Continuum Advances in Translation

Translation, Humour and The Media

Edited by **Delia Chiaro**

continuum

Translation, Humour and the Media

Continuum Advances in Translation Studies
Series Editor: Jeremy Munday is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Leeds, UK.

Continuum Advances in Translation Studies publishes cutting-edge research in the fields of translation studies. This field has grown in importance in the modern, globalized world, with international translation between languages a daily occurrence. Research into the practices, processes and theory of translation is essential and this series aims to showcase the best in international academic and professional output.

Translation, Humour and the Media

Translation and Humour

Volume 2

Edited by
Delia Chiaro

Continuum International Publishing Group
The Tower Building
11 York Road
London SE1 7NX

80 Maiden Lane
Suite 704
New York, NY 10038

www.continuumbooks.com

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-4411-3788-3 (hardcover)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Typeset by Newgen Imaging Systems Pvt Ltd, Chennai, India
Printed and bound in Great Britain by the MPG Books Group

Contents

List of Illustrations

Figures

Tables

Series Preface

The aim of this new series is to provide an outlet for advanced research in the broad interdisciplinary field of translation studies. Consisting of monographs and edited themed collections of the latest work, it should be of particular interest to academics and postgraduate students researching in translation studies and related fields, but also to advanced students studying translation and interpreting modules.

Translation studies has enjoyed huge international growth over recent decades in tandem with the expansion in both the practice of translation globally and in related academic programmes. The understanding of the concept of translation itself has broadened to include not only interlingual but also various forms of intralingual translation. Specialized branches or sub-disciplines have developed for the study of interpreting, audiovisual translation and sign language, among others. Translation studies has also come to embrace a wide range of types of intercultural encounter and transfer, interfacing with disciplines as varied as applied linguistics, comparative literature, computational linguistics, creative writing, cultural studies, gender studies, philosophy, postcolonial studies, sociology, and so on. Each provides a different and valid perspective on translation, and each has its place in this series.

This is an exciting time for translation studies, and the new *Continuum Advances in Translation Studies* series promises to be an important new plank in the development of the discipline. As General Editor, I look forward to overseeing the publication of important new work that will provide insights into all aspects of the field.

Jeremy Munday
General Editor
University of Leeds, UK

This page intentionally left blank

Notes on Contributors

Delia Chiaro is Professor of English Language and Translation at the University of Bologna's Advanced School in Modern Languages for Interpreters and Translators and Chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in Translation, Languages and Culture. Since publishing *The Language of Jokes: Analysing Verbal Play* in 1992 (London, Routledge) she has combined her interest in verbally expressed humour with her passion for cinema by examining what occurs when verbal humour in English is transformed into dubbed or subtitled filmic products. As well as considering the transformations which cinematic dialogues undergo, she is a keen observer of audience perception to the translated humour and applies methodologies taken from the social sciences to the field of Translation Studies to examine recipients' reactions. Her publications include *Humor in Interaction*, co-edited with Neal Norrick (John Benjamins, 2009), a chapter on humour and translation in the *Primer in Humor Studies* (Victor Raskin (ed.), Mouton De Gruyter, 2008) and a chapter in *Reading 'Little Britain'* (I.B. Taurus, 2010).

As well as being the author of numerous publications, she has been invited to lecture across Europe, in Asia and New Zealand.

Rachele Antonini is a lecturer in English Language and Translation at the Department of Studies on Translation, Languages and Cultures of the Advanced School for Interpreting and Translation, University of Bologna in Forlì, Italy. Her research interests focus on the sociolinguistics of Irish Gaelic (with Li Wei and Karen Corrigan 'The Irish language in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland'. In U. Ammon, K. J. Mattheier and P. Nelde (eds), *Language Policy and Small Languages, Special Issue Sociolinguistica: International Yearbook of European Sociolinguistics*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 118–28, 2002), the perception of dubbing and subtitled humour ('The perception of subtitled humour in Italy: An empirical study'. In Delia Chiaro (ed.) *Humor, Special Edition Humor and Translation*, 18, 2,

Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 209–25, 2005; 'SAT, BLT, Spirit Biscuits, and the Third Amendment: What Italians make of the cultural references contained in dubbed texts'. In Yves Gambier, Miriam Shlesinger and Radegundis Stolze (eds), *Doubts and Directions in Translation Studies: Selected Contributions from the EST Congress, Lisbon 2004*. 153–167, 2007), the teaching of oral language mediation ('Training the future mediators how (not to) take sides in language mediation'. In Garzone, G. e Catenaccio, P. (eds), *Language and Bias in Specialized Discourse*, Milano: CUEM, 245–57, 2008), child language brokering (Antonini (ed.) *Child Language Brokering: An Overview of Patterns and Trends in Current Research*, Special issue of MediAzioni, Forthcoming). The use of research methodologies borrowed and adapted from the Social Sciences and particularly from sociolinguistics (questionnaires and interviews) is the common denominator of all her research activities. The results of her studies in these research fields have been presented and discussed at various international conferences. She has been working as a freelance interpreter, translator and subtitler for the past 18 years. Since 2003 she has been teaching English, linguistic mediation, liaison interpreting and simultaneous interpreting at university undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as teaching English language modules in screen writing courses funded by the European Social Fund.

Chiara Bucaria graduated in translation from the Advanced School of Modern Languages for Interpreters and Translators of the University of Bologna, Italy, from which she also received her Ph.D. in translation and cultural studies. She was awarded a Master's degree in English from Youngstown State University (USA) and in 2006 was the recipient of the International Society for Humor Studies' (ISHS) Graduate Student Award. Chiara Bucaria currently holds a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in Translation, Languages and Cultures (University of Bologna) investigating the impact of censorship and manipulation in translated TV programmes. Her main research interests include humour studies, audiovisual translation, child language brokering and the relationship between censorship and translation.

Dirk Delabastita is professor of English literature and literary theory at the FUNDP Namur (University of Namur). He wrote his Ph.D. on Shakespeare's wordplay in *Hamlet* and the problems of translating it (*There's a Double Tongue*, 1990, published in 1993). He edited two further volumes on the translation of wordplay: *Wordplay and Translation* (1996, special issue of *The Translator*) and *Traductio. Essays on Punning and Translation* (1997).

Dirk Delabastita also co-authored a Dutch-language dictionary of literary terms (*Lexicon van Literaire Termen*, with Hendrik van Gorp and Rita Ghesquiere, seventh edition, 2007), which has been translated into French (*Dictionnaire des termes littéraires*, 2001) and of which an online edition is being planned for 2012. His other books include *European Shakespeares* (edited with Lieven D'hulst, 1993), *Fictionalizing Translation and Multilingualism* (special issue of *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, edited with Rainier Grutman, 2005) and *Shakespeare and European Politics* (edited with Jozef de Vos and Paul Franssen, 2008). He is one of the series editors of *Approaches to Translation Studies* (Rodopi), is involved in the CETRA Translation Studies PhD School at K. U. Leuven, Belgium, and belongs to the editorial board of *The Translator*. His main research interests include literary studies and its interface with linguistics and translation studies; narratology; wordplay, ambiguity and verbal humour; the translation and international reception of Shakespeare.

Adrián Fuentes Luque is Senior Lecturer at the Universidad Pablo Olavide in Seville, Spain. He is also a professional translator, having served as Senior Translator at the Australian Embassy in Spain, and taught at the universities of Cádiz and Granada (Spain) and Portsmouth (UK). His research areas include audiovisual translation, reception (having published the first empirical study on reception of audiovisual translated material), translation of humour and the translation of advertising and tourist texts. He is the editor of *La traducción en el sector turístico* (2005, Atrio), the first monograph on translation in the tourist sector.

Charles S. Gulas is an associate professor of marketing at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio USA. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA. He is the co-author of *Humor in Advertising: A Comprehensive Analysis* published by M.E. Sharpe and has published articles in the *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Current Issues* and *Research in Advertising* and many other business publications. He is a former comedy club owner.

