Humor Subtitling in Stand-Up Comedy Raditya Dika

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Abstract: *Translating humor is challenging since it is often culture-specific. This study analyzes the types of humor and the strategies used in subtitling the humor in the video Stand Up Comedy Raditya Dika 2019. This study aims to find out whether the humorous effect can be preserved in the English translation. This study is descriptive qualitative research. The humorous elements were classified based on the humor category proposed by Raphaelson-West (1989). The subtitling strategies were analyzed by using the framework proposed by Gottlieb (1992). The findings show that there are three types of humor found in the data. There are cultural humor, universal humor, and linguistic humor. The subtitling strategies applied in translating humorous utterances are transfer, expansion, and paraphrase. The findings of the study indicated that universal humor could be transferred into other languages without significant challenges since it does not include specific cultural references. However, linguistic and cultural differences may create major issues in transferring the humorous effects into the TL. The audience needs to be familiar with the source language culture to comprehend the jokes. The study of humor translation from Indonesian to English is rarely conducted. Therefore, the result of this study contributes new insight into the field of humor translation.*

Keywords: *Humor, Subtitling, Stand-up Comedy*

Abstrak: Penerjemahan humor memiliki tantangan tersendiri karena seringkali mengandung unsur-unsur budaya tertentu. Penelitian ini menganalisis jenis-jenis humor dan strategi yang digunakan dalam menerjemahkan humor di video Stand Up Comedy Raditya Dika 2019. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah efek humor bisa dipertahankan dalam terjemahan Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif. Unsur-unsur humor dikategorikan berdasarkan kategori humor menurut Raphaelson-West (1989). Strategi penerjemahan takarir dianalisis menggunakan teori oleh Gottlieb (1992). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan ada tiga jenis humor yang ditemukan dalam data, yaitu humor budaya, humor universal, dan humor linguistik. Strategi penerjemahan takarir yang digunakan dalam menerjemahkan humor adalah transfer, ekspansi, dan parafrasa. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa humor universal bisa dengan diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa lain tanpa kendala berarti karena tidak mengandung unsur-unsur budaya yang spesifik. Namun, perbedaan budaya dan linguistik dapat menciptakan tantangan besar dalam menyampaikan efek humor ke bahasa sasaran. Penonton harus memiliki pengetahuan tentang budaya bahasa sumber untuk memahami humor tersebut. Penelitian tentang penerjemahan humor dari bahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Inggris jarang dilakukan. Oleh karena itu, hasil penelitian ini memberikan perspektif baru pada bidang penerjemahan humor.

Kata kunci: Humor, Penerjemahan Takarir, Komedi Tunggal

1. INTRODUCTION

Any translator who has ever tried to translate humor will understand how challenging it is to produce the same humorous effect in the target language (TL). This is due to the fact that humor is often culture-specific. Something hilarious in one culture might not be considered funny in another. The recipients need to be knowledgeable regarding the people, events, lifestyle, values, and customs of the source culture to understand the humor context (Chiaro, 2017). Moreover, translating humor poses another challenge since it often plays with linguistic forms such as wordplay or puns. If the linguistic humor does not have an equivalent in the TL,

the translator usually has no option but to reduce or leave out the humorous elements (Zolczer, 2016).

As in the case of translating humor in subtitling, the challenges will be added by the constraints of this mode of audiovisual translation. According to Hatim and Mason (1997), there are four main constraints in subtitling. The first one is the shift in mode from speech to written text. As a result, certain speech features may not be represented in the subtitle. The second constraint is physical limitations such as the available space and display time for the subtitle to appear on the screen. The third one is source text reduction as a consequence of the first and the second constraint. Finally, there is a requirement to match the subtitle with the visual image on the screen, which creates an additional constraint. When it comes to humor subtitling, if the translator manages to overcome all of the limitations with a good subtitle, whether the humorous effects are preserved or lost in the subtitle is another problem (Spanakaki, 2007).

Gottlieb (1992) states that in assessing the quality of subtitling, the rendering of each verbal element must be analyzed in regard to its semantic and stylistic values. He proposed ten subtitling strategies as follows: (1) expansion, (2) paraphrase, (3) transfer, (4) imitation, (5) transcription, (6) dislocation, (7) condensation, (8) decimation, (9) deletion, and (10) resignation. These strategies can be found in the translation of different genres, including humor translation.

