An Anaslysis of Subtitling Humor from English into Persian

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ABSTRACT

Humor is a distinct form of communication that plays a crucial role in human interaction and cultural expression, particularly within the realm of audiovisual media. This research will subsequently be focused on humor translation in subtitled films, considering movies such as Deadpool and Wolverine, The Fall Guy, and Hit Man. The central question pursued in the paper is how humor could be effectively translated across cultures, which calls for the formulation of the following two research questions: What are the most and least frequent strategies used when subtitling humor? Which strategies are most effective for translating each type of humor? The present paper is based on Debra and Raphaelson-West's (1989) framework and Translation Strategies for Subtitling Films by Gottlieb (2001). To attain its aims, the present descriptive and analytical research resorted to a step-by-step watching of each movie for the identification of humorous parts, followed by a careful consideration of the English dialogues against their Persian subtitles. The results showed that transfer was the most frequent strategy and condensation was the least frequent. These findings will add to the existing knowledge of humor translation strategies and hopefully prove helpful to both translators and researchers in the field of translation studies.

Keywords: Audiovisual Translation, Humor translation, Subtitling, Subtitling Strategies, Persian Subtitling

1. INTRODUCTION

Humor is a vital part of human communication, and it serves many functions other than pure entertainment. Humor is also a cultural expression of life, reflecting the norms, values, and experiences shared by members of a community. In audiovisual media, humor becomes even more complex, especially when it comes to subtitling. Translating humor for subtitles is a particular challenge, since not only the content of the jokes, but also the timing, the tone, and the cultural features of the joke have to be translated within the tight framework of the screen text.

Humor subtitling presupposes deep linguistic and cultural knowledge. Translators will have to work their way through different genres of humor: puns, situational comedies, and cultural references-most of which may not necessarily have direct equivalents in another language. The process is demanding because it requires brevity from the translators while ensuring that the same humorous effect is preserved, intelligible to the target group. According to Patrick Zabalbeascoa, there are six types of humor: international jokes, which are universally accessible; national-cultural-and-institutional jokes that require adaptation for comprehension; national-sense-of-humor jokes influenced by specific cultural contexts; language-dependent jokes reliant on linguistic features; visual jokes that depend on both verbal and nonverbal cues; and complex jokes that combine multiple categories.

Various strategies have been suggested by researchers to overcome these difficulties through translation. In addition to Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) classification of strategies into direct and indirect methods, Newmark (1988) identified various approaches such as literal translation, transference, and functional equivalents. Moreover, Delia Chiaro (2010) has proposed four techniques for translating verbal humor: leaving the humor unchanged when possible, replacing it with culturally relevant examples, using idiomatic expressions in the target language, or ignoring the original humor altogether.

This article tries to analyze humor in three selected films: Deadpool and Wolverine, The Fall Guy, and Hit Man. The main aim is, therefore, to find the genres of humor in these two films and analyze the strategies implemented in their Persian subtitles. This study will try to find out how humor stands in the translation

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process with regard to different cultures through identification of trends in various translation practices and the extent of their success in retaining humorous effect.

For data collection purposes, each film was watched carefully to identify humorous parts. The English dialogues were then carefully compared with their Persian subtitles in order to assess how humor had been translated. This involved an in-depth analysis that categorized the types of humor identified and determined strategies in translation. This kind of methodological approach is bound to give useful insights into the intricacies involved in translating humor within subtitled films.

Three key questions that this research will seek to address are:

-Which strategies are most frequent in the process of humor subtitling?

-What strategies in this context are the least frequently used?

-Which are the most effective strategies for each type of humor?

This study refers to Debra and Raphaelson-West's framework (1989) on different aspects of humor translation and Gottlieb's classification of subtitling strategies (2001). Debra and Raphaelson-West's framework pinpoints the ways in which different varieties of humor would call for different strategies with regard to their contextual value. Meanwhile, the taxonomy by Gottlieb offers a wide overview of subtitling strategies, from transfer, paraphrase, expansion, and condensation-all serving particular functions when working with humorous texts.

