



It's No Laughing Matter: Translating Lingua-Cultural Humour in *Asterix in Britain* into Sinhala

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ABSTRACT

Humour in audio-visual texts, particularly in animation films, plays a pivotal role. They are mainly based on linguistic and lingua-cultural elements. The translators who dub them into the target languages must adopt strategies to successfully transfer the humour. This study examines the strategies employed by translators to translate the humour generated by the lingua-cultural elements in animation films. The English dubbed version of the animation film *Asterix in Britain* and its Sinhala dubbed version were chosen for the study. This particular film highlights a clash of cultures between Romans, Britons, and Gauls, offering humour to the audience and challenges to the translators. The three strategies proposed by Chiaro (2006) are applied to the analysis of the chosen examples. The study reveals that the translators look for substitutions in the target culture to preserve, at times partially, humorous elements and, in doing so, create new humour absent in the English version. Absence of humour in the target text is also noted. However, compensation strategies applied throughout the film fill this void and keep the target audience entertained.

Keywords: Animation, compensation, dubbed films, strategies, substitution

Introduction

Humour, though enjoyable in any form of entertainment, makes the translators' task much harder. Audio-visual texts are dubbed or subtitled to give access to audiences around the world who do not understand the source language (SL). Much has been written about translating humour, particularly about its (un)translatability and the risk of an (un)favourable outcome. However, looking at globally popular situation comedies such as *Friends* or *Big Bang Theory* and animation movies such as *Shrek* or *Frozen*, it is evident that humour can successfully cross geographical and cultural boundaries.

In animation movies, humour plays a pivotal role. When dubbing them, the translators must find ways to share that humour with the target audience, without which the success of the film becomes doubtful. This has been discussed by scholars highlighting the challenges and



constraints with reference to various animation films. The present study focuses on Verbally Expressed Humour (VEH), which is defined by Chiaro as “any verbal form of attempt to amuse” (Chiaro & Piferi, 2010) in dubbed animation films. Though puns and jokes are essential in animated films to generate humour, cultural references can also entertain audiences by offering them laughter and merriment. The classification offered by Antonini and Chiaro (2005) and Bucaria (2007) is divided into two categories: Lingua-cultural humour and Linguistic humour. Lingua-cultural humour is transmitted through references to cultural and verbal elements that include food, drinks, institutions, celebrities and famous characters. The second category is composed of humour generated through verbal communication, mainly jokes based on puns and allusions (Chiaro, 2006). The objective of this research is to closely examine the translation of VEH based on cultural references in dubbed animation films, paying particular attention to the strategies used by translators in the target language (TL). This aspect tests the creativity, skills, and knowledge of the translators to a great extent.

Animated films are most often characterised by “light-hearted atmosphere where humour, both verbal and non-verbal plays a decisive role” (Bruti, 2014). In dubbed audio-visual texts (AVT), certain technical constraints related to different types of synchronism are imposed (Herbst, 1994). However, in the dubbed animation films, speech and articulation movements are not given the same importance as in the feature films because they represent talking animals at time and the place and manner of articulation are “blurred and approximate” (Bruti, 2014, p. 92). Varela states that the low priority given to lip sync in dubbing cartoons is a recurrent feature. Apart from rare occasions, an accurate phonetic adaptation is not required for the comic characters (as cited in Gil, 2009, p. 143). For this reason, in the present study as well, particular attention is not paid to lip sync when examining the strategies chosen to translate humour. Furthermore, animation films often target young audiences. As Bruti explains, “cartoon talk has been recognised as a simplified variety, which is easier for the intended audience”. Therefore, characteristics such as the use of basic vocabulary, monoclausal sentences, short and balanced turns, and a reduced number of orality markers are generally found in them (2014, p. 92-93). Similarly, in dubbed animation films, the translators need to respect the basic language level and simplicity of dialogues to make the target text (TT) humorously appealing to the young audience.

Furthermore, when the audience largely consists of young viewers, as in the case of animation films, the translators are indeed required to consider their requirements, which inevitably influence their decisions. Manca and Aprile discuss how humour can be further restricted by the profile traits of the audience (2014). The linguistic or encyclopaedic knowledge of the target audience or even the degree of familiarity with subject matter, genres, and types of humour may pose obstacles. The humour translated in to the TT should cut across these barriers to be understood by the target audience.

