

**TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES AND PRAGMATIC EQUIVALENCE  
IN INDOONESIAN TRANSLATION OF HUMOROUS UTTERANCES  
IN THE WALT DISNEY'S DONALD DUCK COMICS**

**Issy Yuliasri**

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia  
issy.yuliasri@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

This paper presents a study of English-Indonesian translation of the humorous utterances in *Walt Disney's Donald Duck* comics. Twenty one Indonesian translated comics of the 2008 issues and their original English versions were used as the source of data. A total of 480 humorous English utterances were identified and verified by 4 native English speakers. These 480 English utterances and their translations were used as the data. Analyses of the collected data were then made to see the translation techniques used by the translator in translating the humorous utterances and to see the resulted pragmatic equivalence viewed from the equivalence of pragmatic force between the source text (ST) and target text (TT), involving implicature analysis of the utterances. The findings of the research reveal that 647 uses of translation techniques are made to translate the 480 utterances, as more than one techniques are used in some of the utterances. Seventeen out of 18 translation techniques proposed by Molina & Albir (2002) are chosen by the translator. It is also found out that the translator's choice of translation techniques has resulted in 96.87% of the translated humorous utterances being equivalent in their pragmatic force, compared to the original English utterances. The use of such translation techniques as generalization, established equivalent, linguistic compression, amplification, literal translation, compensation, linguistic amplification, variation, particularization, borrowing, transposition, description, and calque has resulted in equivalent pragmatic force between ST and TT. Only minor portion (3.13%) of the translated text is not equivalent in its pragmatic force, and this is caused by the use of amplification, discursive creation, reduction, adaptation, and modulation techniques. The high rate of pragmatic equivalence shows the translator's success in translating the text.

**Key words:** implicature, pragmatic force, pragmatic equivalence, translation technique

**1. Background of the Study**

Translating humor is not easy because the translated text should be humorous to the target readers, and to get the humor the target readers should understand the context of situation, which often relates to a specific culture or background knowledge. The complexity is even more in translating for children because the translator should also consider cultural acceptability as well as readability and didacticism. In doing so, a translator sometimes have to make some adjustments in translating, using various translation techniquis. In making the adjustments, however, the translator should also consider the intended meaning or pragmatic force of the original text so as not to ruin the plot of the story.

Complications may arise in translating humorous text for children. In the case of translating very complex utterances, for example, the translator may feel the need for simplifying the utterances for the sake of readability. In another case, when the expressions of the original text are not existent in the target language, the translator may want to alter them with other expressions available in the target language. Similarly, in cases where the humor relates to certain cultural or situational background, the translator might need to change or recreate the humor to suit with the anticipated target readers' knowledge and culture. These adjustments may inevitably cause non-equivalent pragmatic force.

This study tries to reveal what translation techniques are used in translating the humorous utterances in the *Walt Disney's Donald Duck* comics and how such use of techniques affect the pragmatic force and the humor of the utterances.

## 2. Theoretical Review and Methodology

### 2.1. Theoretical Review

Newmark (1988) defines translation as rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text. Such definition suggests the importance of maintaining the original author's intended meaning in the translated text. This means that in translating humorous utterances uttered by the characters of comics as written by the original author, the translator must also render the author's intended meaning, or what Thomas (1995) refers to it as pragmatic force. In addition, if a text is meant for humor, the humorous effect should also be maintained in its translation; a translated text should have equivalent effect to its target readers as compared to what the original text has with its original readers.

In accomplishing the translation task, a translator can explore different translation techniques in his effort to tackle the arising problems and produce good quality translation. This is also true in the case of translating humorous utterances to gain equivalent pragmatic force or implicatures and humor in the target text. Molina and Albir (2002) propose 18 translation techniques as follows: adaptation, amplification, borrowing, calque, compensation, description, discursive creation, established equivalent, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition, and variation. The translator should be capable of choosing the suitable translation techniques to cope with the problems faced in translating the utterances.

In analysing the pragmatic equivalence of the translation of the utterances, speech act theory as well as the notion of conversational implicatures can be used. According to the speech act theory, speech act is 'the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication' (Searle, 1969:16). Or, the smallest functional unit in human communication (Jaworowska, 2009:1). Searle (1975) divides speech acts into 5 types, i.e.: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration speech acts. The notion of conversational implicatures, or implicatures for short, as proposed by Grice (1975) represents the implicated meaning arises from the flouting of cooperative maxims, i.e. maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner.

Such use of Grice's cooperative maxims to analyse humor is justifiable as previous studies suggest that there is consensus in the studies of humor that a humorous text could violate one or more cooperative maxims (Attardo, 1993), which Mooney (2004) believes as unsuccessful violation. Mooney believes that if the violation is successful, then the humor will not be recognised by the hearer. In the case of humor, the non-observance of cooperative maxims is done unostentatiously, and thus it is not violation but flouting. Dynel (2008:6) agrees with Mooney, stating that "... maxims can be legitimately flouted for the sake of reaching a communicative goal, i.e. generating a humorous effect". The non-observance of cooperative maxims is intentionally done to create implicatures that the hearers are expected to catch.

