The Challenges of Subtitling Humor
with the Movie "Clue" as an Example

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Summary

As the title suggests, this thesis deals with the challenges of subtitling humor in specific relation to the 1985 movie “Clue.”

In the introduction chapter, the problem statement is presented, where I express my concern that humor can pose a serious challenge for a subtitler and that it appeared to do so in the subtitling of “Clue,” especially when this humor is very culturally specific. I propose that subtitling of humorous occurrences may be more successful when the subtitler applies a proper skopos, macrostrategy and microstrategy to his or her subtitling task. Furthermore, I suggest that the microstrategies should in particular rely on idiomaticity as this may serve as an ideal solution to translate humor.

The movie “Clue” is described, not only with regard to its plot and characters, but a brief account is also given of its origins as a murder mystery board game.

Since humor is such an integral part of the movie and also the main focus of this thesis, humor is described as a general concept and the types of humor found in “Clue” are described in further detail.

Translation is explained as a general concept and the subdivision of audiovisual translation that is subtitling, is described in more detail about subtitling as a discipline, which features subchapters about technicality, quality and training. Special emphasis is also put on the subtitling of humor.

While the subtitling of “Clue” as a whole is analyzed in very general terms, a model for analysis was made specifically for this thesis as a means to analyze the subtitling of specific occurrences of humor to investigate if idiomaticity is indeed the ideal approach when subtitling humor. The perspectives of the subtitler and the viewer were also investigated to further add to the analysis of the subtitling of “Clue.”

The thesis is rounded off with a conclusion of the findings of the analysis.
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1. Introduction

This chapter will introduce the reader to the problem statement of this thesis. An overview of the thesis structure, including that of the individual chapters, is also included. Finally, the delimitation of the data is described.

1.1 Problem statement

When watching the 2003 DVD-version of the American movie “Clue” from 1985 with Danish subtitles, I noticed that there were several cases were the subtitler appeared to have struggled with the translation of the various types of humor used in the movie. In many cases, it appeared as if the subtitler had simply made direct translations, thereby not conveying the humor to the viewers that are dependant on the Danish subtitles. In other cases, where sarcasm was applied in relation to American cultural references, it seemed as if the subtitler had relied on the viewers to have some understanding of the English language, i.e. that they would understand what was going on from listening to the audio, rather than from reading the Danish subtitles. The movie appears to have been subtitled in recent years and the subtitler appears not to have bothered with the aforementioned cultural references used in the instances of sarcasm in the film. These cultural references refer to American culture in 1954, where the film is supposed to take place, although the sarcasm is an essential part of the humor used in the movie.

With this movie as an example, I intend to investigate why humor is seemingly such a challenge to subtitle and further investigate what motivation the Danish subtitler could have had for picking the various microstrategies applied, when subtitling the movie. In the event that I find a specific subtitling of humor less than optimal, I will attempt to make an alternative subtitling that conveys the humor better, while still being in keeping with the physical and stylistic parameters of subtitling.

1.2 Thesis structure

The structure of this thesis is presented in the following subchapters to give the reader an overview of what is in store.
1.2.1 Methodology

From my studies as an aspiring translator, I have become familiar with the importance of applying a macrostrategy and also applying microstrategies. While the approach is based on a theory by Juliane House, I will be using the theory for my analysis based on the way it is presented by Anne Schjoldager in her book “Understanding Translation,” as I am familiar with the way she presented it in the aforementioned book from my studies. The importance and function of the various strategies is explained in the methodology and further applied in the chapter featuring the analysis of the Danish subtitling of “Clue.”

I will also be referring to the skopos theory of Hans Vermeer, which states that every translation can be assigned with a function, even if this assignment takes place retrospectively. Being aware of the skopos of the translation task at hand can help the translator achieve the most optimal translation solutions possible, especially when the aforementioned macrostrategy and microstrategies are taken into consideration as well.

Thirdly, the methodology chapter will explain the theories of Henrik Gottlieb that are of relevance to this thesis and they will be used as a basis for the analysis of the subtitling of “Clue,” both when analyzing the subtitling of the movie as a whole and the individual occurrences of humor. Gottlieb has done a substantial amount of research in the field of audiovisual translation and is therefore often referenced in the work of others. I will be focusing specifically on his theories relating to idiomaticity, localisms and wordplay as they are of particular relevance to the types of humor in “Clue” and thereby what the subtitler was challenged with.

I will also introduce my own model for analysis, which will be used in the analysis chapter to analyze the individual occurrences of humor.

Finally, I will consider the perspectives of the subtitler and the viewer, which will be further commented on in relation to “Clue” in the analysis chapter.

1.2.2 Clue

This chapter will introduce “Clue” to the reader. It will give an account of the background of what was originally a board game about solving a mysterious murder, explaining the popularity of the board game, which in 1985 resulted in an American movie
based on it. The movie has a setting similar to that of the board game and the same characters are featured as well as a few new characters used to further drive the plot of the movie. An outline of the plot of the movie is also given, explaining the story in detail. Finally, those of the characters that are of specific importance to the plot and contribute to the humor in the movie are presented.

1.2.3 Humor

Humor is a complex feature of the human condition and this chapter seeks to explain humor as a general concept. Furthermore, the individual types of humor occurring in the movie, namely jokes, irony, sarcasm, puns, wordplay and visual gags, will also be described in more detail in an attempt to further understand what challenges the subtitler was faced with in the subtitling of the humor used in “Clue”. These descriptions will also serve as a reference point when a specific type of humor is identified in the analysis chapter.

1.2.4 Subtitling

This chapter will feature a description of translation on a general level and further elaborate of the subdivision of audiovisual translation studies that is subtitling. Subtitling will be described as a discipline, giving insight into the technicality associated with this particular form of translation, the question of quality as well as the importance of proper training in this particular field will also be addressed. The final subchapter of this particular chapter is specifically relevant to this thesis as it focuses on the constraints involved when subtitling humor.

1.2.5 Analysis

To give an overall idea of how the subtitling was handled, I will analyze the subtitling of “Clue” as a whole before analyzing the subtitling of the individual occurrences of humor that I found to be of relevance to this thesis. Through my empirical analysis of the aforementioned data, I will consider why the subtitler made the choices he or she did and explain the microstrategies applied in the individual examples. In the event that I do not find a particular translation solution to be optimal, I will attempt to suggest a better solution for the humor that did not convey the humor as successfully in the Danish subtitles as it did in the
original English audio. The perspectives of the subtitler and viewer in relation to “Clue” will also be considered before a summary of the findings in the analysis chapter is given.

1.2.6 Conclusion
Finally, I will make a conclusion on my findings in the analysis conducted in the previous chapter in relation to the methodology and subtitling theory.

1.3 Delimitation
In order to limit the size of this thesis, I have chosen to focus on the European DVD of the movie “Clue” with Danish subtitles. While the movie was originally released in 1985, it was, as far as I can gather, never released in Denmark, neither theatrically nor on VHS, so the DVD released in Denmark in 2003 was the first version of the movie with Danish subtitles available. When the movie was released in theaters in 1985, there were three different endings to the movie, which mimicked the movie’s background as a board game where the outcome would vary; which of the three endings the audience would watch depended on which version the individual theater had received. The DVD features an option where the viewer can choose between watching the movie with one of the three endings at random or simply watch all three endings right after each other at the end. For this thesis, I have chosen the option that includes all three endings as I thought this would give the most accurate overall image of how the subtitler approached the subtitling of the humor in “Clue.” Furthermore, this also gives a more complete image of the type of humor used, thereby allowing for a complete image of the humorous utterances the subtitler had to translate. I will, however, focus on individual scenes where I thought the translation choices were of particular relevance for this thesis.
2. Methodology

In this chapter I will present the methodology that will be used in the analysis of the subtitling of humorous utterances in “Clue.” Each source used for the methodology will be briefly introduced, explaining their theory. Finally, I will introduce and explain the model for analysis I made as a framework for how to go about the analysis of the subtitling of humor in “Clue”.

2.1 Sources

In the following, I will provide an overview of the literature relevant for the methodological approach of my thesis. The subchapters reflect the respective authors view and I will discuss their relevance for my own approach, which will also be provided at the end of this chapter.

2.1.1 Vermeer

Vermeer teaches us that every translation has a function, or a skopos, as he puts it. “What the skopos states is that one must translate consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principle respecting the target text” (Vermeer in Venuti 2004:234). While the function may not always be clear at the time of translation, Vermeer proposes that it will always be possible to assign a translation a function in retrospect. It is important to consider the skopos of any translation as “[…] the skopos, which is (or should be) defined in the commission, expands the possibilities of translation, increases the range of possible translation strategies, and releases the translator from the corset of an enforged – and hence often meaningless – literalness” (Vermeer in Venuti 2004:237). Setting a framework for a translation not only keeps the translator on track with regard to what they need to convey through their translation, but also makes it easier to see what he or she should take into consideration to achieve the most optimal translation possible. In the case of subtitles, and to some extent my analysis of the subtitling of humor in “Clue,” it can be very easy to second-guess the choices of a subtitler as one is not under the same constraints of time and volume, nor does one necessarily have the same cultural or linguistic understanding as the subtitler. I would argue that the possibility to second-guess is decreased if a skopos is applied to subtitling, particularly when subtitling humor as that requires not only a certain amount of cultural understanding, but also a flair for creative solutions.
Keeping Vermeer’s skopos theory in mind, the skopos of the subtitles of “Clue”, or any other movie for that matter, is the same, namely to convey the happenings on the screen to other audiences than the original English-speaking audiences. Furthermore, identifying the correct skopos only seems all the more relevant when subtitling a comedy. The dialogue must be subtitled in correspondence with the plot, the images and the audio so that a foreign audience may be equally entertained and have as much of a chance as the English-speaking audience to laugh at the occurrences of humor in the movie. With Vermeer’s theory as a part of my methodological approach, I will analyze certain examples from “Clue” to determine which skopos the subtitler decided their translation to have. I will consider how well this skopos works with the function of the original piece of dialogue. Should my skopos conflict with the skopos of the subtitler, I will then offer an alternative solution to the subtitling where possible.

2.1.2 Schjoldager

The idea of applying a macrostrategy and, usually, several microstrategies is a prevailing approach to translation. While she is not the originator of this theory, Schjoldager supports House’s approach in her book “Understanding Translation” (Schjoldager 2008: 30,32). I have chosen to use the framework as it is presented by Schjoldager as this the framework I am familiar with from my studies as an aspiring translator.

With the importance of knowing the function of a specific translation, any translator should be aware of what macrostrategy they will use as the overall framework for their translation. Schjoldager states that the following should be taken into consideration when choosing ones macrostrategy:

“● While translating, are you expected to focus on the form and content of the source text or on the effect on the target text?
● Are you expected to act as a communicator of somebody else’s communication […] or as a mediator between primary parties […]?
● Is your translation to appear as an overt translation or as a covert one […]?”

(Schjoldager 2008:71)
Following these directions, the translator will figure out if they have to use a source-text oriented macrostrategy or a target-text oriented macrostrategy. A subtitler should obviously use a source-text oriented macrostrategy, as he or she is focusing on the source text, and communicate the happenings on the screen as optimally as possible because the audience is aware that a translation is taking place because of the original audio. In my analysis chapter I will, therefore, not dwell on the macrostrategy as it is very straightforward; I will briefly mention it in my analysis of the subtitling of “Clue” as a whole. Instead, I will focus on the other type of strategy a translator needs to apply, namely the microstrategy. There will usually be several microstrategies, depending on the task at hand, and they depend on whether the translation is direct or oblique. A direct translation will include the following:

- **Borrowing**: The source-text word is transferred directly to the target text.
- **Calque**: A special kind of borrowing. The target language (in the target text) borrows an expression or the structure of an expression from the source language (in the source text) and translates each element literally.
- **Literal translation**: A direct transfer from, i.e. a word-for-word translation of, the source-text item into a grammatically and idiomatically correct target-language expression” (Schjoldager 2008: 90).

An oblique translation will include the following:

- **Transposition**: The replacing of one word class in the source text with another word class in the target text without a change of message.
- **Modulation**: A (slight) change of meaning and/or point of view.
- **Equivalence**: The same situation is described in the target text, but by different (stylistic) means from that of the source text. This use of the term of equivalence is rather similar to Nida’s (e.g. 1964/2000) dynamic (or functional) equivalence and Newmark’s (1977/1989) communicative equivalence.
- **Adaptation**: Changing the cultural reference of a source-text item because of a lack of correspondence in the target language” (Schjoldager 2008: 90).
Another set of microstrategies, which I consider to have particular relevance regarding subtitling, are the five transformation categories:

- **Substitution**: A source-text item is replaced by a more or less equivalent target-text item.
- **Repetition**: Some or all of the formal features of the source-text item are repeated or reproduced in the target text.
- **Deletion**: A source-text item is not rendered in the target text.
- **Addition**: The target text contains an item that bears no (apparent) relation to any source-text item.
- **Permutation**: a source-text item is rendered in the target text, but placed in a different position.” (Schjoldager 2008:91)

The broad range of microstrategies applied by the subtitler of “Clue” is of particular relevance to my analysis, as the different types of humor used in the movie require different microstrategies. With the help of the types described by Schjoldager, I will identify which microstrategies the subtitler seemingly applied and where I disagree with them and the result they caused, suggestions for improvement will be provided and reasoned for.

