

Verbally Expressed Humor Translation Strategy in Audiovisual Products: A Systematic Literature Review

Man Yu Tong¹, Hazlina Abdul Halim², & Ng Boon Sim³

¹ Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: mandy122095@outlook.com

² Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: hazlina_ah@upm.edu.my

³ Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: ngboon@upm.edu.my

Correspondence: Hazlina Abdul Halim, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: hazlina_ah@upm.edu.my

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Abstract

Verbally Expressed Humor (VEH) is a form of humor that through language, written or spoken, to create comic effects. VEH translation in audiovisual products has been a great challenge due to the cultural and linguistic gap in target culture, and the translation inaccuracy and bias bring confusion to audience. Besides, though various methods have been utilized in investigating VEH translation strategies in subtitling and dubbing, no agreed-upon strategy suggestion for each category of VEH. In the present study, systematic literature review methodology is applied to examine related studies published until 1 January 2024, sourced from Web of Science (WoS) collection and Scopus. 35 articles are selected under the guideline of PRISMA 2020 and eligibility criteria. In general, the study aims to examine research status on VEH translation in audiovisual products. Specifically, it tends to clarify what translation strategies are used in translating VEH. The review indicates that: 1) English has been explored most frequently as the source and target language in studies of VEH translation in audiovisual products. 2) The major humor type examined in the selected studies is wordplay. 3) The VEH translation can be guided by various translation strategies taxonomies, while the slight adaptation or change is usually required. 4) Gottlieb's (1992) taxonomy of translation strategies has been extensively utilized in the translation of VEH. However, there remains an absence of a standardized set of translation strategies that can be universally applied to any specific category of VEH. The findings can discover research gap and future trends for researchers, providing VEH translation advice for translators.

Keywords: audiovisual products, PRISMA, Verbally Expressed Humor, translation strategy, review

1. Introduction

The study of humor can be traced back to ancient Greek era. In the book *Poetics* (1449), Aristotle posited that laughter is essentially derisive and that in being amused by finding someone is inferior in some way (Morreall, 1987). Afterwards, three influential humor theories were proposed. The first is the superiority theory of humor from social behavior perspective, which can date back to Plato and Aristotle, as well as Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). The theory of superiority holds that laughter arises when people perceive themselves as superior to others. Simon (2002) argued that it's a sudden sense of glory that emerges from a sudden sense of superiority in ourselves, by contrasting with the weaknesses of others, or with previous self-contrast. The 17th-century British philosopher Hobbes emphasized that people can gain a sense of superiority and enhance their self-esteem by laughing at others' physical or mental deficiencies, misfortunes, and stupid and clumsy behaviors. Despite the popularity of superiority theory in 17th and 18th century, it has notable limitations, as it fails to account for certain humorous phenomena. Consequently, the incongruity theory (also called error theory) from a psychologically cognitive perspective was firstly proposed in Francis Hutcheson's (1694-1746) book, *Reflections Upon Laughter*, in 1750. Subsequently, philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) further developed the theory. Incongruity theory proposes that humor is based on absurd, unexpected, and incongruous contexts. The third theory of humor, relief theory, was proposed by Herbert Spencer in the 19th century from psychoanalytic perspective. Relief theory holds that laughter is a release of suppressed nerves. The theory gained prominence through the book, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (Freud, 1905). Freud thought that the sensation of pleasure arises from the soothing or release of energy through laughter.

In modern era, according to Martin and Ford (2018), humor is defined as people creating and perceiving amusing and interesting stimuli, experiencing this fascinating psychological process, and engaging in and relishing this pleasurable emotional reaction. Linguistic research on humor began with Raskin's (1985) Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) based on Incongruity Theory (Liu, 2011). Then, Attardo and Raskin (1991) extended SSTH theory and proposed General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), which concentrates on humor created

by language form, especially pun or wordplay. Besides, humor has been divided in more comprehensive taxonomies, such as verbal humor and referential humor (Attardo, 1994), or linguistic humor, cultural humor and universal humor (Raphaelson-West, 1989). The aforementioned taxonomies primarily address humor in written text, which falls under the concept of Verbally Expressed Humor (VEH).

VEH is a general term for all humorous elements, which are expressed in written or spoken form, as opposed to those conveyed in some other forms, such as visually (Chiaro, 2000). According to the above definition, the term was also called verbal humor (Fatt, 1998) or linguistic humor (Attardo, 2020) by some scholars. However, according to GTVH, verbal humor now is usually recognized as a humor that created humor that relies significantly on semantics and the similarity or identity of linguistic forms, such as phonemic or graphemic similarities (Attardo, 2020). Linguistic humor is generally considered as the humor caused by its own language structure along with the popularity of Raphaelson-West (1989) humor typology. The present study will apply the term VEH for avoiding ambiguity between verbal humor and linguistic humor.

One of the earliest discussions on VEH classification was described by Cicero (106BC-43BC), who divided VEH into humor rely on linguistic in nature and referential humor (Attardo, 2017). The translation of humor has long been a challenge for translators due to the cultural elements and linguistic features inherent in source language (Asimakoulas, 2004; Tee, Amini, Siau & Amirdabbaghian, 2022). Additionally, the translation of VEH presents significant challenge practically and theoretically (Vandaele, 2002; Gál, 2008). Specifically, problems regarding VEH on screen multiplied several times owing to the visual restrictions imposed upon the translation (Chiaro, 2008).

To address these challenges in audiovisual translation, numerous scholars have proposed a variety of translation strategies based on distinct humor typologies. Despite extensive studies on methods and strategies for translating VEH across various language pairs, debates still exist regarding the proper approaches to translate different types of humor (Xia, Amini & Lee, 2023).

