

FIDELITY VS. CREATIVITY IN DUBBING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND SINHALA DUBBING SCRIPTS OF *THE TWELVE TASKS OF ASTERIX* WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SKOPOS THEORY

IM Ratnayake¹

Abstract

This study explores the balance between fidelity and creativity in the dubbing process based on the Skopos Theory, which emphasises the target audience's needs and the purpose of translation over strict linguistic equivalence. By conducting a comparative analysis of the English and Sinhala dubbed scripts of *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix*, this study attempts to examine how the function influences translation choices in animated film dubbing. The research examines how the translator negotiates between remaining faithful to the source material and exercising creative freedom to ensure that the dubbed version resonates effectively with the Sinhala-speaking audience, focusing on translation strategies presented by Vinay and Darbelnet. Particular attention is given to the adaptation of humour, cultural references, character expressions, and idiomatic language, assessing how these elements are transferred to the target context. Through a scene-by-scene textual analysis, the study identifies where literal fidelity is maintained and where significant creative interventions are made to achieve audience engagement, comprehension, and entertainment. Findings reveal that no sentence of the source text has been translated literally without modifying the content using translation strategies as adaptation and modulation to accommodate cultural sensibilities, enhance emotional relatability, and align with lip-synchronisation and timing constraints inherent in audiovisual translation. These shifts highlight the necessity of creativity within dubbing practices, as justified by Skopos Theory, which views such alterations not as losses but as strategic responses to the demands of the target audience and medium. Ultimately, this research underscores the complex interplay between fidelity and creativity in dubbing and contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of translation within cross-cultural audiovisual media. It offers valuable insights for scholars and practitioners interested in translation studies, audiovisual media, and cultural adaptation strategies.

Keywords: Adaptation, Audio-Visual Translation, Dubbing, Skopos Theory, Vinay and Darbelnet

¹Department of Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.

Email: iruma@ssl.sab.ac.lk



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



Proceeding of the 3rd Desk Research Conference – DRC 2025 © 2025 by The Library, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Received date: 30.05.2025

Accepted date: 04.07.2025

Print Publishing Date: 31.10.2025

Web Publishing Date: 31.10.2025

Introduction

Background of Study

The rapid growth of the cinema industry and the increasing use of audiovisual content for both entertainment and knowledge-sharing have created a significant global demand for Audiovisual Translation (AVT). In the Sri Lankan context, and particularly among Sinhalese viewers, the popularity of cartoon films and television series has seen a notable rise. As a result, translation of film scripts that meet the requirements of the target audience has become essential.

The Skopos Theory stands apart from traditional translation theories by emphasising that translators must work based on the intended purpose, or known as skopos, of the translation Xinefei (2024). Under this theory, all translation methods and strategies are chosen to fulfil the specific goal of the translation task. Since audiovisual content, including TV series and films, is artistic work driven by strong communicative purposes, each one conveys distinct emotions and messages. This demands that translators of film scripts clearly understand the purpose behind their work, including the emotions to convey, the imagery to create, and the themes the filmmakers aim to highlight. Therefore, Skopos Theory provides a highly effective framework for guiding the process of film script translation.

Guided by Skopos Theory, this research examines the effective translation strategies used in the translation of *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix*. The research aims to highlight key considerations for the translation of English movie scripts and to outline practical strategies that translators can implement under the principles of Skopos Theory. Ultimately, the paper seeks to demonstrate the relevance and positive influence of Skopos Theory in the context of film script translation.

This study holds significant value in the field of translation studies, particularly within the field of audiovisual translation. By investigating the balance between fidelity and creativity in the English and Sinhala dubbing scripts of *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix*, the study offers critical insights into how translation strategies are employed to suit the cultural and linguistic expectations of the target audience. The application of Skopos theory further emphasises the functionalist perspective, indicating how translators make context-driven decisions to ensure communicative effectiveness. Further, this study fills a gap in the Audio-Visual Translation field by analysing dubbing practices through a systematic theoretical framework.

Literature Review

Skopos Theory

In the 1950s and 1960s, Western translation theories primarily emphasised the linguistic elements of translation, with concepts like Eugene Nida's "dynamic equivalence." Over time, some scholars recognised that examining translation solely from a traditional linguistic equivalence perspective was insufficient. As a result, they began to adopt a more functional approach, leading to the development of Skopos Theory. Before the 1970s, equivalence theory was the prevailing approach in traditional translation studies. However, this theory proved challenging to apply consistently and had several limitations, which called for the development of a new theoretical framework to guide translation practices. In response, German functionalism emerged, offering a fresh perspective on translation. It moved away from the constraints of "formal equivalence" in language and introduced a new way of understanding translation. Soon after, Hans Vermeer introduced Skopos Theory, which became the foundational theory of German functionalism.

