

## RENDERING VERBAL IRONY OF “ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO’S NEST”: NOVEL, CINEMATIC ADAPTATION AND LITHUANIAN SUBTITLES

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This article analyses the transformation of verbal irony within literary works during adaptation and subtitle translation processes. During the process of adaptation, verbal irony is often altered or lost. In the realms of Lithuanian cinema, subtitling is a common mode of presentation, necessitating additional adjustments to accommodate translation constraints. The study is structured into theoretical and empirical parts. Firstly, it delves into irony typology, characteristics, adaptation strategies, and subtitling approaches. Then, it employs a comparative methodology to analyse verbal irony in Ken Kesey’s novel “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” (1962), its cinematic adaptation by Miloš Forman (1975), and the Lithuanian subtitle translation by Narius Kairys (2018). This method unveils how verbal irony can change or persist during adaptation and subtitling processes. The examples analysed illustrate that the verbal irony from the novel may be lost or simplified and shortened in the adaptation, but it may also be complemented by non-verbal elements, such as acting and intonation. This research revealed that the film contains new cases of verbal irony absent from the original literary work. Notably, the verbal irony in the subtitles is simplified by using a near-synonym expression, omission or changes in word class and, consequently, loses its original impact.

**Keywords:** verbal irony, abridgement, subtitling constraint, audiovisual translation

## ПРЕНЕСУВАЊЕТО НА ВЕРБАЛНАТА ИРОНИЈА ВО „ЛЕТ НАД КУКАВИЧИНОТО ГНЕЗДО“: РОМАН, КИНЕМАТОГРАФСКА АДАПТАЦИЈА И ТИТЛУВАЊЕ НА ЛИТВАНСКИ ЈАЗИК

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Во овој труд се анализира трансформацијата на вербалната иронија во книжевните дела при процесот на адаптација и на титлување. При процесот на адаптација, вербалната иронија честопати се менува или се губи. Во литванските кина, титлувањето често се применува, што бара дополнително приспособување за да се задоволат ограничувањата при преведувањето. Трудот е поделен на теориски и на емпириски дел. Прво, се дава осврт на типологијата на иронијата, на нејзините карактеристики, на стратегиите на адаптација и на пристапите кон титлувањето. Потоа, преку компаративна методологија се анализира вербалната иронија во романот на Кен Кисеј „Лет над кукавичиното гнездо“ (1962), во кинематографската адаптација од Милош Форман (1975) и при титлувањето на литвански јазик од Нариус Каирис (2018). Овој метод покажува како вербалната иронија може да се промени или да се задржи во текот на адаптацијата и на титлувањето. Анализата на примерите покажува дека вербалната иронија од романот може да се изгуби или да се поедностави, односно да се скрати при адаптацијата, но и да се надополни со невербални елементи, како глума и интонација. Истражувањето покажа дека филмот содржи нови примери на вербална иронија, коишто ги нема во оригиналното книжевно дело. Имено, вербалната иронија при титлувањето е поедноставена преку речиси синонимни изрази, како и со испуштање или промени во зборовната група, па, како резултат на тоа, се губи оригиналниот ефект.

**Клучни зборови:** вербална иронија, скратување, ограничувања при титлувањето, аудиовизуелен превод

## 1 Introduction

Verbal irony, a complex linguistic construct, has posed a formidable challenge to both filmmakers and translators alike. The process of adaptation necessitates changes that preserve the essence of the original while infusing it with novelty. In most cases, the intricate nature of verbal irony is altered or becomes lost in the film. An internationally distributed adaptation requires translation, and the verbal irony is rendered in the target language. In the context of Lithuanian cinema, translations are commonly presented by subtitling, demanding further modifications to the text. After adaptation and subtitling, the final rendering of verbal irony may diverge significantly from its source.

The aim of this study is to investigate the nuances of translating verbal irony from its literary origin to its manifestation in Miloš Forman’s cinematic adaptation *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, and subsequently into Lithuanian subtitles. Given the complexity of verbal irony as a linguistic concept and its susceptibility to alteration during cinematic adaptation – an inter-semiotic translation – this research aims to scrutinize the transformation that verbal irony undergoes in this process. Subtitling as a specific method of audiovisual translation is introduced. These approaches allow for closely examining how irony is transformed in the process of adapting a novel into a film and uncovering the strategies used in the Lithuanian subtitles to convey this irony. The qualitative method is applied focusing on detailed analysis and interpretation. Translation strategies are analysed to assess the translation techniques used to convey irony, or the use of linguistic and cultural equivalents.

