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TITLES BY THE BOOK
Translation Strategies in the Episode Titles of the
American TV Crime Drama Series *Columbo*

ABSTRACT

Vilma Lehminiemi: Titles by the Book: Translation Strategies in the Episode Titles of the American TV Crime Drama Series *Columbo*
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The purpose of this thesis is to analyse and categorise the local translation strategies used in translating a TV show's episode titles from one language into another. In this thesis I analysed which translation strategies were used in translating the episode titles of the American TV crime drama series *Columbo* from English into Finnish and in what quantities.

The categories used in the analysis are based on a combination of the translation strategies created by Chesterman and Vinay and Darbelnet. Additionally, two other categories have been created to accommodate the analysed data. The translation strategy categories used in this thesis are literal translation, adaptation, synonymy and hyponymy from Chesterman and Vinay and Darbelnet. The added categories are omission and new title.

The analysed data consists of all 69 English episode titles of *Columbo* and their Finnish translations. According to the analysis, the most common translation strategy used in translating the episode titles is the category of new title, with the titles using the translation strategy consisting of over 63% of all titles. Literal translation is the second most common translation strategy with almost 19% of the translated episode titles using it. The rest of the categories all together make up slightly over 17% of the overall translation strategies used. As such, the data shows a clear preference for the translation strategy of creating a new title over the other categories. Further research into the topic could reveal whether translation strategy use in TV series episode title translations has any detectable patterns between different TV shows with shared qualities, like being translated around the same time, or having the same source or target language.

Keywords: translation, translation strategies, titles, audiovisual translation

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Vilma Lehminiemi: Titles by the Book: Translation Strategies in the Episode Titles of the American TV Crime Drama Series *Columbo*

Kandidaatintutkielma

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Tämän kandidaatintutkielman tarkoituksena on analysoida ja kategorisoida TV-sarjan jaksojen nimien kääntämisessä käytettyjä paikallisia käännösstrategioita. Tutkielmassa analysoidaan, mitä käännösstrategioita on käytetty amerikkalaisen rikosdraamasarja *Columbon* jaksojen nimien kääntämisessä englannista suomeksi ja missä määrin.

Analyysissä käytetyt kategoriat pohjautuvat yhdistelmään Chestermanin ja Vinayn ja Darbelnetin kehittämistä käännösstrategioista. Lisäksi tutkielmaa varten on luotu kaksi muuta aineistoon sopivaa kategoriaa. Chestermanin ja Vinayn ja Darbelnetin kehittämistä käännösstrategiakategorioista tutkielmassa käytetään kategorioita suora käännös, mukauttaminen, synonymia ja hyponymia. Lisätyt kategoriat ovat poisjätö ja uusi nimi.

Analysoituun dataan kuuluvat kaikki 69 englanninkielistä jaksonnimeä *Columbosta* ja niiden suomennokset. Analyysin tuloksien mukaan eniten käytetyin käännösstrategia jaksojen nimien kääntämisessä on uusi nimi, johon kuuluu yli 63 % kaikista jaksojen nimistä. Suora käännös on toiseksi eniten käytetty kategoria, johon kuuluu melkein 19 % kaikista jaksojen nimistä. Loput kategoriat sisältävät yhteensä noin 17 % kaikista jaksoissa käytetyistä strategioista. Analyysin tuloksien perusteella voidaan huomata vahva taipumus uuden nimen luomisen käyttöön käännösstrategiana muihin käännösstrategioihin verrattuna. Lisätutkimus aiheeseen voisi paljastaa onko käännösstrategioiden käytössä huomattavia samanlaisuuksia eri TV-sarjojen jaksojen nimien kääntämisessä, jos sarjoilla on samoja ominaisuuksia, kuten kääntäminen samalla aikakaudella tai sama lähde- tai kohdekieli.

Avainsanat: kääntäminen, käännösstrategiat, otsikot, audiovisuaalinen kääntäminen

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1 Introduction

Episode titles in a TV series work as a way of differentiating between episodes present in the whole series or within a certain season. Episode titles can also give the audience an idea of the contents of a show or a specific episode. Titles in audiovisual media, specifically in film, can be seen as a marketing strategy in their aim to appeal to the target audience of the product attached to the title (Sandra Pena-Cervel & Ovejas-Ramirez 2022, 100). The same can be applied to the titles of TV series and the episode titles within them. In addition to differentiating between episodes, episode titles are also a tool for creating interest in the audience for a specific episode and the contents within it.

