

Translation of Humor in Fansub and Official Subtitles in Hotel Transylvania 2

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Article information	Abstract
DOI : 10.25077/jds.2.2.81-97.2025 *Correspondence : amirdabbaghian@um.edu.my	Translating humor is a complex process that demands consideration of the target audience in terms of cultural background, language constraints, and cultural diversity. This study aims to systematically analyze and compare the translation strategies of fan and official subtitles in conveying humor in <i>Hotel Transylvania 2</i> based on Pedersen’s (2005) translation strategy model. In addition, Nababan’s (2012) translation quality assessment model is used to explore and evaluate the impact of various translation strategies on the accuracy of both subtitles in the film. Humorous utterances from the English fantasy comedy <i>Hotel Transylvania 2</i> screened on Netflix (Chinese official subtitles) as well as the fansub translated version from publicly available subtitle-sharing sites, are used as data in this study. Through qualitative analysis, this study evaluates the humor translation strategies and their accuracy level across Chinese and English languages and cultures. The findings demonstrate that certain strategies are widely used in both subtitles, some leading to a higher degree of inaccuracy in translations. These findings provide some implications for improving the accuracy and quality of humor translation in both official subtitles and fansubs of <i>Hotel Transylvania 2</i> .
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INTRODUCTION

The increasing importance of audiovisual translation (AVT) is evident amidst the rapid development of multimedia technology and globalization. The politics, economies, and cultures of various countries interact as global production and cultural exchanges get closer. In the process of collision of various cultural exchanges, multimedia products serve as an embraced medium for cultural exchange. However, due to the different languages used in multimedia products, AVT is one of the primary channels for intercultural communication (Casas-Tost & Rovira-Esteva, 2019), bridging linguistic and cultural divides. Among various genres, comedy is one of the most popular cinematic forms for international audiences, widely enjoyed in audiovisual media (Costanzo, 2020). The defining feature of the comedy genre is its delivery to the audience in a satirical or humorous style (Shutova & Stanislavovna, 2023). Humorous elements in English comedy films can produce varying effects in different translations, particularly between official subtitles and fansubs (Huang, 2020). Therefore, the gap lies in the differing effects of humorous elements in English comedy films when translated into the Chinese language. So, it is noteworthy to say that the disparity between fansub and official subtitles has not been thoroughly examined and warrants further investigation.

In modern society, humor is so widely accepted, and as Koller (1988) noted, it explains nearly half of human character. It reflects the prevailing societal norms, attitudes, and perceptions of people’s lives (Al-Jabri et al., 2023). The widespread use of mass media has made humor an indispensable part of our lives (Wagner & Schwarzenegger, 2020). But humor transcends mere one-line jokes, encompassing cultural diversity and the complexities of language. It is therefore very difficult to convey humor across linguistic and cultural barriers. Subtitle translation becomes crucial in this situation, as it plays a key role in conveying both linguistic and cultural nuances. Inaccurate subtitles can prevent viewers from fully appreciating even highly captivating films, necessitating subtitle translators to master linguistic and

cultural differences to provide an equivalent viewing experience for the audience.

The concept of humor has intrigued scholars across various disciplines, including linguistics. The focus on humor can be traced back to the Egyptian and Sumerian periods, during which both civilizations documented humor through jokes or humorous texts (Hsu & Raduà, 2020), yet they did not formulate a comprehensive theory of humor despite demonstrating a profound understanding of it. The Greeks were the first to consider humor theoretically, with modern theories tracing their origins to the deep reflections of Plato and Aristotle in the 3rd century BC. They believe that humor is a complex psychological phenomenon involving many aspects such as cognition, emotion, and social interaction (Attardo, 2020). However, the exploration of humor extends beyond this point. Kramer (2020) explores the correlation between various forms of humor and their implications for real-world social critique. Both ancient theories and modern subversive humor share a focus on the intricate and diverse nature of humor, offering a rich array of perspectives for comprehending and investigating humor.

Translating humor is a complex and challenging task, given the inherent differences in language and cultural frameworks (Mohammed, 2019; Alnusairat, 2022). This has been discussed by several researchers. Since many amusing terms have no direct translations in the target language, there will inevitably be loss, retrieval, and compensation during the translation process (Mohammed, 2019). The translation often fails to fully capture the humor embedded in the source language, thereby impeding the audience's comprehension of comedic elements. Audiences are required to re-read or repeatedly view and contemplate the humor to understand it (Hashemian & Farhang-Ju, 2021; Mulyati & Nugroho, 2023). The process of translation requires employing various conversion techniques, involving adjustments in vocabulary, syntax, and stylistic elements. Consequently, the translation of English humor into Ukrainian also confronts impediments (Stoianova & Chernenko, 2020). Despite translators' efforts to preserve humorous elements, they inevitably remove or diminish some of the humorous effects in the target language (Xia et al., 2023). Various types of humor demand distinct translation strategies. In the case of puns, a common approach involves the direct replication of the original pun in the translated text (Budiningtyas et al., 2020). Conversely, in translating humor punchlines, the predominant technique involves establishing equivalence. These approaches, coupled with other target language-oriented tactics, must ensure a high degree of acceptability (Iswardhana & Prajoko, 2022). However, Iswardhana and Prajoko's (2022) research indicates that retaining visual and easily understood elements compensates for the loss of untranslatable elements, contributing to the comedy's success in the target language and culture. To tackle the difficulty of translating humor, the translator needs two key skills: creativity and a deep understanding of the context or intended meanings (Yahiaoui, 2022).

In the Chinese film industry, aside from official subtitles, fan subtitle groups often create their own translations for English-language movies. However, official subtitles and fansub translations might differ in terms of content, quality, and style (Zhang et al., 2024). Official subtitles produced by film distributors or production companies represent the authoritative version, whereas fansubs created by volunteers or fan groups offer alternative translations. Subtitle translation discrepancies may lead to variations in how characters, themes, and dialogue are depicted, consequently influencing the audience's comprehension and interpretation of the cinematic narrative.

