A Comparative Study of Humour Translation Strategies in the Turkish and Persian Dubbings of *Shrek 2*

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Abstract

Due to the interplay of linguistic creativity, cultural nuances, and audience expectations, translating humour across languages and diverse cultures presents one of the most complex challenges in audiovisual translation. This study explores the art of translating humour by analysing the Persian and Turkish dubbed versions of *Shrek 2*, a movie renowned for its rich, layered humour and cross-generational appeal. This qualitative research categorizes and analyses selected scenes from the source text in terms of verbal, cultural, universal, and genre-specific humour. The findings indicate that the Turkish dubbing tends to preserve the humour intact through subtle changes, whereas the Persian version often resorts to omission or heavy domestication due to stricter censorship regulations and cultural norms. While universal humour, like physical comedy, largely crosses linguistic boundaries easily, verbal puns and culturally specific jokes often lose their punch, particularly in Persian dubbing. This study underscores the dual nature of humour, of how it is both universal and culturally specific and emphasizes the importance of translator's role as a linguist and cultural mediator in balancing cultural sensitivity and creativity in ensuring humorous equivalence.

Keywords: *humour translation, audiovisual translation, Shrek 2, Turkish, Persian*

1. Introduction

Humour is the flavour and fundamental aspect of human expression. It depicts not only one's intelligence and level of knowledge but also their cultural background. Therefore, the translation of humour is an extremely complicated task, as it is closely bound to both language and culture. According to Attardo (2002), "humour relies on incongruity, cultural reference, and shared knowledge," all of which are not easily transferrable from one language into another (p. 42). This is especially true in the case of audiovisual translation (AVT), where additional

limitations such as lip-sync, censorship and audience expectations must be considered (Chaume, 2020). Among the various forms of AVT, dubbing is one of the most widely used but particularly demanding ones, requiring the translator to obtain a balance between faithfulness to the source text and cultural adaptation. This often results in the implementation of creative solutions for retaining humour, sometimes even leading to its total erasure (Pedersen, 2011). This challenge becomes especially pronounced in the case of animated storytelling like *Shrek*, and more so *Shrek 2*, which masterfully integrates wordplay, genre parody and intertextual references.

Humour is often deeply tied to language, shared cultural knowledge, and situational context (López González, 2017). As Vandaele (2010, as cited in López González, 2017) emphasizes, humour is so ingrained in everyday life that its absence becomes very obvious when mishandled in translation. In addition, theories like the Superiority Theory, Relief Theory, and Incongruity Theory (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2004; Treetrapetch et al., 2017) underscore the complex and multifaceted psychological and social roles of humour, which further complicates the transfer across cultural boundaries without losing its meaning. The psychological dimension of translating humour is not only related to the translators, but also the audience itself. Deciphering an allusion or wordplay or any humorous element is akin to solving a math problem. The epiphany felt after solving a complex math equation can be likened to the satisfaction of recognizing a humour reference that results in a chuckle or a smile. If this anticipated moment of cognitive and emotional resolution is not met, then it is a failed attempt at handling humour by the translator and for the audience.

This study explores how various humorous elements in *Shrek 2* are translated in Persian and Turkish dubbed versions. By conducting a detailed qualitative analysis, the study addresses the following research questions:

- How are different types of humour, including linguistic, cultural, universal, and genre-specific, translated in the Persian and Turkish dubs of animated comedies?
- What dubbing strategies, such as retention, substitution, adaptation, omission, and paraphrasing, are employed in rendering these humorous elements?
- Which translations succeed or fail in preserving the humorous function and why, based on criteria such as creativity, cultural adaptation, and audience accessibility?

Through a systematic comparison of the English original with its Persian and Turkish versions, this study assesses the translation not only in terms of linguistic fidelity but also functional equivalence in humour reception and emotional impact.

By addressing these questions, the study moves beyond technical analysis and toward understanding the broader implications of humour translation in cross-cultural media.

This study is expected to contribute to several research areas: cross-cultural media studies, dubbing strategy analysis, humour translation studies, and the larger field of

audiovisual translation (AVT). As globalization makes for greater cross-cultural interaction, recognizing how translation and re-interpretation of humour are carried out has been considered more important (Çavuşoğlu, 2023; Dore, 2020).

The results of the study thus offer valuable insights for media-localization practitioners, translators, and academics interested in how humour functions across different languages and cultures. It reinforces Attardo's (2002) principle of maintaining "total meaning... with a touch of humour" (p. 42) by demonstrating how innovative techniques, even when deviating from literal translation, can effectively recreate the original text's intended comedic effects and emotional resonance.

2. Theoretical Background

This section outlines the theoretical foundations that are present in the current study, focusing on three main areas: theories of humour, audiovisual translation (AVT) and dubbing, and translation strategies relevant to humorous content. These frameworks are essential for understanding both the nature of humour as a culturally and linguistically rooted phenomenon and the specific challenges posed by its translation in dubbed animated films.

2.1.   Humour & Translation

The concept of humour is deeply intertwined with human experience and social experience. Following this idea, one might ask, "Are jokes universally funny?" More often than not, the answer to this question leans towards a clear "no". Abrams (1993) describes humour as something "purely comic" (p.220), yet this comic effect is created by the symbolic conceptualization of a concept or content by the recipient's mental processing that may cause an epiphany after a shock or uncertainty, which consequently results in laughter. Building on this cognitive view, Critchley (2002, as cited in López González, 2017, p. 281) suggests that "humour is human", a notion that points out the cultural and cognitive specificity of what individuals or different groups find humorous. Despite appearing to be a straightforward concept, humour, in fact, is a complex and layered entity interconnected with language, cultural subtleties, context, and the shared experiences of a specific community.

Although it may sound simple, translating humour across languages is highly demanding due to the translator having to shoulder the burden of having adequate linguistic proficiency and the knowledge and skill of grasping subtle cultural nuances, in addition, as Vandaele (2010, as cited in López González, 2017) emphasizes, humour is so normalized in daily exchanges that one hardly notices its presence until it gets lost in translation. In spite of the inherent challenges of humour translation, as globalization furthers the interaction between different cultures and languages, the role of translation in bridging gaps becomes increasingly significant (Çavuşoğlu, 2023). The translation of humour is demanded more

frequently day by day within the wide range of translation studies, particularly within the dynamic field of audiovisual translation (AVT) (Çavuşoğlu, 2023; Dore, 2020).

Humour is multifaceted in nature; it can be verbal (e.g. puns, wordplay) or non-verbal (e.g. slapstick, visual gags), and each type presents its own unique challenges. Verbal humour often relies on linguistic features like homophones, polysemy, or idioms, which may not have direct equivalents in the target language (Delabastita, 1994). Non-verbal humour consists mostly of physical comedy, situational comedy, character-specific humour, and even music. As López González (2017) mentions, non-verbal humour allows humorous instances to be created without the need for translation from a source language to a target language. However, while seemingly universal, non-verbal humorous elements can also be culture-specific, as seen in the physical comedy of *Mr. Bean*, which transcends language barriers but may still require subtle adjustments for certain audiences (Chiaro, 2024).

In the context of media, particularly movies, verbal and non-verbal humour are often simultaneously present, which further enriches the comedic effect for the audience by conveying the comedic reference or message in different codes like acting, the background information and objects, the sounds and even white noise, and the '*witty*' dialogue said by the actor (Chiaro, 2010). Therefore, the translators of AVT must not only deal with the intricate details of verbal humour but also with how they are intertwined with and amplified by the non-verbal humorous elements in a scene. Indeed, movies like *Shrek*, which target international audiences, frequently employ visual or non-verbal humour, because of its relatively easier transferability across different languages and cultures (Xia et al., 2023).

