Abstract

Akan (Twi) version

Asuadeɛ yi wɔ mmotaeɛ atitire mmiɛnsa: sɛ ɛbɛyiyi Akan kasakuo ahoroɔ a ɛtumi ma ahwɛfoɔ sere afiri sini mmienu bi mu; sɛ ɛbɛhwɛ deɛ ɛma saa kasakuo ahoroɔ yi yɛ sere; na afei nso ahwɛ sɛ mpo atwerɛdeɛ ahoroɔ a wɔde asi kasa yi ananmu no tumi ma wɔn a wɔnte Akan kasa no sere anaa? Sini mmienu a asuadeɛ yi de di saa nnwuma a yɛabobɔ soɔ no ne *I Told You So* (1970) ne *Obroni Hiani* (2014).

Adesua yi susu sɛ, sini mmienu no mu kasakuo ahoroɔ a ɛtumi ma ahwɛfoɔ sere no bi ne badwam kasa a ɛfa Akan akyiwadeɛ ahoroɔ ho (open expression of Akan taboos), afɛwdie (teasing/ridiculing), anihanehane (hyperbole), kasakoa ne mmɛ a yɛaka adane no (stylistic modifications of idioms and proverbs), ɛne deɛ ɛkeka ho.

Asuadeɛ yi bɔ mmɔden sɛ ɛde susudeɛ ahoroɔ (superiority, relief, incongruity, relevance theories of humour) bɛkyerɛkyerɛ deɛ nti a kasakuo ahoroɔ no tumi ma ahwɛfoɔ sere. Yɛhunuu sɛ, ɛtɔ da a, kasa bi tumi ma ahwɛfoɔ ne/anaa sini no mu nnipa no bi nya atenka bi sɛ gyama wɔnim biribi yɔ sene nipa titire bi a ɔwɔ sini no mu. Sɛ ɛkɔba no saa a, deɛ wɔsusu sɛ ɔnnim saa biribi no yɔ no ho tumi yɛ wɔn sere. Ɛtɔ da nso a, ɛsane sɛ Akan amammerɛ mma ho kwan sɛ amanfoɔ bɛkasa afa akyiwadeɛ bi ho nti, sɛ obi bu mmra yi so kasa fa ho a, ɛtumi ma ahwɛfoɔ sere. Afei, sɛ sini mmienu no mu nipa bi yɛ biribi anaa ɔka biribi a ɛne nnipa dasani tebea ahoroɔ bi bɔ abira a, ɛtumi ma ahwɛfoɔ sere.

Ne korakora no, asuadeɛ yi da no adi sɛ ɛnnyɛ atwerɛdeɛ ahoroɔ a wɔde asi sini mmienu no mu kasa ananmu no nyinaa na ɛtumi ma ahwɛfoɔ a wɔnte Akan kasa no sere. Ebinom tumi, na ebi nso ntumi. Yɛhunuu sɛ, mpɛn pii no, ɛsane sɛ wɔn a wɔnnyɛ Akanfoɔ (anaa wɔnte Akan kasa no) nni nimdeɛ fa Akan amammerɛ nhyehyɛeɛ bi ho, na ɔnni nneɛma titire bi wɔ wɔn man anaa amammerɛ mu nti no, ɛyɛ den sɛ kasakuo atwerɛdeɛ nsiananmu no bɛtumi ama wɔn asere.

English version

The paramount aim of this study is threefold: to tease out a number of communicative phenomena in two Akan dramatic discourse which carry humour enjoyed by viewers; to provide theoretical accounts of what make these communicative situations funny; and to examine the subtitles provided for the discourses to determine whether they are likely to evoke the same or similar humorous effects in the target-language viewers. The study does these with data drawn from the Akan movies *I Told You So* (1970) and *Obroni Hiani* (2014).

It is argued that conversational humour employed in the discourse of, at least, the two Akan movies come in the form of disparaging remarks/putdowns, open expression of Akan taboos, teases/ridicules, hyperbole, stylistic modifications of idioms and proverbs, amongst others.

This study employs the traditional tripartite theories of humour (superiority, relief and incongruity) as well as Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory to account for the humour carried by the dialogue excerpts drawn from the two movies for this study. It is established that the humour carried by some of the excerpts arises out of viewers' and/or certain characters' conception of some eminency over another character (especially when the latter displays incompetence at a task), viewers' sudden release of accumulated nervous energy meant to repress the expression of Akan taboos (when a character in the movie openly talks about a tabooed activity or substance), and viewers' reaction to a character's illogical, unexpected behaviour or utterance.

Lastly, the study employs Gutt's (1998, 2000) notion of interpretive resemblance to examine the subtitles provided for the dialogue excerpts drawn for the study, determining the extent to which they succeed at eliciting the same or similar humorous responses from the target-language viewers as intended for the source-language viewers with the original dialogues. It is argued that resemblance of this kind between the original dialogues and the corresponding subtitles is not always possible. The subtitles of the excerpts whose humour is built around unique Akan cultural assumptions and referents tend not to fully resemble its original dialogue in humorous respects.

Dedication

To the Awiba family

Acknowledgements

I am most certain I would not have been anywhere near the pursuit of a graduate programme if not for the grace of the Most High; I am forever grateful, Father!

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Annjo Klungervik Greenall (PhD) and Kaja Borthen (PhD) for their interest in my research, as well as their excellent supervision that contributed immensely to the shaping of this thesis. With every reading of my drafts came very useful comments and practical advice from the both of you, which helped in improving not only the thesis but my academic writing skills as well. I was lucky to have had you co-supervise my thesis. Thank you.

My appreciation also goes out to all my (other) lecturers at the Department of Language and Literature of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), whose lectures and seminars, in one way or the other, proved useful in the writing of this thesis.

Thank you, Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo (Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana) for (unknowingly) inspiring me greatly to want to study here at NTNU from as far back as level 200 at the University of Ghana. I owe you a great debt of gratitude.

I am grateful to the Norwegian University of Science and Technology for offering me admission and to the Norwegian government for awarding me a full scholarship under the Quota Scheme which made my study from 2014 to 2016 possible.

I appreciate the unending support of family and friends throughout the period of writing this thesis. To my parents, Mr. Simon Awiba and Mrs. Mary Abasom, thank you for your prayers and endless love; my siblings: Emmanuel, Anthony, Cecilia, Charles, Francis, and Dora, I love you all. Thank you. Paul Opoku-Mensah and Collins Boafo, you are both more than brothers to me. I appreciate the unceasing support from you both over the years.

I am particularly grateful to Madam Scorlastica Kwakye (Minerals Commission, Ghana). In you, I found a great friend. Thank you for your immense contribution to the writing of this thesis.

Finally, I express my heartfelt gratitude to my girlfriend, Laurita Kodua. I could not have done it without your love and support. Thank you!

Meda mo nyinaa ase! (I thank you all!)

Table of Contents

List of images

Abbreviations

Glosses

SG	singular
PL	plural
SUBJ	subject
OBJ	object
NEUT	neutral
POSS	possessive
DET	determiner
CONJ	conjunction
REL	relative pronoun
REFL	reflexive
COMPL	completive
NEG	negation
PERF	perfect
FUT	future
PROG	progressive
INDEF	indefinite
RED	reduplication

Others

ST	source text
TT	target text
AVT	audiovisual translation
VHS	video home system
DVD	digital versatile/video disk
MGI	multiple graded interpretation
SCI	single covert interpretation
RP	respondent
CONT	continuation
LIT	literally/literal meaning

1 Introduction

1.0 Background to the study

Humour is an essential part of everyday human communication; an integral part of every human society. On a daily basis, we read and enjoy witticisms in various publications, laugh at seeming illogical and absurd situations, and engage in playful teasing and banter amongst ourselves. Being this fundamental in human interactions, Dynel (2009a, p. 1284) notes that the concept of humour has, for centuries, received scholarly attention from different fields of study, ranging from anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, to linguistics. She further claims that whereas researchers working in the first four fields (stated above) may regard humour as one (albeit multifarious) phenomenon, linguists analysing the semantic, cognitive, sociolinguistic, or pragmatic mechanisms of humour tend to narrow down the scope of their study to its specific manifestations. For instance, Dynel contends that owing to the methodological feasibility of the study of (canned) jokes, many contemporary linguists studying humour tend to narrow down the scope of their studies to this form, with only a few focusing on spontaneous or pre-constructed interactional humour, different from the former (ibid: 1285). The current study will focus on the latter.

Translation, in general, is a challenging task. The task of translating requires the translator to make inferences regarding the intended interpretation of an original script or dialogue, acquaint him or herself with the cultural environment of the source-language communicator and the target-language addressee, and transfer the intended interpretation of the original to the target-language recipient with a different language, while factoring in the cultural values and conventions available to the target recipient. This rather extensive task proves even more challenging when it involves a specific kind of translation: subtitling. This is because, in the case of subtitling, the already arduous task of translating is further compounded by the imposition of several technical constraints on the subtitler's work (see section 2.5.1).

On top of translation in and of itself being a challenging task, and subtitling even more so; humour poses even greater difficulty in its translation from one language to another. When trying to translate verbal humour across language boundaries, certain culturally-specific elements and

language-specific devices which are often typical of the source culture tend to make the translator's work difficult to the point that certain elements ultimately end up not being translated at all. The omissions of these cultural elements and/or language devices have the potential of causing losses to the semantic and pragmatic interpretations of the original, as well as any humorous effect the original was intended to carry. This, perhaps, explains why telling a joke or trying to be funny in a language other than one's own, or to a group with whom one does not share the same cultural assumptions mostly end up unsuccessful. Chiaro (2010, pp. 20-21) stresses the difficulty of the translation of humour when she compares it to the translation of poetry and song. She argues that, even though the translation of poetry and song are constrained by such features as rhyme, rhythm, genre-bound rules and conventions, humour wins when it comes to translational complexities. For this and other practical, as well as theoretical problems that humour translation raises, Chiaro notes that with the exception of few authors such as Attardo (2002); Delabastita (2002); Vandaele (2002a); Chiaro (2004, 2005, 2006); Zabalbeascoa (2005), the study of the translation of humour seem to have been overlooked (ibid: 90).

Following from the dearth of studies focusing on spontaneous or pre-constructed interactional humour and humour translation as discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the present study aims, amongst other things, to contribute to the filling of this lacuna in humour research. It does this with data drawn from characters' verbal interactions in two Ghanaian movies produced in the Akan language.

Bodomo, Andersen & Dzahene-Quarshie (2009); Ansah (2014); and Lewis, Simons and Fenning (2015) describe Ghana's language situation as a highly multilingual one with about seventy-nine indigenous languages spoken amongst various ethnic groups. These indigenous languages and English, the sole official language of the country, are used in various domains including content production in the country's audiovisual industry. The status of English language as the official language of the country has made it imperative for most television programmes produced in the various indigenous languages to be translated into it (English) in order to reach a wider audience both home and abroad. Thus, in a country like Ghana where movie producers are known to incorporate funny elements, both verbal and non-verbal, in their productions, coupled with a seeming dominance of the subtitling industry by amateurs, there appears to be a need for

research attention to be directed toward the concept of verbal humour and its translation. To this effect, the present study takes a look at humour in characters' verbal interactions in two Akan movies and their English subtitles.

1.1 The Akan language

The study will make use of data sourced from two Ghanaian movies produced in Akan, one of the many indigenous languages of Ghana. According to Osam (2004, p. 3), Akan has been made one of the many languages which form the Kwa sub-group[1] of the higher Niger-Congo language phylum[2]. It is mainly spoken by the Akan ethnic group of Ghana in West Africa. Speakers of the language in Ghana are found in the following regions: Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Eastern, Central, Western and parts of the Volta region.

The 2010 Population and Housing Census by the Ghana Statistical Service pegged the percentage of native Akan speakers alone at 47.5% of the country's overall population. Aside this, a sizeable number of Akan non-natives use the language as their second language (L2), making it the most spoken indigenous language in Ghana.

The Akan language is made up of several mutually intelligible dialects such as Akuapem, Asante, Fante, Wasa, Agona, Akyem, Brong, Kwahu, and Gomoa. The Brong dialect, according to Osam (2004, p. 2) is also spoken by a percentage of the population of the eastern parts of Côte d'Ivoire, a neighbouring country (where the dialect is called Abron). Osam further notes that the dialects of Akan are grouped into two broad categories: Fante and Twi (made up of all the non-Fante dialects). He identifies Gomoa, Ekumfi, Nkusukum, Iguae, Breman and Agona as amongst the sub-dialects that make up the Fante dialect.

In Ghana, Akan is used in several domains. The language is used as the medium of instruction in lower primary schools in the locations where it is the L1. It is also taught as a school subject in these locations, from lower primary level, through junior high and senior high school levels, and

[1] A family of languages spoken in the south-eastern part of Côte d'Ivoire, southern Ghana and central Togo.
[2] The largest language family in Africa in terms of geographic area, number of speakers, and number of distinct language.

even at the university level. Akan is also used in churches, on radio and television programmes, for commerce, in movie dialogues, etc.

The researcher of the present study was born and grew up in Kumasi, the capital city of the Ashanti Region of Ghana where Akan is spoken as L1 and where most of the Akan movies are produced. He possesses a native command of the Akan language and uses this linguistic knowledge for the transcription and analysis of data gathered.

1.2 Video movie productions in Ghana

Video movie productions began in Ghana in the late 1980s with the tremendous success of William Akuffo's *Zinabu (1987),* a full-length feature movie shot with a VHS home video camera (Garritano, 2013, p. 2). Prior to the advent of the video technology in Ghana, the Gold Coast Film Unit (GCFU), established in 1948, spearheaded the country's movie industry with a number of movies shot on the celluloid film technology (ibid). According to Haynes (2007, p. 1), as a result of a general economic downturn in Ghana during the 1980s, celluloid film technology which was employed by the Gold Coast Film Unit (GCFU) and later, the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC) had become impossibly expensive. Thus, the success of William Akuffo's *Zinabu* on the relatively inexpensive video technology sparked what became known in the Ghanaian video industry as "the video boom" (Garritano, 2013, p. 2). According to Adjei (2014, p. 61), whereas the GFIC was government-sponsored and, therefore, had well-defined missions and visions to craft authentic Ghanaian movie culture, the private video movie producers who sprang up in the late 1980s were driven more by commercial instincts.

Ghana's humour industry has been vibrant since the establishment of the GCFU with the production of comedies and dramas interspersed with humorous elements such as *Progress in Kojokrom* (1953), *Mr. Mensah Builds a House* (1956) and *I Told You So* (1970). The Ghanaian humour industry has developed over the years to include stand-up comedy, theatre, skits, and even humorous newscasting[3]. The past decade has particularly seen a surge in the number of media production houses in the Kumasi Metropolis, the capital city of the Ashanti region of

[3] Popular amongst Akan radio newscasters. The incorporation of funny elements in newsreading.

Ghana, which mainly produce humorous movies using the Akan language. These movies are very popular and enjoyed by Ghanaians both home and abroad. These Akan movies are often translated by means of subtitling into the English language in order to reach a wider audience, both home and abroad.

However, Adjei (2014, p. 64) asserts that the introduction of subtitles in Akan movies has done little for the benefit of non-Akan viewers due to the bad English grammar, malapropism, and transliterations dominant in these translations. Adjei further argues that even the subtitles sometimes inadvertently function as a source of humour to viewers as they struggle to come to terms with the bad English used in them (ibid).

Within ten years of the first local video production in 1987, Garritano (2013, p, 2) notes that as many as four movies in English were being released in Ghana each month. This number increased to six movies per week by 2009, one in English and five in the Akan language. Movies in Akan have remained far more popular than those in English amongst both Ghanaian locals and Ghanaians in the diaspora. With Akan constituting the most-spoken indigenous language, Adjei (2014, p. 64) recounts that movies produced in this language target a massive percentage of the population, reaching out to illiterate and semi-illiterate Ghanaians who identify themselves better within any narrative context that employs an indigenous language. Finding themselves within environments or cultures which primarily use English and other foreign languages, patronage from both literate Ghanaian locals and Ghanaians in the diaspora tend to be motivated by their yearning desire to experience their root culture in which the use of indigenous languages – as depicted in the Akan movies – is the order of the day.

Despite the immense criticisms it has received over the years, the Akan movie industry has remained vibrant for more than a decade, attracting more actors, producers and other stakeholders. Without a doubt, the Akan movie industry has come to stay and scholarly attention towards it might help increase the quality of the movies' subtitles. It is for this reason that the present study chooses to look at subtitled Akan movies.

1.3 Motivation for the study

Studies on the concept of humour appear dauntingly complex. A great amount of anthropological, psychological, philosophical, sociological and linguistic research has been carried out which aim at shedding light on different aspects of this rather complex phenomenon. In the field of linguistics, for instance, a number of studies have been carried out which aim at explaining specific semantic, pragmatic and cognitive mechanisms underlying the generation and perception of humour (e.g. Attardo, 2001; Dynel, 2009b; Giora, 1988; Raskin, 1979, 2012; Veale, T., Feyaerts, K., & Brône, G., 2006). Given the fundamental nature of humour in human interactions, it is important that more scholarly attention is geared toward different features of the phenomenon, as well as its unique and varying manifestation forms in different cultures and languages of the world.

Akan, as pointed out in section 1.1, constitutes the most spoken indigenous language in Ghana. As such, the language has and continues to benefit from extensive linguistic research from different perspectives. That said, there seems not to be any study on humour in the Akan ethnolinguistic context. The present study, therefore, contributes to the field of humour research by exploring its manifestations in Akan dramatic discourse. Since this thesis would potentially be one of the pioneering works on humour in the Akan language, it explores the phenomenon from different angles, making use of different theories and concepts. It explores the humour forms prevalent in Akan movies, how they are generated, their subtitles, as well as how non-Akan viewers would potentially perceive the original dialogues' intended humour in these subtitles. By looking at humour from these angles, it is hoped that the present study serves as a good foundation upon which future Akan humour studies would be based. It is also hoped that this thesis will have pedagogical importance, especially in the field of pragmatics and translation studies, for teachers and students alike.

1.4 Research aims and questions

The main aims of this study are: a) to tease out a number of communicative phenomena in Akan dramatic discourse which carry humour appreciated by viewers; b) to provide insight into why

certain utterances that make up these discourses are funny; c) to take a look at the subtitles of these humorous discourses, examining whether it seems likely or not that they lead to the generation of the same or similar humorous effects for the target-language viewers. The study seeks to achieve this set of aims based on data culled from two Akan movies: *I Told You So* (1970) and *Obroni Hiani* (2014). In order to achieve the set aims, the following research questions have been formulated to serve as a guide for the study:

1. What are the varieties of humour forms employed in the discourse of the two Akan movies selected for the present study?
2. What accounts for the humour in the dialogue excerpts drawn for the study?
3. To what extent do the subtitles provided for these excerpts resemble the original dialogues in terms of providing the target-language viewers with the same or similar amounts of humorous effects without causing them unnecessary processing effort?