Humor subtitling improves our comprehension of the workings of humor within varied cultural contexts; it underlines problems faced by translators trying to be faithful to comic effect. This research will increase clarity about aspects touching both theory and practice of subtitling.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Audio-visual Translation

Audio-visual translation (AVT) includes a variety of methods for translating spoken and written media, with subtitles being one of the most common methods. AVT aims to overcome language barriers by allowing viewers to access foreign films, TV shows and other media by maintaining the context and content (Gambier, 2013). This process not only translates dialogue, but also takes in visual information, cultural contexts. According to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), this makes AVT a very specific field indeed. AVT is definitely at a different level of analysis that requires a high level of skill and knowledge not only in the source and target languages but also a broad cultural understanding. (Baker, 2018).

Translators indicate meaning within a confined space and time, which often necessitates omitting some information or altering it in some way. This is particularly significant when adapting humor since much humor relies on words, phrases, or idioms that are not necessarily suitable for the target language (Chiaro, 2009). The translation thus needs to consider not just the words, but more importantly, the comic effect and the cultural bearing that the humor comes with." (Katan, 2014). AVT research has in recent times gained recognition in the academies as an area of huge importance to world communication and cultural exchange. Studies about AVT range from purely theoretical works to purely practical ones (Gambier & van Doorslaer, 2010).

2.1.1 Subtitling

Subtitling is a kind of AVT in which subtitles appear on the screen to provide narrative or relevant information. It provides a bridge for viewers who do not speak the original language to understand the storyline while watching a film or program (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). The role of the translator is to ensure that the subtitles are not only accurate but also short enough to accommodate medium constraints (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998). This includes making difficult decisions about what to include or exclude while maintaining consistency and clarity.

2.2 Culture-bound Problems

Cultural issues in translation refer to problems caused by cultural differences between the source language and the target language. These problems are particularly evident in interpretations of humor due to reliance on specific cultural, contextual, and social norms that cannot be properly interpreted (Baker & Hochel, 2018). For example, jokes that appeal to one culture may fail or be misunderstood by other audiences due to unfamiliarity with the local culture and language (Chiaro, 2009). So, subtitlers need to look at these issues carefully to make them meaningful and humorous.

2.2.1 Humor

Humor is a complex phenomenon that varies across cultures, making it difficult to translate into written text. It can take many forms, including jokes, situational comedy, irony, satire, and pun—all of which depend on linguistic and cultural characteristics (Attardo & Raskin, 1991). The effectiveness of humor depends on the shared knowledge between speakers; therefore, what is funny in one culture may be misunderstood or offensive

in another (Chiaro, 2009). This difficulty requires a different approach when translators attempt to convey humor from one language to another.

Research has identified certain types of humor that present unique challenges to translators. For example, cultural jokes often involve a country's customs and social values that are not the same as those of other countries. On the other hand, international jokes are based on topics or situations that are known across different countries, but still need to be carefully managed to appeal to the target audience (Meyer & Dziubalska-Kołaczyk, 2012). Therefore, subtitlers should carefully analyze the content of each joke before deciding how best to match it with their audience.

2.2.2 Strategies for Humor Subtitling

Subtitling humor requires a technical approach due to inherent challenges such as temporal and spatial constraints. Scholars have found a number of useful ways to explain humor while adhering to these constraints. Before translating humor, it is significant to recognize and classify different types of humor. Defining humor is difficult because groups and subgroups are not limited and they also tend to be subjective.

The classification done by Patrick Zabalbeascoe is helpful in this regard. He divides humor into these six categories:

1. International joke: Humor which is not dependent on language or culture.
2. National-cultural-and-institutional joke: Jokes need to be adapted into the target language because they contain national, social or institutional words.
3. National-sense-of-humor joke: The joke or its theme is influenced by the culture of a particular place or country, depending on the history, religion and other aspects of the culture/state. It is also considered the most controversial group.
4. Language-dependent joke: humor that depends on linguistic features (e.g. homophones, polysemy).
5. Visual joke: depends heavily on the verbal, combined nonverbal or iconic representation of the idiomatic or metaphorical factor. The jokes appear to be based on what is on the screen.
6. Complex joke: A combination of two or more of the above categories.

2.3 Empirical Studies on the Translation of Humor

Many empirical research studies on humor translation have been conducted over the past two decades. These studies demonstrate the difficulty of humor subtitling and the importance of cultural awareness, imagination, and linguistic skills in the translation process. Furthermore, they illustrate the different strategies used by subtitling professionals to convey the humor and difficulties associated with this operation.