2.2.   **Theories of Humour**

Among the theoretical frameworks that inform humour studies, touching on the three particularly influential theories in literature is essential: Incongruity Theory, Superiority Theory, and Relief Theory (Bujizen & Valkenburg, 2004). The Incongruity Theory suggests that humour is created by bringing together incongruous elements (Treetrapetch et al., 2017), or in other words, the unexpected violation of expectations. The Superiority Theory, as the name suggests, posits that the misfortunes and perceived inferiority of others are humorous. The Relief Theory suggests that individuals laugh to release the built-up tension from their daily lives (Treetrapetch et al., 2017). Additionally, theories like Raskin's (1985) Semantic Script Theory of Humour and the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) by Attardo and Raskin (1991) could be considered more specifically as linguistically based humour theories (Dore, 2020). The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), developed by Attardo and Raskin (1991), provides a detailed framework for analysing verbal humour. This theory suggests that a joke is based on the overlap of six "Knowledge Resources" (KRs): Script Opposition, Logical Mechanism, Situation, Target, Narrative Strategy, and Language (Attardo, 1994; Attardo &

Raskin, 1991, 2017). These KRs help work out why some jokes are comedic, and some are not, and if two jokes have more resources in common, they are more familiar, and if at least two resources are different, the jokes will most probably be different (Beresnevičiūtė, 2023). For instance, this theory is particularly useful for understanding how humour functions in *Shrek 2*, where jokes often rely on incongruity (e.g., an ogre as a romantic hero in *Shrek*) and cultural subversion (e.g., fairy-tale tropes being mocked). As Attardo (2002) notes, "the main objective throughout the entire process of translation regarding humour is to maintain the total meaning of the original version, but at the same time with a touch of humour" (p. 42).

2.3.   Audiovisual Translation and Dubbing

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is a field of translation studies that emerged after the rise of the film industry and its widespread popularity (Jabbari & Nikkhah Ravizi, 2012). It is a field that deals with the transfer of meaning in multimedia products. Within AVT, dubbing stands out as a prominent mode of translation, mostly utilized in Europe (Chaume, 2020) and particularly favoured for specific audiences, such as children. Dubbing involves replacing the original speech with a target language voice track that synchronizes with the actors' lip movements, gestures, timing, pauses, even breathing and overall performance (Chiaro, 2010; Chaume, 2020). These constraints further challenge translators so that they are forced to make compromises, such as altering jokes according to a specific culture, which might cause the joke to lose its humorous effect. Additional constraints include medium (children's films tend to be dubbed even in subtitle-oriented countries), censorship, and local broadcast norms (Herrero Perucha, 2015).

The process of translating humour from one language to another involves two fundamental components: linguistic and cultural (Navarro Brotons, 2017). To address this challenge in translating humour in media, many strategies have been proposed by numerous scholars (Gan, 2023). Pedersen (2011), for instance, proposes seven strategies for translating Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECR): 'Retention', keeping the original reference or making small changes; 'Specification', making the ECR more specific by adding extra information in the TL; 'Direct translation/Official Equivalent', directly translating SL to TL with no alteration in semantics; 'Generalization', making the translation less specific than it is in the SL; 'Substitution', replacing the ECR with another ECR all together; 'Omission', dropping the untranslatable humour (p.76). Fuentes (2000, as cited in Navarro Brotons, 2017, pp. 59-61) makes a distinction between the following translation techniques: compensating translation, effective or functional translation, explanatory translation, and literal translation. Similarly, Chiaro (2006, 2008, 2010) proposes four strategies specifically for translating Verbally Expressed Humour (VEH): leaving the humour unchanged, replacing it with a different VEH in TL, replacing it with an idiomatic TL expression, and ignoring VEH entirely.

Delabatista (1994) questions the translatability of puns and offers the following strategies: Pun to Pun (translation of a pun to another pun), Pun to related rhetorical mediums (capturing the pun-ness with a medium like alliteration, rhyme, irony, etc.), Pun to Non-pun (pun reshaped to a non-pun), Pun to Zero pun (omitting the pun), Non-pun to Pun (compensation), Zero to Pun (a newly created pun in TL) (pp. 192-226).

Meanwhile, alongside the previously mentioned strategies, Venuti's (1995) theory of domestication and foreignization provides a broader view for translating cultural references. It is important to note that audiovisual translators, especially in dubbing, often employ a combination of these strategies, depending on specific humorous expressions and the situational constraints they encounter. Ultimately, it must be emphasized that the perception of the recipient and the audience expectations play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of these strategies and the appreciation of the creativity of the translator.

These translation strategies are not applied uniformly across languages and cultures. For instance, research on Turkish and Persian translations reveal significant differences in terms of tackling humorous elements. Jabbari and Nikkhah Ravizi (2012) investigated American animated movies dubbed into Persian and found that the translators and the dubbing team used a range of strategies such as Delabatista's (1996) pun translation strategies, Leppihalme's (1997) allusion strategies such as retention, replacement by SL/TL name, omission, minimum/literal translation, and Mateo's (1995) strategies for translating irony such as literal TT irony, equivalent effect translation, enhancement, reduction to single meaning.

In contrast to the more constrained and regulated Persian context, Çavuşoğlu's (2023) study of *Shrek* in Turkish dubbing highlights a more flexible target-culture-oriented approach. Although both contexts displayed creative problem-solving and employed strategies like substitution, retention with adaptation, paraphrasing, and addition with no single strategy clearly dominating, they differ significantly in their retention or omission of satirical content.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The Shrek series is, one might say, THE classic of animated films that ingeniously balances humour for children and adults. From wordplay and slapstick comedy to cultural satire and genre-specific jokes, its profound and multidimensional humour is what underpins its widespread appeal (Çavuşoğlu, 2023; Xia et al., 2023). Shrek 2, in particular, stands out for its seamless blend of wordplay, satire, parody, and intertextual references. Yet, it is precisely the elements that make Shrek 2 a comedic success that put the biggest strain on translators' shoulders, especially in dubbing, where linguistic and cultural qualities must be exquisitely treated in order to maintain the humorous value of the movie. Translating Shrek 2's humour

can be likened to teaching an ogre to tap dance: improbable, absurd, and somehow irresistibly entertaining when it succeeds. Based on these identified characteristics, *Shrek 2* is singled out for analysis from the complete *Shrek* series.

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive, and comparative research design to analyse how various types of humour from selected scenes in *Shrek 2* (2004) are rendered in its Persian and Turkish dubbed versions. The research follows an analytical framework to examine how linguistic, cultural, universal, and genre-specific humour is translated and adapted across languages to preserve the humorous impact. The methodology of this study is inspired by Raphaelson-West's (1989) classification of humour, which categorizes jokes into linguistic, cultural, and universal types, with an additional category introduced as genre-specific humour (e.g., dark comedy, sarcasm, adult-oriented jokes).

3.2. Data Selection

The data consists of key humorous scenes from *Shrek 2*. The original English version is compared with:

- The Persian dubbed version, which was sourced from official Iranian dubs by the dubbing studio Glory Entertainment (The Association of Tehran Young Voice Actors; in Persian: انجمن گویندگان جوان تهران). This studio is commissioned under the IRIB but has also increased its dubbing projects from local video companies to directors and even the UN.
- The Turkish dubbed version was sourced from Netflix. However, the dubbing production was conducted by the studio of İmaj Seslendirme (or, in short, İmaj), an Istanbul-based Dubbing studio.

This movie was chosen due to its widespread international popularity over the years after its release and its rich use of diverse humorous elements that appeal to a broad audience, including both children and adults (Çavuşoğlu, 2023). A broad range of humour types were included by selecting scenes based on their diversity of humorous characteristics. The selection of humorous instances was based on a systematic, time-coded breakdown of the film created by the researchers, mainly the corresponding author. Moments were classified as humorous based on established humour theories and typologies, including those by Buijzen and Valkenburg (2004), Attardo and Raskin (1991), Chiaro (2010), etc., which encompass universal, cultural, linguistic, and genre-specific humour. To minimize subjectivity, the initial identification was reviewed collaboratively by the authors, ensuring consistency in classification.

The selected excerpts in the original English version of *Shrek 2* and their corresponding dubbed versions in Persian and Turkish were thoroughly examined and analysed. To identify each instance of humour, the analysis was conducted in a four-step process:

- First, the humorous elements in the transcribed and time-stamped scenes in the English version of *Shrek 2* were identified based on visual, verbal, and contextual cues.

