

ENGLISH WORDPLAYS IN CHRISTOPHER MILLER'S *THE LEGO MOVIE* TEXT AND ITS *BAHASA INDONESIA* SUBTITLING MOVIE TEXT

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Abstract

This research employed a qualitative method because it provides brief descriptions of translation phenomena of wordplays in *The Lego Movie*. The data of this research were words, phrases, and sentences that contain wordplay found in *The Lego Movie* and its Bahasa Indonesia subtitling text. They were collected manually from English text as the phonic channel and Bahasa Indonesia text as the graphic channel of the original DVD of *The Lego Movie*. The main instrument of this research was the researcher herself. Therefore, in order to build trustworthiness, triangulation method was applied. This research has three important things in the result. Firstly, the types of wordplay found in *The Lego Movie* are phonological structure: homonymy, homophony, and paronymy; polysemy wordplay, idiomatic wordplay, syntactic wordplay, and morphological wordplay. Among them, the idiomatic wordplay is in the highest rank. Secondly, the techniques to translate the wordplay are WP → WP, WP → NON WP, WP ST = WP TT, and editorial techniques. WP → NON WP translation becomes the most frequently used technique. Thirdly, 92.30% of translation of the wordplay is equivalent; 66.66% is partially equivalent, and 25.64% is fully equivalent. It can be seen that most of the wordplay translation is equivalent. Thus, the translator is successfully translate the wordplay in this movie into a good translation.

Keyword: translation, wordplay, translation technique, degree of equivalence, *The Lego Movie*

INTRODUCTION

Movies are one of the types of [visual communication](#) that use [moving pictures](#) and sound or voice to tell [stories](#) or to give information about something and help people to learn. People in every part of the world watch movies as a type of way to have fun. Through movies people can see things that they are not able to experience in their entire life. People even can see what they have been daydreaming for long time.

However, sometimes audience from other countries does not have an access to the language in which the movie is produced, Hollywood movies for example. The audience from

Indonesia who wants to watch their movies should read the subtitles to understand the whole story. In this regard, translators have a pivotal role. As persons who are capable of doing communication through both the source language and target language, through the act of translation they are responsible for conveying the message in the movies in order to make the audience be able to understand the whole message in the movie. In other words, translators make the effort to spread the message of the movies for wider audience.

The activity of translating has evidently made a lot of Hollywood box office movies to be well-known in Indonesia. There are still numerous other foreign movies imported to Indonesia and translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*. These movies even dominate Indonesian movie market.

In some movies there are many creative vocabularies of the languages found. There are some terms that cannot be found in the dictionary. Hence, translators are needed to convey the words that cannot be understood by the audiences. The most noticeable thing from comedy movies is the fact that they contain humor as the element. Through humor people can find amusement.

Scholars have confirmed that humor is not easy to translate. Chiaro (2005: 1) suggests translating humor as “a notoriously arduous task the results of which are not always triumphant”. In line with Chiaro, Veiga (2009: 1) says that translating humor poses a genuine challenge to the translator. Following Vandaele, "humor translation is qualitatively different from 'other types' of translation and, consequently, one cannot write about humor translation in

the same way one writes about other types of translation" (Vandaele, 2002:150). Similarly, when it comes on translating humor, the translator has to deal with the intended effect of humor and its possible unsuccessful reproduction. It can be said from the explanations above, it is true that translating humor has more serious difficulty that distinguishes it from other types of translation. Therefore, because of its uniqueness and the creative vocabularies, translating humor is worth to be investigated further.

wordplay in the source language can also functioning as wordplay in the target language is sometimes difficult. Every language has their own structure and it is hardly impossible that two languages share the same structure. As a result, the ability of translators to find creative solutions in translating wordplay is highly required.