Grice's cooperative principle has been used to analyse pragmatic equivalence by Baker (1992). Using this approach, a translator is viewed as a communicator that communicates a source text in a cooperative way with the target readers, following the four cooperative maxims. In other words, the translator is expected to consider the quantity of the information, the quality of the truth, the relevance or consistency of the context, and clarity of the translation. (Cuellar, n.d.:9).

### 2.2. Methodology

In this study 480 humorous utterances collected from 21 Walt Disney's *Donald Duck* comics and their translations were used as the data. The original English humorous utterances were confirmed by 4 native English speakers. Analyses were made on the use of translation techniques and on the equivalence of the implicatures of both the source text and target text.

To analyse the translation techniques used, the source text and target text were compared and Molina and Albir's (2002) classification of translation techniques previously mentioned was used, consisting of 18 techniques such as adaptation, amplification, borrowing, calque, compensation, description, discursive creation, established equivalent, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition, and variation.

To analyse the pragmatic equivalence, explicatures and implicatures of both the source and target texts were compared. Implicatures were analysed from the flouting of Grice's cooperative maxims. The illocutionary meanings or pragmatic force were then classified into 5 kinds according to Searle's (1975) classification, i.e.: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration. If both source text and target text have the same kind of illocutionary meaning or pragmatic force (i.e.: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration), they are considered pragmatically equivalent.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1. Translation Techniques Used

There are 647 uses of translation techniques to translate the 480 utterances as there are cases where one utterance is translated using more than one technique. Seventeen out of 18 translation techniques proposed by Molina & Albir (2002) have been chosen by the translator. The most prominently used are discursive creation (18.28%), reduction (16.47%), generalization (13.60%), established equivalent (9.37%), linguistic compression (8.46%), amplification (7.40%), literal translation (6.34%), and adaptation (6.04%). Other techniques have been less frequently used, each less than 5%, such as modulation (4.23%), compensation (3.8%), linguistic amplification (2.0%), variation (1.2%), particularization (1.1%), borrowing (0.6%), transposition (0.5%), description (0.3%), and calque (0.3%).

#### 3.2. Pragmatic Equivalence

The research findings reveal that of the 480 utterances, most are utterances with implicated meanings, and some are in the form of direct utterances that do not flout the cooperative maxims and thus do not have implicatures. The kinds of utterances used are parallel between the source text (ST) and text (TT); in both texts, expressive implicatures and explicatures are the most dominant (50.21% and 49.58% in ST and TT respectively), followed by representative implicatures and explicatures (25.00% and 24.58% in ST and TT respectively), directive explicatures and implicatures (18.33% and 19.38% in ST and TT respectively), commissive implicatures and explicatures (5.42% for both ST and TT), and declaration (1.04% for both ST and TT). In addition, the findings also reveal that there is a shift in the proportion of the explicatures and implicatures of the humorous utterances. In the ST, there are 425 data in the form of implicated utterances (88.54%), and 55 in the form of explicatures (11.46%); in their translations, the number of the implicated utterances decreases to 369 data (76.88%) and there are 111 data (23.12%) in the form of explicatures. The reduced implicated utterances and added explicatures in the TT show the explicitation technique used by the translator, which is categorized as amplification in Molina & Albir's classification of translation techniques. In addition, the re-creation of the humorous utterances made by the translator (classified as discursive creation under Molina & Albir's classification) has also caused the shift of the implicated utterances in ST into explicatures in the TT. Details of the analysis can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Types of Utterances in ST and TT

No.	Type of Utterance	Frequency											
		Form of Utterance in ST						Form of Utterance in TT					
		Implictr		Eksplictr		Total		Implictr		Eksplictr		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Expressive	222	46.25	19	3.96	241	50.21	193	40.21	45	9.38	238	49.58
2.	Represent.	102	21.25	18	3.75	120	25.00	92	19.17	26	5.41	118	24.58
3.	Directive	75	15.62	13	2.71	88	18.33	63	13.12	30	6.25	93	19.38
4.	Commissive	23	4.79	3	0.63	26	5.42	19	3.96	7	1.46	26	5.42
5.	Declaration	3	0.63	2	0.42	5	1.04	2	0.42	3	0.63	5	1.04
<b>Jumlah</b>		<b>425</b>	<b>88.54</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>11.46</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>76.88</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>23.12</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>

The above findings are analysed further for pragmatic equivalence:

**3.2.1. Pragmatically Equivalent**

In this study, ST and TT are said to have pragmatic equivalence if: (1) implicated utterances in ST are translated into the same implicated utterances in TT; (2) implicated utterances in ST are translated into explicatures of the same kind, and (3) explicatures are translated into the same kinds of explicatures. The result of analysis shows that in total there are 465 utterances (96.87%) whose translations are pragmatically equivalent. Breakdown of the analysis shows that:

- (1) There are 425 (88.54%) implicated utterances in ST, 367 utterances (76.46%) that are translated into implicated utterances of the same kind: expressive into expressive (40.00%), representative into representative (19.17%), directive into directive (12.91%), commissive into commissive (3.96%), and declaration into declaration (0.42%).
- (2) There are 43 implicated utterances (8.96%) in the ST that are translated into utterances of the same kind but with no implicatures in the TT, showing explicitation: expressive implicated utterances into expressive explicatures (4.79%), representative implicated utterances into representative explicatures (1.25%), directive implicated utterances into directive explicatures (2.29%), commissive implicated utterances into commissive explicature (0.42%), and declarative implicated utterances into declarative explicatures (0.42%).
- (3) There are 55 explicatures in the ST (11.46%) that are translated into explicatures of the same kinds: expressive (3.96%), representative (3.54%), directive (2.71%), commissive (0.63%), and declaration (0.21%).

In relation to the use of translation techniques, the pragmatically equivalent translations (96.87%) are resulted from the use of such translation techniques as generalization, established equivalent, linguistic compression, amplification, literal translation, compensation, linguistic amplification, variation, particularization, borrowing, transposition, description, and calque.

**3.2.2. Pragmatically non-equivalent**

In this study, ST and TT are said to have no pragmatic equivalence if: (1) implicated utterances are translated into implicated utterances but of different kinds; (2) implicated utterances are translated into explicatures of different kinds; and (3) explicatures are translated into explicatures of different kinds. The result of analysis shows that there are 15 humorous utterances (3.33%) that are translated into pragmatically non-equivalent utterances. The details are given below:

- (1) There are 2 implicated utterances (0.42%) that are translated into implicated utterances but of different kinds: representative into directive (0.21%), and directive into expressive (0.21%).
- (2) There are 12 implicated utterances (2.50%) that are translated into explicatures of different kinds: expressive into directive, expressive into representative, expressive into commissive, representative into expressive, representative into directive, directive into representative, and commissive into expressive.
- (3) There is only 1 utterance (11.46%) in the form of explicature that is translated into explicature of different kind (representative into directive).

The 3.13% pragmatically non-equivalent translations are resulted from the use of amplification, discursive creation, reduction, adaptation, and modulation techniques.

Despite the shifts in the implicatedness of the utterances from the ST into the ST, the figures show that the translator has endeavoured to maintain the pragmatic equivalence, which also means he/she has maintained the plot of the story. The table presented as appendix shows the detailed figures.

Below is an example of the non-equivalent translation:

*Context: As there is a llama spitting onto Donald, Donald intends to give the llama a lesson by pouring some water to it. Donald was warned by the zoo keeper not to do so because the llama was irritable. However, Donald did not listen and poured a lot of water to it instead. The llama was angry and attacked Donald. Running away in shock, Donald shouted:*

*ST: "Can't you take a joke?"*

*TT: "Tolooong!"*

BT: “Heeelp!”

(Note: BT=Back Translation)

The above example shows the use of implicated utterance in the ST, which is an expressive implicature of quipping or satirizing; it shows that Donald is questioning the llama for not being able to understand his joke; that the llama is so irritable. However, in the TT, the utterance is “*toloong!*” (“heeelp!”), which is an explicature asking for help.

### Conclusion

In translating the humorous utterances in Walt Disney’s *Donald Duck Comics* from English into Indonesian the translator’s choice of translation techniques has resulted in 96.87% of the translated humorous utterances being pragmatically equivalent. The use of such translation techniques as generalization, established equivalent, linguistic compression, amplification, literal translation, compensation, linguistic amplification, variation, particularization, borrowing, transposition, description, and calque has resulted in pragmatic equivalence between ST and TT. Only minor portion (3.13%) of the translated text is not pragmatically equivalent, and this is resulted from the use of discursive creation, reduction, adaptation, and modulation techniques.

