

Intertextual References and Culture-Specific Words in Dubbing Translation: The Case of *Deadpool & Wolverine*

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Abstract: This paper is a self-criticism of the Slovak dubbing translation of *Deadpool & Wolverine*, with a focus on intertextual references and culture-specific terms. The analysis highlights the necessity of distinguishing between intra- and extra-universe intertextuality, each governed by distinct translation norms. Intra-universe references typically require a foreignizing approach, whereas extra-universe references often necessitate a domesticating strategy. Media constraints, such as dubbing, further influence translation decisions. The study emphasizes the impact of global subcultures on translation strategies within pop-cultural franchises.

Key words: intertextuality, culture-specific words, dubbing translation, translation criticism

Introduction

Ever since the cultural turn in Translation Studies (Bassnett – Lefevere 1990), the focus in translation has shifted more towards cultural and functional equivalence (*Skopos* – Reiß, Vermeer 2013). When it comes to the question of intertextual references or culture-specific words and phrases, word-for-word renderings are rarely functionally equivalent. The problem of translating intertextual references is also primarily connected not just to the function of the references within the text, but also to their function within the group of audience in which they are used. Similarly, these references do not necessarily refer to a “culture” in the national sense, but to a specific group of people sharing similar hobbies or interests – i.e., global subcultures, fandoms. This paper studies the Slovak dubbing translation of *Deadpool & Wolverine*, focusing on strategies and the decision process used in the translation of intertextual references and culture specific words. Via self-criticism (the author is the translator), I intend to explain the decision-making process and to categorize the translation strategies used and the motivation behind them. The goal is to excerpt the factors influencing the

translator's decision-making process when translating intertextual references and culture-specific words in a pop-cultural work.

Popular Culture and Intertextual References

Translation is a decision-making process (Levý 1963) in which cultural differences play a crucial role. Each culture has different norms in translation (Toury 1995); these norms are dynamic and require translators to work within them – or to purposely not abide by them if it is functional. Now, in this paper, when I mean cultures, I do not necessarily talk about national cultures. According to Hofstede, culture is “*the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another*” (Hofstede 1980, p. 21). Bear this definition in mind while briefly analysing *Deadpool & Wolverine*.

Deadpool & Wolverine is an example of a mass cultural pastiche of specific popular culture. Malíček (2012) distinguishes between the terms mass and popular culture by emphasizing the fact that mass culture is what is contemporarily considered to be ‘popular’, while popular culture does not have to be massively successful. In other words, popular culture is defined by its enthusiastic fanbase. These fanbases create subcultures that are often global. A work of art becomes an example of popular culture when the audience supports it not because it is successful, but because the fans are passionate about it. What the creators of *Deadpool & Wolverine* managed to do was to make a massively successful film that pays tribute to the popular culture of the former 20th Century Fox superhero movies. This is crucial when the translator tries to establish the model reader (Eco 1995) for whom s/he tailors the translation approach.

It is appropriate at this point to return to Hofstede's definition of culture. Considering the model reader, or rather, the model audience of the analysed movie, it is necessary to find out how the audience distinguishes itself from other cultures or subcultures. According to Herec (In Tyšš 2013), from a sociological point of view, readers of fantasy fiction create communities. It follows that the same may very well be applied to the audience of the superhero franchise(s). Such an audience prides itself on a very deep understanding of knowledge pertaining to the comic-book film universe and meta-knowledge regarding studio decisions, actors, directors, and they often create memes that one is only able to understand after gaining a certain amount of knowledge. This is how they differentiate themselves from a mass reader, or mass audience. They pride themselves on understanding all the intertextual references. That distinguishes them from other subcultures.

Since the analysed work is full of intertextual references and culture-specific-words, one has to distinguish between references and

words pertaining to the subculture of the fanbase (or a fandom) and to those related primarily to the original culture, i.e., the country of origin. Why? The former requires a different approach than the latter. The former is expected by the audience to be translated in a way that it is still recognisable as part of the subcultural milieu; the latter not. It constitutes part of the subculture, not of the national culture.

Deadpool & Wolverine uses intertextual references mainly for humorous function.¹ As already mentioned, it is a pastiche. Pastiche differs from parody in the sense that it makes fun of the prototext with the goal of paying respect to it. In other words, it laughs with it, not at it (Nünning 2006). Nevertheless, as stated by Botella Tejera, intertextuality is an important source of humour (2017, p. 9), particularly in the analysed work. And humour is culturally specific (ibid., p. 7), or rather subculturally specific.

