Colloquium Area "Contemporary Research in Mass-Media Translation and Interpretation"

O ANALIZĂ MULTIMODALĂ A UMORULUI VIZUAL ŞI A ADAPTĂRII VERBALE ÎN VERSIUNEA ROMÂNEASCĂ A SCURTMETRAJULUI *CIAO ALBERTO* (2021) /

A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF VISUAL HUMOR AND VERBAL ADAPTATION IN THE ROMANIAN VERSION OF *CIAO ALBERTO* (2021)



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Abstract

This paper investigates the translation of humor in Pixar's Ciao Alberto *(2021) through a multimodal lens, focusing on the synergy between visual slapstick and verbal delivery. By conducting a contrastive analysis of the English source and its Romanian dubbing/subtitling, the study examines how humor is reconstructed when the visual track provides the punchline while the audio track provides the setup. The research utilizes a Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) framework to evaluate the preservation of irony and comic timing. The findings suggest that successful translation in animation depends on the translator's ability to decode "intermodal dissonance" and re-encode it for a new cultural and linguistic landscape.*

Keywords: *multimodal discourse, audiovisual translation, multimodal humor, visual-verbal dissonance, subtitling, dubbing, intersemiotic translation, pixar, comic timing, cultural adaptation*

Introduction

The present investigation is grounded in the premise that the contemporary linguistic phenomenon has transcended the boundaries of classical modal logic, integrating itself into a paradigm of the sign that authoritatively governs the entire scientific edifice of audiovisual communication. In this context, the short film *Ciao Alberto* (2021)—an original Pixar animation serving as a sequel to the feature film *Luca* (2021)—presents itself not merely as an entertainment artifact, but rather as an eloquent structure that demands a structuralist analysis capable of eliciting the pre-conscious laws governing the interaction between text, image, and sound. The multimodal revolution has essentially consisted in substituting an atomistic perspective on translation with a systemic analysis, wherein the function and relationship between semiotic tracks constitute the fundamental categories of understanding.

If late modernity established language as the central category of knowledge, digital animation represents, perhaps, the most refined form of "grammaticalization" of imagined reality. By scrutinizing the (non)verbal discourse analysis in *Ciao Alberto*, we observe that humor is not a discursive accident, but a mechanism of cultural assimilation articulated interdisciplinary between verbal pragmatics and gestural semiotics. The transition from the source text to the Romanian version (whether through dubbing or subtitling) involves a linguistic turn that cannot occur spontaneously; it necessitates a rigorous inquiry protocol that allows for the exportation of theoretical acquisitions from Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) into the sphere of translational practice. Thus, "intermodal dissonance" (the tension between the auditory setup and the visual punchline) ceases to be a systemic error and is transformed into a vector of the comic essence, simultaneously revealing structures that precede the linguistic phenomenon *per se*.

Adopting the model of the semiotics of culture, any gesture within the short film, definable as a significant symbolic activity, produces a coherent "text" whose function is the modelling of reality for the receptor. The Romanian translation/ adaptation of the animation is, in this sense, a "struggle for memory," in which the non-hereditary information of the Italian cultural space (mediated by Pixar's aesthetics) must be transformed into a domestic cultural text, recognizable to the target audience's linguistic cognition. The merit of such an approach lies in its capacity to formulate a pre-sociological definition of transposed humor, with specific focus on the accumulation of meaning that precedes the communicative exchange and generates message coherence within the accelerated tempo specific to the audiovisual medium. By identifying invariants and elucidating the mechanisms of signification, the present article aims to construct a rigorous model of humor adaptation, treating culture not as an optional cue, but as a condition for the existence and translation of the work of art.

Humor in Audiovisual Discourse

Within the architecture of audiovisual language transfer, the translator's activity intrinsically incorporates an "editorial element" that reconfigures the ontology of the source text. In this paradigm, the translator acts as a "Translator/Writer," invested with the authority to make constant editorial decisions regarding omissions or, conversely, the insertion of novel informational units indispensable for localizing the exogenous element within the receptor's cultural oecumene. Any cultural object subjected to this type of transfer migrates from the state of an isolated system toward a continuous process of transformation and reinterpretation; thus, the reality represented in this context corresponds to an eloquent structure, progressively adapted to the rigors of the new context.

