

An Analysis of Translation Techniques in Translating Sarcasm in Deadpool and Wolverine Movie

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Abstract

Sarcasm is a fascinating and often misunderstood form of communication. It involves saying something but meaning the opposite, usually to make a point in a humorous, critical, or ironic way. Translation is not just about replacing words from one language with another; it is about conveying meaning, emotion, and cultural context. The study will focus exclusively on how these translation techniques and translation equivalence are applied to maintain the intended sarcastic tone and meaning in the Indonesian subtitles. Qualitative research offers a descriptive analysis to further investigate linguistic phenomena (Creswell, 2013) cited in (Febriany, 2024). A case study is like taking a close, detailed look at a real-life situation or event to better understand what happened, why it happened, and what can be learned from it. Out of the 79 sarcastic utterances analyzed, 7 cases (8.86%) used a single technique, 23 cases (29.11%) used two techniques (duplets), 29 cases (36.71%) used three (triplets), 13 cases (16.46%) used four (quartets), 5 cases (6.33%) used five (quintets), and 2 cases (2.53%) employed six techniques (sextets). Dynamic equivalence was the dominant approach. Out of 79 cases, 74 were dynamic, while only 5 used formal equivalence. This makes perfect sense. The goal wasn't just to preserve words, it was to preserve tone, attitude, and emotional impact.

Keywords: *Sarcasm; translation; sociolinguistic; deadpool*

INTRODUCTION

Sarcasm is a fascinating and often misunderstood form of communication. It involves saying something but meaning the opposite, usually to make a point in a humorous, critical, or ironic way. Bhakuni et al., (2022) state that, sarcasm is characterized as a paradoxical wit style based on how it affects sour and frequently ironic language that is typically aimed at a specific person. According to Camp (2011) cited in Melawati (2022) there are 4 types of sarcasm, Preisitional Sarcasm, Lexical Sarcasm, 'like'-prefixed Sarcasm, and Illocutionary Sarcasm. However, the effectiveness of sarcasm can be lost when translated into another language, where there are limitations in space and time.

Translation is not just about replacing words from one language with another; it is about conveying meaning, emotion, and cultural context. The process of changing a message or

meaning between two or more different languages is called translation (Latifah et al., 2022). Moreover, Human language abilities may be increased in two ways: acquisition and learning (Wael et al. 2025). There are 18 translation techniques, Adaptation, Amplification, Borrowing, Calque, Compensation, Description, Discursive Creation, Established equivalent, Generalization, Linguistics amplification, Linguistics Compression, Literal translation, Modulation, Particularization, Reduction, Substitution, Transposition and Variation (Molina and Albir, 2002) cited by (Sugihartono et al., 2023). Therefore, in translation, the translation text must be translated in the same meaning.

Translation equivalence is essentially about making sure that a translated text communicates the same message, meaning, and emotional impact as the original version. According to Nida, (1974) cited by Mao & Wang, (2024), there are 2 kinds of Translation Equivalence; Formal and Dynamic Equivalence. Therefore, translators must carefully choose the right strategies to adapt sarcasm while keeping the humor and intent of the original dialogue intact in the subtitle. Subtitle, as a form of translation, adds another layer of difficulty. Wigraha & Puspani, (2022) says that, the process of inserting an audio-visual medium to display the spoken utterance is known as subtitling. Subtitle often used in the movies, Prastyaningsih & Harida, (2021) also said that, movie is a series of images from a prepared and processed film that are shown on a screen, usually with a sound track.

The study will focus exclusively on how these translation techniques and translation equivalence are applied to maintain the intended sarcastic tone and meaning in the Indonesian subtitles. The research aims to examine which translation techniques are employed in rendering sarcastic expressions, and how these techniques impact the preservation or alteration of the original sarcasm using translation equivalence.