To elaborate on the statement that intertextual re-creation depends on recognisability in the given target culture (Kaźmierczak 2019, p. 366), I claim intertextual references and culture-specific words are of the two following types:

- 1) Intra-universe culture-specific words and intertextual references²
- 2) Extra-universe culture-specific words and intertextual references

In these two types, two different norms are applied in translation. The former requires the use of norms of the subculture, while the latter requires norms of the national culture.

Methodology

The methodology of the following criticism is based on the model of translation criticism proposed by Laś (2019). Specifically, it is a self-criticism in which the author of the translation explicitly explains their decision-making process. This communicative model emphasizes the need to criticise those elements of the original work that are essential for the transference of the main function. In the case of *Deadpool & Wolverine*, a pastiche with the goal of celebrating former ‘forgotten 20th Century Fox superheroes’,³ the main function is humour. From the linguistic point of view, humour is demonstrated mainly by the use of

¹ In this text, I use the definition of intertextuality as "a relation of a given text with another text, a group of texts, or with texts of culture that precede it in time" (Kaźmierczak 2019, p. 364).

² Intra-universe in the sense of pertaining to the sub-cultural universe of the movie universe and meta intra-universe – regarding actors, famous memes, directors, studios, etc.

³ Even the story is set in the ‘forgotten’ rubbish dump, where these superheroes still exist, an in meta-reference to how the fans or the general public forgotten about them.

vulgarisms and inter-cultural references or culture-specific words. This analysis focuses on the latter.

When analysing the intercultural references and culture-specific words, I will first categorize them using the aforementioned two main categories (intra-universe culture, extra-universe culture) and then I will use Ranzato's (2016) taxonomy of translation strategies for culture-specific items in translation – (1) substitution, (2) elimination, (3) generalisation, (4) explicitation, (5) official translation, (6) loan, (7) calque, (8) lexical recreation, (9) compensation, (10) creative addition. The first five strategies are generally domesticating translation strategies, strategies 6 – 9 are foreignizing; and (10) can be both (Pagrandytė – Astrauskienė 2021, 144). There is an assumption that intra-universe culture specifics will generally be foreignized and extra-universe items domesticated.

This approach will be combined with Levý's (1963) ideas when discussing translation as a decision-making process. He emphasizes that each decision-making process can be evaluated via two types of translation decisions. (1) Un/Necessary translation decisions and (2) Un/Motivated translation decisions. The former basically relates to constitutive shifts as defined by Popovič (1983),¹ but my focus will be mainly on the latter. Un/motivated translation decisions define whether the changes are, indeed functionally related to the macro-context and defined or shaped by the main function of the text.

In terms of the corpus, all intertextual references in the movie will be analysed. Last but not least, the model proposed by Laš (2019) emphasizes the need for meta-synthesis. Meta-synthesis is the last step in the translation criticism process and it is where the critic incorporates the acquired knowledge into some framework that can be used in future (similar) translations. Here the criticism finally becomes constructive criticism.

To sum up, these are the goals of the self-criticism:

- (1) Categorization of translation strategies regarding translation of intertextual references and culture-specific words using the two aforementioned criteria.
- (2) Motivations behind the translator's decisions.
- (3) Meta-synthesis focusing on the factors influencing the translator's decisions regarding dubbing translation of intertextual references and culture-specific words.

Criticism

¹ Inevitable shifts in translation that stem from different linguistic systems of the two languages involved in the process.

The starting point of this criticism focuses on those intertextual references and culture-related words that can be categorized as intra-universe, i.e., related to the subculture of the superhero comic books. The individual examples are further categorized according to the translation strategies used. EN refers to the English original, SK to the Slovak translation and SK_B to the back-translation.

Intra-universe loans

The majority of intra-universe culture-related words and intertextuality were transferred to Slovak using a loan as a translation strategy.

EN: Disney bought Fox. SK: Disney kúpilo Fox. SK_B: Disney bought Fox.

EN: Marvel's so stupid. SK: Marvelu už pekne jebe. SK_B: Marvel's out of their fuckin' mind.