However, language barriers interfere with these aspects of titles. International markets and the exporting of television shows make up a significant portion of the revenue produced by major production companies in the US (Bielby & Harrington 2008, 9). When exporting a TV series to foreign countries, there is a need to translate or adapt not only the title of the series itself, but also the episode titles within the series. To do this the translator can use a variety of different translation strategies. The focus of this thesis is on the analysis of episode titles that have been translated from English to Finnish. The purpose of this thesis is to find out what kind of translation strategies are used in this process using one specific TV series as an example and in what quantities. The episode titles analysed are from the American TV crime drama series *Columbo*. All episode titles in the series have Finnish translations.

Audiences themselves have an active role in choosing what kind of television programs they consume (Bielby & Harrington 2008, 11), and episode titles can help aid this selection process. Especially in the case of *Columbo*, the episode titles are more descriptive than the series name alone, as the Finnish version of the series name is kept the same as the original title. For an audience member priorly unfamiliar with the series, just the title *Columbo* offers very little information about the contents of the series. Meanwhile, an episode title such as “Murder in Malibu” (S9E55) tells the audience that the show most likely has something to do with murders. Translating the episode titles into Finnish makes this information available for people who might not understand English but do understand Finnish.

The goal of this thesis is to find out what strategies have been used when translating the episode titles of *Columbo* from English to Finnish. The translation strategies used affect the contents of

the translations and analysing the used strategies can give some insight into what aspects of translation have been given priority by the translators. It also reveals the types of changes that have occurred in the meaning of the episode titles during translation. The translation strategy categories used in the analysis are adapted from the ones created by Chesterman (2016) and Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). Additionally, two other categories have been created to better accommodate the analysed data.

2 Title translation

2.1 Strategies in translation

According to Chesterman, strategies are used as a tool to find solutions to problems, making them problem centred (2016, 87). As such, translation strategies work as a way for translators to figure out solutions to problems encountered during translating. Additionally, Chesterman states that strategies should be observable from the translation when compared with the source text (2016, 86). Hence, the definition of translation strategies that is used in this text will only refer to elements of the translation process that can be observed from the translation and the source text, omitting the translational actions that cannot be directly seen in the translated text. The translation strategies discussed here are part of local strategies, as opposed to global strategies. Chesterman defines local strategies as discerning the translation of specific items or structures in a text, with global strategies regarding the text as a whole (2016, 88).

Chesterman categorises translation strategies into syntactic strategies, semantic strategies, and pragmatic strategies, all of which include 10 subcategories, although the categories can include some overlap (2016, 90-109). Another categorisation for translation strategies has been proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet, whose categorisation includes direct and oblique translation strategies (1995, 31). The direct translation strategies include borrowing, calque, and literal translation, with the oblique translation strategies consisting of transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995, 31-40). The categorisations of Chesterman (2016) and Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) have some overlap in both their contents and the categories used.

Both Chesterman's and Vinay and Darbelnet's categorisations include the categories of literal translation, calque, and transposition, with Chesterman (2016, 93) having directly borrowed the

term transposition from Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, 36). Both categorisations also have categories regarding adaptation of cultural elements, with Chesterman referring to the strategy as cultural filtering (2016, 104) and Vinay and Darbelnet including two categories for the topic, with the strategies of equivalence and adaptation (1995, 39).

Despite including some of the same translation strategies, the categorisations differ in their specificity. Vinay and Darbelnet's category of modulation (1995, 37) has been split into multiple semantic subcategories by Chesterman, including the categories of synonymy and hyponymy (2016, 99). Chesterman's categorisation in this case allows for a more specific analysis of the translation strategies used. Similarly, Vinay and Darbelnet's categories of equivalence and adaptation (1995, 39) being two separate categories offers an option for a more varied analysis of the topic when compared to Chesterman's broader category of cultural filtering (2016, 104). However, not all of the categories mentioned will be relevant in analysing the episode titles, creating a need to omit some of them from the analysis.