Besides, facing with numerous proposed translation strategies, the selection of the suitable strategies can be confusing and time-consuming for translators in real practice. Although Zhu's (2022) literature review article on translation strategies of cultural references has involved some studies focusing on cultural humor translation, a systematic summary and exploration on VEH translation strategies is lacking. Thus it's essential to summarize translation strategies for rendering certain VEH in audiovisual products by a systematic review of relevant studies. Besides, the present study tends to reveal the current research trends on the translation strategies of VEH in audiovisual products, thereby providing guidance for future research in the field.

2. Methodology

This section describes the aims of the study, systematic literature review method, PRISMA 2020 guideline, search strategy, study selection criteria and data abstraction.

2.1 Research Aims

The study focuses on the analysis of literature which explore on translation strategies of VEH in audiovisual products, summarizing investigated types of VEH and audiovisual products, identifying applied translation strategies, and compared language pairs in relevant studies. Thus, the objectives of this study are: (1) to summarize translation strategies for various types of VEH and the features on selected studies, and (2) to systematically analyze the studies on translation strategies of VEH in audiovisual products.

2.2 Systematic Literature Review Method

Systematic literature review is a method to identify and critically appraise studies relevant with explored topics, as well as collecting and analyzing data from said research (Liberati et al., 2009). Based on the purpose of this study, the systematic literature review is utilized as the basic research method, due to the specific aspect to be examined by the study. Among the methods of literature review, systematic literature review method is the most accurate and rigorous, which is suitable for analyzing a narrow research question or investigating very specific factors (Snyder, 2019).

2.3 PRISMA 2020 Guideline

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 is the updated version of a guideline used in systematic literature review and meta-analysis study to screen searched articles. With PRISMA 2020 guideline, the screen of studies will be conducted under specific steps, rules and inclusion or exclusion criteria. In the current study, PRISMA 2020 is adopted as the guideline to screen previous studies related to VEH translation strategies in audiovisual products.

2.4 Search Strategy

The study searched related articles from Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus collection with several keywords as search terms, and the search string is presented. Subsequently, searched articles are screened according to settled inclusion and exclusion criteria. Ultimately, useful information in the selected studies are extracted.

2.4.1 Data Source

The database WoS and Scopus collection are utilized for searching potential studies. WoS, the first broad-scope international bibliographic database, is the most influential bibliographic data source traditionally used for journal selection, research evaluation, bibliometric analyses, and other tasks (Li, Rollins & Yan, 2018). While, Scopus collection covers wider range of academic journals (Pranckutė, 2021). Despite the content indexed in WoS and Scopus is shown to be highly overlapping, they can be a complement of each other.

2.4.2 Search Terms

The topic concept “verbally expressed humor”, its synonym “verbalized humor”, “verbal humor”, its hypernym “humor”, and “humor element” were used as search terms. Under the influence of Attardo and Raskin's (1991) perspectives, “verbal humor” now is widely recognized as the humor intrigued by language itself. However, Fatt (1998) once categorized humor as verbal, visual and physical humor. In this sense, the “verbal humor” has the same meaning of VEH. Thus, “verbal humor” was also included as the search term, considering the potential for relevant studies to be published based on Fatt's (1998) taxonomy.

Meanwhile, another topic term is “translation strategy”, which refers to the way or skill to translate VEH in this context. In some studies, it is also referred to as “translation procedure,” “translation skill,” “translation technique,” “translation solution,” or “translation method.” These search terms are confined to the title, abstract or keywords on Scopus, and the same words and phrases are used as search terms in the topic, title and abstract in WoS.

2.4.3 Search String

In Scopus, the searching string for Advanced Search is as follows: TITLE-ABS-KEY(("verbally expressed humor*" OR "verbalized humor*" OR "verbal humor*" OR "humor element*") AND translation AND (strategy* OR procedure* OR skill* OR technique* OR solution* OR method*)).

In WoS, the Advanced search string is: TS=(("verbally expressed humor*" OR "verbalized humor*" OR "verbal humor*" OR "humor*" OR "humor element*") AND translation AND (strategy* OR procedure* OR skill* OR technique* OR solution* OR method*)).

2.5 Study Selection Criteria

All articles published before January 1, 2024, were searched in both databases, yielding a total of 233 articles. All retrieved articles were exported from the online databases to Zotero, in which 29 duplicates were removed. Since “translation” is also a vital term in biology research, multidisciplinary studies involving humor and biology or pharmacy cannot be automatically excluded by the searching string. Therefore, a title screening was conducted by reading and identifying keywords in the title of each study to locate research within the field of translation studies. The second step involved abstract screen. Though some articles appeared relevant to the topic based on the title and a few keywords, the abstract provided a clearer focus of the study. The following step was to screen the full text according to the eligibility criteria.

2.5.1 Inclusion Criteria

- (1) The study should be in English.
- (2) The study must be an academic research article published in a peer-reviewed journal with full-text available. The quality of articles in peer-reviewed journals is ensured through the rigorous review process conducted by professional scholars and experts.
- (3) Studies focus on VEH translation strategies should be included.

2.5.2 Exclusion Criteria

- (1) Review articles, book chapters, conference papers and reports are excluded.
- (2) Studies not in translation field are excluded.
- (3) Studies only focus on VEH translation but not on translation strategies are excluded.

2.6 Data Abstraction

The data were extracted according to the PRISM 2020 screen steps, inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria. The inclusion of controversial articles was decided by consulting experts other than authors. Additionally, other articles from the same journal with controversial ones were considered as a reference to assess the quality of the articles. The extracted information from the selected articles include the types of audiovisual products in selected studies, the compared language pairs in the selected researches, the explored VEH types in articles, the authors, and the translation strategies applied.