The findings of this research will contribute to the field of translation, providing insights into the strategies used to translate sarcasm. This study will also be beneficial for translators, subtitlers, and linguists who work with humor and cultural adaptation in film translation. By understanding how sarcasm is handled in subtitles, this research can offer practical guidance for improving translation quality in the entertainment industry. Ultimately, this study highlights the importance of translation in preserving the essence of a film's dialogue, ensuring that audiences across different languages can enjoy the same witty and sarcastic experience as the original version.

METHOD

This study takes a qualitative method using case study approach to explore how sarcasm is translated in *Deadpool & Wolverine*. By using Molina and Albir's (2002) cited in (Sugihartono et al., 2023) and According to Nida, (1974) cited by Mao & Wang, (2024) translation techniques as a framework, the research aims to see how well the sarcastic tone and meaning are maintained in the Indonesian subtitles. Qualitative research offers a descriptive analysis to further investigate linguistic phenomena (Creswell, 2013) cited in (Febriany, 2024). A case study is like taking a close, detailed look at a real-life situation or event to better understand what happened, why it happened, and what can be learned from it.

Deadpool & Wolverine is an upcoming superhero film produced by Marvel Studios, featuring Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool and Hugh Jackman as Wolverine. Known for its dark humor, meta-commentary, and heavy use of sarcasm, Deadpool's character provides a rich source for studying how humor and irony are handled in translation. The main data for this study come from sarcastic lines spoken by Deadpool in Deadpool & Wolverine and their official Indonesian subtitles. The data will be taken from the official Disney+ release to ensure accuracy and authenticity. Since Disney+ provides professional subtitle translations, the study will focus on how well these translations retain the humor, tone, and meaning of Deadpool's sarcastic lines.

Once the data is collected, it will be analyzed in several ways: 1) Summarize the Sarcasm Utterances, the data will be summarized into a table that contain Source Language (SL) and the Target Language (TL) found in the 'Deadpool & Wolverine' movie; 2) Identifying Translation Techniques, each translated line will be examined; 3) Identifying the Translation Equivalence, each translated line will be examined; 4) Conclusion, the researcher will draw the conclusion from the data that has been found.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are 18 translation techniques outlined by Molina and Albir (2002): Adaptation, Amplification, Borrowing, Calque, Compensation, Description, Discursive Creation, Established Equivalent, Generalization, Linguistic Amplification, Linguistic Compression, Literal Translation, Modulation, Particularization, Reduction, Substitution, Transposition, and Variation. There are 2 types of translation equivalence, formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. According to Nida (1974), formal equivalence is where the SL translated into TL and stick to the original words and structure. Meanwhile, dynamic equivalence focus on meaning and make it sound natural. From 79 data, 74 data (93.67%) are dynamic equivalence and 5 data (6.33%) are formal equivalence.

Translation Techniques

13 out of 18 techniques found in the data, these translation techniques are going to be classified into several groups.

Table 1. Translation Techniques

Group of Translation Techniques	Frequency	Percentage
Single	7	8.86%
Duplet	23	29.11%
Triplet	29	36.71%
Quartet	13	16.46%
Quintet	5	6.33%
Sextet	2	2.53%
Total	79	100%

The first grouping of translation combinations are single, with 7 frequency (8.86%). For example:

TL: "Oh, what's your superpower? Is it parallel parking?"

SL: "*Oh, kekuatan super kamu apa? bisa parkir paralel?*"

The **Established Equivalent** technique is used because the expression "**parallel parking**" has a standardized equivalent in Indonesian ("**parkir paralel**") that is widely recognized. There is no change in structure or meaning, only a lexical adjustment to fit the target language.

The Second grouping of translations techniques combinations are duplet, with 23 occurrences (29.11%). For example:

SL: "Oh, you must be this year's Juggernaut."

TL: "*Oh, kamu pasti Juggernaut tahun ini ya.*"

The term "**Juggernaut**" is retained in the target language because it refers to a well-known character from the Marvel universe. Since this is widely recognized by the target audience, it does not need to be translated or explained, thus serving as an established equivalent. Also, there is no change in structure or meaning, only a lexical adjustment to fit the target language. The addition of "**ya**" as **Amplification** at the end of the sentence in the TL helps soften the tone and add conversational nuance.