2.3.1 Works Done in Iran

Samir (2022) conducted research to determine the strategies used by Iranian translators to subtitle dark jokes in films based on the model of Molina and Albir (2008). The corpus of the study consisted of a detective and drama film entitled Joker (2019). 24 dark jokes were identified in the selected movie. To achieve the aim of the study, two subtitled Persian versions of the movie Joker were analyzed. The resulting data were described using descriptive statistics and Chi-square test. The results obtained showed that amplification, literal translation and modulation were the most used strategies in joke subtitling.

Kianbakht (2015) investigated the subtitling strategies adopted in the Persian translation of Woody Allen's comedy Annie Hall and determined which strategy was used more often than others. The study is a comparative descriptive content analysis based on the dialogues and related subtitles of Woody Allen's Annie Hall. The theoretical framework of this study was based on Henrik Gottlieb's (2001) classifications of subtitling strategies. The results of the study showed that the most common strategy was transfer. The high frequency of the transfer strategy means that Iranian subtitlers transfer the dialogues of the original film into Persian in the most comprehensible and natural way possible.

2.3.2 Works Done Abroad

Ghassemiazghandi and Tengku-Sepora (2020) conducted a research on humor translation strategies in Persian subtitles and determined the extent to which each translation strategy was used. The study focused on three types of humor - universal, cultural and linguistic - derived from Schmitz's humor categorization. Sixteen animations formed the corpus of the study. The study was conducted based on the Gottlieb subtitle strategies classification to define the translation strategies used by subtitlers. This descriptive research examined the transfer strategies used by subtitlers by comparing segments of the source text and the equivalent target text. The results of the study show that the most common translation strategies applied by translators in subtitling animated comedies from English to Persian are "transfer", followed by "paraphrase".

Alharthi (2016) studied the problems of subtitling humor in the American series Seinfeld. The study also identifies the subtitling strategies used by Arabic translators to address the technical, linguistic, and cultural issues in translating humor in Seinfeld and reveals factors that may influence subtitling decisions. The study was based on the general theory of verbal humor (GTVH; Attardo & Raskin 1991) and on Pedersen's (2005) model of cultural references in subtitles. The results show that different types of humor (eight types) were used in the selected data. These types have been translated into Arabic using different strategies governed by a number of parameters, including cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target languages and cultures, intersemiotic redundancy, intertextuality, media- specific constraints, viewers' knowledge of the show, and the simplicity of the humor in the source text. Arabic subtitles have, in many cases, successfully translated the humor into Arabic. However, some examples of humor that contain cultural references and puns proved more difficult.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This paper investigates the subtitling of humor in movies and discusses the translation strategies adopted by the subtitlers. In order to accomplish this, two theoretical frameworks were employed. First, Debra and Raphaelson-West's 1989 categorization of humor was used to classify the various types of humor found in the chosen movies. This framework helped identify the challenges faced by the subtitlers in translating various kinds of humor. Second, ten translation strategies for film subtitling by Henrik Gottlieb (2001) were used for analyzing the subtitling strategies and establishing their effectiveness in conveying humor in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

3.1.1 Debra and Raphaelson-West's (1989) Framework

Debra and Raphaelson-West's framework for humor categorization (1989) provides a basic methodology for understanding the complexities of translating humor, especially in audiovisual contexts. This framework categorizes humor into three: linguistic humor, cultural humor, and universal humor.

Linguistic humor relies heavily on puns, wordplay, and other language-specific devices that take advantage of the source language's peculiarities. This is usually where the humor relies on phonetic or semantic features of the words involved, which makes these jokes very difficult to translate. For example, a pun that works in English may completely lose its humor when rendered into Persian due to differences in language structure and sound. According to Raphaelson-West (1989), translating linguistic jokes calls for a creative task of finding the equivalents that could produce a similar comic effect in the target language, aside from understanding how the original joke works. That may include replacing the original pun with another one which might seem familiar to the target audience while retaining the intention.

Cultural humor, on the other hand, is deeply embedded in specific cultural contexts and often depends on shared knowledge or societal norms. It may refer to local customs, historical events, or stereotypes in society that are not known to people of other cultures. For example, a joke concerning a well-known cultural figure or event in Iran would not translate well for an English-speaking audience who does not have that context. Where this occurs, translators find themselves either having to provide enough context or change it to be suitable for the cultural schema of the target audience. According to Raphaelson-West (1989), cultural jokes often call for more delicate handling, where the translator has to balance faithfulness to the original humor with the requirement for cultural relevance.