2.2 Factors influencing translation strategy use

Chesterman's definition of translation strategies refers to them as a way for translators to react and conform to norms (2016, 86). However, as Chesterman states, this action of conforming does not necessarily mean aiming to achieve maximal equivalence, but can also refer to the translator creating, in their opinion, the optimal translation (2016, 86). This definition takes into account the necessary changes brought to a translation due to cultural differences and differing audiences between the source text and the final translated product. As titles play a major role in marketing and generating interest in different media products (Marich 2005), the audience's ability to understand and connect with the title can affect the popularity of any given media product. In the case of a television series such as *Columbo*, having an interesting episode title can entice people to watch the episode, with a larger audience profiting the network and strengthening the series' place within said network's lineup of TV shows. Taking the target audience's background and culture into account when translating the episode titles can ensure the title resonating more with the target audience.

2.3 Translation strategies

Translation strategies themselves have multiple categories with differing definitions, so it is necessary to further define which categories will be used in this thesis. The theoretical concepts found in Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) and Chesterman's (2016) translation strategy categorisations relevant to the analysis of the episode titles and their translations include literal translation, cultural filtering or adaptation, equivalence, synonymy, and hyponymy. In addition to these categories I have also chosen to include the category of omission, guided by the theory of omission by Rodica Dimitriu (2004). I have chosen to introduce these specific strategies, as they appear to be most suited to the data. As mentioned earlier, the used translation strategies are all local translation strategies.

2.3.1 Literal translation

Both Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, 33-34) and Chesterman (2016, 91-92) use the category of literal translation, with both referring to the direct translation technique where the translation is as close as possible to the source text while still being grammatical in the translated language. Literal translation is also referred to as word-for-word translation by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, 34).

2.3.2 Adaptation and equivalence

Adaptation as defined by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, 39) refers to the need to translate a specific situation in the source language text with a new equivalent situation in the target language text. This is necessary when the situation mentioned in the source text is unknown in the culture of the target language (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995, 39). The same strategy is referred to by Chesterman as cultural filtering (2016, 104). Chesterman adds to the definition the concept of the change being made to conform to the norms of the target language and culture (2016, 104). In addition to adaptation, Vinay and Darbelnet also mention equivalence (1995, 38). According to Vinay and Darbelnet, equivalence can be seen in translations when the same situation is translated differently in the source language and the target language, for example, using different language-specific onomatopoeia to translate the same sound (1995, 38). This understanding of equivalence can also be seen in the translation of idioms, with a specific idiom being translated to the equivalent version while still retaining the original meaning behind the

idiom (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995, 38). For the purposes of this thesis, the concepts included in these three categories will be combined and collectively referred to by the term adaptation, based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) naming. Additionally, equivalence as a term is used in this thesis as defined by Anthony Pym (2023, 12-13), referring to the matching of source and target text value on the level of form, reference or function. As such, the meaning of equivalence used in this thesis does not follow Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) definition of the term.

2.3.3 Synonymy and hyponymy

The concepts of synonymy and hyponymy are also relevant to the analysis of the episode titles. Chesterman mentions synonymy and hyponymy as subcategories included in the semantic strategies (2016, 98-100). The strategy of synonymy is defined by Chesterman as one where instead of the translator picking the nearest equivalent for a word, they instead use a synonym or near-synonym, usually as a way of avoiding repetition (2016, 99). Hyponymy and its usage as a translation strategy are further grouped by Chesterman into three subclasses, where the source text's superordinate word can be turned into the translated text's hyponym, the source text's hyponym can be turned into a superordinate in the translated text, or the source text's hyponym is changed into another hyponym in the translation (2016, 99).