In 1989, Vermeer introduced Skopos Theory in his article *Skopos and Commission in Translational Action*, where he described translation as a purposeful human activity occurring in a specific context. The term "skopos" is used to refer to the goal or aim of a translation. According to Skopos Theory, the final version of a translation is largely shaped by the function or purpose it serves within the target language context. Moreover, the theory outlines three key principles for translation: the skopos rule, the coherence rule, and the fidelity rule, with the skopos rule taking precedence. This rule asserts that the purpose of the translation dictates the translation methods employed.

Three Basic Rules of Skopos Theory

Skopos Theory consists of three key rules: the Skopos rule, the coherence rule, and the fidelity rule. Translation can be performed based on these three principles. The following is an explanation of these three rules within the framework of Skopos Theory.

The Skopos Rule

In Skopos Theory, the key principle is the "skopos rule," which states that a translation must fit the context and culture of the target language and meet the target audience's expectations. The purpose of the translation determines the methods and strategies used, with the idea that the end justifies the means. Christiane Nord identified three purposes in translation: the translator's general purpose (e.g., livelihood), the aim of conveying the message to the audience, and the goal driven by a specific translation strategy. Ultimately, the translation aims to communicate with the target audience within their socio-cultural context, so the translator must define the purpose and choose the appropriate method accordingly.

The Coherence Rule

In Vermeer's view, the coherence rule, or "infra-textual coherence," asserts that the translated text must be understandable to the target audience within their cultural context and align with the communicative situation in which the target text will be used. In other words, the translator's approach should ensure that the translation is consistent with what the audience can comprehend and accept, based on their knowledge and cultural background.

The Fidelity Rule

Vermeer refers to the fidelity rule as "inter-textual coherence," which asserts that the target text should maintain a certain level of connection with the source text. In other words, whether in terms of form or function, the target text must remain consistent with the original, ensuring it is faithful to the source. However, the level of fidelity varies depending on the specific purpose of the translation.

These three fundamental rules offer guidance for translation practices, though their significance and influence differ. Among them, the Skopos rule stands out as the central principle, holding the most weight. As Nord explained, when the purpose requires a change in function, the standard should no longer be consistent with the original context, but rather the appropriateness or suitability in relation to the intended goal. Furthermore, if the purpose demands contextual inconsistency, the criterion of intro-textual coherence no longer applies.

Translation Strategies by Vinay and Darbelnet

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, some documents can be translated literally, while most of the time, more complex translation methods are required to translate a document. The two theorists have introduced seven strategies, of which the first three strategies fall into direct translation methods, while the other four strategies fall into oblique translation methods.

Borrowing

Transferring a word from the source language directly into the target language without changing its form or meaning is the most basic translation method.

Calque

A unique type of borrowing in which the expression or structure from the source language is translated word-for-word into the target language.

Literal Translation

The process of substituting source language (SL) sentence or clause structures with equivalent target language (TL) structures that have the same form and meaning.

Transposition

Transposition involves changing the grammatical form of a word or phrase when translating, while keeping its meaning the same. It means using a different type of word—like turning a noun into a verb or an adjective into a noun—but still conveying the same idea.

Modulation

Modulation involves altering the way a message is expressed by shifting the perspective or viewpoint. It reflects a change in how something is perceived or presented.

Equivalence

Equivalence involves substituting a situation in the source language with one in the target language that conveys a similar meaning and effect.

Adaptation

Adaptation is a specific type of equivalence known as situational equivalence. It requires modifying the cultural context or reference in the source text (ST) to suit the target language (TL) audience, due to social and cultural differences between the two communities

Translation of Dubbing Scripts

As stated by Martínez (2008), translation of film scripts for dubbing is one of the most peculiar disciplines within the field of translation. The translator produces a text which will serve as the initial version for a lengthy and complex process during which the text will pass through many individuals and operations, which may be more or less respectful of the original translation (Martínez, 2008). Further, in addition to the challenges in the translation process, a translator is bound by a set of instructions on such issues as, for example, whether songs are to be dubbed, whether screen inserts are to be subtitled, and whether certain dubbing actors should take certain roles, and so on (Martínez, 2008).