A segment of difficulty in this equation of resignification is humor, defined both as a quality whose perlocutionary consequence is "fun" and as a mechanism of cultural assimilation of reality, articulated upon "perceived incongruity." However, the hermeneutics of the comic act remains marked by profound subjectivity, being dependent on the receptor's personal encyclopedia and informational memory. For a rigorous analysis of this phenomenon in the short film *Ciao Alberto*, we

operate with the distinction between purely linguistic humor and linguo-cultural humor. The latter presupposes a highly complex interaction between verbal structures and explicit references to the collective memory of the source culture (exemplified by institutions, celebrities, and gastronomic specifics, among others)—namely, those elements that function as veritable models of reality.

According to the exegesis established by Minutella (2014), humor emerges in the research horizon as a "slippery" concept, whose resistance to a univocal definition derives from its intrinsically subjective nature. In this paradigm, the intended perlocutionary effect is the triggering of laughter (Vandaele, 2002, p. 150), a phenomenon whose external manifestation is governed by fundamental features such as ambiguity or "perceived incongruity". Nevertheless, the hermeneutics of the comic act remains beholden to the receptor, insofar as "humor may well remain within the eyes, ears and mood of the beholder" (Chiaro & Piferi, 2010, p. 300), a fact that has led to the elaboration of diverse and complex taxonomies.

Methodological Framework: Systematizing the Fluidity of Humor

To systematize this fluid subject matter, the present study adopts the terminology proposed by Chiaro, operating with the notion of *Verbally Expressed Humor* (VEH), defined as "any verbal form of an attempt to amuse" (Chiaro & Piferi, 2010, p. 285). This theoretical category becomes authoritative in the audiovisual translation analysis of the short film *Ciao Alberto*, with the focus oriented toward those instances of VEH that engage linguistic and cultural elements whose transposition into a new linguistic oecumene demands significant analytical expertise. Regarding VEH, it constitutes a form of "grammaticalization" of the intent to amuse, clearly distinguishing itself from comic mechanisms transmitted exclusively through non-verbal channels. The translation of VEH proves to be a thorny issue, as the efficiency of the comic act varies according to the volume of "shared social background" possessed by the participants in the communicative act.

Consequently, to ensure adequate methodological rigor, Minutella has identified and labeled three essential subtypes of VEH that configure the comic architecture of an audiovisual work:

1. *Humor based on Culture-Specific References and Allusions* <CRA>: historically fixed units of information that refer to concepts or objects specific to a non-cultural or exogenous cultural universe, requiring transformation into a domestic cultural text.
2. *Wordplay-based humor* <W>: rhetorical mechanisms that exploit the formal similarities of language. This is a rhetorical device that contrasts linguistic structures based on their formal similarity (homonymy, polysemy, paronymy), generating tension between divergent meanings.
3. *Language Variation-based humor* <LV>: the use of dialects, specific accents, and registers as identity markers and sources of the comic (Minutella, 2014, p. 69).

In digital animation, language is essentially the authoritative category through which character personality is rapidly constructed, often resorting to ethnolects to signal foreign origins and activate the comic function through linguistic stereotypes.

Multimodality and Semiotic Interplay

From a multimodal perspective, humor manifests as a coherent discourse traversing two fundamental dimensions: the auditory and the visual. While the auditory channel facilitates the symbiosis between linguistic and linguo-cultural humor, the visual channel expresses itself through mechanisms of oculesics, proxemics, and kinesics, actively participating in the elaboration of filmic reality. A relevant theoretical contribution is that of Martínez-Sierra (2005), who proposes an eight-level schematization of humor (ranging from paralinguistic and sonic elements to community dimensions) emphasizing that the semiotic systems of audiovisual art possess an inherent modeling function.

