

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, the habit of watching movies and series through *over-the-top* (OTT) platforms has increased rapidly, particularly with the rise of mobile devices and affordable internet. According to Yellowbrick (2023), OTT (Over-the-Top) media services involve delivering video content over the internet, without relying on conventional distribution methods such as cable or satellite. This habit led to the rise of streaming services, which have significantly changed the media localisation sector (Cintas, 2023). *Netflix, Disney+ Hotstar, HBO Max, Apple+, Amazon Prime Video, Viu, iQIYI*, and many more are some of the popular digital streaming services available. These platforms enable audiences to enjoy content on demand, anytime, anywhere, and on any device (Yellowbrick, 2023).

With the rise of digital streaming services, people nowadays can easily access TV shows, movies, series, or documentaries from around the world. Those contents act as the medium of communication through language (Sajarwa, 2022). However, language is varied, and the differences in language use will affect the audience's perception. As Halliday & Hasan (2014) stated in *Cohesion in English*, language is a social semiotic system, meaning that language has an internal structure and function within society. Without language accessibility, international audiences would not be able to understand and enjoy the content fully. Therefore, these online streaming services also provide translation.

On these streaming services, translation, especially audio-visual translation, is essential for a vital connection between the content and audiences from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The accessibility of subtitles is not only important for helping the language gap but also crucial to increase subscriber numbers and engage a wide variety of audiences (Ozbudak, 2021). The subtitle translation needs to be concise, clear and convey the meaning (Permadi, 2021).

However, translating subtitles is challenging, especially translating humour in comedy into subtitles. Among the genres available in streaming services, comedy is one of the genres that is flexible, relevant, and always interests audiences. One of the most well-known forms of comedy on streaming services is the sitcom, or situation comedy. According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, a sitcom is a TV series that features a fixed continuing set of characters in a series of comedic circumstances. A sitcom is usually a 30-minute comedy sketch show that displays a group of regular characters appearing in the same setting, such as at family homes or at workplaces (Allen, 2025). *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (2013-2021), *Friends* (1994-2004), *Modern Family* (2009-2020), *The Big Bang Theory* (2007-2019), and many more are examples of sitcoms that have been popular in media entertainment for decades.

Translating humour in comedy, especially in sitcoms, is challenging because humour in sitcoms often arises from the situations, character interactions, and misunderstandings (Mills, 2009). Humour in sitcoms also mostly in the form of verbal humour. Among the many forms of verbal humour, one that stands out for its cleverness is the pun (Paronomasia). Pun is a form of wordplay in which humour is created through double meanings, sound similarities, or ambiguity. Puns are clever, funny, and often require a common understanding between the speaker and the listener. Puns are everywhere in everyday conversation, in literature, and especially in comedy. Writers like *Shakespeare*, *Oscar Wilde*, and *James Joyce* used puns not only to entertain but also to layer meaning and engage readers in unique ways. Today, puns are also widely used in modern entertainment, such as stand-up comedy, movies, and sitcoms.

However, puns are notoriously difficult to translate. Puns often rely on similar sounds or word structures in one language, which may not exist in another. This makes translating puns extremely challenging, especially in subtitles where each word is limited by time and space. The translator needs to not only understand the original joke, but also find a way to recreate the humour in another language in just two short lines on screen.

It is this difficulty that makes puns an interesting subject to explore. While humour and translation have been studied in various ways, this research focusing on humour, wordplay, and especially puns at Universitas Kristen Indonesia remains limited. This inspired the writer to explore this topic in more depth by analysing *Phil Dunphy's* puns and their translation techniques in the English-Indonesian subtitles of the *Modern Family* sitcom.

The American sitcom *Modern Family* was chosen as the main data source because of its rich use of pun-based humour, especially from the character *Phil Dunphy*. Phil is known for his pun-based humour, which makes his dialogue an appropriate subject for analysing pun translation. This research focuses on identifying the types of puns used and examining how they are translated into Indonesian in the official subtitles of *Disney+ Hotstar*. This research uses Diaz Perez's (2008) theory of pun translation as a framework for classifying puns and exploring the techniques used to translate puns.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. What types of puns are found in *Phil Dunphy's* comedic dialogues in the *Modern Family* sitcom?
2. Which pun translation techniques are used in translating *Phil Dunphy's* puns in the Indonesian subtitles of the *Modern Family* sitcom?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

1. To identify the type of puns found in *Phil Dunphy's* comedic dialogues in the *Modern Family* sitcom.
2. To identify the translation techniques used in translating *Phil Dunphy's* puns in the Indonesian subtitles of the *Modern Family* sitcom.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research carries both theoretical and practical significance in the field of translation.

