

Beyond Translation Accuracy: Audience Reception of Humor Loss in Audiovisual Humor Translation ——Evidence From Mo Lei Tau Humor in Chinese Animation

Yutong Man

Faculty of Modern languages and communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia

43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

E-mail: mandy122095@outlook.com

Hazlina Abdul Halim (Corresponding author)

Faculty of Modern languages and communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia

43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

E-mail: hazlina_ah@upm.edu.my

Boon Sim Ng

Faculty of Modern languages and communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia

43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Received: September 19, 2026 Accepted: October 19, 2026 Published: October 25, 2026

doi:10.5296/ijl.v18i5.24063

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v18i5.24063>

Abstract

Audiovisual humor translation involves challenges beyond linguistic transfer because humor appreciation depends not only on semantic accuracy but also on the preservation of culturally, pragmatically, and contextually embedded meanings. Although previous studies have extensively examined translation strategies for humor, less attention has been paid to how audiences perceive humor loss resulting from translation errors. This study investigates

audience reception of translated humor in *Scissor Seven* (SS), a Chinese animated series featuring Mo Lei Tau (MLT) humor, a culturally embedded comedic style characterized by linguistic playfulness, absurdity, and incongruity.

Adopting a qualitative audience reception approach, this study first identified instances of humor translation errors from the Chinese source texts and English subtitles based on Nord's (1997) functionalist error typology. These examples were then used as stimuli in semi-structured interviews with twenty bilingual participants. The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to explore audience perceptions of humorous effects, multimodal compensation, and translation acceptability.

The findings reveal that participants perceived varying degrees of humor loss across the four selected clips. Their evaluations concerned semantic clarity, cultural references, tone, and wordplay. Some participants found the linguistic-error clip unexpectedly humorous despite its lexical mistranslation. Participants reported partial compensation from visual and auditory cues, with its perceived effectiveness varying across cases. Acceptability was limited but varied, with some participants tolerating humor loss in view of translation difficulties and subtitle constraints. These findings describe reception tendencies associated with the selected cases rather than generalized patterns of the four error categories. This study highlights the importance of audience-oriented evaluation in audiovisual humor translation and suggests that translation adequacy should be assessed not only through textual correspondence but also through perceived humorous effects among target audiences.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, humor translation, audience reception, humor loss, Mo Lei Tau humor, Chinese animation

1. Introduction

Despite the growing body of research on audiovisual humor translation, existing studies have predominantly relied on text-oriented analyses, whereas empirical audience reception studies remain limited, particularly those examining how translation errors influence viewers' perception of culture-bound humor such as MLT humor. However, the effectiveness of audiovisual humor translation cannot be fully determined through textual comparison or error identification alone. Since humor appreciation is ultimately realized through audience interpretation, examining how viewers perceive translated humor provides complementary evidence for evaluating translation outcomes. This gap is particularly evident in Chinese animations such as SS, in which humor is multimodal and depends heavily on absurdist elements and cultural subversion, as well as linguistic features.

MLT humor is a popular comedic style that emerged in Hong Kong films in the 1990s, and has been inherited and further developed in contemporary Chinese films and television. It can be operationally defined as instances which are humorous from the distortion or subversion of logical, linguistic or pragmatic narrative conventions in both language and behaviors, manifest through structural, semantic, and discourse-level disruptions (Qi, 2004; Shao, 2014; Lei, 2019; Liu & Wang, 2018; Zhuang, 2021). Consequently, the translation of MLT humor is particularly challenging due to its absurdity, the strong local culture and

Cantonese-influenced linguistic characteristics inherent in this style of humor. These characteristics make MLT humor an appropriate case for investigating how audiences perceive humor loss when culturally and linguistically embedded humorous effects are transferred into another language. This challenge becomes even greater when MLT humor is translated for target audiences in audiovisual products. Owing to the temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling, viewers have only a limited amount of time to process subtitle information and recognize the intended humorous effect. Furthermore MLT humor is highly culture-bounded, which requires the knowledge of cultural background or context. The spatial and time restrictions of subtitling make it difficult to make sufficient explanations for cultural references in MLT humor. As a result, translators are often forced to simplify, omit, or adapt the original expressions, increasing the likelihood of humor translation errors and potentially reducing the transmission of the intended humorous effect.

Translation errors may result in misunderstanding, misinformation, and incomplete comprehension of the dialogue (Haque & Rini, 2023). However, the effects of translation errors in audiovisual products may not be fully reflected through text-oriented analysis, since audiovisual communication integrates visual, verbal, acoustic, and textual modes, all of which jointly contribute to viewers' construction of meaning (Qiu & Pym, 2024). Nida (2001) also argued that the effectiveness of a translation is judged by the response it elicits from its recipients. Therefore, the audience perception of translation errors, particularly the humorous effects in the error may not be consistent with whether the translation is erroneous or correct. In this vein, audience reception faces a challenge in developing comprehensive insights into translation errors.

Although this study identifies humor translation errors based on Nord's (1997) functional error typology, its primary focus is not the classification of errors itself. Instead, it investigates how audiences perceive these identified errors and how they influence the reception of translated humor. Existing literature on audiovisual humor translation mainly focuses on the comparison of original and target texts (Al-Ezzi & Al-Qudah, 2023; Chen & Wang, 2022). While revealing translating process from the translator's perspective, this approach provides little insight into how end users actually perceive this form of screen translation (Antonini, 2005). Although audience perspective in audiovisual humor translation has been regarded as a useful method to testify the translation effectiveness, the authentic evidence on how translation errors in subtitles impact audience perception has rarely been explored before. Existing reception studies on audiovisual humor translation mainly evaluated translation quality (Schauffler, 2012; Shen, 2017) under fixed frameworks and this research on audiovisual humor translation rarely focused on MLT humor, and the authentic perception of translation errors is scarcely investigated.

More recently, Bolaños García-Escribano, Botella Tejera, & Ogea Pozo (2025) reported that audiences preferred preserving cultural elements in humorous audiovisual translation, whereas Karavelos & Sidiropoulou (2024) demonstrated that the reception of taboo humor is shaped by socio-cultural norms and historical contexts. Although these studies have considerably advanced our understanding of audience reception of translated humor, they have predominantly focused on evaluating translation strategies, or investigating underlying

reasons for reception, particularly of culture-specific humor. In most cases, audience responses were examined to determine the effectiveness of particular translation choices rather than to investigate audiences' perceptions of humorous effects in translation errors themselves.