### 2.1.3 Gottlieb

In the field of translation studies, and certainly in the field of audiovisual translation, Gottlieb’s many studies are hard to avoid, not only because of the sheer number of them, but also because of their relevance to the field. For my analysis, I will be focusing on four of the aspects Gottlieb focuses on, namely localisms, which are relevant to Schjoldager’s substitution, wordplay, idiomaticity and the overall importance of the competence of the subtitler.

When translating humor, my personal preference as an aspiring professional translator is to choose an idiomatic solution as that will most often be the best solution. Using idiomaticity as an approach is also supported by Gottlieb and he writes the following on the subject of idioms:
“Et idiom, eller et idiomatisk udtryk, vil jeg definere som ’en semantisk enhed bestående af en syntaktisk flerhed’, eller på jævnt dansk ’mindst to ord som, når de optæder sammen, betyder noget andet end de gør hver for sig’. Idiomer er altså udtryk, hvis samlede betydning man ikke umiddelbart kan udlede, selvom man kender betydningen af de ord, der indgår i dem.

(I would define an idiom, or an idiomatic expression, as ‘a semantic unit consisting of a syntactic plurality’, or in plain Danish ‘at least two words that mean something else when they appear together than when they appear separately’. Thereby, idioms are expressions whose complete meaning one cannot immediately deduce, even if one knows the meaning of the words they consist of.” (Gottlieb 1997:299)

Sometimes humor can be transferred by means of a direct translation, which certainly holds the highest level of fidelity towards the original humorous occurrence. In his contribution to Díaz Cintas’ “New Trends in Audiovisual Translation” Gottlieb focuses on the idea of fidelity and infidelity triggers in subtitling. A subtitler should generally strive to maintain a high level of fidelity towards the source, but when subtitling humor, a lower level of fidelity will often be the way to go as “[…] smooth communication via recognizable entities is sometimes preferred to loyal representation of strange localisms” (Gottlieb in Díaz Cintas 2009:25). When localisms occur in humor, it is often in the target audience’s favor to go the idiomatic route and choose something similar from the target culture that they will be able to recognize rather than sticking with the localism and translating it directly and thereby risking confusing the target audience. Gottlieb proposes the following options for substitution of localisms:

“1) replacement by a foreign element known to the target audience (English Adirondack National Park > Danish Yellowstone National Park),
2) replacement by a foreign element shared with the target culture, that is, an international element (English White Palace > Danish McDonald’s),
3) replacement by a domestic element (English Fourth of July > Danish Nytårsaften [new year’s eve]; shared feature: fireworks)” (Gottlieb in Díaz Cintas 2009:32).
The substitution elements suggested by Gottlieb relate directly to the constraints a subtitler is faced with, whereas the kind of substitution suggested by Schjoldager can be used for all kinds of translation. Substitution in relation to subtitles is a means to an end to avoid confusing the target audience with unknown localisms of the source language and culture; seeing as the use of footnotes and endnotes is a possibility in other types of translation, a subtitler may use localisms to explain what the source dialogue is referring to, all the while still staying within the parameters of relaying the dialogue on the screen to the target audience. In the case of “Clue,” there are some localisms referring to the Cold War where the application of Gottlieb’s theory will be useful to determine whether the subtitler chose the right solutions or not in order to minimize the confusion of the Danish audience.

In another paper by Gottlieb, he comments on the translation of wordplay from English into Danish:

“As Danish and English are closely related languages, English wordplay is expected to be replaced by Danish wordplay almost everywhere in an English-language satirical program, except in very ‘local’ sequences and in sequences with a very high verbal content (e.g. fast speech) where the subtitler is forced into heavily reducing the subtitle content” (Gottlieb 2005: 57).

Wordplay is an essential part of the humor in “Clue” as the movie makes great use of the pun. As explained in the humor chapter of this thesis, the prerequisite for puns is wordplay. Gottlieb argues that whether wordplay is successfully translated or not depends on various constraints. While subtitling has certain physical constraints, there may also be constraints regarding language, where “the presence of ‘untranslatable’ elements in the original which lack linguistic counterparts in the target language” (Gottlieb 2005: 63) pose a problem. Another type of constraint regards the competence of the subtitler; this includes “lack of talent, interest or experience […]” (Gottlieb 2005:63). I will apply the theories Gottlieb posed in this paper to determine what constraints the subtitler of “Clue” had to deal with and how they affected his or her solutions.
2.2 Model for analysis

Other than applying the aforementioned theoretical framework, my own model for analysis will be used when analyzing how the translation of specific humorous elements in “Clue” was approached. When viewing the movie, it appears as if the subtitler applied numerous microstrategies, a number that I would seek to minimize, if possible. I have made a model for analysis, accommodating my favored approach to the translation of humor, namely idiomaticity. Below, I have outlined my analysis model. It is to be understood as a sequential analysis model. By using the model, I will firstly look at how the translation was approached. I will then consider whether or not the subtitle manages to transfer the sense, humorous effect and any cultural references of the source language to the target language. After the analysis it will be concluded whether the original translation lives up my demands for a successful translation. If it does not, I will suggest a better translation if possible. My model for analysis contains the following elements:

1. **Scene**
   A description of the scene of the movie, including the time in the movie it occurs and the setting.

2. **Dialogue**
   An interpretation of the dialogue of the scene in the context, providing background information for the readers understanding.

3. **Subtitle**
   The translated version of the utterance as provided by the subtitler.

4. **Strategy**
   A classification of the solution chosen in accordance with the theory described in my methodology.

5. **Humor**
   A classification of the type of humor used, which is based on the types of humor described in the humor chapter of this thesis.

6. **Comments**
   Comments regarding my findings, including suggestions for an alternative subtitling where I find it is needed and possible.
7. Relevance

The relation of my findings to my overall thesis statement.

2.3 The perspectives of the subtitler and the viewer

In the analysis chapter I will provide an analysis of the perspectives of the subtitler and viewer respectively in relation to “Clue,” the purpose of which are presented below.

2.3.1 The perspective of the subtitler

With any type of translation, a translator serves as the mediator of the information from one party to another. A subtitler is given the task of mediating the dialogue and plot of a movie or a similar audiovisual item in one language to an audience in a different language. The subtitler is often specialized in this field and is familiar with certain machine translation systems that allow him or her to attach their translations to the original audiovisual item so that the viewer is able to get a running translation of the dialogue on the screen.

2.3.1 The perspective of the viewer

The viewer can be compared to a customer in that he or she pays the admission ticket to or, as is the case with this thesis, buys a DVD with a movie. In any case, the viewer buys something that is supposed to entertain him or her. Some Danish viewers have a good understanding of the English language and only see the subtitles as tool that supports their viewing pleasure, but the viewer may be entirely dependent on the subtitles if he or she has very little to no understanding of the English language, in which case the subtitles become vital to the enjoyment of the viewer.

The next chapter of this thesis will present the movie “Clue,” herein under its origins as a board game, the plot of the 1985 movie, which is the subject for the analysis of the subtitling of humor in this thesis, as well as introduce the characters of the movie.
3. Clue

This chapter will introduce the reader to “Clue” and its origins. A synopsis of the plot of the 1985 movie is also included, along with a description of the characters of the movie as their personalities are an essential part to the humor of the movie.

3.1 Background – from board game to motion picture

The concept of the board game “Clue” originated in England, where an English solicitor’s clerk by the name of Anthony E. Pratt came up with the idea for a game, where the players would be solving the murder of Dr. Black and one of the players – in the form of the characters Colonel Mustard, Mrs. White, Mrs. Peacock, Mr. Green, Professor Plum and Miss Scarlet, who are all represented by a playing piece with the color their name represents - would turn out to be the murderer. Pratt originally conceived the idea in 1944 as a way to pass time during air raid drills and the “whodunit” nature of the game was very likely inspired by the approach to crime solving presented in Agatha Christie’s novels about Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot, which were highly popular at the time. When he pitched the idea to Norman Watson, the executive of the company Waddingtons, he immediately purchased the game from Pratt and changed the name from “Murder!” to “Cluedo,” a name combining the words “clue” and “ludo”. Due to wartime shortages, the first Cluedo game was not made available until 1949. When the game was released in America, the name was changed once again, this time from “Cluedo” to “Clue” and some of the character names were also changed, the most significant was that the name of the perpetual murder victim, Dr. Black, was changed to Mr. Boddy, offering a pun with regard to his role in game.

When opening the box containing the game, one will find a board which represents the mansion where the murder takes place. Nine different rooms are represented on the board; a hall, a lounge, a dining room, a kitchen, a ballroom a conservatory, a billiard room, a library and a study. There are also six miniature murder weapons included; a candlestick, a dagger, a wrench, a rope tied into a noose, a lead pipe and a revolver. It is then the objective of the players to figure out which of the six characters killed Mr. Boddy, in which room the murder took place and which of the murder weapons was used. The players are represented by the aforementioned colored playing pieces and there are also a number of other objects used to help solve the murder.
The game has remained popular ever since its original release with the packaging being updated every now and then, as well as having special editions released where the classic characters are replaced with popular characters from other media, i.e. The Simpson’s and the characters from the world of Harry Potter.¹

In 1985, a movie version of the board game was released by Paramount Pictures. A few characters were added to the essential cast of one murder victim and six suspects, the most significant of these new additions being the butler Wadsworth and the maid Yvette. The movie also saw the addition of some minor characters who served as key elements in relation to the plot nonetheless; a cook, a motorist looking for help with his car, a policeman and a singing telegram girl. The movie is equal parts “whodunit” and comedy and has reached cult status since its initial release. In order to mimic that the ending of the board game would change each time it was played, three different endings were made and which ending you would see as a movie-goer would depend on which ending the theater you went to had received. When the movie was later released to home audiences on VHS, all three endings were present and they were linked together by small frames of text, much like the dialogue cards known from the silent movie era. Once the movie was re-released on DVD, the viewer then had the option to either watch one of the three endings at random like the theatrical release, or linked together in the same way as the VHS version.

### 3.2 Plot

The movie opens with the butler, Wadsworth arriving at Hill House, the mansion known from the board game, preparing for the six characters known from the game to arrive. As they arrive, we learn that the colorful monikers they have in the board game are aliases they are supposed to use for the party they have been invited to in the movie. Once they have all arrived, dinner is served and the party sits down to eat. As they sit around the dinner table, the nervous tension between them is so great that it can almost be cut with a knife. They are not really aware why they are at the mansion, but they soon find out when their host, Mr. Boddy, arrives; we now learn that the six are being blackmailed for different things they did or did not do and that Mr. Boddy is the blackmailer.

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Furthermore, Wadsworth reveals that he is actually the person behind the invitations for this strange party because he wants the blackmailed to confront their blackmailer and turn him over to the police.

The party adjourns to the mansion’s study where Mr. Boddy presents each of them with a gift; a candlestick for Miss Scarlet, a rope tied into a noose for Mrs. White, a lead pipe for Mr. Green, a wrench for Colonel Mustard, a revolver for Professor Plum and a dagger for Mrs. Peacock. The six look puzzled to be presented with these gifts and the tension in the room only increases when Mr. Boddy tells them that each of them is now holding a lethal weapon in their hands. Mr. Boddy suggests that the six kill Wadsworth in order to keep the police from arresting Mr. Boddy, who would then let their secrets be known to the world. The light is then turned off by Mr. Boddy and several thuds, gasps, a scream and a gunshot is heard. Upon turning the light on, the group is startled to find Mr. Boddy lying lifeless on the floor and there is a state of paranoid confusion, especially when it is suggested that the brandy, which Mrs. Peacock has just taken a mouthful of in order to calm her nerves after the sight of the lifeless Mr. Boddy, may be poisoned. Mrs. Peacock’s terrified screams are soon replaced by the terrified screams of the scared maid, Yvette, who has been listening to the happenings in the study via a tape recorder, which was placed in the billiard room by Wadsworth prior to the confrontation in the study. Still unaware as to whom the murderer is, the group runs to the kitchen to ask the cook what she was doing during the events in the study, but she is nowhere to be seen. After their initial befuddlement over her absence, Mr. Green soon locates her when standing by the freezer; the cook falls out of the freezer, stabbed in the back with the dagger still there. The dagger is of course the one that Mrs. Peacock received from Mr. Boddy earlier. Mr. Green struggles to hold onto the heavy body of the cook and upon letting her drop to the floor, everybody is accusing everybody of being the murderer. The group then carries the cook’s body to the study, where they are shocked to discover that Mr. Boddy’s body has disappeared.

Mrs. Peacock finds Mr. Boddy’s body by accident and has another hysterical tantrum before fainting. This time he really is dead, though, sporting a head wound caused by a blunt instrument soon identified as the candlestick Miss Scarlet received earlier. The group carries Mr. Boddy and the cook’s bodies to the study, where Wadsworth decides to lock away the deadly gifts from Mr. Boddy. He then goes to the front door to throw the key away with the rest of the group at his heels. As they open the door, however, there is a man outside who was just about to ring the doorbell; his car has broken down near the mansion and he wants to use a telephone. As the motorist goes inside the lounge and he picks up the telephone, Wadsworth locks him in and the group decides to split up
into teams of two and search the mansion for the murderer. While they are doing so, and clearly showing their distrust in each other, the motorist is killed when someone strikes his head with the wrench Colonel Mustard got from Mr. Boddy earlier. The very same Colonel Mustard and his teammate Miss Scarlet soon happen upon the motorist as they find a secret passageway in the conservatory, which ends in the lounge where the motorist was locked in. Panic ensues and is once again interrupted by someone at the door; this time it is a cop who wants to enquire about the motorist’s car, which he found near the mansion. Paranoid because of the presence of a man of the law, the group sends him into the library, where Wadsworth quickly locks him in. He soon has to let him out, however, as the telephone rings; it is J. Edgar Hoover and he wants to talk to Wadsworth. The cop now resumes his search of the mansion and the group conceals the three dead bodies with clever gimmicks and they manage to fool the cop. Once he is locked away in the library again, the group resumes their own search of the mansion. It is not long before someone shuts off the power.