Carmen Mangiron is a lecturer in Spanish, Japanese and Translation in the School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies and a member of the Centre for Translation and Textual Studies at Dublin City University, Ireland. She also teaches game localization at postgraduate level in several Spanish universities and has extensive experience as a translator, specializing in software and games localization. Her

research interests include literary translation, game localization and media accessibility.

Minako O'Hagan, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer at Dublin City University, Ireland, affiliated with the Centre for Translation and Textual Studies (CTTS). She has been involved in interdisciplinary cutting-edge translation research with a main interest in emerging practices of translation. Her earlier publications include *The Coming Industry of Teletranslation* (O'Hagan 1996) and *Translation-mediated Communication in a Digital World: Facing the Challenges of Globalization and Localization* (O'Hagan & Ashworth 2002). She has been an investigator on a number of externally and internally funded research projects, ranging from a feasibility study on Machine Translation for subtitling to a study of fan translation of Japanese anime and manga. More recently her focus in research has been in the area of translation for interactive multimedia products such as video games, combined with user studies of social media technologies.

Linda Rossato was awarded a Master's degree in Screen Translation from the University of Bologna and a Ph.d. in English for Special Purposes from the University of Naples *Federico II*. As well as audiovisual translation, her research interests include the translation of televised food culture and child language brokering.

Thorsten Schröter was born in Germany and moved to Sweden in his mid-20s. He did his undergraduate studies within the teacher education programme in French and English at Karlstad University, Sweden, and got his Bachelor's degree in 1999. He subsequently took up doctoral studies in English linguistics with interspersed teaching and some translation work. His Ph.D. thesis *Shun the Pun, Rescue the Rhyme? The Dubbing and Subtitling of Language-Play in Film* was completed in 2005. Since 2006, he is senior lecturer in English linguistics at Mälardalen University, Sweden, though still working as a translator occasionally, and with a continued research interest in Translation Studies.

Roberto A. Valdeón was awarded a Master's degree in English Literature and Translation Studies from the University of Glasgow (1988), and obtained his Ph.D. in English Studies from the University of Oviedo (1993). He is the author of *Las novelas de E. M. Forster: una revisión intertextual and Spanish Texts for Translation*, both published by the University of Oviedo

Press. He has published around fifty articles on EFL and translation, including contributions to *Perspectives, Across Languages and Cultures, Meta, Linguistica Antverpiensia, Target, International Journal of Applied Linguistics, Babel, Forum, Languages in Contrast, Phrasis and Trans.* He is a member of the editorial committee of *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics* (University of Vigo) and, from 2010, co-editor of *Perspectives* (University of Copenhagen). He was the chairman of an international conference on 'Translation in the Era of Information' (October 2008). He has guest-edited special issues of *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics, Perspectives* and *Across Languages and Cultures.* As a member of Aedean (the Spanish Association for Anglo-American Studies), he chairs the Translation Studies section.

Yau Wai-Ping teaches translation at Hong Kong Baptist University. He is an experienced translator of Chinese poetry and fiction, and has published articles on literary and screen translation. His specialist interests include literary translation, media translation and Chinese literature.

Marc G. Weinberger is professor of marketing at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA where his advertising work has explored the use of humour and other message devices in magazines, television and radio advertising. He has co-authored two books, *Humor in Advertising: A Comprehensive Analysis and Effective Radio Advertising* as well as articles that have appeared in the *Journal of Marketing, Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Advertising, European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Current Research* among others.