Although existing studies have provided valuable insights into translation strategies, translation quality, and audience responses to audiovisual humor, limited attention has been paid to whether theoretically identified humor translation errors correspond to audiences' actual perceptions during viewing experiences. A translation that is considered problematic from a functional or textual perspective may not necessarily result in the same degree of perceived humor loss among audiences. Conversely, audiences may perceive reduced humorous effects even when the semantic meaning of the translation is successfully conveyed. Therefore, examining audience responses provides complementary evidence for understanding the effectiveness of audiovisual humor translation.

To address this gap, the present study investigates audience reception of humor translation errors identified through Nord's (1997) functional error typology. Rather than focusing on the classification of translation errors, this study explores how audiences perceive these identified problems, including whether they experience humor loss, how multimodal elements contribute to compensation, and how they evaluate the acceptability of translated humor. Using SS as a case study, this research provides empirical evidence on the relationship between researcher-identified humor translation problems and audience-perceived humorous effects.

2. Method

The present study applied a qualitative reception design to answer the following three questions:

- (1) How do participants perceive the humorous effects of MLT humor subtitles containing identified translation errors?;
- (2) How do participants' perceptions of humor loss and translation acceptability vary across the selected clips containing different types of translation errors?;
- (3) How do visual and auditory elements contribute to the compensation of reduced humorous effects?

Rather than evaluating the translation errors from a text-oriented perspective, this study shifts the focus to audience reception by examining viewers' actual responses to subtitles containing translation errors. In doing so, it provides empirical evidence of how translation errors influence the reception of MLT humor subtitles. Audience reception is a great indicator of testifying to the translation effectiveness in audiovisual humor translation. As Vermeer (1978) noted, the translation focus is not exclusively on the senders' intentions and the text itself, but on the audience. A qualitative design was selected because audience reception involves viewers' subjective interpretations, evaluations, and experiences, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures.

2.1 Stimuli Material

Representative humor translation errors identified through Nord's (1997) functional error typology were selected as interview stimuli. They were extracted from the erroneous MLT humor translation in the first four seasons of SS published on Netflix. SS was chosen as the source of stimuli because it is characterized by a great amount of MLT humor elements, which poses great challenge for conveying humor in translation. The identification and classification of translation errors served as a preparatory stage for stimulus selection rather than as the primary objective of the study.

To facilitate systematic selection and textual reference, the identified translation errors in SS were classified into four categorizations according to Nord's (1997) error typology: cultural error, pragmatic error, linguistic error and text-specific error. The use of a predefined error typology also reduced subjectivity in stimulus selection and enhanced the methodological rigor of the study. Pragmatic translation errors refer to those translations which cannot give "adequacy" in the pragmatic perspective of the target receiver. Cultural translation errors are those failures caused by improper decisions made on culture-specific items. Linguistic translation errors constitute an inadequate translation of language structures while text-specific translation errors refer to those inadequate translations specifically bound to one particular source text, such as certain figures of speech, neologisms, or puns (Nord, 1997). Only one representative example from each category of translation errors was selected as stimulus material because the focus of the interview is the audience's deep and diverse thoughts on translation errors rather than the comparison of various samples. By selecting one representative example from each error category, the stimulus materials captured a broad range of translation problems instead of focusing on isolated cases. Considering the influence of multimodality on humor perception in audiovisual works, the video clips containing extracted examples were presented, with each clip lasting approximately 30 seconds.

2.2 Sampling Strategy

In the current study, the purposive sampling strategy was applied to recruit qualified participants in semi-structured interviews, through sending the invitations via social media and e-mails. 20 participants were selected and invited according to the following inclusion criteria:

- 1) Individuals who are 18-24 years-old should be included.
- 2) Participants were required to demonstrate sufficient proficiency in both Chinese and English to comprehend the source humor and evaluate its English translation. Chinese proficiency was established through native or advanced second-language competence, while English proficiency was established through an IELTS score of 7.0 or above, an equivalent recognized qualification, or relevant tertiary-level study in English
- 3) Familiarity with Cantonese culture was determined through participants' self-reported exposure to Cantonese-language media, popular culture, or related cultural content.
- 4) Participants of both sexes were recruited to provide diversity within the sample.

The following groups of people were excluded:

- 1) Individuals who are not well with English and Chinese should be excluded.
- 2) Individuals who do not know Cantonese culture should be excluded.
- 3) Individuals who are unable to provide informed consent will be excluded.
- 4) Individuals who are underage will be excluded.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

Considering the function of semi-structured interviews in uncovering participants' beliefs, opinions, motivations and feelings (Georgescu & Anastasiu, 2021), this study applied semi-structured interview to collect authentic responses from audiences. Before the interview, the author explained what the research was about and made sure the participants could comprehend the relevant information linked to the research. The participants must have the competence to consent and able to choose to agree or refuse (Arifin, 2018). Participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study anytime with no consequences. Participants were entirely voluntary to view the content in the presented video clips and they were informed about any sensitive content beforehand. As well, participants were informed that the interview was audio-recorded for research purposes only, with the consent explicitly acquired.

After obtaining consent from participants, the one-on-one interview was conducted face-to-face. Each interview (lasting for 60-90 minutes) was held in a quiet and private room, allowing for real-time conversations and audio recording. During the interviews, the selected clips were displayed with bilingual subtitles to compare the effects in original and target texts. Participants could replay or pause the clips freely with no time limit imposed on watching clips, and they had the freedom to ask questions. Participants were asked about perceptions of translation errors from various aspects, including lead-in questions, the questions on evaluation of each erroneous translation, questions on the perception of humor, and questions on the compensation of humor loss through image and sound. The complete interview protocol is provided in Appendix A.

The participants' confidentiality was maintained by not disclosing their names or identities during the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the study results (Arifin, 2018). Besides, the privacy of participants was ensured by a well-managed environment. During the interview, participants were not asked about their age, sex, family or other personal information. After the interview, the audio records and transcriptions were stored in an encrypted folder. Furthermore, all identifying information was removed from the transcripts and participants were anonymized, such as participant 1, participant 2 and so on, to ensure confidentiality.

2.4 Data Analysis

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, all interview transcripts were coded systematically using MAXQDA. The codes and themes were developed inductively, which were applied consistently throughout the analysis to ensure a systematic interpretation of

participants' responses. Besides, a second round of coding was conducted, in which the two rounds of coding were compared, and any discrepancies were reviewed and discussed within the research team.