Fansubbing refers to a subtitling translation service for audiovisual content facilitated by a fan-made subtitling community (Massidda, 2020). Many researchers have also conducted in-depth studies on fansubbing, revealing the diversity and complexity of this phenomenon in today's media ecosystem (Mao, Lin & Wang, 2024). The quality and impact of fan translations have attracted significant attention, with fan translation practices emerging as crucial nodes in the process of cultural globalization (Cruz, Seo & Binay, 2021).

Many studies highlight the strengths of fan subtitles, like their profound comprehension of the original content and retention of its cultural essence (Tee et al., 2022), but others draw attention to the

obstacles they confront. Some studies have pointed out that amateur subtitles produced by fans exhibit noticeable quality discrepancies across linguistic, cultural, and technical dimensions. Some consumers of fan subtitles are willing to sacrifice quality in exchange for expedited online availability of content (Szarkowska et al., 2021). This is further corroborated by the following studies. Proofreading is crucial in subtitling translation, as post-editing enhances both humor and literary aspects, underscoring the significant role of proofreaders in ensuring the final quality of fan subtitles (Liu, 2022). Studies examining the translation of profanity in professional subtitles versus fan subtitles indicate that fan subtitlers tend to choose more straightforward language. Although there are differences in the strategies employed by professional subtitlers and fan subtitling groups, these disparities are not significant (Sahari, 2022). In contrast to the inclination to soften strong language in dubbed versions, fan subtitles higher degree of foreignization that makes the audience aware that the dubbed product has lost part of the work's original flavor (Magazzù, 2022). Lu and Lu (2021) conducted a comparative analysis of prevailing practices between official and fan subtitles in the complex social and cultural context of China. The study revealed that Chinese fan subtitling communities often deviate from professional conventions, opting to craft subtitles that exhibit a heightened aesthetic appeal while maintaining functionality and symbolic coherence. This is consistent with research findings by Budiharjo and Saptaningsih (2020), which suggest that Fansub exhibits characteristics reflective of popular culture.

Nonetheless, fan subtitles encounter several challenges, such as the collaborative nature of the translation process, deficient theoretical understanding and practical skills, and inadequate proficiency in the target language (Gach et al., 2021). Previous studies have emphasized that the primary drawback of fan subtitles is their poor quality compared to professional subtitles. However, since amateur fan translators are very familiar with the original works, they are often particularly good at interpreting this anime (Sakuma, 2023). Moreover, owing to the foreignizing translation strategy adopted by fan subtitles, they tend to retain a higher proportion of new words compared to professional translators of the same TV series, resulting in a more fluent expression of the original work (Korpi, 2022).

Although the above studies have discussed the advantages and challenges of fan subtitles, there are few comparative studies between fan subtitles and professional subtitles, and there is also a lack of unified professional evaluation standards and methods. Therefore, more research and discussion are necessary to determine the evaluation standards for different types of subtitles and to offer theoretical and practical support for improving the quality of fan subtitles. Based on the above discussion and informed by Pedersen's (2005) translation strategies model, this study used the English animated movie *Hotel Transylvania 2* as a case study to identify and compare the translation strategies of fan and official subtitles in conveying humor in this film. This model offers a method for categorizing and analyzing various translation strategies, especially in the context of cultural and linguistic transfer in subtitle translation. By employing Pedersen's model as the theoretical framework, this study aims to discern and evaluate the similarities and disparities in translation strategies utilized by fan and official subtitles. The research objective is to systematically analyze and compare the translation strategies for humor in both Fansub and official subtitles, identifying and categorizing these strategies while delineating the factors influencing their selection.

Additionally, this study also aims to explore and evaluate the impact of various translation strategies on the accuracy of both fansub and official subtitles in *Hotel Transylvania 2*. To achieve this, the study employs Nababan's (2012) translation quality assessment model as its analytical framework. This objective involves observing the accuracy level in humor conveyance according to Nababan's (2012) model, comparing the frequency and types of inaccuracies between fansubs and official subtitles, and exploring the relationship between diverse translation strategies and inaccuracies. It also involves evaluating the effectiveness of the translation strategies proposed by Pederson (2005) in maintaining comedic elements. Ultimately, this analysis seeks to offer insights into the finer aspects of humor translation and provide recommendations for enhancing the precision of subtitle translation.

This study delves into the translation of the fansub and official in *Hotel Transylvania 2*. The study is driven by two research questions:

1. What translation strategies are utilized in Fansub and official subtitles of humor in *Hotel Transylvania 2* based on Pedersen's translation strategies model?
2. How is the translation accuracy affected in Fansub and official subtitles conveying humor in *Hotel Transylvania 2*, according to Nababan's translation quality assessment model?

METHODS

Material

Given that the translation of humorous utterances is the focus of this study, a comedy film had to be selected. This is because comedic films typically feature a lot of humor, which may appear in a variety of forms. Therefore, the comedy *Hotel Transylvania 2*'s subtitles served as the data, and the content of the subtitles involved in the study was translated from English to Chinese. The film *Hotel Transylvania* was released in September 2012 and received acclaim, topping the North American box office. In September 2015, the second instalment of the series was released, once again achieving box office success. *Hotel Transylvania 2* is an American animated fantasy comedy film that tells a story about family, friendship, and growth in a relaxed and humorous way. Following Martínez-Sierra's (2006) criteria for data, the film *Hotel Transylvania 2* was chosen for this study based on the following characteristics.

Firstly, *Hotel Transylvania 2* has rich humor elements. The film tells the story in a light-hearted and humorous way and contains many humorous elements and laughs, which provide rich material for studying the performance of humor in translation. Secondly, the film incorporates many Western cultural elements and customs, such as Halloween, vampires, werewolves, etc., which provide examples for discussing how to deal with culturally relevant humor during the translation process. In summary, *Hotel Transylvania 2* provides a rich research scenario containing diverse humorous elements, a rich Western cultural background, and imaginative animated representations. All these factors come together to create an ideal setting for researching humor in translation.