The primary challenge in translating audiovisual VEH lies in managing "intermodal dissonance" and technical constraints of a nearly mathematical nature, such as lip-sync or the temporal duration of utterances. Mediation strategies range from substituting the VEH element of the source language with an equivalent invariant in the target language to utilizing compensation in other segments of the text, thereby ensuring the accumulation of information necessary for enhanced comprehension. The success of this cultural transfer resides in the translator's capacity to re-encode humor within a new linguistic landscape, respecting the indissoluble synergy between the visual track, which provides the comic punchline, and the audio track, which elaborates the necessary setup for the represented universe to become a truly intelligible and influential text.

In the horizon of contemporary reception, the paradigmatic tension between dubbing and subtitling has transcended an antagonistic vision, evolving toward a hermeneutics of complementarity that rejects axiomatic hierarchies. Early research, often captive in a mutual defensiveness, has given way to current perspectives that recognize Audiovisual Translation as a system of adaptive practices capable of responding to differentiated market segments. This semiotic dimension necessitates a rigorous reflection on the tension between foreignization and domestication, to understand how mechanisms of cultural assimilation can manipulate the source text without altering its eloquent structure.

In this reconfiguration process, the image, acting as an active background, serves as the determining visual anchor that either delimits or enhances the translator's editorial agency. In audiovisual texts, comic instances are frequently "intertwined with visual elements, which are powerful transmitters of meaning" (Minutella, 2014), giving rise to the so-called *chistes compuestos* or "compound jokes" (Martínez-Sierra, 2005). These represent nodes of signification where cultural references, imagery, sound, and linguistic structures converge in a multimodal synergy. Thus, the task of the audiovisual translator is to navigate this unitary system of reciprocal relations, ensuring that the transformation of sequences from the exogenous universe into a domestic cultural text respects the constraints imposed by "perceived incongruity" (Vandaele, 2002)—the only element capable of guaranteeing the coherence and vitality of the comic act within the new linguistic landscape.

To rigorously delineate the mechanisms that elicit laughter, the concept of humorous load emerges as a synergetic configuration of semiotic variables converg-

ing toward a unitary perlocutionary effect. This eloquent architecture, as defined by Blake (2007), draws its substance from a diversity of sources that exploit structural ambiguity and the intrinsic tensions of linguistic planes, transforming error into a vector of meaning. Humor is born at the confluence of polysemy and homophony with mechanisms of lexical malapropism or the exploitation of the failure of formal logic—processes that reconfigure the ontology of the audiovisual message.

Furthermore, comic synergy is sustained by the hybridization of registers (where the dissonant junction between a prestigious accent and dialectal grammar triggers a marked incongruity between the receptor's stylistic expectations and the presented linguistic reality). In this sense, the unexpected connection between disparate entities and the absence of a clarifying context forces the assimilation of reality into a paradigm of the absurd, wherein the humorous load serves as the ultimate guarantee of the internal coherence of a linguo-cultural system.

By resorting to the taxonomy proposed by Martínez-Sierra (2005) and integrating it within the research horizon of audiovisual translation, we identify eight fundamental levels that govern the ontology of humor in a multimodal environment:

1. *Community and Institutional Elements*: These target landmarks with deep-rooted presence in the collective memory of the source culture, ranging from the names of celebrities and politicians to publication titles or emblematic edifices. They largely correspond to the category of Culture-Specific References (CR)—those "words that refer to concepts or objects specific to the source culture and which may be unknown in the target culture" (Minutella, 2014)—necessitating a strategy of cultural assimilation or substitution to remain operative.
2. *Community Sensibility Elements*: These reflect themes whose resonance is more pronounced within specific collectivities, indicating a cultural preference or disposition rather than an exclusive specificity. Here, "humour appreciation varies individually" (Vandaele, 2002), and the success of the transfer depends on the congruence between the translator's encyclopedia and that of the receptor.
3. *Linguistic Elements*: These constitute the core conveyed strictly through language structures and wordplay, representing the equivalent of what Chiaro and Piferi define as VEH, namely "any verbal form of an attempt to amuse" (Chiaro & Piferi, 2010).
4. *Visual Elements*: These are provided by the iconic stream on the screen, representing a significant non-verbal component for the reception of the message itself. In Pixar animation, where the image is a "powerful transmitter of meaning," this level often dictates the boundaries of adaptation possibilities, functioning as an invariant that cannot be bypassed.
5. *Graphic Elements*: These include written messages inserted into pictograms, posters, or elements of the mise-en-scène. They possess a precise narrative and semiotic function, often requiring intervention at the level of subtitling or visual editing to preserve the coherence of the "world-as-text".