Deadpool is known for its meta-narrative humour, in which the main character breaks the fourth wall and, for example, explains how the movie was made. In this example, he refers to the whole situation when Disney bought Fox. As I chose the model readers to be fans of the franchise, it is expected that they know the behind-the-scenes information to understand the reference. Hence, I simply loaned the names of studios, there was no need for explicitation or generalization. The second example also shows a creative addition. The Slovak translation of this sentence is more vulgar.¹ This is the very beginning of the movie and the addition's motivation was to improve the humorous function and to prepare the audience for a lot of expressive language.

EN: Smashturbating. SK: Smašturovať. SK_B: Smashturbating.

This is another loan. The word “smashturbating” describes a comical way of masturbating using the toy hands of Hulk. Since Hulk, when transformed into his superhero figure, can not speak and only says “smash”, I decided to keep this direct reference to him rather than substituting it with a more humorous way to describe a ridiculous

¹ Although in total, there are less vulgarisms in Slovak (192) than there are in English (220), but they are distributed differently and it is difficult to compare their expressive value, since Slovak dubbing translation norm is much less used to expressive vulgar language.

masturbation technique (e.g. *masturbínovat'* (connotation to a turbine)). It was motivated by the subcultural expectations.

EN: Paul Rudd finally aged. SK: Paul Rudd konečne zostarol. SK_B: Paul Rudd finally aged.

Here, the character refers to a huge figure that is similar to the mask of Ant-Man (played by Paul Rudd) and is revealed to have a skeleton in it. There is an ongoing meme within the fandom that Paul Rudd does not age; he always looks the same. This reference is understandable by the fandom; hence the decision was motivated by the necessity to keep the reference.

EN: Suck it, Fox! I'm going to Disneyland. Get fucked! SK: Počuješ, Fox? Idem do Disneylandu. Jebem vás! SK_B: Suck it, Fox! I'm going to Disneyland. Get fucked!

This loan was selected because of the context behind the whole creation of the movie. Disney proudly presented it as the first R-rated movie (from that studio), and hence the meta-humour was necessary to transfer into the translation without the loss of intertextuality, even if it relates to the process of the movie's creation rather than to other 'texts' – it is still part of the intra-universe references.

EN: Mangold tried! SK: Čo som Mangold? SK_B: Who am I, Mangold?

This is a line by Deadpool by which he is trying to say it is impossible to kill the Wolverine. "Mangold tried" refers to the movie Logan (2017), directed by James Mangold. At the end of that movie the Wolverine was killed off. There was only a minor constitutional shift to make it sound more natural in Slovak. The motivation was again to please the target subculture.

EN: Classic John Byrne brown and tan! SK: Opálená klasika od Johna Byrna. SK_B: Tanned classic by John Byrne.

John Byrne was one of the comic-booksartists of the Wolverine. Again, it was not necessary to explicitate or substitute this intertextuality.

EN: The Cavillrine! The legends were true! SK: Cavillrín! Legendy neklamali! SK_B: The Cavillrine. The legends were true!

'The Cavillrine' refers to the combination of the names Henry Cavill and the Wolverine. Cavill had a cameo in the movie; he played one of several Wolverine variants. The information on the possibility of him playing the Wolverine was leaked before the release of the movie, so the

authors poked fun at the fandom in a very meta-humorous way. The goal was to show that the studio cares about their fans and they are aware of the narratives circulating within the fandom.

EN: Shawarma? SK: Šavarmu? SK_B: Shawarma?

Shawarma is a type of Middle-Eastern street dish that is largely unknown in Slovakia. In a different text type, substitution would be used (e.g. to kebab or yufka), but here it is an intra-universe intertextual reference to the Avengers enjoying shawarma in a post-credit scene from *The Avengers* (2012). This became a meme and it is well-established knowledge within the fandom. That is why a loan was used.

EN: I assume I'm going to marvel. SK: Bude to marvelózne. SK_B: It will be marvelous.

In this loan, I coined a new adjective in Slovak that mainly transfers the connotation to Marvel Studios. So even if the semantic meaning was not fully transferred, the pragmatic effect was, and it was a motivated decision with the goal of increasing the tongue-in-cheek humorous function.

Intra-universe substitution

In some cases, substitution was used simply because it was impossible to convey the information in the target language otherwise.

