

Making Sense of Humour:

The Translation of Humour in the Animation Feature Film Shrek

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the strategies adopted in the translation of humour as depicted in the full-length computer-animated feature film *Shrek*, an unprecedented box office success released by DreamWorks Animation in 2001. One of the film's most successful aspects lies in its critically acclaimed appeal to adults and children alike through a significant amount of verbal and visual humour elements. In setting out to explore the film's humour, the concepts of animation and humour are presented in a discussion of *Shrek's* characters, plot and technological mastery.

The study critically examines two core approaches to Translation Studies as fundamental approaches to translation: the notions of Context and Contextualisation (Baker, 2006) and the Relevance Theory of Communication (Sperber & Wilson, 1986 & 1988). Before analysing the subject of the research, the study considers the translation of humour through three key strategies: the General Theory of Verbal Humour (Raskin & Attardo, 1991), Norm Acceptance/ Norm Opposition (Asimakoulas, 2004) and Frame Semantics (Rojo López, 2002).

Drawing on these three primary theories, the report identifies the essence of humour as it is presented through numerous devices and techniques in the film's original English dialogue before analysing the Portuguese dubbed dialogue. Such devices and techniques include wordplay, irony, intertextuality and rhyme supporting a plethora of visual frames. Through an analysis of these laughter-inducing features, the adopted translation strategies are explored in the context of whether or not the identified humour was carried through from the original Source Text to the resulting Target Text.