

## TRANSLATING VERBALLY EXPRESSED HUMOUR IN ASTERIX AND CLEOPATRA INTO SINHALA

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### **Abstract**

The present study focuses on the translation of verbally expressed humour in dubbed animated films. The translators face the complex task of transferring humour from the source text to the target text. The study examines how they translate humorous elements and the strategies that they employ to perform this task. The animated film Asterix and Cleopatra (1968) and its Sinhala dubbed version are selected for the study. Humorous elements are identified and categorised into three groups, according to the taxonomy proposed by Minutella (2014): cultural references and allusions, wordplay and language variations. The Sinhala dubbed version is studied and ten examples are analysed qualitatively to understand how these elements are translated into the target language. The three strategies proposed by Chiaro (2006) are applied. The study reveals that the first strategy which is the substitution of verbally expressed humours in the source language with an example of verbally expressed humour in the target language, is employed mainly by the translators. The translation strategies employed are not always successful in transferring humour. Loss of humour, fully and partially, is noted in certain examples.

*Keywords: Animated films, Humour, Strategy, Substitution, Wordplay*

## INTRODUCTION

Humour in animated films is an essential component. These audio-visual texts offer entertainment exploiting both the image and the sound. Verbal humour makes a significant contribution in this regard, and at the same time, poses numerous challenges to the translators who are tasked with transferring this humour into another language. Needless to say, the translation of humour has a considerable impact on the success of the film in the target language.

Humour can be considered as an “umbrella term” that makes it possible to work with various textual types and different linguistic expressions, for example puns and purposes such as mockery or amusement (De Rosa, 2014, p. 107). Definitions of humour are varied and mostly vague. Cambridge Dictionary defines it as “the ability to find things funny”<sup>1</sup>. Collins Dictionary phrases it as “a quality in something that makes you laugh for example in a situation, in someone’s words or actions, or in a book or film”<sup>2</sup>. Though definitions can be formulated to explain the basic idea, the perception of humour remains very subjective; “humour may well remain within the eyes, ears and mood of the beholder” (Chiaro & Piferi, 2010, p. 300). Palmer identifies incongruity as a major component of humour. According to him, “the core of the joke is constructed by the sudden and unexpected contradiction between two ideas, one plausible and the other not” (Korostenskienė & Pakrosnytė, 2017, p.157).

Shared knowledge between the source language (SL) culture and target language (TL) culture is equally essential to understand humour. Two people in the same linguistic surrounding may not be able to appreciate a joke in the same way. One could laugh and the other not. When the linguistic surrounding is not the same, conveying what is considered humorous in one surrounding to another, becomes a strenuous task. Furthermore, Chiaro (1992) points out that American sitcoms do not necessarily become hits in the UK and vice versa: “Language and culture seem to be indivisible, and without shared socio-cultural knowledge between the sender and the recipient, a common linguistic code will be of little help” (p.77).

When translating humour into a TL, domesticating approach is often preferred by the translators as it allows the TL audience to understand the context and appreciate the humour related to it. Guix and Wilkison (2000) explain that faced with the translation of elements such as weight and measure, musical notes and titles of works that already exist in translation, domestication becomes a common strategy (cited in Gil, 2009, p. 151). Taking into consideration the differences between the languages and the difficulty in translating cultural allusions and puns, the tendency to domesticate and naturalise humour supporting the models of functional translation, can be justified in many cases (De Rosa, 2014, p. 110). Bucaria (2017) also claims that “when it comes to humour in audiovisuals, most scholars tend to agree that a functional approach (Vermeer, 1996) should be preferred, i.e., one that privileges dynamic equivalence between source and target texts rather than formal equivalence (Nida, 1964)” (p.432). The formal structure of a wordplay or a joke is extremely difficult to reproduce in another language. What is essential in this context of translating verbally expressed humour (VEH), is that the target audience understands the sense or what causes humour and is able to appreciate it. De Rosa (2014) explains that in order to make the target audience laugh, at times the original content has to be modified to a great extent.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/humour>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/humour>