1.4.1 Theoretical Significances:

- This research contributes to the fields of translation studies, especially English linguistics and audio-visual translation, by applying Diaz Perez's (2008) theory on pun translation. This theoretical exploration enhances our understanding of the complexities involved in translating contextual humour.
- The research highlights the intersection between language, culture, and humour, offering insights into the complexities of cross-linguistic communication in media. Additionally, it provides a reference for future academic work on the translation of wordplay and humour in literary and audio-visual contexts.

1.4.2 Practical Significances:

- The findings of the research can benefit the practice of subtitle translation. By identifying the puns and their translation techniques, translators and subtitle creators can enhance their knowledge of humour translation and improve the quality of subtitles. This improvement supports better audience engagement and satisfaction across diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- The research serves to benefit students and researchers in English literature, translation studies, and applied linguistics by offering a case study on the importance of linguistic creativity as an educational tool. It provides practical insights into the challenges and techniques involved in translating puns, offering guidance on maintaining fidelity to original content while ensuring accessibility and enjoyment for international audiences.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

This research adopts a qualitative approach. As Creswell (2023) explains, qualitative research seeks to explore and interpret the ways individuals or groups understand and respond to social or human issues. This method prioritises rich, nuanced descriptions of participants' perspectives, experiences, and the situational

context in which events take place. In this research, a descriptive method is used to examine and present the types of puns and the translation techniques employed in the subtitles of *Modern Family*.

Creswell (2023) also notes that descriptive qualitative research involves maintaining close engagement with the data, applying minimal theoretical frameworks, and organising information into meaningful themes and categories. This approach allows the research to offer a thorough understanding of how pun-based humour is represented in translation by interpreting textual data, classifying it into relevant categories, and providing a detailed and systematic description of the translation techniques observed.

1.5.1 Data Source

The primary source of data is the subtitle of the American sitcom television series *Modern Family*. Created by Christopher Lloyd and Steven Levitan, *Modern Family* first aired in 2009 on ABC and concluded in 2020. The series consists of 11 seasons and a total of 250 episodes, with each episode lasting approximately 20 to 22 minutes. All episodes are legally accessible through the streaming platform *Disney+ Hotstar*. *Modern Family* was selected as the object of research due to its rich use of verbal humour, especially puns. *Modern Family* relies on linguistic creativity, and one of the main characters, *Phil Dunphy*, frequently uses puns in his dialogue. These elements make the series an appropriate source for analysing how pun-based humour is rendered in translation.

1.5.2 Data Collection

In this study, the writer observes the *Modern Family* sitcom. To collect data, the writer used the observation method (*metode simak*) with Non-Participant Observation Technique (*Simak Bebas Libat Cakap*). According to Mahsun (2017), the observation method is a data collection method used in linguistic research that involves observing and listening to language use directly, either in spoken or written form, without the researcher intervening in or influencing the interaction.

To implement the method, the writer applies a note-taking technique to collect all the data in the form of puns. Note-taking technique is a follow-up technique to the observation method, where the researcher listens to or reads language data and carefully takes notes on relevant parts (Mahsun, 2017). The data collection was conducted through the following steps:

1. Watching all seasons and episodes of the *Modern Family* sitcom with English and Indonesian subtitles via *Disney+ Hotstar*.
2. Selecting episodes that contain puns, with particular focus on puns spoken by the character *Phil Dunphy*.
3. Watching the selected episodes repeatedly on *Disney+ Hotstar* to find the pun-based humour uttered by *Phil Dunphy*.
4. Reading the subtitles of English puns uttered by *Phil Dunphy*.
5. Note-taking the subtitles of English puns to find out the Indonesian translation of the puns
6. Inserting the puns collected into columns/tables to find out the translations.