The text may also be altered during the final dubbing stage. If synchronisation was not handled by the director, they might want to make slight adjustments based on personal preferences or to correct any mistakes. In conclusion, dubbing audiovisual programmes is a multifaceted process that involves several stages. While the individuals involved work as part of a team, their tasks are often performed independently. Notably, the translator's output is frequently not the final version but rather a preliminary draft that undergoes refinement and modification to meet the requirements of the medium.

Dubbing Restrictions

As stated the process of dubbing, a translator should not only be bilingual but also bicultural, as cultural elements play a crucial role in dubbing. In addition to that, a translator should have a proper idea about the sense of humour in both cultures with which the translator works, to provide a successful translation in the target language (Sahin, 2012). Another restriction in dubbing is dealing with sentences that have multiple meanings that may confuse the target language (Ilyas, 1989). In such instances, choosing the intended meaning of the source text is critical in providing a natural and effective translation. In addition to these restrictions, O'Connell (2003) and Chaume (2012) discuss the restrictions related to synchronisation in dubbing, which also plays an important role in translating dubbing scripts.

Dubbing Animations

Despite the age, there is a huge demand for animation movies and cartoons around the world, and it is found that cartoons greatly impact the education of children (Espasa, 2008). Translating animation cartoons causes great challenges as the translation should match the perspectives of the children (Lathey, 2009) while preserving the elements of the translation process. Further, a translator should be skilful enough to handle two cultures, as each culture consists of its own elements.

Research Problem

In dubbing animated films, translators are often tasked with the difficult balance between remaining faithful to the original script and creatively adapting it to suit the target audience. In *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix*, the Sinhala and English dubbed versions reveal distinct methods of managing this balance, shaped by cultural, linguistic, and technical influences. Using Skopos Theory, which emphasises the communicative function of the translation over strict adherence to the source text, as the theoretical framework, this study aims to examine how various translation strategies are utilised to either preserve or modify the original material. Despite the significance of this issue, there is a noticeable lack of research specifically addressing how such strategies are applied in Sinhala dubbing, especially when compared to English versions. This gap underscores the importance of systematically studying the strategies used to navigate fidelity and creativity, and of understanding how the intended purpose of the translation directs these decisions.

Objectives

Main Objective

1. To identify and analyse the translation strategies used in the Sinhala dubbing of *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix* in comparison to the original English version, and to determine the percentage of usage for each strategy.

Specific Objectives

2. To investigate how those translation strategies are used to meet the communicative purpose of the target audience.
3. To assess the extent to which the Sinhala dubbed script maintains or modifies the original meaning, humour, and character portrayal in accordance with Skopos principles.

Main Research Question

1. What translation strategies are employed in the Sinhala dubbing of *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix* compared to the original English version, and percentages of use?

Specific Research Questions

2. How are those translation strategies used to meet the communicative purpose of the target audience?
3. How does the Sinhala dubbed script maintain or modify the original meaning in accordance with Skopos principles?
- 4.

Methodology

Research Design

This research employs a qualitative comparative design, guided by the theoretical framework of Skopos Theory. It aims to examine how fidelity and creativity are negotiated in the Sinhala and English dubbing scripts of *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix*. The primary objective is to uncover the translation strategies used to fulfil the communicative intent (skopos) of the Sinhala version.

An in-depth analysis was conducted on selected scenes that prominently feature humour, cultural elements, emotional content, or clear examples of translation techniques.

Data Collection Method

The primary data consists of:

- The original English dubbing script (transcribed directly from the English-dubbed version of the film).
- The Sinhala dubbing script (transcribed from the Sinhala-dubbed version of the same film).

Both scripts were manually transcribed, cross-checked for accuracy by repeated viewing, and segmented scene-by-scene and line-by-line to facilitate comparison.

Specific scenes for in-depth analysis were selected, using purposive sampling to focus on parts of the film where cultural adaptation, humour, idiomatic language, and emotional expression are prominent.