6. *Paralinguistic Elements*: These hold a comic function by exploiting pronunciation features, vocal qualities, or imitation. This level intersects with Language Variation (LV), where the use of ethnolects or foreign accents is utilized "as a quick way to build character and to reaffirm stereotype" (Lippi-Green, 1997), offering an additional playful dimension through "foreign-accented English."
7. *Sound Elements*: These are found within the soundtrack and special effects, actively participating in the construction of the atmosphere through acoustic stimuli. They enhance the "chistes compuestos" or complex jokes, in which "culture-bound references, image, sound and/or linguistics are combined" (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007).
8. *Non-marked Elements*: This represents a residual category gathering potentially humorous fragments that elude standard taxonomic criteria but contribute to the "quality that has 'fun' as its consequence" (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007).

This taxonomic grid constitutes an analytical matrix facilitating a refined contrastive dissection of the process of resignification, while simultaneously identifying the structural transformations occurring during the transition from the source joke to its target counterpart. Furthermore, it illuminates the manner in which the cultural assimilation of reality is achieved through the constant negotiation between multiple communicative channels. The mediation of these elements within a multimodal environment is contingent upon the capacity to decode "intermodality" and re-encode humor as a unitary system, thereby guaranteeing a reception congruent with the original intent, even within a new linguistic oecumene.

Cross-Version Reconfiguration

Building upon our analytical endeavor, we shall proceed toward a rigorous examination of the segments circumscribing community and institutional elements—landmarks which, through their deep-rootedness in collective memory, dictate the terms of the cultural assimilation of reality within the Romanian version of the short film *Ciao Alberto*. These units function as a "visual anchor" that delimits the translator's editorial agency, compelling a negotiation between "foreignization and domestication".

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
We got to use the big telescope at school today!	Azi, la şcoală, am folosit telescopul cel mare. [Today, at school, we used the big telescope.]	Azi, la şcoală, am folosit telescopul cel mare. [Today, at school, we used the big telescope.]
It can see really far but not Portorosso far.	Se vede foarte departe, dar nu chiar până la Portorosso. [One can see very far, but not quite as far as Portorosso.]	Am văzut până departe, dar nu până la Portorosso. [I saw far away, but not as far as Portorosso.]

The proper noun "Portorosso" functions here not merely as a toponymic reference, but also as a symbol of community belonging a "Cultural Reference (CR)" defining the entire diegetic universe. Upon initial examination, the choice to preserve the toponym intact in both Romanian variants reflects a strategy of assimilating reality by conserving the "informational memory" of the source text. Of particular interest, however, is the institutional level of the "school." While in the American source, the school is a space of technological exploration ("the big telescope"), in the Romanian audiovisual transfer, the institution remains an unmarked invariant; a locus serving as a mere background for the "humorous load" generated by the hyperbolic distance between the two geographical points.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Me and him, we're like pasta and pesto.	Noi doi suntem ca pastele și pesto. [The two of us are like the pastas and pesto.]	Noi doi suntem ca pasta și pesto. [The two of us are like the pasta and pesto.]

"Pasta and pesto" are gastronomic institutions of the source culture, becoming "words referring to specific concepts that may be unknown in the target culture." However, due to culinary globalization, the Romanian translator deems these terms already assimilated into the receptor's oecumene, thus avoiding a "cultural substitution" that might have destroyed the local flavor (e.g., *mămăligă cu brânză* or *sarmale* [*polenta with cheese* or *stuffed cabbage rolls*]). The use of the plural form in the dubbing (*pastele*) versus the singular in the subtitles (*pasta*) reveals a subtle distinction between colloquial grammaticalization and the syntactic rigor of the written text, yet both fail to alter the humorous load of the comparison.