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Chapter two of this thesis discusses the theoretical frameworks on which the study is based and also draws into its discussion other essential issues such as those relating to the Ghanaian audiovisual translation landscape and humour translation. Whilst discussing these theoretical issues, the chapter concurrently draws in a number of related literature and examples, reviewing them to provide context for the study. Chapter three discusses the research methodology used for the study, shedding light on the type and source of data as well as the method of analysis adopted. The chapter closes with an outline of some limitations to the study.

Chapter four is dedicated to the analysis and discussion of data. The chapter presents and analyses a number of dialogue excerpts from the selected Akan movies, paying particular attention to their humorous content. Specifically, the chapter attempts to establish potential reasons why certain utterances in the discourse are likely to generate humorous responses in viewers as well as whether or not the subtitles provided for these utterances are likely to succeed at evoking the same or similar humorous effects in the target-language viewers. This chapter

closes with a brief summary, an outline of the study's main findings and a discussion of certain observations noted in the course of analysis.

The concluding chapter, chapter five, sums up the entire thesis from a bird's-eye viewpoint and makes suggestions for further studies in humour research.

2 Theoretical framework

2.0 Introduction

The present chapter is divided into three parts. The initial part explores the concept of humour, establishing its specific form that this study is interested in. This part also discusses audiovisual translation as a special form of translation, with a focus on subtitling. The second part will be dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, namely the incongruity, superiority and relief theories of humour discussed in Attardo (1994) and Krikmann (2006) and Sperber & Wilson's relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995; Wilson and Sperber 2004). The concluding part deals with the translation of verbal humour against Gutt's (1998, 2000) notion of interpretive resemblance.

2.1 What is humour?

Humour is a pervasive part of human communication. There exists a surfeit of research on the concept and yet, many lack a simple or clear definition of it. According to Attardo (1994, p. 3), there have been several discussions about the definition of humour and its internal subdivisions. Despite these discussions, Attardo recounts the seeming impossibility by scholars to even agree on the divisions of the category of humour (e.g. humour vs. comic vs. ridiculous), let alone find a pretheoretical definition of the concept of humour in the most general sense (ibid.). This has led to several attempts by scholars to advance the claim that humour is undefinable (Escarpit, 1960, p. 5-7, cited in Attardo, 1994, p. 3). Indeed, several variables come to play in determining how humour is produced and perceived: context, cause, culture, etc. For this reason, Vandaele (2002a, p. 155) argues that "the meaning of humour is not necessarily reducible to just a specific state of positive arousal but may be multiplied by both its causes and specific further effects". The definitional problem of humour is further compounded by the fact that humour, or what people find funny, changes over the course of history so that what is funny to the present generation may not have been (equally) funny to past generations and may be unfunny to future generations (Ross, 2005, p. 53-54). Even within the same generation, family or group, the perception of humour tends to be highly individualistic. Nonetheless, a working definition of the concept is important for the present study.

Attardo (1994, p. 4) posits that linguists, as well as psychologists and anthropologists, consider humour as a general, all-encompassing category covering all events or objects that elicit or evoke laughter, amuses or are perceived to be funny. It is an in-group phenomenon, such that humour, or whatever is perceived funny is defined as such by a specific social group, and may be perceived differently by other groups.

Broadly, a distinction is made between two types of humour: non-verbal and verbal humour. Alexander (1997), Chiaro (1992) and Norrick (2004) draw a distinction between these types as the humour we derive from visuals such as images and gestures as against humour emerging from individuals' processes of verbal behaviour respectively (cited in Dynel, 2009a: 1284). This thesis, like much other linguistic research on the concept of humour, focuses on verbal humour. Particularly, the research will delve into what has come to be known as *conversational humour* (Coates 2007, Norrick and Chiaro 2009, Dynel 2013), with a focus on its manifestation in Akan dramatic discourse.

Conversational humour is a general term which encompasses a number of pragmatic types of humour which mostly occur in real-life, everyday human communicative interactions as well as in movies. Despite its reminiscence of the spontaneity and unintentionality of humour in everyday conversations, conversational humour tends to be a result of a conceptualised, scripted endeavour rendered by actors when it is applied in movies, television shows, etc. Conversational humour used in movies tend to be directed towards co-characters and/or towards viewers. Sometimes, the intended humour in a particular part of a dialogue in a movie is to be enjoyed by the viewers, as well as other characters in the movie. Other times, the intended humour is solely targeted at the viewers and not to be enjoyed by any co-character. Dynel (2009a: 1286) notes that "units of conversational humour range from single-word lexemes, phrasemes to whole sentences and even multi-turn exchanges interwoven into non-humorous discourse". Multi-turn exchanges in non-humorous discourse are prevalent in the data drawn for the present study.

Conversational humour is to be distinguished from the commonly considered prototypical form of verbal humour, canned jokes. Canned jokes are well-planned forms of verbal humour produced orally or contained in publications. Many studies have been carried out on canned

jokes and readers who are interested in such works may refer to (e.g. Giora 1991; J. M. Suls 1972; Ritchie 2004; Vaid, Hull, Heredia, Gerkens, & Martinez 2003). The present study focuses exclusively on conversational humour in Akan dramatic discourse and its translation.

2.2 Audiovisual Translation

The term, audiovisual translation, encompasses instances of both interlingual and intralingual translation. Interlingual AVT is found in subtitling, dubbing and voiceover. It involves the transfer of verbal components contained in audiovisual products such as movies, musicals, video games, theatrical plays, etc. Intralingual AVT, on the other hand, consists of subtitling aimed at language learners, the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Remael (2010, p. 12) contends that Audiovisual translation (AVT) is relatively a newcomer within the field of Translation Studies but has moved from the field's periphery to its centre over the past two decades, attracting tremendous interests amongst scholars of diverse academic backgrounds. According to her, the earliest form of AVT may have been the translation of intertitles in silent movies until far greater needs for translation emerged with the advent of 'talking movies' in the 1920s and the need for providing movies with translations for export. Remael further notes that the globalisation of AV distribution, expansion of the internet, the advent of DVD technology, the proliferation of portable devices such as mobile phones, tablets, iPods, and other such developments since the close of the 20th century has greatly impacted the Audio-visual landscape, leading to the use of several modalities in its transfer from one language to another (ibid.). Gambier (2004), for example, identifies up to thirteen modes of AVT. Three out of this number are regarded as the main AVT modes: dubbing, subtitling, and voiceover.

In Ghana, subtitling constitutes the most used means of translating audiovisual content. This is likely to be due to the cost-effectiveness of this modality as compared to its immediate alternative, dubbing, which Diaz-Cintas (2003, p. 196) claims to be ten to twenty times more expensive. In Ghana, dubbing is mainly used as a means of translating foreign movies which are imported and aired mostly by various local TV companies. Notable amongst these movies are the English-dubbed Latin American telenovelas (originally produced in Spanish) which have

become very popular in Ghana over the past couple of years. Voiceover constitutes the least used modality in Ghana amongst the three, although, during the colonial era, feature-length movies such as *The Boy Kumasenu* (1952) produced by the Gold Coast Film Unit exclusively employed this method. The original dialogue of *The Boy Kumasenu* is a combination of English and Akan. The present study focuses on subtitling.

Diaz-Cintas & Remael (2014, p. 8) defines subtitling as "a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)". It is a unique form of translation that involves an interlingual or intralingual transfer from a verbal code into a written code. This form of translation comes with several technical constraints. Notable amongst these constraints are those relating to space and time available to the subtitler. There is a strict rule concerning the length of subtitles which, according to Díaz-Cintas (1999, p. 33), is pegged at two lines maximum with a 35 character limit per line. Also, since subtitling has to do with translating on-going dialogues which are usually delivered at faster paces than their translations can keep up with, there is a limit on the duration of time each subtitle can stay on screen before the next. According to Hurt & Widler (1998, cited in Pelsmaekers & Van Eesien, 2002, p. 252), the screen text is visible for a period between two and eight seconds, depending on its length, with a pause of at least 1/6 or 1/4 of a second between each text. Chiaro (2009, p. 148) claims that the restrictions on the length and duration of subtitles are necessitated by the need to provide viewers ample time to read the subtitles while at the same time remaining unaware that they are actually reading. As noted by Chiaro (2009, p. 151), it is worth pointing out that these challenges and technical constraints may lead to condensations and losses of certain elements of spoken language such as hesitations, false starts, pitch, length, etc. She further argues that taboo and swear words which are unacceptable in standard, or even informal written language may be deliberately omitted by subtitlers in the streamlining that the modality necessitates (ibid.). These condensations and omissions can prove problematic in the task of humour translation as some of these spoken language elements tend to contribute to the overall humour carried by a stretch of dialogue. According to Diaz-Cintas (2005, p. 4-5), the technical constraints on the task of subtitling, coupled with the influx of

inexperienced subtitlers, poor working conditions, the absence of proper in-house guidelines, impossible deadlines, etc. have resulted in a sharp decline of the quality standards of subtitled works in recent years.

2.3 Classical humour theories

According to Attardo (1994) and Krikmann (2006), theories of humour are traditionally divided into three branches: the superiority/disparagement/hostility theories, the relief/release theories and theories of incongruity/contradiction/inconsistency. These humour theories are discussed in the subsections below.

2.3.1 The superiority theory of humour

Hobbes (1994, quoted in Hu, 2012, p. 1185) defines humour as "the sudden glory arising from the sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others". Quite simply, human beings tend to laugh at or get amused by others' misfortunes or shortcomings, against the enhancement of their own self-esteem. Lynch (2002, p. 426) points to the fact that a person can be found comical if he or she is inadequate according to a set of an agreed-upon group or societal criteria, making those who meet these criteria feel superior. The humorous effects derived in this manner are mostly greater when the target originally holds a position of higher repute than the one who experiences the humour. The superiority theory of humour explains why Ghanaians generally find jokes about Nigerians and the Chinese funny. It also explains why the Akan people find it funny when persons belonging to the various ethnic groups of Northern Ghana and the Ewes of the Volta region of Ghana display their incompetence at speaking the Akan language.

The kinds of humour in human conversations which can be captured by the superiority theory of humour tend to manifest in two forms: the relatively benign and benevolent humour which enhances the communicator's self-esteem in a way that is tolerant and non-detrimental to others, and humour that is potentially detrimental to the communicator or his/her relationships with the direct target and others (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003, p. 52). The former

comprises of friendly teasing, playfully poking fun at others and other such playful attempts at making fun of others. On the other hand, the latter comprises of more hostile uses of humour, in which one enhances his/her self-esteem by denigrating, disparaging, excessively teasing or ridiculing others (Zillman, 1983, cited in Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003, p. 52). These two forms coincide with Dynel's (2013, p. 30) affiliative and disaffiliative humour respectively.

According to Dynel (2013, p. 36), disaffiliative humour covers genuinely aggressive utterances coinciding with disparagement/putdown humour and sarcasm which carry no humour to be enjoyed by the target, at whose expense other recipients are supposed to be amused. In order to better understand verbal humour in a movie context encompassed by the superiority theory, example (1) is hereby given below.

> Example 1. *House,* episode 19, season 6. **'…all women were horny…'**
> [House, Foreman, Thirteen (who is bisexual) and Chase are discussing their female patient's symptoms and the libido may be indicative of some disease.]
> 1. Foreman: Increased libido can be a symptom of adrenocortical carcinoma, which also explains her other symptoms.
> 2. Thirteen: [annoyed]: A woman who likes sex must be sick?
> 3. House: Just because everybody in this room wishes that all women were horny all the time doesn't make it so. [Chase looks amused.] Get an MRI of her adrenal glands.
>
> (Dynel, 2013, p. 37)

Based on data culled from a famous American television drama, "House", Dynel presents the example (1) above as an instance of disaffiliative humour in dramatic discourse, encompassed by the superiority theory of humour. According to her, the sarcasm in House's utterance 3 appears to carry a genuine aggression against Thirteen, with no humour to be appreciated by her. Dynel argues that rather than dismissing Thirteen's suggestion by stating that the patient's libido may not be a symptom, House conveys this meaning implicitly and disparages Thirteen's sexual

orientation in the process. This generates humour not only for viewers but the other interlocutors as well, with Chase overtly showing his amusement.

Disaffiliative humour encompassed by the superiority theory is, perhaps, the most prevalent kind of humour employed in Akan movies. Most Akan movies – including the ones adopted for the present study – tend to poke fun at ethnic minorities notably the Ewes[4] and Northerners[5], projecting them as incompetent users of the Akan language. It is also not uncommon to come across gender-specific jokes or witticisms, excessive ridiculing and sometimes, even insults in Akan movies. In some cases, certain characters even tend to unfavourably present themselves before other characters as well as the viewers or joke about their own ineptness. All these instances have the tendency of eliciting humour at inter-character levels, as well as amongst viewers. In recent years, the frequent use of this kind of humour in Akan movies has sparked public outcries as parents, in particular, seem worried about the likelihood of their children learning such aggressive means of speech from the Akan movies. Thus, in the initial part of the analysis chapter, the superiority theory of humour is adopted to account for the likelihood of some utterances contained in some of the examples to elicit humorous responses from viewers.

2.3.2 The relief theory of humour

The relief/release theory of humour is essentially a psychoanalytic theory which attempts to describe humour from the angle of a tension-release model. In his *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious,* Sigmund Freud, who is credited with the best-known version of the relief theory, posits that there exists psychic energy in our body which acts as an aid for suppressing feelings in socially tabooed areas such as sex, death, scatology, etc. The theory treats humour as a means of venting this energy. Freud (1905, cited in Critchley, 2011, p. 3) argues that the release of this energy causes recipients to experience laughter because it economises upon energy that would ordinarily be used to contain or repress psychic activity.

[4] Persons belonging to the Ewe ethnolinguistic gr oup from the Volta Region of Ghana.

[5] Encompassing people from the three northern regions of Ghana: Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions.

Quite simply, society imposes on us certain conventional requirements and restrictions. Humour often affords us relief from conforming to such social requirements and restrictions by allowing us to, for instance, freely air impulses that relate to such tabooed activities as e.g. sex and incest and substances such as human excreta. People who have been restrained over time from publicly talking about certain acts and substances would most likely burst into laughter when this restraint is suddenly removed or someone disregards the set restraint and openly talks about such acts and substances. The relief theory of humour thus views laughter as a means of releasing accumulated nervous energy generated in people through constant repression in socially tabooed areas, thereby, reducing tension or stress. There are differences between nations as to which behaviours and topics are considered taboos. This means humour that results from the breaking of restrictions on certain acts and topics will be perceived differently by different people depending on whether or not such acts and topics are considered taboos in their countries in the first place. That said, taboos on sexuality tend to be very common, applicable to most – if not all – nations of the world. Sometimes, mere hints toward sexuality in a joke, like in example (2) below, generate humorous responses from targets.

> Example 2. **'Crikey, that's a hard one!'**
> Three nuns who died were tested by St Peter before being allowed into heaven. He asked them a question in turn. 'What is the name of the first man?' 'Adam.' 'Ok, go in.' 'What is the name of the first woman?' 'Eve.' 'Right.' Then he asked the third, 'What were the first words that Eve said to Adam?' 'Crikey, that's a hard one!' 'That's right. In you go.' (Ross, 2005, p. 63)

Agyekum (2011, p. 584) notes that the Akan people place great importance on politeness, formality, indirection, honorifics, etc. in various speech situations. The Akans place strict prohibitions on certain activities and utterances which they consider as taboos. According to Agyekum, it is a common practice by Akans to use various euphemistic and apologetic means when talking about tabooed acts and items such as menstruation, farting, incest, sexual organs, etc. Generally, people experience laughter when others break the restrictions placed on the utterance of these tabooed acts and items. This informs the choice of the relief theory of humour

for the present study. In the second part of the analysis chapter, some utterances from the selected movies whose account of humour stems from the breaking of such restrictions on taboos will be presented and analysed using this theory.

2.3.3 The incongruity theory of humour

According to Morreall (1983, p. 15), the incongruity theory of humour assumes that the feeling of humour is an intellectual reaction to that which is considered illogical, unexpected or inappropriate in one way or the other. According to Morreal, human beings expect certain patterns between certain events and things in their world and their nature. When they experience certain patterns which they consider incongruous with the patterns they are used to, and eventually get to resolve the incongruity, they experience humour and laugh (ibid: 15-16). Different people may have different such patterns depending on their conceptual schemes. Thus, what may be considered incongruous by person A may not necessarily be considered so by person B due to their diverse personal experiences and expectations.

According to Krikmann (2006, p. 27), in a typical conversation involving humour arising from incongruous elements, hearers process stimulus reducing it to the most accessible, salient interpretation until they encounter an incongruity. A cognitive attempt is then made to resolve the incongruity. If this attempt is successful, a resolution is made and a new interpretation of the stimulus, which has so far remained hidden, is found. The realisation of this new interpretation, according to Krikmann, is met with surprise and satisfaction, causing humorous effects in the hearer.

Many scholars refer to this theory as *the incongruity-resolution theory* (Ritchie, 1999; Suls, 1983; Shade, 1996; Veale, 2004; Yus, 2003). According to them, the presence of incongruity in utterances or situations in themselves, do not necessarily have to evoke humour. Indeed, several instances of incongruity in different situations and discourses go without eliciting a single humorous response from recipients. These instances become funny to recipients when they appear in humorous settings (Shade, 1996, p. 26) and, most importantly, after the incongruity is

resolved. Example (3) below, taken from Dynel (2013, p. 31) illustrates better the incongruity-resolution model.

Example 3. *House,* episode 21, season 2. **'…"yoo hoo" to the hoo hoo'**

[House is on clinic duty. A mother has come with her four-year-old daughter, suspecting epilepsy in her. Having familiarised himself with the symptoms, House offers a diagnosis.]

1. House: You mix rocking, grunting, sweating, and dystonia with concerned parents and you get an amateur diagnosis of epilepsy. In actuality, all your little girl is doing is saying "yoo hoo" to the hoo hoo.
2. Mother: She's what?
3. House: Marching the penguin. Ya-ya-ing the sisterhood. Finding Nemo.
4. Girl: [laughing] That was funny.
5. House: It's called gratification disorder. Sort of a misnomer – if one was unable to gratify oneself…that would be a disorder.
6. Mother: [covering the girl's ears] Are you saying she's masturbating?
7. House: [through the corner of his mouth] I was trying to be discreet – there's a child in the room!

(Dynel, 2013, p. 31).

According to Dynel, House uses four euphemistic lexical items in 1 and 3 to refer to the tabooed activity of masturbation. She argues that all the four creative lexical items coincide with second-order textual incongruities based on uncanny juxtapositions.

Second-order incongruities, according to Walaszewska & Piskorska (2013, p. 163) are inexplicable elements that hearers encounter while interpreting texts such as absurdities and uncanny phenomena. These elements are taken for granted and never dismissed as impossible within jocular texts and other humorous frames as with example (3) above.