While the power is shut off, Yvette, who has snuck away from her teammate Mr. Green, gets choked with the noose Mrs. White received earlier. At the same time, the cop is killed with the lead pipe that Mr. Green received. Lastly, the doorbell rings once again and everyone holds their breath; a singing telegram girl is at the door as it opens, but she barely gets to start her song before a shot from the revolver Professor Plum received rings out and she falls lifeless to the ground. Wadsworth rushes to turn the power back on and the group, now overcome with complete apathy, discovers the three new bodies. Wadsworth now commences to go over the events of the evening at a hectic pace and the murderer/murderers are revealed.

3.2.1 Ending one
Yvette is revealed as the killer of the cook and Mr. Boddy, but it is also revealed that she was doing the bidding of Miss Scarlet, who killed the other four victims. Miss Scarlet reveals that Yvette helped her discover secrets about the other guests and that her real business is not her escort service, but selling government secrets to the highest bidder. Wadsworth wrestles Miss Scarlet for the revolver and the FBI bursts in and she is arrested.

3.2.2 Ending two
Mrs. Peacock is revealed as the killer, her motive being that she was taking bribes from a foreign power and that she killed Mr. Boddy and the other five victims, who worked as his
informants, in order for her to be able to continue taking bribes. She manages to escape the mansion while holding the rest of the group at gunpoint, but is arrested by the FBI once she is outside.

3.2.3 Ending three

Wadsworth reveals that Professor Plum killed Mr. Boddy, Mrs. Peacock killed the cook, Colonel Mustard killed the motorist, Mrs. White killed Yvette and Miss Scarlet killed the cop. The rest of group figure out that Wadsworth killed the singing telegram girl and that he actually is Mr. Boddy; the man they thought was Mr. Boddy was in fact the real butler. Wadsworth attempts to get away while holding the befuddled group at gunpoint, but Mr. Green, who turns out to be an FBI agent, quickly shoots him and the rest of the group is arrested for their respective murders.

3.3 Characters

The following describes the most significant actions and features of the personalities of the characters in “Clue.”

3.3.1 Wadsworth

He is introduced as the butler and takes pride in his job. As a result, several puns are made with relation to his line of work. He admits to inviting the guests to the macabre dinner party to have a chance to stand up to their blackmailer. Mr. Boddy blackmailed his wife because she had friends who were socialists. Wadsworth and his wife were forced to work for Mr. Boddy for nothing as they had no money to give him. Wadsworth works for the FBI in endings one and two, but is revealed as the real Mr. Boddy and the murderer of the singing telegram girl in ending three.

3.3.2 Colonel Mustard

The colonel has a sensitive security post at the Pentagon. His military career affects his behavior as he appears to take the lead of the group several times and is also somewhat belligerent. He pays the blackmail in order to keep Mr. Boddy from sending the negatives of the Colonel having sex with Yvette to his mother. Wadsworth points out that he drives a very
expensive car considering he lives on a colonel’s pay. The colonel defends this by stating that he came into money when he lost his parents during World War II. This, however, turns out to be a lie; he was a war profiteer who stole essential air force radio parts, which he then sold on the black market. The motorist, who was his driver during the war, knew about this and the colonel therefore kills him in ending three.

3.3.3 Mrs. White

Her first husband was an illusionist who disappeared and her second husband was a nuclear physicist who was killed and emasculated. She is paying the blackmail in order to avoid a scandal about her supposedly being behind the fates of her two husbands. Yvette had an affair with her second husband and Mrs. White therefore strangles her with the noose in ending three.

3.3.4 Mrs. Peacock

As the wife of a senator, she is used to entertain at parties and is therefore very chatty. When the murders begin, however, she is in a constant state of paranoid hysteria and screams continuously. In the main storyline she takes bribes in return for delivering her husband’s vote to lobbyists. She has been paying the blackmail for over a year to keep the story out of the papers as she claims that she has done nothing wrong. In ending two she is the murderer of all six victims, whom she kills in order to be able to keep taking bribes from a foreign power. In ending three she kills the cook when she realizes that she was informing Mr. Boddy about her actions.

3.3.5 Mr. Green

After all of the others have been confronted with what they are being blackmailed for, Mr. Green decides to simply admit what he is being blackmailed for; he works for the State Department and he is a homosexual, which he must keep a secret or he will loose his job on security grounds. He is very nervous and accident prone; he spills his drink on Mrs. Peacock and breaks a table from sitting on it. He is the only character who never kills anyone in any of the three endings for his own gain. He does, however, shoot Wadsworth in self-defense in the same ending.
3.3.6 Miss Scarlet

Unlike the other guests, she gladly admits being guilty of what she is being blackmailed for; she runs a service which allows men to pay for the company of a young lady for a short period of time. Not surprisingly, she is rather sexually provocative as she wears a tight dress with a low neckline and uses plenty of sexual innuendo; however, she is not flattered by the advances of some of the male guests. She has a very dark sense humor, which she claims is her defense mechanism. In the first ending, she is behind all six murders, but only committed four of them herself. In the third ending she kills the cop as he was taking bribes from her.

3.3.7 Professor Plum

He is a psychiatrist who lost his doctor’s license after having an affair with a patient. The patient is later revealed to be the singing telegram girl. He works for the United Nations Organization, and more specifically the World Health Organization, where he works with family planning. Unsurprisingly, he is very fond of women and he gropes Miss Scarlet on more than one occasion, looks lustily at Yvette’s cleavage and uses Mrs. White to demonstrate a certain sexual position depicted in a negatives featuring Colonel Mustard and Yvette. In the third ending, he kills Mr. Boddy.

The next chapter focuses on the concept of humor and explains the types of humor relevant to “Clue” in more detail and relates them to the characters of the movie, utilizing examples of the humor the characters use.
4. Humor

Humor as a concept is fairly abstract, but the following chapter seeks to explain it nonetheless. The specific types of humor used in the movie “Clue” will also be described and thereby serve as a reference point for when these types of humor are mentioned in the analysis chapter later in this thesis.

4.1. Humor as a concept – a general description

When attempting to make a very broad description of humor that just about anyone can agree with, it will probably state that it is something that provides amusement by way of hilarity. However, what the individual finds to be humorous is harder to describe and a lot of different factors must be taken into account. The main factor is the type of comic device or approach used to induce a humorous reaction, but other factors such as age, gender, educational background and cultural background also play a big role. As an example, a 5-year-old will often consider someone getting a pie smashed into their face or slipping on a banana peel to be highly amusing, while an adult may not consider this to be amusing at all. An adult may prefer humor in the form of sarcasm, as he or she will be able to appreciate the background for the sarcasm. There are many different kinds of humor and as illustrated with the example above, what one finds to be humorous can be determined by many different factors; one could, rather boldly, claim that there are as many types of humor as there are people in the world. For this reason, I will only focus on the types of humor applied in the movie “Clue” in the following subchapters of this chapter.

4.1.1. Jokes

For some, joking is synonymous with humor. Not only do we often tell a joke in order to evoke amusement in others, but consider also the term “joking around”; when someone is joking around, it means that they are behaving in a specific way in order to make others laugh. Jokes are often used as an icebreaker that gets the conversation going when a new group of people are introduced to one another:
“[…] relating and hearing a joke often brings individuals closer to each other, inasmuch as the themes, conflicts, and characters in most jokes foster mutual identification and empathy between parties. Telling and listening to jokes, therefore, can enhance object relations and self-esteem, and diminish frustration, anxiety, and hatred among people.”

(Strean 1993:3)

It may, however, have the opposite effect if the person relating the joke is using it tauntingly, thus increasing tension as is the case in “Clue;” applying different types of humor to a joke, such as sarcasm, may have an estranging effect on the person being told the joke.

Note that since jokes are themed, “it is well-known that almost all societies, cultures, ethnic groups, families, and individuals have their favorite and enjoy relating them,” (Strean 1993:3) which explains why a lot of jokes are often deemed as untranslatable. When a joke is untranslatable, it can be close to impossible for the translator to obtain the same amusement in the target language as in the source language. It may also cause the translator to miss the hilarious occurrence altogether, which may have been the case with “Clue.”

4.1.2. Irony

When someone wins the lottery, but drops dead the next second, it can be considered to be an ironic event: getting the freedom to do anything one wants because of total financial security and then losing one’s life, thus losing the ability to do anything whatsoever, shows the occurrence of two opposites. Since these opposites are extreme, some people can see that there is some humor in the situation because of that.

In “Clue,” the character of Miss Scarlet in particular utilizes irony, or more specifically jokes with an ironic theme, to deal with the pressure of being locked up in a house with a group of people, where one of more (or even herself, for that matter) of the people present and breathing are guilty of murder. Utilizing irony to cope with unsettling situations is indeed what some experts claim to be the point of irony, as is apparent from the following:

"When things seem misaligned, disproportionate, unexpected, or out of place, philosophers, poets, and everyday people, often use irony to capture and comment on
the pattern of contrasts they discern. By projecting an attitude of disbelief along with the “outer” meaning of their words, ironists convey a contrary, “inner,” meaning to those who catch the cue. But irony is far more than a simple act of speech. […] In the face of uncertainty, and the “unwelcome contradictions” of life, many people have found irony a valuable resource for inciting the moral and political imagination against whatever is given, assumed, or imposed” (Fernandez and Huber 2001:1).

Expressions of irony are usually very straightforward in their structure and can generally be translated directly.

4.1.3. Sarcasm

A close relative of irony, sarcasm is also used to express the absurdity of a situation, but it is applied differently from irony:

“Although both sarcasm and irony describe utterances that express the opposite of the speaker’s true intent, they differ in content that in sarcasm, is generally used to offer criticism, particularly to insult; whereas, irony can be used for making any type of comment – positive or negative.” (Rockwell 2006:6)

Seeing as sarcasm often relies more heavily on cultural aspects such as social discrepancies, war and dissatisfaction with one’s government, sarcasm is considered by some to be a rather sophisticated form of humor; it relies so heavily on people’s cultural understanding and can be quite elaborate in its mocking of its subject. It is a vessel often applied in satire, which also seems to be the case with the use of sarcasm in “Clue”. As an example, consider this sarcastic exchange between the highly sarcastic butler Wadsworth and the more unassuming Colonel Mustard when the household receives a phone call from J. Edgar Hoover:

Colonel Mustard: “Why is J. Edgar Hoover on your phone?”

Wadsworth: “I don’t know, he’s on everybody else’s, why shouldn’t he be on mine?”
The sarcasm applied in the example above is very culturally specific to America and the mid-century Cold War paranoia with countless phones being tapped. According to Rockwell, this type of humor is to be expected as “American audiences are so familiar with sarcasm that they find it unusual when confronted with a show or a character that never uses sarcasm” (Rockwell 2006:1). Furthermore, Rockwell’s statement helps explain why the subtitler did not pick up on the humor and transfer it to the Danish translation, which I will analyze in more depth in the appropriate chapter.

4.1.4. Puns

One of the types of humorous elements in “Clue” that the subtitler struggled with, were puns, which is not surprising as “puns may be regarded as in-jokes or idiomatic constructions, given that their usage and meaning are entirely local to a particular language and its culture. For example, camping is intense (in tents)” (Wikipedia). As the example used in the quote illustrates, puns rely heavily on wordplay, so it is understandable that they can be difficult to translate, as the likelihood of mimicking the wordplay in the target language with words of the same meaning is highly unlikely. Idiomaticity is therefore relevant for translating puns, as the reaction to a pun will often reflect the character’s relation to the subject and the. Consider this example from “Clue,” which is used by several characters when they are revealed as murderers:

“Communism was just a red herring.”

The utterance has a very straightforward meaning, namely that communism was not the motive for their actions, but that it was used to throw them off track. Furthermore, the red herring is a well-known storytelling device used to trick an audience into thinking that someone else is the killer when they are watching a movie. When the actual killer is then revealed, they audience will be surprised as many will guessed that someone else was the killer. However, seeing as communists are often referred to as being “red” because of their political views, the term “red herring” gains an extra meaning due to the word “communism” being in the same utterance and it thereby gains a humorous twist from the play on words.
There are many cases of puns in “Clue” and the complexity of some of them cause those to stray into the territory of pun-metaphors:

“Puns, like metaphors, fossilize in the very substance of the language; it is hardly possible to work the ground extensively without turning up a figure or a pun. At the heart of all this word-play seems to be a concern with two ancient and related processes: naming and riddling.” (Nash 1985:146)

4.1.5. Wordplay

Just like sarcasm is a close relative of irony, wordplay is a close relative of the pun. As Nash illustrates, you cannot have one without the other: “word-play is the lure, the spinning toy, that draws up the lurking and fishy meaning” (Nash 1985:137). Just like the pun, wordplay relies on a person’s vocabulary and thereby their ability to understand why a fairly straightforward utterance may be considered funny when applying one’s knowledge of other words with the same pronunciation. An example of a character in “Clue” relying heavily on wordplay is Mrs. White, which is evident from the following exchange between her and Colonel Mustard about her marital relations:

Colonel Mustard: “You lure men to their deaths like a spider with flies.”
Mrs. White: “Flies are where men are most vulnerable.”