Data Collection

Methods and techniques for collecting data include documentation techniques. The procedures involved viewing the movie, obtaining the Chinese and English subtitles, and identifying subtitles categorized as humor. This data collection procedure has been divided into three stages. First, to obtain the official version of the film, the video and audio of *Hotel Transylvania 2* were downloaded from the official video streaming platform *Netflix*. *Netflix* provides high-quality audiovisual content and has an official license for subtitling films. Second, it was necessary to obtain the film's dialogue script, which was downloaded from the open subtitles website (<http://www.opensubtitles.org>). To ensure consistency between the film and the script, the movie was viewed several times by the researcher and checked against the script. This process is intended to ensure that the dialogue recorded in the script matches the actual dialogue in the film, including each character's lines, the order of the dialogue, and how well it matches the audiovisual content.

In the third stage, fansub translations were obtained from the subtitle library website. The Chinese fan subtitles selected for this study were produced by the subtitle group called SSK. At the same time, the choice of fan subtitles from the open website implies that the research data were obtained legally and publicly. This source of data does not involve any privacy or personal information, as the fansub is voluntarily released by the captioning team and is freely available to the public. To guarantee the data's reliability, the researcher thoroughly verified the data at each stage. To ensure data consistency, the researcher not only watched the films multiple times but also conducted detailed subtitles and dialogue checks. Considering the possibility of multiple fan-subtitled versions, the researcher also cross-checked fan subtitles from different sources to ensure that the subtitled versions selected were representative.

Ensuring that the data collected was representative, accurate, and comprehensive was the aim of the entire data collection process.

Data Analysis

First, humorous utterances were identified and classified each time they appeared in the original scripts. For the classification of humor, the study used Martínez-Sierra's (2006) ad hoc taxonomy of humorous elements to classify to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the classification of humor. Upon completion of the classification, the comparison of each humorous line from the original script with its equivalents in the official and fan subtitles was then conducted. This study classified humor and collected data from the following aspects. First, identify the humorous elements in the original subtitles of *Hotel Transylvania 2* and transcribe them. Second, transcribe the corresponding fansub and official subtitles. Humor elements were identified according to four categories in the classification.

The translation strategies used to translate the subtitles can be analyzed in the following way. Pederson's (2005) translation strategy model was employed to identify and classify the strategies used to translate humorous discourses. He proposes seven subtitle translation strategies, which are omission, generalization, substitution, direct translation, official equivalent, retention, and specification. By applying this taxonomy, the study can systematically analyze the translation strategies of humor. In addition, this study quantified the frequency of use of each type of translation strategy through statistical analysis to determine the similarities and differences between official subtitles and fan subtitles in translating humor. Meanwhile, qualitative analysis revealed the potential impact of translation strategies, including their effectiveness in preserving the original humor and conveying cultural connotations.

To analyze the accuracy of the translation, Nababan's (2012) translation quality assessment model was also employed as a theoretical framework to evaluate the accuracy of both subtitles. Accuracy was chosen by the researcher as the focus because it is regarded as the most crucial element in the field of translation (Nababan, 2012). The researcher assigned scores ranging from 1 to 3 to evaluate the humor translation in both official and fan subtitles and subsequently summarized the analysis results. Through this multidimensional approach, the study not only reveals the characteristics of different translation strategies but also provides methodological insights on how to improve subtitle translation.

RESULT

Translation Strategies for Different Types of Humor

Translation of Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements

According to Martínez-Sierra (2006), this type of humor can be related to cultural elements and can be different forms of content, presented in a variety of ways, to evoke specific cultural images. Official and fan subtitles use distinct presenting methods and translation strategies when dealing with humor that covers the boundaries of culture.

Among the seven identified community sense of humor elements, example 1 is an adapted line from the classic nursery rhyme "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." This nursery rhyme holds significant cultural influence and recognition across many societies. The humor in this example arises from the distortion of the audience's cultural memory of the original rhyme. Examples 2 and 3 both involve descriptions of vampires. Vampires are a cross-cultural image, so the ridicule of the image of vampires can touch upon a wide range of cultural cognitions. Exaggeration and satire are used to express the ridicule of the image of vampires, thus creating an effect that the audience finds funny. Example 4 takes a ubiquitous cultural image from the movie *Bigfoot* and places it in the unlikely context of playing in the German soccer league, creating an absurd yet hilarious scenario. Example 5 reflects a shared cultural norm where self-promotion or seeking media attention is frowned upon. Therefore, when someone mentions doing something impressive but expresses a desire to avoid media coverage, it resonates with the community's values and may elicit laughter. The premise of example 6 is that someone gives a child an exaggerated

Table 4.1: Official subtitles and Fansub translation of Community-Sense-of-Humor Elements

ST	Official TT	BT	Fansub	BT
Example 1: Suffer, suffer, scream in pain. Blood is spilling from your brain.	忍哪, 忍哪, 苦叫 呦。血从你的头 上流	Endure, endure, suffering, oh! Blood flows from your head.	受苦, 受难, 痛苦 中尖叫 鲜血从你 脑中溢	Enduring suffering, screaming in pain, Blood spills from your brain.
Example 2: Dad. His baby tooth wasn't a fang.	爸爸, 他的乳牙不 是尖牙	Dad, his baby tooth isn't a fang.	爸爸, 他的乳齿都 不是尖牙	Dad, none of his baby teeth are canines.
Example 3: But shouldn't he have fangs and That pasty skin you guys have?	可他不是应该长着 尖牙有着你们这种 苍白的皮肤吗?	But shouldn't he have fangs and pale skin like yours?	但他不是得长出你 们那样的尖牙还有 苍白肤色吗?	But doesn't he have to have fangs and pale skin like yours?
Example 4: Come on, even Big-foot's tearin' it up in the German soccer league.	别这样, 大脚在德 国足球队里的表现 都可圈可点的	Come on, Bigfoot's performance in the German football team is remarkable.	得了吧, 即使是 大脚也席卷了德国 足球联赛	Give it up. Even Bigfoot is tearing it up in the German soccer league.
Example 5: I guess it was pretty cool, but I'm not about getting press.	我觉得这很棒, 可 我对媒体不感冒	I think it's great, but I'm not interested in the media.	我觉得那会很酷, 但是我还不想登报	I think that would be cool, but I don't want it in the newspapers yet.
Example 6: Straight from the crypt.	从地下直接出土的	Directly unearthed from underground.	直接从墓穴里拿出 来的	Directly taken out from the tomb.
Example 7: Certified yellow belt since 1997.	97年我得过黄腰带	I got a yellow belt in 1997.	1997年官方认证的 黄带	Officially certified yellow belt in 1997.

gold necklace. In many community cultures, such a valuable and possibly antique gift may be considered inappropriate to give to a child. This creates an absurd and dramatic contrast, which triggers a sense of humor. Example 7 capitalizes on the shared understanding within a specific social group. While a yellow belt typically signifies a novice, the inclusion of “since 1997” suggests the speaker has held this rank for an unusually prolonged period, contrary to expectations. Consequently, the sentence elicits laughter, leveraging irony to generate humor.