Patrick Zabalbeascoa is a Principal Lecturer in Translation Studies at the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, Spain. He lectures in translation theory, humour translation and audiovisual screen translation, mostly from English into Spanish and Catalan. His research is almost entirely focused on translation studies, with special attention to the translation of audiovisual texts for the television and the cinema. He also has numerous publications in translation theory, an area in which he has developed a model of priorities and restrictions, and proposed alternative approaches to traditional views on so-called translation techniques, or shifts. In relation to all of these aspects, his research interests, and much of his teaching, also reach out to aspects of humour and metaphor translation. Some of his most recent thinking and publications have to do with developing the idea of

'mapping' translation solutions through a system of binary branching, and also 'mapping' audiovisual text components on coordinates defined by an audio/visual axis, and a verbal/non-verbal axis. His research interests and teaching deal with aspects of film, humour and metaphor translation, as well as audiovisual translation.

Federico Zanettin is Associate Professor of English Language and Translation at the University of Perugia, Italy. Hi research interests range from comics in translation, to corpus-based translation studies and intercultural communication. His publications include the volumes *Comics in Translations* (2008, editor) and *Corpora in Translator Education* (2003, co-editor), and articles in various journals and edited volumes. He is co-editor of *Translation Studies Abstracts* and *the Bibliography of Translation Studies* and *inTRAlinea*, an online translation journal, and is the advisory board of the journals *The Translator* and *New Voices in Translation Studies*.

Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to those scholars who reviewed the individual contributions and the two volumes for their insightful comments and constructive suggestions. Special thanks go to Jeremy Munday for believing in this project, and above all for keeping me in line when and where I would have naturally strayed into excessive exemplification of verbal humour at the expense of scholarly discussion. Thanks also go to Jessica Milner Davis for her support and expertise especially in matters regarding Chinese and Japanese humour.

Janette Matthias and Daniela Pizzuto provided invaluable clerical and editorial support. I would also like to thank Gurdeep Mattu, Colleen Coalter and Mr P. Muralidharan of Continuum Books for all their help.

This page intentionally left blank

Translating Humour in the Media

Delia Chiaro

While being quite independent from its preceding companion volume, *Translation, Humour and Literature*, the present book aims at completing the reader's journey across the field of humour and translation. It provides further indications on the subject outside the more traditional areas in which humour occurs such as conversational interaction and literature, two themes that are widely discussed in the previous book. *Translation, Humour and the Media* sets out to examine a wider, newer and less studied area and principally explores issues regarding the translation of humour in the long-established media of cartoons and comics (**Zanettin**), cinema (**Fuentes Luque**, **Rossato and Chiaro**, **Schröter**, **Wai-Ping**, **Zabalbeasco**a**)** and television (**Bucaria**, **Delabastita**, **O'Hagan**, **Valdeón**). However, other contributions also discuss the challenges involved in translating humour in more recent media such as global advertising (**Gulas and Weinberger**), video-games (**Mangiron**) and the simultaneous interpretation of live media coverage of worldwide events (**Antonini**).

1. Translating Verbal Humour

In whatever form verbally expressed humour (Ritchie 2004) is couched, its transposition between source and target languages is going to be a difficult task. However, the basic obstacles translation faces, over and above the medium, are basically still the same. In their *General Theory of Verbal Humor*, Attardo and Raskin assert that verbal humour consists of two perfectly overlapping and, at the same time, opposing scripts that are discernible to the recipient as a single semantic script (Attardo and Raskin 1991). Thus, any translation of verbally expressed humour (VEH) should attempt to re-create the overlap and opposition present in the source humour. This task will naturally involve matching the linguistic ambiguity in the source language (SL) with similar ambiguity in the target language (TL) as well as

finding solutions to culture-specific references pertaining to the culture of origin which are frequently involved in humorous tropes. Of course, linguacultural specificity is a problem facing any translation, but owing to the fact that by nature verbal humour exploits linguistic ambiguity to extremes, often combining it with highly specific cultural references, it stands to reason that translating verbal humour can be especially complex.

