ENGLISH WORDPLAY IN SPONGEBOB MOVIES AND THEIR TRANSLATED EXPRESSIONS IN BAHASA INDONESIA SUBTITLE

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ABSTRACT

This research has three objectives: 1) to describe the types of the wordplay, 2) to describe the techniques used by translator to translate the wordplay, and 3) to describe the degree of equivalence of the translation of the wordplay in SpongeBob movies. This research employed descriptive qualitative as the main method. The forms of data of this research were words and phrases containing wordplay in the movies. They were collected manually from the original VCDs of SpongeBob movies: The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie and SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water and their Bahasa Indonesia subtitle. The findings of this research show that six types of wordplay are found. They are homonymy, homography, paronymy, idiom, syntactic structure and morphological development. Among them, morphological development is in the highest number. Then, the techniques used by translator to translate the wordplay are wordplay to wordplay, wordplay to non-wordplay, wordplay to zero, wordplay in the target text is the same with the source text, and multiple techniques: editorial technique and wordplay in the target text is the same with the source text. The last findings show 74% of the wordplays are translated equivalent, 16% of the wordplays are translated non-equivalent, and 8% of the wordplays are unrealized or not translated.

Keywords: translation, subtitle, wordplay, SpongeBob
I. INTRODUCTION

Children’s animated movies are getting more popular these days. One of the most popular children animated movies is *SpongeBob*. *SpongeBob* is one of the animated movies popular not only among children but also among adults. Although almost all of the stories of this movie are simple and child-friendly, adults also can enjoy this movie because sometimes this movie deals with difficult dialogues or humours that can only be understood by adults.

Humour mainly becomes a hot topic in *SpongeBob* movies. Wordplays are usually used to create these humours. Wordplay is known as a play on language. Wordplay is considered as a part of culture. It brings information that can only be understood by a community which belongs to the culture. Wordplay can be a problem when not all people understand the meaning or what message that the wordplay is carrying. This problem often occurs when people in the different cultures or even countries try to read or watch some works that contain wordplay. In the *SpongeBob* Movies for instance, there are many wordplays that can only be accepted in English. To solve this problem, translation is necessary.

Translating a wordplay is challenging because it creates such problem like when the source text wordplay is translated into non-wordplay in the target text and therefore it makes the effect of the wordplay being lost. Whether serious or comical, wordplay creates linguistic problems of translatability because different languages have different meaning-form distributions (Delabastita 2004: 601).

According to the phenomena above, the researcher decides to analyse wordplays in *SpongeBob* movies. The first movie was released in November 19, 2004 and the second movie was released in February 6, 2015.

This research focuses on wordplays in *SpongeBob* movies and the techniques to translate them in Bahasa Indonesia subtitle. In translating the wordplays, the translator must considers the equivalent between the wordplays in source text and their translation in Bahasa Indonesia subtitle. To get
accurate and equivalent meaning, a translator must know what meaning he or she should produce.

Based on the background and the research focus, the objective of the research are to identify the types of wordplays used in \textit{SpongeBob} movies, to identify the translations techniques used in translating \textit{SpongeBob} movies into Bahasa Indonesia subtitle, and to identify the degree of equivalence of the translation of wordplays in \textit{SpongeBob} movies into Bahasa Indonesia subtitle.

\section*{II. THEORETICAL REVIEW}

According to Nida (1975: 33), “translating consists in producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the message of the source language, first in meaning and secondly in style”. This explanation can be applied in a movie translation or audiovisual translation. In a movie, translation can be in the form of subtitle. Therefore, the translation of the written text in the target text should equivalent with the original verbal message in the source text.

In translating wordplays, sometimes the translator cannot maintain both the meaning and the style in the target text. To solve the problem, the translator should applied the right technique to translate them. Since, wordplay is a unique phenomenon, the technique to translating it also should be unique and different. Thus, translation technique of wordplay by Delabastita is chosen by the researcher.