- Second, each identified humorous element was categorized into one of four types—verbal, cultural, universal, or genre-specific—based on the typology proposed by Raphaelson-West (1989). The additional category of genre-specific humour was introduced by the researchers to account for elements such as fairy tale parody and adult humour.

- Third, the corresponding segments in the Persian and Turkish dubbed versions were examined and compared with the original English version to identify how the humour was manipulated and/or altered in the target languages.

- Fourth, the translation strategies applied by the dubbing translators to convey the humour were analysed based on not a singular but a plural established frameworks and theories of audiovisual translation, particularly dubbing and humour translation. This included strategies such as substitution, paraphrasing, addition, adaptation, literal translation, omission, and compensation, following the models proposed by Pedersen (2011), Chiaro (2006, 2008, 2010), and Delabastita (1996), as well as the broader concepts of domestication and foreignization described by Venuti (1995).

This comparative analysis aimed to identify the translation strategies frequently used for different categories of humour and to understand how the humorous effect was maintained, altered, or lost in the dubbing process.

3.3. Classification and Categorization of Humour

To further refine the analysis of humour in *Shrek 2* and the challenges of its translation, it is useful to consider different classifications of humour. Various theories exist on the categorization of humorous elements, such as Zabalbeascoa's (1996, 2005) classification of jokes in translation and Martínez-Sierra's (2006) classification of audiovisual humour in *The Simpsons*. However, although several humour classification models exist, this study will use a modified typology of Raphaelson-West (1989) because of its clarity, functional categorization, and its compatibility with audiovisual media. The model's distinction of universal, cultural, and verbal humour pairs well with the multi-tiered humour strategies present in *Shrek 2*. In addition, its flexible structure allowed for the creation of an additional category: genre-specific humour, which was necessary to accommodate the heavy emphasis placed on fairytale parody and the characteristic of adult-oriented humour within the film. This framework, hence, served to provide both a theoretical framework and room for analytical flexibility when locating and analysing instances of humour in the original and dubbed versions. The resulting four distinct types of humour used in this study are as follows:

- Universal humour, which consists of universally funny elements that tend to be cross-culturally understandable, such as slapstick, visual gags, and general absurdity

- Language-specific (verbal) humour, which relies on morphology, phonetics, and semantics and encompasses examples of wordplay, puns, idioms, irony, rhymes, and alliteration, drawing theoretical insights from Delabastita (1996) and Chiaro (2010).

- Culture-specific humour, which is culturally constructed humour that resonates with a specific community and culture and includes references to pop culture, fairy tales, ethnic jokes, and various forms of intertextuality.

- Genre-specific humour, which captures instances related to tone, style, and topic, including dark humour, adult jokes, sarcasm, dry wit, and self-deprecating humour. This category was added to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the humour in *Shrek* [1], with a characteristic comedic mockery and satirical play with genres.

This categorization allows for a comprehensive, more sensitive reading of the movie's complex and witty humour landscape.

3.4.   Evaluation Criteria

In evaluating the translations, the study defined success not in terms of literal accuracy, but rather in terms of maintaining the humorous function and emotional effect of the source on the audience. Following the model proposed by Gan (2023), a translation was deemed successful if it achieved three core goals: it recreates the intended humorous impact, demonstrates creative problem-solving and cultural adaptation, and remains accessible and engaging for the target audience. Conversely, translations were considered unsuccessful if they failed to deliver humour, caused confusion, undermined emotional tones, or unnecessarily censored or omitted comedic material. These criteria endorse a pragmatic and audience-centred evaluation framework suitable for analysing audiovisual media where often matters of linguistic correctness are subordinated to issues of performance and reception.

Three primary dimensions guided the evaluation process: creativity, cultural adaptation, and audience accessibility. Creativity referred to the translator's ability to come up with inventive solutions and context-sensitive strategies when direct translation was impossible (Chiaro, 2010; Pedersen, 2011). An example would be if a culture-specific joke in English was replaced with a locally relevant joke in Persian or Turkish that received a similar reaction; this was deemed a creative success. Cultural adaptation evaluated the extent to which translations were rendered relatable and appropriate within the target audience's sociocultural context (Venuti, 1995; Vandaele, 2010). This can be exemplified in scenes where, due to sensitivity to censorship constraints, especially in the Persian context, certain themes (e.g., gender roles or bodily humour) were restricted. Audience accessibility examined whether the humour remained understandable and effective for viewers without requiring specialized

knowledge beyond their cultural frame (López González, 2017). The translation of American or British pop-culture references to Persian and Turkish could be an example of this.

Each excerpt was analysed through a qualitative comparative study using these criteria. Translations were assessed as not fully achieving their intended effect if they failed to convey the humour, caused confusion, or departed from the original tone, and as successful if they met all three dimensions (or demonstrated strong effectiveness in at least two). Partial successes or contextually limited adaptations were considered in borderline cases.

Overall, the emphasis was on functional equivalence rather than formal equivalence, hoping to understand whether the translations could achieve a similar reception and emotional effect in the target cultures, as proposed by Nida's (1993) dynamic equivalence model.

4. Analysis

The primary analysis was conducted by the first author, a native speaker of Persian with advanced proficiency in both Turkish and English. Having lived in Iran until the age of thirteen and in Türkiye for the past twelve years, the first author possesses deep cultural and linguistic familiarity with both Persian and Turkish. Additionally, she has advanced command of the English language and culture, which was essential for understanding and interpreting the original humour in Shrek 2. The second author, an Assistant Professor at a university with extensive academic expertise in the English language, specifically translation studies, and a native speaker of Turkish, cross-checked the categorizations and evaluations. All humorous scenes were initially selected, transcribed, and categorized by the first author, who also performed the primary comparative analysis. The second author subsequently reviewed the identified humour types, translation strategies, and success evaluations to ensure intersubjective consistency and analytical reliability. This collaborative approach helped to ensure that the findings were linguistically grounded, culturally informed, and methodologically sound.

4.1.   Verbally Constructed Humour

Shrek 2 is exceptional with its rich and various humour types, especially verbally expressed humour (VEH). Verbally constructed humour, or in other words, linguistic humour, including puns, idioms, word plays, double meanings, and more, is considered one of the greatest challenges faced by translators and dubbing studios. Despite these difficulties, humour translation is not only possible but also an exceptionally creative process, and when handled skilfully, the translation of verbally constructed humour can produce effective and engaging outcomes that resonate with the target audience while preserving the comedic effect of the original. Correspondingly, the Persian and Turkish dubs have employed different strategies to

tackle the challenges of verbal humour, with varying degrees of success. In the following parts, examples from the movie and their dubbing will be demonstrated and analysed.

During the first five minutes of *Shrek 2*, a notable instance of verbally expressed humour is presented, as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Verbal Humorous Elements in a Song

Time Stamp: 00:05:10	Type: Verbal – Wordplay	Scene: [Shrek scoops Fiona up in his arms and walks to the door of his home] [They open the door to find Donkey lying in Shreks chair, singing]

English version:
Donkey: ***One is the loneliest number that youll ever do...***
       Two can be as bad as one

Persian:	Turkish:
" مرا ببوس...برای آخرین بار "	"Tek başına olmak kadar kötü bişey yok... ki hiç yoktan daha iyidir"

In this scene, Donkey is singing the song "One (Is the Loneliest Number)" by Filter (1998). The choice of song is entirely related to the words in the lyrics, which humorously highlight Donkey's loneliness while Shrek and Fiona were on their honeymoon. In the Turkish dubbed version, although not a real song, similar lyrics and melody can be seen: "There's nothing worse than being alone (tek meaning single or one), but at least it's better than nothing". In the translation, there is still a wordplay with numbers and being alone, which would be considered successful preservation due to the achieved creativity, adaptation, and audience accessibility. In contrast, in the Persian version, the song and the lyrics are replaced by an original Persian song by Viguen. The lyrics of the song translate to "Kiss me...for the last time," which captures Donkey feeling down about being alone but completely misses his sense of loneliness. Nevertheless, the song choice compensates for the loss of humour and adds a localized version of the humour in the song because having an old classic Persian song sung by a Donkey in animation is absurd and humorous.