Finally, universal humor cuts across cultural barriers and can be understood by all people regardless of their backgrounds. It usually depends on the experiences and emotions common to all human beings and therefore are more easily translatable. But even universal humor can be a problem when it uses references or idioms native to one culture.

3.1.2 Translation Strategies for Subtitling Films by Gottlieb (2001)

Gottlieb's framework for subtitling strategies is an integrated approach to the unique challenges faced by subtitlers in the audiovisual subtitling process. Based on his earlier work, Gottlieb (1992) identifies ten specific strategies that the subtitler may use in an effort to effectively convey meaning and humor from the source language to the target audience. Understanding these strategies is, therefore, paramount to ensure subtitles are not only accurate but also culturally relevant and interesting to the viewer. The proposed ten subtitling strategies by Gottlieb (2001) include transfer, expansion, paraphrase, imitation, transcription, deletion, dislocation, condensation, decimation, and resignation.

1. Transfer

This approach implies a translation of the source text directly into the target language with regard to its original meaning and without changes. By the way, it will be more effective when the linguistic structures of the two languages almost coincide, and the transfer can be made from one language to another without any problems. This approach is preferred when the source message is straightforward and devoid of any cultural bias so that the audience will not misinterpret the message (Gottlieb, 1992).

2. Expansion

Expansion strategy is used when there is a need for the elaboration of dialogue in the source language with more context for the target audience to understand better. It comes about when some information concerning culture or references cannot clearly be interpreted by the target audience. This method of translation closes the gaps in cultures and maintains the same level of humor or meaning of a text (Gottlieb, 1992).

3. Paraphrase

The paraphrasing strategy is resorted to when the phrase in the source language cannot be reconstructed syntactically in the target language. This approach allows the translators to capture the essence of a dialogue and render it according to grammatical and stylistic conventions of the target language. This flexibility is crucial in maintaining humor and even making the dialogue sound natural to the audience (Gottlieb, 1992).

4. Imitation

This approach involves retaining the same forms, mostly with regard to names of people and places. This approach is used to retain the source cultural context of the film and ensure that the viewer receives the intended meaning of the original text as stated by Diaz-Cintas & Remael (2007).

5. Transcription

Transcription in subtitles refers to giving verbatim of spoken dialogues without translating them in target language. This approach is widely adopted for names, jargons, technical terms, or utterances that are better rendered as such to be adequately appreciated. This can, to a great extent ensure accuracy but should be effectively handled to avoid confusion especially in terms the viewers are not familiar with (Gottlieb, 1992).

6. Deletion

The deletion strategy implies excluding those parts of a dialogue that are not necessary for understanding. Very often, this is caused by shortage of time or a place for subtitles. Therefore, some filler words could be deleted or several sentences of the same content in order to make this text simpler and not too long, yet preserving its denotative meaning (Gottlieb, 1992).

7. Dislocation

This is a process where elements in the subtitle are rearranged for either better clarity or readability. This strategy is useful in cases where the structure of the sentence does not lend itself well to translation into another language or when it hinders the reading experience of the viewers. By adjusting word order or breaking up longer sentences into shorter segments, translators can create more coherent subtitles that are easier for audiences to follow while retaining the original meaning (Gottlieb, 1992).

8. Condensation

The condensation strategy aims at summarizing longer stretches of utterances into shorter forms without necessarily losing vital information. This approach is very helpful when working on long dialogues that cannot fit within the subtitle constraints because of time limits on screen display (Gottlieb, 1992).

9. Decimation

Decimation represents a gross reduction of the original text, retaining core meanings and critical information from the original speech content. Unlike in condensation, where ideas can be generalized in a broad sense, decimation entails heavy text cut- downs but still retains key elements of understanding. This method is most applicable when subtitles have to fit strictly to time but also often need to provide the viewer with a basic sense of what is being portrayed visually (Gottlieb, 1992).