Researchers have focussed on various aspects of translating humour in the recent years. Mudriczki examines the humour transfer strategies in the Italian, German and Hungarian versions

of *Shrek the Halls* with special reference to Christmas-related verbal and visual elements. The research stresses that culture-specific elements, in this case, related to Christmas, become plot-carrying elements, and translators are required to provide “high quality transfer of seemingly intercultural elements” (Mudriczki, 2014, p. 53). As explained by Luyken, Reid, and Herbsts, the translators must make the distinction between the plot carrying elements and atmospheric elements and decide on the use of translation strategies such as omission or retention to ensure a higher quality target text (Luyken et al. 1995, as cited in Mudriczki, 2014, p. 53-54). In *Asterix in Britain*, cultural references become plot carrying crucial elements, as the Roman reaction to British ways is an integral part of the plot and undoubtedly triggers humorous effects. Reducing or omitting plot-carrying elements may result in humour being weakened in the TT.

Minutella (2014) applies the three translation strategies proposed by Chiaro (2006) to the dubbed and subtitled Italian versions of *Shrek*. Focussing on humour generated by both cultural references and linguistic elements, the study reveals that the dubbed version appears more humorous as the translators have recourse to a “higher degree of compensation”. It also presents the substitution of VEH in the SL with an example of VEH in the TL and the Replacement of the SL VEH with an example of VEH in the TL elsewhere in the text (compensation) as the most frequent strategies in both dubbed and subtitled modes (2014). In a similar study, examining the dubbed Italian and Brazilian Portuguese versions of *Rio*, De Rosa (2014) discusses the application of Chiaro’s three strategies and highlights the importance and effects of procedures that compensate or substitute the forms of verbal humour of the source text (ST).

Given the difficulty of translating (lingua)cultural references and/or puns, these strategies justify, in many cases, the tendency to naturalise and domesticate the humorous element, supporting functional translation models. What is assumed as a translation priority is the comic function, so that the attention of the translator shifts to formulating humorous jokes and to the effect that these will have on the target audience. (De Rosa, 2014, p. 110)

The translators skilfully exploit the compensation and substitution strategies to entertain the target audience which result in domestication and naturalisation of the comic element. It is understood that priority is given to strategies that generate humour in the target audience. Zabalbeascoa (2001) confirms that TV comedies in particular give prominence to creating humour and the strategies that allow to integrate as many humorous instances are given priority (as cited in Gil, 2009, p. 152). Wierzbica, a well-known Polish audio-visual translator and dialogue writer who successfully scripted the Polish version of *Shrek*, lists adaptation, addition, and compensation as his favourite translation strategies. Examples of adaptations of Polish allusions show that they are efficient and successful in evoking the intended comic effect (Chmiel, 2010). The translator also uses addition, a strategy considered as a translation error by Tomaszewicz (2006, as cited in Chmiel, 2010, p.131). Although addition is seen as “an unjustified introduction in the target text of unnecessary information or stylistic effects not present in the source text”, it has somehow become successful in the Polish version of

Shrek. Thus, Chmiel questions whether additions in dubbed versions should be treated as an error or rather as a key translation strategy (2010).

Martnez-Sierra's study on the Spanish dubbed version of the American animated series *The Simpsons* shows that the humour loss is minimal in the episodes that were analysed. The translators' unwillingness to "accept a total absence of humorous load in target texts shows that they give high priority to the translation of humour" (2006, p. 294). The study also highlights the importance of having shared knowledge (existing assumptions) between the SL and TL audiences. If translators are good at identifying intercultural barriers, they become equally competent at the inferential process, thus producing a successful TT (2006).