Humor can be classified into different types based on various perspectives (Kianbakht, 2015). Several scholars have categorized humor into specific types. Raphaelson-West (1989) divided humor into three categories: (1) linguistic humor, such as puns, (2) cultural humor, such as ethnic jokes, (3) universal humor, such as the unexpected, unusual response. She stated that by following the above order, the jokes are respectively more challenging to translate.

The study conducted by Sukerti and Basthomi (2016) analyzed the strategies employed in subtitling the American TV series *Friends*. It examined whether the strategies applied by the translator were able to preserve the humorous effect intended by the original humor. The research has found that literal translation is the most frequently used strategy, resulting in a less humorous effect in the TL. The researchers also concluded that humor is not accepted in the same way across cultures, and linguistic differences create a significant obstacle in finding the equivalent and the laughing matter in the TL.

Giusti and Budiharjo (2015) have also conducted research that focuses on analyzing joke translation in the movie *Date Night* and explaining how the translation techniques affect the translation quality in terms of accuracy and acceptability. The analysis shows that 66 data (83.54%) were translated using a combination of two to six techniques, and 13 data (16.46%) were translated using single techniques. The technique that produces the largest number of accurate translations is transfer, while decimation produces the largest number of less accurate translations. Based on the result, the translator has successfully translated most of the jokes. However, less acceptable translation results from the use of uncommon terminologies, unnatural expressions, inappropriate dictions, and incomplete punctuation marks.

Another research related to humor translation was conducted by Nufus (2014). The study aims at identifying the types of humor translation and their acceptability in the TL. The result shows that cultural humor is found the most in the data, and the translation is acceptable. The writer also stated that cultural differences might influence the acceptability of cultural humor translation. In addition, less information about source language (SL) culture may cause errors in translating the cultural humor.

There are two main differences between the current research and the research explained above. Firstly, the previous study aimed to find out how humorous utterances were translated

from English into Indonesian. In contrast, the current research aims at analyzing humor translation from a different point of view, that is, how Indonesian humor is translated into English. Secondly, instead of using movies or tv series as the data source, the current research analyzes the data from an Indonesian stand-up comedy video.

Stand-up comedy is a type of joke performance that is generally delivered by a solo performer called a comic. The comic usually stands on a stage and speaks directly to the audience (Fitri et al., 2018). Even though stand-up comedy is delivered in a humorous mood of interaction, this does not mean that the materials conveyed by the comic are not serious (Wijana, 2016). In many cases, comic often uses stand-up comedy as a medium for social critics and persuasion. The joke materials in stand-up comedy can provoke the audience to think critically without losing the sense of its humor (Badara, 2018).

Stand-up comedy in Indonesia started booming when Metro TV first broadcasted the show in 2011. In the present day, stand-up comedy is very popular among Indonesian youth. The videos of the performances are usually uploaded to online video platforms like YouTube, which attract many viewers. There are several influential comics in the development of stand-up comedy in Indonesia; one of them is Raditya Dika. He is one of the founders of a comedy community called Stand Up Comedy Indonesia (Noftriana et al., 2014). His YouTube channel has more than nine million subscribers, making it one of Indonesia's most subscribed YouTube channels.

Based on the background, this research aims to find out the types of humor and the subtitling strategies applied in translating humor in the video Stand Up Comedy Raditya Dika (SUCRD) 2019. The researcher is interested in analyzing how Indonesian humor is translated into English and whether the strategies applied are successful in preserving the humorous effect in the TL. Since the research in humor subtitling from Indonesian to English is rarely conducted, this research offers a new perspective in the field of humor translation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is descriptive qualitative research. Creswell (2014) stated that "qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem". The research process involves emerging questions and procedures, collecting data, analyzing the data, and making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The data of this study is the humorous utterances from the video Stand Up Comedy Raditya Dika (SUCRD) 2019 and its English subtitles. The data source was obtained from Raditya Dika's YouTube channel. The video was uploaded on 12 January 2019 and viewed more than 33 million times in May 2021. The video was chosen as the data source since it is one of the most viewed stand-up comedy videos in Indonesia.

There are three steps in collecting and analyzing the data. In the first step, the researcher observed all the utterances and identified the humorous elements in the video Stand Up Comedy Raditya Dika (SUCRD) 2019. The second step was transcribing the monologue performed by the comic and its corresponding subtitles in English. The last step was data analysis. The humorous elements were categorized based on the humor category by Raphaelson-West (1989). For the analysis of the subtitling, the researcher applied the types of subtitling strategies based on a framework proposed by Gottlieb (1992).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings show that there are three types of humor found in Stand Up Comedy Raditya Dika (SUCRD) 2019. There are cultural humor, universal humor, and linguistic humor. The subtitling strategies applied in translating humorous utterances are transfer, expansion, and paraphrase. In subtitling cultural and linguistic humor, the translator mostly applied expansion

and paraphrase strategies. In the subtitling of universal humor, transfer strategy is frequently applied.