While there have been some works on the translation of irony, there are none, to the authors’ best knowledge, focusing on both cinematic adaptation and subtitling concerning verbal irony. This article may provide an innovative and valuable insight that may help translators subtitle verbal irony in the future.

## 2 The anatomy of irony

One of the leading authorities in the intricate realm of irony is Muecke (1970: 31), who explains it as writing that leaves the literal meaning open. It does not just mean the opposite of what is said but rather saying something that encourages multiple interpretations. As such, irony functions deliberately to provoke interpretation, and a single ironic expression may possess numerous different implications. According to Kreuz and Roberts (1993: 98–99), there are four main principal categories of irony: Socratic, dramatic, verbal irony, and irony of fate. Attardo (2000: 795) explains Socratic irony as feigning ignorance of a topic to teach the audience. Kreuz and Roberts (1993: 98) provide an illustrative instance of a professor posing ostensibly straightforward questions to make students realise their gaps in understanding. This technique encourages deeper contemplation, driving the audience to find answers and uncover deeper truths.

Dramatic irony creates a conflict between the audience’s awareness and the character’s comprehension (Kreuz and Roberts 1993: 99). The audience knows

more and can understand the irony of the character's utterances and actions. While unintentional from the character's perspective, dramatic irony becomes intentional when considered from the creator's viewpoint.

According to Attardo (2000: 795), the irony of fate corresponds to situational irony. Garmendia (2018: 3–5) explains this type as an action, occurrence, or event considered unintentionally ironic. This form of irony is not planned, and the situation is ironic because of the way it occurred.

Verbal irony, delineated by Garmendia (2018: 7), is a form of communication where the speaker imparts ironic content to an audience, whether that audience comprehends the ironic intent or not. Both the creator and the character employ this irony purposefully and with full awareness.

Thus, in the intricate landscape of irony, verbal irony is a deliberate form of communication used to convey a deeper meaning beyond the literal one.

## 2.1 Characteristics and functions of verbal irony

Verbal irony contrasts a stark juxtaposition between reality and outward appearance (Chevalier 1932: 42). The literal meaning should not be taken at face value, as there is a more profound message. Muecke (1970: 34) explains that reality takes shape through the eyes of the ironic observer. The audience must know the situation from the ironist's perspective to discern the true meaning. Booth (1975: 28) remarks that verbal irony creates an inner circle of those who grasp the meaning and agree. Thus, one of the functions of verbal irony is to foster a sense of community among those who share the understanding. According to Muecke (1970: 35), the true meaning is discerned from what the speaker says or from the context. Verbal irony and its context are inseparable. Attardo (2000: 823) contends that irony is inappropriate to the situation and relevant to the context. The words alone are not ironic; their meaning changes with the context. If the context is not grasped, only the literal meaning is perceived, and the audience is deceived. Hutcheon (1994: 15) notes that those deceived are excluded and embarrassed and may be called "victims"; however, deception and victimisation are not the purposes of irony. Muecke (1970: 35) explains that the ironist pretends not to be believed but to be understood. The irony is deceptive with the intention not to deceive but to enlighten. One of the main purposes of verbal irony is to express one's attitude (Garmendia 2018: 88). Speaking more simply would require less effort from the speaker and listener, but verbal irony conveys more information. Attardo (2000: 821) posits that the most appropriate elements are the most predictable, the least informative, and the least appropriate ones are the most informative. Verbal irony relays information germane to the situation and alludes to deeper layers, encompassing absurdity, critique, and humour.

One of the prevailing devices within the realm of irony is hyperbole, the tool used to criticise through exaggerating some features of the target (Muecke 1970: 57). This is used to emphasise positive features and then condemn them (Muecke 1970: 58–60). The ironist builds up the target only to knock it down.

A similar effect is achieved by understating. Colston (2017: 234) explains that the features are portrayed as lesser than actual reality. This is used to make some-

thing seem insignificant or feign ignorance (Muecke 1970: 61). Muecke (*ibid*) marks that common sense or innocence may help reveal hypocrisy and irrationality. Thus, the ironist simplifies the situation and reveals its worthiness of criticism. Clark and Gerrig (1984: 121–122) claim that pretence is one of the main features of irony and creates a community of people who understand verbal irony and victims who do not.