Data Analysis Method

A qualitative content analysis was utilised within a comparative framework informed by the principles of Skopos Theory. The analytical process consisted of the following key stages:

- Scene-by-scene comparison was conducted between the English and Sinhala versions to detect variations in meaning, tone, style, and cultural elements.
- Translation strategies were identified by categorising each change or adjustment using the translation strategies introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), which provides a structured framework to categorise translation strategies into two main procedures: direct translation (borrowing, calque, and literal translation) and oblique translation (transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation). This model was chosen because of its clarity and applicability in analysing both linguistic and cultural shifts between source and target texts.
- Each instance was then evaluated in terms of fidelity and creativity, determining whether the translation maintains closeness to the source text or reflects a more creative, target-oriented adaptation.
- Finally, all findings were interpreted through the lens of Skopos Theory, focusing on how each strategy supports the communicative intent of the Sinhala version.
- The results were thematically arranged, with recurring patterns and key examples from the film used to illustrate the strategies and their functions.

Suitability of the Corpus to the Study

The Twelve Tasks of Asterix (1975) is an animated film based on the Asterix comic series by René Goscinny (writer) and Albert Uderzo (illustrator). It's a classic of French animation and is the second feature-length film in the Asterix franchise, following the 1967 film Asterix the Gaul. The film contains numerous satirical references to various aspects of Roman and Greek mythology, ancient history, and popular culture, all seen through the comedic lens of the Gauls' antics, which makes it suitable to be selected as the corpus of the present study. These elements present considerable challenges for translators, making the film an ideal case for analysing translation strategies, particularly in the context of cultural transfer and adaptation.

Further, it was well-received both in France and internationally, including Sri Lanka, becoming one of the most beloved animated films of the 1970s, especially for children and Asterix fans. A significant factor behind this popularity, particularly in the Sri Lankan context, is the high-quality translation of the film script, which has greatly supported the film's promotion.

Results and Discussion

The following section addresses the three research questions.

1. What translation strategies are employed in the Sinhala dubbing of The Twelve Tasks of Asterix compared to the original English version, and percentages of use?

Table 01: Translation Strategies and Percentages

Translation Strategy	Number of Examples	Percentage
Adaptation	127	73.8%
Multiple Strategies	35	20.3%
Deletion	10	5.8%
Total	172	100%

It must be noted that only the selected examples are shown below to indicate how each strategy is used, whether to preserve or adapt the original meaning.

Adaptation

Table 02: Example 1

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Communicative Purpose	Skopos-Based Commentary

Darling, please darling, it's me ought to be up on that shield! I'm the chief after all!	<i>Nōnē, oya magē nilā vāhanēne. ōken kadē yannā epā. mahajanāyā dākkot ehemā.</i>	To reclaim status	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT
--	--	-------------------	--

The use of colloquial expressions and humour grounded in the political context of Sri Lanka contributes to the cultural relevance and understanding of the Target Text (TT). From the perspective of Skopos theory, the translation adheres to the three central rules: the Skopos rule, the coherence rule, and the fidelity rule. Although the content has been culturally adapted to improve comprehensibility for the target audience, the overall communicative purpose of the Source Text (ST) is preserved. Furthermore, the analysis reveals instances of omission, such as the repeated use of the term “darling” in the ST, indicating a strategy to maintain naturalness and fluency in the TT. These translation choices reflect a functional approach, prioritising cultural resonance and readability without compromising the core intent of the original text.

Table 03: Example 2

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Communicative Purpose	Skopos-Based Commentary
I've got to go out shopping, you can have your shield back later, meanwhile... you tidy the place up a bit, it's like a wild boars sty! Come on you two!	<i>Oya ōnē taram lokkongē nōnālā yannē? ithiṇ maṇṇi poddak gihillā āvamā mokāda? gihillā arā kussiyā atugālā dānāvā. api yaṇṇi.</i>	To give instructions humorously and reclaim the feminine role as the spouse of the chief.	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT

The tone of the original text is made more sarcastic and humorous to suit Sinhala viewers. The use of everyday phrases like "*kussiyā atugāla dānāvā*" enhances relatability. The line is localised for comedic effect while keeping the meaning close to the original. The phrase "wild boar's sty" is adapted to a messy kitchen ("*kussiyā atugāla dānāvā*"), which fits Sri Lankan daily life chaos better than the image of a boar's den. "Come on, you two!" is simplified to "*api yaṇṇi*", which sounds natural to the target audience.