The difficulties of translating wordplays are reflected in *The Lego Movie*, and this can be an object of this study. It can be seen that *The Lego Movie* is popular among Indonesian kids

One type of humor that is dependent on the structure of the language is wordplay. Generally speaking, wordplay has similar meaning to humorous play on words. In producing an equivalent translation, wordplay is commonly translated into wordplay. However, keeping the structure of the language so that

because actually, *The Lego Movie* is inspired by the Lego mini figures that is very popular among kids.

This research has three objectives to find out. The first is the types of wordplay found in *The Lego Movie*, the second is translation technique used to translate wordplay in *The Lego Movie* and the third is Degree

of Equivalence in translating wordplay in *The Lego Movie*.

To find out the types of wordplay in *The Lego Movie*, this research uses a theory classified by Delabastita (1993: 102-5). He classified Wordplay into five types. They are Phonologic wordplay, polysemy wordplay, idiomatic wordplay, syntactic wordplay and morphological wordplay.

Phonological wordplay is divided into homonymy, homophony and paronymy.

To examine the techniques used by the translator to translate wordplays into *Bahasa Indonesia*, this research uses the translation techniques for wordplay proposed by Delabastita (1993: 191). These techniques are considered applicable for this research because they are also used to translate text from English into *Bahasa Indonesia*. The techniques are wordplay to wordplay translation (WP→WP),

wordplay to non-wordplay translation (WP → NON WP), wordplay to rethorical device translation (WP → RT), wordplay to zero translation (WP →Z), wordplay ST equal to wordplay TT (ST = TT), non-wordplay translation to wordplay translation (NON WP → WP), zero translation to wordplay translation (Z → WP), and editorial technique.

The last objective of this research is the degree of equivalence in *The Lego Movie* as realized in the *Bahasa Indonesia* subtitling. There are three degree of equivalence proposed by Nugroho (2011: 39). they are equivalent; fully equivalent and partly equivalent, non-equivalent and unrealized.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research describes the phenomena of words that are found in a comedy movie. Thus, this research uses

a qualitative method. The findings of this research will be a statistical procedures and the explanations or discussions of wordplay. Wahyuni (2012: 12) states that one of the characteristics of qualitative research is that it is descriptive in nature. What is meant by descriptive is that in qualitative research the data collected are in the form of words rather than numbers.

More specifically, the type of this research is descriptive qualitative research. The aims of descriptive qualitative research is to show or to illustrate the phenomenon of wordplay in translating the movie. Meanwhile, this research aims at explaining the phenomena found in the translation of wordplay in *The Lego Movie*. These phenomena were related to the types of wordplay, techniques used to translate the wordplay, and the degree of equivalence of the wordplay. Futhermore, a qualitative method is relevant to be used in this research. The data in this research were words, phrases, and sentences considered as wordplay found in *The Lego Movie* and their *Bahasa Indonesia* subtitling texts, while the context of the data was the dialogues of the characters in *The Lego Movie*. Furthermore, the data were collected manually from the English texts as the phonic channel and *Bahasa Indonesia* texts as the graphic channel of the original DVD of *The Lego Movie*. Firmin (2008 : 190) tells us that in qualitative research, the term data is frequently related to words. The context of the data was the dialogues and the subtitling texts of the characters of *The Lego Movie*. In addition, the data sources of the research are *The Lego Movie* as the source text (ST) and its *Bahasa Indonesia* subtitling text as the

target text (TT). The data were collected manually from English texts as to phonic channel and *Bahasa Indonesia* texts as the graphic channel of the original DVD of *The Lego Movie*.

The steps of collecting data in this research include; (1) watching the movie several times to get a deep information about the phenomena under study, the translation of wordplay, (2) making transcript by manually typing down the English dialogues containing the wordplay (3) writing the *Bahasa Indonesia* subtitling texts of the English

researcher analyzed the data by interpreting each datum to answer the research questions, and (4) the researcher presented in the discussion. Some examples from the findings were taken and further explanation of the interpretation were elaborated. In order to get a valid reliable research, the concept of credibility were applied in

dialogues containing the wordplay, and (4) putting the data into data sheet.