Methods

Asterix, created by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, is known for its use of wordplay to create humour. The Gaulish adventures in various countries around the world expose the heroes to different cultures and customs. Therefore, *Asterix* presents rich material that can be analysed to achieve the objective of the study. The animation film *Asterix in Britain* (1986) and its Sinhala-dubbed version were chosen for this study. The Sinhala-dubbed versions of *Asterix* attained considerable success under the Sinhala name of the title character *Soora pappa*. During the years 2002-2003, the animated films of *Asterix* were translated by Chandra Ranatunga, Chaminda Keerthirathna, Rochana Wimaladewa, Gaminda Priyawiraj, and Suneth Chithrananda into Sinhala for Sirasa TV. *Asterix in Britain* is specifically chosen as the study is limited to one animation film as qualitative analysis is prioritised and Britain is a better-known destination to the Sri Lankan audience as the country was a former British colony. As the Sinhala translators have worked from the English dubbed film making English the relay language, the study does not refer to the original French animation film. Therefore, the research is carried out centred on the English dubbed version and the Sinhala dubbed version. Sinhala being a minority language spoken only in Sri Lanka and not often compared to the main international languages in similar research, increases the significance of the present study.

In *Asterix in Britain*, the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar is set upon conquering Britain. Roman soldiers who land in Britain are faced with certain curious British customs. This study focuses particularly on the translation of the humour generated by the reactions and confusions of both the Britons and the Romans, who must tolerate each other's cultural traits. Although the clash of cultures tests their patience, it achieves the goal of amusing the audience. Chiaro (2007) explains that cultural stereotypes and generalisations of a group or a community whose characteristics that are criticised or laughed at are not uncommon sources of humour on screen. These humorous instances are identified in the English dubbed version, and the Sinhala dubbed version is closely studied to understand how they are dubbed in the TL. To discuss the strategies employed by the Sinhala translators, the following three options proposed by Chiaro (2006) are applied:

- Substitution of VEH in the Source Language (SL) with an example of VEH in the Target Language (TL).
- Replacement of SL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL.
- Replacement of the SL VEH with an example of compensatory VEH elsewhere in the TL text.

As *Asterix in Britain* is translated from English, which is the relay language (RL), it replaces SL in this study. A total of 10 examples are analysed in detail, highlighting the strategies employed. Once the translation strategies are discussed, the dominant tendencies observed in the translators' approach are presented in the discussion.

Results

As mentioned above, 10 examples that include lingua-cultural references and allusions are identified and discussed in detail. These examples are divided into three categories: Examples related to food habits, measurements and road traffic, and famous words of a historical figure. In the examples, the English dubbed (RL) version, the Sinhala dubbed (TL) version, and the back translation in English are provided.

1. Food habits and specialties

When the Roman soldiers first come to Britain, they discover that the Britons have strange food habits. The clash of food preferences and the amusing reactions to the strange food combinations naturally evoke humour among the TL audience.

Example 1		
English dubbed version (RL)	Sinhala dubbed version (TL)	Back translation in English
British soldier: "I say could I just request a spot of milk in it."	"Mata denne medata seeni dala kiri ekak."	Give me milk with sugar in the middle.

In Example 1, a British soldier asks for a spot of milk in his hot water. The Sinhala translators prefer to substitute it with drinking milk with sugar. It is seen in the image that milk is poured into the hot water but sugar is not added to it. Nevertheless, the translators propose drinking milk with sugar instead of drinking hot water with milk in the TL. It could be assumed that the former is more familiar to the target audience than the latter. As this happened before the introduction of tea in Great Britain, drinking just hot water or hot water with milk (without tea) seemed too strange. The translators therefore opt for a substitution in the TT.

Example 2		
Roman soldier: "Look, they are drinking. Yeah, milk and hot water. Savages, that's what they are."	"Ang kiri bonasa. Mang dithane unuwathura. Atpith tilak illing bomu."	There, they are drinking milk. I think hot water. Let's get some and drink.
"Drinking hot water, I mean they are not civilised."	"Api kiri tikak illang bivuvanang iwaraine."	We should have asked for some milk and drink.

It is evident that the Romans found the customs and traditions of the Britons uncivilised which includes drinking hot water with milk. The Sinhala dubbed version excludes the terms "savages" and "uncivilised". As a former colony, Sri Lanka adopted British methods such as drinking tea and playing cricket. Therefore, if the translators are to be loyal to the RL, they must call their own custom savage and uncivilised. As this could become more sensitive and less humorous, the translators choose to follow what the former colony did centuries ago during the British rule which is to adopt British customs. As a result, in the Sinhala dubbed version, the audience can see that the Roman soldiers are also interested in drinking milk. However, as seen in Example 1, they want to drink milk, not hot water with milk. In terms of the humour that is created insulting British customs as uncivilised, is neutralised in the TT.