Table 04: Example 3

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Communicative Purpose	Skopos-Based Commentary
This is Cacophonix, the village bard, People don't always appreciate...his talents, and sometimes express their feelings in a tactful, delicate way.	<i>Mē innē kākō pappā. ādārēṭa kiyannē sarigamā kannā kiyālā. meyāgē saṇṅīṭeṭa hāmōmā hoṇḍin salākānāvā.</i>	To humorously introduce a character and imply sarcastically that his music is disliked	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT

The name ‘Cacophonix’ is adapted as ‘*Kākō Pappā*’ by preserving the character’s identity. The phrase ‘the village bard’ is adapted to Sinhala as ‘*ādārēṭa kiyannē sarigamā kannā kiyālā*’ with an addition to the ST while preserving the sarcasm effect. The sarcasm of the sentence ‘People don't always appreciate...his talents, and sometimes express their feelings in a tactful, delicate way’ is adapted into Sinhala as ‘*Meyāgē saṇṅīṭeṭa hāmōmā hoṇḍin salākānāvā*’ by preserving its intended effect with a slight omission of the ST.

Table 05: Example 4

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Communicative Purpose	Skopos-Based Commentary
...fell into the Cauldron when you were a baby...nhanhanhay...	<i>Ōne nā, bā mə tamā. hāmādāmə nā, bā. kaldērəməṭə vāṭilā tiyenāvā bambuvak.</i>	To show the displeasure	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT

The Sinhala translation keeps the iconic cauldron reference of the movie while building humour through repetition and tone. “*Bambuvak*” adds a playful, slightly mocking effect. The translation captures the comic hesitation and taboo around retelling this origin story, fulfilling Skopos, the audience's humour and familiarity.

Table 06: Example 5

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Communicative Purpose	Skopos-Based Commentary
A whole thing of caviar, large kind, and there is more.	<i>Mē tiyennē Srī Lankāvē ghāṅṅhāra kramayaṭa hadāpu nāraṅ puḍima.</i>	To express surprise or amazement at a luxurious or abundant food offering	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT

Instead of directly translating “caviar,” which may be unfamiliar or lack impact for some Sinhala viewers, the Sinhala dubbed version substitutes a more culturally recognisable phrase, possibly sarcastic or exaggerated. It retains the tone of surprise and mockery, aligning with Skopos by using local humour and references to engage the audience.

Multiple Strategies

Table 07: Example 6

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Translation Strategies Used	Communicative Purpose	Fidelity to the Source Text/Creativity to the Target Text
We seem to be getting somewhere now. - Mmmm, I'm not all that confident.	<i>Anē mandā Jym pappē, api dān kī sārayak udaṭa giyāda pallehaṭa āvada? -maṭa nam dān epā velā.</i>	Adaptation Modulation	To express doubt and hesitation	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT

While preserving the purpose of the ST, the use of the strategies of adaptation and modulation preserves the naturalness of the TT using the colloquial expressions that are familiar to the target audience.

Table 08: Example 7

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Translation Strategies Used	Communicative Purpose	Fidelity to the Source Text/Creativity to the Target Text
These stairs are pretty steep. -Carry on.	<i>Ammē, kavuda dannā hādūvē mē paḍipeḷaval? -yaṃ, yaṃ.</i>	Adaptation Modulation	To express concern or remark on difficulty	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT

The literal comment about steep stairs is turned into a rhetorical question, making it sound more natural and conversational in Sinhala with a colloquial expression “*Ammē*”, which is often used in difficult situations. The phrase “Carry on” is adapted as “*yaṃ, yaṃ*”. This adaptation maintains the tone of concern while engaging the audience in a culturally familiar way.

Table 09: Example 8

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Translation Strategies Used	Communicative Purpose	Fidelity to the Source Text/Creativity to the Target Text
You know Obelix it isn't that I don't think that dog's very intelligent... but I do sometimes wonder if he isn't a rather small to carry menhirs.	<i>Mōḍā vāḍā kārannā epā Jim pappē. ūṭā puḷuvandā gal ussannā? oyiṭā vaḍā narākādā ūrō allannā purudu kaḷot?</i>	Adaptation Modulation	To express doubt with humour and mild teasing	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT

The original English tentative thought is turned into a more direct, playful reprimand and question in Sinhala, making it more lively and culturally relatable. The humorous scepticism about carrying menhirs is preserved but delivered in a tone that fits the target audience’s conversational style. Also, the term “menhirs” is adapted as “*gal*” to avoid any alienness in the target text. Further, when using the adaptation, the addition of “*oyiṭā vaḍā narākādā ūrō allannā purudu kaḷot?*” is identified, which makes it more natural in the TT as it preserves the connection between Obelix and wild boars, which can be seen throughout the series of movies.