In her account of the humour in example (3), Dynel identifies *"saying yoo hoo to the hoo hoo"* as a rhyme based on the slang term for female genitalia, "hoo-hoo". She also considers the second expression, *"marching the penguin"*, as metaphorical. Lastly, she categorises the third and fourth, *"ya-ya-ing the sisterhood"* and *"finding Nemo"*, as allusions, alluding to "Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood"[6] and "Finding Nemo"[7] respectively. All these creative euphemisms, she argues, display overt incongruity with the recipient's cognitive model of reference being his/her mental lexicon. Thus, for instance, as long as the mother – and for that matter, any viewer – does not know these slang expressions, she will be faced with incongruity. Even if the mother and/or any viewer have/has these slang expressions in their lexicon, they will still perceive incongruity on the account that all the innovative lexemes used by House contradict the cognitive model of inference of the medical terminology that a doctor should be using. The incongruity is resolved once the covert meanings of the lexical items as well as House's motivation for using them are discovered: to hide the proper medical term from the girl and to make fun of the mother for attempting a lay diagnosis of her daughter's symptoms which turns out to be trivial.

In her account of the humour in example (3), Dynel does not draw in the relief theory although it seems to play a role in the overall humorous effects carried by the dialogue. In order not to openly mention the tabooed activity of masturbation in front of the girl, House resorts to the several euphemistic lexical items contained in the excerpt. However, the mother, after having inferred what House means, disregards the restraint on the utterance of this tabooed activity and mentions it in utterance 6. This, in itself, is likely to cause viewers to experience laughter.

2.4 Relevance theory

According to Yus (2003), humour in human communication is a highly context-specific phenomenon that often exploits people's abilities to draw pragmatic inferences. Addressees of verbal humour do not only have to decode the linguistic meanings of the utterances directed at

[6] A 2002 American comedy drama about female friends.

[7] A 2003 American computer-animated comedy-drama adventure movie whose plot revolves around searching for a fish.

them but also have to make inferences as to the communicative intentions of the speaker and the contextual frame within which the utterances were made. Thus, to explore better the humorous phenomenon in human communication, a theory on how such pragmatic inferences arise is needed. This motivates the choice of Sperber & Wilson's relevance theory (see Sperber and Wilson 1995; Wilson and Sperber 2004; Clark, 2013; Carston, 2004) for the present study. According to Yus (2003, p. 1327), relevance theory, as an inferential-based theory of communication, makes certain predictions suitable in the account of how certain humorous effects are generated and received.

Relevance theory is a theory about human cognition and communication. It makes claims about how we, as human beings, generally allocate and use our cognitive resources once we realise someone has produced an ostensive stimulus directed towards us, whether verbal or non-verbal. It views human communication as an ostensive-inferential process by which a speaker produces an ostensive stimulus which makes it manifest to both the speaker and addressee that the speaker intends to make manifest or more manifest a set of assumptions (Sperber & Wilson 1995, p. 155). The set of assumptions communicated by the speaker may be explicitly or implicitly communicated with his or her utterance. Hence, in its account of utterance interpretation, relevance theory makes a key distinction between this set of explicit and implicit assumptions which are termed "explicature" and "implicature" respectively. They are defined below.

(1) *Explicature*

An assumption communicated by an utterance U is explicit [hence an 'explicature'] if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by U.

(2) *Implicature*

An assumption communicated by U which is not explicit is implicit [hence an 'implicature'].

(Sperber and Wilson, 1986, p. 182, cited in Carston, 2004, p. 635).

To exemplify these, Carston gives the example below.

Example 4. '**Mary'**
X: How is Mary feeling after her first year at the university?
Y: She didn't get enough units and can't continue.

According to Carston, if it is supposed within the context that X takes Y to have communicated the following assumptions, then on the basis of the definitions above, (i) is an explicature of Y's utterance and (ii) is an implicature.

i. $Mary_x$[8] did not pass enough university course units to qualify for admission to second-year study and, as a result, $Mary_x$ cannot continue with university study.
ii. $Mary_x$ is not feeling very happy.

Carston notes that in (i), the decoded logical form of Y's utterance has been taken as a template for the development of a propositional form. On the other hand, (ii) is a completely independent assumption, inferred wholly from (i) and a further premise concerning the relation between Mary's failure at the university and her current state of mind. In the development of utterance Y into the more specific and elaborate representation in (i), Carston (2004, p. 636) observes that a referent (Mary) has been assigned to the pronoun '*she'*. Also, *'get'* and *'units'* have been assigned more specific meanings than those they encode and additional conceptual constituents have been supplied as arguments of *'enough'* and *'continue'*. Finally, a cause-consequence link has been taken to hold between the conjuncts. Following from all these pragmatic processes involved in the derivation of an explicature from an utterance, Carston argues that the conceptual content of an explicature is not only dependent on the decoded linguistic meaning of an utterance but also on its pragmatically inferred meaning.

The intention to communicate, which comes with the production of a verbal or non-verbal stimulus, automatically creates expectations in addressees. These expectations, according to Wilson & Sperber (2004, p. 608), are precise and predictable enough to guide hearers toward

[8] $_x$ indicates that a particular referent has been assigned to the name "Mary".

what the speakers intend to communicate. This claim underpins the key idea within relevance theory: upon the production of a stimulus, addressees assume that the communicator has an interpretation in mind which provides enough cognitive rewards for it to be worth the mental effort required in reaching it (Clark, 2013, p. 7). Relevance theory explains this in terms of the technical term, 'relevance'. An input, according to relevance theory, is relevant to an individual when, and only when, its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a positive cognitive effect (see Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 608). A positive cognitive effect is a worthwhile difference to addressees' representation of the world, such as true conclusions. The relevance of an input is measured in terms of degree such that, all things being equal, a) the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time and b) the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time (ibid: 609).

According to the relevance-theoretic framework, all aspects of human communication and cognition are controlled by addressees' search for (maximal) relevance. Human beings tend to search for the greatest possible positive cognitive effects for relatively smaller cognitive effort. The hearer expects adequate information to be provided by the communicator in order to better understand her intention with minimal processing effort. This assumption, together with the idea that communicators manifestly intend their addressees to assume that their stimuli are relevant enough to be worth processing are represented in two basic principles of relevance theory defined below.

(3) *Cognitive Principle of Relevance.*

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 610).

(4) *Communicative Principle of Relevance*

Every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 612)

An ostensive stimulus that is optimally relevant is that which is a) relevant enough to be worth addressees' processing effort and b) the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

Following from the notion of optimal relevance, positive cognitive effects and the mental effort required to obtain them, Wilson & Sperber put forward a relevance-theoretic heuristic aimed at guiding addressees in their interpretation of any ostensive stimulus. This heuristic is outlined below:

(5) *Relevance-theoretic comprehension heuristic*

a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.

b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied (or abandoned).
(Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 613).

The comprehension heuristic above stipulates a path of least effort for addressees when interpreting an ostensive stimulus since the presumption of optimal relevance requires speakers to produce (within the limits of their abilities and preferences) utterances that are as easy as possible to understand given a certain communicative intention. It also asks addressees to stop at the first interpretation that satisfies their expectations of relevance. This is because each ostensive stimulus should ideally communicate only a single relevant interpretation. For this reason, a speaker who intends his or her utterance to be as easy as possible to understand should formulate it such that the first interpretation that satisfies his or her addressees' relevance expectation is the one he or she intended to convey.

As pointed out in Yus (2003, p. 1302) humorists often exploit the principles of relevance in human communication and the relevance-theoretic comprehension heuristic above for the sake of generating humour. Relevance theory has, therefore, been used by many scholars to account for various forms and instances of humour in human communication despite the fact that the framework is not specifically designed for humour analysis (see e.g. Curcó, 1995; 1997; Nai-shi, 2005; Yong, 2001; Yus, 2003).

The present study makes use of aspects of Yus' (2003) relevance-theoretic account of humorous jokes in communication which present suggestions about which cognitive processes and principles may be involved in the generation of humour in incongruity-based jokes. These are discussed in the next section.

2.4.1 Verbal humour and relevance

As hinted in the previous section, humorists – including moviemakers – often have some ideas about which interpretations will be most relevant to their addressees and the interpretive steps they will most likely go through in recovering them. Yus (2003, p. 1304) argues that the prediction of these interpretive steps means speakers can, at least, be confident that certain incongruities or clashes of assumptions will arise due to the way a discourse is organised and interpreted. Speakers aiming for humorous interpretation of their utterances may exploit the different stages of interpretive steps that relevance theory predicts (e.g. extraction of logical forms, disambiguation, reference assignment, enrichment) to create these incongruities and clashes of assumptions. The resolution of these incongruities and assumption clashes consequently generates the intended humour. This forms the basis for Yus' (2003, p. 1300) relevance-theoretic account of the traditional incongruity-resolution theory of humour. He explains that hearers interpret utterances, assuming that a set of assumptions ostensively communicated provides a good balance of cognitive effects in exchange for the cognitive effort their processing requires, and that this set of assumptions is the one the speaker presumably intended his or her utterance to mean. If the interpretation is not as informative as required, seems irrelevant or untrue, a search for a more relevant interpretation worth the hearers' processing effort is activated, despite the extra cognitive effort it may require. Yus argues that humorous effects obtained out of the enjoyment in the resolution of incongruity are worth the extra cognitive effort.

Following from the above account, Yus (2003, p. 1308-1313) looks at a certain set of jokes whose creation involves three basic elements: a) the resolution of incongruous on-going interpretations; b) the realisation of having been fooled by the communicator; and c) a positive

interaction of the joke with the addressee's cognitive environment. He proposes the following steps for the generation and interpretation of such jokes:

1. The initial part of the joke has multiple potential interpretations but they are graded according to their accessibility (the multiple-graded-interpretations part of the joke, or MGI part for short).
2. Based on clause (a) of the relevance-theoretic comprehension heuristic in (5) above, the hearer is led to follow a path of least effort to select a first – relevant – interpretation of the initial part of the text. Once this first interpretation satisfies the hearer's relevance expectation, clause (b) of the comprehension heuristic requires the hearer to stop.
3. Suddenly, the hearer notices that the subsequent text has a single covert interpretation (the single-covert-interpretation part of the joke, or SCI part for short) which is eventually the correct one and the one providing the overall coherent interpretation of the whole text. This is because, following the basic relevance-theoretic claim, this is the most (and only) relevant interpretation in this part of the joke based on considerations of processing effort and positive cognitive effects.
4. Since the hearer has already supplied a relevant interpretation for the MGI part, the information provided by the SCI part surprises the hearer (it is incongruous with the on-going interpretation).
5. The resolution of the incongruity, by finding an overall coherent sense of the whole text, together with the hearer's realisation of having been fooled into selecting a specific interpretation, is supposed to trigger a humorous effect.

Yus applies this five-step procedure to the joke below:

Example 5. **'Women's brains…'**

[MGI "Things don't look good. The only chance is a brain transplant. This is an experimental procedure. It might work, but the bad news is that brains are very expensive, and you will have to pay the costs yourselves." "Well, how much does a brain cost?" asked the relatives. "For a male brain, $500,000. For a female brain, $200,000."

> The patient's daughter was unsatisfied and asked, "Why the difference in price between male and female brains?" "A standard pricing practice," said the head of the team. MGI] [SCI "Women's brains have to be marked down because they have actually been used" SCI].
> (Yus, 2003, p. 1310)

The initial part of the joke comes with multiple potential interpretations which are graded according to their accessibility (the MGI part of the joke). The fact that a male brain costs $500,000 and that of female costs $200,000 (as established in the initial part of the joke) comes with various possible inferences such as (iii) – (v) below in the order of most to least accessible:

iii. The male brains are better than the female ones, hence, more expensive.
iv. The male brains are hard to come by, hence, expensive.
v. The male brains have not been used, hence, expensive.

The hearer is led to select the first – relevant – interpretation of the initial part of the joke which demands least cognitive effort:

iii. The male brains are better than the female ones, hence, more expensive.

Suddenly, the hearer notices that the subsequent text – *"Women's brains have to be marked down because they have actually been used"* – has a single covert interpretation which is the correct one (the SCI part):

v. The male brains have not been used, hence, they are expensive.

Since the hearer has already supplied a relevant interpretation for the MGI part, the information provided by the SCI part surprises the hearer (it is incongruous with the on-going interpretation).

- The male brains are better than the female ones, hence, more expensive => Men are more intelligent than women.
- The male brains have not been used, hence, expensive => Women are more intelligent than men.

The resolution of the incongruity and the hearer's realisation of having been fooled to select (iii) is supposed to trigger the humorous effects.

In the analysis chapter, examples which follow similar humour-retrieval steps as Yus' example above will be presented and analysed. It is worth pointing out that, unlike Yus' example above, the examples to be analysed in chapter four are not canned jokes. They are sourced from characters' verbal interactions in Akan movies depicting everyday human conversations. Thus, for the purpose of the present study, a similar MGI/SCI account is given for the example below taken from an Akan TV commercial on a very popular brand of washing soap, "Key Soap". Any peculiarity encountered in the course of analysing similar units of conversational humour with Yus' MGI/SCI scheme in the analysis chapter will be noted and commented on.

Example 6. **Unilever Ghana's *Key Soap* TV commercial**

[Husband sits in the living room dozing off. Wife cutting 'Key Soap' in the kitchen, with door opened]

1. Wife: Me-dɔfo pa
   Gloss: $1_{SG\ POSS}$-lover good
   TT: ***'My dependable partner'***
2. Husband: [wakes up] Mmm?
3. Wife: M-feɛ bebree a me-hyiaa wo yi
   Gloss: $_{PL}$-year many $_{REL}$ $1_{SG\ SUBJ}$-meet-$_{COMPL}$ 2_{SG} $_{DEF}$
   TT: ***'We've been together for all this while…'***
4. Wife: Wo-n-nii me hwammɔ da
   Gloss: $2_{SG\ SUBJ}$-$_{NEG}$-play-$_{COMPL}$ $_{1SG\ OBJ}$ betrayal ever
   TT: ***'You've never let me down'***
5. Wife: Wo-yɛ n-neɛma bebree ma me

Gloss: $2_{SG\ SUBJ}$-do $_{PL}$-thing many give $_{1SG\ OBJ}$

TT: ***'You take care of all my needs'***

6. Husband: Mmm hm?
7. Wife: Wo-yɛ ɔboafo pa

   Gloss: $2_{SG\ SUBJ}$-are helper good

   TT: ***'You're dependable'***
8. Husband: [smiles broadly] mmm…
9. Wife: Na wo-nim ade titire a me-pɛ wɔ wo ho?

   Gloss: And $2_{SG\ SUBJ}$-know something particular $_{REL}$ $1_{SG\ SUBJ}$-like on $2_{SG\ POSS}$ side

   TT: ***'Y'know what I like about you most?'***
10. Husband: Mmm hm?
11. Wife: Wo hwam no
12. Gloss: $2_{SG\ POSS}$ good-smell $_{DEF}$
13. TT: ***'Your wonderful perfume'***
14. Husband: [turns to look at his wife] mmm… [smells his armpit]
15. Wife: Eyi nti na maame se wo-yɛ soronko yi

    Gloss: $_{DEF}$ because $_{CONJ}$ maame say $2_{SG\ SUBJ}$-are unique $_{DEF}$

    TT: ***'No wonder mum says you're the best choice I could ever make'***
16. Husband: [joins his wife in the kitchen]

    Na sɛ wo maame ɔ-m-pɛ m'-asɛm ?

    Gloss: But it-is $2_{SG\ POSS}$ mother she-$_{NEG}$-like $1_{SG\ POSS}$-issue

    TT: ***'But your mother doesn't even like me'***
17. Wife: Oh me 'Key Soap' ho adanse na me-re-di yi oo

    Gloss: Oh $1_{SG\ POSS}$ 'Key Soap' about goodness $_{CONJ}$ $1_{SG\ SUBJ}$-$_{PROG}$-profess $_{DEF}$

    CONT: …wo deɛ sɛ ɛ-ho biribiara da nea ɛ-da oo.

    Gloss: 2_{SG} for as $3_{SG\ NEUT}$-side everything lie where $3_{SG\ NEUT}$-lie oo

    TT: ***'I was just talking about my Key Soap but you are just as lovely'***

In example (6) above, the initial part (lines 1 – 16) that Yus labels the MGI part, would most likely convey the following assumptions, listed from (vi) – (viii) in the order of most to least accessible:

vi. The wife is talking about her husband
vii. The wife is talking about another person in the room.
viii. The wife is talking about her 'Key Soap'.

The MGIs above are connected to the referent of the pronouns *'me'*/my and *'wo'*/you. Following a path of least cognitive effort, the viewer is led to select the first – relevant – interpretation of the initial part that provides adequate cognitive effects:

vi. The wife is talking about her husband

Suddenly, the viewer notices that the subsequent utterance – "*Oh me 'Key Soap' ho adanse na meredi yi oo" (LT: "Oh it is the goodness of my Key Soap that I am professing")* – has a single covert interpretation (SCI) which is the correct one:

viii. The wife is talking about her 'Key Soap'.

The new information provided by the SCI part appears incongruous with the on-going interpretation since the viewer has already supplied a relevant interpretation (vi) for the MGI part. The new interpretation provides viewers with an overall coherent sense of the whole text, thereby resolving the incongruity. The resolution of the incongruity and viewers' realisation that they have been fooled into selecting interpretation (vi), triggers humorous effects in them.

2.4.2 The translation of verbal humour and relevance

Relevance theory distinguishes between two psychological modes of language use: descriptive and interpretive use. According to Gutt (1998, p. 44; 2000, p. 35), an utterance is used

descriptively when it is intended to be taken as the true state of affairs in some possible world. On the other hand, an utterance is used interpretively when it is intended to represent what someone said or thought. Gutt illustrates these two modes of language use with the following example.

Example 7. **'Fred and Judy'**

1. Melody: 'Fred and Judy have got a divorce.'
2. Melody: 'Harry said, "Fred and Judy have got a divorce."'

Whereas Melody uses utterance 1 to claim that the state of affairs it describes (that Fred and Judy have got a divorce) is true, she only reports in 2 what someone else said. Unlike with utterance 1, Melody's utterance 2 would not be wrong if it turns out that Fred and Judy were not divorced. Utterance 2 would be wrong only if it turns out that Harry had not, in fact, made that statement. In 1, Melody uses the utterance descriptively whereas, in 2, she uses it interpretively.

Gutt (2000, p. 36) further notes that an essential factor in interpretive use is that there should be a relationship of *interpretive resemblance* between the original utterance and that used to represent it. Interpretive resemblance is viewed, in terms of degree, such that two utterances interpretively resemble each other more closely, the more explicatures and/or implicatures they share (Gutt, 1998, p. 45). Following from this, a direct quotation (e.g. Melody's utterance 2 of example (7) above), if interpreted in the same context as the original, would share all the explicatures and/or implicatures of the original and, thus, be said to show the highest degree of interpretive resemblance with the original.

Translation, from a cognitive pragmatic perspective, is explained by Walaszewska & Piskorska (2013, p. 125-126) as:

> an inferential gap-filling activity in which the translator has to infer the intended interpretation, context accessibility and predictions of mutuality between the source-language communicator and the source-language addressee, all that

> framed in the source-language culture, and then transfer all this information to a target audience with a different language and more or less different way of coding information, and possibly different social values, norms and stereotypes.