3. Results

This section is a summary of the abstracted information from the selected articles, including the types of audiovisual products examined, VEH types explored, compared language pairs and translation strategies applied in the selected articles.

3.1 The Selected Articles

The process of selecting identified studies for this systematic review based on the modified PRISMA 2020 diagram, is illustrated in Figure 1. As shown in the figure, 233 studies were searched initially in WoS and Scopus database. Before screening, 29 duplicates were removed using the tool Zotero. After screening of the title and abstract, 97 articles were excluded for reasons such as not being in the field of translation studies field, not focusing on audiovisual products or being literature review studies. Subsequently, 107 studies were read in full text, and 32 articles were included according to the study selection criteria. In the process of reading these articles, 3 additional qualified studies were found by forward and backward reference searching. Ultimately, 35 articles were selected for analysis in this study.

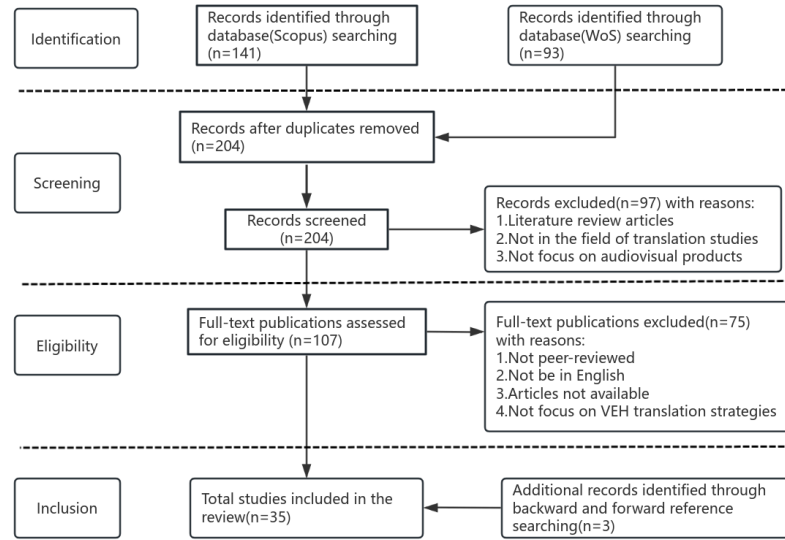


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram Adapted From Pang, Abdul Halim and Mohd Jalis, 2023

3.2 Audiovisual Products Explored in the Selected Articles

VEH translation in audiovisual products has attracted significant attention from scholars. The data sources explored in these selected articles are presented below in Figure 2. Among the articles, 16 articles focus on the translation of VEH in TV series (45.7%), 17 examine VEH in films (48.6%), and only 2 articles (5.7%) investigate other types of audiovisual products: advertisement and stand-comedy.

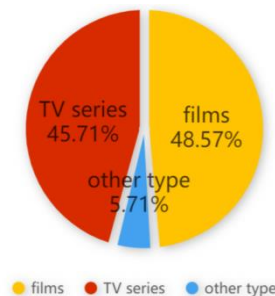


Figure 2. Frequency of the Types of Audiovisual Products in the Selected Articles

3.3 VEH Types Explored in the Selected Articles

VEH is a kind of humor expressed by language rather than visual elements or physical gestures. Various scholars have categorized this form of humor. After scrutinizing the selected articles, the most commonly applied and generalized taxonomies are those proposed by Raphaelson and West (1989), Delabastita’s (1996) classification of wordplay, and the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) developed by Salvatore Attardo and Victor Raskin’s (1991). Therefore, the current study will employ the above-mentioned humor taxonomies and theories to classify and analyze all selected articles. Those VEH can not be clearly categorized into a single one type will be shown respectively. Attardo (2020) illustrated verbal humor (here refers to pun) relies significantly on semantics and the similarity or identity of two linguistic forms: sounds or spellings. Although wordplay, according to the Delabastita’s (1996) taxonomy, overlaps with puns to some extent, it’s a hypernym of puns, and the two terms can sometimes be interchangeable. In most of the selected studies, the concrete subcategories are not described in detail. Therefore, in this systematic study, wordplay and puns are treated as the different and independent categories. Raphaelson and West (1989) proposed a general typology of VEH, categorizing humor into linguistic humor, cultural humor and universal humor. In Raphaelson-West’s (1989) taxonomy, linguistic humor is synonymous with wordplay and puns, but it presents a broader sense. Thus, wordplay and puns are not included in linguistic humor as a single category. Some studies are guided by other taxonomies, but most can be included in the above taxonomies, especially linguistic and cultural humor.

According to the three main humor taxonomies mentioned above, the frequency of VEH types in the selected articles are summarized in Figure 3. Wordplay(19%) was the most frequently researched, followed by cultural humor(17%). Puns(13%) also accounts for an evident part. Additionally, many VEH instances were not clearly classified into subcategories(17%). The rest specific types each represents less than 10%: universal humor(6%), linguistic humor(7%), allusion(6%), irony(6%), use of language variation(4%), VEH in L3(2%) and proper name(2%).

