

# Subtitling Strategies and Acceptability of Verbal Humor

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## Subtitling Strategies and Acceptability of Verbal Humor in *Superstore* Seasons 5 and 6 (2019-2021)

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**Abstract.** In this study, the researchers focus on the types of humor based on the theory of Raphaelson-West (1989), translation strategies according to Gottlieb (1992), and the level of translation acceptability according to Nababan (2012) by using qualitative descriptive method which is used because the purpose of this study is to explain the phenomenon of translating humor subtitles in the *Superstore* series. The results show that the most common type of humor is universal humor with a total of 48 data, cultural humor with 37 data and linguistic humor with 25 data. The most frequently used translation strategy in the subtitles is transfer strategy with 43 data, while expansion and resignation are the least used with 2 data. Of the 110 data analyzed, 67 data fall into the acceptable category and only 3 data are unacceptable, which means that the subtitle translation is acceptable. Data collection is done by watching all seasons then selecting utterances that contain humor and classifying them based on the theory used. The transfer strategy is most used for universal humor, while paraphrasing is more dominant in cultural humor. Thus, the translation of verbal humor in the series is natural and relevant to the Indonesian language, and is able to maintain meaning and humor.

**Keywords:** humor translation; subtitling strategies; *Superstore*; translation acceptability; translation strategies

**Abstrak.** Pada penelitian ini, peneliti berfokus pada jenis-jenis humor berdasarkan teori Raphaelson-West (1989), strategi penerjemahan menurut Gottlieb (1992), dan tingkat keberterimaan terjemahan menurut Nababan (2012) dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan karena tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah menjelaskan fenomena penerjemahan subtitle humor dalam serial *Superstore*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jenis humor yang paling banyak ditemukan adalah humor universal dengan total 48 data, humor kultural 37 data dan paling sedikit humor linguistik 25 data. Strategi penerjemahan yang paling sering digunakan dalam subtitle adalah strategi transfer dengan 43 data, sedangkan ekspansi dan resignasi merupakan yang paling sedikit digunakan dengan 2 data. Dari 110 data yang dianalisis, 67 data termasuk dalam kategori acceptable dan hanya 3 data yang unacceptable, yang berarti penerjemahan subtitle tersebut dapat diterima. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menonton semua season kemudian memilih tuturan yang mengandung humor dan mengklasifikasikannya berdasarkan teori yang digunakan. Strategi transfer paling banyak digunakan untuk humor universal, sedangkan parafrase lebih dominan pada humor kultural. Dengan demikian, terjemahan humor verbal dalam serial ini alami dan relevan dengan bahasa Indonesia, dan mampu mempertahankan makna dan humor.

**Kata kunci:** keberterimaan terjemahan; penerjemahan humor; strategi penerjemahan; strategi penerjemahan; *Superstore*

## INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalization driven by technology, access to foreign cultural content such as music, literature, magazines, and movies has become increasingly easy. This phenomenon not only provides a platform for global information exchange but also gives countries the opportunity to indirectly promote their cultural values, especially through popular media such as movies. Streaming platforms like Netflix, for example, have totally changed how we experience media, making movies and series from various cultures and languages easily accessible. With Netflix in Indonesia, we can easily find shows from various countries, including movies, series, and other programs from the United States. This makes English one of the world's most widely spoken languages, as it is easier for people from different countries to use, which makes it easier for non-English speakers as their mother language.