For the same ST, Table 4.1 shows that the two subtitles are entirely distinct. The official translation strategy that is most frequently employed is direct translation, which is followed by the substitution strategy to address culturally specific humorous elements. Direct translation is a prevailing practice in fansubbing, contrasting with the diverse range of strategies employed in official subtitling. In the first three examples, both translations opt for a direct translation strategy to express humor. However, the fansub is more closely aligned with the spoken language, while the official translation is typically more formal and standardized. In examples 4, 5, and 6, the official translations adopt substitution strategies, whereas fansubbing prefers direct translation. In this case, the fan translation still adheres to the direct translation strategy to maintain the structure and language style of the ST. Although the direct translation of the fansub more accurately retains the literal meaning of the original text, it may not be intuitive enough for readers, and they need to understand its meaning from the context. Official subtitles also employ generalization in example 7. Overall, comparing the two translation strategies, both the subtitle group and the official Chinese translation predominantly relied on direct translation for community sense of humor elements, proving effective in preserving the original context and semantics, particularly in humorous texts.

Table 4.2: Official subtitles and Fansub translation of Linguistic Elements

ST	Official TT	BT	Fansub	BT
Example 8: Yo, how hot is my date?	嘿，我约会的对象很正点吧？	Hey, isn't my date stunning?	唷，我的女伴多美啊	Yo, how beautiful is my date!
Example 9: My little poisonberry?	我的小毒莓？	My little poisonous berry?	我的小蜜糖？	My little honey?
Example 10: He's old-school.	他是个老古董	He is an old antique.	他相当老派	He is quite old-fashioned.
Example 11: He's not as enlightened as your hip Daddy.	他可不像你这个时髦老爹一样这么开明	He's not as open-minded as your fashionable dad.	他可不像你酷爸爸我这么开明	He's not as enlightened as me your cool Daddy.
Example 12: My little devil dog.	我的小狗仔	My little puppy.	我的小魔童	My little devil boy.
Example 13: Porridge Head, did you call a hearse for the Gremlinbergs?	粥头，给幽灵一家人叫灵车了吗？	Porridge Head, did you call a hearse for the Ghost family?	浆糊脑子，你有没有打电话给冰鬼订灵车？	Pasty brain, did you call the ice ghost to book the hearse?
Example 14: A: Maybe you should just get Bluetooth. B: Okay. Blue Tooth, come over here.	A: 你说得对，也许你该用用蓝牙。 B: 好吧，蓝牙，你过来。	A: "You're right, maybe you should use Bluetooth." B: "Okay, Bluetooth, come here."	A: 嗯 知道了 或许你就用蓝牙。 B: 没问题，蓝牙，过来。	A: "Hmm, got it. Maybe you should just use Bluetooth." B: "No problem. Bluetooth, come here."
Example 15: Tummy get a tummyache.	我的胃不舒服了	My stomach feels uncomfortable.	汤米肚子痛了	Tummy has a stomachache.
Example 16: All he needs is time with his vampa.	他需要的就是和他的血爷多多相处	All he needs is to spend more time with his blood grandpa.	他所需要的就是与他的吸血公独处	What he needs is to be alone with his vampire lord.
Example 17: Cebause, I'm SSunglasses Man, to the rescue!	“音位”我是墨镜侠，要去救人！	"Phoneme" I'm Sunglass Hero, going to save someone!	因为，我是墨镜侠，我要拯救世界	Because I am the sunglasses hero and I will save the world.
Example 18: A-course now we call it Tee-Mousing.	没问题，我们现在叫它老鼠球座	No problem, we call it Rat Tee now.	可以，当然现在我们叫它 通鼠窜	Okay, of course, now we call it rat scurrying.
Example 19: His mother's already nutsy koo koo!	他妈妈已经疯疯癫癫的了	His mother has gone crazy!	他妈妈已经是个精神错乱的颠颠了	His mother is already a psychopath!
Example 20: This kid is an awesome daredevil.	这孩子是个超胆侠	This kid is a super bold hero.	这孩子是个超赞的 不怕死星人	This kid is a fearless superstar.
Example 21: You have to go now? When we finally have no traffic.	现在去尿吗？路上好不容易不堵了。	Go pee now? The road is finally free of traffic jams.	你非要现在去吗？在我们终于没有堵车的时候。	Do you have to go now? When we finally got out of traffic jam.
Example 22: It's at a hotel? Fancy schmancy.	在酒店？真装腔作势	At the hotel? What a pretence.	这是在一家旅馆？奢侈奢侈	This is in a hotel. Luxury luxury.
Example 23: From Prince of Darkness to King of Room Service	从黑暗王子变成了开酒店的。	From the prince of darkness to a hotel owner.	从黑暗王子堕落到房间服务之王。	From Prince of Darkness, fallen, to the King of Room Service.
Example 24: The big shot here was a little crybaby.	这个大家伙以前是个爱哭鬼	This big guy used to be a crybaby.	这位大人物以前可是 个小 爱哭鬼呢。	This big shot used to be a little crybaby.
Example 25: Hey, dudeman. I'm a dudeman!	嘿，兄弟，我是兄弟啊！	Hey, brother, I'm a brother!	嘿老家伙，我是个老家伙！	Hey, old guy, I'm an old guy!