EN: G'day, mate. "There's nothing that'll bring me back to life faster... than a big bag of Marvel cash"! SK: Zdravím, bratu, nič nenakopne borca viac ako tučný balík škváry od Marvelu! SK_B: Alright, bro, nothing wakes up a lad more than a fat load of dough from Marvel!

The original line of dialogue parodies Australian English, because Deadpool talks like Hugh Jackman (not like the Wolverine). Any form of dialect is always difficult to transfer, especially, when the audience is supposed to recognise a specific accent and its relation to an actor in the movie. This is impossible to transfer in the Slovak translation, so instead the translation uses a lot of substandard words to convey a very colloquial register that boosts the humorous function of the original – although here the function is increased by the manner in which the Slovak dubbing actor speaks (intonation, tone, etc.). The motivation is to have a very colloquial way of addressing the Wolverine by Deadpool.

Intra-universe Generalization and Creative Addition

EN: They call me "The Merc with the Mouth." They don't call me "Truthful Timmy, the Blowjob Queen of Saskatoon." SK: Volajú ma „drzý kokot“. Nevolajú ma „Pravdovravný pičko, čo fajčí kokoty v Kanade“. SK_B: They call me "a prick with the mouth". They don't call me "Truthful cunt who sucks cocks in Canada".

"Truthful Timmy, the Blowjob Queen of Saskatoon", is a direct reference to a Twitter account of the same name that became a fandom joke, often referenced in comments on YouTube to interviews with Ryan Reynolds (Deadpool). "The Merc with the Mouth" is a reference to Deadpool's nickname in the universe of superheroes. Both these intertextual references were generalized and there was also a creative addition to increase the humorous function by means of substantially emphasized vulgarity. The decision is therefore motivated, although a more literal rendition of the original would also have been adequate.

As expected, intra-universe intertextuality and culture-specific words were mainly translated by the use of loans, with only a few instances of substitution, generalization, or creative addition. Foreignizing translation strategies dominated. In terms of motivation behind translation decisions, they were all related to the specified model reader – a fandom member. Domesticating strategies were used only in few cases where the humorous function was considered more important than direct intertextuality.

Extra-universe substitution

Let us now look at extra-universe intertextuality and culture-specific words. These references are not primarily aimed at the subculture of superhero fans.

EN: Now, let's power up your little Amazon Fire phone there. SK: Zapnite tú vašu mašinku z Wishu. SK_B: Now, let's power up your little machine from Wish.

"Amazon Fire phone" refers to a discontinued unsuccessful smartphone. In Slovak, there is a substitution which utilizes an established joke within Slovakia about Wish e-shop products that are considered to be of lower quality. Since the original has a similar connotation, this substitution is motivated by the function of the reference.

EN: You're gonna Old Yeller my fucking universe? In your parlance, yes. Two in the heart, one in the head. SK: Vy chcete odmuľasovať môj

vesmír? Vo vašej hantírke, áno. A ja budem Skár. SK_B: You want to Mufasa my universe? In your parlance, yes. And I shall be Scar.

Old Yeller 1956 is a 1956 Disney movie in which the main character is forced to euthanise his own dog. Deadpool here refers to one of the main villains and juxtaposes the forbidden rule in cinema (not-to-kill animals on screen) with the villain's goal to destroy the universe. In Slovakia, the movie is largely unknown and has never been translated. The substitution aimed to preserve a reference to a different movie in which animals die on screen that was also made by Disney. Hence the translation refers to *The Lion King* and cons the verb 'odmufasovať' which is supposed to mean "to kill". In dubbing, there is always a possibility that the audience does not catch the reference, since Slovak is not used to creating new verbs in this manner. Therefore, the line "Two in the heart, one in the head" was substituted to follow the first reference by the name Scar – the villain who killed Mufasa in *The Lion King*. To boot, in the same year that Deadpool was released, Disney released a new film from *The Lion King* franchise focusing on Mufasa, so the intertextual reference is strengthened for the contemporary audience. This is a motivated and necessary decision.

EN: Original recipe or Van Milder here? I can gently tap the fourth wall too. The Proposal. SK: Pôvodný recept? Či túto Sexy párty? Aj ja viem jemne narušiť štvrtú stenu. Hra na hrdinu. SK_B: Original recipe or Van Milder here? I can gently tap the fourth wall too. Free Guy.