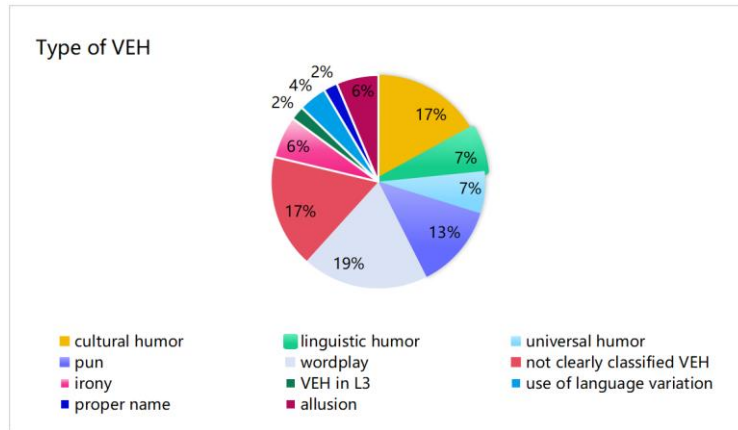


Figure 3. Types of VEH in the Selected Articles

3.4 Compared Language Pairs in the Selected Articles

The compared language pairs refer to the language of source text and its corresponding target text of the explored audiovisual products. As shown in Figure 4, among the selected articles, English is the most frequently examined language in source text, with 28 out of 35 articles involving it. While in the target texts, English and Arabic are the most frequently used languages, each featured in 6 articles. Persian follows closely, with 5 articles exploring it as the target language.

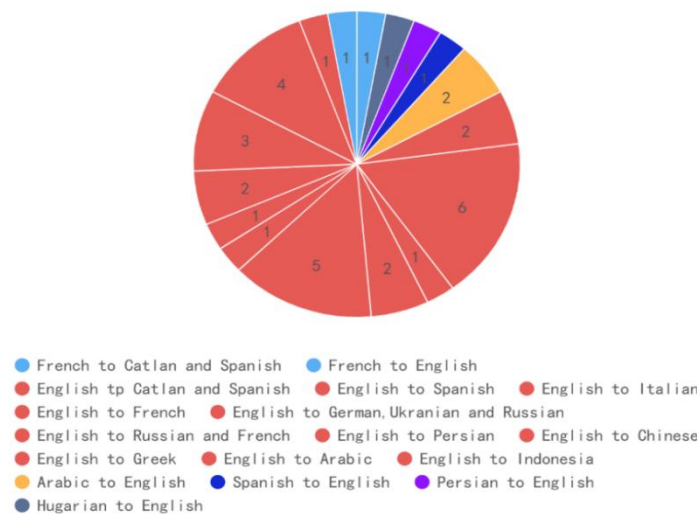


Figure 4. Compared Language Pairs Explored in the Selected Articles

3.5 Translation Strategies in the Selected Articles

The following tables 1, 2 and 3 list the applied translation strategies toward different VEH categories and its author citation, and the underlying strategy taxonomies are indicated. For the sake of simplicity, “VEH” will be referred to as “humor” in the subsequent text. However, for the studies that don’t have a clearly clarified strategy taxonomy or the translation strategies are based on the mix of various typologies, the translation taxonomy is not presented.

Table 1. Translation strategies for linguistic, cultural and universal humor

Humor category	Author	Translation strategies
Cultural humor	Perdikaki, 2014	1) Explication, 2) Substitution, 3) Addition, 4) Loan, 5) Literal, 6) Transposition, 7) Lexical recreation, 8) Compensation, 9) Omission.

		D íz-Cintas and Remael (2007)
	D íz-P érez, 2017	1) Exoticism, 2) Cultural borrowing, 3) Literal, 4) Lexical recreation, 5) Generalization, 6) Communicative translation, 7) Deletion, 8) Situational substitution, 9) Situational substitution 10) Cultural transplantation (adapted from Haywood et al., 2009)
	Sadeghpour & Omar, 2015; Alnusairat & Jaganathan, 2022	1) Omission 2) Literal translation 3) Borrowing 4) Equivalence 5) Adaptation 6) Replacement 7) Generalization 8) Explication (Tomasziewicz, 1993)
	Maharani & Ediwan, 2019	1) Paraphrase, 2) Transfer, 3) Imitation, 4) Transcription. based on Gottlieb's (1992) typology
	Sadeghpour, 2021; Al-Jabri, Alhasanet & Ali, 2023	1) Official equivalent 2) Direct translation 3) Specification 4) Addition 5) Generalization 6) Substitution 7) Omission Pedersen's (2011 & 2005)
Linguistic humor	Sadeghpour & Omar, 2015; Alnusairat & Jaganathan, 2022	1) Omission 2) Literal translation 3) Borrowing 4) Equivalence 5) Adaptation 6) Replacement 7) Generalization 8) Explication (Tomasziewicz, 1993)
	Al-Jabri et al., 2023	(1) Official equivalent (2) Retention (3) Specification (4) Addition, (5) Direct translation (6) Generalization (7) Substitution (8) Omission Pederson's (2005)
Universal humor	Hamid & Omar, 2015; Alnusairat & Jaganathan, 2022	1) Omission 2) Literal translation 3) Borrowing 4) Equivalence 5) Adaptation 6) Replacement 7) Generalization 8) Explication Tomasziewicz (1993)
	Maharani & Ediwan, 2019	1) Paraphrase, 2) Transfer, 3) Imitation , 4) Transcription. Gottlieb (1992)

Table 1 presents related information based on Raphaelson-West (1989) humor typology. In the translation of cultural humor, Perdikaki (2014) applied strategies proposed by Dáz-Cintas and Remael(2007), while Dáz-Pérez(2017) adapted the typology established by Haywood et al.(2009).

In some cases, the translation strategy taxonomy can be applied to the exploration of various humor translation. Sadeghpour (2021) and Al-Jabri et al.(2023) investigated cultural humor and linguistic humor based on Pedersen’s(2005, 2011) typology. Maharani and Ediwan (2019) used Gottlieb’s(1992) translation taxonomy to explore both cultural and universal humor. Tomasziewicz’s (1993) translation strategies for cultural items were applied to examine the translation of linguistic humor, cultural humor and universal humor (Sadeghpour & Omar, 2015; Alnusairat & Jaganathan, 2022).