The data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis with assistance provided by the software MAXQDA, to facilitate data management and thematic categorization. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It examines data in rich detail, interpreting different facets of the research issues. Thematic analysis is the most effective method in capturing the intricacies of meaning in a textual data set (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). In semi-structured interviews, many open-ended questions and following-questions exist, causing the complexities of the textual meanings to emerge. Thus, to clearly clarify the audiences' perception, thematic analysis is applied in the current study. The interview data were analyzed according to the six-step process proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006), as shown in Figure 1.

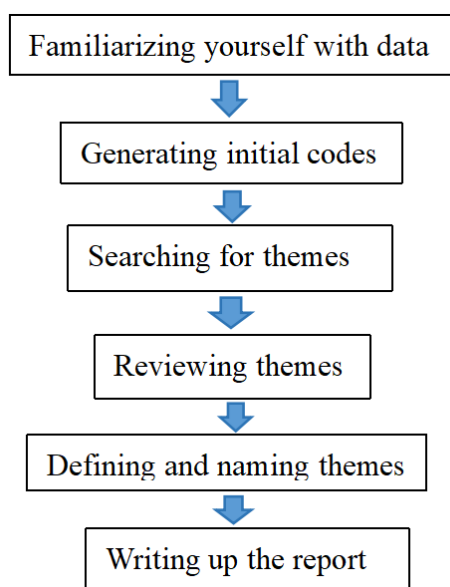


Figure 1. Procedures of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)

The whole semi-structured interview has been recorded utilizing a phone recorder. Before the analysis commenced, the data collected by the semi-structured interviews were transcribed into texts using the software WPS. After that, the transcribed texts were imported in MAXQDA and prepared to be managed and analyzed systematically. The concrete steps of thematic analysis are presented as follows:

- (1) Firstly, the imported texts were read with immersion in order to become familiar with these data and gain an overall understanding of participants' responses.
- (2) Secondly, the documents were coded in MAXQDA manually. Data that have no relevance to the research questions do not require coding whatsoever and these codes should be as

concise as possible (Rose, McKinley & Baffoe-Djan, 2020). More plainly, this step aims to extract key expressions and relevant information related to the research questions from the interviewees' unstructured narratives. These initial codes were automatically recorded and appeared in the window of the code system in MAXQDA. Given that open-ended questions may allude to more than one concept (or “theme”), a single response may be assigned to many codes (Saldanha & Brien, 2013).

(3) Thirdly, after reading and summarizing the initial codes, these codes were collated into potential themes. A well-defined code focuses on one idea, while a theme has a core organizing principle and encompasses a variety of different ideas or aspects associated with that principle, each of which could potentially be represented as a code (Rose, McKinley & Baffoe-Djan, 2020). After the review of the themes, a name was given to each theme based on the core principle reflected by its codes. After coding 20 transcripts in the software MAXQDA, 277 effective codes were found, with three themes being concluded: translation evaluation, humorous effect and compensatory effect. The codes in “translation evaluation” include overall perception of the translation error, and codes in “perceived humorous effects” are opinions on the impact of error on humorous effects in the translation. The theme “perceived compensatory effects” encompasses the opinions on the compensatory function of visual or auditory channels for humor loss.

(4) Fourthly, the frequency of codes within some themes was analyzed using the analysis tool in MAXQDA — “code frequencies” — to identify patterns and highlight which issues were most prominent among participants. This numerical overview served to inform interpretation rather than be utilized for statistical testing.

(5) Fifthly, the findings were synthesized and written up to report participants' perceptions and the patterns observed in the data.

3. Results

This section is organized based on error types, presenting results and discussion of the interview data. As only one sample is selected as the stimulus material in each kind of error, the results and analysis of codes should be regarded as perception tendencies. There is no generalization to errors within the same error type.

3.1 Perception of the Pragmatic Error

The frequency of codes in the themes “translation evaluation”, “perceived humorous effects” and “perceived compensatory effects” are displayed in Table 1, to depict the overall perception of the pragmatic error and the impact of the error on humorous effects.

Table 1. Frequency of codes (exported from MAXQDA)

Theme	Code	Frequency
Translation evaluation	Good translation	3
	Syntactic variation	2
	Loss of tone	18
	Semantic consistency	5
Perceived humorous effects	No impact on humor	1
	Diminished humor	7
	Humor loss	12
Perceived compensatory effects	Audiovisual compensation	3
	No compensation	11
	Auditory compensation	2
	Visual compensation	3

In accordance with Table 1, most participants hold the view that the pragmatic error will lead to the humor loss, with the code “humor loss” appearing 12 times and “diminished humor” showing up 7 times. These results show that the pragmatic error in this study is generally regarded as a prevention of transmitting comic effect in MLT humor subtitle. Some participants referred to syntactic variation as a contributing factor to the weakened humorous effect. This reveals that audiences do not always perceive pragmatic failure as an isolated phenomenon; instead, changes at the syntactic level may also influence the pragmatic realization of humor. Only one code indicated that the pragmatic error wielded no influence on humor. Although this exception demonstrates that audience perceptions of MLT humor remain subjective to some extent, such a low-frequency response does not undermine the dominant pattern observed in the data. Instead, it reflects individual differences in humor perception while at the same time reinforcing the overall tendency that pragmatic errors are generally perceived as impairing humorous effects.

According to the codes in the theme of translation evaluation, the loss of tone takes the highest frequency, occurring 18 times, indicating that audiences were highly sensitive to tonal shifts in the translated subtitles. Although the semantic meaning is successfully transmitted and the translation is understandable, according to the code “semantic consistency” in the table, the translation is still perceived as a pragmatic failure. It also reveals that audiences appeared to evaluate the translation not only in terms of semantic accuracy but also in terms of whether it preserved the original communicative style and interpersonal intention. Furthermore, several participants described the translation as a good translation. These responses indicate that audience evaluation of subtitle quality is multidimensional rather than solely dependent on humorous effectiveness. In other words, viewers are able to distinguish between overall translation quality and the successful reproduction of humor.

Despite the influence of translation on humorous effects, the loss of humor can sometimes be compensated by the auditory and visual elements. The findings indicate that negative responses were more prevalent than positive ones. The code “no compensation”, which appeared 11 times, suggests that a large proportion of interviewees believed that the visual and auditory elements in the clip could not compensate for the loss of humor caused by translation. It highlights that audiences perceive humorous effects as greatly relying on linguistic expressions rather than other channels in audiovisual products. Although two participants acknowledged that auditory cues could compensate for the loss of tone or even enhance the humorous atmosphere, the limited occurrence of these codes suggests that successful compensation was not widely perceived among participants.