1.5.3 Data Analysis

In analysing the data of this study, the researcher employed two methods of data analysis, the Intralingual Matching Method (*Metode Padan Intralingual*) and the Extra-Lingual Matching Method (*Metode Padan Ekstralingual*). According to Mahsun (2017), the Intralingual Matching Method is an analytical approach where the determining reference comes from within the language itself. It uses internal linguistic features, such as dictionary meanings, morphological structures, and phonological characteristics, to classify or interpret data, while the Extra-Lingual Matching Method is an approach to data analysis in which the determining factors for interpreting language are found outside the language itself. This means that the research relies on external elements such as the situational context, the speaker's intentions, cultural background, or the social reality surrounding the use of language.

The Intralingual Matching Method was applied because most of the data were analysed by using linguistic elements within the language itself as the determinant, such as the similarities or differences in spelling, pronunciation, and word formation. Meanwhile, the Extra-Lingual Matching Method was used for data that required consideration of the meaning of words in their usage of the situational context and communicative function within *Phil Dunphy's* puns in the *Modern Family* series.

In addition, the writer applied two techniques according to the characteristics of each type of pun examined. In identifying data of homonymy, homophony, and paronymy, the writer used the Comparative Differentiating Technique (*Teknik Hubung Banding Membedakan*). According to Mahsun (2017), this technique focuses on identifying differences between linguistic elements. This technique was used for recognising and distinguishing items that may appear similar but differ in terms of form, function, or meaning.

For polysemy and morphology data, the writer employed the Comparative Matching Technique for Identifying Core Similarities (*Teknik Hubung Banding Menyamakan Hal Pokok*). Mahsun (2017) notes that this technique aims to find a fundamental or core similarity among data by first identifying both their similarities and differences. This technique is used to identify core similarities, since the analysis of polysemy pun focuses on the shared core meaning in a single lexeme that has more than one related sense. In morphology, it is used to relate the base form of the word to the derived or compounded form used as a pun, as well as to identify the new meaning that arises from morphological processes. The data analysis was conducted through the following steps:

1. Classifying the puns based on their types using Diaz Perez's (2008) theory on pun translation.
2. Analysing the pun type and their translation techniques applied in the Indonesian subtitles using Diaz Perez's (2008) theory on pun translation.
3. Calculating the percentages of each type of pun and each translation technique using the formula by Sudijono (in Kristiana, 2022). The

writer first divides the number of occurrences of each category by the total number of collected data. Then, to determine the percentage, the division result was multiplied by 100%. The formula used in this calculation is as follows:

$$P = \frac{O}{T} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage

O = Occurrence

T = Total data

4. Concluding the analysis of pun types and their translation techniques applied in the Indonesian subtitles using Diaz Perez's (2008) theory on pun translation.
5. Write up the research results in a format according to the scientific writing of the Faculty of Letters and Languages of Universitas Kristen Indonesia.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

This research is specifically focused on analysing the puns found in the lingual aspects and their translation techniques used in the Indonesian subtitles of the *Modern Family* sitcom based on Diaz Perez's (2008) theory on pun translation. The series consists of 11 seasons and a total of 250 episodes, but to maintain a manageable and focused scope, the data is restricted to puns uttered solely by *Phil Dunphy*, one of the main characters in the series, notably known for his frequent use of puns and playful language throughout the series.

Therefore, based on the data collection process, the writer selected only 22 episodes from 9 seasons that showed frequent puns by *Phil Dunphy*. The selected episodes are as follows: Season 1, episode 4, Season 1, episode 22, Season 2, episode 1, Season 2, episode 4, Season 2, episode 7, Season 2, episode 8, Season 2, episode 12, Season 3, episode 9, Season 3, episode 15, Season 4, episode 2, Season 4, episode 16, Season 5, episode 3, Season 5, episode 9, Season 6, episode 8, Season 6, episode 16, Season 6, episode 18, Season 7, episode 4, Season 7, episode 11, Season 7, episode 19, Season 7, episode 20, Season 8, episode 19, and Season 9, episode 12.

These episodes were chosen based on the frequency and variety of pun usage within *Phil's* dialogue. The analysis does not include puns spoken by other characters, nor does it aim to provide a comprehensive study of all episodes or seasons of the sitcom.