Table 2. Translation strategies for pun

Humor category	Author citation	Translation strategies
pun	Williamson & Pedro Ricoy, 2014; Marqués Cobeta, 2021; Bolaños García-Escribano, 2017	1) ST pun to TT pun; 2) ST pun to TT non pun; 3) ST pun to TT related rhetorical device ; 4) ST pun to TT literally translated pun ; 5) ST pun to TT omission; 6) ST non pun to TT compensatory pun ; 7) ST non pun to TT pun not present in ST ; 8) Addition of editorial techniques (Delabastita,1996)
	Dáz-Pérez, 2014	1) Transference, 2) Direct copy, 3) Punoid, 4) (Non-punning)diffuse paraphrase, 5) Sacrifice the pun and maintenance of the semantic content, 6) Change of pun, 7) Punning correspondence
	Wang, 2014	1) Domestication/naturalization 2) Foreignization 3) Neutralization
	Aleksandrova, 2020	1) Free translation with a non-pun replacement; 2) Literal translation; 3) Quasi-translation

Table 2 describes the translation strategies for puns in the selected articles. The taxonomy of translation strategies proposed by Delabastita (1996) was frequently applied in pun translation (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy, 2014; Marqués Cobeta, 2021; Bolaños García-Escribano, 2017). Other scholars analyzed the translation strategies of puns based on various taxonomies of strategies and subsequently abstract or summarize those applicable to the text.

Table 3. Translation strategies for other humor types

Humor Category	Author citation	Translation strategies
wordplay	Zabalbeascoa, 1996;	1) Establishing the priority:equivalence, non-equivalence, equivalence not regarded. 2) Avoid restrictions: use more specialized strategies, give more recognition to translator, improve teamwork. (Zabalbeascoa, 1996):
	Vanderschelden, 2002; Williamson & Pedro Ricoy, 2008; Afsari, Abootorabi & Moeinzadeh, 2018;	1) Rendered verbatim, 2) Adapted to the local setting, 3) Replaced by non-wordplay; 4) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue; 5) Inserted in different textual positions, where the target language renders it possible. Based on Strategies on wordplay (Gottlieb, 1997)
	Bolaños García-Escribano, 2017	1) Calque, 2) Borrowing or reduction; 3) Amplification, 4) Description; 5) Compression,

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6) Generalisation, 7) Modulation, 8) Particularisation, 9) Transposition; 10) Wordplay replacement;
<p>Sadeghpour, Khazaefar & Khoshsaligheh, 2015; Amirian & Dameneh, 2014</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Expansion, 2) Paraphrase, 3) Transfer, 4) Imitation, 5) Transcription, 6) Dislocation, 7) Condensation, 8) Decimation, 9) Deletion, 10) Resignation. <p>(Gottlieb, 1992)</p>
<p>Abomoati, 2019</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Literal translation 2) Adaptation 3) Substitution 4) Omission 5) Paraphrasing 6) Changing the script line, 7) Changing what the joke evokes.
<p>Wang, 2014;</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Domestication/naturalization; 2) Foreignization 3) Neutralization
<p>Al-Ezzi & Al-Qudah, 2023</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) explicitation, 2) transposition, 3) literal translation 4) omission. <p>Gottlieb (2001)</p>
<p>Not clearly classified VEH</p> <p>Aitony, 2019; Tee et al., 2022; Mulyati&Nugroho, 2023; Ghassemiazghandi & Tengku-Sepora, 2020; Amirian & Dameneh, 2014</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Expansion, 2) Paraphrase, 3) Transfer, 4) Imitation, 2) Transcription, 6) Dislocation, 7) Condensation, 8) Decimation, 9) Deletion, 10) Resignation. <p>(Gottlieb, 1992)</p>
<p>Yahiaoui, 2023</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Adaptation; 2) Cultural substitution, 3) Paraphrase; 4) Omission; 5) Borrowing

		(Federici, 2011; Newmark, 1988)
	Hassanvandi, Ilani & Kazemi, 2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Paraphrase 2) Transfer 3) Localization; 4) Creation ; 5) Deletion; 6) Transliteration; 7) Preservation; 8) Addition
	Abomoati, 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Paraphrase, 2) Substitution, 3) Literal 4) Omission
	Yahiaoui, Alqumboz, Fattah & Adwan, 2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) explication; 2) substitution; 3) Omission, 4) Addition
Irony	Yahiaoui, Hijazi & Fattah, 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) ST irony-TT irony with Literal translation 2) ST irony enhanced with some word/expression 3) ST irony-TT irony with equivalent effect translation 4) ST irony becomes TT irony by means of different effects from those used in ST. 5) ST ironic innuendo becomes more restricted and explicit in TT 6) ST irony has Literal translation with no irony in TT <p>(Mateo, 1995)</p>
L3 in VEH	Dore, 2019	<p>L3TT=L2: Ai leaving L3ST unchanged, substituting it for L2 words, deleting the L3ST segments. Aii compensation within L2 remains Aiii Signaling that a character by compensation within L2 (L3TT=L1) if the intention is to provide a language that is different from L2 to maintain L3 visibility. L3TT=L3ST: Ci Verbatim transcription Cii Conveyed accent D the solution not coincide with any of the languages (L1, L2, L3ST). (Zabalbeascoa & Voellmer, 2014)</p>
	Abomoati, 2019;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Change the script line, 2) Omission
Use of language variation	Garcia-Pinos, 2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Substituting target dialect markers for source dialect markers; 2) Replace source dialect markers with target dialect markers 3) Replacing the dialect on the starting side with the social pinyin mark on the target side; 4) Replace the initial dialect mark with a unique oil word or Register flags 5) Substituting target-side dialect markers for source-side dialect markers; 6) Replace the original dialect Consists of a target side variant that It may be a standard language; 7) Dialect markers omitted. (Czennia, 2004) <p>Priorities:semantic integrity, fluency, consistency with context, and cultural</p>