This unit represents a privileged case of "foreign-accented English," where a community element—the greeting, in this instance—is left untranslated to "reaffirm the identity stereotype".

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Buongiorno, Massimo.	Buongiorno, Massimo.	*Buongiorno, Massimo.*

"Buongiorno" (*hello/good morning*) ceases to be a mere lexeme and is transformed into a "significant symbolic activity" signaling membership in the Mediterranean cultural space. By preserving it, the Romanian translation achieves a transformation of the exogenous universe into a "domestic cultural text" without resorting to "substitution," relying instead on the volume of "shared social background" possessed by the contemporary Romanian public, which is well-acquainted with basic Italian lexicon.

Here, our investigation encounters an Institutional Element *par excellence*: the *pescheria*. In the economy of the short film, the fish market is the vital center of the characters' existence.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Oh, sure! Storms. Waves taller than the pescheria.	O, clar. Furtuni. Valuri	Da. Furtuni. Valuri mai înalte

	mai înalte ca pescheria. [Oh, sure. Storms. Waves higher than the pescheria.]	ca pescheria. [Yes. Storms. Waves higher than the pescheria.]

From a multimodal perspective, the word is a "powerful transmitter of meaning" interacting with the Visual Element on screen. The decision not to translate the term as *pescărie* or *piaţă de peşte* in Romanian indicates a will to maintain the humorous load at a level of poetic foreignization. The *pescheria* becomes a metaphor for the "struggle for memory," and the cultural object is re-encoded into a new linguistic landscape without losing its original "homogenizing function".

Our multimodal analysis now enters a zone of semiotic density, where we shall explore the mechanisms through which Community and Institutional Elements, alongside those of Community Sensibility, ground the humorous load of the Romanian audiovisual transfer.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Especially my new job.	Mai ales noul meu serviciu. [Especially my new service/job.]	Mai ales noul meu loc de muncă. [Especially my new place of work.]

Upon an initial analytical reading of "Especially my new job," we observe how the concept of the *job* is transformed into the central axis of the discourse. In the Romanian dubbing, the choice of the term *serviciu* ("Mai ales noul meu serviciu") over *loc de muncă* (present in the subtitles: "Mai ales noul meu loc de muncă") is by no means accidental. For the Romanian audience, *serviciu* carries a more profound institutional resonance, suggesting not merely an activity, but a communal duty.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Delivery!	Comanda! [The order!]	Livrarea! [The delivery!]

Why this divergence? *Comanda* (the order) focuses the attention on the object of the transaction (an element of the economic institution), whereas *Livrarea* (the delivery) describes the act itself. Within the multimodal context of Pixar's animation, *"Comanda!"* is a choice "pregnant with meaning," as it underscores Alberto's fleeting authority within the social hierarchy of Portorosso. It is a "struggle for memory" in which the economic act is assimilated as a form of communal ritual.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Am I fired?	Sunt concediat? [Am I fired/dismissed?]	Mă dai afară? [Are you throwing me out?]

The use of *concediere* (dismissal/firing) in the dubbing creates an engaging and humorous "intermodal dissonance"; a child utilizing a lexeme specific to labor leg-

islation generates a "perceived incongruity" that grounds the VEH. This "humorous load" arises from the failure of the logic that should govern the relationship between an adult (Massimo) and an unofficial helper (Alberto).

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Dude, I don't mean to brag, but Giulia's got some serious competition.	Nu vreau să mă laud, dar Giulia are concurenţă serioasă. [I don't want to boast, but Giulia has serious competition.]	Nu vreau să mă laud, dar Gulia are concurenţă serioasă. [I don't want to boast, but Giulia has serious competition.]

The term *concurenţă* (competition) functions here as a "transparent allusion to the meritocratic order." For Alberto, being the "perfect employee" ("I'm gonna be the perfect employee, and I'll make Massimo proud"/"Am de gând să fiu angajatul ideal şi-l voi face mândru pe Massimo") means entering into a competition with Giulia for Massimo's affection. This "dissonance of respect" points to a "cultural disposition" specific to societies that value productivity as a currency for love.