2.3.4 Omission

Omission in translation refers to the act of leaving something from the source text untranslated (Dimitriu 2004, 163). According to Dimitriu, the norm of aiming for the highest equivalence while translating tends to discourage the use of omission (2004, 164). Regardless, omission can still be found in translations, including the English to Finnish episode title translations of *Columbo*. Dimitriu explains this phenomenon as being due to omission being a target-related strategy, which adjusts the text based on the intended target audience (2004, 165). As such, language and cultural differences between the intended target audiences of the source text and the translation could require the translator to utilize omission while translating. According to Dimitriu this adjusting can occur on a linguistic, pragmatic, cultural or ideological level, which can lead to omission on a word, phrase, and sentence level (2004, 165).

3 Method and data

3.1 Episode titles in *Columbo*

Despite being detective fiction, the television series *Columbo* does not fall into the common detective fiction category of a whodunit, where a major part of the story is focused on the detective, alongside with the audience, figuring out the identity of the murderer (HarperCollins Publishers, n.d.). In almost every episode of *Columbo*, the audience is shown the identity of the murderer and the general method of committing the murder in the first part of the episode, with the rest of the episode focusing on Lieutenant Columbo moving closer to solving the case and showing how the murderer reacts to the detective figuring out the truth behind the murder. As such, the episode titles do not need to refrain from giving the audience hints about the murderer's identity, as it is not a central mystery in most of the episodes. Typical topics utilized in the English episode titles are related to the murderer's identity or profession, the location of the episode's murder or overall story, or the method of murder found within the narrative. The titles can also include puns or wordplay, sayings, or intertextual references.

The series consists of two pilot episodes, 53 regular episodes, and 14 special episodes, for a total of 69 episodes, all with unique titles. The first pilot episode was originally aired in the United States in 1968 (Finna, n.d.). The rest of the series was created and aired in the United States from 1971 to 1978 and from 1989 to 2003 (Finna, n.d.). The Finnish episode titles have been gathered from Elonet (Finna, n.d.). The Finnish episode titles found on Elonet are the same as the Finnish episode titles used in Finnish TV program guides during the times when *Columbo* has been shown in Finnish television. I have categorised all of the Finnish translations based on the chosen translation strategy categories and calculated the usage percent of each translation strategy.

3.2 Categorisation

To analyse and quantify the translation strategies found between the English and Finnish episode titles of *Columbo*, I have utilised a list of categorisations. Most of the categories, not including the categories of omission and new title, are based on the prior mentioned theories of translation strategies by either Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) or Chesterman (2016). As the

translation strategy categorisations created by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and Chesterman (2016) include many categories that are irrelevant to the analysis of the data, I have created my own group of categories that include only the translation strategies relevant for the data. The categorisation used in this thesis is as follows:

1. Literal translation
2. Adaptation
3. Synonymy
4. Hyponymy
5. Omission
6. New title

The first category of literal translation includes episode titles with translations that are as close to the source text as possible while remaining grammatical in the target language. The translation used matches fully with the source text's meaning and style.

The category of adaptation includes episode titles where a cultural item or expression in the English episode title has been replaced with an item or expression that could be considered to be more familiar to the intended audience of the Finnish episode title. The category also includes sayings that have been translated as the target language's version of said saying.

The category of synonymy includes titles where certain words or terms from the source text have been replaced with a synonym or near-synonym in the translation. The titles in the category of hyponymy include cases where a word from the English episode title has been translated as its hyponym or hypernym in the Finnish episode title.

The category of omission refers to the translation strategy where an element or multiple elements of the source text have been omitted in the Finnish translation. This could mean that a single word, a term, or a longer string of words has been omitted from the translation. The omission can alter the meaning of the episode title or make it more or less specific.

The final category used is new title. This category includes episode titles where the translator has created a completely new Finnish title instead of translating the English episode title. The

episode titles are so far removed in meaning, form and style that they cannot be considered to be the same title translated into a different language.

Regarding the category of new title, the mere presence of these completely new titles can be thought of as a type of translation strategy, where the translator has deemed a completely new title to be the best solution to a translation problem. The strategy of creating a new title can also in some cases be considered to be a combination of multiple other translation strategies, becoming a completely new translation strategy. Chesterman mentions in the wider category of pragmatic translation strategies the translation strategy of transediting, which includes re-editing and rewriting done by a translator (2016, 108). However, Chesterman's definition of transediting is related to the concept of the source text being somehow lacking and needing fixing (2016, 108), which is not necessarily the case when it comes to the English episode titles. As such, this strategy of creating a new title will not be referred to as transediting in this thesis.