This inferential gap-filling activity is seen as an instance of interpretive use of language across language borders (Gutt, 1998, p. 44; 2000, p. 105). According to Gutt, a translation can be viewed as a receptor language text that interpretively resembles the original, that is, shares more explicatures and/or implicatures with the original (ibid). This idea, however, is far from complete. Interpretive resemblance, with regard to translation, should not be sought entirely in terms of sharing similar explicatures and/or implicatures as the original. A translation should resemble the original in such respects that make it adequately relevant to the target audience i.e. yielding enough cognitive effects for the target audience as the source-language speaker intended for the source-language audience to obtain from the original. This is because, relevance may be sought beyond the level of semantic and pragmatic interpretations to include various effects (such as humour) that the original may be carrying.

Humorous effects cannot be said to correspond to either explicatures or implicatures, but they can be seen as a kind of cognitive effect. For this reason, attempting to reproduce in a TT, similar explicatures and/or implicatures found in the original is likely to yield a translation that does not interpretively resemble the original in terms of providing for the target-language viewers the same or similar amounts of humorous effects, and without causing them unnecessary processing effort. In the task of humour translation, a translator needs to develop and maintain strategies aimed at reproducing for the target-language audience, the source-language intended humorous effects. This should be done without causing the target audience unnecessary processing effort. According to Walaszewska & Piskorska (2013, p. 126), this often requires the translator to make a number of alterations to the original joke.

Based on the above account of humour translation, Walaszewska & Piskorsta (2013, p. 133) provides the following three groups of jokes, in terms of their degrees of difficulty in translation:

1) Transferrable jokes. These are easy-to-translate jokes with inter-culturally valid social stereotypes, parallel forms of coding the information and linguistic strategies for humour generation that can be found in both languages. It is worth noting that a transferrable joke into one language may be difficult or impossible to translate into another language.
2) Replaceable jokes. Jokes that involve cultural referents that can be found, with greater or lesser similarity, in source and target cultures, and although the linguistic sources of humour are not the same, alternatives can be found in the target language achieving similar balances of cognitive effects and mental effort.
3) Challenging jokes. These jokes pose problems for a good translation due to very specific intra-cultural referents, linguistic resources that have no counterpart in the target language, etc.

Although the typology above is in relation to canned jokes, it seems applicable to conversational humour as well. In the course of data analysis in chapter four, we will come by examples which coincide with the types above. Analysis of their subtitles will then focus on the extent to which the subtitlers of the two Akan movies succeed at reproducing for the target-language viewers similar humorous effects intended for the Akan viewers with the ST, and for the same or least processing effort.

3 Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods adopted for this study. It discusses the source of data for the study, the ways in which the data were gathered and the procedures adopted for their analysis and discussion.

3.1 Sources of data

Studies on verbal humour and its translation in the audiovisual landscape tend to focus on a single movie, television series, commercial, etc. It may be the case that, this makes data collection and analyses relatively easier as everything is drawn from a single source. However, sourcing data from a single movie has a potential disadvantage of limiting the generalisability of the overall research findings. Data for the present study is sourced from two Ghanaian movies produced in the Akan language and translated by means of subtitling into the English language. The two movies are *I Told You So* (1970) and *Obroni Hiani* (2014). In no way does the study's use of more than one data source makes its findings universal. However, since these movies are considerably separated in time and also employ two major dialects of the Akan language, namely Asante Twi and Fante, results from this study should hopefully apply to more instances of humour in Akan movies since most Akan movies employ at least one of these two dialects in their dialogue.

I Told You So tells a story of a Ghanaian man, Kobina Jones, who returns to his country after having stayed in Nigeria, another West African country, for a number of years and made enough money for himself. He intends settling down in his home country and finding himself a beautiful woman to marry. He gets acquainted with a man by name Esuo Abor Buo, who promises to offer him his niece's (Rosina) hand in marriage, mainly due to Kobina Jones' wealth. Rosina's father, Kwesi Twii, however, had vowed never to allow his daughter marry a wealthy man since, according to him, rich people are too bossy. This creates tension between Rosina, her parents, Esuo Abor Buo and Kobina Jones. It turns out later in the movie that Kobina Jones accrued his

wealth by stealing a huge sum of money from someone with which he absconded to Nigeria years ago. This movie employs the Fante dialect of the Akan language in its dialogue.

Obroni Hiani which literally translates into English as 'a poor white person/Caucasian' revolves around an Englishman, Jimmy, who is lured by Internet fraudsters (made up of a Ghanaian man nicknamed Big T. and his girlfriend, Jenny) to travel down to Ghana to meet his internet-found love. Unknown to Jimmy, he had been chatting with Big T. all that while and shown pictures of Jenny. Big T. asks his girlfriend to pretend to be in love with Jimmy but unfortunately, Jenny actually begins to get emotionally attached to the latter. Big T. attempts to murder Jimmy but he gets saved by a passer-by called Aserewa. Aserewa happens to be an illiterate village herbalist who only speaks the Akan language. Jimmy and Aserewa's incompetence at speaking each other's language is contrasted for humorous effects. The original dialogue of this movie is in the Asante Twi dialect of the Akan language.

The choice of these two movies, which are considerably separated in time, is informed by the researcher's quest to see if there have been changes either in the kinds of humour or the general subtitling practices employed in Akan movies over the years. Generally, it is evident from the two movies that humour in Akan movies and their sources have not seen any significant change over the years. For instance, there is almost always a single character whose utterances and quirky behaviour elicit much of the humorous effects in viewers. Esuo Abro Buo represents such a character in *I Told You So* whilst in *Obroni Hiani*, there is Aserewa. What has changed considerably, at least between the two movies selected for the present study, are the subtitling practices. For instance, in the movie *Obroni Hiani*, many utterances come without corresponding subtitles. These include some of the utterances gathered for the study. It is predicted that this and other stylistic differences noted between the subtitles of the two movies will have different methodological and analytical consequences on the present study hence, their selection.

An original DVD copy of *Obroni Hiani* was obtained from Best K. Productions, the original producers of the movie. A representative of this production house from whom the copy was secured assured the researcher of the originality of the subtitles contained in the copy. Likewise, a DVD copy of *I Told You So* was obtained from Abe Pe Show Productions. *I Told You So* was

originally shot on celluloid in 1970 and reproduced onto DVD in 2013 by Abe Pe Show Production. A representative of this production house confirmed the originality of the subtitles by indicating how the reproduction was carried out: the original movie, along with its subtitles, was simply projected onto a surface and recorded with a digital camera. As evidence to this, the researcher noticed that the scratches associated with the original's technology and the occasional shaking of the movie's frame – possibly due to the shaking of the camera – reflected in the subtitles as well.

3.2 Data collection method

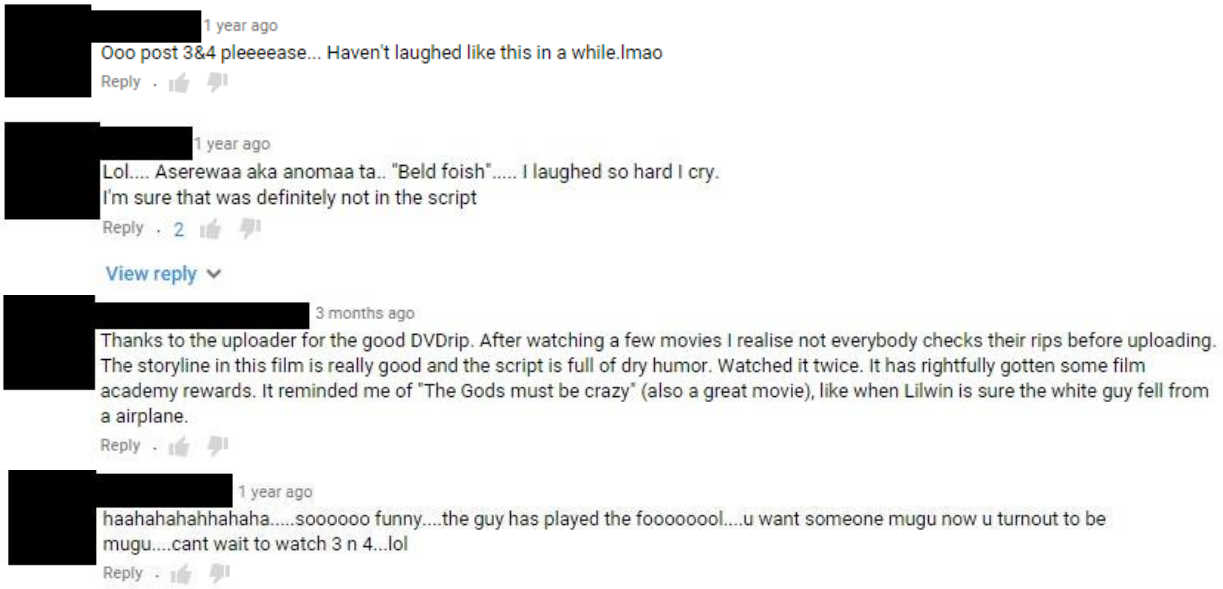
Extraction and transcription of humorous utterances

As indicated earlier, the present study sources its data from two Akan movies, *I Told You so* (1970) and *Obroni Hiani* (2014). A number of humorous utterances and their corresponding subtitles from these two movies are extracted and manually transcribed by the researcher. A potentially problematic aspect of this method has to do with the fact that humour, or what is considered funny, is highly individualistic. Dennet (1991, cited in Ruch, 2001, p. 410) notes that the funniness of an element is a distinct qualia, such that what is funny to person A may not necessarily be funny to person B. Thus, in order not to gather a biased data as to which utterances are perceived funny and which ones are not, the researcher of the present study did not resort only to his intuitions but also relied on the perception of other viewers. The researcher did this by observing physical responses (mainly in the form of laughter) on the faces of viewers he screened the movies for. This was done against utterances the researcher had pre-chosen from the movies which he considered funny. In all, fifteen persons were sampled to watch the movies. Out of this number, eight were females and the remaining seven, males. This was to ensure a balance in the findings especially concerning how each group perceives certain gender-specific jokes included in the data. The researcher rightly observed, for instance, that the male viewership laughed upon hearing certain disparaging remarks by characters in the movies against women whilst the female viewership simply looked on. This and other such observations were noted and written in the researcher's notebook. Also, utterances which did not yield the expected response from the viewers were dropped. The researcher also took note of the general perception of

viewers of the selected movies on YouTube by observing the comments left in the comments section of each movie. Below are screenshots of some of the YouTube comments under the two movies. To keep the identities of the commenters anonymous, their names and images have been superimposed with coloured shapes.

Image 1. YouTube comments on *I Told You So* (1970)

Image 2. YouTube comments on *Obroni Hiani* (2014)



Although some of these and other such comments concern the general funniness of the movies – and not specific utterances – they affirm, to some extent, the impression of the researcher and the other audience members regarding the general funniness of the movies drawn for the study.

Some of the examples used in the analysis and discussion chapter actually include certain characters' utterances that some of the commenters on YouTube found funny (shown in the screenshots above).

The dialogue excerpts gathered and their corresponding subtitles are transcribed in the format shown in the example below:

Example 8. *Obroni Hiani*, **'This guy will make me an idiot'**

[Aserewa, an illiterate Ghanaian herbalist who has taken into his home an Englishman, Jimmy, tries to entertain his guest by doing an impression of Michael Jackson's dance moves. His attempt is not going so well.]

1. Aserewa: [Notices Jimmy laughing at him and stops dancing]

Akoa yi m-ann-hwɛ yie a ɔ-bɛ-gyimi me pɛɛ.

Gloss: Guy DEF $1_{SG\ SUBJ}$-NEG-see well if $3_{SG\ SUBJ}$-FUT-fool $1_{SG\ OBJ}$ definitely.

CONT: Me-yɛ fiewura nso.

Gloss: $1_{SG\ SUBJ}$-is landlord too

LT: *'If I don't look well this guy will definitely fool me, and I am the landlord too'*

TT: ***'This guy will make me an idiot, but I'm the landlord'***

3.3 Data Analysis

As indicated in section 1.4, the present study aims, amongst other things, to: a) to tease out a number of communicative phenomena in Akan dramatic discourse which carry humour appreciated by viewers; b) to provide insight into why certain utterances that make up these discourses are funny; c) to take a look at the subtitles of these humorous discourses, examining whether or not they are likely to elicit the same or similar humorous effects in the target-language viewers. This set of aims informs the present study's research questions outlined in section 1.4, and repeated below.

1. What are the varieties of humour forms employed in the discourse of the two Akan movies selected for the present study?
2. What accounts for the humour in the dialogue excerpts drawn for the study?
3. To what extent do the subtitles provided for these excerpts resemble the original dialogues in terms of providing the target-language viewers with the same or similar amounts of humorous effects without causing them unnecessary processing effort?

In order to answer the above research questions, this study adopts a qualitative approach to the collection, analysis, and discussion of data. The choice of a qualitative research method is motivated by its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and experiences – including human communication and its humorous elements that the present study investigates – and how they are shaped by the context of their lives, such as the social, economic, cultural or physical context in which they live (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011, p. 9).

First, a variety of humour forms employed in Akan dramatic discourse are presented and analysed within the three traditional theory branches of humour discussed in the theory chapter: the superiority, relief and incongruity theories of humour. The study then proceeds to employ Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory to complement the traditional incongruity theory of humour, detailing which interpretations addressees are likely to select – and why – at different points in the dialogue, which may at some point lead to an incongruity.

The presentation and analysis of data under the various theories aforementioned are done to show the variety or scope of humour forms generally present in Akan movies and specifically in the two movies chosen for the study. This will also show why certain utterances in the examples are perceived funny by viewers.

In order to answer the third and last research question, the study adopts Gutt's (1998, 2000) notion of interpretive resemblance (see section 2.4.2) to account for the subtitles that come with each example presented for analysis. Just as Yus (2003) asserts the validity of relevance theory in accounting for any type of ostensive human communication, so does Gutt argue the validity of relevance theory in accounting for all instances of the phenomenon commonly referred to as "translation" without the need for any distinct general translation theory. Gutt views translation as an instance of interpretive use of language across language borders such that a TT is said to interpretively resemble its ST when they share many explicatures and/or implicatures. The set of explicatures and/or implicatures conveyed by an utterance are part of what enables a humorous effect. However, humorous effect, in itself, is neither an explicature nor implicature. For this reason, interpretive resemblance will be sought in the provided subtitles in terms of whether they are likely to achieve similar humorous effects in the target-language viewers as intended for the Akan viewers with the original dialogue. The mental effort likely to be expended by the target-language viewers in achieving the intended humour will also be drawn into the discussion.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

First, as rightly indicated in section 3.1, sourcing data from a single movie for a research such as the present one has a potential disadvantage of limiting the generalisability of the overall

research findings. The present study sources data from two movies, which are considerably separated in time and employ two major dialects of the Akan language, reflective of most Akan movies. This, however, does not rule out completely the limitation on the generalisability of the study's findings. Findings might be reflective of only the two movies involved in the study. The generalisation of the research findings should, therefore, be made with caution.

Also, true to Adjei's (2014, p. 64) assertion (see section 1.2), grammatical errors, transliterations and malapropisms abound in the subtitles of the selected movies for the study, especially in *Obroni Hiani*. Comments on such errors in the examples are discussed when relevant.

Lastly, it was observed during the course of the study that one of the two Akan movies selected for this study (*I Told You So*) had been removed from YouTube. This happened after screenshots of viewers' comments left in the comments section of this particular movie on YouTube had been taken for the study. Whilst the reason for the removal remains unknown, it is worth mentioning it since the study continues to use the screenshots.

4 Analysis and discussion

4.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse selected STs from the two Akan movies adopted for the study using traditional humour theories and the relevance-theoretic framework. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part employs the superiority theory of humour to account for some utterances which elicit humorous effects in recipients by projecting the incompetence, misfortunes and/or shortcomings of certain characters against the enhancement of other characters' (and sometimes viewers') self-esteem. The second part uses the relief theory of humour to account for some utterances whose humorous effects stem from the breaking of certain societal restrictions by the mention of tabooed acts and substances. The third part of the chapter presents examples that elicit humorous responses on the account of perceived incongruities in characters' verbal interactions and their eventual resolution. This third part will also employ some relevance-theoretic concepts to supplement the traditional incongruity theory of humour, detailing which interpretations are likely to be selected by addressees at certain points in a dialogue, which may lead to incongruity. For each example presented, the chapter adopts Gutt's (1998, 2000) notion of interpretive resemblance to account for the degree of correspondence between its ST and TT items. In our context, resemblance is viewed in terms of the likelihood of the TT to achieve similar humorous effects in the target-language viewers as intended for the Akan viewers with the source dialogue. That is, for the subtitles to interpretively resemble the original dialogues, they should possess the potential of yielding not only a similar set of explicatures and implicatures but also the intended humorous effects of the original for the target-language viewers. This should be possible without causing the target-language viewers unnecessary processing effort. The concluding part is dedicated to summarising the chapter, detailing the chapter's main findings, and discussing certain patterns and observations noted during the analysis.

4.1 Examples encompassed by the superiority theory of humour

As presented in section 2.3.1, the kinds of conversational humour that can be captured by the superiority theory of humour tend to come in two forms: the relatively benign and benevolent

humour (affiliative humour) and humour that is potentially detrimental to the communicator's self-esteem or his or her relationships with others (disaffiliative humour). Example (9) below presents an instance of disaffiliative humour encompassed by the superiority theory.

Example 9. *I Told You So,* **'Women only have brains'**

[Kwesi Twii solicits his wife's opinion on Kobina Jones' intent to marry their daughter]

1. Kwesi Twii: Obanyin sikani bi firi Nigeria aba…
   Gloss: Man rich INDEF from Nigeria come-PERF
   LT: *'A rich man from Nigeria has come…'*
   TT: ***'There is a rich man from Nigeria…'***
2. Kwesi Twii: Ɔ-se ɔ-pɛ dɛ ɔ-bɛ-ware Rosina
   Gloss: 3SG SUBJ-says 3SG SUBJ-wants to 3SG SUBJ-FUT-marry Rosina
   CONT: …na ɔ-de no kɔ
   Gloss: CONJ 3SG SUBJ-take 3SG OBJ go
   LT: *'He says he wants to marry Rosina and take her go'*
   TT: ***'He has planned to marry Rosina and take her away'***
3. Kwesi Twii: …na w'-adwene se wo dɛn?
   Gloss: CONJ 2SG SUBJ POSS-mind says 2SG OBJ what
   LT: *'what says your mind?'*
   TT: ***'What do you say?'***
4. Araba Stamp: Me wura… deɛ wo ara bɛ-ka biara
   Gloss: 1SG POSS owner… what 2SG SUBJ REFL FUT-say whatever
   LT: *'My husband… whatever you say'*
   TT: ***'My dear… whatever you say holds.'***
5. Kwesi Twii: …besia deɛ ɔ-nim nyansa kɛkɛ,
   Gloss: Woman for 3SG SUBJ-knows sense just,
   CONT: …na mmanyimfo na ɔ-dwen.
   CONJ men REL 3PL SUBJ-think
   LT: *'A woman only has sense, but it is men who think'*
   TT: ***'Women only have brains, but men think'.***

The disparagement/putdown carried by utterance 5 in example (9) carry no humour to be enjoyed by the target, at whose expense other recipients are supposed to be amused. According to Dynel (2013, p. 36) characters' use of such aggressive utterances in movies is primarily for the sake of viewers' amusement. Even so, not every viewer may find all such utterances funny depending on whether or not they belong or share in the target group's way of life. Kwesi Twii's utterance 5 in example (9) above appears to carry a genuine aggression against his wife and the female gender in general who are unlikely to appreciate any humour the utterance is intended to convey. A section of the male gender may also find this utterance too disparaging to appreciate any humour it may carry. Nonetheless, some recipients (most likely male viewers) would find this utterance humorous, on the provision that they are presented with a supposed shortcoming of Araba Stamp (and the female gender, in general), making mostly the male viewership feel momentarily superior. With his utterance 5, Kwesi Twii and other viewers who affiliate with him see Araba Stamp (and generally the female gender) as lacking in the ability to use their brains to think and, therefore, inferior. By the same utterance, Kwesi Twii enhances his self-esteem and that of male viewers who share his view by contrasting his observation of women's "shortcoming" with men's ability to think with their brains, making the latter group feel somewhat superior. This generates humorous effects in such viewers as they momentarily get amused by women's inadequacy against their conception of self-eminency.