There are two intertextual references here. The first one, to the movie *The Proposal*, is translated using an official title translation – *Sexy párty*. The latter reference (to *The Proposal*) is substituted with a more updated reference, to the movie *Free Guy*. The motivation is to ease interpretation for the target reader by referencing a more known and recent movie in the target culture.

EN: Mary Poppins. SK: Mary Hafinsová. SK_B: Mary Whoofins.

This is a wordplay combining *Mary Poppins* and the word *puppy* (relating to a young dog). Although Mary Poppins is not completely unknown in Slovakia, it is impossible to preserve the wordplay with puppy. To boot, the character Mary Poppins does not have any important function in the scene, hence the translation substituted it using an interjection related to the sound that dogs make in Slovak (*haf*) as a suffix to the name. It was a motivated and necessary decision.

EN: I'm going to boil your brains on an atomic level whilst flicking my bean to the Enya boxset. SK: A len čo to spravíš, uvarím vám mozgy ako

mikrovlnka a popri tom sa budem prstovať pri výberovke Enyi. SK_B: I'm going to boil your brains like a microwave while masturbating to Enya's best-of.

Another example of a necessary substitution. The term boxset is not often used in Slovakia, but the noun *výberovka* meaning “best-of” comes in handy in dubbing because it is rather short and can be combined with the name of the artist without extra conjunctions. The humorous function is preserved. It is a necessary decision.

EN: The name's Remy LeBeau, Le Diable Blanc. But you can call me the Gambit. It's been a while since I've seen Sling Blade. Hit me again. SK: Volám sa Remy LeBeau, Le Diable Blanc. Ale volaj ma Gambit. Foresta Gumpa som už dlho nevidel. Ešte raz, prosím. SK_B: The name's Remy LeBeau, Le Diable Blanc. But you can call me Gambit. It's been a while since I've seen Forrest Gump. Hit me again.

This is a dialogue between Deadpool and Gambit. Gambit introduces himself and speaks with a Cajun accent that is difficult for Deadpool to understand. So Deadpool makes fun of him by comparing his voice to the movie *Sling Blade*, which stars a disabled Arkansas man whose speech is also difficult to understand. The movie is not very well known in the target culture, so the connotation with disability and voice may be lost on the target reader. Hence there is a substitution to a more popular movie, *Forrest Gump*. Although the character of Forrest Gump is easily understood, the main motivation here is to preserve an acoustic similarity between Gambit and Gump. It is a motivated and necessary decision.

EN: Oh, ableism. Great. That's not gonna go over well with the woke mob. SK: Och, ableizmus. Super. Toto si asi sniežkáři nepôjdu. SK_B: Oh, ableism. Great. That's not gonna go over well with the snowflakes.

The motivation behind the substitution of the *woke mob* by *snowflakes* is particularly related to the form of media. In dubbing, one works with a limitation of syllables and to express the *woke mob* in Slovak would be too complicated (for example *tupí zástancovia politickej korektnosti*), so instead the term was substituted by *sniežkáři*, a general pejorative used by conservatives to refer to liberals. Since political correctness is associated with social liberalism, the humorous function is preserved, and it is a necessary decision motivated by the type of media.

EN: I have the Wolverine! I alone control her! You come for me... you come for her. So sorry. I know it's pronounced „him.“ I'm gender blind. It's my cross to bear. SK: Mám aj Vulvarínu! A poslúcha ma na slovo!

Ak pôjdete po mne pôjdete aj po nej. Prepáč, viem, že sa to skloňuje inak, ale všetci sme si rovní nevidím rozdiel. SK_B: I have the Vulvarine! And she obeys every single word of mine! If you come for me... you come for her. Sorry. I know it's declined differently, but we're all equal. I don't distinguish between people.

This is a combination of substitution and creative addition. The name the Wolverine is substituted with *Vulvarína*, using the Latin root for womb. This alters the grammatical gender of the name to a feminine noun. The entire discussion surrounding pronouns in the West is not yet a very heated debate in conservative Slovakia, so it is substituted with a remark about noun declension. It is a necessary and motivated decision preserving the humorous function.

EN: You come for the king, you better kill the king. SK: Keď vraždíš kráľovnú, tak nesmieš váhať. SK_B: When you want to kill the queen, you can't hesitate.

