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## APPROACHES TO HUMOR TRANSLATION IN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

Annotation

Among the many cognitive abilities of human beings, creating humor may be considered one of the most complex, due to its relative and idiosyncratic nature. Moreover, much of its fascination lies in the fact that it can serve a wide range of purposes. If considering translation, it is generally defined as a process that makes texts produced in one language accessible to people who do not speak that language. Over the years, when considering the translation of humor, a great of scholars have debated it in general terms, but often concentrated on its transfer within audiovisual works. By doing so, they have also contributed to arousing interest in humor translation among “younger” scholars. Consequently, the literature on the Audiovisual Translation of humor has been steadily increasing over the last decade. This article analyses the parts of humor in dubbing and subtitling as well as provides with explanations in their approaches to their rendering.

**Key words:** Humor, translation, audiovisual, dubbing, subtitling

## ПОДХОДЫ К ПЕРЕВОДУ ЮМОРА ПРИ АУДИОВИЗУАЛЬНОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ

Аннотация

Среди многих возможностей юмор считается самым сложным и идиосинкразическим аспектам по природе. Юмор – один из самых сложных объектов перевода в силу внутри лингвистических и культурно обусловленных особенностей того или иного языка. Та или иная ситуация, фраза или предложение может вызвать совершенно разную реакцию у представителей разных культур. Всякое высказывание обладает способностью оказывать на читателя или слушателя определенное прагматическое воздействие, а значит, имеет прагматический потенциал, который по-разному реализуется в конкретных коммуникативных актах. Отсюда следует вывод, что и в тексте перевода важную роль играет прагматическая адаптация юмора. По мнению В.Н. Комиссарова, “переводчику необходимо заботиться о достижении желаемого воздействия на получателя в зависимости от цели перевода, либо воспроизводя прагматический потенциал оригинала, либо видоизменяя его. Именно поэтому изучение прагматических аспектов составляет одну из центральных задач теории перевода”.

**Ключевые слова:** Юмор, перевод, аудиовизуал, субтитр и дубляж.

## AUDIOVIZUAL TARJIMADAGI YUMORNING TARJIMA YO'LLARI

Аннотация

Yumor inson qobiliyatlarining tuzilishi jihatidan eng murakabi hisoblanadi. Chunki yumorning ishlatilishining ko'lami kengdir. Yillar davomida turli sohadagi olimlar yumor haqida turli xil qarashlarini oldinga surishdi. XX asrga kelib esa, uning qo'llanilishi audiovisual multimedia maxsulotlarida ko'rinib, uning subtitr va dublyajdagi tarjimasiga alohida e'tibor qaratila boshlandi. Shuning uchun ham kinoning rivojlanishi bilan bir qatorda audiovisual tarjimadagi yumorga bo'lgan e'tibor Kundan kunga oshib bormoqda. Ushbu maqolada subtitr va dublyajdagi yumor bo'limiga to'xtalib uning tarjima yo'nalishlari va yo'llari yoritilib beriladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Yumor, tarjima, audiovisual, subtitr va dublyaj.

The considerations regarding the theoretical debate on the AVT of humor derive from both the theory and practice. The two can be considered equally useful because, they are “simply two sides of the same coin: theory informs practice, which in turn contributes towards a theoretical framework”. This view falls into the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, which investigate translations “as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience”. Translations are analyzed according to the socio-historical context within which they are embedded and the translation norms such a context has established. As a consequence, researchers can offer insight into the translation process they analyze and possibly detect procedural patterns. According to Venuti and his famous distinction between source-oriented and target-oriented approaches come readily to mind. In the former case, translators attempt to retain in the TT the linguistic and cultural differences the ST contains, thus making it evident that the former is a translated version of the latter. In a domesticating or target-culture approach, the TT is made fluent, “intelligible and even familiar to the target-language reader”. These concepts can be and are applied to the analysis of TV and film comedy, along with other considerations stemming from the Poly system Theory that can help us to understand “the role translation plays in canon formation, and the establishment, development and maintenance of an academic discipline”. For instance, in the case of Italian AVT, which is the poly system under scrutiny here, Italy's cinema and audiovisual tradition matches the definition of “weak literature” as suggested by Even-Zohar when talking about literary translation.

He describes weak literature as being on the margins of a larger literary hierarchy that prevents the former from developing like other larger literatures, which may be therefore felt to be indispensable. This description it's the context because, like “weak literature”, the audiovisual production of Italy is limited compared to that of the United States, the reason being that after the initial Introduction boom, between 1906 and 1913, the European film industry halted due to the outbreak of World Wars I and II, and it was consequently outdone by Hollywood. Despite its recovery, the European market is still overshadowed by US productions. Like other European countries, Italy largely depends on the importation and translation of American series and movies. It is therefore unsurprising that a large amount of scholarly research in AVT often deals with American audiovisual works and their translation into French, Spanish, Italian, German and so on [1].