Another example from the first quarter of the movie showcases verbally expressed humour through double meaning, as given in Table 2.

Table 2

Double Meaning in Dialogue

Time Stamp: 00:17:05	Type: Verbal – Double meaning	Scene: [We cut the dining room. Queen Lilian mentions how Shrek's swamp would be a fine place to bring up Shrek and Fiona's children]

English version:
Shrek: (chuckling) Its a bit early to be thinking about that, isnt it?
King Harold: ***Indeed. I just started eating.***

Persian:	**Turkish**:
"واقعا سر غذا اصلا زشته "	"elbette, ama burda yemek yiyoruz"

In the scene presented in Table 2, King Harold makes a seemingly literal statement of what he is doing at that moment; however, there is a double meaning in the utterance, and it is him being disgusted by the idea of Shrek and Fiona's children, which is reflected in his wording and tone.

In the Turkish version, his sentence is translated as "obviously, but we are eating now." His sarcastic tone and the implied disapproval are achieved in the Turkish dub by using the contrastive conjunction "ama", meaning "but", and his disgusted tone.

The Persian version is translated as "It's so inappropriate (to say this) while eating". In the Persian culture, it is impolite and inappropriate to talk about disgusting subjects like poop jokes or suggestive things like sexual innuendos, and with this in mind, the translator has been able to capture King Harold's disgust through this custom. Although both Turkish and Persian dubbings have managed to encapsulate King Harold's intention in his verbal humour, the degree of success in these dubbings is still debatable.

Table 3 presents an instance of an idiom-based wordplay.

Table 3

Wordplay on a Well-Known Expression

Time Stamp: 00:24:36	**Type**: Verbal – wordplay	**Scene**: [King Harold walks back inside the bedroom. Queen Lillian is sitting in bed with a book in hand]

English version:
Queen Lillian: Ugh, you act as if love is totally predictable. Dont you remember when we were young? And oh, we used to walk down by the lily pond, and they were in bloom.
King Harold: (starting to reminisce) Our first kiss... (snapping out of it) its not the same! I dont think you realize that our daughter has married a monster!
Queen Lillian: Oh, stop being such ***a drama king***.

Persian:	**Turkish**:
"اوه! مثل **شاه های توی قصا ها** شدی! "	"Ah! Bu kadar **abartmaktan vazgeç**!"

A drama queen is commonly used to describe an individual who gets furious or too upset over trivial matters. In this sense, Queen Lilian is trying to emphasize the dramatic nature of King Harold's behaviour by using the popular expression 'drama queen' but altering it to 'drama king'. The humour arises from a twist on a well-known colloquial expression, which fits the narrative context as he is a real king.

In Turkish, the expression 'drama king' is omitted, and it is translated to "Ah! Stop exaggerating!", which contains the dramatic element but fails to convey the wordplay into Turkish.

"Drama King" is translated to "The king in fairy tales" in Persian, which fails to capture the dramatic part of this humorous wordplay entirely. However, since most fairy tales are exaggerated stories after all, it can be deduced that King Harold is dramatic; therefore, the degree of success might be open for interpretation.

Rhyme and alliteration are useful tools for creating humour, as well. The example in Table 4 below illustrates this different instance of a verbally constructed humour.

Table 4

Alliteration in Creating Humour

Time Stamp: 00:36:45	Type: Verbal – Alliteration/nearswearing	Scene: [Puss in Boots forcefully steps on Donkeys hoof so that Donkey sheds a tear on Fairy Godmother's card. Donkey screams in pain]
English version: Donkey: You **little**, hairy, **litter-licking [1] sack of [2]**...		
Persian:	"پشمک کوچولو خیلی بی معرفتی..."	**Turkish**: "Ayağıma bastın **kıllı** çocuk."

In this scene, Donkey's alliteration with the letter "L" gives the sentence a rhythmic quality, and his choice of words creates a humorous expression not only through the musical quality but also because the words evoke feline behaviour. Additionally, his unfinished insult cleverly stays within the guidelines of a family-oriented audience but still manages to achieve comic exaggeration and humour.

In the Turkish translation, "you stepped on my foot, you hairy kid," the translator goes for a direct translation strategy by focusing on clarity and quick emotional expression rather than attempting to reproduce the stylistic flourish and falls flat in transferring the rhythmic aspect created by alliteration overall.

The Persian translation "You're so cruel, you little hairball," while not a literal translation, it uses substitution and creative adaptation but also fails to convey the alliteration, the musical element, and the unfinished insult into Persian.

Another notable example appears around the 40-minute mark, where Shrek verbally expresses a humorous phrase through a pun, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Puns as Verbal Humour

Time Stamp:	Type:	Scene:
00:40:37	Verbal Puns/Double meaning	– [Shrek, Donkey, and Puss in Boots find Fairy Godmother's potion factory and are unsure whether to go inside or go back]

English version:
Puss in Boots: Thats the Fairy Godmothers cottage. Shes the largest producer of hexes and potions in the whole kingdom.
Shrek: Then why dont we ***pop in there for a spell?*** Ha-ha! Spell!

Persian:	Turkish:
"پس سری میزنیم به **جادوکده**! ه ه جادوکده"	"o halde gidip neden **büyü yaptırmıyoruz**! Haha biraz büyü."

The word "spell" may refer to "an indeterminate, short period of time" or to "a spoken word or form of words held to have magic power". This pun creates a dual comedic effect by the double meaning of popping in the cottage for a short time and also getting a spell. This pun is contextually fitting as the characters are talking about the Fairy Godmother, who deals in magic, which also enhances the humour.

The Turkish dub, "Then why don't we get cast under a spell, Haha a little spell", defeats the point of the pun and focuses on the magic element of the expression, not the double meaning, or in Delabatista's (1996) words the strategy used is the translation of a pun-to-a zero pun. The strategy used here is primarily adaptation, ensuring that the reference remains understandable within the context of the story, but sacrificing the linguistic wit and layered humour of the source. On the other hand, it might also fall under the category of a pun-to-pun strategy through substitution, taking into consideration that the Turkish version introduces its own form of wordplay. The phrase *"büyü biraz"* can be interpreted both as "grow up a little" and "a bit of magic," depending on intonation and context.

The Persian translation does not reflect the same level of pun-based humour as the original English, but succeeds slightly more in keeping the casual, colloquial tone of "popping in": "Then let's drop by the magic-house! Haha magic-house!" This translation focuses both on the magic element and stopping by somewhere for a short time, and there is a pun-like aspect in the word "magic-house", or as Delabatista (1996) states, a pun was translated to a non-pun; nevertheless, it did not fully capture the wordplay in the pun.

Another example of a pun is present in the scene where Donkey grabs the potion from Shrek and drinks it. Then Puss in Boots makes a comment on Donkey's appearance, which contains a pun.

Table 6

Puns Having a Double Meaning as Verbal Humour

Time Stamp:	Type:	Scene:	
00:49:08	Verbal Puns/verbal irony	–	[Donkey grabs the bottle with his mouth and chugs half of it down. Shrek grabs the bottle]

English version:
Shrek: How do you feel?
Donkey: Well, I dont feel any different. I look any different?
Puss in Boots: You still look like an **ass** to me.

Persian:	Turkish:
„هنوز برای من مثل الاغی“.	"bence hala **eşşeksin**."

In this scene, the humour is constructed around verbal wordplay and sarcasm, hinting at the double meaning of the word "ass." In English, "ass" functions both as a colloquial term for "donkey" and as a mild vulgar expression referring to a person's buttocks. The joke thus operates on two levels: it literally references Donkey's unchanged physical form while simultaneously mocking him through a sarcastic insult. This layered humour presents a significant challenge for translators, especially in dubbing, where timing, cultural sensitivities, and lip-sync constraints must be managed (Delabastita, 1996; Chiaro, 2010).