Example 3		
Roman soldier: "If we quit during duty hours, we'll end up fighting during our meal time."	"Suddage ratata aavath hari rahata kemak keve ne. iye lunu mirisak dunna. Lunuth ne mirish ne."	Ever since we came to the White man's country, we have not eaten tasty food. Yesterday, we had a <i>lunu miris</i> . There was no chilli and no salt.

Example 4		
Roman soldier: "To make spinach soup, you heat some good olive oil, you get some bacon, some onions, slice them into thin slices and... simmer slowly."	"Mama bath vital naphtha. Bulath ne, hunu ne, dungkola ne, puvak ne. "Othala thibunu kole vitharai... mage bada goragora ganawa."	I bought a beetle quid. There was no betel, no slaked lime, no tobacco, and no areca nuts. Only the paper that it was wrapped with... my stomach is making sounds."

To create more humorous instances, the Sinhala translators continue to substitute TL food items for those of the RL. Example 3 shows Roman soldiers protesting, unwilling to fight during meal times. The Sinhala translators use this context to laugh at the food found in Britain. *Lunu miris*, a typical Sri Lankan condiment, is not prepared well by the Britons, in which there's no chilli and salt, the two main ingredients. This brings a smile to the target audience as it's quite well known that compared to the local spicy food, the food found in Britain are bland.

Example 4 highlights a similar case in which the translators seek a substitution from the TL culture. The Roman soldier explains a recipe for making spinach soup. This recipe has been replaced by an explanation about a beetle quid purchased in Britain. The soldier expresses his bitter disappointment, saying that there was nothing but the cover, and he further complains that his stomach seems unwell. This substitution adds humour to the TT, as the Romans seem to struggle to acquire the food items that they prefer in a foreign country and fall ill, which could happen to any traveller.

Example 5		
Pub keeper: "Actually, it's my specialty, boiled boar with mint sauce."	"Den oyagollanta mama denne thambapu uru mas sudu lunuth ekka."	Now I will give you boiled boar with garlic.

Example 6		
General Motus: "I'll catch those guys; I'll boil them and throw them at the lions. I'll serve them with mint sauce... Yuk, those poor lions."	"Mala perethayek wage balan inne nethuva yanava. Apoi, burn thadiyek."	Don't stare like a zombie. Go. What a big idiot.

Example 5 and 6 are based on a British specialty, which is eating boiled boar with mint sauce. In example 5, mint sauce is substituted because it is not familiar to the target audience. To create a similar repugnant and strong smell, garlic was chosen. The translators succeeded in preserving the humour by relying on substitution. However, in Example 6, the reference to boiled meat and mint sauce is erased. General Motus threatens to boil the two Gauls, the Briton and the dog that they are looking for, and to serve them with mint sauce to the lions. He pities the lions, as the boiled boar with mint sauce is disliked even by them. In the Sinhala dubbed version, the translators remove this threat and General Motus simply scolds the soldier, insulting him with terms such as "zombie" and "idiot". On screen, the audience can only see the terrified soldier running away after hearing his orders. Thus, the target audience can be convinced that the general is scolding the soldier for not performing his duty properly. However, the humour generated by the idea of lions being forced to eat boiled boar meat with mint sauce is not shared with the target audience.

2. Units of measurement and road traffic

This is another aspect that generates humour in the animation film. Obelix is very confused about how the Britons measure in feet and how they drive on the wrong side of the road. Note that although British road traffic and units of measurement are strange to the Gauls, they are

not so to the target audience, who were colonised by the British. Therefore, the translators have to think of creative solutions to preserve the humour in this situation.