The third grouping are triplet, with 29 frequency (36.71%). For example:

SL: "Oh, my God. You're standing."

TL: "*Ya ampun. kamu berdiri juga.*"

The **amplification** technique is evident in the addition of the word "*juga*" (meaning "*also*"), which is not explicitly present in the source text. **Reduction** occurs with the omission of "*Oh,*" from "*Oh, my God.*" This interjection is considered unnecessary in the target language, as "*Ya ampun*" already serves as an expressive equivalent and carries the intended emotional tone. Lastly, **Established Equivalent** is used in rendering the rest of the sentence. Phrases like "*You're standing*" are naturally and idiomatically translated as "*kamu berdiri,*" which is a widely accepted and commonly understood expression in Indonesian.

The fourth grouping of translation techniques combinations are quartet, with 13 frequency (16.46%). For example:

SL: "I'm sorry, us? I wasn't aware that you were an Avenger."

TL: "*Maaf, 'kita'? aku nggak tahu kamu itu anggota Avenger juga.*"

Reduction is seen in the omission of "I'm" from "I'm sorry." In Indonesian, the phrase "*Maaf*" is sufficient to express an apology without needing to state the subject explicitly. Established equivalent is used in translating the overall sentence structure and key expressions such as "I wasn't aware that you were" into "*aku nggak tahu kamu itu.*" These phrases are functionally equivalent and widely used in everyday Indonesian. Amplification appears with the addition of the word "*juga*" at the end of the sentence. Borrowing is evident in the use of the term "*Avenger*," which is left untranslated.

The fifth combinations grouping are quintet, with 5 frequency (6.33%). For example:

SL: "I'm Marvel Jesus you dull creature."

TL: "*Aku ini Marvel Jesus, makhluk bodoh.*"

Borrowing is clearly used with the term "*Marvel Jesus*," which is retained in English. Reduction is evident in the omission of the word "you." In Indonesian. Substitution appears in the translation of "dull" as "*bodoh*." While "dull" literally means slow-witted or uninteresting, the word "*bodoh*" (stupid) is a stronger and more direct insult in Indonesian. Amplification is seen with the addition of the word "*ini*" in "*Aku ini*," which adds emphasis. Established equivalent is reflected in the structure and the translation of "creature" into "*makhluk*," which is a natural and widely accepted equivalent in Indonesian.

The last grouping of combinations are sextet, with 2 frequency (2.53%)

SL: "It's been a while since I've seen Sling Blade, hit me again."

TL: "*Lama nih nggak nonton Sling Blade, pukul aku lagi dong.*"

Reduction occurs with the omission of "It's" and "I've," simplifying the sentence structure. Substitution is applied when the verb "seen" is replaced by the more specific "*nonton*," which means "watch" in Indonesian. The phrase "hit me again" is translated literally as "*pukul aku lagi dong*," maintaining the original wording. Amplification is added through the word "*dong*," which adds a persuasive nuance in Indonesian. The term "Sling Blade" is borrowed directly without translation, preserving the original title. The remaining elements are rendered as established equivalents that fit naturally within the target language context.

Translation Equivalences

According to Nida (1974) cited in Mao & Wang, (2024), formal equivalence is where the SL translated into TL and stick to the original words and structure. Meanwhile, dynamic equivalence focusses on meaning and make it sound natural. From 79 data, 74 data (93.67%) are dynamic equivalence and 5 data (6.33%) are formal equivalence.

Table 2. Translation Equivalence

Translation Equivalence	Frequency	Percentage
Formal	5	6.33%
Dynamic	74	93.67%
Total	79	100%

The first translation equivalences are formal equivalence, with 5 frequency (6.33%). For example:

SL: "Let's go, Peanut."