Toward the end, Massimo invokes an image of brutal symbolic force: "he punched a hole in a brick wall." The brick wall serves as both a physical barrier and an "institution of family memory." In both Romanian versions, the image is faithfully rendered ("a făcut o gaură în perete").

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
I once made my father so angry, he punched a hole in a brick wall.	Odată l-am supărat pe tata atât de rău, că a făcut gaură în perete cu pumnul. [Once I made my father so angry that he made a hole in the wall with his fist.]	Odată l-am înfuriat pe tata atât de tare încât a făcut o gaură în perete dintr-un pumn. [Once I infuriated my father so much that he made a hole in the wall from a punch.]
Well, we fixed it.	Păi... Am reparat-o. [Well... We fixed it.]	Am reparat zidul. [We repaired the wall.]

The resolution in "Well, we fixed it"/"Păi... Am reparat-o" demonstrates that community sensibility is based on the capacity to "repair" not only walls but also relationships. The "humorous load" here is of a "*doux présent*" type, where an act of destruction (the father's rage) is sublimated into an act of creation (the collaboration between Massimo and Alberto). This "reconciliation between spirit and libido" transforms the exogenous reality into a coherent Romanian cultural text, grounded in the idea that "anything can be repaired".

Upon an initial reading of the segment—"The fire's leaking!"—we encounter the most conspicuous lexeme of the entire sequence: *leaking*. Why did the screenwriter select this specific term from the vast array of verbs describing the propagation of fire? For Alberto, whose personal encyclopedia is defined by an aquatic en-

vironment, fire is assimilated through the logical prism of water. We are in the presence of a misuse of words (malapropism), where the humorous load results from the perceived incongruity between the nature of the substance and its mechanism of expansion.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
The fire's leaking.	A luat foc barca. [The boat caught fire.]	Focul se întinde! [The fire is spreading!]
The fire's leaking!	Arde barca! [The boat is burning!]	-

The Romanian dubbing opts for a functional simplification: "*A luat foc barca / Arde barca!*", thereby losing the semantic bivalence and the flavor of Alberto's logical error. In contrast, the subtitling — "*Focul se întinde!*" — though more neutral, also fails to re-encode the original malapropism. This editorial decision reflects a loss of intermodal dissonance, wherein the Romanian translator preferred a "perfect depiction of reality" at the expense of the original linguistic "magic."

The segment "'Meow' yourself" offers a revealing perspective on how VEH can be "pregnant with hidden meanings".

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
'Meow' yourself.	„Meow" și ție. ["Meow" to you too.]	N-ai decât să miauni! [Go ahead and meow!]

Here, humor arises from the "connection between two apparently disparate entities": human language and animal onomatopoeia. The Romanian dubbing, through the formula "*și ție*" (to you too), creates a magnificent interplay of direct reference, treating the cat's meow as a verbal act of communication subject to human norms of politeness. This compensation strategy succeeds in maintaining the "internal harmony" of the scene and transforms the sound into an eloquent structure.

Another moment where "the poet and the translator meet" is the segment: "Once I was caught in a hurricane with two eyes." In this context, Massimo deconstructs the established metaphor of "the eye of the hurricane." The humor here is structural, based on ambiguity and a lack of context.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Oh-ho. Once I was caught in a hurricane with two eyes.	Odată am intrat într-un ochi de uragan. [Once I entered a hurricane's eye.]	Odată m-a prins un uragan cu doi ochi. [Once a hurricane with two eyes caught me.]

The Romanian dubbing neutralizes the punchline, remaining within a "still life" description of the phenomenon. However, the subtitles preserve the semantic

bivalence and the original comic "incantation." This "pregnant choice" by the subtitler underscores the degree of manipulation required for the cultural assimilation of humor to be complete, making visible the "struggle for memory" within the cultural text.