As established above, the humorous effects intended to be carried by example (9) is mainly carried by utterance 5. The subtitler translates this utterance almost exactly as the the Akan original, except, perhaps, for the generalisation of "*besia"* (lit: *'woman'*) into the plural *'women'*. This, however, does not lead to any loss in terms of the pragmatic interpretation of the utterance. It even makes explicit the intended generality of Kwesi Twii's utterance to all females which is only but implicitly communicated by the Akan original. Despite the relative semantic closeness of the ST and the TT, the subtitles may or may not be taken as interpretively resembling the original in terms of its likelihood of carrying across the humorous effects intended for the Akan viewers to the target-language viewers. Based on the cultural differences between the source culture and the target culture, viewers from each group may have access to different contextual

assumptions. Whereas Akans generally see men as the 'brains' of society, responsible for solely taking various difficult decisions, other cultures may abhor this overt show of gender inequality. Despite the existence of this societal norm, it is not a common practice to see Akan men verbally assault women with it as Kwesi Twii does to his wife with utterance 5. It has been established in the previous paragraph that viewers who are likely to find utterance 5 amusing are most likely those who either belong or share in the source culture's way of life. For this reason, target viewers who neither share in the source culture's way of life nor have access to this contextual assumption may only find the translation provided for utterance 5 disparaging but not humorous. Thus, the degree of interpretive resemblance that exists between the Akan original and the English subtitle in terms of humorous effects each carry is complicated by cultural differences that may exist between the two cultures involved. Whether or not the target-language viewers perceive the subtitle for utterance 5 funny will depend, among other things, on their access to similar contextual assumptions available to the Akan viewers.

Just like the example (9), the sarcastic turn by Aserewa in example (10) below can be viewed as generating a kind of humour that is disaffiliative towards the addressee, Jimmy, as it carries a genuine aggression against the latter.

Example 10. *Obroni Hiani,* **'I was born with a machete'**

[Aserewa requests that Jimmy follows him to the farm. Jimmy refuses, giving the excuse that he has soft palms and do not know how to wield a machete]

Aserewa:	sɛ	me	deɛ	yɛ-woo	me			
Gloss:	as	1_{SG}	for	$3_{PL\ SUBJ}$-born	$1_{SG\ OBJ}$			
CONT:	na	sekan	kutakuta	me	nsa	benkum	ne	nifa.
Gloss:	$_{CONJ}$	machete	hold-$_{RED}$	1_{SG}	hand	left	$_{CONJ}$	right

LT: *'As for me I was born with a machete in both hands'*

TT: ***'I was born with a machete in my hands.'***

The potential humour in Aserewa's utterance is thus not intended to be appreciated by Jimmy, at whose expense viewers are to feel amused. Aserewa could have dismissed Jimmy's excuse to go with him to the farm by stating that he (Jimmy) can farm just like any other person if he wants to. Instead, Aserewa uses the sarcasm *'sɛ me deɛ yɛwoo me na sekan kutakuta me nsa benkum ne nifa'* (lit: *'As for me, I was born with a machete in both hands'*) to convey this meaning implicitly, while condemning Jimmy's position at the same time. By doing this, Aserewa poses as superior to Jimmy by juxtaposing his competence at farming with the incompetence of Jimmy at the same task. Viewers who identify with Aserewa's utterance are first likely to feel amused by Jimmy's open declaration of incompetence at farming in the typical Ghanaian farming community he finds himself. This is because, amongst the Akans, it is of great importance that a man know how to farm and any man who falls short of this societal virtue is considered lazy, hence, inferior. Since, indeed, no one is born wielding any kind of farming tool, Aserewa's utterance is likely to generate further humorous effects in viewers who will momentarily see Jimmy as only trying to give excuses for his incompetence, making Aserewa and viewers who identify with him feel somewhat superior. Also, Aserewa's utterance, against the fact that no one is born wielding any kind of farming tool creates incongruity in viewers which is resolved when they discover that Aserewa is only being sarcastic.

Although the subtitler economises the translation for example (10) by taking out the preposed *'As for me'*, he translates the irony employed by Aserewa without a loss to that effect. However, whether or not the humorous effect intended for the Akan viewers is carried over in the translation to the target-language viewers is not only dependent on the successful translation of the irony. Yet again, cultural differences between the source culture and the target culture play a crucial role in how viewers from each will potentially perceive the humorous effects the example is intended to solicit. As indicated before, Akan viewers who identify with Aserewa's utterance are first likely to feel amused merely by Jimmy's declaration of incompetence at farming in the typical Ghanaian farming community he finds himself. This, perhaps, may not be the case for other non-Akan viewers whose cultures place little to no importance on a man's ability to farm. Such viewers may, therefore, not appreciate any humour in Jimmy's excuse. Even if they deduce the sarcasm in Aserewa's utterance, such viewers may still require access to the contextual assumption about Akans and farming mentioned above in order to fully experience the humorous

effects the Akan original is intended to carry. Neither the scenes prior to the one from which example (10) was drawn nor the translation provided for it explicitly make this contextual assumption available to the target-language viewers. Thus, interpretive resemblance in terms of humorous effects intended for the Akan viewers is not necessarily carried across in the translation to the target-language viewers.

4.2 Examples encompassed by the relief theory of humour

Example (11) below involves the tabooed human excreta, fart, whose open utterance is prohibited amongst the Akan people as indicated in section 2.3.2. By merely mentioning his nickname 'Anomaa Ta', Aserewa succeeds at eliciting humour not only from the other characters present, who, coincidentally, are gathered to be entertained by him, but also the Akan viewers.

Example 11. *Obroni Hiani,* 'M**y name is Aserewa'**

[The chief of the town where Aserewa lives has organised a competition that seeks to unearth a man who is funny enough to make his daughter happy after losing her mother. The winner gets to marry the chief's daughter. Aserewa is before the chief and townspeople to partake in the competition]

1. Aserewa: [introduces himself] Me din ankasa de Aserewa, AKA Anomaa Ta
   Gloss: $1_{SG\ POSS}$ name really is Aserewa, AKA Bird Fart.
   LT: *'...My real name is Aserewa, AKA Bird Fart.*
   TT: ***'My name is Aserewa,'***
2. Chief: Anomaa Ta? Eeii [chuckles]
   Gloss: Bird Fart? Eeii
   LT: *'Bird fart? Eeii'*
   TT: **[untranslated]**

As indicated in chapter two (see section 2.3.2), it is a common practice amongst the Akans to use various euphemistic and apologetic means in expressing various acts and substances which are considered taboos. People generally experience laughter when someone breaks tradition and

openly utters a tabooed act or substance. According to the relief theory of humour, the humour derived from the breaking of such restrictions on tabooed acts and substances is due to the fact that it leads to the venting of built-up psychic energy in the body which aids in suppressing feelings in such tabooed areas. One such tabooed activity amongst the Akans is farting. Thus, since Aserewa's nickname involves this tabooed activity, he succeeds at eliciting laughter from some characters of the movie as well as Akan viewers by breaking tradition and openly mentioning it before the townspeople, as well as the chief of the land.

The above account of example (11) makes it clear that the humorous effects the original dialogue is intended to carry to the Akan viewers stem from Aserewa's open reference to the tabooed human excreta, fart. Although both utterances 1 and 2 come with Aserewa's nickname, which contains this tabooed substance, neither come with translations for the nickname. The subtitler provides an incomplete translation for utterance 1 (i.e. *'...My name is Aserewa,'*) and no translation for utterance 2. This may possibly be as a result of a deliberate attempt by the subtitler to omit the taboo word from the translation as taboos and swear words tend to be unacceptable in standard, or even informal written language (see section 2.2). These omissions, as predicted in section 2.2, have negative consequences for the target-language viewers' perception of the humorous effects intended for the Akan viewers. Since no translation is provided for Aserewa's nickname, which is intended to be responsible for eliciting the humorous effects in viewers, the quest for interpretive resemblance between the Akan original and the translation becomes constrained. It cannot be claimed that the subtitle interpretively resemble the original dialogue in humorous respects since the part of the dialogue that is intended to trigger the humour is left untranslated.

Incest is yet another tabooed activity not only amongst the Akans but Ghanaians in general. The laws of Ghana place strong prohibitions on the act and the Akan ethnic group goes a step further to restrict people from even making utterances regarding the act. Example (12) below presents yet another instance of verbal humour borne out of a character's disregard for societal restraint on the utterance of a tabooed activity.

Example 12. *I Told You So,* '**If she had not been my niece'**

[Esuo Abor Buo, Kwesi Twii and Araba Stamp have just finished talking to Rosina. Rosina is excused and as she walks away, Esuo Abor Buo stares glaringly at her behind making series of rhythmic sounds with his voice in accordance with how she shakes her buttocks]

1. Esuo Abor Buo: Aahh! Abɔfra yi sɛ ɛ-nn-yɛ dɛ ɔ-yɛ
   Gloss: Aahh! Child DEF if $3_{SG\ NEUT}$-NEG-is that $3_{SG\ SUBJ}$-is
   CONT: me wɔfaase, nkyɛ meaa….
   Gloss: $1_{SG\ POSS}$ niece, would $1_{SG\ REFL}$
   LT: *'Aahh! If this child wasn't my niece, I would have… myself'*
   TT: ***'What a girl. If she had not been my niece, I might just have…'***
   [Both Esuo Abor Buo and Araba Stamp laugh]

Although Esuo Abor Buo does not complete his utterance and for that matter does not explicitly say anything regarding incest, he strongly implies it with his incomplete sentence and glaring look at his niece's behind. He thus succeeds at eliciting humorous responses from viewers and Araba Stamp. Even he (Esuo Abor Buo), who makes this utterance, finds it funny as he joins Araba Stamp in laughing. Uttering and/or doing what is not to be uttered nor done in the society releases the built-up energy used to suppress feelings in such tabooed areas thereby generating laughter.

In Chapter two (see section 2.3.2), it was noted that nations and cultures vary as to which behaviours and topics are considered taboos. For this reason, the section further noted that different people from different countries may perceive humour that results from the breaking of restrictions on such tabooed activities and topics differently. Incest is considered illegal in many countries around the world. Nonetheless, it is not every culture that considers sleeping with one's niece so serious a taboo that merely making utterances that hint at the act are strictly prohibited. The target-language viewers' access to the contextual assumption regarding how Akans perceive

incest would most likely aid them in appreciating the humour that comes with the example. So, although the translation for example (12) communicates the semantic and pragmatic meaning of the Akan original, whether or not the translation successfully carries the intended humorous effects to the target-language viewers would largely depend on whether they know that a taboo has been broken. This means, yet again, that cultural difference between the source culture and the target culture plays an essential role in the degree of interpretive resemblance the translation for example (12) achieves for the target-language viewers.

4.3 Examples encompassed by the incongruity theory of humour and relevance theory

Examples used in this section are presented by movies in such a manner that all the examples drawn from *I Told You So* are presented and analysed first, before those drawn from *Obroni Hiani*. In all, this section makes use of seven examples: four from *I Told You So* and three from *Obroni Hiani.* Examples from each movie are presented chronologically according to the degree of success of their translations at achieving interpretive resemblance, from full resemblance, to little resemblance, to, if any, omissions.

Example 13. *I Told You So,* '**J-O-N-C-E'**

[Esuo Abor Buo who constantly claims to be the 'chief letter writer' of the town and thus highly literate introduces himself to Kobina Jones for the first time and asks of the latter's name]

1. Esuo Abor Buo: …na wo nso wɔ-frɛ wo dɛn?
   Gloss: $_{CONJ}$ 2_{SG} too $3_{PL\ SUBJ}$-call $2_{SG\ OBJ}$ what
   LT: '*…what do they call you too?'*
   TT: ***'And what is your name?'***
2. Kobina Jones: … ame nso wɔ-frɛ me Jones.
   Gloss: 1_{SG} too $3_{PL\ SUBJ}$-call $1_{SG\ OBJ}$ Jones
   LT: *'I too they call me Jones.'*
   TT: ***'Jones.'***
3. Esuo Abor Buo: Jones? [spells] J-O-N-C-E. Jones!

TT: ***Jones? J-O-N-C-E.***

Having claimed before his addressee (Kobina Jones) from the outset to be a highly literate person and giving both his addressee and viewers a reason to believe him i.e. his self-proclaimed title 'Chief Letter Writer', Esuo Abor Buo attempts spelling his addressee's name in utterance 3 which overtly contradicts this contextual information. An incongruity then arises between Esuo Abor Buo's literacy claim and his failure at spelling correctly his addressee's rather simple name. This incongruity is resolved when viewers get to acknowledge that Esuo Abor Buo is in fact, as illiterate as most of the town folks in the movie but has succeeded in deceiving them into thinking he is literate with a few non-existing and wrongly-constructed English phrases.

Also, the humour in this example can partly be accounted for with the superiority theory of humour. The incompetence of Esuo Abor Buo at spelling his addressee's name is laid to bare making viewers who know how to spell the name feel superior and thus laugh at the former's shortcoming.

The humour in this example rests on viewers' successful recovery of the implication in utterance 3 against viewers' prior knowledge of the explicit information communicated by Esuo Abor Buo on his literacy. According to the cognitive principle of relevance, upon hearing Esuo Abor Buo begin to spell the name 'Jones' in utterance 3, viewers would naturally seek the greatest positive cognitive effect in exchange for little processing effort. They would assume – based on their knowledge of the correct spelling of the name 'Jones' and the contextual information available about Esuo Abor Buo's high literacy – that spelling his addressee's name should not be a problem to Esuo Abor Buo if he is indeed as knowledgeable as he claims. They are then faced with a cognitive dissonance when Esuo Abor Buo gets the latter part of the spelling wrong, an act that does not only prove inconsistent with viewers' relevance expectation but also leads to the spelling of a contextually irrelevant word. The communicative principle of relevance then leads viewers to search for optimal relevance in this seemingly irrelevant word in the current context. The viewers would expend extra mental effort in deducing from Esuo Abor Buo's spelling the implication that he is not literate after all. In effect, neither the moviemaker nor Esuo Abor Buo

communicates in explicit terms information about the latter's illiteracy. This piece of information is completely inferred by the viewer from Esuo Abor Buo's utterance.

In terms of translation, the subtitler succeeds to an extent in preserving the balance between the amount of humorous effects and mental effort intended by the moviemaker with the ST for the source culture. Based on viewers' linguistic knowledge, they may know beforehand the right spelling of the name 'Jones'. Even if they (the viewers) do not have this linguistic knowledge, the subtitler provides them with the right spelling in the subtitle for utterance 2 before proceeding to give Aserewa's wrong spelling, J-O-N-C-E, in that of utterance 3. Since the humour in the example largely rests on viewers' realisation of the wrongness of Aserewa's spelling of the name 'Jones', the subtitler's provision of both the right spelling and the wrong one by Aserewa makes it possible for viewers who are incapable of spelling the name to still experience the humour that the example carries. It can be claimed, therefore, that the translation provided for example (13) interpretively resemble the original fully in terms of its potential in soliciting a similar amount of humorous effects in the target-language viewers without the need for them to expend any unnecessary processing effort. The relatively easy achievement of this full interpretive resemblance by the translation may be explained by the fact that, 'Jones' and the spelling 'J-O-N-C-E' are both in English, and not Akan. This makes the translation of this bit of dialogue a case of intralingual translation/subtitling. The only transfer the translator does with his translation, then, is from speech to text.

Amongst the Akan ethnic group, it is a taboo for a king or chief to drink himself to stupor. It is even prohibited for a king or chief to be seen taking alcohol in public. In example (14) below, the chief of the land, who happens to be a drunkard, requests for *'agbaa'* (a strong locally-brewed alcoholic drink). He uses several euphemistic lexical items (i.e. *'eh', 'keka bi kyerɛ w'ase'* and *'mmoatia sakre'*) to prevent the people gathered from noticing that he is engaged in this tabooed activity.

Example 14. *I Told You So,* **'The stuff'**

[At Rosina's wedding. Her uncle, Esuo Abor Buo, calls on the chief of the land to pour libation to the gods]

1. Chief: … na e-n-nyi ‘eh’?
   Gloss: CONJ $2_{SG\ SUBJ}$-$_{NEG}$-have ‘eh’
   LT: *‘Don’t you have ‘eh’?*
   TT: ***‘Haven’t you… eh..***
2. Esuo Abor Buo: Eh?
   TT: ***‘What?’***
3. Chief: E-n-nyi ‘eh’?
   Gloss: $2_{SG\ SUBJ}$-$_{NEG}$-have ‘eh’?
   LT: *‘You don’t have ‘eh’?*
   TT: ***‘Haven’t you… eh..***
4. Esuo Abor Buo: … me-n-te ase, Nana
   Gloss: $1_{SG\ SUBJ}$-$_{NEG}$-hear under Nana
   LT: *‘I don’t understand, Nana’*
   TT ***‘I don’t get you’***
5. Chief: ‘keka bi kyerɛ w’-ase’
   Gloss: Say some show $2_{SG\ POSS}$-in-law
   LT: Say something to your in-law
   *TT: **‘Tell your in-law your piece of mind’***
6. Esuo Abor Buo: [looks confused]
7. Chief: ‘mmoatia sakre’
   Gloss: Dwarfs bicycle
   LT: *‘Dwarfs’ bicycle’*
   TT: ***‘Dwarfs’ bicycle’***
   [Rosina laughs in the background]
8. Chief: Oh ‘agbaa’!
   Gloss: Oh agbaa
   LT: *‘Oh the locally-brewed alcoholic drink’*
   TT: ***‘The stuff’***
9. Esuo Abor Buo: Oh ‘agbaa’… ebi wɔ hɔ bebree.
   Gloss: Oh ‘agbaa’… some have there more

LT: *'Oh 'agbaa'… there's more available'*

TT: ***'Oh, the stuff! O, I've got our home made stuff right here.'***

All the euphemistic terms used by the chief presents a second-order incongruity for Esuo Abor Buo and some viewers based on unusual juxtapositions (see section 2.3.3). The first one, *'eh',* presents an incongruity based on (within the context) a surprising sound which is eventually accepted as referring to the alcoholic drink. This sound 'eh' used in this context may have many different interpretations. It is for this reason that viewers are unlikely to understand what the chief intends it to mean when he first utters it. To understand what it means and resolve the incongruity it presents, viewers will require more information to be provided as done with utterances 5 and 7, as well as fall back on prior contextual information. The second and third, *'keka bi kyerɛ w'ase'* and *'mmoatia sakre'* are both metaphors used by a section of Ghanaians to refer to this particular alcoholic drink. Their use by the chief gives rise to incongruities for his addressee, Esuo Abor Buo, as the latter struggles to make meaning out of the metaphors. The incongruities are resolved once the covert meaning/referent of the terms are foregrounded by the chief in utterance 8. Dynel (2013, p. 31) argues that creative euphemisms such as those in example (14) above display overt incongruity with the recipient's cognitive model being his/her mental lexicon. Thus, whether or not a recipient has the metaphors used in this example as part of his/her lexicon will play a role in his/her identification and resolution of the incongruity they present. For instance, in our example, it is possible that the chief may have unintentionally elicited a humorous response from Rosina (made manifest by her laughter after utterance 7). It is either likely that Rosina already has one or both metaphors used by the chief in her lexicon or she infers based on the context what the chief intends the terms to mean. Likewise, some viewers may be able to infer from the context what the chief intends these metaphors to pick out since scenes prior to this one have established the chief as someone addicted to the drinking of this particular alcoholic drink. Other viewers as well as Esuo Abor Buo who are unable to make this inference only get to resolve the incongruity after the chief explicitly communicates the referent of the terms in utterance 8.