However, despite the benefits of English, there are many challenges, especially related to Translation, which is the process of adapting or transferring meaning from the source language to the target language in order to fit the culture of the target language. Furthermore, interpretations of cultural representations in media such as movies often have different meanings depending on the social background of the audience, local values, and cultural frameworks in different countries. This means that translation is crucial in movie subtitles so that viewers can understand the context of the movie. This process is not simply a word-for-word translation, but also requires a deep understanding of cultural references, humor, idioms, and social norms to ensure that the content remains meaningful and understandable to the target audience. A failure to translate properly can misrepresent the original meaning of the content, especially when translating English material that is rich in cultural reference, such as American humor or informal expressions, which may not have direct equivalents in other languages or cultures. Translation is not simply a linguistic translation, but also requires a deep understanding of the target audience's symbolic systems, norms, and social and cultural practices. For example, idioms or metaphors based on a specific culture can lose their meaning when translated literally into another language. A translator must make sure that the translated text is as close as possible to the original, both in terms of meaning and the author's intent. Nida and Taber (1974) states that "translation is the reproduction in the recipient language of the natural equivalent of the message of the source language, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style." In conclusion, translation is the process of transferring words to find the closest equivalent meaning in the target language. The first thing to consider is the terms of meaning, and the second is the terms of style.

These days, translation is not just found in print media like magazines, newspapers, comics, and novels. TV shows like series and movies also need translation. Subtitling is a form of audiovisual translation (AVT). It is the practice of translating verbal text in audiovisual works that is displayed at the bottom of the screen. As explained by Cintas and Remael (2014), this is a common method in AVT. Based on Henrik Gottlieb's classification (1992), there are 11 categories in subtitling strategies. These include expansion, paraphrasing, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, condensation, decimation, deletion, resignation and taming. The purpose of each strategy is to help translators produce messages. There are three ways to measure translation results. According to Nababan (2012), it can be measured on how accurate the translation is, how easily the meaning can be understood, and how natural it is for the acceptance of a translation in the target language. In humor, there are important things that translators must do, that is, make the translation understandable and make the audience laugh. Translating humor, especially in texts that depend on wordplay, often becomes a challenge for translators. Vandaele in Nufus (2020) asserts that "the translation of humor is qualitatively different from 'other types of translation,' and thus cannot be approached or analyzed in the same way as conventional translation practices." Humor is a cultural trait common to all human communities, as pointed out by Fry in Jiang et al. (2019), although people from different cultural

backgrounds may have different reactions to comedy situations. As defined by Raphaelson-West (1989) based on its relevance to language, humor can be classified as verbal humor and nonverbal humor. Verbal humor includes linguistic humor, cultural humor, and universal humor. Linguistic humor is humor that is based on language and manipulates language elements. Cultural humor is humor influenced by a culture. Universal humor is humor that can be understood by most people. Humor on television is usually present in verbal language. That's why verbal humor plays a big part in sitcoms.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, sitcom, stand for situation comedy, is a regular television series that uses the same characters in funny everyday situations. Sitcoms usually have characters who appear in repeated funny situations that are relatable, such as family homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and many more. An American sitcom set in a workplace is *Superstore*. This sitcom is set in a workplace, specifically a Cloud 9. It is important that the series presents a diverse character and discusses social issues, making its humor rich in cultural references.

Based on previous studies, this research presents several novelties and fill an important gap in the field of humor subtitling. Previous studies, Mulyana (2016) from Yogyakarta State University, entitled "Verbal Humor in The English Rio 2 Film Expressions and Their Bahasa Indonesia Subtitling Expressions" and Bey (2015) from Syarif Hidayatullah University Jakarta, entitled "The Acceptability Humor Translation of English to Indonesian in the Movie "Penguins of Madagascar: Discover Their Untold Story Thanksgiving," have explored subtitle strategies, types of humor, and translation acceptability in various films and series using theories from Gottlieb, Nababan, Nida and Taber, and Raphaelson-West. However, these studies often focus on one or two aspects separately, such as subtitle strategies or acceptability. This study is different because it combines the three main theoretical frameworks, types of humor from Raphaelson-West, subtitle strategies from Gottlieb, and translation acceptance from Nababan, into one study. Moreover, while previous studies have mostly used qualitative descriptive methods with subjective assessment, this study aims to adopt a more solid methodological approach to improve the objectivity and reliability of the findings. By analyzing movies or series that have not been explored in previous studies, this research fills a gap related to contextual diversity in humor subtitle studies, providing important new insights for the field.