Translation of Linguistic Elements

Linguistic elements of humor are based on linguistic features and are mainly concerned with the way language is used (Martínez-Sierra, 2006). Since humor often relies on language-specific usages, such as homophones, puns, slang, etc., translators need to be flexible in their use of linguistic elements and innovative in translating these humorous elements into expressions in the target language. For this type of humor, the official translation and the subtitle group translation also have differentiated treatment and adopt various translation strategies.

Linguistic elements of humor account for a large proportion of the lines, with 18 elements identified. Examples 9, 14, and 21 employ homophones and puns for comedic effects. “Poisonberry” sounds like a combination of “poison” and “boysenberry”, and although there is no direct pun in semantics, this sound-like effect will attract the audience’s attention and trigger a sense of humor. In the movie, the character named “Bluetooth” also alludes to the pun of a Bluetooth headset. Similarly, the phrase “no traffic” can be interpreted as the absence of traffic congestion or as “no traffic” in a conversation, adding a layer of humor. Examples 8, 10, 16, 19, 22, and 25 all use slang and informal language. “Yo” plus the description of “hot” and “old-school” “dudeman” “fancy schmancy” all show a slang and informal language style. The informal term “vampa” instead of “vampire” and the phrase “nutsy koo koo” both contribute to the creation of humor. Examples 11, 13, 18, 20, 23, and 24 are examples of wordplay and innovative use of language. For instance, “Tee-Mousing” is a newly coined word that adds humor through innovative use of language. The contrast between “Prince of Darkness” and “King of Room Service” creates a humorous effect. The “little devil dog” in Example 12 suggests the character’s mischievous behavior and has an exaggerated and sarcastic tone. The sentence in example 15 uses word repetition, and the incorrect word “cecause” in example 17 is used because of the child’s pronunciation errors, which shows the flexibility and diversity of language in humorous expression.

The official subtitles employ 12 substitution strategies in total for this kind of humor. In contrast, although not as frequent as the official version, fansub also makes extensive use of it, with the number reaching 7. The strategy of direct translation is extensively employed in fan subtitles, reaching a frequency of 6, whereas official subtitles tend to adopt a more varied strategy. In the official subtitles, direct translation, retention, and specification are all used twice. In example 10, the official translation of “he is an old antique” adopts a substitution strategy, replacing “old-school” with “old antique”. This translation strategy tries to maintain the meaning of the original text with some innovations and modifications to make the translation more vivid and funny. In fansub, specification is utilized twice, while generalization and retention are each employed only once.

Translation of Paralinguistic Elements

Paralinguistic elements refer to the non-verbal aspects of sound, like tone and rhythm, that can convey emotions and influence how an audience feels (Martínez-Sierra, 2006). This sense of humor may be expressed through tone and rhythm. Although this form of humor is not represented much in the film, its translation strategies are also diverse.

Most of the lines mentioned above convey humor to the audience through the tone and intonation of the characters in the movie. For instance, “oh, great” employs an exaggerated and slightly uplifting tone, while “baboon’s butt on your head” uses a teasing tone, making the humorous effect more apparent. Examples 27 and 29 feature a contemptuous or helpless tone. These humorous effects primarily rely on the use of paralinguistic elements.

There is not much diversity in the humor translation strategies of this type of humor. Direct translation and substitution predominate in all translations of this type, whether they are fan or official subtitles. Nevertheless, the two versions exhibit some inconsistency in their employed strategies. In Example 27, the old vampire lies to keep his daughter from learning that he had an accident while taking his grandson out of the hotel and claims that the sirens heard in the background are being emitted by banshees. In the

Table 4.3: Official subtitles and Fansub translation of Paralinguistic Elements

ST	Official TT	BT	Fansub	BT
Example 26: Oh, great. You know I haven't done this in years.	好吧，你们都知道我金盆洗手很多年了	Well, you all know that I've been washing my hands in a golden basin for many years.	很好，你知道我好多没干这种事了	Good, you know I haven't done this in years
Example 27: Oh, those are just some wailing banshees checking in.	有几位女妖在办入住手续	There are several banshees checking in.	哦 那只是一些爱啼哭的妖怪来住店了	Oh, that's just some crying monsters staying at the hotel.
Example 28: You look like you got a baboon's butt on your head.	你脑袋上像戴了个狒狒的屁股。	It's like you have a baboon's butt on your head.	你头上好像装了个狒狒的屁股。	It's like you have a baboon's butt installed on your head.
Example 29: All that taught me is that you're pathetic.	你只是让我明白了，你是个可怜虫。	You just made me understand you are a poor worm.	我只学会一件事，你真窝囊。	I've only learned one thing. You're such a coward.

official translation, “wailing banshees” is directly translated as “女妖” (banshees) without any major changes or additions, while the fansub's version adopts the substitution strategy of translating “wailing banshees” as “crying monsters”.

Translation of Non-Marked (Humorous)

This humor element can be explicit humor that directly triggers laughter or implicit humor that requires deep thought to be appreciated through subtle clues and hints (Martínez-Sierra, 2006).

Table 4.4: Official subtitles and Fansub translation of Non-Marked (Humorous)