The codes related to the compensatory effect of visual parts imply that movements, facial expressions, and character portrayals can be perceived as improving overall humorous effects. However, participants generally agreed that the resulting humor was still not equivalent to that of the source version. As participant 6 said, “the humorous atmosphere can be presented by visuals, but the humorous effects elicited by the unexpected tone can not be fully conveyed”. Thus, these positive perceptions are insufficient to outweigh the dominant view that visual and auditory channels cannot adequately compensate for humor loss in translation, as reflected by both limited compensatory effects and the relatively lower frequency of these codes. This finding highlights the importance of preserving verbal humorous mechanisms in subtitles, rather than assuming that non-verbal elements will adequately compensate for translation-induced humor loss.

3.2 Perception of the Text-Specific Error

This section presents the frequency of codes in the theme of translation evaluation, perceived compensatory effects, and perceived humorous effects which are presented in Table 2. These codes have revealed patterns on how audiences think of the translation, how the error influences humorous effect and whether the humor loss can be compensated through visual and auditory channels.

Table 2. Frequency of codes (Exported from MAXQDA)

Theme	Code	Frequency
Translation evaluation	Semantic inaccuracy	3
	Semantic consistency	5
	Loss of tone	4
	Register translation issue	1
	Good translation	1
	Loss of culture	5
	Stiff translation	3
	Loss of pun	12
Perceived humorous effects	No impact on humor	1
	Diminished humor	11
	Humor loss	8
Perceived compensatory effects	Audiovisual compensation	4
	No compensation	10
	Visual compensation	6

As shown in Table 2, the loss of the pun was commonly noticed by participants, with the corresponding code occurring 12 times. The finding reflects the fact that audiences are sensitive to the loss of features which are tied to MLT humor. Moreover, the views regarding semantic consistency and inaccuracy were relatively balanced among participants, although semantic consistency was reported slightly more frequently than semantic inaccuracy. The close frequency of both semantic inaccuracy and consistency suggests the multi-semantic feature of wordplay, especially in polysemy. It also generates strong evidence on subjectivity of the audience to the perception of wordplay. Some participants also give neutral and positive evaluations, specifying the translation has a register problem, or praising it as a good translation. These views also forcibly prove that codes are formed based on participants'

subjectivity and authentic perceptions of the error rather than the evaluation according to linguistic standards. Besides, the low frequency of these codes cannot form patterns, therefore no detailed analysis was presented concerning them. Moreover, the emphasis on tone and culture demonstrates that, in subtitle evaluation, audiences will focus on various dimensions of translation rather than solely pay attention to semantics. This finding is consistent with the result from the pragmatic error clip in the present study, which likewise highlights the importance of tone in the translation of MLT humor.

In contrast, the code “stiff translation” occurred relatively infrequently, indicating that although unnatural wording was noticed by participants, it was not perceived as a primary concern. It implies that the fluency and naturalness may not be as influential as culture in MLT humor translation. Humorous effects perceived by participants are either disappeared or diminished in the text-specific error, according to Table 2. Although there is one participant who thinks the humorous effect in translation has not been influenced, the perception that humor is disrupted remains the dominant trend among the audience. This finding has empirically proved that text-specific error could impede humor perception in the viewing experience.

Moreover, half of the respondents posited that the loss of humorous effects within subtitles could not be offset via alternative means, while the remaining participants indicated that other channels could, to some extent, mitigate the loss of humor. A large number of interviewees acknowledged the humor derived from visual elements, suggesting that visual cues contribute to the sense of humor among respondents. Some participants offered a more detailed perspective, discussing the compensation achieved by the combination of visual and auditory elements. These results show that visual and auditory cues are important parts to help audience perceive the MLT humorous effect, especially visual elements. Nevertheless, most participants considered that such a compensating function was restricted and only a partial compensation could be achieved. Many participants stated that the compensation is effective when it is accompanied by an understanding of cultural background, suggesting the essential role of a shared cultural background in humor perception.

3.3 Perception of the Cultural Error

Video clip 3 presented in the interview is the cultural error sample. To explore how the audience perceives the cultural translation error, the frequency of parental codes of translation evaluation, perceived compensatory effects and perceived humorous effects are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency of codes (Exported from MAXQDA)

Theme	Code	Frequency
Translation evaluation	Semantic inaccuracy	5
	Loss of tone	1
	Loss of metaphor	5
	Confusing translation	11
	Loss of culture	6
Perceived humorous effects	Diminished humor	2
	Humor loss	18
Perceived compensatory effects	No compensation	12
	Visual compensation	8

All participants perceived that humorous effects were lost or diminished in the presence of cultural errors. Many participants perceived the “loss of culture” or “loss of metaphor” in the target text. As participant 4 said, “the cultural connotation of ‘嫩牛五方(Literal Translation: Tender Beef Five-Sided Wrap)’ cannot be perceived for the difference of source culture and target culture”. It clearly shows that the cultural error is unable to convey the intended humorous effects, and the root cause may be traced back to cultural differences. Participants frequently found that the translation is confusing. Indicated here is that the cultural error is not only ineffective in humorous effect, but also undermines the understandability of target texts. As for semantics, most participants believed the original meaning has not been successfully conveyed via the frequent appearance of the code labeled as “semantic inaccuracy”. The tone has also been mentioned once in evaluations. It is not discussed in detail because it had a very low frequency and no recurring and meaningful pattern has been formed. It can be seen that the cultural error has greatly prevented the audience from grasping humor in subtitles. Other opinions about semantics, confusing translation and loss of metaphor demonstrate that semantic accuracy is the basis of MLT humor translation. If the semantic meaning in a translation is not accurate and clear, this situation will confuse the audience.

A salient pattern regarding compensatory effects is that a considerable number of interviewees still failed to perceive humorous effects despite the support of visual and auditory elements. Moreover, some participants specifically pointed out that cultural humor is not a type of humor that can be compensated for by visual or auditory elements. Although a

few participants held the view that the humorous effect could be compensated for, the prevailing pattern remained unrefuted due to the lower frequency of such opinions. Some participants confirmed that humor loss in subtitle translation is compensated for through visual cues with the cultural background as an essential condition. Overall, such cultural factors indicate a great difficulty in being expressed by sound and visual parts. Although some members of the audience could get some cultural hints through visual cues, the related cultural background must be a prerequisite.