TL: "*Ayo, Kacang.*"

The command "Let's go" is directly translated to "Ayo," which is a straightforward equivalent in Indonesian. Likewise, the nickname "Peanut" is translated literally as "*Kacang.*"

The second translation equivalences are dynamic equivalence, with 74 frequency (93.67%). For example:

SL: "No wonder the Avengers didn't take you."

TL: "*Pantesan Avengers nggak nerima kamu.*"

The phrase "No wonder" is translated as "*Pantesan,*" which is a colloquial and idiomatic Indonesian expression. It captures the same meaning, a sarcastic or mocking realization, but in a way that feels natural to Indonesian speakers.

Discussion

Rather than relying on a single strategy, the translators consistently used a combination of techniques, some simple, others more layered. Out of the 79 sarcastic utterances analyzed, 7 cases (8.86%) used a single technique, 23 cases (29.11%) used two techniques (duplets), 29 cases (36.71%) used three (triplets), 13 cases (16.46%) used four (quartets), 5 cases (6.33%) used five (quintets), and 2 cases (2.53%) employed six techniques (sextets).

One thing that stood out was how often translators relied on "established equivalents" phrases that are already familiar and natural in Indonesian. But that alone wasn't enough. In many cases, they added small touches, like the word "*tuh*" or "*banget*," to reinforce sarcasm or make the tone sound more like every day Indonesian speech. These additions, referred to as amplification, made the characters' voices feel more alive. At the same time, they weren't afraid to remove unnecessary bits of the original, like repeating subjects or filler words, which falls under the technique of reduction. This helped the dialogue sound more natural and less rigid in the target language.

Sometimes, the structure of the sentence had to be changed entirely, which is where transposition came in. For instance, rhetorical questions or ironic remarks in English were reworded in a way that fit Indonesian grammar while keeping the punch. In some situations, description was necessary to explain terms that don't have a direct counterpart in the target culture. For example, "A-lister" became "*bintang papan atas*," which paints a clearer picture for the Indonesian viewer.

Dynamic equivalence was the dominant approach. Out of 79 cases, 74 were dynamic, while only 5 used formal equivalence. This makes perfect sense. The goal wasn't just to preserve words, it was to preserve tone, attitude, and emotional impact. Sarcasm lives in the way something is said, not just in what is said. That's why dynamic equivalence, which focuses on

how the audience feels and understands the message, is so important when translating this kind of material.

In the end, what this study shows is that translating sarcasm is as much an art as it is a skill. The combination of translation techniques, especially when paired with dynamic equivalence, allows the humor and personality of the original dialogue to come through. Thanks to this thoughtful and nuanced approach, Indonesian viewers can enjoy *Deadpool* and *Wolverine* with all its wit, sass, and sarcasm intact.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research titled *An Analysis of Translation Techniques in Translating Sarcasm in 'Deadpool & Wolverine' Movie*, several important conclusions can be drawn. This study aimed to analyze how sarcasm, a complex and context-dependent form of expression, is translated from English into Indonesian. Using Molina and Albir's (2002) framework for translation techniques and Eugene Nida's (1974) theory of equivalence, the analysis was conducted on 79 sarcastic utterances from the film. The findings show that sarcasm in the film was most often translated using a combination of techniques. Only 8.86% of the data used a single technique, while the majority involved multiple techniques such as duplets, triplets, quartets, and beyond. The most frequently employed techniques were established equivalent, amplification, reduction, borrowing, and transposition. These strategies allowed the translator to preserve the meaning, tone, and humor of the original dialogue; while making it feel natural and relatable in the target language. In terms of equivalence, dynamic equivalence was overwhelmingly dominant, appearing in 93.67% of the data. This supports the notion that in translating humor and sarcasm, what matters most is not literal accuracy but the ability to evoke the same effect or emotional response in the target audience. Formal equivalence, which preserves structure, was only used when absolutely necessary.

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