In the Turkish dubbed version, the translator preserves the sarcastic insult effectively by having Puss say "bence hala eşşeksin," which translates roughly to "I think you're still a donkey." While the emphasis on "eşşek" (donkey) in delivery captures the mocking tone and maintains the audience's laughter, the translation loses the double meaning present in the English "ass." Thus, the Turkish translator opts for the substitution strategy to tone down the vulgarity of the original joke. This choice is likely to balance humour with audience appropriateness, given that *Shrek 2* targets family viewing.

Similarly, the Persian dub renders the line as "هنوز برای من مثل الاغی," which directly translates to "You still look like a donkey to me." Here, too, the sarcasm and tone are retained through the intonation and choice of words. However, Persian offers two words for donkey, and the specific lexical selection indicates the use of adaptation and paraphrasing strategies, where the humour's function (mocking Donkey) is prioritized over preserving the complex linguistic play, but while not surely a pun, there is still verbal irony and wordplay present in this version.

The final example in this section is demonstrated in Table 7.

Table 7

Puns in a Popular Expression

Time Stamp:	Type:	Scene:
00:49:46	Verbal – Puns	

	[Shrek drinks the rest of the potion. His belly starts rumbling, and Donkey and Puss in Boots take cover behind a log. Shrek lets out a loud fart, and the two come out from cover]

English version:
Donkey: Ooh, got to be. I think you grabbed the "***Farty Ever After***" potion.

Persian:	**Turkish**:
دست ننت درد نکنه با این **شربت** دزدیدنت. مال **تخیلیه گاز** " "دزدیدی؟	"olamaz bu şişeler karışmış olmalı! ***Osuruk iksiri*** içmiş!

Donkey's line parodies the fairy tale cliché "happily ever after" by inserting the word "farty," thereby comically undermining the romantic ideal with a childish joke. The visual humour, combined with Donkey's linguistic pun, makes this a clever, verbally constructed humour. The Turkish dubbed version translates the line as "Oh no, these bottles must have gotten mixed up! He drank the fart potion!" Here, the translator successfully preserves the basic humorous idea of the fart-related joke and keeps the comedic tone appropriate for a family audience.

However, the Turkish version abandons the specific wordplay on "happily ever after," and instead goes for a straightforward description. The strategy used here is adaptation through simplification.

In Persian, the line roughly translates to "Thanks a lot, genius, for stealing the potion. You stole a gas leakage potion?" Although the original pun for the fairy tale parody is omitted, by using a localization and cultural adaptation strategy, the comedic aspect is partially maintained. In addition, in the Persian version, the vulgarity of the joke is toned down to fit Iranian cultural norms about public decency.

4.2. Culturally Constructed Humour

Much of the humour in *Shrek 2* is extremely culture-dependent and often references American pop culture, Western Fairy Tales, and Medieval Parody, creating real challenges for translators in terms of equally preserving the humour across different audiences. The different interpretations of the Persian and Turkish dubbing teams are illustrated here through the strategies of retention, adaptation, substitution, omission, etc.

One brief yet culturally charged moment in *Shrek 2* parodies the iconic "Spiderman kiss" from the 2002 *Spiderman* movie, in which the superhero kisses Mary Jane upside-down. In this scene, the humour relies heavily on the audience's shared pop-cultural knowledge. In the Turkish dubbed version, the visual gag is kept exactly as in the original, with no censorship or alteration. The Persian dub cuts the kiss completely and censors the moment altogether. Due to Iranian broadcasting and dubbing codes, the depiction of romantic physical intimacy, particularly kissing, in movies aimed at a general audience is restricted (Jabbari & Ravizi, 2012).

In another example, as shown in Table 8 below, a moment involves cultural humour that combines a fairy tale reference (Pinocchio) with American lifestyle imagery, which is the idea of a casual Sunday barbecue, a common social activity, and a symbol of relaxed weekend culture in the U.S.

Table 8

Cultural Humour in an American Setting

Time Stamp: 00:06:30	Type: Culture Specific American culture	Scene: [Donkey is leaving Shreks cottage because he made him leave to be – alone with Fiona, and Donkey is whining and nagging while going out.]

English version:
Donkey: Oh, okay. All right, cool. I guess, uh, me and Pinocchio was gonna catch a tournament, anyway, so uh…. maybe Ill see yall Sunday for a barbecue or something.

Persian:	**Turkish**:
منو پینوکیو میخواستیم خرم به هوا بازی کنیم. پس بنبراین " " یکشنبه توی مسابقه میبینمت	"Pinokyo ile bir turnuvaya katılmamız gerekiyor, sizinle Pazar günü mangal yaparız, pijamalarınızı da giyin."

The Turkish translation is almost identical to the original. It preserves the fairy tale allusion to Pinocchio and the weekend barbecue culture, as Türkiye shares similar social practices: Sunday is a day off, and barbecues are a popular family activity. The translators also add a small, playful touch with the phrase "pijamalarınızı da giyin" ("wear your pajamas, too"), reinforcing Donkey's informal, playful tone.

In the Persian dub, however, more significant adaptation is necessary. Iran's official weekend is on Thursday and Friday, meaning Sunday is a working day. Thus, a literal translation mentioning Sunday would confuse the Iranian audience. The Persian version changes the day while reworking the line to suit local expectations: "Me and Pinocchio wanted to play donkey-in-the-air, so we'll meet at the competition on Sunday." Notably, the phrase "خرم بههوا" ("donkey-in-the-air") replaces the tournament reference with a localized idiomatic game term, "gorgam be hava," translated as "wolf-in-air", which is really the game of Tag, but adapted for Donkey's character. This reflects a substitution strategy used to add back the humorous effect caused by Donkey's rant and his tone.

In another scene, Donkey's exclamation, "Wow! It's going to be champagne wishes and caviar dreams from now on!" functions as cultural humour found in Western lives of luxury and indulgence. The humour lies not just in the imagery but also in its irony since Donkey and Shrek are anything but glamorous figures. This contrast is illustrated in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Western Cultural Norms as Humour

Time Stamp:	Type:	Scene:
00:11:26	Culture Specific – Western culture	[Donkey is on the back of Shrek and Fionas carriage, observing the surroundings in the kingdom of Far Far Away]

English version:
Donkey: Wow! Its going to be ***champagne wishes and caviar dreams*** from now on!

Persian:	**Turkish**:
پسر چه حالی میده! بریم یه دست ***چلو کباب سلطانی*** بزنیم " " تو رگ حالشو ببریم تو نمیری.	"Ana! bundan sonra ***şampanya içip sadece havyar yiyeceğiz!*** "

The Turkish dub translates this line almost directly: "Oh my! From now on, we'll drink champagne and only eat caviar!" This faithful translation retains both the imagery and cultural references of the original and assumes that the Turkish audience is familiar enough with champagne and caviar as symbols of luxury. The translator uses a retention strategy, maintaining the semantic and emotional impact of the original line without any significant cultural adjustment. This strategy is effective since modern Turkish culture, especially through media and globalization, has absorbed many such Western luxury symbols throughout the years (Çavuşoğlu, 2023).

In contrast, the Persian dub rewrites the line as " پسر چه حالی میده! بریم یه دست چلو کباب سلطانی بزنیم تورگ حالشو ببریم تو نمیری," which can be roughly translated as "Boy, this feels amazing! Let's go and devour a Chelow Kebab Soltani and really enjoy it!" Although caviar is also a symbol of luxury in Iran, alcohol is not; hence, here, the translator substitutes champagne and caviar with Chelow Kebab Soltani, a quintessentially luxurious Persian dish consisting of rice and premium quality meat kebab. The translator also infuses the sentence with colloquial Persian ("بزنیم تو رگ" meaning "let's inject it into our veins") to enhance the humour and local element. This approach represents a creative substitution and cultural adaptation strategy.

Figure 1

Screenshot of the ad Sign

The case of humour goes both ways in the dubbing. In this scene at 00:11:41 time stamp, Shrek and Donkey come across a big advertisement sign for the Fairy Godmother, and her magic wand is moving up and down. There is no humorous aspect present in the original English version or in the Turkish dub. In the Turkish version, Shrek simply says, "sonsuza kadar mutlu yaşamak için peri anne," which translates to "Fairy Godmother for living happily ever after." This is a direct translation of what is written on the billboard seen in the film.