		acceptability. Restrictions:linguistic, cultural, pragmatic or contextual in nature, subjectivity of the translator (Zabalbeascoa's, 2001)
Proper name	Debbas & Haider, 2020	1) Retain unchanged. 2) Retain unchanged with added guidance. 3) Retain unchanged with detailed explanation. (Leppihalme, 1997)
allusion	Pilyarchuk, 2023	1) Minimal change 2) Replacement 3) Overt explanation or omission. Expanded version of (Leppihalme, 1992)
dark and sexual humor	Bucaria, 2008; Bucaria, 2021	1) Complete omission; 2) Weakening; 3) Close rendering; 4) Increased effect (Bucaria, 2007)

Table 3 indicates the author citation and translation strategies of other humor types, including wordplay, dark and sexual humor, irony, L3 in VEH, the use of language variation, proper noun, allusion and those not clearly classified VEH. For wordplay translation, Zabalbeascoa (1996) proposed the priority and restricted model. Gottlieb's strategy taxonomies established in 1992 for subtitling and in 1997 for wordplay are widely used in the selected articles (Sadeghpour et al., 2015; Amirian & Dameneh, 2014; Vanderschelden, 2002; Williamson & Pedro Ricoy, 2008; Afsari et al., 2018). Bolaños Garc á-Escribano (2017) presented a new translation strategy typology based on previous literature to translate wordplay, so as the Abomoati (2019). Bucaria (2007) proposed a taxonomy of translation strategy for sexual and dark humor, and applied it in distinct audiovisual texts (Bucaria, 2008 & 2021).

For those VEH not clearly categorized, Gottlieb's (1992) taxonomy was also frequently applied due to its generalization in subtitling translation (Ajtony, 2019; Tee et al., 2022; Mulyati & Nugroho, 2023; Ghassemiazghandi & Tengku-Sepora, 2020; Amirian & Dameneh, 2014). Al-Ezzi and Al-Qudah (2024) conducted their studies based on Gottlieb's taxonomy proposed in 2001. While Wang (2014) summarized that humor translation in audiovisual products can be translated with domestication or naturalization, foreignization and neutralization strategies. Yahiaoui (2023) elaborated humor translation strategy based on Federici's (2011) and Newmark's (1988) taxonomy. Other effective translation strategies traced from previous literature, which are not clearly classified by certain one scholar, are also applied (Hassanvandi et al., 2016; Abomoati, 2019).

The irony translation was conducted based on Mateo's (1995) taxonomy of translation strategy for irony (Yahiaoui et al., 2020). Strategies like explication, substitution, omission, and addition were also involved (Yahiaoui et al., 2019). The translation strategy taxonomy established by Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer (2014) were applied by Dore (2019) to examine the translation of the third language in humor elements. When language variations are involved in humor, changing the script line and omission are effective strategies for its translation (Abomoati, 2019). Besides, Garcia-Pinos (2017) employed Czennia's (2004) translation strategies and translation model proposed by Zabalbeascoa (2001) to solve the language variation transfer in humor translation. The study of translation strategy on proper noun conducted by Debbas and Haider (2020) applied Leppihalme's (1997) translation strategies. For the translation of allusion, the expended version of Leppihalme's (1992) taxonomy was utilized (Pilyarchuk, 2023).

4. Discussion

The figures and tables above have revealed some research trends in the audiovisual field on VEH translation strategies and the application of the translation strategies are also clearly clarified. Alongside the effective strategies outlined, certain rules and regulations for their application can be discovered. Besides, the potential implication of these phenomena warrant further study.

4.1 General Characteristics of the Literature

Primarily, the types of audiovisual works studied in the selected articles are not very diverse, mainly focusing on TV series and movies. Only Al-Jabri et al. (2023) and Yahiaoui (2023) studied humor in talk shows and advertisements respectively.

Next, according to the summary of humor types in the selected articles, linguistic humor is the most frequently examined, followed by cultural humor, with universal humor being the least involved. In some papers, these three humor types are all taken into account (Sadeghpour & Omar, 2015; Alnusairat & Jaganathan, 2022). Besides, nearly one-fifth of the papers didn't make a clear classification of the humor analyzed. This demonstrates that studies on translation strategies of audiovisual humor tend to investigate from broader viewpoint of humor. The remaining studies investigated more specific humor types, but only account for one-fifth of the selected articles. Allusion is explored by Pilyarchuk (2023) and irony by Yahiaoui et al.(2019; 2020). Proper name, as an uncommon humor type, was analyzed by Debbas and Haider (2020). Humor caused by language transformation was also noted. The translation of a third language in

VEH was examined by Dore (2019), and humor arising from language variation was probed by Garcia-Pinos (2017) and Abomoati (2019).

The results imply that linguistic humor accounts for an important and noteworthy part of the humor in audiovisual products. Additionally, the linguistic humor, especially wordplay, poses a great challenge in translating humor in audiovisual products. In general, wordplay involves textual phenomena that use structural features of the languages to create communicative confrontations activated by identical or similar forms (Delabastita, 2004). When translating this form of language altogether with the humorous effects, the complexity is more than translating pure cultural humor or universal humor. What can be translated literally is referential humor, and what cannot be translated is linguistic humor. Because the object of translation is to convey the content of the language rather than the form. Therefore, the investigation of translation strategies for linguistic humor attracts more attention from scholars due to its significance and the challenges it presents in audiovisual products.