ST	Official TT	BT	Fansub	BT
Example 30: Honeybat!	蝙蝠宝贝!	Bat baby!	我的蝙蝠小宝贝!	My little bat baby!
Example 31: Can you get me some ice cream with anchovies?	能给我拿点小银鱼冰淇淋吗?	Can you get me some whitebait ice cream?	你能帮我拿点鳀鱼冰淇淋吗?	Can you get me some anchovy ice cream?
Example 32: All right! Let's do this boy up!	好了! 给他来点珠光宝气!	Alright! Give him some jewelry!	好的 咱们一起让这孩子嗨起来吧	OK! Let's get this kid excited together!
Example 33: Check out what I got him. Bling!	看看我给他准备了么，好闪啊!	Look what I prepared for him, it's so shiny!	瞧瞧我给他带了什么东西!	Look what I brought him!
Example 34: “My First Guillotine.”	“我的第一个断头台”	“My first guillotine.”	“我的第一部斩首机”	“My first beheading machine.”
Example 35: Have some cake, Wuzzlelumblebum.	来块蛋糕，大象先生	Have a piece of cake, Mr. Elephant.	吃点蛋糕吧，唔兹拉帕巴姆	“My first beheading machine.”
Example 36: This scooter thing's out of juice. We're never gonna make it.	车没有电了，我们回不去了	The car is out of battery. We can't go back.	这踏板车快没油了，我们到不了了	Eat some cake, Wuzzlelumblebum.
Example 37: So, two seats in coach?	两张最便宜的票?	Two of the cheapest tickets?	所以，两张经济舱票吗?	This scooter is almost out of gas. We can't get there.
Example 38: Um... We're outside the hotel having a little cookout.	在酒店外头野餐呢	Having a picnic outside the hotel.	呃，我们在旅社外面露天烧烤呢	Uh, we're having a barbecue outside the hotel.
Example 39: Sure. Great. Peachy. Good old Vlad.	好，行，赞，老弗拉德人很好	Okay, okay, great, Old Vlad is a nice guy	当然，太好了，太赞了好老人弗拉德	Of course, great, great good old Vlad
Example 40: None of these parents better review this on Yelp.	但愿家长不要在网站上给我差评	I hope parents won't leave me negative reviews on the website.	没有任何家长会会在尖叫网上给网上给好评的	No parent will give a positive review on Screaming.com.

The examples above demonstrate the non-marked (humorous) through various language techniques and contextual settings. The absurd combinations of “honeybat,” “ice cream with anchovies,” and “first guillotine are inherently humorous due to their unexpected nature. “Do this boy up” is an exaggerated and uncommon expression that sounds funny. The use of “bling” in an informal context adds humor through language choice. “Wuzzlelumblebum” is a humorous name that can amuse the audience. Examples 36 and 37 involve embarrassing situations where plain language creates a humorous and unexpected effect. Examples 38, 39, and 40 illustrate implicit humor, requiring the audience to understand the tone and context.

Substitution is still the most common strategy in official translation, in addition to direct translation and generalization. However, fansub uses a direct translation strategy to maintain the style of the original text, in addition to specification, omission and retention. In example 31, the official Chinese translation adopts a generalization strategy for “anchovies” and translates it as “little whitebait”. This allows viewers who do not know the fish species to more intuitively imagine the characteristics of the fish, but it may also cause the audience to misunderstand that it is other types of small fish. The subtitle by fan groups is translated in an extremely straightforward manner, adhering to a translation strategy that guarantees the accuracy of the original text’s literal meaning.

Frequency of Use of Translation Strategies

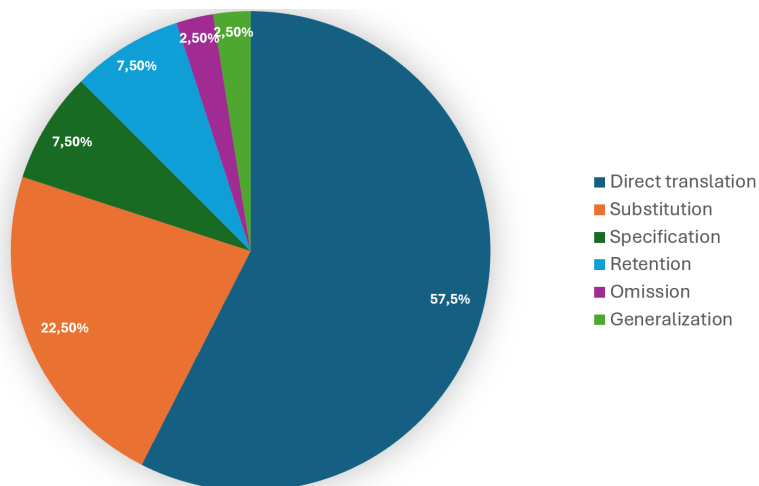


Figure 4.1: Translation strategies used in Fansub

As for the translation strategies used by the fansub, it can be seen from Figure 4.1 that direct translation is the most commonly used, accounting for 57.5%. Substitution is also one of the widely used strategies, reaching 22.5%. The use of specification, retention and generalization is relatively infrequent, with occurrence rates of 7.5%, 7.5%, and 2.5%. At the same time, the fansub also used the omission strategy, but the proportion was also deficient, comprising only 2.5%.

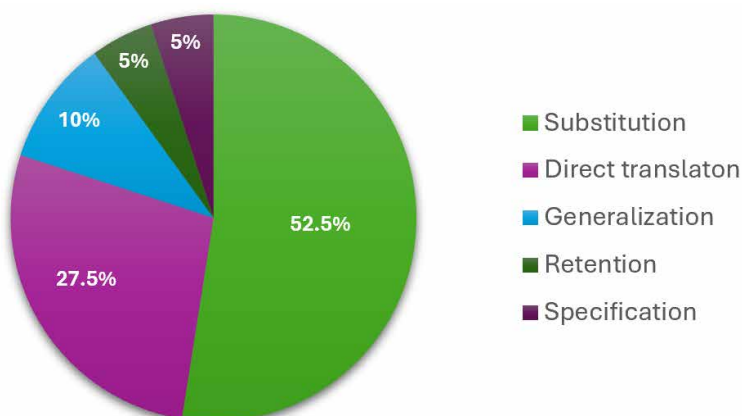


Figure 4.2: Translation strategies used in official subtitles

According to the above figure, the most prominent strategy used when translating humor was substitution, accounting for 52.5% in official subtitles. This strategy achieves the communication and transformation of humor by replacing the original humorous elements in the ST with more humorous or appropriate words in the TT. In addition, direct translation is also one of the common strategies, accounting for 27.5%. Generalization, specification, and retention are employed less frequently, with their usage rates at 10%, 5%, and 5%, respectively.