3.4 Perception of the Linguistic Error

Video clip4 was presented in interviews as the linguistic error sample. The related codes are categorized and themed as translation evaluation, perceived humorous effects, and perceived compensatory effects, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency of codes (Exported from MAXQDA)

Theme	Code	Frequency
Translation evaluation	Confusing translation	10
	Over literal translation	6
	Lexical translation issue	6
	Awkward translation	3
Perceived humorous effects	Diminished humor	6
	Strengthened humor	2
	No impact on humor	3
	Humor loss	9
Perceived compensatory effects	No compensation	5
	Visual compensation	12
	Auditory compensation	2

The evaluation of the linguistic error focused on audience's understanding, literal translation problems, and lexical translation issue. Participants frequently commented that the translation was confusing and overly literal, resulting in an awkward rendering. At the semantic level, some participants identified lexical issues in the translation, suggesting that such linguistic errors could lead to misunderstanding during viewing.

Most participants thought the humorous effect is largely diminished or destroyed in the error, meanwhile there were several participants feeling no impact of translation on humorous effects. Two participants thought the translation has stronger comedic effects than that in original expressions. These results indicate a tendency that humorous effect is impeded by the linguistic error, while the influence could also be positive or neutral on humorous effects. This may be attributed to the nonsensical feature in MLT humor. Furthermore, more than half of the participants acknowledged visual cues—and, to a lesser extent, sound—as compensatory elements for humor loss in subtitles. While a minority of participants denied such compensatory effects, their limited number does not challenge the overall pattern. It indicates that the linguistic error may not be crucial for the humorous expression, as visual parts could also convey useful information to the audience.

4. Discussion

The present study aims to investigate the audiences' perception of humorous effects of erroneous translations in subtitled content. The findings indicate that translation errors generally disrupt audiences' perception of humor, while the compensatory role of visual and auditory elements varies across the selected cases. These effects are closely tied to how audiences evaluate the translation itself: errors are not merely noticed, but actively interpreted as problematic. The following content discusses these findings and their implications for audiovisual humor translation theory and practice.

Generally, audiences perceive the reduction or loss of humorous effects in identified translation errors in subtitles. This finding is consistent with Tee et al.'s (2022) claim that translation errors can undermine the humorous effect of the target text. However, the present study extends this text-based understanding by providing empirical audience evidence that theoretically identified translation errors can also be perceived as detrimental to humorous effects during viewing. This shift from a text-based approach to an audience-oriented perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of how translation errors interact with the audience's perception of humor.

Despite this general trend, an unexpected finding emerged in the linguistic error: several participants felt that the error strengthens humor rather than reduces it. This exception raises an interesting question: can a translation error sometimes function as a "happy accident" that generates humor in its own right? The responses to the linguistic-error stimulus suggest that a translation error may, in some cases, function as a "happy accident" by generating an unintended humorous effect. The absurd and illogical expressions which are hard to understand is one of the features of MLT language (Zhuang, 2021). Thus, the mistranslation which brings confusion and awkwardness to the audience accidentally matches with the MLT style. Thus, the effect of MLT humor could be retained or even recreated by the

mistranslation. For example, the word “吃” in the sentence “吃我一大春宝剑 (meaning take the Dachun sword)” is used to convey the meaning of “take” in this context, rather than its common meaning of “eat”. When the word “吃” was literally translated as “eat”, a linguistic error occurred because the semantic meaning of the word had deviated. However, the error could add to the absurdity of the scene, thereby enhancing the sense of MLT humor. Audiences may recognize it as a sense of MLT humor arising from the illogical expression: eat the sword. Such illogicality mirrors the essence of MLT humor, which can also be vividly seen in Stephen Chow’s movies — movies typically characterized by MLT humor.

Does the audience’s experience of humor loss in subtitles necessarily mean that the humor fails to be successfully conveyed? The answer varies in different kinds of errors. In the present study, participants are generally divided on whether visual or auditory channels can make up for the lost humor in subtitles containing pragmatic error, text-specific error and cultural error. The salient pattern in the text-specific error could be attributed to the wordplay in translation. The wordplay is a typical form of linguistic humor that relies on the language itself and is difficult to be remedied through non-verbal channels. Moreover, the perception of ineffective compensation may stem from the irreplaceable role in loading information in audiovisual products. As Díaz Cintas & Remael (2014) specified, dialogues serve the structuring, narrative-informative and interactional functions in films. Viewed from the perspective of MLT humor, the comedic effects in MLT humor are created largely by the wordplay, deconstructive language or incongruity constructed by dialogues (Shao, 2014). For instance, a pun or a culturally specific joke in the dialogue does not have a direct visual or auditory equivalent that can reproduce its humorous effect. Therefore, even when visual or auditory elements are present, they cannot fully fill the gap left by the loss of humor in the subtitles.

Then why does nearly half the audience acknowledge the compensatory effects from visual and sound? Firstly, as an animation, SS boasts considerable and rich visual effects, which can be exaggerated and fantastic, particularly the characters’ expressions and body movements. These visual elements can convey substantial humorous information. Gambier (2018) once noted that while subtitles are essential for generating meaning, non-verbal signs could play a dominant role under certain circumstances. The results in the present study support Gambier’s (2018) statement, but more specifically, our study found that the non-verbal signs, especially visual elements, could be effective in producing humorous sense, although the compensatory effects are limited and conditional. For example, in the case of cultural and text-specific error, many people recognized the visual cues can compensate for the humor loss in subtitles, while the cultural background knowledge is a prerequisite.

These findings resonate with previous research. The finding in the cultural error reinforces the claim that the cultural factor is an important foundation to the construction of MLT humor (Lei, 2019). Besides, Wang (2014), who studied humor translation, also acknowledged the visual elements support the conveyance of humorous effect in target texts. This aligns closely with our participants’ recognition of the contribution of visual cues to humor perception. In our case, the participants’ feedback on the partial effectiveness of visual humor compensation could be seen as an extension of Wang’s (2014) view, suggesting that the role of visual elements might be more nuanced when considering cultural understanding. Similarly, Chiaro (2010) also

argued that humorous elements in audiovisual products could be transferred by diverse codes. This further validates our findings as visual cues are indeed one of these codes. The diverse-code perspective put forward by Chiaro (2010) enriches our understanding of how humor is transmitted, and our study adds to this by highlighting the relationship between visual cue compensation, cultural background, and the overall perception of MLT humor. These findings suggest that translators should remain attentive to the verbal mechanisms that trigger MLT humor, since multimodal elements may support, but do not necessarily replace, the humorous effects conveyed verbally.

Among the four selected stimuli, perceived humor loss was most consistent in the cultural-error case, in which all participants reported a reduction or loss of humorous effect. By contrast, the other three stimuli elicited more varied responses, including perceptions of diminished humor, no impact, and, in the linguistic-error case, strengthened humor. This pattern should not be interpreted as establishing a hierarchy among Nord's error categories, since each category was represented by a single stimulus. Rather, it indicates that different theoretically identified translation errors may be experienced differently by audiences depending on the specific humorous mechanism and contextual conditions involved.