The humour in example (14) can be accounted for with Yus' MGI/SCI scheme discussed in section 2.4.1. In principle, the sound 'eh' used by the chief in utterance 1 can have extremely many different interpretations (MGIs). The viewer is not fooled into selecting any of these interpretations. In fact, the sound 'eh' is too arbitrary for both the viewer and addressee to be able to correctly infer its intended meaning. The chief further utters 5 and 7 which, depending on whether or not the viewer have these metaphors in their lexicon, may or may not appear incongruous to him/her. Esuo Abor Buo, after utterance 5, is still confused which indicates that he may not have the metaphor in his lexicon. Both the viewer and Esuo Abor Buo will naturally extend their processing effort to access various contextual information in their search for a relevant interpretation of the lexical items used. In the case of example (14), Esuo Abor Buo is unsuccessful at finding any such relevant interpretation. He and other viewers who are still faced with the incongruity after the chief utters 7 are only able to resolve the incongruity after the chief explicitly communicates what he intends all the aforementioned terms to mean (this correspond to Yus' single covert interpretation (SCI)). For Esuo Abor Buo and such viewers who are unable to resolve the incongruity themselves, the chief's resolution of the incongruity and the thought of having extended their processing effort only to remain unsuccessful at interpreting the terms triggers the humorous effects.

Other viewers, especially those who are able to infer from utterances 5 and 7 what the chief means will possibly experience humorous effects on the account that Esuo Abor Buo somehow showcases incompetence at deducing the intended referent of the lexical items, making such viewers feel superior for being competent at the task. Also, the fact that the chief has to resort to several speech acts in order to cover up his engagement in the tabooed act and finally giving up to express it explicitly in utterance 8 can partly account for the humour the viewers experience. The chief breaks tradition with utterance 8 and exposes his engagement in a tabooed act, causing a release of energy that would ordinarily be used to contain or repress psychic activity. This means both the superiority and relief theories of humour are at play in the account of the humour in example (14).

Example (14) presents a typical instance of verbal humour whose translation proves challenging to translators due to their inclusion of certain intra-cultural referents and linguistic resources that have no equivalents in the target language (see section 2.4.2). 'Agbaa' used in the example refers specifically to a very popular locally-brewed Ghanaian liquor known for its high alcoholic content. Per our account of the humour in the example, it was noted that viewers who are not proficient in Akan, as well as Esuo Abor Buo, only get to resolve the incongruity that the euphemistic lexical items present after the Chief explicitly utters what he means in utterance 8. Since the name 'agbaa' and its referent are both specific to the source culture, the subtitler might have to substitute 'agbaa' with an equivalent strong liquor in the target culture e.g. Moonshine. Even so, the subtitler will most likely face problems in finding similar metaphors for Moonshine (or any other strong liquor) as there are in the source language for 'agbaa'. In effect, the subtitler's use of the literal translation strategy for the metaphors and *'the stuff'* for 'agbaa' do not, in themselves, preserve the balance of humorous effects and mental effort that the moviemaker intended with the ST for the source audience. The target-language viewers will most likely expend excess mental effort in their quest to retrieve from the subtitles the speaker's intended meaning as they may lack the requisite cultural knowledge about the metaphors and their use. Nonetheless, the non-Akan viewers may assume in retrospect that all the creative expressions used by the chief refer to *'the stuff'*. They may experience humour, at least, on the account that the chief had to employ all these less-than-obvious expressions to refer to 'the stuff'. Following from this, it can be claimed that a little degree of interpretive resemblance in terms of humorous effects intended for the Akan viewers may have been achieved with the subtitles provided for the target-language viewers.

Example 15. *I Told You So,* **'No need to run'**

[an elder from Kobina Jones' family goes to Rosina's family. He asks Esuo Abor Buo, Rosina's uncle, to help convince Rosina's dad to grant Kobina Jones' request to marry his daughter]

1. Elder: Me-dwane toa wo
   Gloss: $1_{SG\ SUBJ}$-run after $2_{SG\ OBJ}$
   LT: '*I run after you'*

TT: '*I run to you for shelter'*

2. Esuo Abor Buo: Mɛ-n-nwane m-ma wo nan mu m-mu
   Gloss: 2_{SG}-$_{NEG}$-run $_{NEG}$-let $2_{SG\ POSS}$ leg inside $_{NEG}$-break
   LT: '*Don't run and break your leg'*
   TT: '*No need to run. You may break your leg'.*

In the above excerpt, utterance 1 by the elder comes with two possible interpretations. Taken literally, it is just a simple statement about the speaker physically running after or to his addressee. Amongst the Akans, however, this utterance can also be used idiomatically to mean "resorting to or looking up to someone for help". It is clear within the context that the elder intends his utterance to mean the latter and Esuo Abor Buo is aware of this. However, Esuo Abor Buo deliberately ignores what utterance 1 is intended to mean and responds to its literal meaning. This gives rise to incongruity between the communicative intention of the elder with his utterance 1 and Esuo Abor Buo's response with utterance 2, vis-à-vis the viewers and the elder. The incongruity is resolved once the viewers, as well as the elder, notice the intentionality behind Esuo Abor Buo's response: that Esuo Abor Buo creatively plays on the elder's idiom to make fun of him. The humour carried by Esuo Abor Buo's utterance 2, thus, may be experienced not just by the viewers but the elder as well.

This example also fits in Yus' MGI/SCI scheme. Utterance 1 comes with at least two possible interpretations (MGIs) which are graded according to their accessibility:

ix. The idiomatic meaning: resorting or looking up to someone for help
x. The literal meaning: running after or to someone.

Based on Akan viewers' linguistic knowledge and their knowledge of the context within which this bit of dialogue is made, they will most likely first select the idiomatic meaning. Once they have supplied this relevant interpretation for utterance 1, Esuo Abor Buo's utterance 2 surprises them as they suddenly notice the single covert interpretation (SCI) of utterance 1 – the literal

meaning. Incongruity then arises which needs to be resolved by the viewers. The resolution is successful when the viewers become aware of the fact that Esuo Abor Buo only intentionally plays on the idiom in utterance 1 with his utterance 2, just to make fun of the elder. This resolution is supposed to trigger the humorous effects in the viewers and the elder.

The success or failure of the subtitles provided for example (15) at achieving interpretive resemblance would be based on whether the target-language viewers notice the creative play on the idiom by Esuo Abor Buo. This means the viewers, first of all, would have to identify and understand the idiom used in utterance 1, or at least the fact that it is used metaphorically. This idiom-identifying task is made difficult for the target-language viewers with the TT provided for utterance 1. This is because the subtitler provides a translation that somehow bears a close resemblance with the meaning of the idiom and neither an equivalent idiom in the target language nor the literal meaning of the words used. This makes the TT *'I run to you for shelter'* in the context appear ambiguous for non-Akan viewers, especially since the elder had just arrived and could have possibly physically run from wherever he came from to his addressee. If this is the case (that the elder physically ran to Esuo Abor Buo), utterance 2 would most likely not be interpreted as a play on utterance 1. In that case, utterance 2 would simply pass as a caution to the elder not to run lest he breaks his leg. In effect, *'No need to run. You may break your leg'* as a response to *'I run to you for shelter'* may or may not yield humorous effects in the target-language viewers depending on whether or not they read the latter idiomatically or literally. Cultural knowledge (knowledge of Akan idioms), therefore, may play an essential role in the achievement or otherwise of interpretive resemblance by the TT.

The humour-eliciting potential of example (16) below lies in the entertainment of the literal and proverbial uses of Kwesi Twii's utterance 1. *"Ɔbaa nyɛn guan a, obenyin na ɔtɔn"* is an Akan proverb used to promote and maintain submissiveness on the part of women to men, as the latter are deemed to be the heads of households.

Example 16. *I Told You So,* '…**the women sell their own mutton…'**

[Kwesi Twii is talking to Esuo Abor Buo about how Rosina's mum, Araba Stamp, needs to share in his resolve not to allow their daughter marry Kobina Jones. Kwesi Twii plays

the gender card by pointing out, with the idiom in utterance 1 below, the fact that he is the man of the house and for that matter, Araba Stamp needs to follow his lead]

1. Kwesi Tsuii: …ɔbaa nyɛn guan a, obenyin na ɔ-tɔn
   Gloss: …woman rear sheep if, man REL 3SG SUBJ-sell
   LT: … if a woman rears a sheep, it is a man who sells.
   TT: ***'… a woman may look after sheep, but it's the man who sells the mutton'***
2. Esuo Abor Buo: Ooh Nkran mmɛsiafo deɛ ɔ-nyɛn wɔn nnwan a,
   Gloss: ooh Accra women-PL for 3PL SUBJ-rear 3PL POSS sheep-PL if,…
   LT: *'Ooh as for Accra women, if they breed their sheep,…'*
   CONT: wo-kɔ Makola a wɔn ara na wɔ-tɔn wɔn ade
   Gloss: 2SG SUBJ-go Makola if 3PL REFL REL 3PL SUBJ-sell 3PL POSS thing
   LT: *'... if you go to Makola, it is they themselves who sell them'*
   TT: ***'Here in Accra, the women sell their own mutton at Makola market.'***

The moviemaker plays on the prediction that viewers who possess the requisite cultural knowledge about this Akan proverb and its usage would most likely choose the proverbial reading of utterance 1 based on the context. The literal reading of the utterance by Esuo Abor Buo in utterance 2 thus gives rise to incongruity as it does not seem to fit well within the context. Akan viewers are able to resolve the incongruity once they realise Esuo Abor Buo intentionally selects the literal meaning of Kwesi Twii's utterance in order to showcase his disagreement with the latter regarding the supremacy of men over women. The Akan viewers would further deduce that when Esuo Abor Buo utters 2, he is not being incompetent but only using the proverb creatively to condemn Kwesi Twii's position, while making fun of him. This realisation of the playfulness behind Aserewa's usage of the proverb resolves the incongruity, triggering the humorous effects in the Akan viewers.

Again, this example can be captured with Yus' MGI/SCI scheme. Utterance 1 comes with at least two potential interpretations (MGIs):

xi. The proverbial meaning which establishes the supremacy of men over women in Ghanaian homes.

xii. The literal meaning which has to do with the fact that it is the man who sells sheep even if it is reared by a woman

The moviemaker predicts that Akan viewers would most likely first select the proverbial interpretation of utterance 1 based on their cultural knowledge of Akan proverbs and their usage. They are likely to select this interpretation because it satisfies their relevance expectations by providing them with enough positive cognitive effects in exchange for least processing effort. Once they select this relevant interpretation, clause (b) of the comprehension heuristic requires them to stop and not consider any other possible interpretation (including interpretation (xii) above). Since the Akan viewers have already supplied a relevant interpretation for Kwesi Twii's utterance, Esuo Abor Buo's selection of the literal interpretation, which informs his response in utterance 2, surprises them. This creates an incongruity that has to be resolved by the surprised viewers. Although this single literal interpretation (which corresponds to Yus' SCI) is not intentionally hidden from viewers, the context makes its selection somehow difficult for competent users of the source language. Viewers' realisation of the fact that Esuo Abor Buo intentionally chooses the literal meaning of the utterance in order to debunk Kwesi Twii's stance on male supremacy, as well as make fun of the latter, resolves the incongruity and triggers humorous effects in them.

The previous paragraph has established that the humour in example (16) draws on the moviemaker's play with the literal and proverbial readings of utterance 1. Thus, a subtitler who aims at producing for the target-language viewers a translation that interpretively resembles the original in terms of a balance between humorous effects and processing effort intended for the Akan viewers would have to translate such that the subtitles maintain faithfulness to this humour-eliciting strategy. This would mean finding a similar proverb in the target language about male supremacy. This target language proverb, as long as it projects the male supremacy ideology, could be about anything and need not necessarily contain such parallelism of the roles of males and females in the rearing and selling of livestock. In fact, if the only aim of the subtitle was to elicit similar humorous responses from the target-language viewers without recourse to

the set of explicatures and implicatures conveyed by the original, then any incongruity resulting from one's creative play on Kwesi Twii's proverb would most likely yield the intended result. However, interpretive resemblance, when it comes to the translation of humorous dialogues, seems as important at the level of the set of explicatures and implicatures carried by the original as the humorous effects it (the original) is intended to elicit. For this reason, the core message that the proverb in utterance 1 seeks to convey (male supremacy) needs to be carried and played on in the TT. This task will most likely prove difficult especially when translating for a target culture audience who, in the first place, strongly stand against gender inequality and for that matter, do not have such proverbs in their language. This challenge, in the case of example (16), may have informed the subtitler's use of the literal translation strategy. By choosing to translate literally, however, the subtitler may possibly have sacrificed the intended humorous effects for the pragmatic meaning. Nonetheless, some viewers may succeed at understanding the joke by inferring from the context that utterance 1 is used metaphorically.

In example (17) below, when Jimmy asks of the whereabouts of Jenny, he intends the name 'Jenny' to refer to his girlfriend. However, it is only Jimmy and viewers who are aware of the character Jenny up until this scene in the movie. Also, Ghanaians generally pronounce the word 'journey' as /dʒɜːni/ which bears a close resemblance in sound with the name 'Jenny' used in this context.

Example 17. From *Obroni Hiani*, **'Jenny'**

[Ohenewaa acts as an interpreter between Jimmy who speaks only English and Aserewa who speaks only Akan]

1. Jimmy: Where's Jenny?
2. Aserewa: Ɔ-se deɛn?
   Gloss: $3_{SG\ SUBJ}$-say-$_{COMPL}$ what?
   LT: *'He said what?'*
   TT: ***'What did he say?'***
3. Ohenewaa: Ɔ-se Jenny
   Gloss: $3_{SG\ SUBJ}$-say-$_{COMPL}$ Jenny.

LT: *'He said Jenny'*

TT: ***'Jenny'***

4. Aserewa: Aane, 'journey' no momm deɛ nokorɛ Nyame anim ni…
   Gloss: Yes, 'journey' DEF really for truth God before DEF
   CONT: … ɛ-bɛ-yɛ 1,500 kilometres
   Gloss: … $3_{SG\ NEUT\ SUBJ}$-$_{FUT}$-be 1,500 kilometres
   LT: *'Yes, as truthful as I can be before God, the journey should be about 1,500 kilometres'*
   TT: ***'Oh the journey. Truthfully, about 1,500 kilometres'***
5. Ohenewaa: Sir, it's a very long distance... a very long journey.

Yus (2003, p. 1305) gives a relevance-theoretic account of similar instances of verbal humour as arising out of communicators'/moviemakers' exploitation of the different stages involved in hearers' interpretive process of decoding/inference aimed at optimally relevant interpretations of speakers' utterances. In our example, disambiguation and reference assignment are the two interpretive stages involved in the interpretation of the potentially ambiguous sound /dʒɜni/. The moviemaker, in the case of example (17) exploits the divergence between the contextual information available to both Aserewa and Ohenewaa and those available to viewers for the sake of generating humour to be enjoyed by viewers. Thus, viewers' attempt at interpreting Aserewa's response with utterance 4 is first likely to result in the explicature below:

xiii. The speaker (Aserewa) truthfully estimates a certain journey to be about 1,500 kilometres.

However, the above interpretation seems irrelevant within the context as a direct answer to Jimmy's query, since it does not yield the expected amounts of positive cognitive effects, either for viewers or for Jimmy. Viewers' search for a more relevant interpretation may lead them to expend more mental effort in retrieving such contextual information as how Ghanaians generally pronounce the word 'journey' and Aserewa's shallow knowledge of English names. These pieces of information do not necessarily lead to a new interpretation of Aserewa's response different from assumption (xiii) above but they allow viewers to realise why Aserewa gives a response

which appears irrelevant within the context: he wrongfully disambiguates the sound string /dʒɜni/ into the common noun ‘journey’ instead of the proper name ‘Jenny’ and, therefore, assigns it a referent unintended by its speaker. Aserewa’s utterance, which appears irrelevant to Jimmy, achieves relevance to viewers because it results in more assumptions about Aserewa’s shallow knowledge of English phonology, and also generates for them humorous effects.

Explaining this in terms of Yus’ (2003, p. 1308) multiple graded interpretations, the speaker, Jimmy, communicates utterance 1 which contains the sound string /dʒɜni/ that has at least two potential interpretations which are graded according to their accessibility. These interpretations, what Yus terms the *multiple-graded interpretations* (MGI), in our example, are:

xiv. The proper name ‘Jenny’.
xv. The common noun ‘journey’.

Neither the viewer nor the direct addressee, Aserewa, is fooled into selecting any of the two interpretations as in Yus’ example in section 2.4.1. The moviemaker predicts – based on viewers’ potential linguistic knowledge and knowledge of such contextual information as the awareness of a character named Jenny – that they would first select the proper name ‘Jenny’ interpretation. This interpretation, the moviemaker predicts, would provide viewers with the best balance of positive cognitive effects in exchange for the mental effort its processing demands. Having followed paths of least effort to arrive at this relevant interpretation, viewers will stop their search according to the relevance-guided comprehension heuristic and will not consider the possibility of another interpretation. Thus, given Aserewa’s response in utterance 4, the viewers suddenly notice the single covert interpretation (SCI) of the sound string /dʒɜni/. This new interpretation is that of the common noun ‘journey’ stated in interpretation (xv) above. Although this SCI eventually turns out to be unintended by Jimmy and thus incorrect, its appearance surprises not only the viewer but Jimmy as well i.e. they are faced with incongruity in Aserewa’s interpretation of the sound string /dʒɜni/ and consequently his response with utterance 4. The surprised viewers have to resolve the incongruity by accessing such contextual information as Aserewa’s constant claim about Jimmy having fallen from an aeroplane. They would also have to access possibly information about Aserewa regarding whether or not the movie presents him

as a knowledgeable person or, perhaps, the opposite. This contextual information does not make Aserewa's interpretation of /dʒɜni/ correct but it allows viewers to understand why he selects that interpretation in the first place i.e. assigning 'journey' to the journey (distance) between the supposed aeroplane and the ground that he had found Jimmy fits Aserewa's assumption. The resolution of the incongruity, together with the viewers' realisation of Aserewa having wrongfully selected this unintended interpretation, triggers humorous effects in them.