### References:

- Attardo, S. 1993. “Violation of Conversational Maxim’s and Cooperation: the Case of Jokes” in *Journal of Pragmatics 19*
- Baker, M. 1992. *In Other Words: a course Book on Translation*. Sage Publication: London.
- Cuellar, S. B. n.d. *Equivalence Revisited: A Key Concept in Modern Translation Theory*. Article. Universidad Nacional de Colombia. [www.idiomtransfer.com/pdf/artikel1.pdf](http://www.idiomtransfer.com/pdf/artikel1.pdf). [downloaded] 13 April 2010.
- Dynel, M. 2008. ”Introduction to Special Issue on Humour: a Modest Attempt at Presenting Contemporary Linguistic Approaches to Humour Studies” in *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics 4.1, Special Issue on Humour*
- Grice, H. P. 1975. ”Logic and Conversation” dalam Cole, Peter and J. Morgan (ed.) *Syntax and Semantic: Speech Acts*. Academic Press: New York
- Jaworowska, J. 2009. “Speech Act Theory”. Article, <http://online.sfsu.edu/~kbach/spchacts.html> [downloaded] 25 January 2009
- Molina, L & Albir, A.H. 2002. “Translation Technique Revisited: A Dynamic and Functionalist Approach” in *Meta: Translators’ Journal, Vol. XLVII, No. 4*. p.p. 499-512. <http://cat.inist.fr/?aModele=afficheN &cpsidt=14447481> [downloaded] 2 February 2009
- Molina, L. & Albir, A.H. 2002. “Translation Technique Revisited: a Dynamic and Functionalist Approach” in *Meta: Translators’ Journal, Vol. XLVII, no. 4*. p.p. 499-512. <http://cat.inist.fr/?aModele=afficheN &cpsidt=14447481> (downloaded) February 2, 2009
- Mooney, A. 2004. “Co-operation, Violations and Making Sense”. in *Journal of Pragmatics 36*
- Newmark, P. 1988. *A textbook of Translation*. Pergamon Press: Oxford.
- Searle, J. R. 1975. “Indirect Speech Act” dalam Cole, Peter, and J. Morgan (ed.) *Syntax and Semantics: Speech Acts*. Academic Press: New York
- Searle, J.R. 1969. *Speech Acts: an Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Thomas, J. 1995. *Meaning in Interaction: an Introduction to Pragmatics*. Longman: London and New York

Appendix

Pragmatic Equivalence in the English-Indonesian Translation of Walt Disney's *Donald Duck Comics*

No.	Form of Utterance		Frequency		Pragmatic Equivalence
	ST	TT	No.	%	
<b>Implicated Utterance into Implicated Utterance of the Same Kind</b>					
1	Expressive implictr.	Expressive implictr.	192	40,00	Equivalent
2	Represent. implictr.	Represent. Implictr.	92	19,16	Equivalent
3	Directive implictr.	Directive implictr.	62	12,92	Equivalent
4	Commissive implctr.	Commissive implctr.	19	3,96	Equivalent
5	Declarative implctr.	Declarative implctr.	2	0,42	Equivalent
			<b>367</b>	<b>76,46</b>	
<b>Implicated Utterance into Explicature of the Same Kind</b>					
6	Expressive implictr.	Expressive explictr.	23	4,79	Equivalent
7	Represent. implictr.	Represent. explictr.	6	1,25	Equivalent
8	Directive implictr.	Directive explictr.	11	2,29	Equivalent
9	Commissive implctr.	Commissive explictr.	3	0,63	Equivalent
10	Declarative implctr.	Declarative explictr.	1	0,21	Equivalent
			<b>44</b>	<b>9,17</b>	
<b>Explicature into Explicature of the Same Kind</b>					
11	Expressive explictr.	Expressive explictr.	19	3,96	Equivalent
12	Represent. explictr.	Represent. explictr.	17	3,54	Equivalent
13	Directive explictr.	Directive explictr.	13	2,71	Equivalent
14	Commissive explictr.	Commissive explictr.	3	0,63	Equivalent
15	Declarative explictr.	Declarative explictr.	2	0,21	Equivalent
			<b>54</b>	<b>11,25</b>	
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>465</b>	<b>96,87</b>	
<b>Implicated Utterance into Implicated Utterance of Different Kind</b>					
16	Represent. implictr.	Directive implictr.	1	0,21	Non-equivalent
17	Directive implictr.	Expressive implictr.	1	0,21	Non-equivalent
			<b>2</b>	<b>0,42</b>	
<b>Implicated Utterance into Explicature of Different Kind</b>					
18	Expressive implictr.	Directive explictr.	4	0,83	Non-equivalent
19	Expressive implictr.	Represent. explictr.	2	0,42	Non-equivalent
20	Expressive implictr.	Commissive explictr.	1	0,21	Non-equivalent
21	Represent. implictr.	Commissive explictr.	2	0,42	Non-equivalent
22	Represent. implictr.	Directive explictr.	1	0,21	Non-equivalent
23	Directive implictr.	Represent. explictr.	1	0,21	Non-equivalent
24	Directive implictr.	Expressive explictr.	1	0,21	Non-equivalent
			<b>12</b>	<b>2,50</b>	
<b>Explicature – Explicature of Different Kind</b>					
25	Represent. explictr.	Directive explictr.	1	0,21	Non-equivalent
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>3,13</b>	
<b>Total</b>			<b>480</b>	<b>100</b>	