4 Episode title analysis

4.1 Literal translation

The category of literal translation has the second most instances of episode titles in it. These episode titles are included below in table 1, with a total number of 13 titles belonging to this category. If literal translation is viewed as the first strategy a translator should try to use while translating (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995, 34), it could be assumed that these source language episode titles did not present the translator with any specific problems which would need to be solved by using other translation strategies. As such, the translator has deemed the use of literal translation to be sufficient for creating a grammatically correct and idiomatic translation. The titles found in this category are devoid of specific cultural elements or items that could cause issues for literal translation.

Table 1. Instances of literal translation

English title	Finnish title
Ransom for a Dead Man	Lunnaat kuolleesta miehestä

Dead Weight	Kuollut paino
Swan Song	Joutsenlaulu
The Conspirators	Salaliittolaiset
Columbo Goes to the Guillotine	Columbo menee giljotiiniin
Murder: A Self Portrait	Murha – taiteilijan omakuva
Agenda for Murder	Työjärjestys murhalle
Rest in Peace, Mrs. Columbo	Lepää rauhassa, rouva Columbo
Murder in Malibu	Murha Malibussa
Caution: Murder Can be Hazardous to Your Health	Varoitus: murha vaarantaa terveytesi
Death Hits the Jackpot	Kuolema vie päävoiton
No Time to Die	Ei aikaa kuolla
Strange Bedfellows	Oudot yhteistyökumppanit

Examples in the category of literal translation include episode titles such as “Swan Song” (S3E24), which has been translated as “Swan song” (Joutsenlaulu) in the Finnish translation, and “The Conspirators” (S7E45), with the Finnish translation also being “The Conspirators” (Salaliittolaiset). The episode “Swan Song” also retains the metaphorical aspect of the title, as the meaning of the term is the same in both English (HarperCollins Publishers, n.d.) and Finnish (MOT Sanakirjat, n.d.), referring to a last performance before death or retirement. No adaptation is needed in this case, so a literal translation can be used without altering the meaning or form of the title. However, most of the source titles in this category do not have aspects like wordplay or metaphorical meanings in them. In cases where the titles do have multiple meanings, the translation focuses on matching of the form and simply includes the literal meaning. Regardless, the translations in this category match the meaning and style of the original English titles.

4.2 Adaptation

As stated before, adaptation is used to conform to the norms of the target language and culture (Chesterman 2016, 104). This can be seen in the episode titles as instances of sayings being translated as their equivalent versions in the target language. The wordings of the English and Finnish titles differ, but they are still recognisable as being based on the same saying. Table 2 includes instances of adaptation found in the episode titles. There are two source language episode titles that are based on sayings which have been translated through adaptation into the Finnish versions of the sayings.

Table 2. Instances of adaptation

English title	Finnish title
A Friend in Deed	Ystävä hädässä
A Bird in the Hand...	Parempi pyy pivossa

The translator has most likely inferred that the episode “A Friend in Deed” (S3E25) is a play on the saying “A friend in need is a friend indeed”, as the Finnish translation uses part of the Finnish version of the saying. As such, the translation of this title includes a case of adaptation, since the translation is not literal but aims to evoke the same feeling in the target audience that comes from a different language background. The Finnish translation “A Friend in Trouble” (Ystävä hädässä) is not literal to the individual meaning of the words used in the original title. Regardless, the title is recognisable as being based on the same saying, with the basic idea behind the saying remaining the same. However, the Finnish translation loses the element of wordplay present in the source title with usage of the word “deed”, which in this context is most likely used to refer to the act of murder within the episode.

Another case of adaptation can also be seen in the title “A Bird in the Hand...” (S10E61) with the Finnish translation of the episode title being “Better a hazel grouse in the hand” (Parempi pyy pivossa), making it the Finnish version of the same proverb. However, there is a slight difference in the stylisation of the titles, with the original English title including three periods as a way of indicating the saying having a continuation, while the Finnish title opts to leave out

the periods, having a more simplistic style to it. Despite this, the meaning of both titles is still the same in their respective languages.