Furthermore, the pattern of compensatory effects in the linguistic error is quite different from the other three errors. The majority of participants perceived that visual settings or auditory cues in SS could compensate for the humor loss in subtitles. This surprising result may stem from the image on screen helping people to understand the scene and correct the mistranslated word. As participant 8 remarked, "the word '吃' was translated as 'eat', which contextually means 'take' here, but fortunately the character on the screen was taking the sword. So I can figure out what is going on here and nothing will be changed". Therefore, if the semantic meaning was wrongly conveyed in subtitles, there are great chances that the visual parts, especially body movements could help correct and express the right meaning. In this stimulus, the visible action helped some participants recover the intended meaning despite the lexical mistranslation. This suggests that visual context can support interpretation in particular circumstances. However, the finding does not establish that audiovisual cues can routinely compensate for linguistic errors or justify giving semantic accuracy a lower priority. Instead, it highlights the importance of considering interactions between subtitles and visual context when interpreting participants' responses to this case.

Apart from responses to humorous effects, audiences' overall evaluation and perception of the errors can offer more further insights into MLT humor subtitle translation. The evaluation of the pragmatic error shows an unexpectedly dichotomous pattern, with both positive and negative responses existing. The loss of tone was noticed by most of the participants, which reassures that tone functions as a crucial carrier of humor in MLT discourse. Since MLT humor is characterized by absurdity, exaggerated interpersonal stance, and unconventional conversational style, changes in tone may substantially weaken the pragmatic cues through which humor is conveyed. This finding also highlights an important distinction between semantic transmission and humorous reception. In other words, successful semantic transmission does not necessarily lead to the successful reproduction of humorous effects. Therefore, when semantic fidelity and humorous effect cannot be simultaneously achieved,

translators may need to prioritize the communicative function that contributes most to audience humor appreciation. The technical limitation is another element for the binary evaluation, when participant 10 commented, “The translation is not as humorous as the original text, but I think it is a good version as the subtitle space is limited”. A translation may therefore remain acceptable in terms of readability, comprehensibility, or technical constraints, even when it fails to fully preserve the intended humorous effect.

Regardless of some positive evaluations, the opinions concentrate primarily on the view that pragmatic error could cause tone loss and undermine humorous effects. In the pragmatic-error stimulus, participants frequently identified a loss of tone alongside diminished humor. This finding highlights the relevance of pragmatic cues to humor reception in this particular case. More importantly, the codes together reassured that MLT humorous effects not only rely on semantic meaning, but also on pragmatic cues such as tone. This finding also supports the view that pragmatics is more important than semantics in the translation of humor (Attardo, 2002). The linguistic-error stimulus further illustrates how visual information may help audiences recover intended meaning when the subtitle contains a lexical mistranslation. In this case, the character’s on-screen action provided contextual information that enabled participants to reinterpret the erroneous subtitle. This finding highlights the importance of considering cross-modal interaction when evaluating the audience impact of subtitle errors, rather than assessing the verbal channel in isolation.

Evaluations of the text-specific error covered a wide range of aspects, while no salient pattern emerged, with the exception that the loss of pun was noted by the majority of participants. Interestingly, although participants demonstrated a strong consensus regarding the disappearance of the pun, their evaluations of semantic conveyance were mixed. The frequent identification of pun loss suggests that participants were sensitive to the linguistic creativity underlying the humorous effect in this stimulus. Therefore, when a pun is removed or weakened through translation, audiences may readily perceive the absence of the original humorous trigger. The distinction of semantic meaning in the text-specific error can be explained by the dual function of the pun, and the result also reveals that the semantic meaning could also be transmitted successfully even at the loss of humorous effects. In other words, the pun may become a neutral expression and the original information is conveyed with no influence on the understandability. As participant 7 said, “the translation only shows its literal meaning, but the underlying meaning is buried in English. While the plots and dialogues are still accessible, the sentences become a plain presentation.” Therefore, the translation of puns in MLT humor should be approached functionally rather than being limited to literal or formal equivalence.

Evaluations of the cultural error concentrate on the understandability and the loss of cultural connotations. The results reveal that the inadequate rendering of cultural elements in MLT humor may cause difficulty in comprehension. The frequent references to cultural factors in the interviews further demonstrate the importance of cultural knowledge in audiences’ perception of MLT humor and support previous observations that cultural differences pose challenges for audiovisual humor translation (Wang, 2014; Tee et al., 2022).

Audiences' comments on the linguistic error mainly focused on the understandability and the problem of over-literal translation. Taken together, the results suggest that the linguistic error may hinder the comprehension of the translated humor and negatively affect the overall viewing experience. The literal translation was mentioned as the reason for the confusing and awkward translation, as several participants said that the over-literal translation has rendered lexical mistakes and making the translation problematic. Attardo (2002) stated that a literal translation will cause complete humor loss. Responses to the linguistic-error stimulus in the present study were mixed. Some participants described the literal rendering as confusing or awkward, whereas others found its absurdity humorous or used the visual context to recover the intended meaning. These responses indicate that perceived semantic inaccuracy and humorous enjoyment did not always coincide in this case.

Participants' recurring comments on semantic clarity suggest that comprehensibility remained relevant to their evaluations of the selected subtitles. This is consistent with the emphasis on semantic accuracy discussed by Dewi Utami & Verayanti Utami (2023), although their study concerns a different translation context. In the present cases, semantic clarity was one consideration alongside pragmatic, cultural and humor-specific features.

5. Conclusions

Based on the empirical data obtained from the semi-structured interviews, the findings show that participants generally perceived the humorous effects as diminished or lost across the four selected translation-error stimuli. Nevertheless, successful semantic transmission was recognized in some responses, indicating that the successful transmission of semantic meaning does not necessarily ensure the preservation of humorous effects. This distinction highlights the importance of evaluating humor translation beyond semantic accuracy by considering how translated humor is actually perceived by audiences.

The findings further demonstrate that humor loss in audiovisual translation may, under certain conditions, be compensated for by visual and auditory cues. Such compensation, however, varied across the four stimuli. In the pragmatic- and cultural-error stimuli, participants predominantly perceived multimodal cues as insufficient to compensate for humor loss, whereas perceptions of compensation were more divided in the text-specific-error stimulus. In the linguistic-error stimulus, visual cues played a more evident compensatory role by providing contextual information that assisted audiences in interpreting the translated dialogue. Taken together, these findings suggest that the impact of translation errors on humor perception is not determined by the verbal translation alone, as visual and auditory resources may mediate the extent to which humor loss is experienced by audiences.