(1) Why do the French only have one egg for breakfast?
Because one egg is *un oeuf* [enough].
(2) What do the French have for breakfast?
Weetabix. [*Huit heures* bix]

As discussed by Chiaro (see especially 2005, 2008a and Volume 1) the unfeasibility of formal equivalence (i.e. a perfect *linguistic* match, see Nida 1964) in translating jokes such as those exemplified in (1) and (2), advocates that a functional translation might be a preferable option. Functional translation, in this case, would involve replacing the jokes with quite different ones in the TL even though doing so may entail disregarding formal equivalence to a lesser or greater extent. However, where the function of humour, its *skopos*, is to evoke funniness, then the translation can be considered a success if recipients can perceive the humorous intent of the target humour, despite the fact that it may not mirror the source unerringly in formal terms (see Vermeer 1989 on *Skoposteorie*). Because translational equivalence is regarded in terms of *degrees* of equivalence rather than absoluteness, the more similar the translated humour is to the source humour, both in terms of form and function, the more successful it will be. Accordingly, retaining a core element present in the source humour can give a translation an extra degree of equivalence. For example, here is a (somewhat lukewarm) solution to translating example (1) into Italian:

(1a) *Perché i francesi mangiano l'uovo a colazione?*
Perché ogni giorno è un giorno (n)uovo.
[Because every day is a new day[1]]

By taking the source joke's 'invariable core' (i.e. an essential element of the source text which must be retained in translation, see Popovič, 1976) to be the egg (*uovo*), the translation successfully preserves it by adding an 'n' before *uovo* to create the word *nuovo* (new). Unfortunately, not only does the concept of 'Frenchness' disappear in translation but so does the

structure and typology of the source joke. Jokes (1) and (2) are both based on what Delabastita (2005: 161–184) calls 'translation-based monolingual cross talk', namely jokes that are based on TL ambiguity that exploits the linguistic features of another language. In this case it is French, so perhaps a preferable translation might be:

(1b) *Un italiano e un francese stanno camminando per le strade di una città quando si trovano davanti ad un escremento di cane.*
Il francese dice: 'Parbleu!' E l'italiano: 'Sarà . . . ma a me sembra marrone . . . [2]
[An Italian and a Frenchman are walking through the streets of a town when they come across some dog excrement. '*Parbleu*!' cries the Frenchman. 'Maybe', says the Italian, 'but it looks brown to me!']

This translation retains the bilingual crosstalk of the source joke by deconstructing the French exclamation *Parbleu!* to become the Italian phrase *par[e] blu* ('it looks blue') so that the French colour word *bleu* (blue) can be deliberately contrasted with the Italian colour word *marrone* (brown) for humorous purposes. This time, however, the original narrative structure 'What do x have for breakfast?' is lost. Wishing to retain the initial question form, another acceptable variant could be:

(1c) *Cosa mangiano i francesi a colazione?*
Mah, non saprei, pâté d'animo?
[I don't know, soul pâté?]

In this case, the expression *patema d'animo* (anguish) is deconstructed and corrupted to create the French-sounding nonce term *pâté d'animo* meaning 'soul pâté'. French-sounding, edible and quite meaningless, but then common sense and rationality are of no matter because, as far as humour is concerned, disbelief is suspended and conversational maxims are broken at will (see Chiaro, Volume 1 for a lengthy discussion of equivalence, translational strategies and conversational maxims).

2. Translating Humour on Screen

Conversational humour and literary humour apart, a significant location of such VEH is the screen – and cinema and television are two media that thrive through translation.

2.1 Screen translation

By the end of the World War II, long before the world economy had surrendered to the process of Macdonaldization, society had already begun to undergo a more subtle process of globalization thanks to corporations such as Screen Gems, Columbia, Paramount and RKO who managed to rapidly colonize large swathes of the planet with their movies. In fact, just as British Imperialism had effected the spread of English from the seventeenth century onwards, such was the force of celluloid that it was to make Hollywood a significant catalyst in the growth of English as the first truly global language, in the same way that rock music and the internet were to contribute to completing this process in the later part of the era (McRum et al. 2003). In addition, the 1950s also witnessed US-based television concerns that followed in the footsteps of the cinema and broadcast their products into homes the world over. In non-English speaking countries throughout the world, the need to be able to understand and enjoy films led to the birth of screen translation (Chiaro 2009a: 141–165).