Based on this, researchers analyze the types of humor according to Raphaelson-West (1989) and subtitling strategies were used to translate the humor according to Gottlieb (1992), and acceptability translation of humor in the American Sitcom Series *Superstore*. The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the types of humor based on Raphaelson-West theory in the utterances in the English-Indonesian Subtitle of American Sitcom Series *Superstore*
2. To describe the subtitle strategies used in translating humor in the American Sitcom Series *Superstore* according to Henrik Gottlieb's model.
3. To evaluate the level of acceptance of humor translation in the American Sitcom Series *Superstore* using Nababan's translation acceptance framework.

## METHOD

Based on the theory used in this research, the descriptive qualitative method was chosen because this method is the most appropriate for this research as the purpose of this study is to explain the phenomenon of translating humor subtitles in the *Superstore* series. In addition, King and Brooks (2017) state that in

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qualitative research, the researchers focus on “understanding” rather than “explanation” as the goal of human science.

The data source for this study was humor utterances or dialogues in subtitles that appeared in the American sitcom *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6. The data taken were utterances that contained humor according to the Raphaelson-West theory, which included universal, cultural, and linguistic humor. All of this data was taken from the whole of seasons 5 and 6, with a total of 36 episodes. This research used data with English as the source language and Indonesian as the target language. From this data, the researchers analyzed the types of humor based on the humor theory proposed by Raphaelson-West, which were linguistic humor, cultural humor, and universal humor in the series. Next, the data were classified using the subtitle theory proposed by Gottlieb. Lastly, the quality of the translation was analyzed and determined by the lecturer with expertise in translation studies to obtain an acceptability score using Nababan's theory of translation strategies of acceptability. With a strong academic background and practical experience in translation, the lecturer is well qualified to evaluate the acceptability of humor translations in this study. This assessment is considered reliable and credible, which minimizes the risk of bias. This is further supported by the use of clear assessment criteria and objective analysis.

According to Creswell (2007), data collection is a series of processes of gathering related information to answer the research question. In this study, there are several steps taken by the researchers to collect data, which are:

1. Watching all seasons, from season 1 to 6, to understand the context of the American sitcom series “*Superstore*,” which has a total of 113 episodes.
2. Collecting English and Indonesian subtitles manually by watching seasons 5 and 6 of the American sitcom series *Superstore* on Netflix.
3. In this case, researcher only focus on expressions that contain humor on season 5 and 6 of the American sitcom series *Superstore*.
4. Collecting data in the form of utterances that fall under humorous expressions in English and Indonesian subtitles to look for the subtitling strategies.
5. Conducting an assessment to measure the acceptability of humor on seasons 5 and 6 of the American sitcom series *Superstore*.

The researchers described how the data was collected, starting from the beginning of the research until the results were found. The way the researchers drew conclusions was connected to what was discovered in the study.

### 33 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researchers discuss the results of the analysis of types of humor, subtitling strategies, and the acceptability of humor contained in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6. This analysis presents data on verbal humor in the form of linguistic, universal, and cultural humor found in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6 using Raphaelson-West's (1989) theory of types of humor. Additionally, the subtitling strategies theory by Gottlieb (1992) will be applied to the subtitles of the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6, including Expansion, Paraphrase, Transfer, Imitation, Transcription, Dislocation, Condensation, Decimation, Deletion, Resignation, and Taming. Lastly, this study uses Nababan's (2012) theory of acceptability

of the translation of English humor into Indonesian subtitles to assess the level of acceptance and quality of humor translated in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6.

## Result

### 1. Types of Humor

Based on the humor theory of Raphaelson-West (1989) there are 3 types of humor, Linguistic, Cultural, and Universal Humor. Researchers found there are 110 utterances that contain humor in the American Sitcom Series *Superstore* season 5 and 6.