Accuracy of Official Subtitles and Fansub

The scoring criteria for translation accuracy are based on Nababan's (2012) translation accuracy assessment instrument. By adhering to these criteria, translators can ensure the accurate transmission of meaning across languages and cultures. The criteria are as follows:

Table 4.5: Nababan's Translation Accuracy Assessment Instrument

Category	Points	Criteria
Accurate	3	Translation perfectly mirrors the original text, with no alterations in meaning.
Less accurate	2	Most content is accurately translated, but some distortions, double meanings, or omissions affect the overall message.
Inaccurate	1	Translation contains significant inaccuracies or deletions that substantially alter the meaning of the original text.

Table 4.6: Translation accuracy rates across strategies in official subtitles

Strategies	Accurate		Less accurate		Inaccurate		Less accurate+ inaccurate	
	N	Percentage (%)	N	Percentage (%)	N	Percentage (%)	N	Percentage (%)
Direct translation	10	25	1	2.5	0	0	1	2.5
Substitution	8	20	10	25	3	7.5	13	32.5
Specification	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Generalization	2	5	2	5	0	0	2	5
Retention	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	24	60	13	32.5	3	7.5	16	40

Based on the data presented in Table 4.6, out of the 40 official subtitles analyzed (N=40), the proportions of accurate, less accurate, and inaccurate translations are 60%, 32.5%, and 7.5%. Among these, the combined percentage of less accurate and inaccurate translations is 40%, indicating that 40% of the official subtitle translations can be identified as "not accurate". The translation strategy that contributed most to inaccurate and less accurate subtitles is substitution, while the most accurate strategy is direct translation. Overall, the translations of official subtitles are mostly accurate.

Table 4.7: Translation accuracy rates across strategies in Fansub

Strategies	Accurate		Less accurate		Inaccurate		Less accurate+ inaccurate	
	N	Percentage (%)	N	Percentage (%)	N	Percentage (%)	N	Percentage (%)
Direct translation	22	55	0	0	0	0	0	0
Substitution	3	7.5	4	10	2	5	6	15
Generalization	1	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retention	2	5	1	2.5	0	0	1	2.5
Specification	4	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Omission	0	0	0	0	1	2.5	1	2.5
Total	32	80	5	12.5	3	7.5	8	20

Table 4.7 demonstrates that fansub exhibits a notably elevated accuracy rate, attaining 80%, with the remaining 20% classified as "not accurate" translations. Specifically, within this subset, translations

characterized as less accurate constitute 12.5%, while those deemed wholly inaccurate represent 7.5%. Similarly, the direct translation strategy yields higher accuracy, whereas the substitution strategy results in a greater proportion of inaccuracies. Both findings indicate that the direct translation strategy consistently produces more accurate translations, whereas the substitution strategy results in higher rates of inaccuracy in both official and fan subtitles. After examining the accuracy of both subtitles, it was found that while the majority of subtitles maintain a high level of quality, there is still a considerable portion that does not meet the established accuracy standards.

Strategic Application of Humor Translation

The study examined the utilization of different translation strategies in both the fan and official subtitles in *Hotel Transylvania 2*. The findings indicate that official subtitles tend to favor TT-oriented translation strategies, such as substitution, which prioritizes the preferences and cultural background of the target audience to convey the original humor effectively. This observation further corroborates the adoption of a text-oriented translation strategy by subtitlers (Xie, 2020; Alsharhan, 2020). Besides, this study further emphasizes that retaining humorous elements is crucial for successful translation (Ardi, 2022; Mohammed, 2019). Adapting the translation to align with the preferences of the target audience can enhance the communication of the original humor. However, this process of rewriting and substitution may present considerable challenges in the process of translating humor. Therefore, choosing a suitable translation strategy becomes critically important (Delfani, 2019; Farkhan et al., 2020). This study also underscores the advantage of fan subtitle production teams in preserving the cultural and humorous aspects of the original content. Despite facing challenges in terms of collaboration, theoretical comprehension, and practical skills (Gach et al., 2021), they prioritize maintaining the structure and linguistic style of the original work. This is achieved through employing ST-oriented translation strategies represented by the direct translation strategy. This diverges from the findings of Lu and Lu (2021) and Budiharjo and Saptaningsih (2020). Fan subtitles often demonstrate heightened creativity, departing from established professional standards in pursuit of subtitles with elevated aesthetic appeal. However, they also employ various strategies to balance fidelity to the original content. This phenomenon may be attributed to the particular cultural preferences of fan subtitle production teams and the expectations of their audience.

Building upon prior research, this study delves deeper into the variances in translation strategies among various subtitle production teams. It reveals that for fan subtitles, strategies emphasizing the source language are more prevalent. Subtitlers predominantly employ ST-oriented strategies in the investigation of subtitle translation (Sadeghpour, 2021). This study's findings assist subtitle translators in understanding the preferences of various subtitle production teams, enabling them to select appropriate translation strategies.

Accuracy of Translation and Strategies

An examination comparing the accuracy of official subtitles with those created by fansub groups indicates that while most official subtitles are precise, a notable portion still fails to meet recognized accuracy benchmarks (Ashlikhatina & Mujiyanto, 2022; Batmanathan et al., 2022). Humor translation frequently involves language conversion and creative thinking. Therefore, cross-language and cross-cultural humor translation encounter some challenges (Stoianova & Chernenko, 2020; Hashemian & Farhang-Ju, 2021). When translators endeavor to retain humorous elements, they unavoidably attenuate or eliminate certain humorous effects in the target language, thereby diminishing their accuracy. However, the accuracy of fan and official subtitle translations in this study does not fall as low as the accuracy observed in the novel translations by Ningsih (2020). The use of the substitution strategy is a significant factor contributing to these inaccuracies. This strategy involves substituting phrases or expressions with equivalent ones that may not fully convey the original meaning, resulting in a higher proportion of less accurate and inaccurate translations (Rosa, 2021).