*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. This justifies, in some cases, a total departure from the meanings and the content of the original in order to achieve a comic effect; the objective pursued is almost exclusively perlocutory. (p.110)*

However, Rollo (2010) notes that making modifications to the source text can lead to distorting or falsifying the emotional level of the original dialog. In such cases, its function can be altered and the essential meaning betrayed (Cited in Mudriczki, 2014, p. 54). Bogucki further remarks that many audiovisual translators rely on strategies to translate humour that result in flouting or disrespecting the rules of good practice (2016, p.76). It is evident that translating humour demands creative and innovative strategies from the translators who are required to make the target audience laugh. Interviewing Italian dubbing industry operators, Chiaro (2006) indicates that VEH is the single most challenging obstacle in translations for the screen (p. 198).

Chiaro (2003) proposes four strategies to translate puns on screen: leave the pun unchanged in the SL, replace the SL pun with a TL pun, replace the pun with an idiomatic expression in the TL and ignore the pun altogether (pp.16-18). The fact that ignoring the pun is given as a strategy proves that translating a pun into a TL is never an easy task. Chiaro (2004) further argues that “it is highly unlikely that two languages will be so similar as to possess the same homophonous, homonymous or polysemous items upon which puns are usually created.” (Cited in Manca & Aprile, 2014, p, 158). This explains why it is almost impossible to achieve formal equivalence when translating wordplay. Furthermore, it is observed that puns that generate humour are few in number. For this reason, Chiaro (2005) puts forward the thought of limiting the number of puns in audio-visuals to make it less “taxing” on the translators internationally (p. 139).

Translating humour in an audio-visual text is doubly challenging given the fact that the creativity and the solutions of the translators are restricted by the image on screen which cannot be modified or erased. Therefore, as Sanderson remarks, the translators have to manipulate the verbal content to achieve a certain cohesion between the two channels (2009, p. 126). Another constraint that weighs on the audio-visual translators is lip synchronisation. However, Bruti (2014) points out that with regard to animated films or cartoons, this aspect is sometimes less crucial. The reason is that at times, the protagonists in these films are animals that talk or even sing: “so speech and articulating movements do not need to coincide so accurately as they do in feature films, because place and manner of articulation are blurred and approximate” (p. 92). It is clearly understood that translating humour in dubbed films is a complicated task with constraints on one side and high expectations on the other.

To closely examine these challenges faced by the translators when translating humour in an animated dubbed film, and the solutions that they choose, the present study selects the Sinhala dubbed animated film *Asterix and Cleopatra*. The chosen audio-visual text belongs to the well-known series *Asterix* originally created by Albert Uderzo and René Goscinny. The series is famous for its verbal humour, particularly the skilful wordplay of its creators. *Asterix and Cleopatra*, which is based on the comic strip of the same name, first published in 1963, was released as an animated film in 1968. In this chosen film, the Gaulish warriors travel to Egypt to help their friend Edifice who is ordered by Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, to build a magnificent palace for the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar, in Alexandria. As the warriors travel to another country, the film exploits Egyptian cultural aspects such as the famous constructions,

and the royal customs of its queen. With this added cultural layer, the translation of verbal humour naturally becomes more complicated than in others, where the geographical space is limited to one country. Therefore, the present study is able to examine how the translators face this complex task of translating humour based not just on wordplay but also on allusions to multiple cultures. Further, the study highlights and discusses the strategies used by the translators to overcome this challenge.

The *Asterix* films, dubbed into Sinhala and broadcasted on the local channel Sirasa TV as *Soora pappa*, the Sinhala name given to the title character, captivated the local audience becoming a phenomenal success. During the years 2002-2003, the animated films of *Asterix* were translated by Chandra Ranatunga, Chaminda Keerthirathna, Rochana Wimaladewa, Gaminda Priyawiraj, and Suneth Chithrananda, and were broadcasted as weekly episodes of half hour (Jayawardena & Rodrigo, 2022). The popularity of the Sinhala dubbed version is another reason to choose an animated film from this particular series. Though the original series is written in French, the Sinhala dubbed version was made from the English version making it the relay language (RL). For the present study, only the English version and its Sinhala dubbed version are used as material. The fact that the study examines the translation of humour into the Sinhala language, a minority language only spoken in Sri Lanka, increases the significance of the study.