Irony by analogy is used to compare two situations to explain how the target is worthy of criticism (Muecke 1970: 63). By criticising the situation and then comparing its target, the criticism seamlessly extends to the target itself (*ibid*). This unexpected resemblance also creates a humorous effect. Hence, the irony is created by employing hyperbole, understatement, and analogy. The main functions of verbal irony are to convey one’s attitude, criticise, reveal absurdity, create a community, and express humour.

## 2.2 Cinematic adaptation as inter-semiotic translation

The intricate nature of verbal irony pinpoints the substantial challenge it poses to cinematic adapters who face the peculiar and demanding task of adaptation. Jakobson (1959: 233) calls cinematic adaptation inter-semiotic translation, a process involving the “interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems”. In accordance with Cintas and Remael (9), an audiovisual production relies on two codes: image and sound. The textual language of a book is transformed into visual and auditory elements, and some elements may be altered and resonate with the audience differently. Thus, verbal irony may undergo subtle shifts or complete transformations.

The act of adaptation requires changing the original. Abbott (2008: 114) explains the logistical impossibility of faithfully transferring every line into a film that only spans about two hours. A film is meant to be experienced in a theatre in an unbroken manner, imposing limitations on length and pacing (Abbott 2008: 114). Thus, the source text must be modified. Stam (2000: 59) posits that adaptation should prioritise faithfulness to the medium over rigid fidelity to the source material. The adapter is constrained by time and the necessity to keep a balance between faithfulness to the original and the cinematic medium.

Abbott (2008: 112) asserts that competent adapters are raiders because they do not copy but steal what they want and leave the rest. Verbal irony deemed unnecessary may be omitted, and some forms of irony might be simplified, avoiding excessive contemplation. McFarlane (2007: 15) observes that reading is an individual act of comprehension, interpretation and a personalised form of adaptation. Since verbal irony requires understanding context and interpreting the meaning beyond the literal, the adapter may decipher an ironic utterance and render it into film uniquely. Adaptation is the process of interpreting a literary work into a product that is faithful to the original and the cinematic medium. Consequently, due to various constraints and the adapter’s interpretation, verbal irony is susceptible to alterations during the process of adaptation.

### 2.3 Adaptation strategies

Rauma (2004: 62) distinguishes a taxonomy of seven adaptation strategies: dramatisation, abridgement, elaboration, reassignment, rephrase, transference and invention. Dramatisation entails transforming narration into dialogue and usually involves rephrasing (Rauma 2004: 62). In cases where the original is written in the first person, dramatisation can facilitate the conversion of the narrator's irony into lines of dialogue, fostering the characters to interact and express themselves. Abridgement omits words or sentences to condense the text, wherein certain parts of the original lines are transferred (Rauma 2004: 69–70). Since verbal irony relies on specific wording in a specific context, abridgement may aid in rendering the message more accurately; however, simplifying ironic expressions may affect their nuanced impact.

Elaboration entails expressing the message more verbosely (Rauma 2004: 72). The film's duration is limited and compels the adapter to discern the indispensable elements. However, Sarah Kozloff (2000: 52) claims that cinematic texts often include "verbal embroidery", suggesting that the adapter's personal inclinations may "embroider" verbal irony, potentially changing its meaning and effect.

Reassignment involves assigning a line to a different character (Rauma 2004: 74). Although Rauma (*ibid*) speculates that the reassigned line should not be heavily characterisational, this may not be conducive to verbal irony, as it expresses attitudes and reveals character traits.

Rephrasing pertains to conveying the same idea in different words (Rauma 2004: 79). Given that film dialogue imitates real speech, rephrasing may be used to make the text more colloquial (Rauma 2004: 80). This may be used to simplify verbal irony and make it easier to understand. Still, it may also result in an alteration or loss of some ironic meaning.

Transference takes the exact wording from the novel and integrates it into the film, sometimes relocating it to a different context (Rauma 2004: 83). For verbal irony, transference is a prudent choice, enabling faithful and accurate transmission of the original's meaning. However, this strategy may not work with particularly complex verbal irony.

The invention entails the creation of new lines (Rauma 2004: 86). By employing the invention, the adapter can imbue the film with a more distinctive vision, fostering a more personalised adaptation. This approach permits the adapter to introduce their own instances of verbal irony should they feel they align better with their version of the story.