After collecting all data, the researcher analyzed them through some processes;

(1) the researcher read all the data that

had been collected before, both from the

ST and TT comprehensively, (2) the

researcher classified the data by

categorizing with a table. The table was

made to classify the data into types of

wordplay, techniques used to translate

the wordplay, and the degree of

equivalence of the wordplay, (3) the

this research. Lincoln and Guba in

Suharso (2006: 16) state that there can

be no validity without reliability and

thus no credibility without

dependability.

Furthermore, to achieve the credibility

of the research, the researcher applied

triangulation. According to Wahyuni

(2012: 40), triangulation method can be

used to increase the credibility of the data. One of the forms of triangulation is the usage of peer debriefing, e.g. critical examination and evaluation by a qualified outside the researcher. In this research, peer debriefing was conducted by asking three students of English Language and Literature.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. FINDINGS

Based on the research found, there are 39 data found in this research. The most obtrusive type of wordplay is the idiomatic wordplay. The idiomatic wordplay has the highest rank above all types with 20 data out of 39 data. Related to this type, wordplay to non wordplay (WP → NON WP) becomes dominant out of seven techniques of translation which occur in *The Lego Movie*. Furthermore, there are 36 equivalent frequencies of the translation of wordplay in *The Lego Movie*. Out of these total 36 data, 10 data are fully equivalent and 26 are partially equivalent.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Types of Wordplay in *The Lego Movie*

a. Phonological Structure

1) Homonymy

Homonymy occurs when two or more words have identical spelling and sound but have different in meaning.

The example of homonymy can be represented by Batman and Benny.

Batman and Benny want to enter the

Lord Business' office building by

piloting the ship to the service entrance

so they can get past to the dangerous

wall. They go to the building by using a

spaceship and suddenly the robot

stopped them when they are about to

enter the building. The robot then asks

them whom they want to see. To raise a

humorous effect, Batman says he wants

to see his 'butt'. In this term, 'butt' is

only used to raise a humorous effect, not

that Batman really wants to see the

robot's butt. Then the robot asks Batman whether 'Butt' is a first name because it seems that there is no 'Butt' available in the building. However, before the robot ends the conversation, suddenly Batman throws a weapon to cut the robot's head and the robot dies. After Batman cuts the robot's head, Batman and Benny bursted into laughter.

2) Homophony

Homophony occurs when words or group of words are different in writing and spelling but identical in pronunciation. The following is an example of homophony from the findings. In the middle of Emmet's confession, a guy look like a swamp creature interrupted him and said "this is supposed to make us feel better?" which means that his speech did not make them feel any safe or protected because he was not even the Piece of Resistance

that everyone needed. Emmet then answered him with 'there was about to be a but' which can be meant that he wanted to calm the Master Builders because of his dishonesty of being the Piece of Resistance. However, Gandalf responds his answer angrily by saying that he is a 'butt'. 'Butt' in this term can be meant as a swearing word in order to express a strong anger. Gandalf used the word 'butt' because it has an identical

pronunciation with the word 'but'.

3) Paronymy

Paronymy refers to words or phrases that are nearly but not quite identical in spelling and pronunciation. An example of paronymy is presented below. President Business is one of the starring evils in this movie. He has the company and he handles the Lego world. He makes a Taco Tuesday day when there will be so many free tacos on Tuesday for the whole citizens that obey his

instructions. Generally, the phrase ‘Taco Tuesday’ comes from an informal expression by people among cities in US. This expression is popular among people in the US and especially popular in the beach cities of Southern California because every Tuesday, many restaurants will give special price or discounts, even free Taco to the buyers. Taco is a well-known local Mexican food among people all over the world.

b. Polysemy Wordplay

Polysemy occurs when the two or more associated meanings are part of what is considered to be one single word; for instance, the word head seems having related meaning. The example of polysemy wordplay can be seen in the following example. Randy represents how he describes Emmet in person. He says that they have ‘something’ that can make them into ‘something’, but Emmet is ‘nothing’. In this case, he describes

