportunity for Target Text (TT) to possess the exact meaning and form with the Source Text (ST). Both ST and TT should share similar concept, and the humorous effect of the ST should be felt in TT.

3.3.2 USING RETHORICAL DEVICES

This technique aims at reproducing the effect of the ST wordplay by replacing it by rethorical devices such as repetition, alliteration, rhyme, irony, paradox, etc.

3.3.3 SITUATIONAL TRANSLATION

The third technique aims to make the wordplay understandable by the reader. It can be done by adding word pictures or descriptive phrase to help audience understanding the wordplay.

3.3.4 LITERAL TRANSLATION

This technique provides literal translation in the TT. As the result, the wordplay is usually becomes non wordplay in the TT.

3.3.5 EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES

This technique is usually done by inserting footnotes or comments in order to explain how the wordplay works.

3.3.6 COMPENSATION

Compensation is applied if wordplay can not be translated. This technique appears to overcome difficult or unstructured wordplay of the ST.

3.3.7 LOAN TRANSLATION

Loan translation is applied to maintain the foreignization of the ST. This is usually addressed for types of Proper nouns such as name of a person, location, and other proper names.

3.3.8 DELETION

This technique is applied if there is no translation of the ST wordplay in the TT.

3.4 SUBTITLE

Subtitles are textual versions of the dialogue in films and television programs. They are usually displayed at the bottom of the screen and framed within certain duration. They can either be a form of written translation of a dialogue in a foreign language or a written rendering of the dialogue in the same language-with or without added information intended to help viewers with hearing disabilities to follow the dialogue.

Subtitling is becoming a preferred mode of translation not only owning to financial considerations-it is much cheaper to satisfy the expanding needs of

film markets by providing subtitles, which are more economical and easier to produce – but also because "to viewers in subtitling countries, the economic advantages are secondary: retaining the authenticity of the original production is paramount". (Gottlieb, 1997:310) for these viewers, subtitling is a more authentic mode than dubbing. The audience is not allowed to forget about the foreignness of a translated film and is constantly reminded of its authenticity as it hears the original dialogues throughout the film.

3.5 'THE BIG BANG THEORY' MOVIE

The Big Bang Theory is an American comedy series produced by Chuck Lorre Production and Warner Bross Television. The series started to air in 2007 in America and first aired in the Netherlands in 2009. The story is set in Pasadena, California, and revolves around a group of for scientist at Caltech University. They are: Sheldon and Leonard, both are physicists and they share an apartment. The other characters are Raj, who is an astrophysicist; and also Howard, an aerospace engineer. There are also female characters named Penny a blonde girl who become Leonard's girl friend; she works as a waitress, Amy is the girlfriend of Sheldon; she is a biologist, and the other character is named Emily who becomes the girlfriend of Howard. Each of the series features the story which revolves in science, fantasy fandom, comic book, gaming and relationship troubles which presented with jokes, humor, sarcasm and wordplay.

Having the above discussion, in the following are the result of the types of wordplay and techniques of translating wordplay found in the movie subtitle of 'The Big Bang Theory'

3.6 TYPES AND TECHNIQUES OF WORDPLAY IN 'THE BIG BANG THEORY' MOVIE

This study found that the types of wordplay found in 'The Big Bang Theory are phonological structures; they are: homophony, homonymy. It is also found that the word play in lexical development, which is idiom. Examples of each type and detailed explanation can be seen in the following description.

Wordplay which based on the phonological structure can be classified into homonymy, homophony, and paronymy. In 'The Big Bang Theory' movie subtitle, it was found that the type of wordplay occurred in phonological structure are homophony and homonymy.

> Data 1
>
> ST: he's got my mother buying four-ply toilet paper. I mean, four-ply....
>
> TT: membeli empat lapis tisu toilet. Maksudku, empat lapis.....

The above data was taken from conversation which was conducted by Sheldon who was rather grumpy because his mother was meeting a man, flirting with him but somehow seemed neglecting him. His statement include wordplay of four-ply and four-ply (foreplay); it can be seen from the context of the cynical face he made when mentioning the wordplay of four-ply (foreplay). Both of the word was written and pronounced similarly in the subtitle. This type of of

wordplay is known as homonymy because the wordplay shares similar writing and pronunciation but has different meaning.