Mrs. White indirectly admits to Colonel Mustard’s allegations about her being a man-eater by indicating that she knows exactly where to start in order to wrap a man around her little finger. The wordplay is here used to imply a sexual joke, which is often the case with wordplay: a seemingly innocent utterance gets a sordid twist due to the context, not only because of the lewd mindset of the person picking up on the utterance and adding said twist, but also because of the lewd mindset of one or more of the listeners.

4.1.6. Visual gags

As the term implies, a visual gag is a representation of humor that is purely visual and usually not accompanied by any dialogue. While this form of humor is not relevant to this
thesis, as visual gags are universal and need no translation, it is used on several occasions in “Clue” and thus deserves to be mentioned when describing the types of humor used in the movie. An example of the type of visual gags used in “Clue” is when Colonel Mustard and Miss Scarlet are searching the kitchen for the murderer. In this scene, Colonel Mustard has a very suspicious look on his face as he approaches a cupboard. He sneaks closer to the cupboard, abruptly opening it to surprise anyone potentially hiding inside. While there is no murderer inside the cupboard, there is an ironing board, which falls directly onto his head, creating a humorous incident.

The next chapter will explain translation on a general level before proceeding to explain the subdivision of audiovisual translation that is subtitling as a discipline, herein under the technicalities involved, the quality of subtitles in relation to the competence of the subtitler and the importance of aspiring translators receiving specific training in subtitling. Finally, the constraints of subtitling humor in particular are addressed.
5. Subtitling

In the following chapter, I will present some of the main ideas of translation studies and from there delve into the subcategory of audiovisual translation that is subtitling. The ideas of subtitling presented in this chapter will be those of relevance to this thesis and thereby also include a look at the problems with the subtitling of humor.

5.1 Translation in general

People have always had a need to communicate with one another despite language barriers. Ever since the computer was introduced and machine translation systems that could generate translations with the use of artificial intelligence, it has been said time and time again that it would just be a matter of time before human translators would be rendered obsolete, which is also a discussion I have come across in my time as student of translation and interpretation. Judging from translation services such as Google Translate, however, human translators will still be in demand for many years to come; there is still not a computer program that is able to take into account all the details and differences of languages that the human brain is capable of taking into account when it comes to translation. Translation is not only about relaying a piece of information in one language word for word in another. If it was that easy, why would there be a need for people to specialize in this field? Everyone could just flip open a dictionary or type a sentence into Google Translate and that would be the end of it, but languages are much more ambiguous and alive than that. One does not simply certify as a translator because one knows two or more languages; it is much more nuanced than that.

Seeing as the field of translation is of great importance, many studies have been carried out in order to understand it better and to set up guidelines for how to go about a translation to achieve the best result possible in any given situation. What immediately comes to mind, and what I am also using as a guideline for my analysis in this paper, is the importance of setting a macrostrategy as the overall framework for the translation. In her book “Understanding Translation,” Schjoldager relays the theory of macro- and microstrategies by Juliane House. There are two types of macrostrategies; the source-text oriented macrostrategy, which is described as having its “focus on source-text form
and content [as it is the] communication of somebody else’s communication” (Scjoldager 2008:71). It is also known as an “overt translation” (Schjoldager 2008:71), as the receiver of the translation will be aware of it not being an original production of text. The other type of macrostrategy is the target-text oriented macrostrategy, which is signified by its “focus on target-text effect [as its function is the] mediation between primary parties in a communication” (Schjoldager 2008:71). This type of macrostrategy is also known as a “covert translation” (Schjoldager 2008:71) as it is not always obvious to the receiver that the text in question is a translation. Once the translator has decided which macrostrategy to apply to their translation, it is then time to consider which microstrategies should be applied, i.e. how to go about the translation of the individual components of the text as this is equally important for achieving the optimal result.

While much more can be said for translation studies, both with further details on macro- and microstrategies and other aspects of the field, I will comment no further on this and proceed with focus on the subdivision of translation studies that is audiovisual translation and more specifically the subdivision of audiovisual translation that is subtitling.

5.2 Subtitling as a discipline

Ever since motion pictures made the transition from being silent to having audio in whatever language they were recorded in, there has been a demand for audiovisual translation. As for a definition what subtitling is, consider the following: “[…] subtitling differs from text translation in a number of ways: there are additional visual and audio components including a residual oral soundtrack; there is a switch from oral to written language and, finally, there are obligatory omissions in the source dialogue” (de Linde, Kay 1999:3). While the written translation of a written source text can be very precise, as there are few or no constraints with regard to volume, the subdivision of audiovisual translation and, in the case of this thesis, subtitling in particular poses an added challenge for the translator as he or she only has a very confined amount of space that the translation can fit into, all the while still having to be precise and true to its source. In the following subchapters I will take a closer look at various aspects of subtitling.
5.2.1 Technicality

As mentioned in the introduction for this subchapter, subtitling is a discipline that may pose some problems for the subtitler. The subtitler relies on certain computer programs, which I know from personal experience require some flair for timing, as the subtitler will usually have to choose the onset time and the duration of one set of subtitles have on the screen before the next set of subtitles make their appearance. Timing the onset time of the subtitles is of further importance when subtitling humor; “as the translation proceeds, the translator strives to match the timing of the subtitle with the sound and the motion of the source text. A humorous line, for example, must be arranged to meet its audiovisual punctuation” (Nornes in Venuti 2004:452) Basically, that which is in the subtitles should at all times match up with the sound as well as the visuals.

As for the physical appearance of the subtitles and the number of characters available, including blanks, there is not much leeway as there can be “[…] no more than c. 10 characters to be read per second [and there is room for] no more than c. 70 characters in each subtitle block” (Gottlieb 2005:58). The subtitle block Gottlieb refers to would be dividable into two lines of 35 characters each as is customary for Danish subtitles. In the case of “Clue,” however, I found that there were as many 37 characters per line. The reason for this variation is that different subtitling companies use different software, as I learned at a subtitling seminar held by Allan Hilton Andersen, who is the head of subtitling company Dansk Video Tekst. Another thing I learned at this seminar was that one cannot simply divide long sentences, which require both lines, at will; there has to be a certain rhythm to where the sentence is divided to make sure that the subtitles do not obstruct the reading flow of the viewer.

5.2.2 Quality

With the number of movies being made increasing and the introduction of home viewing options such as the DVD, the demand for audiovisual translation has increased along with the number of movies. I have in particular noticed that the quality of the subtitles on DVD releases vary greatly. While popular titles, which have played at movie theaters, usually have subtitles of a high quality, re-releases and titles that are released straight to DVD often have subtitles of a lower quality. The reason for this difference in the quality of subtitles will
often come down to the distributors either choosing or having no other option than to save money on getting a qualified subtitler. At the aforementioned subtitling seminar, I learned that subtitlers with little to no training are paid substantially less than the more competent subtitlers. Of course, certain variables must be taken into consideration with translation and in particular subtitling being dependant on the cultural understanding, vocabulary and the imagination of the individual subtitler; while someone may get paid substantially less, they can still be gifted when it comes to finding translation solutions.

Another reason for the varying quality of subtitles, reflected by the vast number of titles being released, is the pace at which these titles have to be subtitled, which not only puts subtitlers under added pressure, but also means that some distributors are likely to pick less competent subtitlers, as the demand for subtitles is too high for the competent subtitlers to take on all the work by themselves. This notion is supported by Nornes in his “For an Abusive Subtitling,” where he states that “this is the logic of […] distributors for whom translation serves little more than surplus value” (Nornes in Venuti 2004:451).

On the subject of incompetence, Nornes states that:

“All of us have, at one time or another left a movie theater wanting to kill the translator. Our motive: the movie’s murder by incompetent subtitle. The death of a text through translation is an age-old trope, but it takes on a new meaning with its transition into cinema. The very possibility of that death implies a state of animation, a state that is, after all, essential to the moving image” (Nornes in Venuti 2004:447).

While this sort of murder still does occur in movie theaters, there is just as much, if not more, evidence of subtitling so bad that it makes the viewer want to throw the DVD out of their window. A giveaway as to the competence of the subtitler may be how well he or she managed to convey the tone of the spoken dialogue;

“[…] there are many elements of speech which at first sight appear superfluous and consequently omittable when converted into written form, for example actually, well, you know, etc, but these may in fact be integral to a character’s style of spoken
discourse. In this sense, the transfer of language mode imposes complex choices on the part of a subtitler, in an attempt to respect the features of both spoken and written modes” (de Linde, Kay 1999:4).

Unless one is aware of it, it may be tempting to exclude the words mentioned above as they serve little function with regard to conveying actual information from the original dialogue, however, making sure the viewer is in tune with the nature of characters is important in order to make the character come alive to someone dependent on subtitles and the behavior that is reflected in such character traits may also be of importance to the plot of the movie being, particularly if the movie is a thriller or crime story, where the speech patterns of a character could indicate guilt or doubt essential to the story.

5.2.3 Training

The competence of a subtitler is not innate; the ability to understand languages and cultures other than your own come with training and experience. Some subtitlers undoubtedly have a natural flair for subtitling and are therefore more successful in their translations. The creativity sometimes needed to arrive at the best subtitling solution possible is another variable greatly influenced by the competence of the individual, but I would argue that creativity can be strengthened by further training and understanding of not only the source language and culture, but also of subtitling as a subdivision of translation studies. McLoughlin acknowledges that subtitling as a discipline requires special attention in the training of translators and she has researched the effect of increased focus on subtitling in their training:

“Production of subtitles as part of translators’ training is still relatively new, but an increasing number of postgraduate translation programmes across Europe now include subtitling modules. This is certainly due to the influence of market forces and the increased demand for localised audiovisual products.” (McLoughlin in Bogucki, Kredens 2010:165)
As an aspiring translator, the amount of training I have received with regard to subtitling is very minimal and was only available as a seminar taking place over a few hours as a part of an elective course. Although I had received training in translation in general, it was apparent that the limited amount of characters available in the subtitle block proved to be a significant constraint that required some different analysis of the source text on my part to achieve the appropriate balance of conveying the original information in the correct tone in the target language. While the correct approach to a translation can usually be determined by applying a macrostrategy and several microstrategies, the analysis of the source utterances may still prove ineffective for subtitling due to the physical constraints of the number of characters allowed in the subtitle block. The level of fidelity required in relation to the source text may also pose a problem with the physical constraints of the subtitle block; while the physical constraints of subtitles rarely allows room for the source utterance to be translated in full, Allan Hilton Anderson explained the source utterance should not be rephrased, but elements should rather be condensed and/or deleted. Another constraint posed by subtitling it that of time; from the time a certain utterance appears to the time the next utterance appears, the subtitler may have very little time to carry out the subtitling. This further complicates the possibility reaching the most optimal solution for the translation of the utterance. The subtitle has to appear at the right time so as to have the utterance of one character overlap that of another.

5.3 Subtitling humor

As mentioned before, many things must be taken into consideration when making subtitles, such as the added obstacle of visuals, which is often a significant hindrance when subtitling humor. As I suggest in my methodology chapter, taking some idiomatic freedom can be an option when subtitling humor, however, if that humor is a combination of a visual gag and an utterance, an idiomatic solution may not be possible. The subtitler then has to consider whether or not he or she can come up with something that is equally amusing all the while being relevant for the visual gag or of they should drop the joke altogether and use a solution that is true to the dialogue and visuals, but kills the joke.
In the chapter on humor in this thesis, I mention how humorous utterances are generally notoriously hard to translate and there is certainly no exception when the type of translation is subtitling; “the translator of [verbally expressed humour] must transform herself into a temporary wit, and however professional he/she may be, he/she is almost bound to fall short if he/she does not possess special pre-requisites which are more typical of a comic actor than a linguist” (Chiaro 2010:21). Considering that humorous utterance can be very local in their immediate appeal, the subtitler can be in for a challenge when having to come up with an equally entertaining solution, all the while still having the restrictions mentioned previously in this chapter. The subtitler “[…] cannot normally resort to explanatory footnotes or endnotes (cf. Díaz Cintas, 2007) and the only strategies available to the translator are explicitation and, sometimes, addition” (Veiga in Díaz Cintas 2009:164). Seeing as there is neither room nor time to elaborate on a humorous utterance, the success of getting across highly depends on the subtitler’s understanding and knowledge of both the source culture and the target culture and even the subtitler’s own sense of humor, which may help in playing the part of the comedian when coming up with a solution that is both relevant and entertaining. In the case of “Clue,” there are many different types of humor and especially the humor regarding American culture and politics seems to have slipped the subtitler by, suggesting that he or she did not have the necessary knowledge of American culture to find equally amusing solutions in Danish. These types of humor may pose an additional problem as “[…] some people are averse to certain types of humour – the terrible three being religion, politics and sex, not to mention the most politically incorrect forms of humour at all, sick humour and humour which jokes about disasters and disabilities (Ruch 1992)”(Chiaro 2010: 19). Again, a lot of the success of subtitling is dependent on the competence of the subtitler and while a lot of this competence rests on their personal abilities to understand other languages and cultures, it also rests on their ability to be objective when faced with the more controversial uses of humor.