1.7 Status of the Study

In supporting the research, several previous articles discussed a similar topic. Chen (2024) analyses the translation of puns in Rick Riordan's *"The Trials of Apollo 2: The Dark Prophecy"* and its Simplified Chinese version, translated by Yuyan Anying Weiming Gao, using Dirk Delabastita's theory on pun translation. It finds that the Simplified Chinese version has both strengths and weaknesses, with some translations being effective while others fail to maintain fidelity to the source text. It also emphasises the importance of engaging language for children and suggests that translators should prioritise clarity and humour in their translations. The recommendations for improvement include the use of footnotes and consideration of cultural context in pun translations.

(Yolanda & Yuliasri, 2016) investigates pun translation techniques in J.R.R. Tolkien's *"The Hobbit"* using Dirk Delabastita's theory and assesses translation quality. The analysis reveals 243 puns, with paronymy being the most frequent. Six translation techniques are utilised, with "Pun to Non-Pun" being the most common. The research also evaluates translation accuracy, acceptability, and readability levels, revealing that 56 translations (23%) were accurate, while 187 (77%) were less accurate. The acceptability levels indicated that 116 translations (47.7%) were acceptable, and 127 (52.3%) were less acceptable. The readability assessment categorised 133 translations (54.7%) as high readability and 110 (45.3%) as sufficient readability.

Junaedi (2021) analyses the *Netflix Subtitles And Asmodeus Fan-Subtitles: Method of Translating Wordplays On Brooklyn Nine-Nine Series* using Delabastita's theory about types of puns and pun translation methods. This research aims to analyse the translation methods used for puns in the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* series by comparing Netflix's official Indonesian subtitles with Asmodeus fan-subtitles. The research uses a qualitative approach, examining two seasons of the

show and their respective subtitles. The research identifies three types of pun present in the series: Homophony (7%), Homonymy (36%), and Paronymy (57%). Among the eight recognized pun translation methods, only three were found in both subtitle versions: Editorial Technique (3%) – Providing additional explanations or modifications in the translation, pun ST to pun TT (Netflix: 26%, Asmodeus: 23%), and pun to no-pun (Netflix: 71%, Asmodeus: 74%). It highlights that Asmodeus fan-subtitles are generally easier to understand for Indonesian viewers compared to Netflix's official subtitles because Asmodeus prioritises natural-sounding Indonesian, making the dialogue more accessible to the audience.

Ioana and Crețu (2022) conducted research on the Puns in Audio-Visual Translation, focusing on the subtitles of the American comedy film series *Police Academy*. Their research highlights the importance of context in understanding and translating puns. The study aimed to examine whether the translation strategies used in the Romanian subtitles could fully convey the meaning of the original puns in English or whether the puns had to be structurally changed to fit the target language.

They used theories proposed by Franz Josef Hausmann (1974) and Dirk Delabastita (1993) as the main framework. Their findings showed that horizontal puns (those that rely more on surface-level language features) had a higher chance of being translated accurately. The most successful translation strategies were pun-to-pun and pun-to-punoid, as they managed to maintain both meaning and humour in the target language. In contrast, vertical puns, which depend more on deep or cultural context, were more difficult to translate accurately, especially when there was limited context in the subtitles. These often led to translations that did not fully reflect the original message. Additionally, the pun-to-non-pun strategy was found to be the least effective, as it only conveyed part of the information and often failed to maintain the playful or humorous tone of the original pun. This research shows that understanding the context is key in translating puns in subtitles.

The previous studies reviewed above are notably different from the present research in several key aspects. First, the sources of data are entirely distinct. None of these studies examined the *Modern Family* series. Second, there is a clear difference in the theoretical approach. Most of the earlier studies relied on Dirk

Delabastita's (1996) framework for classifying the types of pun and translating puns, along with related theories such as Franz Josef Hausmann's (1974) framework. In contrast, this research applies the framework proposed by Diaz Perez (2008), which offers a different perspective on how puns are identified and how translation techniques are categorised.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

1. Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Significance of the Study, Methodology of the Study, Scope and Limitations of the Study, Status of the Study, and Organisation of the Study.

2. Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

This chapter consists of a review of the related literature and the theory used in this research, including the theory of translations, subtitles, humour, and puns.

3. Chapter III: Findings and Discussion.

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and provides an interpretation of the findings in relation to the research objectives. The collected data were classified, analysed, and described according to Diaz Perez's (2008) theoretical framework.

4. Chapter IV: Conclusion and Suggestions

This chapter presents conclusions based on the analysis and addresses the research's problems, and proposes suggestions as a resource for future researchers working in the same topic and field.