## **METHODS**

Different taxonomies have been presented over the years to categorise humorous elements (Delabastita, 1996; Chiaro, 1992, 2004, 2005, 2006; Zabalbeascoa, 1996; Martínez Sierra, 2005, 2008, 2009; Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). The following, adapted and presented by Minutella, is applied to the present study to identify and group humorous elements (2014, pp.68-69).

1. Humour based on Cultural References and Allusions
2. Humour based on Wordplay
3. Humour generated by Language Variation

This taxonomy takes into consideration humour generated by references and allusions to culture, play on words such as puns, and exploitation of humour at semantic, lexical and phonological level. One humorous moment could be based on a combination of these elements. A complex joke combines cultural references, sound, image, and/or linguistics (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007, p.228).

Cultural references and allusions, as the terms indicate, refer to concepts unique to the SL culture or in this case RL culture, such as food, famous characters or institutions. The translators should be aware that the TL audience may not be familiar with all these concepts. Wordplay is created by playing on the sounds or the meanings of the words. As Minutella explains, “they may include homonymy, polysemy, homophony, homography and paronymy and may involve morphemes, words or multi-word units” (2014, p. 69). Language variation consists of the use of different dialects, accents and registers. These can be exploited in audio-visual texts to indicate different ethnic groups and origins, and at the same time, generate humour.

Based on the taxonomy proposed above, the VEH elements are identified in the RL version. The TL version is then closely analysed to understand how these humorous elements

are translated. To facilitate this process, the translation strategies proposed by Chiaro (2006) are applied.

- The substitution of VEH in the SL with an example of VEH in the TL.
- The replacement of the SL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL.
- The replacement of the SL VEH with an example of compensatory VEH elsewhere in the TL text.

These strategies highlight the use of substitution and replacement of the SL VEH with TL examples. The use of examples of compensatory VEH in TL is also included to ensure that humour is not completely lost in the TL. The chosen audio-visual text *Asterix and Cleopatra* is examined and ten (10) examples are chosen according to the taxonomy, to be analysed qualitatively. As mentioned before, only the RL version is considered as the SL in this study. As for the humour based on culture, references to both RL (English) culture and SL culture (Gaulish and Roman) can be found. Additionally, as the main characters travel to another country, references to aspects of Egyptian culture are also added.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ten (10) examples identified as humorous from the animated film *Asterix and Cleopatra*, are listed below. They are given both in the RL and the TL. The back translation of the Sinhala examples, done by the researcher, is given in English within brackets. The humour type is described in the third column. A combination of humour elements can be identified in certain examples.

### Example 1

In this example, Asterix, Obelix and Getafix set off with Edifice, the Egyptian architect, to Alexandria. The village chief offers his farewell greetings, referring to the only fear of the Gauls which is the sky falling on their heads. Though it is not specifically mentioned in this film, it is known in the *Asterix* series that the Gaulish villagers believe that “tomorrow never comes”. Thus, they never have to face this fear.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
Vitalstatistix: My friends, the best of luck to you and I hope that the sky never falls on your heads.	Ehemanam hondin gihin enna. Udata vela inna deviyo oyagollanva balaganivi. (Go and come back safely. The gods up there will protect you.)	Cultural reference: The Gauls’ only fear is that the sky falls on their heads.

In the TL version, this fear is transformed into a normal blessing. The reference to the sky is partially maintained by saying “udata wela inna deviyo” (gods up there). The reference to the gods is added by the translators as it is believed by the locals that the gods live up in the sky and these gods offer protection to their followers. For the local audience, this is a very familiar blessing, because they are used to being blessed in this way in their daily life. The humorous element in the Gaulish fear which is offered as a blessing is, in this case, neutralised. The substitution in the TL unfortunately does not produce a comic effect.