These strategies offer diverse avenues of rendering verbal irony in unique ways within the cinematic context. In some cases, a blend of multiple strategies may be employed at the same time to capture the subtleties of verbal irony, meeting the demands of adaptation.

## 2.4 Constraints of subtitling as an audiovisual translation mode

Cintas and Remael (2014) provide a comprehensive definition of subtitling as a translation practice that presents a written text positioned at the bottom of the screen. These subtitles convey the original dialogue and the discursive elements of the image, along with the auditory information contained on the soundtrack. It is widely recognised within scholarly discourse that translation invariably entails deviations from the source text. This process necessitates a willingness to embrace certain variations to account for contextual nuances. The translation navigates different values, cultural, linguistic, and communal landscapes and needs to risk nicety. While alterations are inevitable, Adamou and Knox (2011: 21) note that subtitles appear alongside the soundtrack, heightening the audience's awareness of translation incongruities. This prompts subtitlers to strive for a faithful rendition of the dialogue. The translator interprets the dialogue of the adaptation, which is an interpretation of the literary dialogue and may lead to significant changes. Verbal irony has multiple meanings, and this double interpretation may alter them.

The constraints inherent to subtitling can be divided into spatial and temporal (Cintas and Remael 2014: 81–99). Spatial limitations refer to the number of lines and characters within a subtitle (Cintas and Remael 2014: 81–85). Aiming to ensure an unobstructed view of the visual content, the number of lines is usually limited to two, and the number of characters is restricted with varying practices (Cintas and Remael 2014: 82–84). More characters on the screen cover more of the action, giving the audience more to read and less time to watch (Cintas and Remael 2014: 85).

The subtitler should condense the text as much as possible without significantly altering the meaning. Since verbal irony may be quite elaborate and have multiple meanings, condensation may lead to losing some of those meanings. Temporal constraints pertain to the timing and synchronisation of the subtitles and further shape subtitling strategies (Cintas and Remael 2014: 88). As James (2007: 151) observed, subtitling is affected by the length of camera shots. If the camera shots are long and the speakers rarely change, the subtitles can be longer and stay on the screen for an extended time (James 2001: 151–152). Shorter camera shots, brisk dialogue exchanges, and frequent shifts of speakers require more condensed subtitles, which stay on the screen for briefer intervals (James 2001: 152). This further limits the translator. The subtitler must also maintain the way the meaning is conveyed. Cintas and Remael (2014: 88–89) suggest that the golden rule is to keep temporal synchrony with the utterance so that the subtitles appear as talking starts and disappears as it stops. This feels more natural to the audience and makes it easier to follow the story. Cintas and Remael (2014: 91) establish another golden rule: a subtitle should not remain over a cut. This is based on studies on eye movement, which show that a remaining subtitle may be interpreted as new and re-read (*ibid*). This distracts the viewer from the image and wastes their time. Due to these restrictions, verbal irony may be altered to create easily readable and understandable subtitles.

Thus, the subtitler is limited by the number of lines and characters and time restrictions, which may lead to altered verbal irony.

## 2.5 Subtitling strategies

Cintas and Remael (2014: 145) mark that subtitles frequently condense spoken text. Reduction facilitates timely comprehension and directs the viewer's attention to on-screen action (Cintas and Remael 2014: 146). The subtitler must know how to employ text reduction while preserving inherent meaning. This entails two types of text reduction: total and partial (*ibid.*). The former is achieved by deleting or omitting lexical items, whereas the latter focuses on condensation and a more succinct rendering of the source text (*ibid.*). In exercising such reductions, the subtitler should always consider retaining pivotal information while leaving out less critical elements.