More broadly, the study demonstrates that the relationship between theoretically identified translation errors and audience-perceived humor loss is not necessarily one-to-one in audiovisual translation. While the selected errors generally weakened humorous effects, audience responses also revealed variation in the extent of perceived humor loss and the possibility of multimodal compensation. This finding underscores the value of incorporating audience perception into the evaluation of audiovisual humor translation, as text-based

identification of translation errors alone cannot fully account for how humorous effects are experienced in actual viewing.

By providing empirical evidence from audience responses, this study contributes to the understanding of MLT humor translation from an audience-oriented perspective and complements predominantly text-based approaches to audiovisual humor translation. It also highlights the importance of considering semantic, pragmatic, cultural, humor-specific, and multimodal factors when evaluating the effectiveness of translated humor. However, the present study examined only one representative subtitle stimulus for each error type; therefore, the findings should be interpreted as reception tendencies associated with the selected cases rather than generalized patterns of the four error categories. In addition, translation errors in on-screen textual elements, such as displays and captions, were not included. Future research could incorporate a larger number of stimuli within each error category and examine audience perceptions of translated humor in both subtitles and on-screen text elements.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the participants who generously shared their perspectives and experiences in the interviews. Their valuable insights contributed significantly to the audience reception analysis presented in this study. The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the second and third authors for their valuable contributions, insightful suggestions, and continuous support throughout the development of this study.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

References

- Alaa, A. M., & Al Sawi, I. (2023). The analysis and quality assessment of translation strategies in subtitling culturally specific references: Feathers. *Heliyon*, 9(8), e19095. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e19095>
- Al-Ezzi, R., & Al-Qudah, I. (2023). English translation of verbal humor in Egyptian comedy films. *World Journal of English Language*, 14(1), 157. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n1p157>
- Alzaabi, S., & Rabab'ah, G. (2023). Conceptual metaphors in YouTube auto-generated subtitles: BBC travel show as a case. *Int. J. Humanities Educ.*, 22(1), 57-75.
- Arifin, S. R. M. (2018). Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *International Journal of Care Scholars*, 1(2), 30-33. <https://doi.org/10.31436/ijcs.v1i2.82>

- Attardo, S. (2002). Translation and humor. *The Translator*, 8(2), 173-194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2002.10799131>
- Bolaños García-Escribano, A., Botella Tejera, C., & Ogea Pozo, M. (2025). Culture-bound humor in English-language dubs: A reception study. *The International Journal for Translation & Interpreting Research*, 17(2), 73-94. <https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.117202.2025.a05>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Chen, Y. P., & Wang, W. (2022). Translating English humor into Chinese subtitles: A semiotic perspective. *Perspectives*, 30(3), 454-470. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2020.1815814>
- Chiaro, D. (2010). Translation and humor, humor and translation. In D. Chiaro (Ed.), *Translation, Humour and Literature*. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Díaz-Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2014). *AVT, Subtitling* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Đorđević, J. P., & Stamenković, D. (2023). Classification of multi-modal translation errors in the entertainment industry: a proposal. *The Translator*, 29(3), 265-280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2021.2024654>
- Gambier, Y. (2018). Translation studies, audiovisual translation and reception. In E. Di Giovanni & Y. Gambier (Eds.), *Translation studies, audiovisual translation and reception* (pp. 52-66). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.141.04gam>
- Georgescu, S.-D., & Anastasiu, I.-E. (2021, November). The interview as a qualitative research instrument. *Proceedings of the International Management Conference*, 15(1), 969-973.
- Gu, F. (2024). Lost in translation: Barbie and subtitle discrepancies in China. *Feminist Theory*, 25(4), 601-607. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14647001241291438>
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384436>
- Haque, A., & Rini, H. C. (2023). Translation errors in subtitle of the Movie Joker 2019 on Netflix. *Humanitatis Journal of Language and Literature*, 9(2), 421-432. <https://doi.org/10.30812/humanitatis.v9i2.2617>
- House, J. (1977). A model for assessing translation quality. *Meta*, 22(2), 103-109. <https://doi.org/10.7202/003140ar>
- Karavelos, A., & Sidiropoulou, M. (2024). Offensiveness and sexual blackmailing in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 221, 137-149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2023.12.009>
- Lei, Q. (2019). 浅析周星驰电影中的无厘头文化[A brief analysis of the “Mo Lei Tau” culture in Stephen Chow’s movies]. *戏剧之家*, 24(2), 2.

Liu, J. L., & Wang, J. J. (2018). 无厘头电影的“变”与“不变”——从周星驰的电影说起 [The ‘change’ and ‘unchange’ of Mo Lei Tau comedy films - starting from Stephen Chow's films]. *淮海工学院学报(人文社会科学版)*, 16(4), 79-83.

Nida, E. A. (2001). *Language and culture: Contexts in translating*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Nord, C. (1997). *Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained* (1st ed.). St. Jerome Publishing.

Nord, C. (2014). *Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained* (4th ed.). St. Jerome Publishing.

Qi, M. (2004). 90 分钟狂欢—周星驰喜剧电影搞笑解码 [90 minutes carnival - funny decoding of Stephen Chow's comedy films]. *北京电影学院学报*, (4), 19-29.

Qiu, J., & Pym, A. (2024). Fatal flaws? Investigating the effects of machine translation errors on audience reception in the audiovisual context. *Perspectives*, 33(5), 913-929. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676x.2024.2328757>

Rose, H., McKinley, J., & Baffoe-Djan, J. B. (2020). *Data collection research methods in applied linguistics*. Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350025875>

Saldanha, G., & O' Brien, S. (2013). *Research methodologies in translation studies* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315760100>

Schauffler, S. F. (2012). Investigating subtitling strategies for the translation of wordplay in Wallace and Gromit - An audience reception study. *PhD thesis*, University of Sheffield.

Shao Z. F. (2014). 周星驰无厘头电影的“解构”性 [The “deconstruction” nature of Stephen Chow's nonsense movies]. *电影评介*, (15), 4. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-6916.2014.15.003>

Shen, W. J. (2017). 影视字幕翻译策略与言语文化幽默接受——基于情景喜剧《生活大爆炸》的接受研究 [Film and television subtitle translation strategies and the acceptance of verbal and cultural humor—A reception study based on the sitcom The Big Bang Theory]. *广东外语外贸大学学报*, 28(3), 61-67.