### Example 2

When the Gauls and Edifice come to the end of their journey reaching Egypt, both Asterix and Obelix are puzzled by the tower of Pharaoh. The purpose of it is explained by Edifice.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
<p>Asterix: What's that light on the horizon?            Edifice: That's the tower of Pharaoh. It guides ships into the harbour. We'll be in Alexandria tomorrow.            Obelix: A tower for guiding ships in? They are crazy these Egyptians.</p>	<p>Asterix: Mokakda etha eliyak penne? (What is that light in the distance?)            Edifice: E Eypthuwe thiyena Pharaoh kuluna. E eliyen reta new walata ethul wenna puluwan warayata. (That's the Pharaoh tower in Egypt. Ships can enter the harbour with that light in the night.)            Obelix: Rata epaya gindara paththu karanna. Me gollange oluwa honda nedda? (It's in the night, that the fire must be lit. Are they crazy?)</p>	<p>Cultural reference: The tower of Pharaoh in Egypt, not known to the Gauls.            Language variation: Edifice's voice, deep, and grave, indicating he is a foreigner.</p>

Edifice explains that the tower, which has a burning light, guides the ships to the harbour in the night. The Gauls are surprised as it's something new to them. It is seen in Obelix's reply. Unconvinced, he questions the need of a tower to guide the ships, and says that the Egyptians are crazy. On the contrary, in the TL version, Obelix is not surprised or impressed by the presence of a tower to guide ships but comments that a light is needed in the night. Obelix calls the Egyptians crazy because they, according to him, do what is necessary. Though the cultural reference to the tower is maintained, the comic element created by Obelix's confusion is not reproduced in the TL.

It is also noted that Edifice, compared to the Gauls, speaks in a deeper voice and speaks slower too. This difference sets him apart from the Gauls, highlighting his foreignness. In the TL version too, Edifice is given a slightly different, deep and almost comical voice to maintain this distinction.

### Example 3

The animated film *Asterix and Cleopatra* has three songs, one of which is the bath song with the singing lion. The introduction of Cleopatra's lion is chosen for this example. One of the slaves employed in the palace brings along the lion, singing this song.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
<p>Cleopatra's lion is here <i>then</i>,            King of all the beasts is <i>he</i>,            With the strength of twenty            brave <i>men</i>,            And there's as much sense            as a little <i>flea</i>!</p>	<p>Menna genava <i>sinhaya</i>,            U sindu kiyannath <i>dakshaya</i>,            Cleopatrage <i>mithraya</i>,            E vunath mu harima <i>murgaya</i>!            (Here, the lion is brought,            Who is a talented singer,</p>	<p>Language variation: Song sung in a low, melodious voice.            Cultural reference: A lion owned by Cleopatra.</p>

	Cleopatra’s friend, But he is very beastly!	
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In the RL version, the words rhyme (*then* and *men*, *he* and *flea*). It is suggested that the lion, though strong, is not very intelligent. In the TL version, the content is modified to present the lion as a singer and a friend of the queen yet, a brutal animal. The TL translators, too, manage to skillfully integrate rhyming words (*sinhaya*/lion and *dakshaya*/talented person, *mithraya*/friend and *murgaya*/beast). In the RL song, when it is mentioned “as a little *flea!*”, the singer changes the tone of the voice, from rhythmic, musical voice to a normal voice, to highlight this negative quality. Similarly, in the TL, the tone of voice changes when the word “beastly” is sung. A different, yet still a negative quality is chosen by the translators. It is ironic that the words *mithraya*/friend and *murgaya*/beast rhyme indicating that a friend may turn into a beast. Though the TL version stresses more on the animal qualities of the lion, it also applauds its musical talents. The audience can see and hear it sing a duet with the queen raising the pitch to the highest possible ranges. The translators substitute the humour in the song with appropriate content, enjoyable to the TL audience.