10. Resignation

It is the replacement of source text with another carrying the same meaning. This approach comes when the source text has got some cultural references that the target audience does not understand or the source text contains a lot of offensive or inappropriate words against the target audience.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

This study focuses on the translation of humor in the movies "Deadpool and Wolverine", "The Fall Guy", and "Hit Man". For the purpose of this research, three movies have been chosen. These movies were crucially chosen because their comedic styles are rich and varied, providing good material to work with. Each of them uses different humor techniques: from witty dialogues and situations to character-based humor, offering a complete humorous landscape that reflects different cultural contexts. Furthermore, their mainstream popularity and cultural influence provide ideal case studies for how humor is translated into a different language and culture in subtitles. Through the analysis of these movies, this research would be able to examine some of the challenges and strategies related to the effective transmission of humor, which provides valuable information for the field of audiovisual translation.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

This research study was, therefore, done in three stages to deconstruct the humor elements of the three previously mentioned movies. During stage one, the films were watched in an iterative manner to identify and isolate humor elements, using Debra and Raphaelson-West's (1989) framework for humor. This first step was necessary because it gave a general idea of how humor is structured and therefore allowed for further development in terms of its comic strategies. After the identification of the humorous elements, the second step was to compare the English dialogues and its corresponding Persian subtitles. This step is important because it lays the foundation for understanding how humor is conveyed through subtitles.

Then an in-depth analysis of the dialogues was carried out. This was through comparisons of English content and its translations into Persian as a way of addressing key research questions about the translation of humor. For the analysis of subtitles, Gottlieb's classification of subtitling strategies was used. The researcher applied these strategies to specific examples from the mentioned movies in order to find out the pattern of retention or alteration of humor in translation. The analysis focused on identifying which strategies were most frequently utilized and how effectively they conveyed the intended humor to Persian-speaking audience.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Data Analysis

This section of the article will explore the complexity of humor by examining the dialogues of three recent films: Deadpool & Wolverine (2024), The Fall Guy (2024), and Hit Man (2023). Each film represents a unique form of comedy, presenting unique challenges and opportunities for subtitlers seeking to effectively convey humor in different languages. Twenty dialogues from each film were selected and reviewed, but due to lack of space, only a few examples are mentioned here.

4.1.1.Deadpool & Wolverine

Deadpool & Wolverine is an immensely witty and irreverent movie. There are a lot of fast jokes, puns, and metanarratives in the movie. Such a type of humor is hard to subtitle, as there should be a great awareness of cultural references and linguistic features to keep the comedy effect. The Persian translation has tried to grasp that essence and make the humor suitable for the audience.

English Source Text	Persian Target Text	Type of humor	Translating Strategy
Hey, do not insult this animal's autonomy. She can decide who her papa is.	هوی! به آزادی و استقلال این حیوون توهین نکن! اون خودش میتونه تصمیم بگیره باباش کیه!	Universal This line plays on the idea of autonomy and personal choice, which is a broadly relatable concept.	Transfer The translation accurately conveys the meaning of the original dialogue without altering the structure or adding information, maintaining the integrity of the source text.
You know what? You're a fucking joke.	میدونی چیه؟ تو واقعا بدرد نخوری!	Universal Wolverine's blunt insult highlights a common dynamic in friendships where one person calls out another's ridiculous behavior.	Condensation The translation condenses the original expression while still capturing its essence. The profanity is toned down, which is common in translations to suit cultural sensitivities.
Look, we know the title of this thing so I know what	ببینید اسم این فیلم رو میدونیم، پس میدونم چه	Cultural	Expansion

you're wondering: how are we gonna do this without dishonoring Logan's memory? Well, I'll tell you how. We're not.	سوالی براتون پیش اومده. چطور میخوایم بدون بی‌احترامی به یاد و خاطره لوگان کار رو پیش ببریم؟ بهتون میگم چطور. قرار نیست همچین کاری کنیم.	This dialogue uses self-awareness and meta- humor, referencing the film's title and acknowledging the audience's expectations.	The translation adds context by explicitly stating (We know the title of this film), which helps clarify the reference for Persian-speaking audiences.

Table 1. Deadpool and Wolverine

4.1.2 The Fall Guy

Starring Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, The Fall Guy is an action comedy that merges romance with intense action. The movie is filled with funny visuals and comedy, highlighting the comedic chemistry between the lead characters.

