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**Report on "Italian subtitling solutions for English-language stand-up comedy" by
Giovanni Raffa**

The thesis, entitled "Italian subtitling solutions for English-language stand-up comedy" written under the supervision of prof. dr hab. Agnieszka Pośpiech (Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach) and prof. Patrick Zabalbeascoa (Sapienza Università di Roma) is well structured and argued with clear research objectives, a thoughtful inter/transdisciplinary approach, and well devised methodology. This inter/transdisciplinarity (see fig. 7) is pivotal for capturing the complex interplay of verbal, nonverbal, and audiovisual elements in stand-up comedy. Each chapter is intentionally coupled with specific research questions, thus providing a logical progression of the argument in question (a side-remark: chapter 1 does not end with the section of final remarks while the other chapters do). Theoretical passages are neatly interwoven with practical examples, ensuring the argument coherence.

The subject-matter research relates to a contemporary and still rather underexplored field of study, i.e. humour translation in stand-up comedy, though as Giovanni Raffa acknowledges, this gains an increasing relevance due to digitization and global streaming platforms like Netflix and Prime Video. Raffa offers a sound qualitative analysis, using diverse theoretical frameworks to address each research question. The inclusion of Nash's (1985) and Attardo's (2017) linguistic humour theories, as well as subtitling guidelines, is particularly adequate. Also, worth noting is the placement of stand-up within the broader dimension of humorous texts in audiovisual perspective as well as the systematic use of Zabalbeascoa's (1999; 1993) priority and restriction framework to assess the constraints and choices involved in translating humour. In this way, Raffa bolsters the assertion of stand-up genre as an audiovisual product, which he also neatly discusses in historical perspective, e.g., through reference to origins of the genre in minstrel shows and vaudeville and its evolutions into contemporary manifestations as a social, political, and personal commentary.

By introducing original concepts to analyse humour (e.g. “chaining” and “hooking”) in stand-up and sitcoms authored by the same comedian, i.e. Ricky Gervais, Raffa achieves the effect of methodological consistency in discussing macro- and microtextuality of humour as well as gap-bridging across various forms of stand-up comedy. This being an indisputable asset, also becomes some sort of a methodological issue I will mention below.

Aside from the theoretical-methodological contribution to AVT, the thesis also offers practical solutions in subtitling, which appears as particularly relevant to the global business of AVT practice, especially that Raffa makes reference to Netflix’s proprietary Translation and Technical Specifications Guidelines (TTSG).

Now, a few words should also be spared on the areas which might be viewed as problematic, particularly from the view point of the development of the Author’s argument in prospective research. For example, Raffa relies much on Ricky Gervais’s work for analysis. This definitely ensures consistency but narrows the so-called generalizability of the presented findings as some potential culture-specific differences in humour style might be ignored, given the nuanced differentiation of the British vs. US, Canadian, Australian speech communities. Even though selected performances from Australian and US are supplied in the thesis, these seem to call for the inclusion of a more representative spectrum of cases to be valid on a comparative Anglophone cross-culture map. While the qualitative analysis presented in the thesis is fine, I would also suggest, for the sake of the future research, introducing quantitative data, such as, e.g. frequency of translation strategies, patterns of omissions, as these could illustrate (or corroborate) broader trends.

The thesis lacks a focus on the so-called reader-responses to the translation product. By analysing this receptive aspect, we may assess the effectiveness of translation strategies, particularly for humour. I realise that such examination entails certain practical and ethical problems connected with the recording of the live reactions of audience in each case under consideration. With this reservation in mind, the reader-response element is worth its while if we think about an integral characterization of AVHT.

Looking ahead, it would also be worth investigating other translation channels or modes, such as dubbing and voiceover for potential differences in AVHT analytic and substantive research framework. Such a broadened perspective might also uncover specific challenges in translating stand-up comedies. Last but not least, I would invite the Author to reflect on the implications of digital media for AVT. By this I mean the impact of standards shared by streaming platforms as well as audience patterns of behaviour on the actual practices in subtitling.

Overall, the thesis boasts strong theoretical underpinnings, clear research questions, and practical relevance. However, as mentioned above, the research could further benefit from an expanded corpus (such as suggested by Raffa, where he mentions American performances, (p. 139) and the incorporation of audience reception studies (such as suggested by Raffa on p. 22 concerning Fuentes Luque's research [2010]). Raffa's thesis demonstrates a comprehensive and well-thought approach to analysing humour translation in stand-up comedy. Its inter- or rather transdisciplinary nature, conceptual novelties in methodology as well as reference to translation industry standards are undoubted strengths.

I hold a definitely positive assessment of the thesis and am confident that it merits progression to the subsequent stages of the PhD award process.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Raffa', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K' and a stylized 'R'.