Moreover, in most selected articles focusing on wordplay translation strategies, researchers had pointed out that wordplay are deemed to be untranslatable (Marco, 2010; Williamson & Pedro Ricoy, 2015, etc.). Some scholars (for example, House, 1973) hold that puns, which included in wordplay are untranslatable, the following authors make extensive studies on whether it's possible. However, the specific translation solutions for transferring wordplay is nearly untouched then. As a result, this unsolved problem also incite many scholars to find the solutions.

From the perspective of theoretical developments, with the introduction of translation strategy taxonomies for wordplay by Zabalbeascoa (1996) and Gottlieb (1997), numerous relevant studies have been conducted to test the effectiveness of these strategies (Zabalbeascoa, 1996; Vanderschelden, 2002; Williamson & Pedro Ricoy, 2008; Afsari et al., 2018).

Furthermore, English shows a high frequency in the selected studies, either as the source language or the target language of examined audiovisual works. Among all selected articles in this study, about 75% studies explore audiovisual products with English as the source language. This phenomenon demonstrates that English-speaking countries, especially the United States, exert significant cultural influence worldly, making their audiovisual works, especially TV series and movies, predominant worldwide. Consequently, the trans-cultural spread of their audiovisual products has attracted the interest of scholars, who aim to investigate humor translation within these works. Both Arabic and English are the most frequently translated languages in the explored audiovisual products, with 6 articles each taking Arabic and English as the target language. Considering the current dominance of English as a lingua franca, most audiovisual products are translated into English to achieve broader acceptance in more countries, thus attracting significant research attention for its translation. The high frequency of Arabic as the target language reflects that Middle Eastern region imports many English-speaking audiovisual works. Humor in these products presents great translation challenges, especially in Arabic, because the formal language, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), co-exists with other vernacular. Therefore, discussions between formal language and vernacular in translation were commonly involved in the selected articles (Yahiaoui et al., 2019; Yahiaoui et al., 2020; Yahiaoui, 2022; Yahiaoui, 2023).

Some other languages were also involved in the examined audiovisual products. For example, Vanderschelden (2002) explored humor translation from French into English, while Williamson and Pedro Ricoy (2008) explored the translation from English into French. Bucaria (2008; 2021) and Dore (2019) investigated dubbing in Italian. Spanish has also been investigated by several scholars (Bolaños Garc ía-Escribano, 2017; D íaz-P érez, 2017; Marqu é Cobeta, 2021), with Zabalbeascoa (1996) and Garcia-Pinos (2017) focusing on humor translated into Spanish and Catalan. Pilyarchuk (2023) conducted a study on humor translation in sitcoms rendered in German, Ukrainian, and Russian, while Perdikaki (2014) explored the translation of humor from English to Greek.

As for language in Asia, Persian was frequently involved as the target language in the explored audiovisual works (Ghassemiazghandi & Tengku-Sepora, 2020; Sadeghpour, 2021; Amirian & Dameneh, 2014; Sadeghpour et al., 2015; Hassanvandi et al., 2016; Afsari et al., 2018). Mulyati and Nugroho (2023) explored the strategies for humor translation into Indonesian and Wang (2014) investigated humor translation strategies of Chinese subtitling. It can be seen that except the Arabic and Persian, the translation strategies of humor in audiovisual products are rarely focusing on neither Asian languages, such as Japanese, Korea, Chinese or Malay etc., nor languages in African countries. The most frequently involved languages are English, Arabic, Persian and European languages.

4.2 Translation Strategies on VEH in Audiovisual Products

Primarily, it can be summarized that most specific types of humor translation can be analyzed using the corresponding strategy taxonomies. For wordplay, the translation strategy taxonomy proposed by Gottlieb (1997) is applicable (Afsari et al., 2018; Vanderschelden, 2002; Williamson & Pedro Ricoy, 2008), and Delabastita's (1993 & 1996) typology is also widely used for wordplay translation (Camilli, 2019; Marqu é Cobeta, 2021). For irony, Mateo's (1995) taxonomy forms the basis of translation investigation (Yahiaoui, 2020), while Yahiaoui et al. (2019) applied several micro strategies from previous literature to analyze various dubbed ironies. Zabalbeascoa and Voellmer's (2014) typology for rendering the third language in source text is effectively applied in examining multilingual humor (Dore, 2019). The taxonomy of translation strategies for Cultural Specific Items (CSI) presented by Leppihalme (1997) was applied in the analysis of cultural humor translation (Debbas & Haider, 2020), and Pedersen's (2011) subtitling strategies for CSI is also applied in exploring cultural humor with more specificity. Dark humor and sexual humor in audiovisual products were examined in 2008 and 2021 under Bucaria's typology (2007).

Next, according to the three tables above, it's concluded that translation strategy taxonomies can be extended beyond the original utilization. Many scholars created specific translation strategy taxonomies toward various humor types for written text, subtitling or

dubbing. However, in real applications, these strategies are not confined to the originally proposed utilization scope. In stead, they can be extended to different categories of humor. For example, translation strategies proposed by Tomaszkiwicz (1993) to translate cultural jokes can also be applied to translate linguistic and universal humor (Sadeghpour & Omar, 2015; Alnusairat & Jaganathan, 2022). The typology raised by Pederson's (2005) for translating cultural reference can not only be applied for translating cultural humor but also for linguistic humor (Al-Jabri et al., 2023). Moreover, the divide between strategies for subtitling and dubbing is blurred. The most frequently applied taxonomy in the selected articles is the Gottlieb's (1992) typology for subtitling. It has been proved that this taxonomy can also be utilized in transferring humor in dubbing (Sadeghpour & Khazaefar, 2015).