In translating texts, both the source text and the target text should have the same meaning and style in the same context. Bell (1991: 6) mentions equivalence can be in different degrees (fully or partially equivalent), different levels of presentation (equivalent in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexis, etc.) and at different ranks (word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase, sentence-for- sentence). He also adds that the idea of total equivalence in the translation equivalence is a chimera. Since every word has their own codes, rules, and grammatical structure, there is no absolute synonym between words even in the same language.

To answer the first question of this research, the researcher uses four basic categories of wordplay by
Delabastita (1993:102). They are: 1) phonological structure; homonymy, homography, homophon, and paronymy; 2) lexical development; polisemy and idiom; 3) syntactic structure; and 4) morphological development.

To translate the wordplay, the researcher uses technique by Delabastita (1996). They are: 1) wordplay to wordplay; 2) wordplay to non-wordplay; 3) using rethorical devices; 4) wordplay to zero; 5) wordplay TT = ST; 6) editorial technique. Beside the six techniques mentioned above, there are possibilities that the wordplay is translated using more than one technique. Wordplay that is translated using two or more techniques is called multiple techniques.

The last question of this research is equivalent. The researcher uses theory of equivalent by Bell (1991). There are 4 categories of equivalent by Bell (modified): 1) fully equivalent; 2) partially equivalent; 3) non-equivalent; 4) unrealized.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is using a qualitative method to describe ways to translate wordplays and to know the degree of meaning equivalence. This research is also using quantitative method to examine the occurrence of the types of wordplay, techniques to translate the wordplay, and degree of equivalence.

The data in this research are in the forms of spoken words, phrases or sentences to be considered as wordplay that are found in SpongeBob movies and their Bahasa Indonesia subtitles texts. The context of the data was the dialogues of the characters in SpongeBob movies. The movies were taken from original VCDs of SpongeBob movies: The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie and The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water.

The researcher is the key instrument for collecting, measuring, and analysing the data. Then the researcher used data sheets to record words, phrases and sentences that contain wordplay. The trustworthiness of this research is gained by using credibility. To
increase the credibility, the researcher also used triangulation.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research showed three findings. Firstly, there are six categories of wordplay found in this research. They are, homonymy, homography, synonymy, idiom, syntactic structure, and morphological development. Morphological developments has the most data with 10 out of total 25 data and the highest percentage 40%. Secondly, 5 techniques of translating the wordplay are found in this research. They are wordplay to wordplay, wordplay to non-wordplay, using rhetorical devices, wordplay to zero, and wordplay in the target text is the same with wordplay in the source text. Moreover, it is found one technique called multiple techniques because in this case more than one technique is used. Out of total 25 data, wordplay to non-wordplay has the most data with 16 data or 64%. Thirdly, there are four degree of equivalence in translating wordplay in this research. They are fully equivalent, partially equivalent, non-equivalent, and unrealized. Out of total 25 data, 17 data or 68% of the translation wordplay in *SpongeBob* movies are partially equivalent.

1. Types of wordplay in *SpongeBob* movies

a. Homonymy

There are two data that is found in the movies.

**SE:**

SPONGEBOB: Get him, The Rodent!

SANDY: Consider him roasted! aw, nuts! I’m all out of nuts!

**TE:**

SPONGEBOB: Kalahkan dia The Rodent!

SANDY: Tentu saja! sial, aku kehabisan kacang!

(Datum 21/Hm/WNW/Pq/01:13:06)

There word ‘nuts’ in the datum above has two meanings. The first ‘nuts’ (/nt/ ) is the expression of angry and the second ‘nuts’ (/nt/) refers to the dry fruit of particular trees which grows in a hard shell and can often be eaten. The word ‘nuts’ here can be categorized into homonymy because
they have the same spelling and pronunciation.

In the translation of Bahasa Indonesia, the translator translated the wordplay literally. The expression of angry ‘nuts’ translated into ‘sial’ and the actual ‘nuts’ translated into ‘Kacang’. In Bahasa Indonesia there is no similar word to ‘Kacang’ that can express the anger.

b. Homography

Homography refers to a word which is spelled the same as another word and might be pronounced the same or differently, but which has a different meaning.