Box office takings in any European country clearly show that for the most part, movies are produced in the USA (see statistics at http://lumiere.obs.coe.int and also at http://www.britfilms.com. Last accessed: 4 February 2010). The situation regarding television is hardly different. British television is the exception since it actually produces much of what it broadcasts while importing the rest from the USA and Australia and thus does not generally require interlingual translation (i.e. translation from one language into another, Jakobson 1959); the rest of Europe, on the other hand, imports mainly from the USA, a practice which does necessitate translation. According to the European Audiovisual Observatory, even France, certainly the most linguistically protectionist European nation in that it has gone as far as actually legislating that only a maximum percentage of programmes be brought in from abroad (Ulff-Møller 1998), still imports over 70 per cent of both fiction and films from the USA (see http://www.obs.coe.int/about/oea/pr/a02vol5.html; Last accessed: 3. January 2010). This situation results in a huge amount of screen translation in Europe alone, let alone worldwide (see Chiaro 2009b).

The main setback regarding translating for film is the fact that screen products are polysemiotic; that is, they transmit messages by means of diverse codes (see Chaume 2004, Chiaro 2009a: 143). Viewers watch actors in action and simultaneously listen to what they say. At the same time, viewers read any written information they might see (signs, newspaper

headlines, notes, etc.) while also perceiving a variety sounds (noise from surroundings, for example traffic, birdsong, white noise, etc.; body sounds like breathing, coughing, etc. and background music). Audiences will also be aware of actors' facial expressions and gestures, their dress, make-up and hairstyles; they will take in the scenery and hear songs that may have lyrics that are significant to the storyline of the film. Thus, the verbal elements of filmic products depend heavily on other acoustic features, but above all on a series of visual components to which they are inextricably linked. With regard to verbal humour, when a joke, a gag or a line is linked to the visuals, translation becomes especially difficult.

2.2 Humour on the big screen

In a famous scene from Lawrence Kasdan's film *The Big Chill* (USA, 1988), Tom Berenger, who plays the part of a dimwit, reluctant to father a child, tells his partner that she is giving him 'a massive headache' to which she replies that he is just making excuses, after all he has 'genes'. At this point, Berenson looks down at his trousers and touches them bemused. In the dubbed Italian version of the film, the verbatim translation provided makes no sense at all because 'genes' and 'jeans' in Italian are not homophones (*geni* /dʒenI/ – jeans /dʒInz/). The actor simply looks at his trousers without audiences really understanding why.

Similarly, in Leo McCarey's 1933 Marx Brothers' film *Duck Soup*, Firely (Groucho), the president of Freedonia, asks Chico and Harpo, two incompetent spies for 'record[s]' in the sense of 'documentation'. In response, Harpo pulls out a gramophone record from his coat. This wacky visual pun calls for deep thought in translation. The Italian subtitles read:

(3) *Volete rispondermi a tono una volta per tutte!* ***Cambiate disco*** *per Bacco!*
[Will you answer me once and for all! Change the record/subject for Goodness' sake!]

The object of the joke is clearly visible to audiences, so ignoring a reference to a record would have simply created a non sequitur. The problem was resolved in Italian by compensating through the use of the idiomatic expression *cambiare disco* (meaning 'to change the subject') which contains the word *disco* (meaning 'disc/record') thus enabling dialogue and visuals to converge (Chiaro 1992, 2006).