Furthermore, translation strategy taxonomies applied in VEH usually be adapted to the audiovisual context with more specific and concrete strategies. Because most translation strategy taxonomies are proposed generally to adapt to most VEH translation. However, translating various humor in real practice may be largely different from the context when these taxonomies are proposed. So, in actual practice, humor translation strategies are based on these generalized principles and determined according to the specific translation purpose and context. In some cases, certain one category of translation strategies is not enough to solve problems of humor translation in audiovisual products. Thus, some scholars will extract the suitable strategies from two or more taxonomies, expand or narrow the existing taxonomies according to the examined context. For example, Perdikaki (2014) applied Nedergaard-Larsen's taxonomy (1993) plus some other scholars' strategies, Yahiaoui (2023) combined Federici's (2011) and Newmark's (1988) taxonomy to probe into humor translation in advertisement videos. Díaz-Pérez (2014) identified seven translation strategies for puns from previous literature. Abomoati (2019) also summarized the previous relating literature to identify seven translation strategies for linguistic and cultural humor. Pilyarchuk (2023) expanded Leppihalme's (1992) taxonomy for allusive humor translation. Díaz-Pérez (2017) adapted the classification proposed by Haywood et al. (2009) to suit the translation of cultural and linguistic humor in TV comedies. For those VEH not clear categorized in audiovisual products, its translation strategies can be traced from related literature toward various humor type, or resort to certain generalized typology of translation strategies.

At last, among the selected studies, it's found that Gottlieb's (1992) typology of translation strategies for subtitling is the most frequently applied due to its generalization. This taxonomy enlist 10 strategies for translating humor in audiovisual products: 1) Expansion, 2) Paraphrase, 3) Transfer, 4) Imitation, 5) Transcription, 6) Dislocation, 7) Condensation, 8) Decimation, 9) Deletion, and 10) Resignation, which can be used to translate various VEH. For example, Maharani and Ediwan (2019) explored cultural humor strategies based on this taxonomy. While Sadeghpour et al. (2015) used it as a guide to explore wordplay translation. Thus, when there is no clear classification of VEH, the classification of translation strategy, Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling taxonomy, are widely applied. (Ajtony, 2019; Tee et al., 2022; Mulyati & Nugroho, 2023; Ghassemiazghandi & Tengku-Sepora, 2020).

4.3 Research Gaps and Prospects

First of all, the types of audiovisual products being studied in the selected articles are confined mainly to TV series or films. Studies on other short videos like humorous posts on social media or Internet are nearly untouched. And the VEH translation in live subtitling or duding is not involved. Thus, the future studies can lay the emphasis on the translation strategies of VEH in videos from online platform, not only restricted to traditional TV or films. Besides, research on live translation of VEH is also feasible.

Next, more audiovisual products sourced or targeted in Chinese, Japanese, Korean or African languages etc. can be selected as research material to occupy research gap. Because the existing studies largely pay attention to the English or European languages, although Arabic and Persian have been widely involved.

Moreover, the humor types of VEH being examined cover a wide range from linguistic to cultural and universal humor. While the imbalance can also be seen that a great part of studies focus on the translation strategies of linguistic humor and most studies has made a very comprehensive humor classification. In the future, translation strategies can be explored based on more detailed humor types to provide more specific translation suggestions. Furthermore, the macro humor types examined may be more oriented towards cultural humor.

Despite the huge amount of humor translation strategies, scholars are encouraged to develop more targeted and applicable translation strategies for VEH based on the existing ones.

5. Limitations

The present study is conducted using the most rigorous review method, but some limitations still exist.

First of all, the scope of data source is limited. Owing to constraints in time and methodology, the study only searched related studies from the WoS and Scopus collections, potentially resulting in the omission of pertinent studies.

Besides, the included articles are only written in English. Some researches written in other languages also make contributions to the field of VEH translation. Additionally, the number of selected articles are relative small with 35 articles. These limitations may lead to biased results.

Moreover, due to the humor taxonomies are not identical and not categorized from the same perspective, some humor types are overlapped or not clearly classified in some articles, which make the research results in this study more ambiguous.

6. Conclusion

Based on the systematic literature review, the present study has conducted an exhaustive exploration on translation strategies for VEH in audiovisual products. By analyzing and discussing 35 qualified articles, VEH types, language pairs involved, and various translation strategies for different VEHs, several conclusions can be drawn: 1) Most studies focused on the exploration of VEH translation strategies in TV and films. 2) Linguistic humor is the most frequently studied, followed by cultural humor, with universal humor being less investigated alongside other miscellaneous humor types. 3) Different types of humor generally have corresponding translation strategy taxonomies, although some strategies may extend beyond their original intended scope. 4) As the most widely applied taxonomy, Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies can be employed or useful strategies can be extracted from relevant papers when VEH in the audiovisual texts is not specifically categorized. 5) Although translators can rely on these strategy taxonomies, the final translation and strategies used should be determined by the actual context. Consequently, some translation strategies are adapted, expanded, or narrowed selectively.

Future research could focus more on translation strategies for cultural humor and extend the scope to videos on various online platforms. Additionally, VEH translation strategies in live videos could become a focal point of research. When selecting research materials, languages from East Asian or African regions could be considered as the source or target languages.

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Authors' contributions

Man Yu Tong is a PhD student from Universiti Putra Malaysia. She is responsible for the fieldwork data collection, data analysis and drafting the manuscript. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hazlina Abdul Halim and Dr. Ng Boon Sim supervised and guided the research design and framework as well as the revision and proofreading of the manuscript. All authors contributed equally to the study and all authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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