In the next chapter, I will analyze both the subtitling of “Clue” as a whole as well as a selected number of individual examples of humorous utterances with the help of the theories presented in my methodology chapter and my own model of analysis to determine whether or not the subtitler was successful in the subtitling of “Clue.” I will also consider the perspectives of the subtitler and the viewer respectively, as discussed in the methodology chapter.
6. Analysis

This chapter features an analysis of the subtitling of the movie “Clue” as a whole as well the analysis of the subtitling of individual occurrences of humor in the dialogue. I will start by re-introducing my model for analysis, originally presented in the methodology chapter of this thesis.

6.1 Model for analysis

In order to conduct my analysis of the subtitling of “Clue,” I have made a model for analysis. Originally introduced in the methodology chapter, here is the model once again, to ease your reading:

1. **Scene**
   A description of the scene of the movie, including the time in the movie it occurs and the setting.

2. **Dialogue**
   An interpretation of the dialogue of the scene in the context, providing background information for the readers understanding.

3. **Subtitle**
   The translated version of the movie as provided by the subtitler.

4. **Strategy**
   A classification of the solution chosen in accordance with the theory described in my methodology.

5. **Humor**
   A classification of the type of humor used, which is based on the types of humor described in the humor chapter of this thesis.

6. **Comments**
   Comments regarding my findings, including suggestions for an alternative subtitling where I find it is needed and possible.

7. **Relevance**
   The relation of my findings to my overall thesis statement.
6.2 The subtitling of “Clue” as a whole

I first watched “Clue” by the means of an American DVD several years ago. In the line of my studies to become a translator and interpreter, I have acquired a certain knowledge of and skill in the English language, even though Danish is my first language. Therefore, I rarely rely on subtitles myself, but after I got hold of a European DVD of the movie, and thereby the option to view it with Danish subtitles, I introduced the movie it to friends who are more dependent on Danish subtitles than I am. It was when watching the movie with others I noticed that they did not laugh at the same occurrences of humor that I did. Being an academic, I started analyzing the subtitles and could see some problems with them that were a hindrance to all of the humor getting across to a Danish audience. Some of the humor could seemingly be transferred into Danish by alternative subtitling, whereas I was not sure about the possibility of successful replacements of the subtitling of other humorous occurrences. While I will get into the subtitling of those elements later in this chapter, I will first analyze the subtitling of “Clue” as a whole.

6.2.1 Macrostrategy

As proposed in the methodology chapter, a translator should decide which macrostrategy they want to apply to their translation. In the case of subtitling, that macrostrategy will be source-text oriented. The subtitler is supposed to convey the original meaning of the source text to the viewer. The viewer is aware that the source text is being translated as the audio on the screen is in the original language, thus making the subtitling an overt translation.

6.2.2 Quality

During the previously mentioned seminar on subtitling held by Allan Hilton Andersen, which I attended, I got professional insight into the field of subtitling, giving me the possibility to distinguish professional subtitling from subtitling carried out by someone without the appropriate skills required. Aside from obvious factors such as vocabulary and cultural understanding, parameters such as pacing and timing are of equal importance for a successful subtitling. In the case of “Clue,” the timing of the subtitles is extremely good; the
subtitles do not appear on screen to early or too late to match the audio of the movie. There were only a couple of faults that I could find, namely the following:

- When Mrs. White compares husbands to Kleenex, her comparison of the two, stating that they should be “soft, strong and disposable,” was not subtitled. There was, however, no room for the subtitling of this, but it still carries too much meaning to simply be omitted. Perhaps the subtitler thought that “soft, strong and disposable” was an official slogan used by Kleenex, a well-known paper tissue brand also sold in Denmark, and that the audience would therefore be able to recognize it as such. I have, however, not found any evidence that suggests that this has ever been a slogan for Kleenex anywhere at any point in time.

- Once Wadsworth starts to go over the events of the evening at a frantic pace, he says “And then the gong struck the cook,” which the subtitler corrected to “Så slog kokken på gongonen.” While the Danish translation makes more sense logically, and we see the cook strike the gong earlier in the movie, the original utterance only adds to the frantic nature of Wadsworth going over the events of the evening and even adds some humor to it. The subtitler likely used the more meaningful translation of the utterance by default.

- At the very end of the third and last ending of the movie, Mr. Green says “Okay, chief, take 'em away. I’m gonna go home and sleep with my wife.” This is, however, not subtitled at all, which is a shame as it is pokes fun at the previous discovery of Mr. Green being a homosexual and his desire to keep it a secret. His homosexuality is used in several humorous occurrences throughout the movie, both those that are purely visual and also in the dialogue, so the complete absence of the subtitling of the final lines of the movie is a mystery.

The language mode used by the subtitler is fitting for the language mode of the movie and further takes into consideration that the movie takes place in 1954; the subtitler uses the Danish polite forms “Dem” and “De” throughout the movie, polite forms which were customary for Danes to use when interacting with strangers in the 1950s.
As mentioned in the chapter about “Clue,” the movie is based on a board game of the same name. While there is little variation with the name of the board game from country to country, the names of the characters are always translated into the target language. The subtitler correctly translated the names of the guests into Danish, which again shows a level of professionalism and understanding for the source material that a less competent subtitler may not recognize; someone without the appropriate knowledge of the board game might have kept the names in English, as one would generally do when character names appear in the subtitles. It may seem a little odd to someone without immediate knowledge of the board game that Mr. Boddy’s name was translated with “doktor Sort,” however, the Danish version of the board game was based on the British version where this character was called Dr. Black. The translation of his name does pose some problems in the subtitling of humor, as is apparent in the individual examples analyzed in this chapter.

Another thing I noticed was the subtitling of the maid Yvette when she speaks in French. The character has a French accent and uses the occasional French word in her otherwise English dialogue. The subtitler took the approach of “subtitling” these French words, remaining the exact same words as Yvette utter, but using italics when doing so, i.e. “Oui, oui, madame” is what the subtitle says and also exactly what Yvette says. This is an approach seen in other movies and television shows, such as “Hercule Poirot;” the Belgian detective has several French words in his vocabulary, even if the main dialogue of the movies and TV series about him are in English. I consider this to be a way to add flavor to a character and show a specific part of their personality to the target audience and it is something I do not expect an untrained subtitler to take into consideration.

Yet another aspect of good subtitling I learned at the aforementioned subtitling seminar was how the subtitler goes about splitting up sentences that require both lines of the subtitle block. If there is a comma in the sentence, it will be favorable to break the sentence after the comma and have the rest of the sentence in the second bar. Should this not be possible, then the subtitler should strive to break the sentence at a point that where the first half in itself makes a fair amount of sense to the viewer. In doing so, the subtitler eases the viewer’s reading, thus making sure that the viewer is not confused when his or her eyes move from the first line of the subtitle block to the second line of the subtitle block. An important aspect to
keep in mind when considering the short amount of time the viewer has to read a subtitle block before it changes to the next.

All in all, the subtitling of “Clue” is of very high quality. Unfortunately, the DVD has no information as to the name of the subtitling company or the subtitler. I would, however, argue that the quality of the subtitles suggests that the subtitler is a professional with both good training and great experience.

6.3 The subtitling of individual occurrences of humor in “Clue”

Using my own model for analysis and supporting my findings with the appropriate theories from my methodology chapter, I will now proceed with the analysis of the subtitling of individual occurrences of humor in “Clue.” The types of humor will be classified in accordance with the descriptions of different types of humor given in my humor chapter.

6.3.1 “Practice makes perfect”

1. Scene
Time: 13:51. The guests are all having dinner in the dining room and begin talking to each other about why they are there and what they all do for a living.

2. Dialogue
Professor Plum comments on Mrs. Peacock’s pressure of speech, as she has just mentioned she is striking up friendly chatter to avoid an embarrassed silence. Miss Scarlet deducts from Professor Plum’s choice of words that he must be a psychiatrist. Professor Plum confirms that he has experience in this field. In a flirty voice, Mrs. White asks him if he is a doctor, which he confirms, but he also reveals that he does not practice. Miss Scarlet then jokily adds that practice makes perfect. The exchange goes as follows:

Mrs. White: Oh, you’re a doctor?
Professor Plum: I am, but I don’t practice.
Miss Scarlet: But practice makes perfect.
3. Subtitle

Mrs. White: Er De læge?
Professor Plum: Ja, men ikke praktiserende.
Miss Scarlet: Øvelse gør mester.

4. Strategy

The subtitler chose the means of a literal translation to translate the utterances. No condensation was necessary as the utterances were very short. The subtitler’s skopos was in this case a direct transfer for the utterances, transferring the meaning of the source text faithfully to the target text.

5. Humor

Miss Scarlet makes a pun regarding Professor Plum’s use of the word “practice.” While he is referring to the verb practice, meaning his right to practice medicine, Miss Scarlet use practice as a noun, thereby creating a pun with sarcastic flair.

6. Comments

While the original exchange sets up the possibility for a pun and subsequently has a character make one with the word “practice,” this pun is not made in the Danish subtitle. While “praktiserende” is the more correct term to use when describing a doctor's right to practice, I suggest some artistic license could have been taken here as the subtitler could have used the word “udøvende” to create a similar pun in Danish, even if “praktiserende” is the more correct term to use when describing a doctor’s right to practice.

7. Relevance

This example supports the idea that some artistic license and the use of idiomaticity can help get a humorous utterance across in the target language. While a synonym for “praktiserende” may not be considered an idiom in the strictest sense of the term, replacing it with the less correct, albeit similar word “udøvende” can be considered a case of idiomaticity as using it
would not be a completely faithful translation, but one that serves the purposes of transferring humor.

6.3.2 “When were you in that men’s room?”

1. Scene
Time: 19:43. The guests have moved from the dining room into the study, where Wadsworth is confronting them with what they are being blackmailed for.

2. Dialogue
Mrs. Peacock is confronted by Wadsworth with the accusation of her taking bribes in turn for insider information on her senator husband. She consequently denies it, obviously intimidated and nervous by the accusations, while Wadsworth keeps relaying more and more evidence of her behavior.

Wadsworth: But if the payment is delivered by slipping used green bags in plain envelopes under the door in the men’s room, how would you describe that transaction?
Miss Scarlet: I’d say it stinks.
Mrs. Peacock: Oh, how would you know? When were you in that men’s room?

3. Subtitle
Wadsworth: Men hvad vil De sige, hvis betalingen foregår på herretoilettet?
Miss Scarlet: Det stinker.
Mrs. Peacock: Hvor kan De vide det fra?

4. Strategy
In this case, the skopos was to make a literal translation in order to transfer what he or she found to the most important part of Mrs. Peacock’s response. In doing so, the subtitler decided to delete the second half of Mrs. Peacock’s response to Miss Scarlet’s comment, which is supposedly less relevant as it was already established that Mrs. Peacock had been in a men’s room.
5. Humor

Wadsworth has just stated that Mrs. Peacock was doing questionable transactions in a men’s room. Miss Scarlet comments on this, remarking that it suspicious by using the word “stinks” to describe the transactions. Mrs. Peacock, who has been denying this all along, is startled by her accusation and asks her how she could know as she was not in that men’s room. In saying this, Mrs. Peacock not only verifies her whereabouts and indirectly admits that it is true, but she manages to make a pun that jokes about the smell of men’s public restrooms as well.

6. Comments

While Mrs. Peacock’s paranoia and stubborn denial is amusing in itself, and the subtitles part of her utterance adds to her denial, I would prefer that the subtitler had made the pun about the smell of men’s rooms come across instead; while Mrs. Peacock question may seem more important, making a subtitle saying “De var der da ikke!” would be more amusing, all the while still being in keeping with the character’s denial and paranoia.

7. Relevance

Applying a skopos in order to find out how to approach a specific translation task is also important on a microstrategic level. While this example did not require an idiomatic solution, the subtitler could have benefited from considering that the skopos of his or her translation is to convey a very humorous American movie to a Danish audience.

6.3.3 “Soft, strong and disposable”

1. Scene

Time: 34:07. The guests have all just run to the kitchen to discover that the cook has been murdered. She falls out of the freezer with a dagger in her back and Mr. Green attempts to grab the large corpse as it falls. They are all very confused and startled by the events of the evening thus far and accusations are flying around the room.

2. Dialogue

Colonel Mustard has just had an exchange with Mrs. White after accusing her of the cook’s murder, basing his accusation on the suspicious disappearance of one of her husbands and the
death of another, commenting that Mrs. White had been involved in murder before. Mrs. White attempts to defend herself against the accusations with witty banter.

Mrs. White: “Husbands should be like Kleenex, soft, strong and disposable.”

3. Subtitle
Mrs. White: “Mænd skal være som papirlommetørklæder.”

4. Strategy
The subtitler chose to apply equivalence in this translation. The first half of Mrs. White’s utterance was translated, while the second half was deleted. While the two lines of the subtitle block could not accommodate a literal translation, the subtitling is confusing to the target audience when it only translates a part of the original utterance.

5. Humor
This remark compares the qualities of husbands to the qualities of Kleenex paper tissues, utilizing irony to compare the practical aspects of tissues to the emotional and practical aspects of Mrs. White’s ideal husband.