Example 7		
Asterix: "Is the palace very far away?"	"Api barrel eka hoyaganna ona Roman karayo eka anduraganna kalin. "Neththam mara thoppiya."	We must find before the Romans identify it. Otherwise, it is a big problem.
Anticlimax: "Oh no, not at all. Just a few hundred feet away or so Obelix: "Whose feet?"	"Ow, eka ikmanata hoyaganna ona thamai"	Yes, we should find it quickly.
Anticlimax: "The Romans measure in pesos. Here, we measure in feet. "Jolly old tradition all that lot." Obelix: "They count everybody's feet?"	"Ithin hoyamuko." "Apita hadissivunata me assayath ekka echchara ikmanata yanta be"	Then, let us look for it. Even though we are in a rush, we cannot go any faster with this horse.
Anticlimax: "In actual fact, there are six feet in one Roman peso, chap." Obelix: "These Britons are crazy."	"Oyata savanna bene." "Elavanne nehthan me karaththe yanne kohomada e?"	You cannot drive. If I'm not driving, how is this cart moving?

Obelix is confused by the use of the term "feet" which is polysemic. The RL exploits the play on the word here. Foot, of which the plural is feet, has two main meanings: i) the part of the leg on which an animal or person stands and moves, and ii) a unit of measurement equal to 1/3 yard (0.3048 metre) or 12 inches (<https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/foot>). Obelix, who is not aware of the second meaning, imagines that Britons count everyone's feet and is unable to convert it to the Roman peso. The Sinhala translators eliminate the entire conversation about "feet". Instead, they exploit the visual image in which the audience can see that the characters, in a cart, are in a hurry to get to their magic potion barrel before the Romans. A simple argument about driving fast is offered to the target audience. A loss of humour in this moment is observed.

Example 8

This example is based on the Roman numerals that the Britons use. Obelix, ignorant of this system, pronounces the number as Mr. XVI, not as number 16. Obelix's confusion triggers a comic effect. He calls both the Romans and the Britons "crazy" because an outsider can become confused about their customs and traditions. In the Sinhala dubbed version, XVI is kept as a name, and the confusion with the number 16 is partially preserved. Instead of explaining to Obelix that these are in fact Roman numerals that are used in Britain, Asterix in the Sinhala dubbed version says that the Britons here put the house numbers at the front, not their name. The substitution fits the context because it explains why Obelix pronounces XVI as Mr. XVI. Back at home, he is accustomed to finding the name of the person fixed to the gate.

Obelix: "It's Mr. XVI." Asterix: "No, it is a number, it is 16. That is how they write it." Obelix: "They are crazy that Britons." Asterix: "They are not Briton. They are Roman numerals, Obelix." Obelix: "I knew these Romans are crazy."	"Eyage nama XVI da?" Ne, oa cheyenne 16. Roma lankan. "Munge oliva honda nedda koheda." "Ehe wage emei. Mehe eval alata nomura thiyana." "He, within, nama tehuana ivabradine. Ethakota kamala denagannava ne"	Is his name XVI, is it? No, that is 16. Roman numerals. They are crazy. It's not like back there. Over here, the houses have numbers. Huh, putting the name is easier. Then everyone will know.
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Example 9

Obelix discovers that in Britain, vehicles go on the left side of the road, which is not what he is used to in Gaul. A wordplay is noted in the RL on the word "right". As Anticlimax explains to Obelix, driving on the left is right in Britain. The word "right" is polysemic. Two of its meanings are used on this occasion to create a comic confusion: i) morally or socially correct or acceptable, and ii) located on the side of your body that is away from your heart (<https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/right>). The translators, knowing that Sri Lankans drive on the left side just like the British, find a suitable substitution. The confusion is centred on the side of the road reserved for drivers and pedestrians. In the Sinhala dubbed version, Anticlimax clarifies that in the white man's country, vehicles must go on the left side and pedestrians must walk on the right side. It turns out that Obelix is guilty of driving on the wrong side, but it is not because he is confused about driving on the right side or the left side, but rather because he became confused about which side to take when driving a cart and when walking on the road. It is an efficient solution that does not contradict the visual image and simultaneously succeeds in preserving the comic element.