4.3 Synonymy

Rather than being perfect synonyms, the synonyms found in the episode titles are near-synonyms. Near-synonymy as explained by Diana Inkpen and Graeme Hirst (2006, 1) refers to synonyms that are not fully intersubstitutable with the word that they would be a synonym to. This can be seen in them having a difference in denotation or connotation or grammatical or collocational constraints. (Inkpen & Hirst 2006, 1). The synonyms found in the episode titles can have differences in denotation or connotation to the words they are acting as synonyms to. The data includes two instances of synonymy, which are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Instances of synonymy

English title	Finnish title
Étude in Black	Synkeä etydi
Undercover	Komisario valepuvussa

One of the instances of synonymy found in the episode titles is “Étude in Black” (S2E10), where the Finnish episode title uses a synonym for the word “black” instead of a direct translation. The translation of the title is “A dark étude” (Synkeä etydi), opting to use the term “dark” rather than “black”. Another episode title translation with synonymy in it is the special episode “Undercover” (E64), with the Finnish translation being “Lieutenant in disguise” (Komisario valepuvussa). In addition to using synonymy in the translation, the translator has also added clarifying information which tells the reader who is in disguise or undercover in the episode.

4.4 Hyponymy

Hyponymy has been used in the episode titles to create a less specific message when compared to the source language titles. Hyponymy, especially hypernyms, can also be used to avoid issues

with cultural items, which might not be present in another language or culture. A more general term might be easier to translate into another language and help with avoiding confusion due to cultural differences. As seen in table 4, the usage of hyponymy in the episode titles is focused on hypernyms. This has made the Finnish episode titles more generic and broader in their meaning. Additionally, one of the hypernyms has replaced a cultural item that does not have a specific translation in the target language.

Table 4. Instances of hyponymy

English title	Finnish title
Columbo Goes to College	Columbo menee koulun penkille
Columbo and the Murder of a Rock Star	Rocktähtien kuolema

An instance of hyponymy can be seen in the translation of the title “Columbo and the Murder of a Rock Star” (S10E58). The Finnish episode title is “The death of a rockstar” (Rocktähtien kuolema), which replaces the more specific term “murder” with the hypernym “death”. The translation also omits the first part of the title, leaving out the mention of Columbo. The original title can be interpreted in two ways, as the rock star in question is the one who commits the murder in the episode, hence after watching the episode the audience can understand the title as meaning “the murder committed by a rock star”, rather than the rock star being the one who has been murdered. This double meaning is however lost in the Finnish translation of the title, as the natural interpretation of the title is merely that the death refers to the rockstar dying.

The episode title “Columbo Goes to College” (S10E56) and its Finnish translation “Columbo goes to a school’s bench” (Columbo menee koulun penkille) are also an instance of hyponymy. The English title uses the term “college”, which has been changed in the Finnish translation. The concept of “college” differs even within English-speaking countries and can refer to multiple different types of educational institutions and groups. Culture-bound items that work as a link to the cultural and sociocultural reality outside of language are often referred to as *realia* in translation studies (Leppihalme 2011, 126). Rather than referring to just material items, *realia* can be used when discussing different culture-bound notions and phenomena, in this case institutions and educational concepts (Leppihalme 2011, 126). As such, the word “college” can be thought of as *realia*, with the term itself having connections to a cultural and societal reality.

As the word college does not have a full equivalent in Finnish, the translator has simply opted to change the realia “college” for a more general term in the translation. The translated title utilizes a hypernym of “college”, with said hypernym being “school” (koulu). The use of this translation strategy avoids the issue of the translator having to choose one specific target language equivalent for a word that could be interpreted in multiple different ways due to cultural differences. If the translation had utilized some of the synonyms for “college” in Finnish, the meaning of the title could have drastically changed. The hypernym “school” still retains the concept of an educational institution in the translation, while avoiding the issue of a more specific Finnish translation clashing with the representation of college seen in the episode itself.