**Table 1** The Frequencies of Types of Humor Used in American Sitcom Series *Superstore* Seasons 5 and 6

Types of Humor	Frequency	Percentage
Linguistics	25	23%
Cultural	37	34%
Universal	48	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 shows that 110 types of humor were found in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6. From the data above, it was found that universal humor was the most common with 48 data or 43%, followed by cultural humor with a total of 37 data, and the last was cultural linguistic with a total of 25 data from the total of 2 seasons with a total of 36 episodes. The *Superstore* series contains dominant universal humor as it focuses on everyday situations and characters that many people can easily relate to, regardless of their cultural background. The show balances humor with social commentary on issues such as immigration, unions, and Black Lives Matter, LGBT, but does so through personal narratives.

### 2. Subtitling Strategies

The researchers analyze the utterances containing humor in the American sitcom *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6 by using Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies. The researchers found that 8 out of 11 subtitling strategies found in American sitcom *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6 were used to convey verbal humor.

**Table 2** The Frequencies of Subtitling Strategies Used in American Sitcom Series *Superstore* Seasons 5 and 6

Subtitling Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Expansion	2	2%
Paraphrase	18	16%
Transfer	43	39%
Imitation	16	15%
Condensation	17	15%
Deletion	7	6%
Resignation	2	2%
Taming	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown in Table 2, it is shown that from the data analysis of subtitling strategies, it is found that in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6 the most frequently used is transfer with 43 words or 39%. Paraphrase is used 18 times, Condensation 17 times and Imitation 16 times, Deletion 7 times, Taming 5 times, then Expansion and Resignation are only used 2 times each. Transcription, dislocation, decimation were not found to be used in subtitling strategies in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6 with a total of 36 episodes. Transfer strategy is most commonly used due to its efficiency, loyalty to the original text, and suitability to the technical limitations of movie subtitles.

### 3. Acceptability

To measure the acceptability level of translation in verbal humor subtitling in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6, the researchers used Nababan's (2012) acceptability theory with three levels of acceptability.

Table 3 The Result of Translation Acceptability

Acceptability	Frequency	Percentage
Acceptable	67	61%
Less Acceptable	40	36%
Unacceptable	3	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on Table 3 that has been analyzed, the majority of translations are acceptable, with 67 or 61% of the data, which means that these humorous translations are appropriate and acceptable in Indonesian. Next, 36% or 40 translations are classified as less acceptable, though they are still understandable with a few minor errors. Finally, the unacceptable category consists of 3 translations, or 3%, which are less natural and contain the most errors out of the total 110 data points.

## Discussion.

### 1. Types of Humor

#### a. Linguistic Humor

Linguistic humor is closely related to the use of language, vocabulary, wordplay, and other linguistic features. In linguistic humor, wordplay, rhyme, and meaning, especially words with multiple meanings, play an important role in this type of humor. In wordplay, there is a concept known as a pun. According to Delabastita (1996) pun is classified into four types in linguistics, homonymy, homophony, homography, and paronymy. To illustrate this, researchers provide examples:

#### Excerpt 1

Jonah : "Hey, that kind of aggression is exactly why people are turning on your sport. Soccer is coming for you!"

Jonah : "Hei! Agresi seperti itulah yang membuat orang-orang membenci olahragamu ! Sepak bola akan mendatangimu!"

This example is taken from episode 6 of season 5, titled "Trick-or-Treat". Jonah's utterance contains verbal humor that falls under linguistic humor because it contains homonymy. The word "soccer" itself means a type of sport, but in this context, Jonah uses wordplay from the word "soccer," which

also sounds like the word “sucker.” In this case, we can understand that Jonah is using wordplay as an insult toward a child wearing a rugby costume, leveraging the word “soccer.”

There are 25 linguistic humor data found in the utterances in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6. This data was obtained by analyzing the context of humor used in the dialogues. In addition, the researchers also paid attention to the characteristics of linguistic humor related to language, linguistic devices, and wordplay. Previous analysis examples show the use of homonyms and paronyms as forms of humor.