Cart driver: "Hey buddy, you are driving on the wrong side of the road." Obelix: "Huh, we're on the right side." Anticlimax: "That's right here in Britain, we drive on the left side of the road... That's right... on the left. That's the right side."	"Koheda yanne? Hari petite hanako." "Ithin, pare yanakota dakunu peththene yanna kiyanne" "Dakunen anne pain yanakotane. Vahana anne am pathogen, theravada. "Ekai buddage kramaya"	Where are you going? Go to the right side of the road. So, we're told to go on the right side of the road. We go to the right side when we walk. Vehicles go on the left side, you understand. That's the White man's way.
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3. Famous words of a historical character

Example 10

The last example is devoted to Julius Caesar. The Roman emperor famously said in Latin "veni, vixi, vici" after winning a battle in Asia Minor. In English, it means "I came, I

saw, I conquered” (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/veni-vidi-vici?q=Veni>). In the RL, the famous words are slightly modified because in the film Caesar is disappointed with the conduct of his soldiers. Sinhala translators do not succeed in replacing famous words with idiomatic expressions from the TL. Caesar simply orders the catapults to stop. Caesar’s words, however, fit the visual image. The order to launch the catapults is given prematurely, causing destruction among the Roman fleet. It makes sense to see Caesar angry and yelling to stop the catapults. The target audience that is not aware of what is said in the RL accepts the dubbed version. The humour triggered by the destruction caused by the catapults seen in the visual image entertains the target audience. However, the actual words of the Roman emperor, though modified in this context, add more authenticity to the scene and exhibit the competence of the RL translators.

<p>Caesar: “Make a note. I came, I saw, and I don’t believe my eyes. “I said good honour and strict discipline.”</p>	<p>“Me okada me venne?” Ketapol narayana navaththanava. Katopol navaththanva”</p>	<p>What is happening? Stop the catapult operators. Stop the catapults.</p>
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The 10 examples identified in the study focus mainly on the humorous incidents centred on the clash between Roman, British and Gaulish customs and traditions. In the following discussion, the application of the three strategies proposed by Chiaro (2006) is examined and the observed tendencies are presented.

Discussion

In Examples 1, 2, 5, and 6, the British food habits of drinking hot water (with or without milk) and eating boiled wild boar with mint sauce are emphasised. However, Roman disapproval or even their disgust at them is not reproduced in the TL version. Instead, the translators find substitutes in the TL culture. The humour that was meant to come out of the clash of cultures is weakened or completely erased, except in example 5. Here, as seen above, the translators substitute garlic for mint sauce and succeed in reproducing the same repugnant yet comic effect. Eating boiled meat with garlic as a speciality is incomprehensible and unimaginable to an outsider. The domestication approach of the translators produces the intended comic effect.

In Example 3, the Roman soldier protests that he is unwilling to sacrifice his meal time. The British soldiers stop fighting at 5 in the afternoon to drink hot water, and they take the weekend off. His complaint about his work schedule is replaced by a complaint of a different nature in the TL; the soldier is unhappy with the *lung miris* that he ate in Britain. Although the substitution is completely unrelated to the scene in question, there is no visual image to contradict what is said in the TL. Therefore, the reference to the local food item, though oriented towards domestication, succeeds in generating humour. Furthermore, the target audience can identify with the Roman soldier who craves home country food in a foreign land. It can be

said that the target audience has a higher chance of grasping the humour related to the poorly prepared *lung miris*.

A similar strategy is applied to Example 4. Together, these two examples show the disappointment of Roman soldiers and their complaints vis-à-vis the food found in Britain in the TL. The Sinhala translators' domestication strategy bears fruit as they transform these two instances to be more understandable and even more humorous than the RL. Though the Sinhala translators do not attempt to reproduce the clash of cultures witnessed in the above-mentioned examples, they successfully exploit the food cravings of travellers, a theme very much relevant to the situation of the Roman soldiers who are separated from their homeland, in a humorous way.

In Examples 8 and 9, the Sinhala translators provide substitutions from TL to entertain the target audience. Though the puns found in the RL are not kept as they are, the Sinhala translators manage to create a humorous moment, partially related to the wordplay in the RL. As discussed above, the word play on "right" is cleverly transformed into confusion between pedestrians and drivers. The confusion caused by the Roman numerals is also successfully solved by exploiting a misunderstanding between the house numbers and the names of the house owners. Manca and Aprile note that translators are able to "preserve partial meaning of SL VEH by choosing translation equivalents which belong to the same semantic field of the SL humorous item" (2014, p.168). The changes, however, can lead either to create new humour absent in the SL or to the loss of existing humour present in the SL.