Emmet as a person who is unskilled and has nothing to offer. The first word of ‘something’ in this term gives an effect to ‘something’ in the second word of the sentence. As an additional, the word ‘nothing’ represents Randy’s view about Emmet that he has ‘nothing’ that can make us into ‘something’. Thus, polysemic term is created in the two identical words.

c. Idiomatic Wordplay

Idiomatic wordplay is a construction of sentences or phrases that contains idiomatic expressions. The example of idiomatic expression can be seen in the phrase ‘zippy-zap’ said by Surver Dave. The phrase ‘zippy-zap’ becomes an idiomatic expression because it has an individual meaning and it is kind of an informal expression. Although there is no actual meaning in the phrase, but ‘zippy-zap’ still can be categorized into idiomatic expression

because it has individual meaning by the speaker. The phrase ‘zippy-zap’ comes from the word ‘zip’ and ‘zap’ which are actually onomatopoeia.

d. Syntactic Wordplay

Syntactic wordplay can be exploited for punning purposes to raise ambiguity. An example of syntactic wordplay can be presented in the following. Batman, Vitruvius, Emmet and Wyldstyle are arrived at the Cloud Cuckoo Land after a long journey.. Unikitty as a member of Cloud Cuckoo Land welcomes them. Unikitty says that the Master Builders have waited for the Piece of Resistance (which is Emmet) at ‘The Dog’. Emmet is confused while Unikitty said ‘The Dog’ because he is not sure about what ‘The Dog’ refers to. However, he knows that ‘The Dog’ refers to a building where the Master Builders gather after Unikitty brings them to the place named ‘The Dog’.

e. Morphological Wordplay

The formation of morphological wordplay can be done by means of affixation, conversion, reduplication, etc. Compounding words also can make

morphological wordplay. The example of morphological wordplay is presented by Emmet when he said the phrase ‘mix up’. The phrase ‘mix up’ comes from ‘mix’ and ‘up’. ‘Mix up’ can be defined as a mistake that results from taking one thing to be another. When the words merge become ‘mix up’ the definition will be different. Thus, morphological wordplay is applied in this phrase.

2. Techniques to Translate the Wordplay in *The Lego Movie*

a. WP → WP

The example of this technique is showed below. The wordplay in the example can be found in the expression

'a little bit...deadly'. 'deadly' is an idiomatic expression used by President Business to represent the situation at the office. The result of the translation in the target text for this phrase may seem unique. When the phrase is translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*, the translator gives a literal meaning to the target text, but the wordplay still contains in the target text. In the target text, the phrase 'deadly' turns into '*mematikan*'. This phrase in *Bahasa Indonesia* still contains wordplay and still have an understandable meaning for the audience.

themselves creates a humorous effect. It can be said that Vitruvius' sentence contains wordplay because he uses the phrase 'your butt' instead of just saying 'cover yourself' to his guard. As seen in the target text, the translator does not recreate the wordplay in the target text. When it is translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*, the phrase 'cover your butt' turns into '*lindungi diri kalian*' by the translator.

b. WP → NON WP

The example of this technique found in the research findings is showed below. Vitruvius has a feeling that Lord Business will come to destroy his castle. He uses the phrase 'cover your butt' in order to tell his guard to save them. The way Vitruvius tells his guard to save

c. WP ST = WP TT

The example of this technique can be seen as follow. President Bussiness wants to punish Bad Cop because he fails to do his mission by making a meeting in his office. He plans to punish Bad Cop by erasing Good Cop, the other side of Bad Cop, and freezing his parents in front of him. Lord Business then describes his anger by saying 'diabolical'.