SE:
PLANKTON: Where do you think you're going?
BURGER BEARD: Why don't you get going, little fella, before you hurt yourself?
SPONGEBOB: Plankton?
PLANKTON: It's Plank-Ton!

TE:
PLANTON: Mau pergi kemana kau?
BURGER BEARD: Kenapa kau tak pergi saja, dasar kecil, sebelum kau melukai dirimu sendiri.
SPONGEBOB: Plankton?
PLANKTON: Aku PlankTon.

The wordplay in the datum above can be found in the name ‘Plankton’. When SpongeBob call the name ‘Plankton’ (/ˈplæŋk.tən/), Plankton himself corrects his name becomes ‘PlankTon’ (/ˈplæŋk.tən/). He changes his name according to the super power he has. He becomes stronger and bigger. The name of Plankton becomes a wordplay because they share the same writing but different pronunciatin. In Bahasa Indonesia subtitle, the translator simply transfers the wordplay from the source text to the target text.

c. Paronymy

There are seven data of wordplay categorized as paronymy found in this research.

SE:
MR. KRABS: Knock, knock.
PLANKTON: Oh, boy. Who's there?
MR. KRABS: Jimmy.
PLANKTON: Jimmy who?
MR. KRABS: Jimmy back my formuler, Plankton!

TE:
MR. KRABS: Tok, tok.
PLANKTON: Ya ampun, siapa disana?
MR. KRABS: Jimmy.
PLANKTON: Jimmy siapa?

MR. KRABS: Jimmy back my formula, Plankton! (Kembali formula-ku, Plankton)

(Datum 14/Pr/TT=ST/Edt/Fq/00:15)

The word ‘Jimmy’(/ˈdʒɪ.mi/) has identical pronunciation with ‘Gimme’ (/ˈgɪm.i/ ) which is a short form of ‘Give me’. In the translation of Bahasa Indonesia, the translator does not put any changes in the ‘Jimmy’. The translator adds a note at the end of the sentence to maintain the form of joke itself. The translator leaves the joke as the way it is because knock-knock joke is not common in Bahasa Indonesia.

d. Idiom

There are four data categorized as idiom in this research.

SE:
SPONGEBOB: Wait a minute, Patrick, look! He's got a tank!
PLANKTON: Well, Krabs, you're certainly in a pickle now!

TE:
SPONGEBOB: Tunggu sebentar Patrick, lihat musuh memiliki sebuah tank.

PLANKTON: Baiklah Krab, sekarang kau mendapat serangan acar.

(Datum 12/Id/WNW/Nq/00:08:16)

‘in a pickle’ can be interpreted into two different meanings. The first is an idiom and the second is interpreted according to the situation. The situation that happens in the movie is Plankton shoots pickles to Mr. Krabs’ restaurant, and the ‘you're certainly in a pickle now’ is an appropriate expression. Furthermore, ‘In a pickle’, as an idiom, is also an appropriate expression because it has a meaning to be in difficult situation.

In the target expression, the idiom translated into ‘mendapat serangan acar’. The translator translated it according to the situation. Thus, the translation in Bahasa Indonesia is not appropriate with the source expression.

e. Syntactic structure

There are one datum categorized as syntactic structure in this research.

SE:
DENNIS: Come on, kid, give it up. Dennis always gets his man.

SPONGEBOB: Never! Yeah! I did it!

DENNIS: You got guts, kid. Too bad I gotta rip them out of you.

TE:

DENNIS: Ayolah, anak kecil, menyerahlah. Dennis selalu mendapatkan apa yang ia inginkan.

SPONGEBOB: Tidak akan pernah! Yeah! Aku berhasil!

DENNIS: Kau berani, Nak. Sayangnya harus kuculcuti darimu.