Sipayung, K. T., Pasaribu, A. N., Sinaga, N. T. (2024). Common problems and overt errors in translating idioms in the film Maleficent. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(2), 23-31. <https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.10203>

Tee, Y. H., Amini, M., Siau, C. S., & Amirdabbaghian, A. (2022). English to Chinese fansub translation of humor in The Marvellous Mrs. Maisel. *Texto Livre Linguagem e Tecnologia*, <https://doi.org/10.35699/1983-3652.2022.37677>

Utami, N. P. L. D., & Utami, N. M. V. (2023). Unveiling semantic errors found in lexical translations of Tasya Farasya's tiktok account. *Lingua Cultura*, 17(2), 219-225. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v17i2.10435>

Vermeer, H. J. (1978). A framework for a general theory of translation. *Living Languages*, 23, 99 - 102. <https://doi.org/10.1515/les.1978.23.3.99>

Wang, D. (2014). Subtitling humor in trans-cultural context. *Chinese Semiotic Studies*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.1515/css-2014-0023>

Yuan, Z., & Jin, H. (2023). The application of machine translation in automatic dubbing in China: A case study of the feature film *Mulan*. *Linguistica Antverpiensia. New Series – Themes in Translation Studies*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.52034/lans-tts.v22i.771>

Zhuang P. (2021). 新世纪国产喜剧电影的无厘头文化解析[An analysis of the nonsense culture in new century domestic comedy films]. *电影文学*, (18), 56-58.

Appendix A

Semi-structured Interview Guide

Part A

1. What do you think of “Mo lei Tau” humor? How would you describe it in your own words?
2. When you watch shows, do you usually rely more on subtitles or other on-screen texts and captions? Why?
3. What do you think is the biggest challenge in translating “Mo Lei Tau” humor? Why?

Part B Please answer the following question after watching each clip.

Clip1

4. What do you think of the translation of the line “这位大哥你撒过来了哦”?
5. What impact does this problem have on your perception and understanding of humor? Please elaborate on it in more detail.
6. What aspects do you think this translation focuses on more? Why?
7. Do you think this translation strategy is suitable for this part of the text? Why or why not?

Clip 2

8. What do you think of the translation of the line “斩草除根”?
9. What impact does this problem have on your perception and understanding of humor? Please elaborate on it in more detail.
10. What aspects do you think this translation focuses on more? Why?
11. Do you think this translation strategy is suitable for this part of the text? Why or why not?

Clip 3

12. What do you think of the translation of the line “嫩牛五方”?
13. What impact does this problem have on your perception and understanding of humor? Please elaborate on it in more detail.
14. What aspects do you think this translation focuses on more? Why?
15. Do you think this translation strategy is suitable for this part of the text? Why or why not?

Clip 4

16. What do you think of the translation of the line “吃我一大春宝剑”?
17. What impact does this problem have on your perception and understanding of humor? Please elaborate on it in more detail.
18. What aspects do you think this translation focuses on more? Why?

19. Do you think this translation strategy is suitable for this part of the text? Why or why not?

Part C Please answer the following questions.

20. After watching all clips, which types of translation problems are the most noticeable to you?

21. Is there anything else you would like to say about this interview?

Appendix B

Thematic Coding Framework

Theme	Code	Definition
Perceived humorous effects	Strengthened humor	Participants perceive that the translation increases the humorous impact of the original text by making the joke more salient or entertaining.
	No impact on humor	Participants perceive that translation problems do not affect the humorous effect.
	Humor loss	Participants perceive that the humorous effect disappears due to translation problems.
	Diminished humor	Participants perceive that the humorous effect is weakened but not completely lost.
Perceived compensatory effects	Visual compensation	Participants perceive that visual elements, such as facial expressions, character actions, or scene context, compensate for the loss of humorous effects caused by subtitle translation problems.
	Auditory compensation	Participants perceive that auditory elements, including voice, intonation, pronunciation, or sound effects, help recover or enhance the humorous effect.
	Audiovisual compensation	Participants perceive that the combined contribution of visual and auditory elements successfully compensates for humor loss in translation.
	No compensation	Participants perceive that audiovisual elements are insufficient to recover the lost humorous effect caused by translation problems.
Translation evaluation	Over literal translation	Participants perceive that the translation follows the source text too closely, resulting in unnatural expressions or ineffective transfer of humorous effects.

Theme	Code	Definition
	Confusing translation	Participants perceive that the translated subtitle is difficult to understand or causes confusion about the intended meaning or humor.
	Lexical translation issue	Participants identify problems related to word choice, vocabulary selection, or inappropriate lexical equivalents in the translation.
	Awkward translation	Participants perceive that the subtitle sounds unnatural, inappropriate, or inconsistent with normal target-language expressions.
	Loss of tone	Participants perceive that the translation fails to preserve the original tone, attitude, emotion, or communicative intention.
	Loss of metaphor	Participants perceive that metaphorical expressions or figurative meanings in the source text are weakened, altered, or omitted in translation.
	Loss of culture	Participants perceive that culture-specific references or culturally embedded humorous meanings are lost or weakened in the translation.
	Semantic inaccuracy	Participants perceive that the translation inaccurately conveys the original meaning or changes the intended message.
	Semantic consistency	Participants perceive that the translation successfully conveys the original meaning despite differences in wording or expression.
	Register translation issue	Participants perceive problems with the level of formality, style, or appropriateness of language use in the translated subtitle.
	Good translation	Participants evaluate the translation positively and consider it effective in conveying meaning and/or humorous effects.
	Stiff translation	Participants perceive that the translation is overly rigid, unnatural, or lacks the flexibility of natural target-language expression.
	Loss of pun	Participants perceive that wordplay, puns, or double meanings in the source humor are lost or weakened in

Theme	Code	Definition
		translation.
	Syntactic variation	Participants notice changes in sentence structure or grammatical arrangement between the source and target texts, which may influence meaning, tone, or humorous effects.
Translation focus	Tone	Participants perceive that the translation prioritizes preserving the tone, attitude, emotional expression, or communicative intention of the source dialogue.
	Semantic meaning	Participants perceive that the translation prioritizes conveying the literal or underlying meaning of the source text.
	Readability	Participants perceive that the translation prioritizes fluency and ease of reading for target audiences, especially within subtitle constraints.
	Understandability	Participants perceive that the translation prioritizes making the content accessible and comprehensible to target viewers.
	Style consistency	Participants perceive that the translation prioritizes maintaining the character's speaking style, register, or overall stylistic features.
	Literal accuracy	Participants perceive that the translation prioritizes close adherence to the wording or structure of the source text.
	Cultural reproduction	Participants perceive that the translation prioritizes retaining culture-specific references, meanings, or culturally embedded humorous elements.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)