Having seen the result of the translation of ST, the technique applied in the wordplay is categorized as Literal Translation. The first word 'four-ply' is translated 'empat lapis' in Indonesian but the next wordplay of 'four-ply' should be translated with different meaning but the translator translated it with similar word of 'empat lapis'. Thus, the wordplay in the ST resulted into non wordplay in the TT. The translator chooses to translate it literally so the sense of the wordplay can not be found in the TT.

Data 2

ST:.. It did everything but quack

TT:... Segala sesuatu tetapi kwek

The above data shows that the type of the wordplay is categorized as homophony. The data was taken from the conversation between Sheldon and Leonard when they talked about Amy's (the girlfriend of Sheldon) hair. Sheldon mentioned that his girlfriend has hair like a duck in an oil spill. This type of wordplay features similar sound or pronunciation. The word 'quack' and 'kwek' are having different writing but they share similar meaning which is the sound of a duck. The technique applied in translating the wordplay is Literal translation.

Data 3

ST: ...and Stuart is not your bubala. I'm your bubala

TT: ... dan Stuart bukan bubala mu, Akulah bubala mu

The above data was taken from the statement which delivered by Sheldon who was upset because her mother supported Stuart to reopen the comic store by giving him the money. He then stated that Stuart is not your 'bubala'. The word 'bubala' does not have a lexicon meaning as cited in the dictionary. Having the context of situation through the movie, it can be defined that the word 'bubala' is defined as the loved one. However, the subtitle is translated into 'bubala' also in Indonesian. The type of the above wordplay is categorized as homonymy because it is written and pronounced similarly. The technique of translating the wordplay is loan translation because the word 'bubala' is not being translated into Indonesian. The translator keeps it foreign in the TT.

This study also found wordplay which included in type of lexical development. This type of wordplay consists of polysemy and idiom; however this study only found an idiom within the subtitle which elucidated in the following data:

Data 4

ST: Oh boy, if there is one thing that gets on my goat

TT: Jika ada seseorang yang patut kusalahkan

(goat: kambing atau bisa berarti orang yang disalahkan)

The above data shows the wordplay as part of lexical development which is idiom. The idiom is 'gets on my goat'. The word gets on has various meaning. However within this context, gets on my goat is being translated differently. The context within the movie shows conversation between Sheldon and Howard talking about the Stuart who might not open the comic store because he didn't get a lot of money from the insurance company. They were very upset with the insurance company.

The translation of the above wordplay subtitle applied the technique situational translation. This technique can be identified by the descriptive phrase of the word 'goat' to help the audience understanding the text. The translation of wordplay in TT is adjusted with the context shown in the movie.

Data 5

ST:I feel pretty.....oh so pretty

TT: No translation

The data shows that the type of the wordplay can be considered as syntactic structure. The word 'pretty' is repeated with the coordinating conjunction 'so', becomes 'so pretty'. The translation of the TT can be written 'Saya merasa cantik...oh sangat cantik', however, there is no translation in the TT subtitle. This circumstance can be understood by seeing the context of situation in the movie. The data was taken from the conversation between Penny and Sheldon. Sheldon proposed a hypothesis that if his friend has a lover, eventually the person will lose one or two friends. Sheldon was asking Penny 'I wonder who you're going to lose next?'. The replied was she might lose Sheldon. Sheldon was not accepting the response, he persisted that Penny was crazy about him and he felt pretty because of it.

The technique of translation applied in the TT is resulted in no translation. The ST is actually is an exaggerating response of Sheldon where he feels pretty about himself which is contrary in the reality.

IV   CONCLUSION

The translation of word play as an instance of a more specific humour can be found not only in literary work but also in audio visual media which is subtitle of a movie. The types of translation of wordplay found in the comedy movie entitled 'The Big Bang Theory' are phonological structures, lexical development and syntactical structure. The phonological structures are homonymy and homophony. The lexical development is idiom. The techniques of translating wordplay found in this study are literal translation, loan translation, situational translation and no translation.

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