### b. Cultural Humor

Cultural humor is influenced by cultural values such as traditions, customs, and other cultural norms.

#### Excerpt 2

Mateo : “The guards think all undocumented people are Latinos so they just keep yelling at me in Spanish and I don't understand what they're saying.”

Mateo : “Penjaga berpikir semua orang tanpa dokumen adalah orang Latin, jadi, mereka terus membentakku dalam bahasa Spanyol dan aku tak mengerti kata kata mereka.”

This scene focuses on the character Mateo, who is caught by ICE agents for working illegally at Cloud 9. After two weeks, his best friend, Cheyenne, comes to visit him. They catch up with each other, and Mateo expresses his frustration toward the guards who scolded him in Spanish. The cultural humor here arises from the stereotype Americans have toward immigrants, where they assume all undocumented immigrants are Latinos who speak Spanish. This becomes even funnier because Mateo himself is Filipino. The use of cultural elements to satirize American stereotypes is an example of cultural humor.

In the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6, 37 data have been found that contain cultural humor. Because this is a sitcom from America, the background of this story is from America and contains cultural humor known in America, such as the discussion of certain organizations, stereotypes of Americans, social culture, culture, and habits of Americans in general.

### c. Universal Humor

Universal humor is humor that can be understood by everyone without needing to know the language or cultural context.

#### Excerpt 3

Glenn : “Oh, no I'm not cured. I'm just completely diabetic now.”

Glenn : “Tidak, aku tak sembuh, aku hanya diabetes sekarang.”

This scene focuses on Glenn's health. People are concerned about his health, but Glenn is unaware of this and proudly says, “Oh, no, I'm not cured. I'm just completely diabetic now.” This is funny and ironic because Glenn isn't cured; his condition has worsened, yet he says it proudly and casually, as if it were an achievement. The utterance “I'm just completely diabetic now” uses the word “completely,” which typically means ‘entirely’ or ‘total,’ creating a humorous and easily understood



exaggeration. This utterance falls under universal humor, as Glenn's casual and proud attitude toward a serious condition makes it easy to translate without needing specific cultural context.

Based on the analysis of universal humor, the researchers concluded that this type of humor generally arises from the incongruity between expectations and reality, as well as situational irony that is easily understood without requiring cultural context. Relatable emotional reactions such as confusion and a relaxed attitude toward unusual situations are sources of universal humor. The use of simple language and everyday situations makes literal translation easier, thus preserving the meaning of the humor. As a result, universal humor is easily understood by everyone.

## 2. Subtitling Strategies

Gottlieb (1992) categorizes subtitling strategies into 11 categories. The purpose of this is to improve audiovisual translation. From the 11 categories of subtitling strategies, the researchers found 9 categories that appeared in the American sitcom series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6, which focused only on verbal humor.

### 8 a. Expansion

Expansion is used when the SL requires additional explanation due to cultural differences that cannot be replaced in the TL.

#### Excerpt 4

Marcus: "We should probably stop doing "stuff"."

Marcus: "Astaga, kita mungkin harus berhenti melakukan "sesuatu" seperti itu..."

These utterances are included in the expansion because the subtitler added an explanation to clarify the context for easier understanding. The context of this utterance is Marcus and Justine found out that they are cousins. Marcus is known as a man who looks for women for sex and Justine is known as a lonely woman who wants sex. From the SL "doing 'stuff'" it was translated to "melakukan sesuatu, seperti itu..." This expansion was added by the subtitler so that the taboo meaning of "doing stuff" could be understood by the audience in the TL as something negative to do.

Of the total 110 humor utterances, the use of strategies was only found in two data, namely one data in universal humor and one data in linguistic humor. Based on the data analyzed by the researcher, subtitlers did not use expansion much in their translations.

### 19 b. Paraphrase

Paraphrase is used when the sentence structure in the SL cannot be translated with the same structure in the TL. This strategy is used to make the subtitle in TL is easy to understand and enhance the readability.