When employing condensation and reformulation, the subtitler spans a spectrum of strategies. Some are employed on the lexical plane, such as simplifying verbal periphrases through the substitution with shorter verb forms, generalising enumerations, using shorter near-synonyms or equivalent expressions, using simple rather than compound tenses, altering word classes, and using short forms and contractions (Cintas and Remael 2014: 151–153). Other strategies manifest at syntactic level changing the mode of a sentence, simplifying indicators of modality, turning direct speech into indirect speech, changing the subject of a sentence or phrase, manipulating theme and rheme, turning long and/or compound sentences into simple sentences, turning active sentences into passive ones or vice versa, using pronouns and other deictics to replace nouns or noun phrases, and merging multiple phrases/sentences into one (Cintas and Remael 2014: 154–161). Typically, a combination of these strategies is employed to achieve an optimal rendering of the source text (Cintas and Remael 2014: 150). Linde and Kay (2014: 26) note that most subtitles represent spoken dialogue and need to have an “oral flavour”. Herein, the translator must create a translation that relays both what is implied and how it is said and effectively applies strategies to achieve a faithful, understandable, and readable rendering. Subtitlers must constantly adapt and choose the best approach to create a text that would adhere to the limitations and faithfully convey the meaning. In the context of these considerations, verbal irony emerges as a complex hurdle, as changes for subtitling imperatives might inadvertently compromise the richness of this linguistic construct.

### 3 From Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* to Miloš Forman's cinematic adaptation of the Lithuanian subtitles

According to Knapp (2007: 44), Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* criticises a society that requires conformity to attain affluence. The narrative follows Randle Patrick McMurphy, a criminal who pleads insanity and gets hospitalised in a mental institution, and a Native American patient, Bromden, who serves as the narrator. McMurphy observes the oppressive hospital system, prompting a confrontation with the authoritarian Nurse Ratched and initiates the patients to rebel. His primary weapon is language: jokes, games, obscenity, make-believe, and verbal disrespect (Knapp 2007: 44). McMurphy's arsenal includes verbal irony, and he employs it more often than anyone else. He uses it as an inside joke with



the patients and creates a community. Sullivan (2007: 25) points out how ridicule is a weapon against oppression and is used to overpower Ms Ratched “in part gaily, jokingly, in part grimly”. Notably, the humour of verbal irony stands in stark contrast to the cold demeanour of the nurse, providing levity to a heavy subject matter while, at the same time, heightening its chilling undertones.

Skvorecký (2000: 342) observes that Miloš Forman’s cinematic adaptation significantly changes the narrative to align with the director’s vision. There are various changes to the narrative, characters, and dialogue. Hames (2018: 275) maintains that the film works on multiple interpretive levels, as McMurphy dies as a victim of a system whose agents are not evil but are tools of power they do not comprehend. Esteemed nursing professionals Boschini and Keltner (2009: 76–78) observe that the head nurse in the film is not irredeemable. Keltner goes so far as to suggest that, despite the film being meant to be antipsychiatry, it “accurately portrays a flawed system inhabited by complicated individuals”. This contrasts with the novel, where MsRatched is characterised primarily as a cold, controlling and cruel individual.

These changes affect how verbal irony is rendered and preserved in the film during adaptation and subtitling. The following examples explore how verbal irony is maintained or changed during adaptation and subtitling. The instances sourced from the novel are marked as the source text (ST), while those from the cinematic adaptation are designated as target text 1 (TT1), and the subtitles are categorised as target text 2 (TT2). Table 1 showcases instances of verbal irony affected by abridgement.

**Table 1.** *Verbal irony affected by line abridgement*

No.	ST	TT1	TT2
1.	Here’s the Chief. The soopah Chief, fellas. Ol’ Chief Broom. Here you go, Chief Broom.	Chief.	Vade. (Chief.)
2.	Now they tell me a psychopath’s a guy fights too much and fucks too much, but they ain’t wholly right, do you think? I mean, whoever heard tell of a man getting too much poozle?	Well, as near as I can figure out, it’s cause I... fight and fuck too much.	Na, spèčiau todèl, kad... per daug mušuos ir krušuosi. (Well, I’d guess because ...I fight and fuck too much.)

The first instance pertains to the initial exchange between an aide and the Native American patient Bromden in the novel and the film. The ST line features verbal irony created through hyperbole. Bromden has no power as a patient; thus, the

aide derisively addressing him as “Chief” is meant to mock and express humour. This choice of address, loaded with sarcasm, is further amplified by the adjective “soopah”, magnifying the notion of power – or rather powerlessness – attributed to Bromden. As the hyperbolic tone reaches the height of its intensity, the aide brings Bromden down by using the word “OI”, creating a patronising tone and a sense of familiarity, and adds a pun made with Bromden’s name. The aide’s dialogue effectively underscores their view of Bromden as feeble and pitiable.