However, the Persian dub takes a much more creative and adaptive approach. Here, it is Donkey who speaks, saying, "شریک اینجارو باش مادمازل برقی," which roughly translates to "Hey Shreik (a botched version of Shrek's name), look at Mademoiselle Electricity over here!" The translator inserts extra cultural humour by having Donkey spontaneously nickname the Fairy Godmother "Mademoiselle Electricity" ("مادمازل برقی") because of her moving magic wand in the advertisement. This is an example of a cultural adaptation and addition strategy. Giving humorous nicknames is a common cultural practice in Persian popular culture, often used to mock or exaggerate someone's traits affectionately or sarcastically. By doing this, the Persian version not only preserves but amplifies the humour, making the scene more lively and relatable to its viewers.

Table 10 presents another moment that blends cultural humour with absurdity in a scene where, after a dramatic buildup suggesting something dangerous, the characters arrive at a drive-thru window modelled after an American fast-food restaurant.

Table 10

American Fast-Food Culture as Humour

Time Stamp:	Type:	Scene:
00:26:11	Culture Specific – American fast-food culture	[Fairy godmother, Prince Charming, King Harold, and two men go through a drive-through, and Fairy Godmother rolls down the window to place her order]

English version:
Fairy Godmother: Harold...
[The men crack their knuckles]
Fairy Godmother: You force me to do something I really dont want to do.

[Fairy Godmother rolls down the window]
King Harold: (gasps) Where are we?
[The carriage is stopped at a drive-thru window]
 PRICILLA: Well, hi, there! Welcome to **_Friars Fat Boy_** ,[1] may I take your order?
Fairy Godmother: My diet is ruined! I hope youre happy. (turns to the clerk) Er okay.
Two Renaissance Wraps, no mayo chili ring... [2]
Prince Charming: Ill have **_the Medieval Meal._** [3]

Persian:	**Turkish**:
[1] " سلام به رستوران ما **خوش اومدین!** چی میل دارید؟ "	"[1] Merhaba! **Şişmanın Yerine** hoşgeldiniz"
" دو تا بسته ی **باقالا قاتق** بدون سس [2] "	"[2] iki **Rönesans** dürüm mayonezsiz ve soğan halkası"
"من **سوسیس ترکی** میخورم 3"	"[3] **ortaçağı menüsü**"

Specifically, the "Friar's Fat Boy" drive-thru parodies the famous Bob's Big Boy chain, with added medieval references in the food names ("Renaissance Wraps" and "Medieval Meal"), humorously combining modern fast-food culture with the fairy-tale setting. The Turkish dubbing translator domesticates creatively, keeping most of the surface display of the puns intact. The restaurant name is now changed to "Şişmanın Yeri", keeping the medieval pun of "Friar's Fat Boy", which is a little side reference to Bob's Big Boy. Notably, this translation is not only humorous but also culturally relevant, as similar expressions are widely used in the Turkish context and so resonate well with the target audience. Likewise, "Medieval Meal" and "Renaissance Wraps" are mostly retained in Turkish, which preserves the medieval vs modern contrast in the original. The Turkish dub keeps its intended meaning mostly by employing a cultural adaptation through retention strategy.

The domestication is far more apparent in the Persian dub. The restaurant name is completely omitted; instead, Priscilla offers them a generic welcome: " سلام به رستوران ما خوش اومدین! چی میلدارید؟" literally meaning "Welcome to our restaurant! What would you like?". two دو تا بسته ی باقالا قاتق بدون سس—"Renaissance Wraps" are turned into a Persian regional dish (packs of baghali ghatogh without sauce") and "Medieval Meal" gets turned into سوسیس ترکی ("Turkish sausage"). The Persian translators, hence, use complete substitution and cultural domestication strategies. They take away the medieval and junk-food references and replace them with more easily recognized, local foods that resonate with Iranian audiences. While such a move ensures that the comic tone of ordering food casually at a drive-thru is retained, it does so at the expense of the layered satire, which draws modern consumer culture into the realm of fairy-tale absurdity.

There is another scene where King Harold sends Shrek and Donkey into the forest to be intercepted by Puss in Boots. In the original English version, Donkey points to a bush shaped

like a voluptuous figure and calls it "Shirley Bassey". This is a clear example of culture-specific humour, as illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11

Pop-Culture as Humour

Time Stamp:	Type:	Scene:
00:32:55	Culture-Specific – pop culture	[Donkey points to a figure-shaped bush in the forest]

English version:
Donkey: "Past the sinister trees with those scary-looking branches." Shrek: Check. [Donkey runs over to a bush in the shape of a busty figure]   Donkey: Yeah, and theres the bush shaped like ***Shirley Bassey***!

Persian:	**Turkish**:
"درخت چغاله بادوم"	"**Shirley Bassey**"

The joke assumes the audience's familiarity with Shirley Bassey, a famous Welsh singer who is well known for her association with James Bond music. The humour lies in the incongruity with which a simple bush can be said to be related to a female singer which produces an unexpected and absurd image that depends on cultural knowledge and the visual appearance. This, therefore, falls very nicely into incongruity theory in humour (Attardo & Raskin 1991, 2017; Attardo 1994, 2001) since it creates a cognitive mismatch between what is seen and what is referenced in a funny way. The Turkish dub keeps the name verbatim without addition or explicitation. In Pedersen's (2011) framework, this strategy can be classified as a form of retention, which keeps the original cultural reference (Shirley Bassey) even though the local Turkish audience may not fully recognize her. This also aligns with foreignization in Venuti's (1995) terms, preserving the source culture reference without local adaptation. In contrast, the Persian dub changes the reference entirely, substituting it with a "Persian green almond tree". This strategy is best categorized under substitution according to Pedersen's (2011) classification: replacing a culturally specific reference with a new one more accessible to the target audience. It also fits into what Chiaro (2010) describes as replacing a culturally loaded reference with a different, target-culture-friendly humorous equivalent. Here, the Persian dub employs a domestication strategy, adapting the content so that the audience can relate to it more naturally. While this version makes the scene culturally accessible, it loses the layered humour that comes from likening a bush to a famous diva's silhouette, and the sexual innuendo and absurdity are diluted; nevertheless, it is still considered funny in Persian culture.

4.3.   Universal Humour

Universally constructed humour, comprised of physical comedy, slapstick, and absurdity, typically survives translation relatively in one piece and without alteration due to its reliance on visual and situational cues rather than linguistic or cultural knowledge (Vandaele, 2010). While the delivery and tone may vary across versions, the humour is often accessible. Universally expressed humour is usually dependent on visual elements; however, there are a few examples from *Shrek 2* that align with this category.

Table 12 presents the scene where Shrek, Donkey, and Puss in Boots go inside Fairy Godmother's cottage, where they come across the receptionist called Jerome, who immediately tells them that Fairy Godmother is not in the building.

Table 12

Situational Contradiction as Humour

Time Stamp: 00:41:00	**Type:** Universal– situational humour	**Scene:** [The three enter through the front door of the cottage and into a reception area. At the desk sits an elf writing in a book.
English version: Shrek: Hi. Im here to see the -- Jerome: The Fairy Godmother. I'm sorry. ***She is not in*** [***Fairy Godmothers voice sounds from a speaker system next to the receptionist***]		
Fairy Godmother: Jerome, coffee, and a Monte Cristo. Now! Jerome: [sighs] Yes, Fairy Godmother. Right away.		
Persian: "اجروم. قهوه و یخ بستنی همین الان"		**Turkish:** "Jerome, kahve ve ***dört-karışık tost***. Hemen!"

The comedic effect stems from the immediate contradiction: Jerome claims that the Fairy Godmother is not available, but she instantly responds through the speaker, giving orders as if she were present and in charge. This falls under situational or incongruity humour, where expectations are exchanged for a quick laugh.