It is worth noting that the humour in example (17) is not solely dependent on the entertainment of an incongruous sound string and its eventual resolution discussed in the previous paragraph. The humorous effects the example carries can partly be accounted for by means of the superiority theory of humour. As mentioned before, viewers, prior to the scene where the excerpt for example (17) is culled from, are furnished with enough contextual information regarding the character Jenny and how Jimmy ended up in that state. Backed by this background information, and possibly their knowledge of English phonology, the sound string /dʒɜni/ may not appear ambiguous to them when it is first uttered in 1. Such viewers will, thus, find Aserewa's wrongful attempt at disambiguating the sound string amusing on the provision that he is incompetent, hence, inferior and they are superior for knowing beforehand the sound string's intended referent. This makes Aserewa appear comical in his attempt, triggering humorous effects in the viewers.

As opposed to many of the examples used in this section, the linguistic item that causes the ambiguity, and eventually triggers the humorous effects, 'Jenny', is not in Akan, but English. The two possible interpretations of this linguistic item, 'Jenny' and 'journey', are both in the English language. For this reason, the translations provided for this particular part of the dialogue is yet another case of intralingual translation/subtitling (as in example 13). The difference between the ST and the TT of this part of the dialogue lies in the fact that there is a transfer between two channels: the verbal-auditory (spoken) and the verbal-visual (written). 'Jenny' and 'journey', in the context of Ghanaian English, are homophonous in sound, but they have to be disambiguated in writing. This, perhaps, explains the relative ease with which the subtitle provided succeeds at full interpretive resemblance of the original dialogue, that is, the interpretation of the TT in the example will most likely yield similar humorous effects for the

target-language viewers as the moviemaker sought to achieve for the source-language viewers with the ST without causing the target viewers unnecessary processing effort.

First, based on viewers' linguistic knowledge, they would possibly know beforehand how the name 'Jenny' is pronounced. Other viewers who may not possess this knowledge of English phonology may still be able to infer based on context, what Jimmy intends the sound string /dʒɜni/ to pick out. The subtitler goes on to make the interpretation of the sound string even easier for viewers. When Ohenewaa interprets Jimmy's question with her utterance 3, the subtitler renders it in text as 'Jenny'. This, in itself, disambiguates the ambiguous sound string used. With /dʒɜni/ disambiguated, it is easier for viewers to notice the incongruity that comes with Aserewa's common noun interpretation of the sound string in the TT of utterance 4 and subsequently Ohenewaa's interpretation in utterance 5. This makes the humorous intentions of the dialogue more obvious to the viewers.

Following from Morreal's definition of the incongruity theory of humour (see section 2.3.3), the feeling of humour is viewed, amongst other things, as a reaction to that which is unexpected and/or illogical. Thus, based on viewers' world knowledge that passengers of aircraft do not disembark in the course of their flights in order to pass urine, they may find Aserewa's utterance in example (18) below not only unexpected (incongruous with what goes on in our world) but also absurd.

Example 18. *Obroni Hiani,* '…**getting down from a flight to urinate?'**

[Aserewa, the illiterate village herbalist finds Jimmy, an Englishman lying unconscious on the floor with blood oozing from his mouth]

1. Aserewa: [contemplating]

	Anaa…?	Plane	no	re-kɔ	no	na	nka	ɔ-re-si
Gloss:	Or…?	Aeroplane	DEF	PROG-go	when	CONJ	if	3SG SUBJ-PROG-disembark
CONT:	a-bɛ-dwonsɔ	anaa?						
Gloss:	3SG SUBJ-FUT-urinate	or						
LT:	'*Or…? He disembarked the aeroplane when it was moving to urinate or?'*							
TT:	***'Was he getting down from a flight to urinate?'***							

According to relevance theory, the production of every ostensive stimulus creates relevance expectations in recipients. These relevance expectations are such that addressees would naturally seek to interpret even seemingly illogical utterances as that of Aserewa in example (18) above to attain some degree of relevance. Thus, to deal with the incongruity in Aserewa's utterance, viewers may embark on a search for a more relevant interpretation by accessing, for example, the world knowledge that getting out of an aeroplane when it is in the air, will most likely cause death – and thus a ridiculous thing to do if a passenger has to urinate. The viewers would also resort to their general knowledge about Aserewa: a character who is presented as having lived his whole life in a typical Ghanaian village, unintelligent, and possibly with no knowledge about aircraft and how they operate.

Armed with this information, viewers can draw from Aserewa's utterance the implication that he is simply exhibiting his ignorance with his utterance. The humorous effects that viewers experience from the resolution of the incongruity in Aserewa's utterance are worth the extra cognitive effort used to access the various contextual and world information.

The humour in example (18) can also be partly accounted for by the relief theory of humour. The inclusion of the tabooed activity of urinating in Aserewa's utterance has the tendency of causing viewers to experience laughter on the account that they experience a momentary relief from conforming to a set social restriction on the utterance of such tabooed activity. Aserewa disregards this societal restraint and openly utters this tabooed activity in the example, causing a release of accumulated nervous energy generated in viewers through constant repression.

Humour borne out of absurdities as in example (18) above can be classified, in terms of its translation, as transferrable, coinciding with Walaszewska & Piskorska's 'transferrable jokes' (see section 2.4.2). Such absurdities tend to appear so in most, if not all, cultures, making them easy to translate. Also, in most languages of the world, there exist various euphemistic terms used to express the act of urinating Thus, the somehow literal translation employed by the subtitler in the TT *(Was he getting down from a flight to urinate?)* is still likely to yield similar humorous effects for the target-language viewers as the ST does for the source-language viewers.

There is a minor difference between the Akan original and the subtitles provided for this example, which is worth pointing out. Whereas the Akan original makes the information about the flight being in motion explicit, this information is rendered implicit in the TT since 'getting down from a flight' can connote getting down from an already-landed aeroplane. This minor alteration, however, does not necessarily lead to a loss in the translation as readers are still aided by the context in deducing what Aserewa means. They, therefore, experience similar humorous effects without expending extra unnecessary effort as the moviemaker intended for the source-language viewers.

There are switches between two languages (English and Akan) in example (19) below. As indicated in the synopsis of the movie *Obroni Hiani* (see section 3.1), Jimmy and Aserewa are incompetent at speaking each other's language. However, Aserewa, having lived in a country where the official language is English, may be able to put few English words together to convey meaning. In fact, code-mixing/code-switching between English and the various indigenous languages is a very common practice amongst Ghanaians, irrespective of their educational backgrounds. It is therefore not surprising that Aserewa, as illiterate as he is presented to be in the movie, is able to switch between codes in order to convey meaning, i.e. from Akan to English in the example below.

Example 19. From *Obroni Hiani*, **'Bird Fart'**

[Aserewa is trying to explain to Jimmy what his nickname refers to]

1. Aserewa: …Anomaa Ta
   Gloss: … Bird fart
   LT: *'...Bird Fart'*
2. Jimmy: Ok I don't know that bit
3. Aserewa: …beld fosh!
4. Jimmy: What?
5. Aserewa: Anomaa ta, beld fosh!
6. Jimmy: Belt?
7. Aserewa: ɛ-nnyɛ belt…

Gloss: $3_{SG\ NEUT}$-$_{NEG}$-is belt…

LT: It is not belt…

8. Jimmy: Bell, bell, the ringing bell?
9. Aserewa: Wo-n-nim anomaa? [depicts a flying bird's movement with both arms]

   Gloss: $2_{SG\ SUBJ}$-$_{NEG}$-know bird

   LT: You do not know bird?
10. Jimmy: Birrrdd!!
11. Aserewa: Yeeaah! Beld! Fosh!
12. Jimmy: What is fosh?
13. Aserewa: … You know? You go to private, the first shoot. Pooh! Prududududu!
14. Jimmy: Oh! [Laughs hysterically]
15. Aserewa: … ɛno deɛ wo-ate aseɛ.

    Gloss: … $3_{SG\ NEUT}$ for 2_{SG}-hear-$_{COMPL}$ under

    LT: … for that you understand
16. Jimmy: Ok. Like, Bird Fart.

Apart from the inclusion of the tabooed human excreta in Aserewa's nickname which, in itself, generates humour accounted for by the relief theory (see example (11)), example (19) above presents yet another instance of verbal humour encompassed by the second-order textual incongruity model. The wrongful pronunciation of the name 'bird' by Aserewa, and his juxtaposition of the taboo substance 'fart' with the onomatopoeic word 'fosh' give rise to incongruities for his addressee. Both terms, 'beld' and 'fosh' appear absurd and thus incongruous within the context at hand, posing difficulties in their interpretation for Jimmy. These incongruities are only resolved when Jimmy infers from the clues given with Aserewa's depiction of a flying bird's movement in 9 and the introduction of further onomatopoeia in 13 what Aserewa intends both terms to mean.

Again, the use of 'beld' and 'fosh' by Aserewa presents incongruities for Jimmy as both can have multiple interpretations (MGIs). Taking only Jimmy's guesses into consideration, 'beld' may be interpreted as 'belt', 'bell' or 'bird', depending on how the addressee hears it. 'Fosh' can

have extremely multiple different interpretations. The addressee, Jimmy, first selects the 'belt' interpretation which turns out not to be the speaker's intended referent. Jimmy goes on to select the 'bell' interpretation which also turns out not to be what Aserewa intends the term to mean. Jimmy extends his processing effort and infers from Aserewa's utterance 9 the single covert interpretation (SCI) of the word which had so far remained unavailable to him (Jimmy). Similarly, he infers from Aserewa's provision of other onomatopoeia in utterance 13 the SCI of 'fosh'. These inferences aid Jimmy in resolving the incongruity, causing him to experience humour.

Viewers who know from the onset what Aserewa intends 'beld fosh' to mean also experience humour which can be accounted for by the superiority theory. The several unsuccessful attempts by Jimmy to interpret Aserewa's terms make the former appear comical before such viewers, while they feel somewhat superior for knowing what Aserewa means.

The subtitler of this movie provides no subtitles for the entire excerpt that make up example (19). This may have been intentional as part of the humour it carries relies on guessing one's way through to the intended interpretation of Aserewa's nickname. Just as Jimmy's several attempts at interpreting the nickname contribute to the overall humorous effects he experiences at the end, so is it likely that viewers who are not competent in the Akan language may achieve similar effects by guessing their way to the intended interpretation. Providing viewers with the (correct) translation of Aserewa's nickname in utterance 1 would possibly reduce viewers' processing effort at the expense of experiencing little to no positive cognitive effects (humorous effects, in our case). Nonetheless, it is not for certain that this factor informed the subtitler's decision not to provide any subtitles for example (19) as several other characters' non-humorous verbal interactions in this particular movie came without translations. These translation omissions will form part of the discussion in section 4.4 below.

4.4 Summary and discussion

The present chapter thus far has been dedicated to the presentation and analysis of dialogue excerpts from the two Akan movies adopted for this thesis. The present section is dedicated to the summary of the study's main findings, as well as a discussion of key observations made in the course of analysis.

First, the presentation and analysis of a variety of examples are done, amongst other things, to show the breadth of humour forms prevalent in, at least, the two Akan movies selected for the study. From the examples used so far, it can be observed that conversational humour in the two Akan movies manifests itself in a wide array of creative linguistic phenomena, such as irony/sarcasm (as used in example 10), the open expression of tabooed activities and substances (as used in examples 11, 18 and 19), novel stylistic modifications, e.g. on proverbs and idioms, as used in examples (15) and (16), allusions, hyperboles and neologisms. Partington (2008, p. 201) terms these stylistic figures and innovative deviations from stylistic norms collectively as *colourful language.* Others come in the form of disparaging remarks/putdowns (as used in example 9), misunderstandings/misrepresentations (as used in examples 17 and 19), absurdities (as used in example 18), the showcase of incompetence (as used in example 13).

With regard to what accounts for the humour in the excerpts drawn for the study, the analysis shows a diverging trend between the examples, depending on which humour theory/theories is/are at play in their accounts. The analysis shows, for instance, that the humorous effects carried by some of the excerpts are caused by certain characters' and/or viewers' momentary feeling of superiority over a character when the latter exhibits some incompetence at a task, is disparaged or ridiculed. Within other excerpts, the humour is caused by a sudden release of some nervous energy in viewers (and sometimes, some characters) which have been accumulated in them over time as a means of repressing the urge to openly talk about certain tabooed activities and substances. Lastly, the funniness of some of the dialogue excerpts is shown to be mainly caused by the creation of incongruities and clashes of assumptions by certain characters' speech.

To determine the extent to which the subtitles provided for the excerpts are likely to succeed or fail at eliciting similar humorous responses from the target-language viewers, for the same or

least amounts of processing effort, the chapter employs Gutt's (1998, 2000) notion of interpretive resemblance. In chapter two (see section 2.4.2), it is argued that Gutt's idea of a translation interpretively resembling its original merely because it shares the set of explicatures and implicatures with the latter is not entirely complete. In fact, this idea seems to be overridden by Gutt's (1992, p. 42) own claim that "if we ask in what respects the intended interpretation of the translation should resemble the original, the answer is: in respects that make it adequately relevant to the audience – that is, that offer adequate contextual effects." What is "adequately relevant" to the audience, is not always the explicit content of the translation but, sometimes, the relative success at which the translation carries certain pragmatic qualities that the original was intended to convey to the source-language audience. Thus, in the case of humour translation, adequate relevance may be sought beyond the set of explicatures and implicatures to include the amounts of similar humorous effects the translation achieves in the target-language audience as the original does in the source-language audience. From the analyses of the examples, it has become apparent that the task of translating such that this resemblance is achieved is particularly challenging.

Humour often relies on cultural schemas, assumptions and stereotypes which are distinct from one culture to another. Thus, humour that is built around unique cultural assumptions and referents become difficult to translate for a target culture audience to whom such assumptions and referents are alien. Following from this, the analyses so far have established some interesting patterns between the examples regarding the relative success that their translations achieve in terms of interpretively resembling the Akan original in humorous respects for similar or least processing efforts. These patterns are discussed below:

a. There appears to be a differential pattern between the translations of the examples captured under the (main) sources of humour, (i.e. superiority, relief and incongruity) with regard to their relative success at achieving interpretive resemblance. It is observed, for instance, that humour arising mainly from such phenomena encompassed by the superiority and relief theories tend to pose challenges in its translation for the subtitlers. This is evidenced by the fact that all the examples captured by these two theories come with subtitles which are likely not to evoke

similar humorous responses from the target-language viewers. On the other hand, some (not all) of the examples captured by the incongruity theory come with subtitles that are likely to succeed at achieving varying degrees of interpretive resemblance by evoking similar humorous effects in the target-language viewers (see examples 13, 15, 17, 18). The reason why not all the examples captured by the incongruity theory come with subtitles which are likely to interpretively resemble the Akan original, perhaps, underpins the second pattern observed, presented below.

b. Generally, the differences between the examples whose subtitles achieve a considerable amount of interpretive resemblance and those which do not seem to be motivated by the existence of certain cultural differences between the source and target cultures. The inclusion of specific intra-cultural referents and the unavailability of certain cultural assumptions to the target-language viewers seem to result in translations which are likely to fail at achieving the interpretive resemblance. These factors hold true for almost all the examples whose translations, in the course of analysis, have been categorised as not likely to succeed at interpretively resembling the original in humorous respects, or achieving little resemblance that may not be worth the mental effort their processing require. These include all the examples captured by the superiority theory (i.e. examples (9) and (10)), examples (11) and (12) captured by the relief theory, as well as examples (14), (15) and (16) captured by the incongruity theory.

c. Another observation made regarding patterns in the subtitles relating to degrees of success at achieving interpretive resemblance has to do with examples (13) and (17). As noted in the course of their analyses, the parts of dialogue in these examples that generate the incongruity whose resolution triggers the humorous effects are in English and not Akan. This makes the translations provided for these parts of dialogue cases of intralingual translation/subtitling. Thus, the subtitlers, while translating these parts, only convert speech to text. For this reason, the TTs of these

two examples achieve the highest degrees of interpretive resemblance as the humour-soliciting incongruities are made more obvious.

Following from the definitions and discussions of the traditional theories of humour in chapter two of the present study (superiority, relief and incongruity), it is observed that each of the theories seems to be characterising some essential aspects for the generation and perception of humour. The theories seem to describe the term 'humour' from different but specific angles such that each theory views the feeling of humour as arising out of, for instance, one's feeling of superiority over another, one's release of a pent-up psychic energy or an intellectual reaction to illogical, unexpected happenings or utterances. Interestingly, the analyses of our examples thus far have shown that the mechanisms underlying the generation and appreciation of the humour in some of the excerpts are not solely accounted for by a single humour theory. Some of the examples carry humour whose accounts depend on at least two of the theories used (see examples (13), (14), (17), (18), (19)). Based on this finding, the present study surmises that the different approaches to humour assumed by these theories may possibly be due to the fact that they point out some subset and aspects of humorous utterances or events and not the general feeling of humour. The possibility of two or more of these aspects of humour co-occurring in a single communicative encounter cannot be ruled out, which, perhaps, explains why the above-listed examples carry humour that is accounted for by at least two of the theories used.

The analysis thus far has also shown that, although Sperber & Wilson's relevance theory is not specifically designed for humour analysis, the framework contains certain hypotheses and concepts which are suitable for capturing how various humour forms – especially those arising out of verbal incongruity – are generated and interpreted. Every ostensive stimulus, whether verbal or non-verbal, creates in recipients expectations of relevance such that they are willing to expend varying degrees of processing effort in their bid to get to the relevant interpretations of the stimulus. What is relevant, in our case, are utterances which offer the target-language viewers the same or similar humorous effects intended for the source-language viewers with the original dialogue. The search for relevance is not only at play in the processing of humorous discourse in movies, but also aids moviemakers to carefully construct characters' dialogues such that they

play on the interpretive steps and processes viewers are predicted to go through in arriving at relevant interpretations. As seen in the analyses of several examples in section 4.3, the above relevance-theoretic claim is essential to the understanding of how moviemakers construct film discourse such that it leads viewers to select first accessible interpretations consistent with the principle of relevance, only to be provided with a more unlikely interpretation by other characters, which may turn out to be or not to be the correct speaker-intended interpretation.

The analysis has also strengthened other researchers' assumptions about humour in dramatic discourse. For instance, it has strengthened Dynel's (2013, p. 23) claim that central to the workings of humour in movies is the fact that their discourses operate on two levels of communication: the inter-character level and recipient's level. From the examples presented above, it can be noted that sometimes the interactions between characters generate humour which is appreciated by the viewer as well as (some) characters in the movie. For instance, when Esuo Abor Buo implies in his utterance in example (12) that he would have had sexual relations with Rosina if she had not been his niece, it does not only amuse some viewers but also elicits humorous responses from both Araba Stamp and Esuo Abor Buo himself. Other times, the dialogues of the examples carry various phenomena which do not carry humour at the inter-character level but may be perceived humorous by the viewer. Typical of such dialogues are those which include utterances aimed at disparaging, belittling or simply making fun of other characters. The direct targets of such utterances mostly do not appreciate any humour they may carry. For instance, the humour carried by both examples under section (4.1) are solely meant for viewers' amusement and not to be enjoyed by the direct addressees.