In the segment—"Well, he would... if he talked, which he doesn't. Ever."—the humorous load is distributed along the vertical axis of syntax.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Well, he would... if he talked, which he doesn't. Ever.	Sau mi-ar spune... Dacă ar vorbi, ceea ce nu face. Niciodată. [Or he would tell me... If he spoke, which he doesn't do. Ever.]	Mai bine zis, mi-ar spune... Dacă ar vorbi, doar că nu vorbeşte. Niciodată. [Or rather, he would tell me... If he could talk, but he doesn't talk. Ever.]

Both Romanian versions respect the "magnificent crescendo" toward the final negation, "*Niciodată*" ("Ever"). This final lexeme, strategically placed after a long pause during a frame change, functions as a "transparent allusion" to Massimo's taciturn nature—an unmarked element that contributes to the quality having fun as its consequence.

Original (in English)	Dubbing (in Romanian)	Subtitles (in Romanian)
Sono libero!	Sono libero! [I am free!]	Sono libero! [I am free!]
Mangia?	Mangia? [Eat?]	Mangia? [Eat?]
Scusi, big guy.	Scusi, uriaşule! [Scusi, you giant!]	Scusi, uriaşule! [Scusi, you giant!]

Both dubbing and subtitling opt to preserve these "islands of Italianness". "Mangia?" is not merely an invitation to consume but a "significant symbolic activity" defining hospitality. By retaining these terms, the Romanian translation achieves an assimilation of exogenous reality without altering the humorous load. The result is a melange of reason and cultural passion, allowing the Romanian receptor to experience intermodal dissonance authentically.

The segment "Scusi, big guy" provides a "sneak preview" of how Alberto navigates between institutional respect and camaraderie. The lexeme "*Scusi*" serves as a "transparent allusion" to his foreign origin, acting as an ethnolect that signals the speaker's ethnic group. The Romanian dubbing, "Scusi, uriaşule!", preserves the semantic bivalence of the term. While "uriaşule" (giant) charts the mundane territory of Massimo's physical strength, the term "Scusi" maintains the cultural bridge.

Throughout the short film, we observe numerous interjections and onomatopoeia. In the segments "Whoa" and "Woo-hoo!", the humorous load relies on vocal qualities and the immanent energy of the senses, rendered in the Romanian version as "Heh"/"Woo-hoo!". These paralinguistic elements hold a comic function by exploiting vocal qualities. They are "connections between disparate entities" (pure emotion and sound) that generate dynamism within an otherwise static structure. A moment of particular complexity is "'Meow' yourself," where humor transcends the linguistic level and enters the realm of chistes compuestos where image and sound combine. The Romanian dubbing, "'Meow' şi ţie," is a "choice pregnant with provocative meanings." By applying a human greeting structure to an animal interjection, a "failure of formal logic" occurs, triggering laughter. It is a "reconciliation between spirit and libido," where Alberto treats the cat Machiavelli as an equal within the oecumene of Portorosso—an element that disappears in the subtitled version: "N-ai decât să miauni!"

Conclusions

If, in the initial stages of this research, we questioned the capacity to convert a cultural identity as exuberant as the Mediterranean one into the frameworks of the Romanian linguistic oecumene, we now gain the conviction that the assimilation of humor in digital animation is not a mere transfer of signals, but an ontological reconstruction of the "world-as-text". We can understand, therefore, why this small universe of Portorosso, despite being filtered through a double cultural lens, preserves its aura of authenticity, refusing to be dismantled by the technical constraints of dubbing or subtitling.

The analysis undertaken confirms the belief that we are witnessing a process in which the translator becomes a true "Translator/Writer," validating their editorial vision through every selection of a lexeme "pregnant with meanings" and through every management of "intermodal dissonance." The short film *Ciao Alberto* thus becomes a benchmark for how the synergy between the visual and the verbal ensures the continuity of the comic message "here and now," rendering the score of this semiotic space unique. This unity of discourse, sustained by the "humorous load" of paralinguistic and graphic elements, demonstrates that, despite any translational impediments, humor remains a "quality that has 'fun' as its consequence," guaranteeing a triumph of the spirit over linguistic limitations.

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