#### Excerpt 5

Amy: "Okay, fine, but this high road thing looks better on Michelle Obama."

Amy: "Baiklah, tapi mengalah lebih cocok untuk Michelle Obama."

The utterances contain a paraphrasing strategy because the expression “this high road thing” is an idiom used to mean something like “to be modest.” In the TL, the subtitler changed it to “merendah,” which still has the same meaning as the SL but is changed to fit the context in the TL culture. Michelle Obama is mentioned because she is famous for her principle of “when they go low, we go high.” However, this principle may not be commonly known to Indonesian audiences, so the subtitler looked for an appropriate equivalent to represent Michelle Obama’s principle, which is “merendah.”

In this analysis, the researchers found 18 data using the paraphrase strategy in subtitle translation. Based on the analysis, the paraphrase strategy was used as the most effective strategy for translating cultural and linguistic humor.

### c. Transfer

Transferring the meaning of the SL literally into the TL completely. This is commonly known as word-for-word translation.

#### Excerpt 6

Garett: “Yeah, exactly. She doesn't expect much. You don't tell a fish about land. You just leave it. You're not gonna leave it, are you?”

Garett: “Ya, tepat sekali. Dia tidak berharap banyak. Jangan beri tahu ikan tentang daratan. Tinggalkan saja. Kau takkan meninggalkannya, 'kan?”

These utterances are included in the transfer strategy, where the subtitler translates all parts of the sentence literally from English to Indonesian, including the idiom “you don't tell a fish about land,” which is retained in its original form. Actually, the subtitler can translate these utterances with a paraphrase strategy so that the idiom is delivered properly, such as “jangan beri harapan palsu.” So, with this analysis, it proves that the subtitler does not always translate the idiom according to the equivalent in the TL, because the translation this time is obviously word-for-word translation or transfer strategy.

With the data that has been found as many as 43 data that use this transfer strategy, this is the strategy used most by subtitlers. With this, the researchers state that the transfer strategy is effective for translating universal humor.

### d. Imitation

Imitation is used to keep the form of the source language in the target language. This is usually used to translate names of people, places, or specific cultures in their original form.

#### Excerpt 7

Justine: “Oh, my God, you two are Danny and Sandy from Grease. ‘Summer Lovin’, right?”

Justine: “Astaga, kalian Danny dan Sandy dari Grease ‘Summer Lovin’, bukan?”

In this translation, the subtitler used an imitation strategy, where she did not change the character names, movie title, and song title “you two are Danny and Sandy from Grease. ‘Summer Lovin’ right?”. All of these are kept in the source language so that the audience knows the reference of the humor is from the famous movie “Grease” to describe the characters of Jonah and Kelly.

From the data that has been collected, there are 16 data that use the imitation strategy. It can be concluded that subtitle use the imitation strategy to show the names of people, locations, food names, and certain cultural references without being replaced. As in the example there is "Danny and Sandy from Grease. Summer Lovin". In all the data collected, the subtitler did not add explanations or change them. From the data that has been collected, the researchers conclude that this imitation strategy is suitable for 3 types of humor, linguistic, cultural, and also universal humor.

#### <sup>28</sup> e. Condensation

Condensation is used to make the text shorter by removing repetitions on the utterance in order to solve the subtitle line limitation problem.

#### Excerpt 8

Jonah: "Mine's kind of a purer excitement, without the drowning part."

Jonah: "Aku hanya bersemangat, tanpa bagian tenggelamnya."

In this data, the word "purer excitement" whose literal meaning is "Semangat yang lebih murni" is condensed into "Aku hanya bersemangat" with the aim of being shorter without changing the point of the meaning so that the subtitle is simpler and to the point. In fact, the choice of the word "only excitement" somewhat eliminates the expression "purer excitement" but does not change the point.

Based on the data, 17 data were found using the condensation strategy. This analysis proves that the condensation strategy is suitable for translating universal humor.