In the Turkish dubbed version, the translator changes "Monte Cristo" to "dört-karışık tost" ("four-mixed toast"), which domesticates the reference. This move uses substitution as per Pedersen's (2011) strategies, and it can also be seen as a form of domestication (Venuti, 1995).

In the Persian dub, the Monte Cristo is replaced with "یخ بستنی" ("ice cream"), which again is a clear case of substitution. However, unlike the Turkish version, the Persian adaptation introduces a slight shift in tone: ordering ice cream, especially in an office context, adds an extra layer of absurdity to the scene. It still preserves the original humour's incongruity but enhances it a little by making Fairy Godmother's command sound even more out of place.

Figure 2

Screenshot of the mud Bath

In the first few minutes of the movie, when Shrek and Fiona are on their honeymoon, they go to a mud bath and fart in it while the fairies react with disgust. This clearly falls under the category of universal humour. Bodily humour is a classic example of slapstick humour and has been a recurring element in cinematic comedy for decades. It plays on simple, childish behaviour and reaction to it, resulting in laughter through immediate imagination and absurdity, which resonates with the relief theory.

In the Turkish dubbed version, the scene is preserved as it is: the farting and the fairies' reaction remain intact. This means the translators opted for retention. This approach reflects a belief that the Turkish audience, like the global audience, would find bodily humour amusing without the need for domestication or censorship.

In contrast, in the Persian dub, the scene is censored, meaning the farting joke is omitted to tone down not only the bodily humour but mainly due to Shrek and Fiona having a mud bath together, which is considered inappropriate according to the IRIB guidelines.

4.4. Genre-Specific Humour

Genre-specific humour, especially adult jokes, dark humour, sarcasm, and euphemisms, poses significant challenges for translators working within the constraints of child-oriented media in conservative or semi-conservative societies. DreamWorks has been known to include edgy, dark, and adult humour in their animations to appeal to adult audiences as well; therefore, many instances of various genre-specific humour are determined.

An example of adult humour can be seen in the part where Shrek and Fiona come back from their honeymoon and talk to Donkey in Shrek's swamp.

Table 13

Adult Humour Instance as Genre-Specific Humour

Time Stamp: 00:05:14	Type: Genre-specific – Adult humour	Scene: [Shrek scoops Fiona about in his arms and walks to the door of his home. They open the door to find Donkey laying in Shreks chair]

English version:
Donkey: Shrek! Fiona! Arent you two a sight for sore eyes! Give us a hug, Shrek, ***you old love machine***. And look at you, Mrs. Shrek. ***How bout a side of sugar*** for the steed?

Persian:	**Turkish**:
چشای بابا قوریم دارن درست میبینن؟ یالا بغلم کن ببینم **تو ای دلدار صمیمی تو ای یار قدیمی**! اوهوهو اینجارو بپا خانم "شریک یه خرده عسل رو این لبا بریز بینیم.	"Şrek! Fiona! Ay ne kadar da yakışmışınız birbirinize! Hadi sarıl bana Şrek **seni çapkın seni**! Bayan Şrek'e bakın hele! Eşşeğe bir öpücüğe ne dersiniz?"

Donkey's enthusiastic greeting, calling Shrek a "love machine" and asking for a "side of sugar" from Fiona, contains adult-oriented, genre-specific humour. Donkey flirts lightly with sexual innuendo, with a playful, exaggerated language. The phrase "love machine" particularly suggests Shrek's implied sexual prowess, an adult joke that is humorous but subtle enough to slip into a children's movie without crossing a line.

In the Turkish dub, the translators chose to tone down the "love machine" reference. Donkey says "seni çapkın seni," which roughly means "you little flirty!" This softens the sexual innuendo significantly while keeping a playful tone. Here, the translation strategy seems to combine adaptation and generalization (Pedersen, 2011). Although some of the adult nuance is lost, the flirtatiousness remains.

In the Persian dub, the translators radically rephrased the entire dialogue while keeping the humorous energy. Instead of preserving exact phrases like "love machine," they created a friendly, exaggerated greeting: "ای دلدار صمیمی تو ای یار قدیمی" ("Oh, my sincere sweetheart, my old comrade!") and then jokingly inviting Fiona to "pour some honey on these lips," which keeps a hint of flirtatious imagery. The approach here shows creative problem-solving where the function (humorous, exaggerated affection) is preserved over the form (literal translation).

Being comedically accepting and multiculturally sensitive for its time, there are humorous but queer elements mentioned in a few scenes here and there. These scenes, containing what might now be called "woke humour", add to the diversity of genre-specific humour in this movie. One such instance occurs when Prince Charming finally gets to the tower where Fiona is locked up and finds a wolf reading a 'pork illustrated' magazine instead of Fiona.

Table 14

Woke/Queer Culture as Genre-Specific Humour

Time Stamp: 00:25:37	Type: Genre-specific – Woke/queer humour	Scene: [King Harold gets into Fairy Godmother's carriage and sees Prince Charming.]

English version:
King Harold: Charming! Oh! Is that you? My gosh! Its been years! How -when…when, when, when did you get back?
Prince Charming: (calmly) Oh, about 5 minutes ago, actually… (angrily) after I endured blistering winds! Scorching desert! I climbed to the highest room of the tallest Fairy Godmother: Mummy can handle this… (continuing her sons rant) He endures blistering winds and scorching desert! He climbs to the highest bloody room of the tallest bloody tower!
King Harold: But, but, but…
Fairy Godmother: And what does he find? Some ***gender-confused wolf*** telling him that his princess—

Persian:	**Turkish**:
"گرگ احمق!"	"**Gerizekalı kurt!**"

This scene blends genre-specific humour with a touch of culture-specific humour. The humour hinges on two main elements: first, the exaggerated, melodramatic rant by Prince Charming and his mother, which mocks traditional fairy tale quests; second, the phrase "gender-confused wolf," which is a playful, edgy joke about the Big Bad Wolf's appearance and behaviour. The term hints at gender fluidity in a light, slightly controversial way, which is intended to be humorous through surprise and absurdity.

In the Turkish dub, the term "gender-confused wolf" is changed to "gerizekalı kurt", literally, "idiot wolf." This is a clear case of substitution due to the potential backlash of the audience finding the original version controversial or inappropriate for children's media. While this choice offers a more neutral alternative and avoids the potential negative feedback, it also eliminates the layered, playful social commentary and satirical humour.

Similarly, in the Persian dub, the "gender-confused wolf" becomes "گرگ احمق" ("gorge ahmagh" = "stupid wolf"). Given the stricter cultural context in Iran, particularly regarding gender representation in media, this choice is predictable and necessary for the dub to be broadcast without censorship.

Other genres of humour in *Shrek 2* are self-deprecating humour and sarcasm. An example containing both can be observed in the scene where, right after Puss in Boots' attack on them, Donkey and Shrek want to go to the Fairy Godmother's cottage, and Puss in Boots wants to accompany them, but Donkey is against it.

Table 15

Sarcasm and Self-Deprecating Humour as Genre-Specific Humour

Time Stamp:	Type: Genre-specific		Scene:
00:37:25	Sarcasm/self-deprecating jokes	–	[Shrek and Donkey start walking off]

English version:
Puss in Boots: Stop, Ogre! I have misjudged you.
Shrek: ***Join the club. Weve got jackets*** . [1]
Puss in Boots: On my honour, I am obliged to accompany you until I have saved your life as you have spared me mine. [2]
Donkey: Im sorry, ***the position of annoying talking animals has already been taken***.[3]
Lets go, Shrek! Shrek?