6. Comments
It has been established that Mrs. White has a rather icy perception of the purpose of husbands and marriage. Her remark shows what little worth she considers men to have, but this does not come across in the subtitling of the remark. The subtitle makes very little sense as it makes a statement without conveying the conclusion of the statement. Keeping in mind that the two lines of the subtitle block can accommodate a total of 74 characters, I would propose to have the “Mænd skal være lige så anvendelige” in the upper line of the block and “som papirlommetørklæder.” in the lower line. By adding “lige så anvendelige”, the subtitle now conveys the purpose of husbands being like paper tissues and also conveys Mrs. White contemptuous attitude towards husbands.
7. Relevance
While the subtitler made a good call to replace the American localism “Kleenex” with the Danish word “papirlommetørklæder” to remove the risk of the viewer not being familiar with this brand of paper tissues, it is strange that he or she would make a translation that does not convey the point of Mrs. White’s remark and thereby does not make much sense. Making a translation that condensates the words “soft, strong and disposable” to the Danish word “anvendelige,” which encompasses the overall trait the three adjectives share keeps the viewer on track.

6.3.4 “Flies are where men are most vulnerable”
1. Scene
Time: 34:10. Like the previous example, this scene takes place after the guests have all just run to the kitchen to discover that the cook has been murdered. She falls out of the freezer with a dagger in her back and Mr. Green attempts to grab the large corpse as it falls. They are all very confused and startled by the events of the evening thus far and accusations are flying around the room.

2. Dialogue
Colonel Mustard is quick to accuse Mrs. White of the cook’s murder, basing his accusation on the suspicious disappearance of one of her husbands and the death of another, commenting that Mrs. White had been involved in murder before. Mrs. White attempts to defend herself against the accusations with witty banter.

Colonel Mustard: You lure men to their deaths like a spider with flies.
Mrs. White: Flies are where men are most vulnerable.

3. Subtitle
Colonel Mustard: De narrer mænd skridt for skridt.
Mrs. White: Mænd er mest sårbare i skridtet.

4. Strategy
Using the method of adaptation, the subtitler made an idiomatic translation that does not have the same meaning word for word, but makes the exchange of humorous allegories possible and thereby preserves the humor of the scene.

5. Humor
Colonel Mustard uses the metaphor of a spider and flies to describe Mrs. White and her marital relations. Mrs. White’s response to his metaphor utilizes the ambiguity of the word “flies,” which can both refer to the insect and the part of a pair of trousers where one closes them, to make a play on words. While Colonel Mustard is using his statement to describe Mrs. White’s predatory nature, her response acknowledges her thoughts on the matter of male vulnerability.

6. Comments
The skopos of this translation is to convey the wordplay Mrs. White uses as a response to the metaphor Colonel Mustard uses for his accusation. The subtitler has achieved a translation of the wordplay by the means of idiomaticity; while the Danish subtitles do not contain similar linguistic elements, the Danish wordplay also deals with Mrs. White’s cunning and predatory nature.

7. Relevance
I favor idiomaticity as a way to transfer humor from one language to another, which this translation supports; had the subtitler gone for a word-for-word translation of the original, the wordplay would have been lost, as the words Danish words “fluer” and “gylp” are obviously very different in both spelling and pronunciation.

6.3.5 “Mr. Boddy’s body, it’s gone”
1. Scene
Time: 34:46. After the discovery of the murdered cook in the kitchen, Wadsworth suggests they bring her body to the study, where they left the body of Mr. Boddy after he had been killed. When they return to the study, carrying the cook’s body, they discover to their befuddlement that Mr. Boddy is missing.
2. Dialogue
The group is very shocked and surprised to discover that Mr. Boddy has disappeared. As they are all helping each other carry the cook, they are huddled in a group in the doorway to the study and as a result not all of them are able to see what is wrong and why those in front of them are reacting so shocked.

Professor Plum: Look! The body’s gone!
Mrs. Peacock: What are you all staring at? Who’s there?
Mr. Green: Nothing.
Colonel Mustard: Nobody.
Mrs. Peacock: What do you mean?
Wadsworth: Nobody. No body, that’s what we mean. Mr. Boddy’s body, it’s gone.

3. Subtitle
Professor Plum: Se! Liget er væk!
Mrs. Peacock: Hvad glor De på? Hvem er det?
Mr. Green:
Colonel Mustard: Ingen.
Mrs. Peacock: Hvad mener De?
Wadsworth: Ingen. Doktor Sorts lig er borte.

4. Strategy
Another case of literal translation, the subtitler translated the utterances of all the characters except for that of Mr. Green, which was deleted. Colonel Mustard, however, basically says the same as Mr. Green, so transferring one of the two characters’ utterances to the subtitle was sufficient to get the exchange of dialogue across in the Danish subtitle.

5. Humor
Depending on where one puts the emphasis when pronouncing the word “nobody,” one either says “nobody,” equivalent to “no one,” or “no body” meaning “no corpse” and wordplay can therefore be enabled when using these words. Furthermore, even if his name is spelled
differently, Mr. Boddy’s last name has the same pronunciation as the word “body,” thus enabling further wordplay.

6. Comments
Faced with the constriction of having to translate character names, as they have to match the Danish equivalents known from the Danish version of the board game Clue, Cluedo, the subtitler was not able to transfer the humorous wordplay used by Wadsworth into Danish. Even if there was not the constriction of the names needing to be translated, I have not found a solution that will allow the same wordplay in Danish, all the while still being relevant for the visuals.

7. Relevance
Even if idiomaticity can aid a subtitler in translating humor, the constraints of visuals and original audio sometimes leaves the subtitler with no other option, but to translate the dialogue directly. In these cases, the humor must be sacrificed in order to maintain a high level of fidelity toward not only the plot of the movie, but also the obligation to convey it to the target language viewer.

6.3.6 “Oui, oui, madame”

! Scene
Time: 35:46. After having discovered that Mr. Boddy’s body has disappeared from the study, and arguing about what may have happened, Mrs. Peacock turns to the maid Yvette to ask for directions for the bathroom, so she can freshen up.

2. Dialogue
When Mrs. Peacock discreetly asks the French maid Yvette about directions for the bathroom, Yvette replies to Mrs. Peacock’s request in French, causing Mrs. Peacock to misunderstand the meaning of Yvette’s response and Mrs. Peacock excuses herself to go to the bathroom to freshen up, Yvette is left looking confused at her response.
Mrs. Peacock: Uh, well, if you’ll excuse me, I have to, uh, uhm... Is there a little girl’s room in the hall?

Yvette: Oui, oui, madame.

Mrs. Peacock: No, I just wanna powder my nose, thank you.

### 3. Subtitle

Mrs. Peacock: De må have mig undskyldt, jeg skal... Er her et toilet?

Yvette: *Oui, oui, madame.*

Mrs. Peacock: Nej, jeg vil bare pudre næsen.

### 4. Strategy

The subtitler once again opted for literal translation and as well as the deletion of the language elements that were of lesser importance to the information being relayed. Furthermore, in the subtitling of Yvette’s French response, the subtitler borrowed the French response and relayed it word for word in the Danish subtitle.

### 5. Humor

Much to the confusion of Yvette, Mrs. Peacock gives a response that does not correlate entirely to Yvette’s answer to her initial question. Once again, wordplay is used on the part of the pronunciation of the French word “oui,” meaning “yes,” and the English word “wee,” which can refer to both “urine” and “urination.” While the words are in no way related in other ways than their pronunciation, Mrs. Peacock’s misunderstanding of Yvette’s response being in French causes her to elaborate on the nature of her need to go to the bathroom, leaving Yvette confused, as she merely answered Mrs. Peacock’s question about the whereabouts of the bathroom, not understanding why she felt the need to add the purpose of her visit to the bathroom.

### 6. Comments

Once again, the constraints of the combination of the plot relayed in dialogue, audio and visuals make the transfer of humor very difficult. While I as an aspiring professional...
translator do my best to work my way around untranslatability, I am at a loss with regard to an alternative solution to the subtitling of this exchange. If I had a larger knowledge of the French language, then I might have been able find a way around this constraint, but seeing as I do not, I would have opted for a literal translation as well, had I been in the subtitler.

7. Relevance
In my humor chapter, I refer to the difficulty of the transfer from humor in one language to another. While I propose that some liberty may be taking by means of idiomatic translation, it is also important to keep the skopos of the translation task in mind. For this example, I would argue that the skopos of conveying meaningful dialogue from the source text to the target text is of greater importance than the transfer of humor.

6.3.7 “That’s what we call overkill”
1. Scene
Time: 37:09. The guests rush from the study to the hall when they hear Mrs. Peacock scream in horror. Here it appears that Mr. Boddy is attacking the woman, but as the group pulls him away from her, they discover that he is lifeless. Mrs. Peacock faints and Wadsworth fails to catch her. He then goes to examine Mr. Boddy, and declares that he is now really dead.

2. Dialogue
Upon examining Mr. Boddy and declaring that he really is dead this time, several of the characters make comments regarding his two “deaths.”

Wadsworth: Well, he’s certainly dead now. But why would anyone want to kill him twice?
Miss Scarlet: Seems so unnecessary.
Colonel Mustard: That’s what we call overkill.
Professor Plum: What we call a psychotic.

3. Subtitle
Wadsworth: Nu er han død.
Hvorfor slå ham ihjel to gange?

Miss Scarlet: Unødvendigt.
Colonel Mustard: Dobbeltmord.
Professor Plum: Psykotisk.

4. Strategy
The subtitler recognized the humor in Colonel Mustard’s comment about Mr. Boddy being declared dead twice and paraphrased his utterance with a modulating translation. All elements except for the keyword “overkill” were deleted.

5. Humor
Colonel Mustard, a military man, makes a pun using the word “overkill,” which is commonly used when the solution of a problem is handled with excess. It is especially used in relation to military operations, where an objective is achieved, but the means by which it is achieved are highly excessive, i.e. bombing an entire city even if a single person is the objective of the bombing.

6. Comments
The pun is preserved in Danish by means of an idiomatic translation; “dobbeltmord” normally refers to the homicide of two people, when they are killed at roughly the same time on the same premises. While it is not a term often used in relation to military like the original word “overkill,” it bears the same connotation of being something done in excess. In a sense, Mr. Boddy’s homicide was a “dobbeltmord” with him being declared dead twice.

7. Relevance
With idiomatic translation being a preferred method of mine when translating humor, the subtitler’s successful recognition of the skopos of Colonel Mustard’s comment as a humorous utterance and using idiomaticity further supports my theory.
6.3.8 “There’s nobody in the study”

1. Scene

Time: 39:48. The party has just gathered the corpses of the cook and Mr. Boddy in the study. As they are arguing about which of them is the killer, Wadsworth gathers all the remaining items that may serve as murder weapons in a cupboard and locks it. The guests criticize his decision to put the key in his pocket and they decide that it should be thrown away. As they open the front door to throw it away, they are startled to find a man standing outside, just about to ring the doorbell. He is equally startled and ducks down as Wadsworth’s makes a motion to throw away the key.

2. Dialogue

In their befuddlement and paranoia, the group looks at the man outside with wide smiles, anticipating his reason for being at the door. He begins to explain that his car has broken down and asks if he can use a telephone, leading to Wadsworth giving an answer that is hardly straightforward.

Motorist: Well, where is it?
Wadsworth: What, the body?
Motorist: The phone. What body?
Wadsworth: There’s no body. No body... There’s nobody in the study.

3. Subtitle

Motorist: Hvor er den?
Wadsworth: Den døde?
Motorist: Telefonen. Hvilken døde?
Wadsworth: Der er ikke møde i studeværelset.

4. Strategy

While the subtitler previously struggled with a similar use of the words ”no body” and ”nobody,” he or she was able to make it the humor work in this case and transfer the humor of the original English dialogue into the Danish subtitles by means of an idiomatic
solution, where the words “døde” and “møde” create a similar form of wordplay. Some of the original ramblings of Wadsworth were deleted, but the wordplay was still made in Danish nonetheless.

5. Humor
Much like the previous case of Wadsworth using the wordplay of “no body” and “nobody,” which is possible because of their very similar pronunciation, he this time uses it in order to camouflage for the motorist that he has just let slip that there are dead people in the house and thereby attempts to lower the motorist’s suspicion.

6. Comments
From this example it seems that the subtitler might have used a similar idiomatic solution in the previous subtitling of the words “no body” and “nobody,” had he or she not been constricted by the restrictions of the visuals of the previous example. In the case of this example, however, the subtitler was not constricted by the visuals in the same way as before, seemingly because there was very little happening visually this time. This gave the subtitler more freedom to make an idiomatic translation using the words “døde” and “møde,” because he or she did not have to take into account that the subtitle should be literal to make sense in relation to the visuals.

7. Relevance
Another case of idiomaticity helping the original humor to come across in the subtitle, but also, when compared to the previous example mentioned in this example, evidence that the constraints of visuals and audio can be a great hindrance in some cases.

6.3.9 “Search me”
1. Scene
Time: 48:07. The group has split up into groups of two and they are now searching the house for the murderer. Colonel Mustard and Miss Scarlet make up one of these groups and have been tasked with searching the ground floor of the house.
2. Dialogue

As Colonel Mustard and Miss Scarlet open the door to an unknown room, they look into the dark. Colonel Mustard asks what it is and when she replies he goes on to pat her down because of the wording he used, which he misunderstood.