English Source Text	Persian Target Text	Type of Humor	Translating Strategy
I don't know why I'm talking so much anyway. I'm not the hero of this story. I'm just the stunt guy.	به هر حال نمیدونم چرا انقدر حرف میزنم. من قهرمان این داستان نیستم. من فقط بدلکارم.	Universal This dialogue expresses a common feeling of self-doubt and humility that many people can relate to, regardless of cultural background.	Transfer The translation closely follows the original structure and meaning without significant alteration, effectively conveying the speaker's sentiment.
Colt Seavers: "I'm just a boy in a neon suit, standing in front of a girl, reminding her that Notting Hill is her favorite movie. And she watches Love Actually every year at Christmas."	چون من پسری هستم که کت و شلوار شیرنگ پاشه و داره به یه دختر یادآوری میکنه که "ناتینگ هیل" فیلم مورد علاقشه و هر سال کریسمسها میشینه فیلم "عشق حقیقی" رو میبینه.	Cultural This dialogue references specific romantic films that are popular in Western culture. The humor arises from the absurdity of the situation.	Expansion The translation adds contextual clarity by explaining the significance of the movies mentioned, which may not be immediately clear to all audiences.
Colt Seavers: "Profesh is my middle name." Jody Moreno: "I thought your middle name was Danger." Colt Seavers: "That's my stage name."	-حرفهای اسم مستعارمه. -فکر میکردم اسم مستعارت "خطر" بود. -اون اسم هنریمه.	Linguistic-Cultural This dialogue plays with language by shortening "professional" to "profesh." The humor comes from the casualness of the term, which contrasts with the seriousness	Paraphrase The phrase is paraphrased to fit cultural expressions in Persian while maintaining the humorous tone of the original.

Table 2. The Fall Guy

4.1.3 Hit Man

Directed by Richard Linklater, Hit Man features Glen Powell as a fake assassin employed by the police. The movie is recognized for its witty screenplay and Powell's charming performance, presenting a blend of absurd situations that culminate in a hilarious peak.

English Source Text	Persian Target Text	Type of humor	Translating Strategy
Gary: "Hitmen don't cancel the first meeting." Phil: "Hitmen? Hitmen don't exist."	-آدم کشا هیچوقت قرار اول رو کنسل نمیکنن. -آدمکش؟ آدمکشی وجود نداره.	Cultural The dialogue plays with the trope of hitmen in movies and pop culture.	Transfer The translation retains the original meaning without significant alteration.
What, are we following made-up rules now?	داریم از قوانین الکی پیروی میکنیم؟	Universal This dialogue reflects a common frustration with arbitrary rules or norms, making it relatable to a broad	Transfer This line is translated directly while maintaining its sarcastic tone. The phrase

		audience regardless of cultural background.	"made-up rules" is rendered as "قوانین الکی" which captures the informal and dismissive attitude of the original.
Phil: "You've seen this a million times. You can do it." Gary: "Why don't you do it?"	-خودت هزاران بار شاهد این اتفاق بودی. از پسش بر میای. -خودت چرا نمیری؟	Universal The exchange highlights a common dynamic in teamwork where one person encourages another while avoiding responsibility themselves, making it humorous through shared experiences.	Transfer-Paraphrase The first part is translated directly, while Gary's response is paraphrased to fit a more conversational tone in Persian. This maintains the playful banter between characters.

Table 3. Hit Man

4.2 Discussion of Results

The analysis of humor subtitling strategies in three films—*Deadpool and Wolverine*, *The Fall Guy*, and *Hitman*—reveals distinct patterns in the application of various translation techniques. Each film presents a unique approach to translating humor, reflecting the complexities of conveying comedic elements across languages and cultures.

4.2.1 Subtitling Strategies Overview

Deadpool and Wolverine

In the case of the two subtitling methods examined in the dialogues of Deadpool and Wolverine, transfer was found to have been used as a method in 9 out of the 20 analyzed dialogues. This is the method that allowed the direct translation of the original dialogue with retention of intent and context of the humor.

In 5 cases, expansion was applied, which means some of the jokes needed additional explanation for better comprehension by the audience. This is very helpful in those cases when some cultural allusions may be not known to the audience representing a different culture. Condensation and paraphrase were used less-3 times each. In these cases, some explanations of the jokes were probably simplified or reworded while still being funny. The varied use of such techniques shows careful attention is paid to subtitling that balances fidelity to the source against the need for clarity and humor.