In the cinematic adaptation, the aide’s tone shifts, addressing Bromden as “Chief” calmly and authoritatively. As Bromden is also powerless in the film, the use of the word is still ironic but considerably milder than its original incarnation. This alteration aligns with the adapter’s vision. The aides are portrayed in a less antagonistic light than their counterparts in the novel. Rather than being consistently abusive, the aides in the film are more restrained and rational and resort to violence in extreme circumstances. Thus, their verbal irony is less aggressive.

The subtitle is a direct translation of the adaptation’s dialogue TT1 and carries over the same ironic meaning. This example demonstrates how line abridgement may simplify the intricacies of verbal irony quite drastically. In this case, the translation does not further impact this linguistic device.

Shifting to the second example of the ST, McMurphy feigns ignorance, asserting his inability to grasp the concept of a psychopath and referencing an earlier explanation provided to him. He doubts the reasoning and conveys the explanation’s absurdity, which is enhanced by a rhetorical question. This interplay creates humour and demonstrates McMurphy’s dismissive attitude towards his diagnosis. The colloquial, vulgar language and contractions reveal McMurphy’s character while critiquing the specialists who diagnosed him – a case of presenting irony through simplicity.

TT1 differs from the ST in context and phrasing evidently. The conversation is not psychopathy but mental illness in general, and McMurphy explains why he thinks he is suspected of being mentally ill. While the abridged line retains elements of the ST, particularly the phrase “fight and fuck too much,” rephrasing and omissions alter its impact. The line in TT1 intensifies McMurphy’s feigned feeling of uncertainty but omits the doubt in the explanation, and the adaptation becomes less overtly ironic. McMurphy does not cite an explanation provided by a specialist but offers his interpretation of the reason, retaining the core message but with altered phrasing, changing its impact. The language of TT1 is not as overly colloquial and simplistic but still contains contractions and vulgarities, maintaining some of the feigned ignorance.

The first part of the sentence of TT2 is rephrased using a shorter near-synonym or equivalent expression, slightly tempering the sense of bewilderment. In TT1, McMurphy expresses how he is trying to figure out the reason, but the subtitle simplifies it to a guess. While irony remains present, its impact is diluted in TT2. Contractions are absent from the subtitles, imbuing the language with a less colloquial, more polished tone, although the use of vulgar language remains consistent. In these cases, verbal irony rendered from the ST to TT1 is simplified and loses much of its meaning. This carries over to the subtitles, which, in one ex-

ample, causes a further loss in irony but does not in the other. Table 2 contains examples of verbal irony rendered using rephrasing as the main adaptation strategy.

**Table 2.** *Verbal irony affected by line rephrasing*

No.	ST	TT1	TT2
1.	He gets his growth, he'll be pretty good-sized, won't he?	Goddamn, boy, you're about as big as a mountain!	Velniai griebtu, vaikine, tu aukštas kaip kalnas. (Goddamn, boy, you're big as a mountain.)
2.	Anointest my head with conductant. Do I get a crown of thorns?  “Get Wildroot Cream Oil, Cholly ...”  “Mage with thoothing-lan-o-lin.”	A little dab'll do ya. Ain't that right Mr Jackson?	Nedidelis brūkšteležimas nepakenks. Ar ne taip, pone Džeksonai?  (A little dab will do. Aren't I right Mr Jackson?)

In the first example, McMurphy employs ironic and humorous commentary on Bromden’s towering stature. This reveals McMurphy as someone who likes to joke around, and this facet of his character is illuminated by his consistent efforts to elicit laughter from his fellow patients.

TT1 presents a rephrased line, with the only ironic part being the word “boy”, which is inappropriate as Bromden is an adult. This form of address may be seen as reductive and potentially racist, as, historically, it has been used to belittle minority individuals (Nittle 2020). Subsequently, McMurphy uses the Native American greeting “Hau” along with performative gestures, making the hand-over-mouth war cry sounds (a stereotypical imitation). This rephrasing gives TT1 a racist undertone, reshaping the irony from light-hearted humour to derisive mockery of the Native American. While McMurphy does use racist remarks in the novel, these are directed against the African-American aides, never against his fellow patients.

Conversely, TT2 is a direct translation using the address “vaikine”, intended for teenagers and young adults. It retains the reductive undertone, but since the term does not have the racial history in Lithuania as it does in America, it is not perceived as overtly racist. The irony persists in TT2, although it is less severe compared to the English rendition.