3.1. Datum 1

SL:

Udah tua banget gue. Udah, nonton tv juga udah males ganti channel.
Dulu masih pake...
Apa ya kalo lo misalnya nonton tv, remotenya ga ada, ya kan.
Lo berdiri kan, berdiri, nyari remote.
Sekarang remotenya ga ada gimana caranya kaki gue nyampe?

TL:

I really am old. And now I can't be bothered to change the channel on TV.
I used to... Let's say when you're watching TV, you don't have the remote with you.
So you stand up and find the remote.
Nowadays, if I can't find the remote, I think of ways for my foot to reach the TV.

(Dika, 2019, 00:02:20-00:02:37)

In the above situation, Raditya Dika shared his experience of getting old, which made him not as energetic as when he was younger. The humorous element was in the part when he said that he was too lazy to get up and find the remote and thought about how his foot could reach the TV instead. The comedy bit falls under the category of universal humor because the problems of getting old are experienced by people from any culture. Therefore, people from different cultural backgrounds could also relate to this joke. The translator applied transfer strategy since the source utterance is translated literally. The strategy is suitable with the context since the discourse is neutral.

3.2. Datum 2

SL:

Ini situasinya pas gue lagi lamaran nih. Selesai lamaran ada wartawan.
Mas Radit kalo misalnya punya anak, mau punya anak berapa?
Gue bilang saya pengen punya anak sebelas. Biar kayak Gen Halilintar.
Becanda, becanda. Ya kan sekarang banyak anak banyak Adsense kan.
TL:
It was during my engagement party. After the party, there were reporters.
"Radit, how many children do you want to have?"
I said I wanted to have 11 children.
So I can be like Gen Halilintar (famous family of Indonesian YouTubers).
Just kidding. Nowadays, the more children you have, the more Adsense you get.

(Dika, 2019, 00:04:07-00:04:23)

Datum 2 is an example of cultural humor since it has culture-specific references. In order to understand the joke, the audience needs to be familiar with the Gen Halilintar family. The family members have their own YouTube channels, which have millions of subscribers. The funny bit comes from the comic's statement, "the more children you have, the more Adsense you get," which refers to an old Indonesian saying, "*banyak anak banyak rejeki*" which means "the more children you have, the more fortune you get". However, the comic plays with the saying to refer that YouTube Adsense is a source of wealth for the Gen Halilintar family. The translator applied expansion strategy by adding an explanation about Gen Halilintar in the

brackets. However, even though there is an explanation of the context, if the audience is not familiar with Gen Halilintar, the intended humorous effect will not be well-comprehended.

3.3. Datum 3
SL:

Udah gitu fansnya Gen Halilintar juga sebel sama gue.

Maksudnya gue kan menghargai keluarga mereka.

Gue pingin seperti kalian… punya banyak Adsense...

Bisa jalan ke mana-mana, ya kan?

Pengen, gue pengen banget punya bayi lahir dari istri gue...

Trus langsung teriak asiap! Kan gue juga...

Gue juga pengen gitu.

TL:

And then fans of Gen Halilintar also send me hate.

I meant that I respect their family.

I want to be like them, having a lot of Adsense...

Traveling around the world, right?

I do want to have a baby with my wife...

Who would shout out hello! (imitating a Halilintar member)

I would love that.

(Dika, 2019, 00:05:12-00:05:34)

Datum 3 is another case of culture-based humor. The comic is imitating a catchphrase, "*asiap*" which is made popular by Atta Halilintar. The catchphrase stems from the Indonesian word "*siap*" which means "ready". The audience can comprehend the joke if they are familiar with the catchphrase, how it is used, and who made the term famous. There is additional information in the brackets to explain the catchphrase. However, the humorous effect of the catchphrase "*asiap*" is not transferred well into the TL since the translator translated it into a general expression "hello". This strategy can be categorized as paraphrase since the meaning of the SL term is altered.

3.4. Datum 4
SL:

Gue kan di industri film ya...

Gue selalu minta makeup artist banci karena lucu aja ada mereka.

Nanti mereka berantem sama banci yang lain, ya kan?

Kemaren kok lo gitu sih neng? Segala macem gitu.