And this study is indeed no exception; in its attempt to offer an account of the treatment of humor in Italian AVT, this work considers instances taken from comedy productions for the television and the cinema. In order to investigate revoicing and captioning, this book concentrates on the first two seasons of the TV comedy program Modern Family and its Italian dubbed and

captioned (subtitled and dubbed) versions. This family sitcom revolves around the lives of Jay Pritchett and his family, all of whom live in suburban Los Angeles. Jay's family includes his Colombian second wife Gloria, their son Joe and Manny, Gloria's son and Jay's stepson. Jay also has two adult children: Mitchell, who is gay and in a long-term relationship with Cameron; and Claire, who is married to Phil. Cameron and Mitchell have adopted a Vietnamese baby girl (Lily), while Claire and Phil have three children: Haley, Alexandra and Luke. *Modern Family* is a telling example of the way comedy has been evolving to depict a multilingual and multicultural society such as that of North America. Most of the series' success and humor derives from its characters' playful use of language, cultural references and the clash between the North and South American societies, languages and cultures. It is a fascinating and humorous sitcom that poses several challenges and is therefore well worth exploring. Hence, the contrastive analysis carried out in this volume seeks to shed light on precisely those language- and culture-specific features that pose significant problems in humor translation, meaning wordplay, culture-specific references and multilingualism. As mentioned above, this investigation aims to bring together insights from the scholarly research on AVT and Humor Studies, most notably, Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humor and Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor. However, the inner complexities of humor, its development a translation within a Mult semiotic system such as the audiovisual setting call for an eclectic approach that extends beyond these fields. Therefore, this study also integrates observations by scholars in Film Studies, Corpus Linguistics, Conversation Analysis and so on. From a statistical point of view, the corpus under scrutiny is sufficiently large to allow for detecting patterns of translational behavior within different AVT modes. The complexity inherent in the rendering of wordplay has led scholars to address the issue of whether it is possible to successfully adapt wordplay in audiovisuals. Chiaro offers a thorough description of the debate surrounding translatability and equivalence, two closely connected concepts that have been the subject of much debate in Translation Studies. However, in order to contextualize the debate as far as audiovisual humor is concerned, it should be stressed that when talking about the translation of verbal humor on screen we most often think in terms of the possibility to achieve, dynamic equivalence [2].

As opposed to formal equivalence (or word-for-word translation), dynamic equivalence privileges target language solutions that are able to facilitate a more thorough understanding of the source text and not just convey its literal meaning. In this view, an efficient adaptation of audiovisual humor cannot be expected to necessarily reflect the formal structure of the source language joke, but, instead, to successfully render its intention, which is, presumably, to amuse the audience in the context of what they are watching. Therefore, according to the notes of Chiaro, in the context of puns, when an example of wordplay is labeled as "untranslatable," what is questioned is not the actual feasibility of its being somehow rendered in a target language - which indeed happens on an everyday basis - but rather the impossibility of achieving formal equivalence. Socio-cultural and diastatic variation, and the use of multilingual dialogue are also frequently adopted as humor-creating devices on screen, and they are often considered some of the major causes of "loss" of meaning in the process of lingua-cultural transfer. As Chiaro notes, both strategies are potentially problematic, because in the first case important characterizing linguistic features are omitted and in the second almost certainly incongruous associations are created with regional varieties from a completely different linguacultural context. However, according to Heiss, "certain genres, such as comedies, for example, are in a certain sense perceived as being detached from reality and therefore offer more room. Particularly, the animated comedy genre where suspension of disbelief seems to be easier for viewers has been a productive genre for the use of local regional varieties [3].

The most emblematic and long-lasting example of this in Italian dubbing is probably *The Simpsons*, in which groundskeeper Willie speaks with a Sardinian accent, Chief Wiggum has a Neapolitan inflection, and Homer's friend Carl an accent from the Veneto region. As alienating as this choice might sound,

*The Simpsons* has been very successful in Italy over the years, which brings us to considerations concerning what constitutes a successful adaptation of audiovisual humor. While a certain strand of the scholarship on audiovisual translation and humor is currently still investigating the more traditional aspects outlined in this chapter, new directions have also recently emerged that reflect changes and evolutions in the production and distribution of audiovisual products containing humor. One of the most impactful aspects of audiovisual humor today is the increased use of taboo language and references, especially as far as Anglo-American fictional products are concerned. While the use of controversial and sometimes politically incorrect humor has always been a staple of more specific genres such as stand-up comedy specials and roasts, recent years have seen a proliferation of this kind of humor also in more mainstream TV series and film comedies, which seemingly adopt controversial language and themes in an attempt to remain relevant and topical in an increasingly fragmented and competitive audiovisual market. Whether or not this is a successful strategy in the pursuit of quality content.

#### LITERATURE

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