Further, as hinted in the methodology chapter (section 3.1), data presented for analysis in the present chapter have shown a dichotomy between *I Told You So* and *Obroni Hiani* in terms of the frequency of subtitles provided for their dialogues. Considering only the examples analysed, it can be noted that all the excerpts from *I Told You So* came with translations for each utterance. This trend holds valid for most humorous and non-humorous verbal interactions between characters of this movie as even intermittent songs sung by characters tend to come with corresponding subtitles. On the other hand, a number of utterances in *Obroni Hiani* – including some used for analysis in the present chapter – come either completely without subtitles (as with

example 19) or with incomplete translations (as in example 11). These omissions in the movies' subtitles may have adverse effects on viewers' overall perception of the humour the original dialogue is intended to carry to the Akan viewers. Beyond this, omissions in the subtitles have the potential of causing miscommunications at the semantic and pragmatic content levels for the target-language viewers. The fact that, out of the two movies adopted for the present study, the 2014 movie came with more omissions in its subtitles than the 1970 movie somehow strengthens Díaz-Cintas' (2005, p. 4) assertion about the sharp decline in quality standards in subtitling practice over the years. Unlike the producers of *I Told You So* and other such colonial movie producers, current Ghanaian movie producers are free to churn out movies without proper state-sponsored quality control checks. This lack of supervisory control, coupled with other factors outlined by Díaz-Cintas such as low incomes, strict deadlines, more precarious freelancing, etc. may have resulted in the change in subtitling practices over the years.

Data presented has also established the fact that although the manifestations of humour in dramatic discourse as in our examples are supposed to mirror, as much as possible, those in real-life conversations, there exist instances of verbal humour which are restricted to the discourse of movies and are inconceivable in real-life talk. The humour that comes with example (18) in our data analysis may be considered as a case in point which may be inconceivable in present Ghanaian real-life discourse. Indeed, there are people in Ghana who know little to nothing about aircraft and how they operate. It is unlikely, however, for such people to assume, as Aserewa does, that passengers actually disembark from on-going flights just to pass urine on the ground. This and other such ridiculous assumptions do not materialise in everyday Ghanaian conversations. Dynel (2013, p. 23) captures this when she notes that moviemakers carefully construct characters' interactions to facilitate the occurrence of various humour forms based on different communicative phenomena which would either be impossible in everyday discourse or, if materialised, would not carry any humorousness for any participant.

5 Conclusion and suggestions for further research

5.0 Conclusion

The present study aimed to provide insights into the verbal humour forms prevalent in the discourse of Akan movies, give accounts of their funniness, and examine their subtitles to determine the degrees at which they are likely to succeed at eliciting similar humorous responses from the target-language viewers as intended with the original dialogue for the Akan viewers. The study attempted achieving this set of aims based on dialogue excerpts drawn from two Akan movies, namely *I Told You So* (1970) and *Obroni Hiani* (2014). The workings of these excerpts were presented and analysed in the light of the traditional tripartite theories of humour (superiority, relief and incongruity) and certain concepts of Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory.

First, it was pointed out that the kind of verbal humour employed in the discourse of Akan movies and, for that matter, many non-Akan dramatic discourses is what has come to be termed as 'conversational humour'. It was argued that conversational humour, although reminiscent of the spontaneity of the humour in everyday human communication, tend to be as a result of a careful, conceptualised, and scripted endeavour when it is applied in movies. It was found that the types of conversational humour prevalent in, at least, the two Akan movies selected for this study come in the form of putdowns, teases/ridicules/banters, ironies/sarcasms, open declaration of tabooed activities and substances, incongruities and clashes of assumptions, euphemisms, metaphors, allusions, hyperboles, neologisms, and sheer absurdities. It was argued that the humour carried by these phenomena are sometimes directed solely at the viewers, with no humour to be enjoyed by any interlocutor in the movie. Other times, the humour is to be enjoyed by the viewers, as well as certain characters in the movie.

The superiority theory of humour was argued to be applicable in the analysis of the funniness of a couple of examples drawn for this study. The theory was shown to account for all instances of humour in the examples which arise out of a character's (or a viewer's) sudden feeling of some eminence, by comparison with the shortcoming or incompetence of another character. The extreme form of humour encompassed by the superiority theory, disaffiliative humour

(juxtaposed with affiliative humour in section 2.3.1), was argued to be, perhaps, the most prevalent kind of verbal humour employed in Akan movies. It comprises, amongst other categories, putdowns, excessive ridiculing, and even insults. Apart from the examples presented under section 4.1, the superiority theory was also shown to partly account for the humour in some of the examples in section 4.3 (see examples 13, 14, 17 and 19)

The relief theory was also shown to be applicable in the analysis of the humour intended to be carried by some of the examples. It was argued that the rather strict prohibitions placed on certain tabooed activities and substances by the Akan people cause people to experience laughter when someone disregards the set restrictions and openly talks about these taboos. According to the relief theory of humour, the laughter experienced in this manner is as a result of a release of a pent-up nervous energy generated in people through constant repression against the utterance of such taboos. Again, the relief theory was shown to play roles in the accounts of the overall humorous effects intended to be carried by some of the examples mainly captured by the incongruity theory (see examples (14), (18) and (19).

The incongruity-resolution model was used to account for various instances of verbal humour in the examples which were based on the predicted stages of viewers' and/or characters' interpretation of (other) characters' utterances. As argued in section 2.3.3, the incongruity-resolution model assumes that people tend to experience humour when they encounter a deviation from a cognitive model of reference while interpreting a stimulus, and eventually resolve this deviation according to an appropriate cognitive rule. In the course of analysing the examples which carry humour of this kind, the present study supplemented the incongruity-resolution model with Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory. Relevance theory was used to detail which interpretations addressees are likely to select at different points in the dialogue excerpts that may lead to incongruities whose eventual resolution triggers the humorous effects. As pointed out in the preceding paragraphs, as well as in section 4.4, the analysis showed that very often, the same utterance/excerpt simultaneously draw on more than one of the three humour mechanisms.

Gutt's (1998, 2000) notion of interpretive resemblance was also used to show the extent to which the subtitles provided for the examples resemble the original dialogues in terms of their likelihood at achieving similar humorous effects in the target-language viewers. Whilst making analysis on the degrees of interpretive resemblance of the subtitles to the original dialogues, the study drew in the possible amounts of mental effort viewers are likely to expend in achieving the original's intended humorous effects. It was shown that, sometimes, the subtitles require the target-language viewers to expend more mental effort in retrieving the intended humour of the original. Other times, the translations make the jokes more obvious such that the target-language viewers use less processing effort.

5.1 Suggestions for further research

The fact that, generally, there seem to be no study on humour in the Akan language and, in particular, humour in Akan dramatic discourse necessitates further research into the phenomenon. The absence of a review of literature on Akan verbal humour throughout the present study was engendered by its seeming dearth of scholarship. It is, therefore, hoped that this study will instigate researchers of diverse scholarly backgrounds to explore different types and aspects of Akan verbal humour. For instance, based on the findings of the present study, researchers can investigate into detail each humour form identified as prevalent in the discourse of the two Akan movies (i.e. irony, sarcasm, euphemism, metaphor, etc.). Research interest could also be directed at canned jokes in Akan, which was not the focus of the present study.

Also, as pointed out in section 3.1, the present study sourced data from only two Akan movies due to a limitation on the period allocated for data collection. It is recommended that future studies on humour in Akan dramatic discourse make use of examples drawn from more movies. This is likely to result in research findings that are much more reflective of most Akan movies.

Further, during the course of this study, it was observed that much-existing humour research employing the classical humour theories tend not to draw in the relief theory in their analyses (for example, Dynel, 2013; Vandaele, 2002b; Yus, 2003). In these and other such studies, the humorous effects carried by certain examples appear to be presented as being solely accountable

for by the superiority and/or incongruity theories of humour, although, in some cases, the utterance of various tabooed activities and substances seem to play crucial roles in the generation of the overall humorous effects. Whilst the reasons behind the exclusion of the relief theory of humour in such studies' analyses are unknown, it would be interesting to find much future humour research make use of this theory in their analyses.

References

Adjei, M. (2014). The Video-Movie Flourish in Ghana: Evolution and the Search for Identity. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 4*(17), 61-68.

Alexander, R. (1997). *Aspects of verbal humour in English* (Vol. 13). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Ansah, G. N. (2014). Re-examining the fluctuations in language in-education policies in post-independence Ghana. *Multilingual education*, *4*(1), 1-15.

Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor* (Vol. 1). New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Attardo, S. (2001). *Humorous texts: A semantic and pragmatic analysis* (Vol. 6). New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Attardo, S. (2002). Translation and humour: An approach based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). *The translator*, *8*(2), 173-194.

Bodomo, A., Anderson, J., & Dzahene-Quarshie, J. (2009). A kente of many colours: multilingualism as a complex ecology of language shift in Ghana. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, *3*(3), 357.

Carston, R. (2004). Relevance theory and the saying/implicating distinction. In L. R. Horn & G. Ward (Eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics*, (pp. 633-656). Malden: Blackwell.

Chiaro, D. (1992). *The language of jokes: analysing verbal play*. London: Routledge.

Chiaro, D. (2004). Investigating the perception of translated Verbally Expressed Humour on Italian TV. *ESP Across Cultures*, *1*(1), 35-52.

Chiaro, D. (2005). Verbally expressed humor and translation: An overview of a neglected field. *Humor*, *18*(2), 135-145.

Chiaro, D. (2006). Verbally expressed humour on screen: Reflections on translation and reception. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, *6*, 198-208.

Chiaro, D. (2009). Issues in audiovisual translation. In J. Munday (Ed.), The *Routledge companion to translation studies*, (pp. 141-165). New York: Routledge.

Chiaro, D. (2010). *Translation, Humour and Literature: Translation and Humour* (Vol. 1): Bloomsbury Publishing.

Clark, B. (2013). *Relevance theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coates, J. (2007). Talk in a play frame: More on laughter and intimacy. *Journal of Pragmatics, 39*(1), 29-49.

Critchley, S. (2011). *On humour*. New York: Routledge.

Curcó, C. (1995). Some observations on the pragmatics of humorous interpretations: a relevance theoretic approach. *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics, 7*, 27-47.

Curcó, C. (1997). *The pragmatics of humorous interpretations: A relevance-theoretic approach* (Doctoral dissertation). University of London, London.

Delabastita, D. (2002). A Great Feast of Languages: Shakespeare's Multilingual Comedy in 'King Henry V' and the Translator. *The Translator, 8*(2), 303-340.

Díaz-Cintas, J. (1999). Dubbing or subtitling: The eternal dilemma. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology, 7*(1), 31-40.

Diaz-Cintas, J. (2003). Audiovisual Translation in the Third Millennium. In G. Anderman & M. Rogers (Eds.), *Translation Today: Trends and Perspectives* (pp. 192-204). Clevedon: *Multilingual Matters Ltd*.

Diaz-Cintas, J. (2005). Back to the Future in Subtitling. *Marie Curie Euroconferences MuTra: Challenges of Multidimensional Translation, University of Saarland, 200*.

Díaz-Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2014). *Audiovisual Translation, Subtitling*. London: Routledge.

Dynel, M. (2009a). Beyond a joke: Types of conversational humour. *Language and Linguistics Compass, 3*(5), 1284-1299.

Dynel, M. (2009b). *Humorous garden-paths: A pragmatic-cognitive study*. Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Pub.

Dynel, M. (2013). Humorous phenomena in dramatic discourse. *The European Journal of Humour Research, 1*(1), 22-60.

Freud, S. (1905). 1963, Jokes and their relation to the unconscious: WW Norton.

Gambier, Y. (2004). La traduction audiovisuelle: un genre en expansion. *Meta: Journal des traducteurs Meta: Translators' Journal, 49*(1), 1-11.

Garritano, C. (2013). *African Video Movies and Global Desires: A Ghanaian History*. Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Ghana Statistical Service (2012). *2010 Population and Housing Census: Summary report of final results.* Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Giora, R. (1988). Semantic mechanisms of humor. *Philosophia, 18*(4), 409-415.

Giora, R. (1991). On the cognitive aspects of the joke. *Journal of Pragmatics, 16*(5), 465-485.

Gutt, E.-A. (1992). *Relevance theory: A guide to successful communication in translation*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Gutt, E.-A. (1998). Pragmatic aspects of translation: Some relevance-theory observations. *The pragmatics of translation, 12*, 41.

Gutt, E.-A. (2000). *Translation and relevance: cognition and context*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hobbes, T. (1994). *Human Nature; de Corpore Politico: Or the Fundamental Elements of Policy*. London: Thoemmes Press.

Hu, S. (2012). An analysis of humor in The Big Bang Theory from pragmatic perspectives. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 2*(6), 1185-1190.

Krikmann, A. (2006). Contemporary linguistic theories of humour. *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore, 33*, 27-58.

Lewis, M. P., Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (Eds.). (2015). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Eighteenth edition*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com.

Lynch, O. H. (2002). Humorous communication: Finding a place for humor in communication research. *Communication theory, 12*(4), 423-445.

Martin, R. A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J., & Weir, K. (2003). Individual differences in uses of humor and their relation to psychological well-being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire. *Journal of research in personality*, *37*(1), 48-75.

Morreall, J. (1983). *Taking laughter seriously*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Nai-shi, L. (2005). Humor Incongruity and Resolution from the Perspective of Relevance Theory [J]. *Journal of Pla University of Foreign Languages*, *1*, 003.

Norrick, N. R. (2004). Non-verbal humor and joke performance. *Humor-International Journal of Humor Research*, *17*(4), 401-409.

Norrick, N. R., & Chiaro, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Humor in interaction* (Vol. 182). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Osam, E. K. (2004). *An introduction to the structure of Akan: its verbal and multiverbal systems*. Accra: Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana.

Partington, A. (2008). From Wodehouse to the White House: a corpus-assisted study of play, fantasy and dramatic incongruity in comic writing and laughter-talk. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, *4*(2), 189-213.

Pelsmaekers, K., & Van Eesien, F. (2002). Subtitling irony: Blackadder in Dutch. *The translator, 8*(2), 241-266

Raskin, V. (1979). Semantic mechanisms of humor. *Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society, 5*, 325-335.

Raskin, V. (2012). *Semantic mechanisms of humor* (Vol. 24). Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Remael, A. (2010). Audiovisual translation. In Y. Gambier & L. V. Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies, 1*, (pp. 12-17).

Ritchie, G. (1999). *Developing the incongruity-resolution theory*. Paper presented at the AISB Symposium on Creative Language Stories and Humour, Edinburgh.

Ritchie, G. (2004). *The linguistic analysis of jokes*: London: Routledge.

Ross, A. (2005). *The language of humour*. London: Routledge.

Ruch, W. (2001). The perception of humor. In A. Kaszniak (Ed.), *Emotion, qualia, and consciousness*, (pp. 410-425). Singapore: World Scientific.

Shade, R. A. (1996). *License to laugh: Humor in the classroom*. Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing.

Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). Postface" to the second edition of Relevance. *Relevance*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Suls, J. (1983). Cognitive processes in humor appreciation. In P. E. McGhee & J. H. Goldstein (Eds.). *Handbook of humor research* (pp. 39-57). New York: Springer.

Suls, J. M. (1972). A two-stage model for the appreciation of jokes and cartoons: An information-processing analysis. *The psychology of humor: Theoretical perspectives and empirical issues, 1*, 81-100.

Vaid, J., Hull, R., Heredia, R., Gerkens, D., & Martinez, F. (2003). Getting a joke: The time course of meaning activation in verbal humor. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *35*(9), 1431-1449.

Vandaele, J. (2002a). Introduction: (Re-) Constructing Humour: Meanings and Means. *The translator*, *8*(2), 149-172.

Vandaele, J. (2002b). Humor mechanisms in film comedy: Incongruity and superiority. *Poetics Today*, *23*(2), 221-249.

Veale, T. (2004). Incongruity in humor: Root cause or epiphenomenon? *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, *17*(4),419–428.

Veale, T., Feyaerts, K., & Brône G. (2006). The Cognitive Mechanisms of Adversarial Humor. *Humor: The International Journal of Humor Research, 19* (3), 305-338.

Wałaszewska, E., & Piskorska, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Relevance theory: More than understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Wilson, D., & Sperber, D. (2004). Relevance theory. In L. R. Horn & G. Ward (Eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics*, (pp. 607-632). Malden: Blackwell.

Yong, W. (2001). A Study of Humorous Utterances from the Perspective of Relevance [J]. *Foreign Language Education*, *1*, 004.

Yus, F. (2003). Humor and the search for relevance. *Journal of pragmatics*, *35*(9), 1295-1331.

Zabalbeascoa, P. (2005). Humor & translation-An interdisciplinary. Humor: International Journal of Humor Research, 18 (2): 185-207.

YouTube video sources

Adowa TV. (2014, July 28). *OBRONI HIANII 1-Asante Akan Ghana Twi Movie* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8yu2ona8Uo

Adowa TV. (2014, July 28). *OBRONI HIANII 2-Asante Akan Ghana Twi Movie* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bu6Ijap6Hs8

Adowa Entertainment. (2014, June 18). *OBRONI HIANII 3-Asante Akan Ghana Twi Movie 2014* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6VrWCx0fmo

Adowa Entertainment. (2014, June 18). *OBRONI HIANII 4-Asante Akan Ghana Twi Movie 2014* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rx9OJ78qhn0

Pidho, S. (2014, August 3). *Key Soap Funny TV Commercial. Medofo pa. Ghana* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5UPo6Az8TM

Appendix: List of examples

Example 1: *House,* episode 19, season 6. **'…all women were horny…'**

Example 2: **'Crikey, that's a hard one!'**

Example 3: *House,* episode 21, season 2. **'…"yoo hoo" to the hoo hoo'**

Example 4: '**Mary'**

Example 5: **'Women's brains…'**

Example 6: **Unilever Ghana's *Key Soap* TV commercial**

Example 7: **'Fred and Judy'**

Example 8: *Obroni Hiani,* **'This guy will make me an idiot'**

Example 9: *I Told You So,* **'Women only have brains'**

Example 10: *Obroni Hiani,* **'I was born with a machete'**

Example 11: *Obroni Hiani,* 'M**y name is Aserewa'**

Example 12: *I Told You So,* '**If she had not been my niece'**

Example 13: *I Told You So,* '**J-O-N-C-E'**

Example 14: *I Told You So,* **'The stuff'**

Example 15: *I Told You So,* **'No need to run'**

Example 16: *I Told You So,* '…**the women sell their own mutton…'**

Example 17: From *Obroni Hiani,* **'Jenny'**

Example 18: *Obroni Hiani,* '…**getting down from a flight to urinate?'**

Example 19: From *Obroni Hiani,* **'Bird Fart'**