4.5 Omission

Six of the episode titles utilize omission in the Finnish translations. In the episode titles omission is mostly used to create a more general message or mental image for the reader. The omitted items often add emphasis to the original title or make it more specific. Omission has also been utilized to remove additional information from the titles, as is the case with the special episode “A Trace of Murder – 25th Anniversary Movie” (E66). The part referring to the 25th anniversary has been removed in the Finnish version of the title. This could be due to the anniversary either not being recent anymore when the episode was aired in Finland or to prevent confusion during later airings of the episode.

Table 5. Instances of omission

English title	Finnish title
The Greenhouse Jungle	Kasvihuone
The Most Crucial Game	Ratkaiseva ottelu
Last Salute to the Commodore	Viimeinen tervehdys
Make Me a Perfect Murder	Täydellinen rikos
Butterfly in Shades of Grey	Harmaa perhonen
A Trace of Murder – 25 th Anniversary Movie	Murhan jäljet

Instances such as “The Greenhouse Jungle” (S2E11) being translated as “The Greenhouse” (Kasvihuone) and “Butterfly in Shades of Grey” (S10E63) being translated simply as “A grey butterfly” (Harmaa perhonen) showcase omission being used as a tool to make the message and image created by the title more general and less specific. Rather than creating an image of a butterfly in multiple shades of grey, in the Finnish translation the butterfly becomes merely grey in a way that does not differentiate between there being one single shade of grey or multiple ones. The same can be said for the omission of “jungle” in “The Greenhouse Jungle”. In this use of the strategy the title has acquired a slightly altered meaning. The mental image the reader gets of the greenhouse based on the title has been changed from the mental images associated with the term “jungle” to a more generic greenhouse without any extra meaning to it.

Another example of omission is the translated title of the episode “Last Salute to the Commodore” (S5E37). The Finnish translation refers to “A last salute” (Viimeinen tervehdys) with no mention of the commodore of the original title. With the lack of the term “commodore” in the Finnish title, the resulting translation does not have any visible connection to the theme of sailing found within the episode.

4.6 New title

Lastly, we arrive at the category of new title which features the most instances in the dataset. 44 out of 69 episode titles fit into this category. These types of episode title translations opt to reference the contents and events of the episode rather than creating a direct translation of the original episode title. For example, the title “Blueprint for Murder” (S1E9) has been changed to “Hiding place” (Kätköpaikka) in the Finnish version of the episode title. Further examples of titles that have been completely removed from the meaning of the original title are “Requiem for a Falling Star” (S2E14), for which the Finnish title is “Buried past” (Haudattu menneisyys) and “Try and Catch Me” (S7E41) which sports the Finnish title “Experts” (Asiantuntijat).

Many of the titles, both English and Finnish, utilise puns and wordplay. Puns as defined by Salvatore Attardo primarily refer to jokes meant to be expressed out loud, but it is mentioned that written puns also exist (1994, 109). In the case of TV series episode titles, despite the audio-visual nature of television, the titles themselves mainly exist in a written form. As such, many of the puns utilised in the titles work due to the written form of the words being the same, rather

than being dependent on the pronunciation of the words being similar. The words utilised in the puns fall under the category of homographs, defined by Attardo as being two words with identical spelling (1994, 111). Oftentimes the pun found in an English episode title is not retained in the Finnish translation. Most of the titles that contain puns or some other kinds of wordplay have been translated into Finnish as a completely new title. These contain titles such as “An Exercise in Fatality” (S4E26), which has been translated as “Move, but not too much” (Liiku, muttei liikaa). The wordplay in the original works as the episode deals with topics of physical exercising, creating a double meaning in the title that would be difficult to replicate in Finnish. As such, the translator has opted for a new title which keeps the concept of exercising intact but simultaneously loses the wordplay of the original. As such, the usage of puns in the English titles has an effect in the translation strategy used, as the translator has had to make a decision regarding the pun and whether to keep it in the translation or to simply omit it.

The titles in the new title category also include sayings that would not have been possible to adapt into the target language. An example of this is the episode title “A Stich in Crime” (S2E15) being a play on the saying “A stitch in time saves nine”. The title has been translated as “Mistake” (Vikatikki) in which the literal meaning of the words is “the wrong stitch”, replacing the wordplay of the original title with another in the translation. However, not all of the English episode titles found in this category deal with sayings, puns or wordplay, so it cannot be seen as the only reason for the use of this translation strategy.