Table 10: Example 9

English Script	Sinhala Dubbed Version	Translation Strategies Used	Communicative Purpose	Fidelity to the Source Text/Creativity to the Target Text
I wonder if you have heard of Hercules? - Hercules the grocer?	<i>Uṃbalā aṅḍuranavada Herculis? - Ara mālu lāllak dāgena innē? eyānē?</i>	Adaptation Borrowing	To inquire about knowledge of Hercules, and to make a humorous or ironic identification	Fidelity to the purpose of the ST while being creative to the TT

The first line is a simple inquiry, kept close to the original, using borrowing for the proper name “Hercules.” Although the term is borrowed, since it is not foreign to the target audience, it does not impact the comprehension of the target audience. The term “grocer” is replaced with “fish seller,” which is more common and humorous in the local context. The translation aims to maintain the humour and playfulness of the original while making it culturally relevant. This approach respects the communicative purpose of curiosity, followed by a joke or ironic comment. According to Skopos theory, the translation prioritises audience comprehension and engagement, ensuring the humour lands effectively.

2. How are those translation strategies used to meet the communicative purpose of the target audience?

Adaptation Strategy

When examining the translation strategies used in dubbing the movie *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix* from English into Sinhala, the study found that the adaptation strategy was employed most frequently, accounting for 73.8% of the total instances. In applying this strategy, the translator aimed to localise the content of the dubbing script while maintaining the function of the source text. This involved referencing political contexts, cultural elements, everyday life situations, and local idioms relevant to the Sri Lankan setting.

(Referring to the political context of Sri Lanka)

ST: Darling, please darling, it's me ought to be up on that shield! I'm the chief after all!

TT: *Nōnē, oya magē nilā vāhanēne. ōken kadē yannā epā. mahajanāyā dākkot ehemā.*

(Referring to the New Year games of Sri Lanka)

ST: Are you listening to me? Right, I was saying it's not very interesting because...we all get there at once and we have to draw lots with the winner.

TT: *Oyā ahagenada innē? maṇ oya davana traṅgavalaṭa kāmati nā. maṇ kāmati koṭṭapora, kaṇā muṭṭi. ahuvunot gahalā dānavā. āttaṭa, oyā koṭṭaporavalaṭa kāmati nādda?*

Further, to make it more natural for the target audience, in addition to the strategies introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), the translator has used the strategies of addition and omission while adapting the source content.

Addition

ST: Right, a towel for my feet, fetch my shoes. Let everyone know Asterix! Where are those shoe pairs gone to? Yes I'm coming!

TT: *Kō magē sapattu kuṭṭama? nōnē vigahaṭa jātika aṅduma gēnna. muṇ dennā kohē gihillada mandā! Vigahaṭa magē nila rathaya lāsti karanavā! navattaganna kiyanavā oya horaṅṅava! maṇ enavā!*

Omission

ST: Ah here comes Dogmatix, the village mascot and a great friend of Obelix.

TT: *Mē innē cūṭi kukū. meyāgē svāmiyā tamā Jym pappā.*

In addition to the adaptation of the content, the translator has attempted to adapt the register of the source language using colloquial terms and phrases that are very familiar in the Sri Lankan context.

Nōne, mū, ane, bambuwa, tamusē, redda, kankaraccalē, unnāha, hābāṭa

Further, to preserve the humour effect of the relevant instances and sometimes to add more humour to the original content, the translator has used rhyming in the target language.

Eheṭa dāmmā, meheṭa dāmmā, ādalā gattā, damalā gāhuwā

Kelin giyā, araheṭa giyā, meheṭa giyā, uḍaṭa giyā

Hariyaṭa utara denna bāri vunotin maḷē, uṁbalā dennama valē, vināsaya tamā bolē

Multiple Strategies

Apart from the adaptation strategy, the second most often used strategy is the use of multiple strategies together to provide a naturalised translation into the target audience. Further, it was identified that the combination of adaptation and modulation has been the most used strategy among the use of multiple strategies to translate a single instance. In addition to that pair, the use of adaptation and borrowing, adaptation, borrowing and modulation, and literal translation and modulation were identified. The use of multiple strategies showcases the translator's attempt to make foreign content more appropriate to the Sri Lankan audience.