#### f. Deletion

Deletion used to remove repetitive words, filler words, and question tags from <sup>1</sup> some or all parts of the original dialog from SL that are considered irrelevant, in order to effectively convey the intended message in the TL.

#### Excerpt 9

<sup>3</sup>  
Mateo: "It's not a bomb, not a bomb. It-it's my ankle monitor. I just- I-I thought I charged it. S-Sorry, everyone. So sorry, sorry."

Mateo: "Itu bukan bom. Ini monitor pergelangan kakiku. Kukira aku sudah mengisinya. Maaf, Semuanya. Maafkan aku."

Utterances "Itu bukan bom. Ini monitor pergelangan kakiku. Kukira aku sudah mengisinya. Maaf, Semuanya. Maafkan aku. Maaf." is a deletion strategy. In this translation, the subtitler deletes several repetitions and fillers found in the source language such as "not a bomb, not a bomb", "It-it's my ankle monitor", "I just- I-I thought I charged it", and "S-Sorry, everyone. So sorry, sorry." Repetition of words that usually appear due to nervous or panic, unnecessary filler words, are removed to make the subtitles shorter, clearer, and easier to read. Thus, the subtitles still deliver the main message, but more in short to keep the audience comfortable without losing the important meaning of the original dialog.

#### **g. Resignation**

Resignation is used when the translation from the SL cannot be found in the TL. The meaning of the source language may be lost.

##### **Excerpt 10**

Eric: "Right. Got you. Making the connection now. 'Eye' see."

Eric: "Benar. Mengerti. Membuat koneksi sekarang. Mengerti."

"Eye see" utterances are translated into 'Understand' using the strategy resignation. "Eye see" wordplay which combines the words eye/eyes which sound similar to i/me is difficult to translate into Indonesian without losing meaning. Because of this, the pun and humor in the sentence are lost, and only the basic meaning is delivered so that some of the original meaning is not delivered.

From the results of the analysis, only 2 data were found that used the resignation strategy for humor translation. With this, the researchers conclude that resignation in humor is not suitable because it eliminates humor.

#### **h. Taming**

Taming is used to translate words considered rude or taboo so they are acceptable in the TL.

##### **Excerpt 11**

Justine: "So, I guess you could say I am good with hot-tempered bitches."

Justine: "Jadi, bisa bilang aku pandai menghadapi wanita pemarah."

The subtitle "hot-tempered bitches," which translates to "angry women," is part of the taming strategy. In English, the word "bitches" is a female dog or usually known as a rude or taboo word for women, but in the translation, the term is smoothed to "wanita pemarah" to be more polite and acceptable. Thus, the translator avoids using harsh words and chooses a more neutral equivalent without being offensive.

There are 5 data that use taming strategy in humor translation, proving that taming strategy can be found in universal humor to neutralize taboo utterances.

The 11 strategies categorized by Gottlieb (1992) are made to help the translation process so that the meaning from SL can be well translated to TL. Subtitling is not only an audiovisual translation in text but also in time and sound to make sure the synchronization in meaning and context in the movie.

### **3. Acceptability**

#### **a. Acceptable**

According to Nababan (2012) Acceptable is given a scale of 3. A translation can be categorized as Acceptable if the translation sounds natural. Common and familiar terms are used in everyday TL language.

##### **Excerpt 12**

Glenn : "The press release says that the new company's based in California. Are we all gonna have to start caring about the environment?"

Glenn : Menurut siaran pers, perusahaan barunya berbasis di California. Apa kita semua harus mulai peduli tentang lingkungan?"

This translation is natural and easy to understand. Terms like "siaran pers," "berbasis di California" and "mulai peduli tentang lingkungan" are commonly used and easy to understand.

#### b. Less Acceptable

According to Nababan (2012) Less Acceptable is given a scale of 2. A translation can be categorized as Less acceptable, if the translation sounds natural. However, there are a few errors in the use of terms or grammar in TL.

