

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Translation is an important means of transferring messages, ideas, and cultural values from one language into another. In translation studies, translation is not understood simply as the replacement of words, but as the transfer of meaning from a source language into a target language in a way that is acceptable to the target audience. Catford (1965) explains that translation involves the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. Nida and Taber (1982) emphasize that translation should reproduce the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and then in terms of style. Newmark (1988) also argues that translation is an effort to render the meaning of a text into another language according to the author's intended meaning. These views show that translation requires linguistic accuracy, contextual awareness, and sensitivity to the communicative function of the source text.

In audiovisual media, translation becomes more complex because meaning is conveyed through spoken dialogue, images, sound, timing, and on-screen context. One of the most common forms of audiovisual translation is subtitling, which transfers spoken dialogue into written text displayed on the screen. Subtitling requires translators to make the message clear and concise because subtitles are limited by screen space and reading time. Therefore, subtitlers do not only translate words, but also reformulate spoken messages so that they can be read quickly and understood naturally by viewers. The translation of pun is one of the most challenging areas in audiovisual translation. This challenge becomes more complicated when humor appears in the form of pun. Pun refers to the creative use of language that exploits similarities in sound, spelling, or meaning to create ambiguity, humor, or stylistic effects.

According to Delabastita and Henry (1996), pun involves textual phenomena in which structural features of language are used to create a meaningful confrontation between two or more linguistic meanings with similar forms. In other words, wordplay depends on the relationship between form and meaning. Because this relationship is often specific to a particular language, wordplay is difficult to translate into another language.

In films, wordplay is not only used to make the audience laugh. It can also reveal characterization, emotion, and interpersonal relationships. This is especially relevant in *The Amazing Spider-Man*, where Peter Parker often uses witty remarks, sarcasm, and playful language. His wordplay reflects his intelligence, nervousness, confidence, and social style. Therefore, the translation of wordplay in this film is important because it influences how Indonesian viewers understand the humor and personality of the character.

The popularity of superhero films such as *The Amazing Spider-Man* also means that these films reach a very wide audience through both cinema release and streaming platforms, which increases the importance of accurate and engaging subtitle translation. Audiovisual translation itself has grown considerably as an academic field over the past few decades, moving from a marginal topic within translation studies into an area with its own dedicated theories, journals, and conferences (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007). Within this field, the translation of humor and wordplay remains one of the most frequently discussed yet unresolved problems, since humor typically depends on culturally and linguistically specific knowledge that does not transfer automatically from one language community to another (Chiaro, 1992). This makes popular, humor-driven films such as *The Amazing Spider-Man* a particularly suitable object of study for examining how translators manage the tension between linguistic form, comedic effect, and audience comprehension within the constraints of subtitling.

English and Indonesian have different phonological, lexical, and cultural systems. English puns often depend on homophones, polysemy, idioms, or sound-based similarities that may not have direct equivalents in Indonesian. When such

expressions are translated literally, the humorous effect may be weakened or lost. At the same time, the subtitle format limits the translator's ability to give long explanations. The translator must therefore decide whether to preserve the pun, replace it with another rhetorical device, translate only the meaning, or omit the wordplay. These decisions are related to translation procedures.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on pun found in the English dialogues of *The Amazing Spider-Man* and the procedures used to translate it into Indonesian subtitles. By examining the pun and their translation procedures, this research is expected to provide a clearer understanding of how linguistic humor is transferred across languages within the constraints of subtitling

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background above, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What types of pun are found in the English dialogue of *The Amazing Spider-Man*?
- 2) What translation procedures are used to translate the pun into the Indonesian subtitles?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the purposes of this study are: 1) to identify the types of pun found in the English dialogue of *The Amazing Spider-Man*, and 2) to identify the translation procedures used to translate the pun into the Indonesian subtitles.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to give theoretical and practical contributions to the field of translation studies, especially audiovisual translation. For students, this study can serve as a reference for understanding how pun is identified and analyzed in film subtitles. It provides an example of how translation theories can be applied to real audiovisual data, particularly in relation to humor, puns, and linguistic creativity.

For researchers, this study contributes to the discussion of pun translation procedures in audiovisual texts. Previous studies have examined pun in comedy series, animated films, and literary texts, but superhero films have received less attention. By focusing on a superhero film, this research offers a different context in which humor is combined with action, science fiction, and character-based dialogue.

For translators and subtitle practitioners, this study may provide practical insight into the procedures used to handle pun under subtitling constraints. The analysis can help translators consider whether to preserve pun, adapt it, replace it with a rhetorical device, or prioritize meaning when humor cannot be fully maintained. In this way, the study may support more effective decision-making in subtitle translation.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

This study applies a descriptive qualitative research design. A qualitative design is appropriate because the research focuses on the interpretation of meaning, context, and translation choices rather than on numerical measurement. The object of analysis is not the frequency of pun alone, but how each instance of pun functions in the dialogue and how it is rendered into Indonesian subtitles. The descriptive aspect is used because the study describes the pun and the translation procedures applied to them systematically. As Nassaji (2015) explains, descriptive qualitative research allows researchers to describe language phenomena based on naturally occurring data and interpret them according to relevant theoretical frameworks. Creswell (2017) further argues that qualitative research is concerned with understanding phenomena in their

natural settings and interpreting the meanings that people attribute to them, making it well-suited for studies that explore linguistic and cultural complexity. Similarly, Moleong and Surjaman (2014) defines descriptive qualitative research as a method that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the object of study, rather than numerical data, and emphasizes the importance of the researcher as the primary instrument of analysis. Therefore, this design is suitable for analyzing pun translation in *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

The source of this study is the film *The Amazing Spider-Man* together with its English dialogue script and Indonesian subtitles. The English dialogue script functions as the source text because it contains the original utterances spoken by the characters. The Indonesian subtitles function as the target text because they represent the translated version received by Indonesian viewers. The data of this study are the utterances in the English dialogue that contain pun and their corresponding translations in the Indonesian subtitles. The film is selected because it contains witty, sarcastic, and playful dialogue, especially in Peter Parker's lines. These linguistic features make the film relevant for examining how wordplay is translated in an audiovisual context.