The Fall Guy

For The Fall Guy, the analysis also featured 20 dialogues and demonstrated a somewhat different distribution of subtitling techniques. Also in this case, the most used strategy was indeed transfer, which was preferred for 10 dialogues, therefore showing a quite marked preference for direct translation. This would suggest that a considerable part of the humor contained in The Fall Guy was transparent enough to be effectively conveyed without major changes.

In 5 cases, expansion was used where some of the jokes needed more explanation to be better understood. Paraphrase was also applied in 4 dialogues to rephrase the text while keeping the effect of the humor and making it clearer. In one case, both paraphrase and expansion were used together to prove that sometimes translating complicated humor needs subtlety.

Hit Man

In Hit man, however, the same number of dialogues (20) evidenced a more complex use of subtitling strategies, with transfer appearing in only 6 cases, implying that quite a lot of humor required adaptation rather than direct translation. The presence of paraphrase (2 instances), condensation (2 instances), and expansion (1 instance) gives evidence for an attempt to simplify or clarify jokes while preserving their comic aspects.

Indeed, in Hit Man, there were 8 dialogues featuring combined strategies, such as transfer and paraphrase, and hence an even more complex balancing act between the need to keep the original meaning and the necessity to adapt for clarity. There was even one instance of both transfer and expansion, further exemplifying how complex the task is to effectively convey humor.

4.2.2 Summary of Findings

The total number of dialogues analyzed across the three films was 60, categorized by subtitling strategy as follows:

Subtitling Strategy	Deadpool and Wolverine	The Fall Guy	Hitman	Total	Percentage
Transfer	9	10	6	25	~41.66%
Condensation	3	0	2	5	~8.33%
Expansion	5	5	1	11	~18.33%
Paraphrase	3	4	2	9	~15%
Both Transfer & Paraphrase	0	0	8	8	~13.33%
Both Transfer & Expansion	0	0	1	1	~1.66%
Both paraphrase & expansion	0	1	0	1	~1.66%

Table 4. Subtitling Strategy

Humor Category	Transfer	Condensation	Paraphrase	Expansion
Universal Humor	~51.61%	~12.90%	~19.35%	~16.13%
Cultural Humor	~46.88%	~3.13%	~28.13%	~21.88%
Linguistic Humor	~47.06%	--	~29.41%	~23.53%

Table 5. Humor Category

This clearly follows from the statistical analysis, which reflects different approaches adopted by subtitlers in the translation of humor across films. The translation techniques for different types of humor not only reflect characteristics necessary for that type of humor but also the aspects related to cultural knowledge and reception of that type of humor. While universal humor can enjoy direct translation methods, cultural humor usually requires contextual expansion, and linguistic humor needs adjustments to show the wordplay.

The dominance of the transfer strategy indicates fidelity to the original dialogue, but the cases of expansion and paraphrase also point out the difficulty involved in the translation of humor that is closely related to cultural context. These findings stress the value of strategic choices in subtitling and, as such, audience reception and comprehension of humor in film. Such strategies can be further researched regarding their impact on the engagement and interpretation of viewers in diverse cultural contexts.

5. CONCLUSION

This article aimed to discuss the problems and strategies of humor translation in subtitled movies and focused on three popular movies, namely Deadpool and Wolverine, The Fall Guy, and Hit Man. This study has tried to identify patterns of humor subtitling across cultures through an analysis of the humor of these movies and their Persian subtitles employing various translation techniques, in addition to assessing how various strategies might best convey similar elements of humor across a cultural divide.

The study shows the variety of procedures resorted to in humor subtitling. The universal humor was transmitted mainly by transfer, which may suggest that jokes relying on generally known human experience can often be retold as such. Cultural humor called for more subtlety, and the most prominent procedures were transfer and paraphrase. This means that cultural references can work across languages, but some need the context to come across; language-specific and wordplay caused problems for linguistic humor, which relied heavily on transfer and paraphrase. Generally, this research contributes to our knowledge of humor subtitling by providing the empirical evidence concerning effective translation methods.

The findings underline that it is not only the type of humor that is important in translation, but also the cultural context in which humor is represented. This study tries to highlight successful strategies, as well as point out shortcomings, for improving practices in humor translation to fully allow the audience to enjoy the comic content of films across language barriers. Further research might focus on cultural variation in the reception of humor in translation, a point that can deepen the understanding of cross-cultural communication in film.

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