#### Excerpt 13

Dina : "Hey, Rodriguez. Good news. I was going over the harassment policy. Turns out there's nothing in there about nerds."

Dina : "Hei, Rodriguez. Kabar baik. Aku sedang membahas kebijakan pelecehan. Ternyata tak ada apa pun di sana tentang kutu buku."

This translation is correct and easy to understand. However, "Aku sedang membahas kebijakan pelecehan" is not correct, it should be "aku sedang meninjau kebijakan pelecehan" Even so, the meaning can still be conveyed, it is just less natural. Therefore, it is classified as Less Acceptable.

#### c. Unacceptable

According to Nababan (2012) Unacceptable is given a scale of 1. A translation can be categorized as unacceptable if the translation does not sound natural. The use of sentences, words, and terms is unfamiliar and does not fit the structure of TL language rules.

#### Excerpt 14

Jonah: "Yeah, she really dropped the ball."

Jonah: "Ya. Dia benar-benar merusak."

The expression "dropped the ball" is an idiom that means "melakukan kesalahan." The translation "She really dropped the ball" doesn't convey the meaning of this idiom properly, so the reader might misunderstand it. The sentence feels unnatural and out of context. Therefore, this translation is also Unacceptable.

Based on the analysis of the American sitcom *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6, it can be categorized into three types of humor: linguistic, universal, and cultural humor, with universal humor as the most common, second is cultural humor, and the least is linguistic humor. In this series contains eight strategies, which are, expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, condensation, deletion, resignation, and taming. The most used by subtitlers is transfer and the least is expansion and resignation.

Although the series under study is situational humor, the researchers only focus on verbal humor. The audiovisual subtitling in the study does not rely on the non-verbal humor scenes. Hence, the

acceptability of the subtitles is highly dependent on the verbal humor or utterances in the series. It is found that the level of acceptability in the series is an acceptable category with 67 dominant data and there are only 3 data that are declared unacceptable. With this, the researchers conclude that in American sitcom *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6, as a result, the subtitles are well accepted, thus facilitating the understanding of humor among the audience in Indonesia

## CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the types of verbal humor, translation strategies, and the level of acceptance of translations in the subtitles of the American series *Superstore* seasons 5 and 6. The results of the analysis showed that the three types of verbal humor proposed by Raphaelson-West (1989), which are linguistic, cultural, and universal humor, all appeared in the series. Universal humor was the most dominant with 48 data, followed by cultural humor with 37 data, and linguistic humor with 25 data.

In terms of translation strategies based on Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling theory, out of the 11 categories of strategies, only 8 categories appeared in the *Superstore* subtitles. The transfer strategy was the most frequently used with 39% of the data, followed by the paraphrase strategy (16%), imitation and condensation each (15%), and the deletion, taming, expansion, and resignation strategies with smaller percentages. This indicates that the transfer strategy is the main methods used in translating verbal humor in this series because due to its efficiency, loyalty to the original text, and suitability to the technical limitations of movie subtitles.

The acceptability level of the translations, based on Nababan (2012), shows that the most subtitles 67 data can be categorized as acceptable translations because they feel natural and use terms that are common and familiar to readers. Only 3 data are classified as unacceptable.

This study has several limitations, including its focus only on humoristic utterances and two seasons of the *Superstore* series, so the results may not fully represent the entire series or other sitcom genres. Moreover, the analysis is limited to Indonesian subtitles, so it does not examine translation variations in other languages that may have different approaches.

Future researchers could expand the scope by analyzing other seasons of *Superstore* or other American sitcoms to see if similar humor patterns and translation strategies remain consistent. Furthermore, studies involving various subtitle languages could provide deeper insights into differences in cross-cultural humor translation strategies. Research could also combine qualitative and quantitative methods to explore audience perceptions of the acceptability of humor translation in deeper detail.

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# Subtitling Strategies and Acceptability of Verbal Humor

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