Seru ngeliatinnya, kadang bisa dikagetin. Mereka pada latah kan biasanya.

"Dor!"

"Ayam ayam ayam!" Gitu kan.

TL:

I work in the film industry...

And I always ask for makeup artists who are sissies because it's just fun having them around. They would fight with each other...

"Sis, why did you do that?" and stuff.

It's fun to watch. Sometimes we try to scare them because they get scared easily.

"Boo!"

"Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy!" Right?

(Dika, 2019, 00:07:11-00:07:29)

Datum 4 represents cultural humor. The comic shared his experience with transgender people. He stated that he enjoys their presence since they are fun to be around. The comic made the joke about how transgender people usually react when they are startled. They usually exclaim "*Ayam, ayam, ayam!*" which literally means "chicken, chicken, chicken". The translator applied paraphrase strategy by translating the exclamation into "Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy!" which sounds more natural in the TL.

3.5. *Datum 5*

SL:

Tapi gue bilang ke semua orang. Gue bilang kalo gue mo ngomongin mereka.
Ke Young Lex. Young Lex abis banget tuh di stand up gue kemaren, di SUCRD.
Tapi gue foto tempatnya, gue kasih liat. Gue punya Line dia, gue fotoin tempatnya.
Gue kasih liat, ini micnya, ini buku materinya, ini tempatnya, gue kirim semua ke dia.
Gue minta izin sama dia, gue bilang...
"Young..."
Young Lex kan? Ya dipanggilnya apa dong? Young, dong?

TL:

But I actually tell people before I talk about them.
For example, Young Lex, who I roasted in my previous SUCRD.
I showed him the place. I have his LINE, so I took a picture of the place.
I showed him the mic, my notes, the place, I sent it all to him.
I asked for his permission. I said...
"Young..." (sounds like "Yang" or "Sayang", Indonesian for "Honey" or "Darling")
His name is Young Lex, right? What else should I call him? Young, right?

(Dika, 2019, 00:14:20-00:14:49)

The datum above can be categorized as linguistic humor since the comic plays with two words that have the same sound, "Young" and "Yang". "Young" refers to an Indonesian rapper named Young Lex, and "Yang" is the short version of the Indonesian word "*Sayang*" which means "Honey" or "Darling". The humorous effect came from the part when the comic called Young Lex "Young" which sounds like "Yang". It sounds funny to the audience since both the comic and Young Lex are male. The translator explained this joke by applying expansion strategy in the form of additional information in the brackets. However, the foreign audience might still not comprehend this joke if they are not familiar with Young Lex and the word "*sayang*" in the Indonesian language.

3.6. *Datum 6*

SL:
Berita di infotainment yang keluar...
Lamaran Raditya Dika membuktikan...
...bahwa cowok humoris mengalahkan cowok ganteng.
Berarti kan gue jelek ya?
TL:
The news that came out...
Raditya Dika's engagement proves that...
...funny guys can beat handsome guys.
That means I'm ugly, right?

(Dika, 2019, 00:27:38-00:27:50)

The comedy bit shown in datum 6 is another case of universal humor since it does not contain specific cultural references. The humorous effect is produced by the comic's conclusion regarding the headline about him. The comic stated that the headline made fun of him by implicitly saying that he is funny but not handsome. The translator applied transfer strategy by translating the SL adequately. The audience can understand this joke without having specific cultural knowledge.

3.7. *Datum 7*

SL:

Kita nyobain makanannya satu-satu dan gue ga tau lo kayak gini juga apa engga ya karena ternyata mereka menilai nikahan dari makanannya. Dan itu lazim ternyata.

Jadi mereka nyobain, gue inget banget nih, makan siomay.

"Ih siomaynya ga enak. Pasti ikan sapu-sapu."

Ini kawinan orang! Lo dateng sukur kalo diundang, kenapa lo hina-hina?

Wah gila gue setres banget gue liat, ini kawinan gue gimana nih.

Mana emang gue mau pake ikan sapu-sapu lagi. Biar murah kan.

TL:

We tried each menu there, and I don't know if this applies to you, but people judge a wedding from its food. And that is a normal thing to do.

So they tried everything. I remember we were trying the siomay.

"Ugh, this siomay is terrible. Must be made from catfish."

This is someone's wedding!

Be thankful that you're invited. Why are you hating on them?

I was so stressed seeing all of this, thinking about my wedding.

Especially I was planning to use catfish, too. To make it cheaper.