This is a very complex multilevel intertextual reference. It is quite possibly a direct reference to the TV show *The Wire*, but in *The Wire* they paraphrased R. W. Emerson's paraphrase of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Nevertheless, when it comes to translation it is substituted, and preserving the pragmatic meaning is the key element. Since this was said by the main villain, Cassandra Nova, a *king* was substituted by a *queen*. It was a motivated decision.

EN: White girl interrupted. SK: Vytiahneme ratrak? SK_B: Care to pull out a snowcat?

EN: Even Forrest Bump. SK: Ani námraza? SK_B: Nor glazed frost?

EN: I wouldn't even try powdered gonuts. SK: Ani medvídek z Bogoty? SK_B: Nor a teddy bear from Bogota?

EN: Bolivian marching powder? SK: A bolívijský hop-šup prášok? SK_B: And Bolivian Floo powder?

The English originals are all euphemisms referring to cocaine. The first one references the movie called *Girl, Interrupted* (1990) directed by James Mangold, who directed several X-Men films including *Logan*. Similarly, *Forrest Bump* is a play on words, referencing *Forrest Gump* and the word *bump* (connotating a *bump of cocaine*). All these intertextual references were substituted by non-intertextual expressions that can reference the use of cocaine. These expressions occur in one scene and the goal of the script was to provide as many cocaine euphemisms as possible. The loss of some references is compensated in the following examples. In the third example, the English original used *powdered gonuts* instead of *donuts* – *gonuts* meaning “go nuts from the

powder” (cocaine). This was substituted by the phrase *medvídek z Bogoty*, a rather famous Czech song referring to the capital city of Colombia – the stereotypical exporter of cocaine into Europe. The last example substitutes a typical English euphemism for cocaine by a reference to the Slovak translation of the Harry Potter franchise, in which *Floo powder* was translated as *hop-šup prášok*, a substance used to travel from one place to another.

Extra-universe creative addition

EN: There are two hundred and six bones in the human body. Two hundred and seven if I'm watching Gossip Girl. SK: V ľudskom tele je dvestošesť tvrdých kostí. Dvestosedem, keď pozerám Gossip Girl. SK_B: There are two hundred and six hard bones in the human body. Two hundred and seven if I'm watching Gossip Girl.

This is Deadpool's line. He indicates he is sexually aroused when watching *Gossip Girl*, because the actor's wife, Blake Lively, is a main star of the show. The TV show is well-known in Slovakia, but it was necessary to use a creative addition to explain the humorous function of *bone-boner* by adding the adjective “hard” to the sentence. It was a motivated decision.

Extra-universe Generalization

EN: Death by day-player. SK: Zabitý komparzistom. SK_B: Killed by an extra.

A day-player is an actor hired on a daily basis and not on a long-term contract. An extra is an actor in the background who does not usually interact with the stars of the movie. Nevertheless, *day-player* is an unfamiliar term without a direct equivalent in the target culture and the humorous function of the line is still present when it is generalized to *an extra*. It was therefore a necessary decision.

EN: Fetch the car. I wanna hit Shake Shack. Rejection makes me hungry. SK: Privezte auto. Mám chuť na fast-food. Keď som smutný, rád papám. SK_B: Fetch the car. I want to go to a fast-food restaurant. I like to munch, when I'm sad.

Shake Shack is an American fast-food chain. This is a line of dialogue said to a driver by Deadpool. It is an incongruous sentence as it combines a stereotypical upper class Britishism (fetch the car) with a mundane fast-food reference. The translation is generalized since the

fast-food chain is unknown in the target culture. It could also be substituted (e.g., to McDonald's), but generalization is also adequate.

EN: Oh, look at this little Hairy Lou Retton. Did you stick the landing, little guy? Yes, you did! Comic accurate short king. SK: Pozrite, ôsmy trpaslík. Kde máš Snehulienku? Áno, si presne ako v starých komiksoch.

SK_B: Look, an eighth dwarf... where is your Snow White? Yes, you look exactly like in the old comics.

Here we can see a combination of generalization and substitution. Mary Lou Retton was an American athlete. Her name is used to refer to short stature. In this scene, the audience sees another Wolverine variant, who is very short and corresponds to the original comics. That is why there is the joke about him being 'hairy' and "comic-accurate short king". The reference to Mary Lou Retton would be completely lost in the Slovak translation. This has a humorous function, so instead the translation aims to make fun of the Wolverine's height by comparing him to a dwarf in the *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. "Did you stick the landing?" is a question asked by Deadpool to emphasize the Wolverine's shortness after he stood up from a bar chair. In Slovak, the joke continues with the *Snow White* reference. The decision was motivated and necessary.