'Diabolical' is sometimes termed as an adjective. However, when it comes to the conversation held by President Business and Robot, the word 'diabolical' turned into an idiomatic expression because the purpose of the word is not to describe something, the purpose of the word is only as an idiom said by Lord Business because he was about to angry after Bad Cop failed to caught Emmet.

d. Editorial technique

This technique is effective if the wordplay is not available in the target language so the translator has to explain the meaning of the word. The word TAKOS stands for 'Tentacle Arm Kragle outside Sprayer'. Lord Business creates the abbreviation in order to represent how the Kragle works. When the sentence is translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*, the word 'TAKOS' is not translated. The word 'TAKOS' is not

translated because the word is an abbreviation. The meaning of 'TAKOS' is also not translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* in order to make the audience understands what 'TAKOS' stands for.

3. Degree of Equivalence of the Translation of Wordplay in *The Lego Movie*

a. Equivalent

(1) Fully equivalent

The following example is a fully equivalent translation. The phrase 'rubbish' becomes a swearing word by Shakespeare to represent his anger to Emmet after his confession. When this phrase is translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*, it becomes 'omong kosong' in the target text. In other words, wordplay to wordplay technique translation is employed in this regard. In this term, the translator seems creative to recreate the wordplay in the target text to express what Shakespeare means.

(2) Partly equivalent

The example of the definition is showed below. Bad Cop seemed does not

believe what Vitruvius' said because Vitruvius was a senior oracle in Lego universe. Thus, he said that his information was such a 'hippy-dippy-baloney'. The phrase 'hippy-dippy-baloney' is defined as nonsense talks by Lord Business because he did not believe with what Vitruvius said by the Special One, which is the Piece of Resistance. The phrase 'hippy-dippy-baloney' is an idiomatic expression because it has an individual meaning. It is derived from 'baloney', which means 'trashy talks', or a 'nonsense talks' because it is impossible to be happened. When it comes to the phrase 'hippy-dippy-baloney', the translator translated into '*omong kosong*'. The translator only translated the phrase into literal meaning, which means, h/she only gives the message of the phrase, but h/she does not recreate the wordplay in the target text.

b. Non-Equivalent

An example of non-equivalence translation can be seen in the following. The conversation took place in the Lego

universe when Wyldstyle told everyone around the world to remain calm until the Piece of Resistance came to save them. Thus, she said this would be a 'Freedom Friday'. In the *Bahasa Indonesia* subtitling texts, 'Freedom Friday' became 'pejuang kebebasan'. It is certainly not a paronymy wordplay. Futhermore, the literal meaning of 'Freedom Friday' was also not conveyed because if the phrase was translated literally it could be 'hari kebebasan' not 'pejuang kebebasan', which are not related at all. Hence, because the wordplay is translated into non-wordplay and the meaning of the source text expressions is different, the translation can be said non-equivalent.

CONCLUSIONS

With regard to the first objective, there are seven types of wordplay found in this research. Looking on the findings of idiomatic wordplay, one of the possible reasons as to why the idiomatic wordplay can be the most frequent types of wordplay in The Lego Movie isthat some of the

idiomatic wordplays are built to raise a humorous effect. Wordplay based on the idiomatic wordplay can be in the form words, phrases or sentences that have an individual meaning. As a result, there would be many reason to use wordplay by means of idiomatic wordplay.

Related to the second objective, there are total four techniques used by the translator to translate wordplay in *The Lego Movie* into Bahasa Indonesia subtitling. This finding can be an indication that the translation of wordplay in *The Lego Movie* is still very much focused on the literal meaning of the wordplay, not on how to recreate the wordplay in the target text. However, looking at different perspective, the technique WP→NON WP is the easiest technique to use by the translator because even the translator does not recreate the wordplay in the source text, the audience can still understand the message of the speaker in the subtitling text.

With regard to the third objective, it can be concluded that 36 data are equivalent

in the translation of wordplay in *The Lego Movie*. Out of these total 36 data, 10 data are fully equivalent and 26 are partially equivalent. Therefore, three data are non-equivalent and there is no unrealized data was found in the research. This indicates that almost all the translation of wordplay in *The Lego Movie* into Bahasa Indonesia subtitling text cannot maintain both the wordplay and the meaning of the source text expressions at the same time.

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