The data are collected through several stages. First, the researcher watches *The Amazing Spider-Man* while comparing the English dialogue script and the Indonesian subtitles. Second, the researcher identifies utterances that contain pun by paying attention to linguistic features such as sound similarity, spelling similarity, multiple meanings, and contextual ambiguity. Third, each identified source-language wordplay is matched with its Indonesian subtitle. Fourth, the researcher records the data in a data sheet that includes the time stamps, source-language dialogue, target-language subtitle, and translation procedure. These steps are conducted carefully to ensure that the data are relevant to the research problems.

The collected data are analyzed in several steps. First, each English utterance containing pun is examined to determine the translation procedures based on its linguistic form and meaning. Second, the Indonesian subtitle is compared with the English dialogue to see how the pun is translated. Third, the translation is classified

according to Delabastita's procedures for translating pun, which are discussed in Chapter II. Fourth, the researcher interprets the translation choice by considering the dialogue context, the subtitle constraints, and the possible effect on the target audience. Finally, the results are discussed in relation to the research questions and the theoretical framework of pun translation.

To maintain the trustworthiness of the analysis, several steps were taken during the research process. The researcher repeatedly watched the relevant scenes of the film to confirm that the identified utterances indeed functioned as pun within their specific context, rather than relying on a single viewing that might overlook contextual or visual cues. The classification of each datum into a translation procedure was also cross-checked against Delabastita's (1996) original definitions more than once to reduce the possibility of misclassification, and any data whose classification remained uncertain after this process, such as those discussed in 3.2.1, were explicitly noted as weaker or borderline cases rather than presented with unwarranted certainty. This procedure is consistent with Moleong's (2014) view that the credibility of qualitative research depends on the researcher's careful and repeated engagement with the data, and it is intended to make the analysis in Chapter III as transparent and accountable as possible.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the pun found in the English dialogue of *The Amazing Spider-Man* and the procedures used to translate them into the Indonesian subtitles. The analysis is limited to pun that appears in spoken dialogue and has a corresponding subtitle translation. Other forms of humor that do not involve pun are not analyzed unless they are directly related to the pun being discussed.

The study is limited to one film and one language pair, namely English and Indonesian. Therefore, the findings may not represent all superhero films or all subtitle translation practices. The research does not examine dubbing, , or audience reception.

It also does not measure the quality of the subtitles through viewer responses. Instead, the analysis is textual and linguistic, focusing on how pun is classified and translated.

1.7 Status of the Study

This research belongs to translation studies, specifically audiovisual translation and pun translation. The study is positioned within recent research on how pun and translation procedures are applied in subtitles or audiovisual texts. Several previous studies share similarities with the present research while also differing in important ways. In terms of similarities, all of the studies reviewed examine language translation in audiovisual or subtitle contexts, and most focus on English-Indonesian translation (Aisyah, 2021; Isnabila & Sutopo, 2021; Prihatini, 2022; Satiawan, 2022; Erwin & Hadi, 2025; Fithri & Suyudi, 2019; Shafa & Thohiriyah, 2025). Among these, several studies specifically address pun, including those by Aisyah (2021), Prihatini (2022), Satiawan (2022), Fithri and Suyudi (2019), and Shafa and Thohiriyah (2025), while Isnabila and Sutopo (2021) and Erwin and Hadi (2025) deal with broader translation procedures and verbal humor, respectively. Notably, Prihatini (2022) and Fithri and Suyudi (2019) both employ Delabastita's framework for pun analysis, which is the same framework used in the present study.

In terms of differences, however, the present research is distinct in several respects. While most previous studies use animated films, cartoon series, or comedy films as their objects, the present study focuses on a live-action superhero film, which represents an underexplored genre in pun translation procedures research. Previous studies of this kind have examined films such as the Rio series (Aisyah, 2021), The Amazing World of Gumball (Prihatini, 2022), SpongeBob SquarePants (Satiawan, 2022), Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Erwin & Hadi, 2025), Friends (Fithri & Suyudi), and Despicable Me (Shafa & Thohiriyah, 2025). Furthermore, while the present study specifically analyzes Indonesian subtitles, some previous studies examine dubbing rather than subtitling (Satiawan, 2022; Prihatini, 2022). Regarding

analytical frameworks, Shafa and Thohiriyah (2025) applied Molina and Albir's translation techniques, Isnabila and Sutopo (2021) discuss general translation procedures, and Erwin and Hadi (2025) include acceptability assessment. In contrast, the present study applies Delabastita's wordplay translation procedures without measuring audience reception.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I presents the introduction, including the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, methodology, scope and limitation, status of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter II reviews the theories of translation, translation procedures, wordplay, translation procedures of wordplay, and subtitling. Chapter III presents the findings and discussion, explains. Chapter IV provides the conclusion and suggestions.