#### Example 4

In Alexandria, at Edifice’s construction site, the Gauls’ attention is drawn by the slaves who work there.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
Asterix: Are they slaves? Edifice: Oh, no! those are all free workers. Obelix: They are crazy, these Egyptians. Asterix: Why aren’t those two stopping? Edifice: They are doing a little overtime.	Asterix: Ara gollo vahalluda? (Are they slaves?) Edifice: Ne egollo nomile veda karanne. (No, they work for free.) Obelix: Mama kivve me gollange oluva honda ne kiyala (I told you, they are crazy.) Asterix: Dennek veda moko? (Why two of them work?) Edifice: E golla overtime karanava. (They are doing overtime.)	Cultural reference: Slaves working in construction, in Egypt. Overtime, an anachronism. Wordplay: Slaves described as free workers, a more politically correct term.

Asterix correctly identifies the labourers as slaves but Edifice contradicts him, pointing out that they are free workers. In the RL version, they are described as labourers working for free. It seems like an attempt to use a more politically correct term “free workers” instead of the term “slave” which is now considered offensive and racist. The fact that the free workers, who don’t get paid, doing overtime generates a humorous moment in the film. Further, working overtime can be identified as an anachronism not belonging to that era, though very familiar to the current audience. The same humorous moment is transferred preserving the cultural references and the wordplay in the TL.

### Example 5

This is another example in which an anachronism is evident and it is exploited to create humour. In this particular scene, Caesar surrounds the construction site with his army with the intention to demolish it.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
Asterix: Hey, look! They've got guided missiles. Getafix: Huh! If they miss, I'll be surprised.	Asterix: Un gal vidinnayi hadanne! (They are going to shoot stones!) Getafix: Oh! Wedunoth nam lesi venne ne. (Oh! If we get hit, won't be nice.)	Cultural reference: Guided missiles which is an anachronism.

Asterix identifies the Roman weapon as a guided missile. It's amusing for the audience because what they see on screen in fact, is an enormous catapult that releases stones. It is not the technologically advanced guided missile that the present-day audience is used to. Though old fashioned, according to Getafix, its accuracy is not to be challenged. Unfortunately, in the TL version, Asterix simply says that the Romans are going to shoot stones. The reference to the weapon and the anachronism is neither maintained nor substituted, resulting in a loss of humour.

### Example 6

In the film, on several occasions, humour is generated by referring to the royal crocodiles of Cleopatra.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour Type
Edifice: All this worry makes me feel ill. When the sacred crocodiles get me, I'll be uneatable! Asterix: You're eager to make them a good meal? Edifice: Of course, they are sacred crocodiles, after all. Obelix: They are crazy, these architects.	Edifice: Mehema giyoth mage ahinsaka daruvange, kimbulanta bojana sangrahayata devi Cleopatra. (If this continues, Cleopatra will give my innocent children to the crocodiles as a meal.) Asterix: Ohe asada kimbulo kanawata? (Do you like to be eaten by crocodiles?) Edifice: Apoyi, ow, un darunu wunata hari poojaniya kimbulo. (Of course. Though they are brutal, they are sacred crocodiles.) Obelix: Mama kiwwe me gollange oluwa honda ne kiyala. (I told you, they are crazy.)	Cultural reference: Architects thrown to be eaten by crocodiles in Egypt as a punishment. Crocodiles are considered sacred; the victim prefers to be thrown in an edible condition, not defiled.
Guard: They are just giving the royal crocodiles their appetizers.	Eliminated	Cultural reference: Crocodiles called "royal": crocodiles being given



		appetizers before the main course.
Voice off: Since you will remember when architects did not finish the job on time, they were thrown to the crocodiles, a good old custom sadly neglected today.	Voice off: Kimbulangen berenna nam maligawa niyamitha dinayata kalin hadanna ona. (To be saved from the crocodiles, the palace must be built on time.)	Language variation: Sarcasm in the voice stressing on the words “sadly neglected today”.