In the second example, the doctors put graphite salve on McMurphy’s temples to prepare for electroshock therapy (EST) used as a punitive measure masqueraded as a therapeutic intervention. McMurphy cites Psalm 23, changing the word “oil” to “conductant”. In the Psalm, God is referred to as a shepherd who anoints a sheep’s head, which represents the believer, with oil to make its wounds heal faster, i.e., oil signifies divine care, healing wounds symbolically (Morgenstern 1946: 17). However, in this context, doctors use “conductant” to punish and con-

trol the patient under the guise of trying to cure them. McMurphy mentions the crown of thorns imposed on Jesus to mock his title “King of Jews” and inflict him pain (Encyclopædia Britannica 2019). Consequently, McMurphy reveals his understanding that doctors torture patients, exposing their sadistic pretence of treatment. Then McMurphy sings a commercial jingle from the 1950s to show he is not scared of the procedure and encourages Bromden, who is preparing for the same ordeal. In contrast to the depicted conductant, the referenced Wildroot Cream Oil, a hair tonic for men, renders the situation absurd.

In TT1, the religious references are replaced with an advertising slogan from the 1950s used for Brylcreem, a hair styling product for men (Farlex Dictionary of Idioms 2015). The insight into the doctors’ motives is not present in TT1, and McMurphy’s insight into the situation is diminished. He playfully addresses Mr Jackson, who dons hair products, creating a humorous effect, then sings the jingle for Wildroot Cream Oil, the words garbled by a mouthpiece. TT1 mocks and makes light of the situation, showing that McMurphy is not scared and encourages Bromden. The religious allusions are likely omitted due to their deemed inappropriateness for the adaptation.

TT2 rephrases the slogan, conveying McMurphy’s nonchalance towards the procedure more explicitly compared to TT1, but sacrifices the hair product reference and slogan-like quality. The second sentence is a shorter near-synonym or equivalent expression. McMurphy’s addressing Mr Jackson makes less sense in TT2 and is less humorous, as the connection with the first sentence is not as strong. The verbal irony in TT2 is more direct and less complex than in TT1.

Throughout these instances, rephrasing enables the expression of similar ideas in novel forms tailored to the adapter’s vision. Some of the irony is lost and not expressed through words, and some is conveyed through acting, which helps enhance the effect of the utterances. The process of subtitling further alters verbal irony resulting in the loss of certain nuances and effects present in the adaptation. Numerous cases of the verbal irony of the ST, some of which are presented in Table 3, are omitted from the adaptation.

**Table 3.** *Verbal irony affected by line omission*

No.	ST
1.	He told me that "psychopath" means I fight and fuh - pardon me, ladies - means I am he put it <i>overzealous</i> in my sexual relations. Doctor, is that real serious?
2.	Yeah? <...> You got a paper I can sign? <...>And why don't you add some other things while you're at it and get them out of the way – things like, oh, me being part of a plot to overthrow the government and, like how I think life on your ward is the sweetest goddamned life this side of Hawaii – you know, that sort of crap. <...> <i>Then</i> , after I sign, you bring me a blanket and a package of Red Cross cigarettes. Hooee, those Chinese Commies could have learned a few things from you, lady.

The first example presents another explanation of McMurphy’s understanding of psychopathy. He facetiously dismisses the seriousness of the diagnosis and ironically asks whether the doctor thinks that overzealousness in sexual relations is serious. This is explained in the film, as exemplified in the second entry of Table 1, rendering the repetition superfluous. Consequently, omission is used to avoid redundancy.

The second example appears after McMurphy is sent to EST for attacking an aide, and Ms Ratched asks him to admit his wrongdoing to avoid the treatment. McMurphy asks for a paper to sign, seemingly agreeing to the deal. Still, the following line reveals it as verbal irony, as he employs analogy to compare Ms Ratched’s actions to those of the Chinese communist government. This interaction is not rendered in the adaptation, and Ms Ratched does not make the offer likely because her depiction in the film is different.

The cinematic adaptation inevitably necessitates the omission of several instances of verbal irony, as they are not suitable for the filmic medium or the narrative of the adaptation. However, many new ironic expressions have been invented to compensate for the loss. A collection of these newly conceived instances is provided in Table 4.