(Datum 07/Hm/WNW/Pq/01:07:38)

‘Guts’ here refers to the braveness and boldness. However the ambiguity rises when Dennis continuing it with saying “Too bad I gotta rip them out of you”. From the sentence, Dennis wants to rip SpongeBob’s guts which the word ‘guts’ also refers to bowel. Since from the beginning Dennis wants to kill him, ‘guts’ that refers to bowel seems a good fit. In the translation of Bahasa Indonesia, the translator translated the word guts with ‘berani’ which is a match to the SpongeBob boldness and braveness. In Bahasa Indonesia, there are no similar words to ‘berani’ that can replace the word guts that refers to bowel. Although the aspect of ambiguity is lost in the target text, the translation can still maintain the meaning of the source text expressions.

f. Morphological developments

Morphological developments has the highest data among all. There are ten data categorized as morphological development un this research.

SE:


TE:


(Datum 01/Mr/WNW/Pq/00:05:48)

The wordplay ‘manager-liness’ is a morphological development because the actual word is only ‘manager’. The suffix ‘liness’ is added because it follows the word ‘cleanliness’. SpongeBob adds the suffix in order to rhyme with the
cleanliness. In Bahasa Indonesia translation, ‘Manager-liness’ is translated become ‘Jabatan manager’. It maintains the meaning from the source expression but not the style. Moreover, In Bahasa Indonesia there is not a wordplay that can be added to the word ‘manajer’ so it can be rhyme with the word ‘kebersihan’.

2. Techniques to Translate Wordplays in SpongeBob Movies.

a. Wordplay to wordplay

The source-text wordplay is translated by a target-language wordplay, which may be more or less different from the original wordplay in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or lexical function. There are 2 data found in this research.

SE:
MR. KRABS: Spongebob! Oh. You were like an underpaid son to me. I would've expected Squidward to stab me in the back.

TE:
MR. KRABS: Spongebob! Kau sudah seperti anak di dalam celanaku. Tapi aku malah mempercayai Squidward untuk menusukku dari belakang.

(Datum 16/Id/W/Fq/00:20:31)

The wordplay in the datum above can be found in the phrase ‘Stab me in the back’. This phrase is an idiom refers to ‘Betrayal’ or has a meaning ‘do something harmful to someone who is trusted’. In the target expression, the translator is translated the idiom into an idiom In Bahasa Indonesia. In the target expression, the idiom ‘stab in the back’ is translated into ‘menusukku dari belakang’ which it looks like it is translated literally. However, ‘menusukku dari belakang’ is also a common idiom in Bahasa Indonesia. The translator can simply translate the idiom into ‘mengkhianatiku’, but it will lose the style of the idiom.

b. Wordplat to non-wordplay

The fragment of the TT which corresponds to the ST wordplay does not contain any wordplay. As a result, the wordplay is sometimes lost in the target text.

SE:
FISH 1: Hey, it's raining pickles! Now it's raining... Tanks.
PLANKTON: Your welcome.

TE:
FISH 1: Hey, sekarang hujan acar.
Sekarang hujan... Tank.
PLANKTON: Sama-sama.

(Datum 13/Hp/WNW/Pq/00:08:39)

The wordplay in the datum above is found in the word ‘tanks’. It is a homonymy and has identical sound to the word ‘thanks’. In the movie, Fish 1 means to say that there is tanks rain after pickles. However, Plankton takes it as a grateful from fish 1, so he says ‘you’re welcome’. In Bahasa Indonesia translation, the word ‘tanks’ is translated literally into ‘tank’. The effect of the wordplay is lost when the translator translates ‘tanks’ into ‘tank’.

c. **Wordplay to zero**

The portion of text containing the wordplay is simply omitted. Yet, the meaning of the sentence still can be maintained.

SE:
PATRICK: We're not kids.
SPONGEBOB: Open your eyes, Patrick! We blow bubbles, we eat ice cream. We worship a dancing peanut, **for corn's sake**! We don't belong out here!

PATRICK: We do not worship him.

TE:
PATRICK: Kita bukan anak-anak.
SPONGEBOB: Buka matamu, Patrick!

Kita meniup gelembung, kita makan es krim. Dan memuja kacang yang bisa menari. Kita tak cocok disni!