In the first instance, Edifice considers it a privilege to be eaten by the sacred crocodiles, so much so that he does not wish his body to be defiled by the worrisome feelings. In the TL, this information is replaced by Edifice’s fear of his family becoming a meal of the crocodiles. The humour brought out by his willingness to be free of worry, for the sake of the crocodiles, is not found in the TL. However, Edifice goes on to say in the TL just like in the RL, that since the crocodiles are scared, he prefers to be eaten by them as a punishment. The comic instant is only partially preserved in the TL.

It is noted in the second instant that the crocodiles are treated well as they are the royal crocodiles belonging to the queen of Egypt. They are provided appetizers before the meal. This humorous detail is eliminated in the TL. A substitution from the TL to preserve the humour is also not offered.

In the third instant, the narrator speaks of the old custom of throwing architects to the crocodiles as efficient, but sadly neglected today. It is implied that had the custom continued, the architects would have always finished their work on time. “Sadly neglected” is stressed with a change of voice, with sarcasm to reinforce the humour. In the TL, it is just stated as a fact that the work should be completed on time to escape from the crocodiles without stressing on the old custom being sadly discontinued. As observed in these three instances, the humour is weakened in the TL version, by not preserving the details on the royal crocodiles that could entertain the audience.

### Example 7

Obelix, who is a menhir delivery man by profession, is not very impressed with the pyramids. To make fun of Obelix’s obsession with the menhirs, Asterix makes a reference to Stonehenge, the prehistoric archaeological site in the UK which contains a circle of standing stones.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
Obelix: Pyramids, give me a menhir any day. Asterix: Can’t you forget Stonehenge. (...)	Obelix: Ochchara kiyanova nam mama innam. Meyata hariyata tharaha yanavane. (If you insist, I’ll stay. He has a bad temper) (...)	Cultural reference: Reference to Stonehenge in the UK. Menhir compared to a pyramid.
Obelix: None of these would have happened in a menhir.	Obelix: Api udata giya nam iwarayne. (We should have gone to the top).	

In the TL version, this comparison between a menhir and Stonehenge is eliminated. Without knowing what Stonehenge is, the joke cannot be understood by the TL audience. Obelix’s

menhirs resemble the stones of Stonehenge to some extent. Given that it is a prehistoric site, it would have existed during the time of the Roman empire and even the Gauls could have known about it. It's a very specific cultural element strongly tied to the RL culture and history. The translators remove it completely along with the humour generated by it. In their opinion, preserving the reference to Stonehenge would not have succeeded in producing a comic effect on the TL audience. They decide not to produce a substitution in this instance. Had the translators decided to look for one, it would have to be a popular local stone structure bearing some similarity to a menhir.

### Example 8

While visiting the inside of a great pyramid in Egypt, the Gauls are abandoned by their guide, Crewcut who is the sidekick of Edifice's rival, Artifice.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
Crewcut: This tomb will be your tomb.	Crewcut: Den ithin ethulata vela shok deval bala bala inna. (Now you can stay inside looking at pretty things.)	Wordplay: play on the word tomb. Cultural reference: Pyramids in Egypt.

Crewcut warns that the pyramid, which is a giant tomb of the ancient kings, will be their tomb as well. The audience can see that the Gauls struggle to find their way out without the guide. "Tomb" is the key word on which the wordplay is based. In the TL version, the translators decide not to repeat the word or the idea of the Gauls dying trapped inside the pyramid. Instead, Crewcut laughingly says that they can spend their time looking at the ancient objects in the pyramid. The humour based on the wordplay is not recreated in the TL.