2.2.1 Translation strategies

Verbal humour on screen tends to be translated in the following ways:

a. Leave the VEH unchanged
In the British farce *Blame it on the Bellboy* (1991, Mark Hermann), a linguistically challenged bellboy at Gabriele's Hotel in Venice misunderstands the names of three English speaking clients: Mr Melville Orton, who is in Venice to buy a property for his boss; Mr Maurice Horton, who, unbeknown to his wife, is there on a blind date and Mr Lawrence Laughton, a hired killer. The perfect ingredients for a farce, the names remain the same in other language versions too.

b. Replace the source VEH with a different instance of VEH in the TL
This solution is the most difficult but certainly the most satisfying for translators and audiences alike, although it does depend upon the dexterity of translators. Several examples can be found in Mike Newell's 1994 comedy *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. For instance, a novice priest, played by Rowan Atkinson, botches up a wedding ceremony by missing out certain sounds of the words in the litany:

(4) 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the **Holy Goat**'

Italian dubbing-scriptwriters create an equally irreverent effect by adding two syllables to the Italian litany where the source had deducted a single sound:

(4a) *Nel nome del Padre, del Figlio e dello* ***Spiritoso Santo***.
[In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the **Lively saint**]

Unlike English, in the case of this ecclesiastic litany Italian syntax requires the adjective to *follow* the noun. So, while the source version plays on the noun ('ghost/goat'), the target version plays on the sounds of the noun–adjective combination – it transforms the noun *spirito* ('ghost') into the adjective *spiritoso* ('lively'), and the adjective *santo* ('holy') into its noun form ('saint'). Hence, the ST 'Holy Ghost' becomes the TT 'lively saint'.

(5) 'Do you take this woman to be your **awful wedded wife?**'
(5a) *Prendi questa donna per la tua* ***illegittima sposa?***
['illegitimate' as opposed to 'legitimate']

c. Replace the source VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL

A much quoted example is how a classic pun from the Marx Brothers' 1942 classic *Horse Feathers* (USA, Norman McLeod) was translated into Italian. Dean of Faculty, Groucho Marx is signing a document and demands that someone give him a 'seal', but Harpo Marx complies by turning up with a seal, that is the animal! A visual pun, typical of the Marx Brothers' off-the-wall humour, brilliantly resolved in the Italian translation by replacing Groucho's request with the imperative '*Focalizziamo*' ('let's focus on it'). A good portion of the semantic content of the source dialogue is retained in the verb *focalizziamo* as the syllable *foca* is the Italian word for 'seal' (i.e. the animal). This linguistic coincidence can be considered a fortunate one. In fact, as **Adrián Fuentes Luque** (this volume) points out, the Spanish dubbed version decided against retaining the word *foca*, opting for *testigo* ('witness') instead, thus significantly reducing the comic effect of the passage and 'turning the presence of the animal seal into an unfunny absurdity' (p. 337).

d. ignore the VEH altogether:
Set in the Warsaw ghetto during World War II, Polish-Jewish musician Wladyslaw Szpilman is the main character in Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002, USA). The dialogues are mainly in English with most German conversation subtitled. Towards the end of the film, Szpilman is found in hiding by a Gestapo officer, Hosenfeld, who offers him help. When Hosenfeld finds out that Szpilman is a pianist he asks him, in German, what his name is. The English subtitles read:

(6) Hosenfeld: What is your name? So I can listen for you.
Szpilman: My name is Szpilman.
Hosenfeld: Spielmann? That is a good name, for a pianist.

This perfectly correct, word-for-word translation, however ignores the fact that the viewer would need to know that the surname '*Szpilman*' sounds like the German word/surname '*Spielman*', which in both Polish and German literally means, 'the man who plays' or 'the player'. In other words, in the original, Hosenfeld is amused by Szpilman's ironic surname (see Chiaro 2009a: 162–163).

However, a need to ensure that the correct link between verbal and visual codes is respected in translation is not exclusive to cinema and TV. This volume includes a chapter which at first sight may seem out of place, an overview of the translation of cartoons and comic books. However, the translation of cartoons and comics has much in common with screen

translation because of the tight bond between the visuals in the frame and the verbal content. Comics, in fact, have a narrative framework that much resembles the storyboard of filmic products. What is specific to humour in cartoons and comics is the way humour is often conveyed in them, that is, through the combination and interaction of both verbal and visual resources. **Federico Zanettin** illustrates that, when comics are republished in a country which is different from that of original publication, not only are verbal elements replaced by texts in a new language, but also visual elements can be either modified and adapted or reinterpreted according to the visual conventions of the target culture.