Table 5.1: Less accurate translation produced by substitution in official subtitles

ST	Official TT	BT
Come on, even Bigfoot's tearin' it up in the German soccer league.	别这样，大脚在德国足球队里的表现都可圈可点的	Come on, Bigfoot's performance in the German football team is remarkable.
I guess it was pretty cool, but I'm not about getting press. Straight from the crypt.	我觉得这很棒，可我对媒体不感冒 从地下直接出土的	I think it's great, but I'm not interested in the media. Directly unearthed from underground.
He's old-school A-course now we call it Tee-Mousing. This kid is an awesome daredevil.	他是个老古董 没问题，我们现在叫它老鼠球座 这孩子是个超胆侠	He is an old antique No problem, we call it Rat Tee now. This kid is a super bold hero
From Prince of Darkness to King of Room Service	从黑暗王子变成了开酒店的	From the prince of darkness to a hotel owner
Oh, great. You know I haven't done this in years.	好吧，你们都知道我金盆洗手很多年了	Well, you all know that I have been washing my hands in a golden basin for many years.
All right! Let's do this boy up!	好了！给他来点珠光宝气！	Alright! Give him some jewelry!
Um... We're outside the hotel having a little cookout.	在酒店外头野餐呢	Having a picnic outside the hotel

The texts in the above table are all less accurate translations due to the substitution strategy. While the meanings of words or phrases in the ST are not accurately translated into Chinese, the process leads to a certain degree of distortion of the original meaning.

Table 5.2: Inaccurate translation produced by substitution in official subtitle

ST	Official TT	BT
My little devil dog.	我的小狗仔	My little puppy.
You have to go now? When we finally have no traffic.	现在去尿吗？路上好不容易不堵了	Go pee now? The road is finally free of traffic jams
Have some cake, Wuzzlelurplebum.	来块蛋糕，大象先生	Have a piece of cake, Mr. Elephant.

All three excerpts over-interpret words or phrases in the ST, resulting in translations that introduce some distortion compared to the original meaning. For instance, "Mr. Elephant" is not an accurate rendition of "Wuzzlelurplebum" and introduces some distortion of meaning. Conversely, the direct translation strategy has proven to be the most reliable, consistently yielding high accuracy. By closely adhering to the ST, direct translation ensures that the original meaning and nuances are preserved.

Table 5.3: Less accurate translation produced by substitution in Fansub

ST	Fansub	BT
He's not as enlightened as your hip Daddy.	他可不像你酷爸爸我这么开明	He's not as enlightened as me your cool Daddy.
Cebeause, I'm Sunglasses Man, to the rescue!	因为，我是墨镜侠，我要拯救世界！	Because I am the sunglasses hero and I will save the world
Hey, dudeman. I'm a dudeman!	嘿，老家伙，我是个老家伙！	Hey, old guy, I'm an old guy!

All three extracts add or change some words in the ST. For example, "because" does not reflect the word "cebeause" that the children in the ST misspelt because of their young age and thus fails to bring the same humorous effect.

Table 5.4: Inaccurate translation produced by substitution in Fansub

ST	Fansub	BT
My little poisonberry?	我的小蜜糖	My little honey
Porridge Head, did you call a hearse for the Gremlinbergs	浆糊脑子，你有没有打电话给冰鬼订灵车	Pasty brain, did you call the ice ghost to book the hearse?

While "little honey" captures the intimate tone of the ST, it does not preserve the meaning of "poisonberry" accurately. It not only fails to help readers understand the meaning of the ST but may cause misunderstanding.

The above table shows the inaccurate translations caused by the use of TT-oriented strategies in fan and official subtitles. The accuracy of translation involves more than just straightforward conversion of source text content into the target language. It necessitates consideration of various factors such as linguistic characteristics, cultural backgrounds, and textual genres. Faithfulness and accuracy in translation hold particular significance (McDonald, 2020). The consistency of these patterns in both official and fansub underscores the critical role of translation strategy in determining accuracy. The findings of this study not only expand the understanding of subtitle translation accuracy but also provide suggestions and references for improving the quality of subtitle translation. Based on the above research on single subtitles, further insights into the translation practices employed in fan subtitles and official subtitles can be gained.

CONCLUSION

Translating humor has been challenging for translators, mainly due to the disparities in language and culture. This study investigates the humor translation within the English animated comedy film *Hotel Transylvania 2* by comparing fan subtitles with official subtitles. The findings indicate that both official Chinese subtitles and fan translations predominantly employ substitution and direct translation strategies. Substitution strategies are prevalent in both translation versions because they effectively navigate linguistic and cultural differences by using more fitting or amusing equivalents in the target language, thus preserving the original humor and impact. Notably, fan subtitles exhibit a propensity to preserve the comedic essence of the source material, while official subtitles prioritize cultural assimilation and linguistic fluidity. Moreover, the strategies of specification, generalization, retention, and omission are less frequently employed in both official and fan translations. This preference suggests a prioritization of directly manipulating linguistic content to convey humor, rather than altering context or structure. The widespread adoption of substitution and direct translation strategies in both official and fan translations signifies a shared objective to uphold humor and entertainment value for the target audience.

Based on an analysis of the accuracy of official and fan subtitles, it was found that while most official subtitles are accurate, a considerable portion failed to meet established accuracy standards. Among these, the substitution strategy emerges as a significant contributing factor to these inaccuracies. This strategy entails substituting phrases or expressions from the ST with non-equivalent ones in the TT, thereby resulting in more inaccuracies in translation. Conversely, direct translation has been demonstrated as the most reliable strategy, consistently yielding translations with high accuracy. By adhering strictly to the ST, the direct translation strategy ensures the preservation of original meanings and subtle nuances.

Official subtitles often lean towards employing a substitution strategy, resulting in distorted meanings and inaccurate translations. Fansub tends to adhere to a direct translation strategy, insisting on preserving the original meaning of the texts. The direct translation strategy demonstrates outstanding performance in ensuring accuracy, providing a crucial safeguard for enhancing translation quality.

Future research could also further explore translation strategies and their impacts in different language and cultural contexts, as well as how to better balance the relationship between cultural adaptation and accurate communication of the original meaning. The following studies can also benefit from this study by investigating different audience groups' perceptions of subtitle translation quality and their preferences for translation accuracy, fluency, and cultural adaptability. This exploration would inform translation practices to align more closely with the requirements of distinct audience groups.

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