### Example 9

The example below focuses on the Gods that the Gauls, the Romans and the Egyptians swear by: Jupiter, Tutatis, Mercury, Osiris, Belenus, and Belisama. In this particular moment, almost everyone adds a name of a God that they believe in, to what they say entertaining the audience. As it's a decisive and a dangerous moment, it can be said that they expect the protection of their Gods.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
Roman centurion: We shall attack, by Jupiter. Asterix: We don't want to fight by Tutatis. (...) Centurion: You'll be sorry for this, by Mercury! Edifice: What are we going to do, by Osiris? Asterix: We build our fortifications, by Belenus! Getafix: You're quite right, by Belisama!	Centurion: Apita sidda wenawa pahara denna. Ceasar kivva gahannama kiyala. (We'll have to attack. Ceasar ordered to attack.) Asterix: Apita boruwata yudda karanna ona ne. Hebeyi ona nam (we don't want to fight, in vain, but if you want (...)) Centurion: Ehenam lesthi wenawa. (Then get ready) Edifice: Den api mokada karanne? Kiyanna pappe.	Cultural reference: References to Roman, Egyptian and Gaulish Gods.

<p>Artifice: Do you think we might go home now, by any chance?</p>	<p>(What shall we do now? Tell druid.)  Asterix: Ape aarakshava thara kara ganna ona. (We must fortify our defences)  Getafix: Eka hari. Api lasthi wemu. (That's true. We'll get ready.)  Artifice: Ape weda kotaha iwarayine. Yamu yanna. (Our share of work is done. Let's go.)</p>	
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In the TL version, the names of all the Gods are erased. Further, it is quite notable that when everyone else is swearing by a God, only Artifice, the rival architect who was forced by the Gauls to work on the site as a punishment for his deeds, decides not to. Instead, he simply says “by any chance”, without adding a name of a God like the rest. It can be reasonably argued that Artifice being a cold, calculating, deceptive rival, has no faith in any God. The humour that was skilfully crafted in the RL with the names of Roman, Egyptian and Gaulish Gods is neutralised in the TL. The Sinhala translators do not opt to use substitutions from the TL culture. It is possible that the translators do not wish to refer to the local Gods to create a humorous moment because it may seem offensive and disrespectful to the religions to which the Gods belong.

### Example 10

The last example draws attention to another song, which is the infamous Arsenic Cake song. The special iced Arsenic Cake is baked by Artifice and Crewcut to falsely accuse the Gauls of attempting to murder the Egyptian queen. The current example analyses only the introductory segment of the song.

In RL - English	In TL - Sinhala	Humour type
<p>Ah poisonous pancakes!  - Yes  - Murderous macaroons  - Not bad  - Viper's venom topped with cream  - Hurrah!  - Cyanide custard pie  - Great!  - Ah! Special iced arsenic cake.</p>	<p>Paththeyo beduma (fried centipedes)  Ehune ne (Didn't hear)  Gonusu soup (soup with scorpions)  Naraka ne (not bad)  Niyagala hodda (curry with <i>niyagala</i>)  Maru (great)  Nai biththara omelet (an omelet with snake eggs)  Demu. (Let's give)  Ada vishesha pasana cake (A today's special, rat poison cake)  Anna hondai (That's great)</p>	<p>Cultural reference: Different types of (poisonous) desserts.  Language variation: The song is sung in a comic tone.</p>

At this moment, Artifice and his assistant Crewcut choose the fatal recipe. Artifice reads out a list of desserts, but all with a type of poison. In the TL version, not only the desserts are substituted with the local food items, but the poisons are, too. Instead of macaroons, pancakes,

and custard pies, the translators select dishes that are familiar to the local audience: curry, soup, omelette and fry. As for the poisons, they too are locally available: centipedes, scorpions, *niyagala* bulb (known in English as Glory Lilly or Fame Lilly, a poisonous plant), and snake eggs. The substitution makes the song more understandable and enjoyable to the TL audience. Formulating humorous recipes based on poisoned creatures such as scorpions or plants such as *niyagala*, is innovative and efficient in this context.