(Datum 04/Mr/WZ/Un/00:45:19)

The wordplay in the datum above can be found in the expression angry ‘for corn’s sake’. The origin of the wordplay is ‘for god’s sake’. SpongeBob changes ‘God’ into ‘corn’ because he thinks he worships a dancing peanut. In Bahasa Indonesia translation, it is simply omitted. Probably because it is just an expression of angry, the translator does not want to translate it. Without translating it, the meaning of sentence in the Bahasa Indonesia does not change.

d. **Wordplay in the TT is the same with wordplay in the ST**
The translator transfers the wordplay in the source text into the target text without any changes. It also calls as loan translation.

**SE:**
SPONGEBOB: Get ready for the Invinci-Bubble!
BURGER BREAD: No! My book!

**TE:**
SPONGEBOB: Bersiaplah untuk Invincibubble!
BURGER BREAD: Tidak. Bukuku.

(Datum 20/Mr/TR/Pq/01:09:08)

From the datum above, the wordplay can be found in ‘Invinci-bubble’. It is the name of SpongeBob’s superpower. The origin of this word comes from ‘Invincible’ which has a meaning impossible to defeat or prevent from doing what is intended. In Bahasa Indonesia, the translator translates it directly without any changes except for the typing mistake. It can be translated into ‘gelembung tak terkalahkan’, but it is too long and does not create humour. The translator may want to keep the humour with does not translating it literally.

e. **Multiple techniques**

Sometimes in translating wordplay, the translator uses more than one technique. In this movie there is one wordplay that is translated using two techniques; loan translation and editorial technique.

**SE:**
MR. KRABS: Knock, knock.
PLANKTON: Oh, boy. Who's there?
MR. KRABS: Jimmy.
PLANKTON: Jimmy who?
MR. KRABS: Jimmy back my formuler,
Plankton!

**TE:**
MR. KRABS: Tok, tok.
PLANKTON: Ya ampun, siapa disana?
MR. KRABS: Jimmy.
PLANKTON: Jimmy siapa?
MR. KRABS: Jimmy back my formula, Plankton! (Kembalikan formula-ku, Plankton)

(Datum 20/Mr/TT=ST/Pq/01:09:08)

The wordplay in this datum can be found in the word ‘Jimmy’. In the translation Bahasa Indonesia, the translator uses two techniques to translate the wordplay. First is loan translation which means the
wordplay in the source expression is transferred directly to the target expression, and the second is editorial technique. Editorial technique is a technique that used by the translator by adding footnotes, endnotes, or explanation to the wordplay. In this datum, the translator adds an endnote in the end of the sentences in Bahasa Indonesia. It can make the audience easier to understand the wordplay.

3. Degree of Equivalence of the Translation of Wordplay in SpongeBob Movies

1. Equivalent

The translation of wordplay is considered as equivalent when the meaning and the style of the wordplay are translated equivalent in the target text. However, sometimes the meaning is more important than the style. Sometimes the translator ignore the style of the wordplay to maintain the meaning of the wordplay in the target text. Based on the explanation above, equivalent is divided into two; fully and partially equivalent.

a. Fully equivalent

The translation of wordplay is considered as fully equivalent when the meaning and style of wordplay are maintained in the target text.

SE:
MR. KRABS: Spongebob! Oh. You were like an underpaid son to me. I would've expected Squidward to stab me in the back.

TE:
MR. KRABS: Spongebob! Kau sudah seperti anak di dalam celanaku. Tapi aku malah mempercayai Squidward untuk menusukku dari belakang.

(Datum 16/Id/W/Fq/00:20:31)

The wordplay in the datum above can be found in the phrase ‘stab me in the back’. It is an idiom for to do something harmful to someone who is trusted. In Bahasa Indonesia, the translator translated the wordplay into ‘Menusukku dari belakang’. It is the literal translation of the wordplay. However, ‘menusukku dari belakang’ is also an idiom in Bahasa Indonesia. It means the translator does not only put an attention to the translation of meaning of the wordplay in the target expression, but also the style. In this
rate, the translation of the wordplay is considered as fully equivalent.

b. Partially equivalent

The translation of wordplay is considered as partially equivalent when either the meaning or styles are maintained in the target expression.