Colonel Mustard: What room is this?
Miss Scarlet: Search me.
Colonel Mustard: Okay.
Miss Scarlet: Get your mitts off me.

3. Subtitle

Colonel Mustard: Hvad er det for et værelse?
Miss Scarlet: Svaret må du lede længe efter.
Colonel Mustard: Godt.
Miss Scarlet: Fjern grabberne.

4. Strategy

While the majority of the subtitling in this case is a literal translation, the subtitler adapted the translation of the first of the remarks Miss Scarlet made to be able to accommodate the humor of the situation on the screen.

5. Humor

The humor in this situation is not relying completely on the utterances of the characters, but rather a combination of a pun and a visual gag. The pun is instigated by Miss Scarlet’s initial choice of words and Colonel Mustard padding her down as a reaction to the phrasing she used is the actual pun.

6. Comments

The subtitler recognized the need for a translation that would make sense when Colonel Mustard pads Miss Scarlet down after her remark. While a simple “aner det ikke” would have been a more straightforward answer in a situation that did not include a visual gag as a pun.
to the utterance, some adaptation needed to be applied in order to make a subtitle that would accommodate the humor of the situation.

7. Relevance
Recognizing humor as the skopos of one’s translation is important to achieve the best result possible. Choosing the right microstrategy for the translation further helps in achieving the best result, especially when the translator is a subtitler and has to take the constraints of audiovisual translation into account.

6.3.10 “Why is J. Edgar Hoover on your phone?”

1. Scene
Time: 56:53. The groups of two are still searching the house for the murderer when a police officer comes to the house to inquire about the motorist’s car which he has found down the road. Wadsworth, who is frantic and paranoid at a lawman turning up at the house, shows him to the library, where he locks him in. When the cop discovers he has been locked in, he grabs the door handles and shakes them, all the while yelling for the door to be unlocked. Upon accusing the party of murder, Wadsworth unlocks the door.

2. Dialogue
Upon unlocking the door, the cop informs the party that J. Edgar Hoover is on the phone. Wadsworth is extremely surprised to hear that he is receiving this phone call and Colonel Mustard further asks why he is receiving phone calls from J. Edgar Hoover.

The Cop: And why are you receiving phone calls from J. Edgar Hoover?
Wadsworth: J. Edgar Hoover?
The Cop: That’s right! The head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation!
Colonel Mustard: Why is J. Edgar Hoover on your phone?
Wadsworth: I don’t know, he’s on everybody else’s, why shouldn’t he be on mine?

3. Subtitle
The Cop: Og hvorfor ringer J. Edgar Hoover?
Wadsworth: J. Edgar Hoover?
The Cop: Ja! Chefen for FBI!
Colonel Mustard: Hvorfor ringer han til Dem?
Wadsworth: Han ringer til alle, så...

4. Strategy

Once again making a literal translation, the subtitler also applied equivalence and used the abbreviation for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, namely FBI, as there was not enough room in the subtitle block to feature the full name. Furthermore, some deletion was applied for Wadsworth response to Colonel Mustard as the exchanges between the two allowed no room for Wadsworth response to be subtitled in full.

5. Humor

Wadsworth makes a sarcastic pun in response to Colonel Mustard’s question about why J. Edgar Hoover is on his phone. At the time J. Edgar Hoover was the head of the FBI, America was highly affected by the Cold War and the fear of communists and what they might do. As a result, many people were under surveillance by the FBI and there was a high amount of telephone tappings taking place as a part of this surveillance. In the 1970s, the evidence of this surveillance saw the light of day, with thousands of people being surprised that they had been under surveillance.

6. Comments

The telephone tappings commissioned by J. Edgar Hoover would have been common knowledge to an American audience in 1985, so I do not blame the Danish subtitler for apparently not picking up on this cultural reference, as the European DVD was released in 2003 and the task of subtitling is presumed to have been commissioned around the same time. However, considering that these telephone tappings are rather infamous and one needs only a general knowledge of modern American history to be aware of them having taken place, I would argue that the subtitler should at least give the audience the opportunity to pick on this humorous occurrence, if he or she possesses that much knowledge of modern American history. A way to achieve an ambiguous subtitle that may be interpreted as a comment on
telephone tapping, but still gives a literal translation that transfers the literal meaning of what is being said on screen, would be to translate Colonel Mustard’s question with “Hvorfor er han i røret?” to which Wadsworth could reply “Han er i røret hos alle, så…” While saying someone is “i røret” is a common Danish way of declaring that someone is on the telephone, it has a certain ambiguous nature that allows the Danish viewer to make the connection to telephone tapping, should they be familiar with this part of modern American history.

7. Relevance
The attempt to make source text humor work in the target text requires a certain cultural knowledge on the subtitler’s part and that may have been the main constraint in this case. I would, however, claim that with the overall high quality of the subtitling of “Clue,” it is likely that the subtitler would know this, but perhaps he or she did not pick up on the joke, as it is very sarcastic. In the humor chapter of this thesis, I remarked that sarcasm is a very American form of humor, so it may just be that this particular occurrence of humor was missed by the subtitler.

6.3.11 “Dead drunk”

1. Scene
Time: 59:18. Mr. Green is reluctantly giving the cop a tour of the house. While Mr. Green tries hard to keep him out of the study, where the corpses of the cook and Mr. Boddy have been placed, and the lounge, where the motorist was killed, the cop enters the rooms by himself. A shocked and disgusted Mr. Green looks on as the other guests work hard to camouflage that there are corpses in the study, using them as grim puppets and pretending to be making out with them. Miss Scarlet and Professor Plum have poured liquor into the mouth of the motorist, to make it seem like he is passed out drunk.

2. Dialogue
Miss Scarlet and Professor Plum are making out on a couch in the lounge, to further give the impression that they are all having a good time. When the cop approaches the dead motorist, who has been placed in a chair, he smells his “breath” and is met by a strong smell of alcohol,
which camouflages that the motorist is no longer breathing. Worried about the safety of the seemingly heavily intoxicated motorist, he has the following exchange with Miss Scarlet:

The Cop: This man is drunk. Dead drunk.
Miss Scarlet: Dead right!

3.Subtitle
The Cop: Manden er døddrukken.
Miss Scarlet: Nemlig.

4. Strategy
A very straightforward literal translation of the cop’s comment, using a direct transfer of the prefix he uses to enhance his description of the motorist’s level of intoxication. Miss Scarlet’s response, which also used this prefix, has had it deleted.

5. Humor
As mentioned above, the cop uses the word “dead” as a prefix to “drunk” to insinuate a high level of intoxication on the motorist’s behalf. Miss Scarlet’s response to his comment is not used to enhance the description of the level of intoxication the cop presumes the motorist is in. She makes a pun by using the word “dead” as well as the cop, referring to the actual state of the motorist. Furthermore, the cop’s comment on the state he presumes the motorist to be in is very ironic to the audience, as they know that the man is actually dead.

6. Comments
It is always easy to second-guess the translation choices of another person, particularly those of a subtitler, as different people have different vocabularies, but I do find it odd that the subtitler did not transfer the humor of this example into the Danish subtitles. In the subtitling of the cop’s comment, the subtitler used the prefix “død-,” which enhances the level of intoxication being presumed in exactly the same way as the original utterance in English did. Miss Scarlet’s response, however, was merely translated with “nemlig.” I would argue that the subtitler could have used the word “sikkert” instead, which he or she easily could have
attached the prefix “død-“ to, giving the result “dødsikkert,” thereby resulting in the same pun being made in Danish.

7. Relevance
When the movie one is subtitling is a comedy, I suggest that the overall skopos of the subtitling should be to convey humor from the source text in the target text. Why the subtitler did not fulfill this skopos in this case may be down to the constrictions of simply not thinking of a solution like the one I suggest. I do, however, think that they subtitler may not have had the skopos of his or her subtitling in mind with this example.

6.3.12 “Communism is just a red herring”
1. Scene
Time: 1:18:22. Wadsworth has just done a high speed run through of the events of the evening to make it clear who the murderer is. In the first of the three endings, Miss Scarlet is revealed as the murderer and is now holding the others at gunpoint.

2. Dialogue
Upon being revealed as the murderer in the first ending, the others want to know what motive Miss Scarlet has for her actions. As she relays them to the others, Mr. Green accuses her of being a communist.

Mr. Green: So, it is political! You’re a communist!
Miss Scarlet: No, Mr. Green. Communism is just a red herring

3. Subtitle
Mr. Green: Så det er politisk!
             De er kommunist!
Miss Scarlet: Nej, hr. Grøn,
             Kommunisme er blot et vildspor.
4. Strategy
For the majority of this exchange, the subtitler chose the approach of literal translation. However, in the case of Miss Scarlet’s response to Mr. Green, he or she chose an idiomatic solution that correctly conveyed the original meaning of the term “red herring.”

5. Humor
The term “red herring” refers to a plot device in storytelling, and more particularly crime stories and the like, where the author deliberately makes an innocent character out to be the one responsible for the evildoings in the story. If the red herring works as intended, the reader will be thrown off track with regard to guessing who the real culprit is. As a result, the reader experiences the desired element of surprise when the real culprit is revealed. In the case of “Clue,” the use of the term is slightly changed, making a pun possible. While communism truthfully was not Miss Scarlet’s motive, the pun on the word red is made, a color that is often associated with communism.

6. Comments
While the translation of the original utterance is perfectly acceptable and takes both the meaning of the term and the plot into consideration, I cannot help but miss the pun regarding the color red. I would suggest taking the idiomaticity a step further and use the Danish metaphor “ikke en rød reje,” which normally refers to absence of payment. Since the metaphor is about the absence of something, I think it is plausible to use it for the translation of Miss Scarlet’s pun, as it uses the color red as well as the utterance. “Kommunisme betyder ikke en rød reje.” may seem a little strange, but seeing as Danes are used to the color red being associated with leftwing politics, it would not be confusing or deduct from the plot.

7. Relevance
Even in the event of a high quality translation, there can be room for improvement when humor is involved. As mentioned in the subtitling chapter of this thesis, the time the subtitler has to finish a given task may be rather insignificant with the increasing demand for subtitles. It took me some time to arrive at the alternative solution I made above, but aside from the
constraint of time, the cultural understanding and vocabulary of the individual is also an important aspect as to what translation is made.

6.3.13 “Why do you think it’s run by a man called Hoover?”

1. Scene
Time: 1:23:42. In the second ending to the movie, Mrs. Peacock is revealed to be the murderer. She also holds the others at gunpoint, but unlike Miss Scarlet in the first ending, she manages to exit the house before being apprehended. Just after she has left, Wadsworth suggests that they stack the bodies in the cellar and then leave quietly one by one.

2. Dialogue
After Wadsworth’s grim proposal to leave the bodies in the cellar, a shocked Professor Plum questions the prospect of walking away from the situation without any repercussions.

Professor Plum: But is the FBI in the habit of cleaning up after multiple murder?
Wadsworth: Yes. Why do you think it’s run by a man called Hoover?

3. Subtitle
Professor Plum: Rydder FBI op efter massemord?
Wadsworth: Ja. Hvorfor tror De,chefen hedder Hoover?

4. Strategy
The translation of Professor Plum and Wadsworth’s exchange is literal, with deletion of some of Professor Plum’s question. The subtitler chose this approach as immediate the skopos of the translation of this particular exchange appears is to relay the information gained from a straightforward question with a straightforward answer.

5. Humor
The previous example, which also referenced the method of operation of the then-head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover, had Wadsworth answer with a sarcastic pun.
Many conspiracy theories exist with regard to government institutions like the FBI and every now and then, some sinister facts see the light of day. It is not unheard of that an event, which may be harmful to the reputation of the government institution in question, will be kept a secret to avoid a scandal.

6. Comments
This translation, much like the previous example of humor referring to J. Edgar Hoover, leaves something to be desired. While it may once again be a case of the subtitler not being aware of the cultural reference to the history of J. Edgar Hoover’s time as the head of the FBI, I still think the complete lack of idiomaticity in the translation is a problem that can be solved. “Hoover” is a well-known brand of vacuum cleaners and a lot of Danes know it as it is used when referring to vacuum cleaners in general. However, one must take into consideration that it is never a given that all viewers have this information and therefore may be entirely dependent on the subtitler handling the localism with a translation that does not alienate anyone. In this case, I would suggest that the upper line of the subtitle block, “Hvorfor tror De,”, remains the same, but that some addition is used in the lower line, changing the subtitle to “chefen deler navn med en støvsuger?” All viewers are thereby able to recognize the humor of Wadsworth’s response to Professor Plum’s question.

7. Relevance
A subtitler may be highly competent with regard to many aspects of subtitling and it is always easy to second-guess the choices of others, but this solution struck me as a case either lack of cultural understanding or a case of idiomaticity not being a part of the subtitler’s approach to the task at hand. This example clearly benefited from an idiomatic approach to solve the constraint of a localism.

6.3.14 “Flames on the side of my face…”
1. Scene
Time: 1:26:23. In the third ending it is revealed that each of the guests, except for Mr. Green, is responsible for someone’s murder. Mrs. White is revealed to have murdered Yvette, her
motive being the jealousy she felt when she discovered Yvette was having an affair with her husband.

2. Dialogue
When she is revealed as Yvette’s murderer, Mrs. White attempts to explain her motive without making much sense.

