

Application of General Theory of Verbal Humor in subtitling humor: A study based on fansubbing of the comedy movie *Airplane*

I.M. Ratnayake^{1*}

¹Department of Languages, Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Subtitling humor has become a major challenge in the field of Audio-Visual Translation as humor is deeply rooted in the culture where it is produced. Further, linguistic factors should also be considered, particularly when dealing with languages that are different in many ways as English and Sinhala. Although fansubbing has been added to the field of Translation Studies recently, it has become popular around the world despite all the challenges as there is a huge demand for fansubbed movies or TV series. However, attention must be drawn to the quality of these fansubs as a significant number of viewers are consuming them. The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) presented by Attardo and Raskin has been used as a linguistic theoretical framework to analyze humor and to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used by the subtitler to translate humorous texts in the comedy movie *Airplane*. The content analysis method was used to analyze data using GTVH as a metric. Subtitling strategies presented by Henrik Gottlieb have been used to explore the strategies utilized by the subtitler. English subtitles that carry the humor of the original movie and parallel Sinhalese subtitles were used as primary data. Library sources and online sources were utilized as secondary data. The findings revealed that the strategy of transfer has been often used resulting in successful transfers in humor into the Target Language as the content of the Source Texts remains unchanged in the usage of that strategy. Also, it was identified that due to the lack of awareness of using the deletion strategy, the subtitler has deliberately deleted some key elements in rendering the humor effect resulting in unsuccessful transfers. This research contributes to the field of Translation Studies by providing insights into fansubbing and practical recommendations for subtitling humor in audiovisual media.

Keywords: Audio-visual translation, Fansubbing, General theory of verbal humor, Gottlieb, Subtitling

*iruma@ssl.sab.ac.lk

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-4972-5125>