

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES IN HORROR FILMS: MAINTAINING EMOTIONAL AND STYLISTIC EFFECT IN DUBBING AND SUBTITLING

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is becoming increasingly important today. In our age of rapidly advancing technology, films, TV series, and videos can spread across the globe in seconds. AVT is not just about translating words — it makes content accessible to people from all corners of the world. Dubbing and subtitles allow audiences to follow and understand stories from any culture. In this way, audiovisual translation acts as a bridge between cultures, promoting mutual understanding and making global film projects available to a wide audience [3].

Audiovisual translation is a complex process, as it combines both linguistic content and expressive elements. This is especially clear in horror films, where conveying the feeling behind the lines is more important than their literal meaning. In such films, dialogue is usually brief, intense, and sometimes abrupt, and together with sound effects creates an atmosphere of fear and tension. Therefore, translators must carefully choose strategies to convey both content and the affective and stylistic tone of the original. This study focuses on the techniques used in dubbing and subtitling horror films, with particular attention to preserving their atmosphere and stylistic impact [8, p. 7].

There are various forms of audiovisual translation, the most common of which are dubbing and subtitling. As De Linde and Kay note, subtitling involves adding text captions to the original dialogue, whereas dubbing involves replacing the original audio track with a translated version synchronised with the image [4, p. 46]. Thus, these two techniques differ significantly not only from a technical point of view, but also in how they are perceived by the viewer.

Subtitling is a demanding process that requires attention to both linguistic and audiovisual aspects of a film. Translators must consider the text, dialogue, and visual components simultaneously. Due to time and space constraints, subtitles often need to be shortened, which can lead to the loss or alteration of stylistic nuances. At the same time, the main content, tone, and communicative purpose of the dialogue must be preserved. Subtitling therefore requires a careful balance between translation accuracy, readability, and synchronization with the audiovisual sequence [1, p. 88].

Unlike subtitling, dubbing completely replaces the original audio with a translated track synchronized to the actors' lip movements and on-screen actions, creating the impression that the characters speak the viewer's language. This requires careful synchronization and adaptation. As viewers do not have to follow the text whilst watching, their attention is fully focused on what is happening on screen and what is being said in the film [9, p. 124]. Dubbing can also include adding or replacing sound effects or lines to improve audio quality or remove expletives for TV release; this type of post-synchronized re-voicing is often called «looping.»

Horror films are known for their strong impact on viewers. The genre remains popular, as shown by the growing number of films and their box office success. To create fear and suspense, horror films use techniques such as pauses, sound effects,

recognizable visual motifs, and limited dialogue, which gradually build tension and keep the audience on edge [6].

A key feature of the genre is that feelings are conveyed not only through words but also through facial expressions, gestures, and sound. Translators must carefully consider atmosphere, intonation, and pauses, as even small changes in speech or line length can affect viewer engagement [2, p. 18]. In this context, the translator's task is not only to convey meaning but also to maintain the rhythm and pacing of scenes, which are crucial for sustaining tension.

A striking example of the effective use of audiovisual translation in horror films is the film «A Quiet Place». In this film, you will hear almost no dialogue, and the main emotional and narrative weight is conveyed through silence, pauses and non-verbal communication, which makes the translation particularly challenging. Therefore, when translating, one must take into account not only the dialogue, but also the interplay of silence, sound, and visual elements, balancing accuracy and conciseness to maintain tension and keep the viewer engaged. Director John Krasinski emphasised in an interview that sound was «one of the key elements» and effectively acted as a separate «character» [5]. For example, in the scene by the waterfall, the translation must accurately convey the contrast between the silence that dominates most of the film and the speech that follows. In scenes related to Evelyn's pregnancy, subtitles remain concise, while dubbing preserves pauses and emotional reactions so as not to disrupt the atmosphere of fear caused by the monsters' attack [2].

Unlike the film «A Quiet Place», where tension is built through silence and minimal dialogue, the film «Hereditary» presents the translator with entirely different challenges. It is particularly challenging to work with sequences such as the dinner scene, where the characters' lines sound mundane but conceal hints of family conflicts and occult themes. When creating subtitles, it is important to preserve this complexity, as overly simplified phrases can strip the scene of its subtle nuances and deeper meaning. However, during dubbing, particular attention is paid to intonation: for example, in the final scenes of the Paimon cult ritual, the characters speak calmly, and it is precisely this restraint that creates a sense of unease. This is precisely why the translator must subtly convey both the everyday speech and the hidden threat, so that the viewer is fully immersed in the atmosphere of the original.

Now let's look at the most common problems in audiovisual translation. First, it can be hard to match the audio with the video so that the characters' voices align perfectly with their actions. Second, translations need to adapt cultural references and jokes so viewers from different countries can understand them. There can also be issues with the format: DVD language options are often limited, subtitles are not always available, and real-time subtitles may have errors. In addition, the same film can appear in different translations on file-sharing sites, and these versions are not always accurate, sometimes containing distorted content or inappropriate language. Finally, the quality of translation depends on the translator's skills and the cultural background of the audience [7, p. 171].

In my view, an analysis of «A Quiet Place» and «Hereditary» shows that audiovisual translation in horror films is not merely a technical matter of subtitling or dubbing. It is a complex, multi-dimensional process that combines translation accuracy with the conveyance of atmosphere and emotional impact. These challenges appear differently in each film, sometimes through silence and pauses, sometimes through

ambiguous dialogue or cultural references. Therefore, a translator in the horror genre becomes not just a linguist, but a co-creator of the cinematic experience, ensuring that viewers worldwide feel the same tension and immersion as the original audience.

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