**Table 4.** *Invented lines containing verbal irony*

No.	TT1	TT2
1.	Chewing gum in class?	Kramtau gumą klasėje. (I chew gum in the class.)
2.	Five fights, huh? Rocky Marciano’s got 40 and he’s a millionaire.	Penkios kovos? Rokis Marčiano kovėsi 40 kartų, ir dabar jis milijonierius. (Five fights? Rocky Marciano fought 40 times and now he’s a millionaire.)
3.	No, I thought you were the champ.	Ne, man atrodė, kad tai tu čempionas. (No, I thought you were the champion.)

The first example appears when the doctor reads McMurphy’s patient file, enumerating his behaviours, such as hostility, unauthorised talking, resentment towards work, and indolence. McMurphy employs verbal irony by analogy and offers the addition of “chewing gum in class”. This connects the behaviour in the patient file and that of misbehaving schoolchildren. Thus, the patient file sounds absurd, and McMurphy demonstrates that he does not take it seriously.

TT2 is a direct translation, but the mode of the sentence is changed from a question to a declarative statement. Since the voice and rising intonation of the actor are heard with the subtitles and the audience can perceive the question, the

subtitle seems at odds with the film. The subtitled irony becomes subdued and incongruent with the film's delivery by transforming the rhetorical question into a straightforward statement.

The second example introduces McMurphy and his attitude towards his situation. This case is similar to the first example from Table 3. McMurphy is talking to the doctor of the mental institution. He uses irony by analogy to compare his situation to a professional boxer and notes that they are treated differently for the same actions. By feigning ignorance, McMurphy reveals the hypocrisy of the situation. Although the irony in the film is more straightforward, it effectively reveals McMurphy's character and stance, amplified by the actor's vocal inflexions and performance.

The exclamation "huh" expressing feigned surprise is omitted from TT2. It is heard with the subtitle, and the character speaks condescendingly so that the audience may grasp the implication. The second sentence of the line is rephrased to sound more natural in Lithuanian, which affects the clarity of the irony. TT1 contrasts "five fights" and "40" using the number-noun structure in both sentences (the noun is implied in the second one). The first sentence of TT2 maintains this structure, but the second one changes it to a verb-number by changing the word class of the noun "kovos" to the verb "kovėsi". While the contrast is still there, it is slightly less obvious, and the verbal irony of TT2 is less apparent.

The third example is after McMurphy's comments on how the patients are irrationally scared of Ms Ratched and think she is "some kind of a champ or something". The ironic observation in the example is spoken condescendingly, emphasising the word "you". This inflexion serves to portray McMurphy as a braggart in the eyes of the patients, highlighting their perception of his demeanour.

In TT2, the subtitler uses the phrase "tai tu", emphasising the irony more perceptibly and facilitating understanding for those not well-versed in English. While subtitling requires succinctness, additions may convey the message more accurately and ensure clarity for the audience.

The verbal irony in the film is more concise and less elaborate, but its impact is amplified through the nuances of acting. Ironic expressions have fewer meanings and are more straightforward in both the adaptation and the subtitles.

#### 4 Conclusions

Verbal irony is a highly elaborate linguistic tool which serves as a prominent narrative device in Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and its cinematic counterpart directed by Miloš Forman. This irony is instrumental in unveiling characters' attitudes, offering critique, and injecting humour and absurdity into the narrative. In adapting the novel to the screen, a process of inter-semiotic translation occurs, where the film's auditory and visual elements blend to bring new dimensions to verbal irony. Verbal irony within the film is conveyed through dialogue, the nuances of acting, and intonation, enhancing its effect.

Subtitling, a vital facet of the cinematic experience, faces constraints imposed by its synchronising with spoken dialogue. Since the subtitles are displayed at the

same time as the dialogue is heard, some parts of verbal irony, such as exclamations, are left unrendered, as the audience often relies on intonation for comprehension.

Since verbal irony in the novel is usually quite elaborate, its portrayal in the cinematic adaptation frequently involves abridgement and rephrasing. This process inevitably leads to the omission of verbal irony, and there are also novel expressions to compensate for these losses.

Subtitling further simplifies verbal irony by employing such strategies as using a near-synonym expression and omission. Additionally, changes in word class can impact the clarity of the conveyed irony. Should the translator not maintain the authenticity of the characters’ speech, the subtitled verbal irony is at risk of losing its intended impact.

This journey of verbal irony from Kesey’s text to Forman’s film, and its Lithuanian subtitles is marked by numerous transformations. Each medium contributes to the irony, ultimately shaping the audience’s experience in subtle and significant ways.

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