SE:
SPONGEBOB: I'm ready. Promotion. Cleanliness is next to manager-liness. I'm ready. Promotion. I'm ready. Promotion.

TE:

(Datum 01/Mr/WNW/Pq/00:05:48)

The wordplay in the datum above can be found in the word ‘managerliness’. The suffix ‘liness’ is added so that it can be rhymed with the word ‘cleanliness’. In Bahasa Indonesia, the word ‘managerliness’ is translated into ‘jabatan manager’. The meaning of the wordplay is well maintained in the target expression.

2. Non-equivalent

The wordplay is translated into non-wordplay and the meaning of the target text expression is different from the source text expression.

SE:
SPONGEBOB: Wait a minute, Patrick, look! He's got a tank!

PLANKTON: Well, Krabs, you're certainly in a pickle now!

TE:
SPONGEBOB: Tunggu sebentar Patrick, lihat musuh memiliki sebuah tank.

PLANKTON: Baiklah Krab, sekarang kau mendapat serangan acar.

(Datum 12/Id/WN/Nq/00:08:16)

The wordplay in the datum above can be found in the phrase ‘in a pickle’. It is an idiom for ‘in a difficult situation’. In Bahasa Indonesia, ‘in a pickle’ is translated literally into ‘mendapat serangan acar’. It is translated based on the situation. ‘In a pickle’ is an ambiguity because it can refer to what Plankton’s doing and an idiom. However, the translator understands it literally to what Plankton’s doing.
Therefore, this translation is considered as non-equivalent because the meaning in the source expression is different with the meaning in the target expression.

3. Unrealized

In some cases the wordplay in the ST is not realized in the TT. The translator simply omitted the wordplay.

SE:
PATRICK: We're not kids.
SPONGEBOB: Open your eyes, Patrick! We blow bubbles, we eat ice cream. We worship a dancing peanut, for corn's sake! We don't belong out here!
PATRICK: We do not worship him.

TE:
PATRICK: Kita bukan anak-anak.
SPONGEBOB: Buka matamu, Patrick! Kita meniup gelembung, kita makan es krim. Dan memuja kacang yang bisa menari. Kita tak cocok disni!
PATRICK: Kita tak memujanya.

(Datum 04/Mr/WZ/Un/00:45:19)

The wordplay in the datum above can be seen in the phrase ‘for corn’s sake’. The original phrase is ‘for God’s sake’. It is an interjection or an expression of emotion. In this case, SpongeBob feels frustrated so he yells ‘for corn’s sake’. In Bahasa Indonesia, ‘for God’s sake’ can be translated into ‘Demi Tuhan’. In the datum above, ‘for corn’s sake’ is not translated. The translator simply omitted it. It is because an interjection is just a sudden expression, so the translator does not translate it. Another possibility is that without translating it, the meaning of sentence in the Bahasa Indonesia does not change.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and the discussions, the conclusions can be shown below.

The first objective of this research is to identify the types of wordplays in the SpongeBob movies. From the total 25 data of wordplays found in the movies, morphological development has the highest rank with ten out of total 25 data and the highest percentage 40%.

The second objective of this research is to identify the strategies to translate the wordplay into Bahasa Indonesia subtitle. Wordplay to non-wordplay is the most used to
translate wordplays in *SpongeBob* movies. Out of total 25 data, wordplay to non-wordplay has the most data with 16 data or 64%. Wordplay to non-wordplay is the most used strategy in translating the wordplays because the translator chooses to maintain the meaning than the style.

The third objective of this research is to identify the degree of equivalence of the translation of wordplays in *SpongeBob* movies into Bahasa Indonesia subtitle. Out of total 25 data, 17 data or 68% of the translation wordplay in *SpongeBob* movies are partially equivalent. By the result of partially equivalent has the most data, it indicates that the meaning of the wordplay becomes the main focus of the translator in translating the wordplays.

**REFERENCES**