Further, the song is sung in a comical voice, with rhyming words and funny facial expressions which altogether make the Cake song a success. The additional ingredients, which are given later in the song, are also substituted with those that are better known to the TL audience. For example, in the RL, these are some of the items that are added to the poisonous cake: hemlock, opium, frog's spawn, tadpole, mandrake root, and vitriol. The TL audience would find it difficult to understand that these are poisonous, because they are not known in the TL culture. The translators make an editorial decision to domesticate, with the intention to enhance the humour factor. They replace them with local ingredients, some of which are not poisonous but are actually used to make cakes: honey, wine, dates, peanuts, cashews, pepper, rat poison, snake, snake eggs, skull, lizard, and fangs of a cobra. The decision to combine normal cake ingredients with poisonous ingredients is a creative solution that yields positive results. It can be argued that compared to the ingredients put in the RL cake, the TL cake appears less deadly, but more appealing. However, the intended result is to make the audience laugh. With the substituted ingredients, the translators succeed in offering an entertaining experience to the TL audience.

To summarise the discussion, the ten (10) examples given above were analysed to study the kind of humour that they contain. Cultural references and allusions were found in all the examples. It is not a surprise because in this particular film, the Gauls travel to Egypt. There, they encounter aspects that are particular to the country such as the pyramids, tower of Pharaoh and the royal crocodiles of Cleopatra. These aspects are naturally exploited to create humorous moments in the film. The film also includes references unique to the RL culture such as Stonehenge (Example 7), and Gualish culture such as their Gods (Example 9). In the TL version, references to Egyptian culture specific objects are all preserved. However, as seen in the analysis above, in some of them the humour is weakened, for example, the humour associated with the royal crocodiles (Example 6). An interesting aspect discovered in the analysis was the use of anachronisms. Out of the two that were identified, the one based on the guided missiles in Example 5 is eliminated. Further, the humour based on wordplay in Example 8 is neither preserved nor recreated in the TL. The use of a politically correct term in Example 4 is transferred literally to the TL maintaining the humour. As for the language variations, the translators have adopted the voice changes in the TL on almost all the occasions. At times they decide to make the voices even more comical to amuse the TL audience, such as in the songs (Example 3 and 10).

Looking at the strategies used to translate the humour, the use of the first one, the substitution of VEH in the SL with an example of VEH in the TL is clearly noted. Substitutions are preferred by the translators to transfer humour based on certain cultural aspects and allusions: the cake ingredients in the Cake song and the bath song. However, in certain occasions, the translators opt not to allow substitutions from the RL and eliminate the humour element as seen in Example 7 and 9. In the ten (10) examples analysed, the second and the third strategies were not identified. The second strategy, the replacement of the SL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL, is understandably difficult to perform. On one hand, it requires a great deal of time and effort from the part of the translators and on the other hand, a lack of

similar and humorous expressions in the TL could make the strategy impractical. The third, the replacement of the SL VEH with an example of compensatory VEH elsewhere in the TL text is not observed in the analysis. As the strategy specifies, the compensatory humour can be placed elsewhere. Though it was noted in the examples analysed for this study, it is possible that examples of it could be found in the rest of the film.

## **CONCLUSION**

The examples studied in the analysis reveal that the Sinhala translators have attempted to transfer the humour into the TL employing various solutions. Humour loss is noted when cultural references are eliminated and substitutions are provided in the TL. Further, by not reproducing the wordplay, the humour effect can be further weakened. Nevertheless, the domestication strategy used by the Sinhala translators, particularly in the two songs, contribute to create humour and also to compensate for some humour loss.

As mentioned before, producing humour is a priority for the translators of animated films. Their task is complex and demands a high level of creativity. It is important that they select the translation strategies carefully. Lost humour is possible to recover to a certain extent with compensation strategies. The visual knockabout humour and the language variations equally contribute to keep the audience entertained throughout the audio-visual text. A detailed study of more examples could be helpful to understand the efficiency of the strategies employed by the translators in the rest of the film. It is evident that each and every humorous instant cannot be successfully transferred into the TL. At the same time, it cannot be forgotten that the TL audiences rely on the efforts of the translators to enjoy dubbed animated films. The study emphasises that creative solutions are essential from the part of the translators to offer an entertaining cinematic experience to the target audience.

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