Persian:	**Turkish**:
" ابفرما تو دم در بده ¹"	"¹ Külube hoş geldin! Ceket de veriyoruz."
"² به شرافتم قسم تا وقتی زندگیت را نجات نداده	"² Söz veriyorum! Hayatını kurtaracağıma kadar sana hizmet edeceğim çünkü sen benim hayatımı bağışladın."
" ام در کنارت خواهم ماند !	"³ Özür dilerim ama konuşan sinir bozucu hayvanların kontenjanı çoktan doldu!"
ببخشید حضرت آقا جاتونو دادیم گدا اولی "³ " !اورداشت برد	

In the original English version, this scene is filled with different humour types across three quick exchanges: First, Shrek's "Join the club. We've got jackets" is a clear example of sarcastic humour, which is dry and witty. Second, Puss in Boots' vow bears cultural humour, referencing the language and ideals of medieval chivalry that add a playful nod to fairy tale traditions. Third, Donkey's line about "the position of annoying talking animals" is self-deprecating humour because he humorously acknowledges his own annoying nature.

In the Turkish dub, Shrek's sarcastic line is translated directly as "Külube hoş geldin! Ceket de veriyoruz." ("Welcome to the club! We also give jackets.") which corresponds to a direct translation (Pedersen, 2011). Puss in Boots' chivalric declaration is translated almost identically, but the Turkish version may not fully capture the full medieval dramatic delivery of the original. The translation focuses on literal meaning ("Söz veriyorum...") without emphasizing the medieval idea of "honour" or dramatizing it in a way that highlights the medieval setting. Donkey's joke is also translated almost word-for-word: "Özür dilerim ama konuşan sinir bozucu hayvanların kontenjanı çoktan doldu!" ("I'm sorry but the quota for annoying talking animals is already full!"). This retention with minor adaptation perfectly maintains the self-deprecating humour just as it is.

In the Persian dub, the approach is more flexible and inventive. For Shrek's sarcastic line, the Persian version "ابفرما تو دم در بده!" ("Come right in, don't stand at the door!") changes the words but retains the sarcastic tone by hinting that Shrek is sarcastically welcoming him into his imaginary club. This reflects substitution combined with functional translation, focusing on the message rather than the literal words, which is effective at maintaining Shrek's sarcasm for the Persian audience. Puss in Boots' vow is translated as "به شرافتم قسم..." ("I swear on my honour...") and delivered with a dramatized tone that fully preserves the medieval chivalric idea. Donkey's line undergoes the most creative transformation: " ببخشید حضرت آقا جاتونو دادیم گدا اولی ورداشت برد!" ("Sorry, Your Excellency, your place was already taken by the previous beggar."). By making Donkey call Puss "Your Excellency" and indirectly calling him "beggar" at the same time, the translator has succeeded in maintaining the sarcastic tone of Donkey, and

by indirectly declaring donkey as "the previous beggar", the message that Donkey is self-mocking and recognizes his own absurdity is conveyed perfectly, which without doubt, makes this a genius translation.

In another scene, King Harold, Fairy Godmother, and Prince Charming discuss Charming and Fiona's situation. As shown in Table 16, the whole idea of a "strong, handsome, honourable prince" in traditional fairy tales is ironically questioned and parodied in this particular scene.

Table 16

Parody and Irony as Genre-Specific Humour

Time Stamp: 01:02:24	Type: Genre-specific – Parody/irony	Scene: [Charming, Fairy Godmother and King Harold are conversing while Shrek, Donkey, and Puss in Boots are eavesdropping.]
English version: King Harold: Well, Im afraid Fiona isnt really warming up to Prince Charming. Prince Charming: ***Umm, F-Y-I, not my fault.***		
Persian: " آ به من چه. همينه كه هست. "	**Turkish**: "**Oha falan oldum yani**. Bu benim hatam değil."	

This moment captures a particular type of genre-specific humour: a parody of the classic fairy tale prince. Prince Charming's use of the modern, casual acronym "F-Y-I" (For Your Information) is agitating and unsettling in a medieval setting. It mocks the traditional fairy tale expectation that princes are noble, brave, and powerful. Instead, this Charming is petty, entitled, immature, and a mama's boy.

In the Turkish dub, the line becomes "Oha falan oldum yani. Bu benim hatam değil." ("I was like wow or something. It's not my fault."). Here, the translator uses substitution, forgoing the attempt to keep the acronym "F-Y-I," which eliminates the medieval-modern language clash. However, Prince Charming's whiny, immature, and dramatic tone is successfully maintained by adding a typical exaggerated Turkish slang that teenagers might use ("oha falan oldum" is very informal and expressive).

In the Persian dub, the line becomes "آ به من چه. همينه كه هست." ("Oh, it's not my concern. That's just the way it is."). Similarly, the Persian dub drops the "F-Y-I" acronym and rephrases the line in a casual, bratty tone that fits a spoiled attitude. Again, this strategy corresponds to substitution, focusing on maintaining Prince Charming's self-centred, dramatic persona.

This comparative analysis shows that the Turkish version of *Shrek 2*, as opposed to the Persian version, remains true to the original text in terms of keeping a humorous spirit and tone. This outcome may result from a conjunction of several factors, including fewer censorship restrictions, greater cultural proximity to Western media conventions, and more flexible dubbing traditions in Türkiye.

It is observed in the selected examples that Turkish translators often employ substitution and slight paraphrasing to preserve jokes while maintaining lip-sync, sometimes sacrificing literal references but sustaining comic tone and impact. Persian translators, operating within stricter boundaries of censorship and cultural sensitivities, more frequently resorted to omission or heavy domestication, leading to a greater loss of layered humour but added extra localized humour to compensate for the loss in the original version.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the translatability of humour in *Shrek 2* and demonstrated that different types of humour respond differently to cultural and linguistic translation challenges. The analysis illustrates that universal humour, which is comprised of elements like physical comedy and situational incongruity, remained largely intact across both the Turkish and Persian dubs. This supports Vandaele's (2010) claim that visually constructed humour is the humour that most consistently resonates with audiences across cultures. Verbal humour, including puns, wordplay, and alliteration, proved to be the most mouldable due to the freedom of not having to stick to a visual cue given. Both dubs frequently resorted to "pun-to-zero-pun" or "pun-to-non-pun" strategies (Delabastita, 1996), prioritizing clarity and propriety over linguistic accuracy. Culture-specific references, such as the "Shirley Bassey" gag or "champagne wishes and caviar dreams," were maintained in the Turkish version through foreignization (Venuti, 1995) but were often domesticated in the Persian version to ensure audience comprehension and avoid violating the guidelines established by the IRIB and facing censorship. Finally, genre-specific humour, being adult humour, sarcasm, and fairy-tale parody, was altered more heavily in the Persian dub to adhere to local norms, whereas the Turkish dub preserved more of the original's satirical edge, which confirms Gan's (2023) argument that censorship and cultural context can define how humour is transferred (Gan, 2023).

Overall, the Turkish dub proved more successful in preserving *Shrek 2*'s original humour and cultural references across all categories. It consistently remained true to the universal gags and situational incongruities and only ever so lightly domesticated adult-oriented or potentially sensitive jokes to suit broadcast standards. The Persian dub, while it was often more creatively adaptive by substituting local idioms and inventing new humorous details, tended to omit or neutralize several key layers of verbal and cultural humour. These omissions sometimes led to a loss of the original's satirical edge and nuanced wordplay.

These findings reinforce the value of a dynamic equivalence approach (Nida, 1993) in audiovisual translation: translators must carefully balance loyalty to the source text with the target audience's expectations and cultural framework of the target languages. As no single, blanket theory for translating humour is established, the most effective approach seems to be

employing a hybrid strategy maintaining universal elements, foreignizing widely popular references, and creatively domesticating potentially sensitive content.

Theoretically, this study contributes to translation studies by mapping which humour categories are the ablest at enduring cross-cultural transfer, especially in the context of lesser-analysed language pairs such as Turkish and Persian. It also highlights which types of humour demand creative solutions and inventive effort.

This research, however, is limited to a single movie (*Shrek 2*), a single year, and two language contexts. Future studies could examine additional versions of the *Shrek* franchise or other animated series across different time periods to evaluate the generalizability of these patterns. Moreover, integrating audience reception analysis into the research through surveys, focus groups, or psychophysiological measures would provide empirical evidence of how translation choices affect viewer engagement and laughter. Finally, comparing further language pairs, preferably more rarely approached languages with different cultural norms, would help determine which strategies are universally effective and which are culture-bound.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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