Deletion Strategy

Deletion strategy is the fewest used strategy among the strategies, and it was identified that the deletion strategy is adopted in two main instances; 1) when the source text contains Latin terms and phrases that are unfamiliar to the target language, and 2) when the source text is too lengthy that it cannot be translated entirely.

3. How does the Sinhala dubbed script maintain or modify the original meaning in accordance with Skopos principles?

Analysis of data revealed that in 115 instances among 172 instances, the translator has modified the ST while maintaining the connection with the ST, which preserves the fidelity rule under the skopos theory. 57 instances were identified in which the ST is modified completely in the target language but retains the function of the ST while preserving the skopos rule and coherence rule under the skopos theory.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that the oblique translation strategies that are adaptation and modulation, were the most frequently employed in the Sinhala dubbing of *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix*. On the contrary, direct translation strategies such as literal translation and borrowing were utilised to a lesser extent. The use of adaptation indicates a deliberate effort by the translator to localise the source content by integrating culturally relevant references and employing a register that aligns with the linguistic and socio-cultural norms of the Sri Lankan audience.

Moreover, the translator's use of rhyming words to preserve the comedic tone of the original indicates a creative manipulation of the target language, aimed at maintaining the entertainment value, which is the core element of audio-visual content. In many instances, a combination of strategies was employed to produce a more natural and contextually appropriate translation, highlighting an audience-oriented approach. The occasional use of the deletion strategy further emphasises the translator's attention to clarity and coherence, especially when some elements of the source text may confuse the target audience.

Overall, while the translation deviated from the source text in some instances, these differences were purposeful and aligned with the intended communicative function, which is consistent with the Skopos rule, prioritising the target audience's reception and ensuring functional adequacy.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations can be presented:

Translators should employ a functionalist approach, such as that proposed by Skopos theory, which allows for modifications that serve the communicative purpose of the target text. This is especially crucial in preserving humour, tone, and the entertainment purpose of audiovisual content.

When translating culture-bound references, idiomatic expressions, or humour, translators should consider using adaptation strategies that replace the original reference with a culturally relevant or locally meaningful alternative, ensuring accessibility for the target audience while preserving the communicative purpose as highlighted in the Skopos Theory.

Translators should prioritise creative equivalence when translating comedic content. This may involve modifying the source text lines to evoke a similar humorous response rather than preserving literal meaning.

A flexible application of strategies, such as combining multiple strategies, can help maintain naturalness and contextual relevance.

In addition to the knowledge of source and target languages, translators should possess a deep understanding of the source and target cultures.

Future Research Areas

Future research could explore how translation strategies differ across various audiovisual genres, such as comedy, drama, or action, and how these genres influence the balance between fidelity and creativity in dubbing.

Investigating how target audiences perceive translated versions of audio-visual content offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of translation strategies. Reception studies using surveys, focus groups, and interviews can reveal how translation choices affect viewer comprehension and enjoyment, which is the ultimate goal of every translation.

Further studies could also examine how socio-political factors in specific target cultures affect translation choices, especially when adapting humour. This could be particularly relevant in countries with strong censorship norms.

References

- Chaume, F. (2012). *Audiovisual translation: Dubbing*. St. Jerome Publishing.
- Espasa, E. (2008). 'Big Brother is watching you': Diseño de audiencia y traducción audiovisual. In J. Sanderson (Ed.), *Películas antiguas, subtítulos nuevos* (pp. 69–80). Publicacions de la Universitat d'Alacant.
- Ilyas, A. (1989). *Theories of translation: Theoretical issues and practical implications*. University of Mosul.
- Lathey, G. (2009). Children's literature. In M. Baker & S. Gabriela (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (2nd ed., pp. 31–34). Routledge.
- Martínez, X. (2008). Film dubbing: Its process and translation. In *Topics in audiovisual translation* (pp. 3-7). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- O'Connell, E. M. T. (2003). *Minority language dubbing for children: Screen translation from German to Irish*. Peter Lang.
- Xinfei, L. (2024). A study on film subtitle translation from the perspective of Skopos theory: A case study of Kung Fu Panda. *Lecture Notes on Language and Literature*, 7(1). (Add page numbers and DOI or URL if available)
- Vermeer, H. J. (1989). Skopos and translation commission. *The Skopos and the Commission or Translation Brief*, (29).
- Vinay, J. P., & Darbelnet, J. (1995). *Comparative stylistics of French and English: A methodology for translation* (J. C. Sager & M.-J. Hamel, Trans.). John Benjamins.