Extra-universe Explication

EN: I have a black belt in Karen. SK: Mám čierny pás z pičovania.

SK_B: I have a black belt in bitching.

The term Karen is "a widespread meme referencing a specific type of middle-class white woman who exhibits behaviours that stem from privilege" (Nagesh, 2020). Here, it is used to reference Deadpool's ability to complain. Therefore, I used explication and a creative addition to enhance expressivity and hence the humorous function. It was a motivated and necessary decision.

EN: What is it, girl? Is there trouble at the well? SK: Čo hovoríš, Lassie? Jimmy spadol do studne? SK_B: What is it, Lassie? Jimmy fell into the well?

In this scene, Deadpool speaks to a severed head of the Sabretooth. He makes fun of Sabretooth and uses a phrase from the TV show *Lassie*. He acts as if he can understand what the head is saying, similarly to the characters in *Lassie* who acted as if they understood her barks. The motivation in translation was to make the reference more explicit. *Lassie* is known in the target culture.

As illustrated, the extra-universe intertextual references and culture-specific words were generally translated by means of substitution, generalization and creative additions. These are predominantly domesticating translation strategies, as expected.

Meta-synthesis and Conclusion

In this paper, the aim was to analyse the translation of intertextual references and culture-specific words with three main objectives: (1) categorizing the translation strategies employed, (2) examining the motivations behind the translator's decisions and (2) identifying the factors influencing translation choices in a pop-cultural and subculture-sensitive context.

This was done by a descriptive translation analysis of the decision-making process related to the translation of culture-specific words and intertextual references. Taking into account the translation strategies, motivations, the target reader, the pop-cultural nature of the analysed work, and media-related restrictions, the following factors can be inferred from the analysis of the decision-making process when translating intertextual references and culture-specific words:

1. It is crucial to distinguish between **extra- and intra-universe intertextuality**. The latter is often an important part of the target subculture and requires a more foreignizing approach from the linguistic point of view. These choices reflect the expectation of the target audience as well as functional approach with the aim to recognize subcultural references, including memes, meta-humour, and behind-the-scenes film knowledge.
2. **Preserving function is more important than preserving intertextuality**. However, if possible, intertextuality should be compensated using substitution strategies. If necessary, **explicitation and creative addition** are appropriate to emphasize the function of specific references. Functional equivalence is thus prioritized over denotative accuracy in a dubbing context.
3. **Dubbing translation restrictions**, including timing, syllable count, and lip-sync requirements, also significantly shape the translation decisions.

In other words, when translating big pop-culture franchises with their own subcultures, translators need to take into account the importance of intra-universe intertextuality, as it is an important and defining feature of the subculture. Nevertheless, in the collision of functional and denotative functions, the former should be stressed. To preserve both, explicitation or creative addition are most commonly used.

Often, decisions are shaped by the restrictions of the specific medium –in this case, dubbing. Two different sets of target language norms apply to the two main intertextual categories.

Of course, the paper has limitations. It is a single-case analysis of one film which limits the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, it is also a self-criticism by the translator and the objectivity of self-evaluation has its limitations. And finally, the study does not provide substantial reception of audience's reactions – despite the viewing figures and a few positive translation reviews there are simply not enough data. Future research could address these limitations by including larger data (e.g. multiple films) and independent evaluations as well as studies focusing on audience receptions.

Despite the limitations, the study has both practical and theoretical implications. Translators working for global pop-cultural franchises should carefully distinguish between intra- and extra-universe references when shaping their translation approach. This binary framework is a useful methodological tool to help translators navigate the tensions between functionality and accessibility of different target audiences. It also highlights how global subcultural norms, alongside norms of national cultures, shape translation norms in contemporary audiovisual media.

To conclude, translating pop-cultural works require complex decision-making shaped by subcultural knowledge, audience expectations and media constraints. The categorization of intertextual references into intra- and extra-universe types combined with Levý's (1963) un/necessary and un/motivated decisions provide a practical tool for translators and evaluation tool for theorists for future research on the audiovisual translation of culturally rich and fandom-driven content.

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