4.7 Overall findings

As expressed by Pym (2023, 41), while analysing translation solution usage in a translation it is not uncommon to find several strategies that fit with one translation and some translations where no one strategy seems to be a good fit. As such, some of the episode titles could be seen as having multiple categories of translation strategies included in them, some of which might overlap in their contents. In a study using a different set of categories the titles could also be seen as fitting into other categories as well. As such, the findings in this thesis reflect the categories used in this thesis, not a comprehensive analysis of all the possibilities of categorisation.

The following table 6 presents the findings of the analysis in both the number of episode titles included in each category and the percentage of titles belonging to said category out of all titles:

Table 6. Translation strategy categories and their percentages of use in the complete dataset.

Category name	Percentage	Number of episode titles
Literal translation	18.84%	13
Adaptation	2.90%	2
Synonymy	2.90%	2
Hyponymy	2.90%	2
Omission	8.70%	6
New title	63.77%	44

The data present in table 6 shows a strong preference for the use of the translation strategy of creating a completely new episode title over the other translation strategies with over 63% of the instances belonging to said category. The category with the second most instances in it is the category of literal translation, which comprises of almost 19% of the titles. The rest of the categories have less than half of the instances of the second most used category.

The original English titles' contents can offer some clues to the possible reasons for the translator picking that specific translation strategy. For example, many of the titles within the new title category include wordplay or puns that would require significant changes to the content of the title to translate them into Finnish. This could present a potential reason for creating a new pun or wordplay with a similar theme in the target language rather than attempting to recreate the original wordplay in Finnish. In cases like these the source episode title presents the translator with a clear problem to solve, to which they have utilised a specific translation strategy as a tool to find the best solution to said problem.

However, some of the decisions to omit parts of the title or change the title either partly or completely cannot be traced to any specific perceived issues or problems the English title might have caused for translation. Instances like "The Greenhouse Jungle" (S2E11) being translated as merely "The Greenhouse" (Kasvihuone) are puzzling, since the title could have been translated using literal translation and still be understood in Finnish. As stated by Chesterman

(2016, 86), translation strategies are linked with the desired relation of the source text and target text as decided and defined by the translator. As such, there is a possibility of the decisions the translator has made regarding translation strategy use being the result of the translator's preferences for the relation between the source and target text and their understanding of the target audience's needs taking precedent over a more literal translation.

5 Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to analyse what translation strategies are used in translating the English episode titles of the TV series *Columbo* into Finnish. The analysis revealed results that show a strong preference for creating a completely new title outside of the boundaries of the source text while focusing on the contents of the episode as the inspiration for the title. Regardless, both the Finnish titles created through using the source text and the titles created through using the episode contents as a guide follow the source titles' formula of keeping the episode titles related to the murder present in the episode, whether it is through references to the act of murder itself, the scene of the crime or the murderer's identity. This is in line with a view of titles as a way of creating intrigue as the focus of *Columbo* are the murders and the act of solving them.

The two most used translation strategy categories differ greatly in their approach to translation. The most used category, new title, minimises the effect of the source text on the target text, while the second most used category, literal translation, prioritises high matching of form and meaning to the source text in the translation. The other translation strategy categories were in the clear minority in the analysed dataset. The use of different translation strategies in this case is not very varied. Rather, there is a clear preference for the most used categories with the use of the other categories being only occasional.

Overall, the analysis can only consider the preferences in translation strategy use of episode titles regarding this specific series. Further research would be needed to be able to make a more general conclusion about translation strategy use in TV series episode titles. For more telling results multiple different series' episode title translations would need to be analysed and the results compared to each other. In addition, analysing episode titles from different eras or source languages could reveal differing trends based on the time of translation or the source language used in the titles. The subject and material additionally offer more research possibilities in the topic of translation strategies utilized in creating the titles in the new title category. However,

analysing any possible strategies or combinations of strategies found within the new titles is outside the scope of this thesis. Further research could reveal whether or not there are any consistent strategies utilized in creating the titles in the new title category. All in all, the topic as a whole has more to offer.

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