Mrs. White: Yes, I did it. I killed Yvette.
I hated her so much…
It, it… the flames…
Flames, on the side of my face…
Breathing, breathle- heaving breaths... heaving…

3. Subtitle
Mrs. White: Ja, det var mig.
Jeg slog Yvette ihjel.
Jeg hadede hende så meget...
Det, det... flammer...
Flammer på den ene side af hovedet...
Bølger, øller, bølgende...

4. Strategy
Yet again a literal translation was the approach used by the subtitler. There were no cases of deletion as the subtitle block was able to accommodate all elements needed to be translated. The only part of the translation that was not a literal translation was the last line giving in the example, where some adaptation was used.

5. Humor
Mrs. White’s explanation of her feelings towards Yvette and her motivation to kill her hardly make any sense, other than suggesting that she might have gone insane from jealousy. Her attempt at explaining herself is, however, amusing. The closest classification I can give of the
humor of her babbling would be that it is a form of wordplay. As she is trying to explain her motive, she cannot find the words to describe her feelings and simply starts saying words that have some similarities phonetically, but that is where their similarities end.

6. Comments
Humor can be very abstract, but the subtitler recognized the humor of Mrs. White’s babbling nonetheless. While he or she could have easily continued with the literal translation of her ramblings, the subtitler chose to substitute the original words uttered by a series of Danish words that have phonetic similarities to further recreate the absurdity in the target text. There is a certain idiomatic quality to finding words in the target language with a similar phonetic effect.

7. Relevance
Being able to recognize humor and willing to be creative in the translation of humor is an important quality for any subtitler to possess. The use of idiomaticity is an important tool in doing so and I think the subtitler showed a considerable amount of creativity in this translation of this example.

6.3.15 “I was going to expose you”
1. Scene
1:27:08. It has been revealed who killed the various victims in the third ending, except for the singing telegram girl. To everyone’s surprise, Wadsworth pulls out the revolver and admits to shooting her and further reveals that he is in fact Mr. Boddy; the man they guests previously thought was Mr. Boddy turns out to be the butler.

2. Dialogue
Mr. Green points out that he was about to expose Wadsworth before Wadsworth beat him to the punch and revealed his identity and motive himself.

Mr. Green: So it was you. I was going to expose you.
Wadsworth: I know. So I choose to expose myself.
Colonel Mustard: Please, there are ladies present!
3. **Subtitle**

Mr. Green: Jeg var ved at afsløre Dem.
Wadsworth: Så jeg valgte at blotte mig selv.
Colonel Mustard: Altså! Der er damer til stede.

4. **Strategy**

Once again the subtitler used a literal translation of the dialogue. He or she recognized that the translation had two skopoi, namely that information gained from the dialogue needed to be relayed to the viewer so that he and she could keep up with the plot, but also that a humorous utterance needed to be transferred. The substitution of “afsløre” with “blotte” was used for the latter.

5. **Humor**

The word “expose” is ambiguous, all depending on the context in which it is used, which enables the possibility of wordplay. While the word means the same, namely to reveal something, it is Colonel Mustard’s decision to understand it as referring to the exposure of one’s naked self that enables the wordplay. His response makes a pun relating the ambiguity of the word.

6. **Comments**

While the subtitler did not have the same possibility of using Danish wordplay that matched that which was used in the original dialogue, he or she recognized the pun being made about exposure. “Afsløre” is the most optimal translation of the kind of exposure Mr. Green and Wadsworth are talking about, but the word “blotte” is not exclusively used to describe the exposure of one’s naked self, so using it as a synonym for “afsløre” is perfectly acceptable.

7. **Relevance**

The subtitler once again recognized the skopos of the translation to be one of transferring not only dialogue, but also humor. While idiomatic translations are not the only way to transfer humor from one language to another, the ability to know which microstrategy to apply in order to achieve a successful transfer is of equal importance.
6.3.16 “I thought men like you were usually called a fruit”

1. Scene

Time: 1:28:43. As Wadsworth is about to leave the house, he is holding the others at gunpoint. He reveals that the police have not been called as he previously claimed and suggests that they stack the corpses in the cellar and leave quietly, one by one. Mr. Green has removed his glasses and is placing them inside his breast pocket while he is asking Wadsworth if he thinks he can just keep blackmailing them. Wadsworth smirks and says “why not?” At this time Mr. Green pulls a gun out from under his jacket and shoots and kills Wadsworth, who collapses in the hall. The others are very shocked at this sudden turn of events.

2. Dialogue

The guests are all shocked and a puzzled Mrs. White turns to Mr. Green and asks him about the nature of his presence at the party. Mr. Green reveals to the others that he is working undercover for the FBI and that the call from J. Edgar Hoover was actually for him.

Mrs. White: Are you a cop?
Mr. Green: No, I’m a plant.
Miss Scarlet: I thought men like you were usually called a fruit.
Mr. Green: Very funny.

3. Subtitle

Mrs. White: Er De strømer?
Mr. Green: Panser.
Miss Scarlet: Jeg troede, man kaldte Dem svanser.
Mr. Green: Meget morsomt.

4. Strategy

Mrs. White’s question is subtitled with a literal translation. The Danish subtitle contains a slang expression for “policeman” that is similarly common to that used in the source text. Mr.
Green’s response and Miss Scarlet’s remark, on the other hand, are transferred by means of paraphrasing to allow for the humor to be rendered in the target text.

5. Humor
Mr. Green reveals that he is a “plant,” a term used to describe a law official who is working undercover in a given situation to gather evidence against criminals and expose them. Miss Scarlet, who is referring to Mr. Green’s homosexuality, jokily comments that she thought men like him were usually referred to as fruits, making a pun on the words “plant” and “fruit” and the similarity of the meaning of the two words in their original sense.

6. Comments
The subtitler cleverly utilizes his or her vocabulary to enable the idiomatic transfer of Miss Scarlet’s pun. While the translation is not as explicit as the source text in explaining the nature of Mr. Green’s work, it still transfers the humor of their exchange successfully. The meaning of the words “cop” and “plant” are rather different, with the first referring to a policeman in general and the other referring to the specific task of undercover work. The words “strømer” and “panser,” on the other hand, are synonyms. Furthermore, the subtitler realized that he or she needed to find a word that could both fit as a description of a law enforcer and be used to make a witty remark with a slang term for a homosexual male, thereby setting up Mr. Green’s response. The solution is that the pun is changed to wordplay that makes Mr. Green’s response make sense in the target text.

7. Relevance
This final example is another strong case for the use of idiomaticity. Had the subtitler not recognized the need for an idiomatic translation, the humorous utterance by Miss Scarlet would probably have been transferred into Danish or the context of entire exchange may not have made sense in the target text.
6.4 The perspectives of the subtitler and the viewer

In the methodology chapter, I presented the perspectives of the subtitler and the viewer and how I generally perceive these perspectives. The following subchapters will comment on these perspectives in relation to “Clue”.

6.4.1 The perspective of the subtitler

The subtitler of “Clue” transferred the dialogue, and thereby the plot, with a very high level of fidelity towards the source dialogue. As mentioned in the subchapters about the subtitling of “Clue,” this was achieved both as a whole and on an individual basis. The subtitler obviously has considerable experience in this subdivision of audiovisual translation as the specific parameters of subtitles, which include the tone of the language used and readability, were handled very professionally.

6.4.2 The perspective of the viewer

The subtitling is generally very useful for a Danish viewer of “Clue” as it features a high level of readability, even in the instances where the amount of time the subtitles are featured on the screen is rather limited due to the characters speaking very fast. With regard to the subtitling of humorous occurrences, however, a viewer that is entirely dependent on the original English dialogue being subtitled is likely to encounter some instances where the meaning is not optimally transferred. An example of this would be the translation of Mrs. White comparing husbands to Kleenex, which is described in 6.3.3 above. A viewer who is not entirely dependent on subtitles may be able to pick up on the humor of the aforementioned ironic remark made by Mrs. White as well as the other humorous occurrences that refer to modern American history in examples 6.3.10 and 6.3.13, despite the humor not being conveyed in the subtitles.

6.5 Summary
All in all, the subtitling of “Clue” as a whole is of a very high quality, suggesting that the subtitler is a professional with a considerable amount of experience. There are a very small number of incidents that can be described as actual mistakes and they therefore have a minimal impact on the overall quality of the subtitling, but they still could have been avoided nonetheless.

The microstrategies used in the individual cases of humorous occurrences being subtitled further attests to the professionalism of the subtitler, showing a willingness to handle humor on an individual basis, as there is great variety in the microstrategies used. The transfer of humor is therefore successful in a large number of the examples given in this chapter. However, there are still a significant number of examples where the transfer of humor can be improved, as well as some examples where the humor was not transferred by the subtitler at all. The latter does for the most part have the possibility to be transferred successfully, if some changes are made.

The final chapter of this thesis seeks to reach a conclusion of the findings of the analysis chapter and how this fits with the original problem statement presented in the first chapter.
7. Conclusion

To round off this thesis, this chapter will serve as a conclusion with a recap of the problem statement and further consider how it relates to the findings of my analysis chapter.

In the problem statement for this thesis, I presented to the reader how I had noticed that the subtitling of some of the humorous utterances in the movie “Clue” appeared to be lacking in terms of conveying the humor of the original dialogue in the Danish subtitles, suggesting that the translation of the humor had posed a significant challenge for the subtitler. Some of the humor was very specific for American culture, referencing the era of McCarthyism, in which the movie is set, by utilizing humor in the form of sarcasm to poke fun at this particular part of modern American history.

In my analysis I sought to investigate why humor is seemingly so difficult to translate and, more specifically why it is so hard to translate when it has to fit into the physical constraints of a subtitle block. Unfortunately, neither the name of the subtitler nor the subtitling company was to be found anywhere on the DVD; being able to interview the subtitler would have been the most ideal basis for the analysis of his or her subtitling choices and would have added further to the quality of my analysis. It would also have given a better idea of his or her experience and would have made it possible to further comment on the competence of the subtitler in the analysis. However, by using the knowledge of subtitling I gained from the seminar on subtitling held by Allan Hilton Andersen from Dansk Video Tekst, I was able to recognize certain indicators of professionalism; the way the subtitles were presented in the subtitle block showed a certain amount of consideration towards the viewer, which is often an indicator of both experience and proper training. The subtitler had also considered the proper tone for the language used in the subtitles, taking into consideration the fact that the movie takes place in 1954, which was evident in the use of the Danish polite forms “De” and “Dem” used by the characters throughout the movie when addressing one another. Furthermore, the subtitler had recognized the need to translate the names of the characters because of movie’s origin as a board game available worldwide, meaning that these names would also be translated in the board game, another indicator of an ability to understand the source material. There were other details, such as the subtitling of the Yvette’s French dialogue, which the subtitler recognized as
being part of her character and therefore borrowed from the original dialogue and kept as they were in the Danish subtitles.

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, my personal preference when it comes to subtitling humor is to apply idiomaticity. In some of the examples of the subtitling of humor that I analyzed, the subtitler of “Clue” had also used an idiomatic translation in order to be able to convey a similar form of humor in the Danish subtitles. In other cases where he or she had not applied a microstrategy of idiomaticity, however, the humor was not as successfully conveyed as it would have been if he or she had taken an idiomatic approach and thus been more creative in the transfer of humor, which I proved with some of my suggestions for alternative subtitling of these particular examples. My analysis concluded that the subtitler had done a better job at subtitling the occurrences of humor than I had initially proposed in the problem statement, but there were still some occurrences of humor that could have benefitted from being altered. All in all, the analysis of the subtitling of “Clue” proved that it was of very high quality, but that the constraints of the individual subtitler play an important role in achieving the most optimal subtitling possible. With regard to the model for analysis I developed particularly for this thesis, I would argue that it served its purpose of analyzing the individual occurrences of humor in “Clue” and their subtitling, however, this model may not be useful for analyzing the subtitling of occurrences of humor in other movies as it was developed particularly with “Clue” and this thesis in mind.

The basis for my analysis was backed with the theories concerning both translation in general and audiovisual translation, which I found to be of relevance for this thesis. In my training as an aspiring translator, the amount of training I have received is very minimal, but this does however seem to be changing as evidenced by the study carried out by McLoughlin, which I referred to in the subchapter on subtitling as a discipline. While this increased focus will surely prove beneficial to subtitling in general, I would argue that there still needs to be an increased focus on the subtitling of humor, especially seeing as it is the most important factor of a comedy. This opinion is also supported by McLoughlin:

“Professional subtitlers seldom have the time to carry out such an in-depth analysis of the text, but in advanced translation classes, it helps students to appreciate the multidimensional nature of film discourse and the several signifying codes it relies on in order to convey meaning. In
turn, it leads them to consider the communication act as a whole rather than concentrating on single words or items.” (McLoughlin in Bogucki, Kredens 2010:169)

I would argue that teaching aspiring subtitlers to consider the skopos of the subtitling in further detail as part of their training as suggested in the quote above would not only have a positive effect on subtitling in general, but particularly in the subtitling of humor. Learning these tools would help to further inspire creative thinking in subtitlers, all the while taking into consideration the constraints of subtitling as a translation form. With these tools as a part of their training, arriving at the most optimal subtitling solution with regard to humor would become a natural part of their thought process once they are working as professional subtitlers.
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In addition to the above, I have also used the online resource Wikipedia.