(Dika, 2019, 00:35:54-00:36:27)

Datum 7 is another representation of universal humor. The comic told the audience about his experience attending his friend's wedding and how the guests criticized the food harshly because it did not taste good. The funny part comes from the comic's statement at the end of the bit. People would think that the comic would avoid using catfish for the menu in his wedding so that the guests would not criticize him. Instead, he stated that he was planning to use catfish to make the food cost lower. This type of unexpected response can be categorized as universal humor. In this case, transfer strategy is used by the translator. There is no significant alteration in the English subtitle.

3.8. *Datum 8*

SL:

Ini dokter yang ngebidanin, bukan itu apa ya istilahnya ya, dia obgyn-nya nyokap gue.

"Masi inget saya ga?" Gue bilang.

"Siapa ya?" Dia bilang.

"Saya dulu lahir dokter bantuin."

"Oh ya, ya. Agak beda ya."

"Iya dokter. Emang beda. Saya agak berubah sih. Dulu kayak jenglot gitu sekarang kayak..."

TL:

This doctor was the one who helped my mother. He was my mom's obgyn.

"Do you remember me?" I asked.
"Who are you?" he replied.
"You helped with my birth."
"Oh, right."
"You look different."
"Yes, doctor. I do. I have changed. I was so tiny back then, but now..."

(Dika, 2019, 00:55:05-00:55:38)

There is a cultural reference that the audience needs to know to understand the humor in datum 8. The funny bit came from the part when the comic said that he looked like a "*jenglot*" when he was a baby. "*Jenglot*" is a deformed humanoid creature in Indonesian mythology. It is tiny and has a scary appearance. The translator translated the part "*Dulu kayak jenglot*" into "I was so tiny back then" which does not explain well how a "*jenglot*" looks. As a result, the humorous element is lost in the TL. The subtitling strategy applied in this case is paraphrase since there is an altered expression in the translation.

3.9. Datum 9

SL:
"Ayo kita cek dulu," gitu kan.
"Silakan duduk," gitu.
Dia gandeng gue, "Bukan saya yang hamil dok, saya buncit doang dok."

TL:
"Let's check," he said.
"Have a seat."
He took my hand. "I'm not the one who is pregnant. I'm just fat."

(Dika, 2019, 00:56:37-00:56:46)

Datum 9 can be comprehended easily by the audience from any cultural background. The joke stems from the fact that the comic has a big belly which makes him look like a pregnant woman. This joke can be categorized as universal humor. The translator applied transfer strategy in translating the SL utterance since it was translated completely.

3.10. Datum 10

SL:
Apapun yang dia mau, gue turutin. Gue suami siaga.
Apapun yang dia mau. "Sayang aku ngidam, aku pengen yakiniku."
"Siap sayang!" Pergi, ambil hape.
"Go-Food!"

TL:
Whatever she wants, I would be there. I was on standby.
Whatever she wants. "Honey, I want to eat yakiniku."
"I got you!" So I would leave and get my phone.
"Use Go-Food!" (like Uber-Eats)

(Dika, 2019, 00:59:05-00:56:46)

In the datum above, the comic stated that he was ready to get anything for his pregnant wife. The humor came from the unexpected part when he mentioned that all he had to do was

ordering food online from Go-Food instead of getting the food himself. The humor can be categorized as cultural since Go-Food is a service providing food delivery in Indonesia. In order to understand the joke, the audience needs to be familiar with Go-Food and what kind of service it provides. The translator did a good job explaining Go-Food by comparing it to Uber-Eats, a similar service which is popular in other countries. In this case, the translator applied expansion strategy by providing extra information in the brackets.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

There are three types of humor found in Stand Up Comedy Raditya Dika (SUCRD) 2019. There are cultural humor, universal humor, and linguistic humor. Different subtitling strategies have been applied to transfer the humorous elements into the TL. The identified strategies are transfer, expansion, and paraphrase. The findings of the study indicated that universal humor could be translated into other languages without significant challenges since it does not include specific cultural references. People from any cultural background could relate to the joke and understand the funny bit. However, linguistic and cultural differences may create major challenges in transferring the humorous effects into the TL. Even the use of expansion strategy by providing additional information might not help very much. The audience needs to be familiar with the SL culture in order to comprehend the jokes.

Indonesian humor is a great medium to introduce Indonesian culture to other countries. An adequate translation or subtitling is required to transfer the message or the intended effect. This research is a small part of research on Indonesian-English humor subtitling in the field of audiovisual translation. Therefore, this topic can be developed further by analyzing the translation of Indonesian humor from other sources, such as movies or TV shows.

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