2.2.2 Humour, translation and quality

Whether dubbed or subtitled, translational choices on screen are constantly criticized by both public and scholars. **Adrián Fuentes Luque** examines the main sources of humour in the Marx Brothers' films, focusing on their plays on words and exploring the linguistic and cultural mechanisms they use to trigger comic effects. The Marx Brothers' humour is often labelled as one of the most universal examples of humour, influencing important contemporary comedians. Yet it has also proven to be one of the most difficult types of humour to translate, to such an extent that, according to **Fuentes Luque**, it has been received differently in English and Spanish, generating very different interpretations of these comedians and their humour. On the other hand, **Patrick Zabalbeascoa**'s examination of the themes present in the films of Woody Allen paradoxically suggests that their style of humour is just as difficult to translate as that of the Marx Brothers. Although Marxian wordplay presents translational problems for the essentialness of their humour, in the sense that their films are full of straightforward puns, it would appear that Allen, while being less of a punster, tends towards formally less complex but intellectually more sophisticated humour. According to **Zabalbeascoa**, Allen replicates culture-specific themes such as Jewishness, anti-semitism, psychiatry, penis envy and New York in all his films. These conceptual themes, couched in humorous tones, appear to create just as much difficulty in their Spanish translations as the plain, yet highly complex, visual and verbal puns of the Marx Brothers.

Chiaro asserts that contemporary US screen comedy (including on TV) generally tends to avoid the extreme punning so typical of the Marx Brothers by opting for a more general humour based on a vague type of global culture (see introduction to Volume 1 and 2005). However, in this sense, films for children seem go against the grain. As **Thorsten Schröter**'s corpus of family films shows, puns remain an important element in the

dialogues. Examining the German, Danish and Swedish translations (both dubs and subtitles) of the wordplay in his corpus, he attempts to evaluate quality.

Linda Rossato and Delia Chiaro adopt a more empirical method to investigate the issue of quality by exploring audience perception of translated humour. In addition to investigating reactions of Italians to humour in the dubbed version of the German comedy *Goodbye Lenin* (2003, Wolfgang Becker) and comparing them with the reaction of German spectators, they also analyse the reactions to the film of different generations of Germans according to their knowledge of the ex-GDR. The reaction of Italian respondents watching in translation resembled more the reaction of a sub-sample of German respondents from the ex-GDR than a sub-sample that has always lived in the GFR. Since the ex-GDR sample would be drawing on their shared knowledge of covert cultural references in the film, the similar reaction from the Italian audience might indicate the effectiveness of the adaptation in allowing them a window on the foreign.

However, possibly the most difficult feature affecting the quality of screen translation is language variation. Variety is frequently used for humorous purposes – suffice it to think of how comedians all over the world use regional accents in their repertoire. But what to do about regional variation in translation is indeed a thorny issue. Is the source variety to be replaced with a target variety? Is it to be flattened by simply replacing it with a standard target form (see Chiaro 2008b and 2010)? The servants in Altman's film *Gosford Park* (2001, USA/GB/Italy/Germany) speak a variety of the many working class Englishes while householders and guests upstairs use Received Pronunciation. Furthermore, one of the guests is an American who pretends to be both Scottish and a servant. The oddness of his accent is immediately obvious to the other servants and autochthonous audiences. Quite a challenge in translation. And if, in dubbing, there is always the option of replacing a regional variety of the SL with a regional variety in the TL (though it may not be a particularly enlightening choice to make considering the connotations specific varieties convey), how can variety be accommodated in *subtitled* form? Along these lines, **Yau Wai-Ping** reports on the use of both Standard Chinese and Cantonese in subtitled VEH in Hong Kong and how its recognition and use by the nation's media has, according to the author, heralded public acceptability of a 'Low' variety.

2.3 Humour on the small screen

Britain and the USA have a very long and well-established tradition of television sitcom.[3] Both nations export these comedies worldwide although