Unfortunately, only in Example 7 that the pun on "feet" is completely ignored. It is important to remember that according to Chiaro (2003), ignoring the pun altogether is a strategy that can be used for the translations of puns on screen (as cited in Bucaria, 2017, p.435). Given the differences between RL and TL, it is not possible to find a corresponding pun in TL. Sanderson notes that puns present the "most frequent cases inequivalence in translation" due to interlingual asymmetry: "the formal similarity between words which are neither etymologically nor semantically linked and the multiplicity of meanings within the same word will not usually coincide between languages" (2009, p. 125).

In these examples, the Sinhala translators have applied the first strategy proposed by Chiaro, the substitution of VEH from the TL, resulting in varying degrees of success. The second strategy, which is the replacement of the SL/RL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL, is not applied in the examples analysed above. The idiomatic expression in the TL should be able to reinforce the humour of the SL/RL or, in our study, the RL. As observed by Manca and Aprile (2014), this strategy demands a high level of creativity from the translators. For example, finding an idiomatic expression to replace Caesar's famous words is not an easy task.

The third strategy calls for the replacement of the SL/RL VEH with an example of compensatory VEH elsewhere in the TL text. Although this particular strategy was not detected in any example, several compensation strategies that are used throughout the film

can be highlighted. They include a voice off, a comical voice that occasionally explains plot developments, popular Sinhala songs (songs sung by drunken Roman soldiers and a drunk Obelix), colloquial register, idiomatic expressions, and catchy, popular phrases in the TL. An example of an idiomatic expression is what the new pirate says to the captain when their ship sinks: “neva gulonate ban chune” (even though the ship sinks/facing a difficult situation, we are having a good time). Anticlimax repeatedly uses a catchy colloquial phrase that is amusing: “getaluvak ne, prasinata karaganda epa” (there’s no issue, don’t make it a problem). In another instance, Anticlimax invites his Gaulish guests to the Inn saying “mama haematoma enne methanata” (I always come here), which is a reference to a popular local advertisement. Furthermore, it can be said that the colloquial register dominates the TL text. As discussed above, when the targeted audience consists mostly of children and adolescents, a simple language is used, and the informal nature of the language can be noticed in all the dialogues of the film. Examining the VEH in the dubbed Italian version of *Shrek*, Minutella states that the dialogue writer Vairano often inserts “idiomatic expressions, colloquial register, neologisms and puns” when they are not present in the SL (2104, p. 83). These compensation strategies increase the overall level of humour, keeping the target audience entertained throughout the film. Furthermore, these compensation strategies can compensate for the lost humour at different points in the TL text.

Conclusion

Translating VEH based on cultural references is a challenging task in any language. After analysing the chosen examples, it can be said that TL translators have recourse to various creative strategies to translate humour. The substitution strategies used by the translator orient towards domestication. The translators find examples from the TL culture that are familiar to the TL audience. They make the humour accessible to the target audience and ensure that the comic function is fulfilled. Their chosen strategies complement the on-screen action. The translators’ attempt to create new humour is also notable with the use of substituting examples from the TL culture. When it is not possible to entirely recreate the comic effect in the RL, they find solutions that preserve at least a partial element of the original humour. However, loss of humour is observed in the examples discussed above. It can be argued that the use of several compensation strategies present throughout the film can, to a great extent, fill this void.

Based on the present study, it can be concluded that the Sinhala translators have succeeded in offering the target audience a humorous experience that, at times, may not be as sophisticated as in the RL text, but nonetheless straightforward and enjoyable. The study can be expanded by adding more examples from the same RL text and also other *Asterix* films dubbed in Sinhala to have a better understanding of the strategies used in translating humour from the RL to the TL.

The challenges that the AVTs, including animation films, present to the translators vary from text to text and from language to language. They are never the same. Humour renews

with each new AVT. The translators, too, are required to face the challenge with ever more creative solutions to entertain audiences across the world.

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