

THE TRANSLATION OF PUNS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the translating methods of puns and gives alternative ways of translating them in movies.

Keywords: humour, major comedians, animated films, literal translation, free translation, cultural meaning.

INTRODUCTION

By and large, comedy aims to induce laughter. At its most basic level, it is at the very least meant to amuse, to entertain, and perchance to teach a lesson at the expense of something or someone. But in order to do so, it employs a number of devices and strategies without the

help of which it can be reduced to little more than an accident, the involuntary cause of a comical outcome.

Revered by most, denied by some – such as British comedian Eddie Izzard who stated, in an article published in The Guardian on the 5th of February 2015, that “‘British’ humour does not exist”, – British Humour is surrounded by a certain aura. Innuendo, satire, parody are but a few of the comedic devices British comedy is famous for and many generations of

comedians have tapped into, while scholars have been studying their mechanics.

One major characteristic of humour in general – as we will see – and of British humour in particular is that it is highly contextual, more effective when it appears to be spontaneous, and relies on a set of references which can often be culture-specific.

In order to translate a text in an efficient way, a translator may use a number of devices ranging from grammatical re-categorisation to cultural adaptation. These

tools allow for the creation of a translation in which the meaning of the source text – its message – is retained, but the form of the target text is better suited to the many subtleties inherent to the target language. There exists a wide array of possibilities to translate sentences which do not require the rendering of any particular effects – even though it could be argued that any given sentence has the potential to have an effect on its reader.

In order to study how translation devices can be applied to humorous expressions, it is first necessary to establish what we intend to consider as humour. The most obvious difficulty is that, in many regards, humour may be viewed as a highly subjective mechanism, as humorous responses vary from one individual to another, and are triggered by entirely different catalysts. For the purposes of the present study, we will therefore abstain – at least in some measure – from taking the subjectivity of humour into account by using a theoretical approach and focusing on the linguistic and cultural workings of a few examples of puns. Our basis for establishing what constitutes a joke will be some of the most renowned theories on humour and the focus will be on linguistic humour in general, and puns in particular.

METHODS OF TRANSLATING PUNS

The audiovisual pun translation strategies Puns cannot be removed from animated films, because they are connected with the context and can play a broad spectrum of roles. Hence, there are different pun translation strategies: omission, literal translation with or without commentary, translation-rendering (representation of the pun in the TL provided with an explanation of its ambiguity), and free translation. A pragmatically adequate and, at the same time, semantically and syntactically equivalent translation cannot be considered to be a relevant strategy, because it is not possible to reproduce in the TL both signs used to create a pun in the SL. Not all the above-mentioned translation strategies are therefore appropriate for the audiovisual translation of puns. The research revealed three

main strategies used in audiovisual translations of animated films: 1) free translation with a non-pun replacement; 2) literal translation; 3) “quasi-translation”

The translation strategies are important to the translation of English movie titles. Fan(1994) said “Translation can basically adopt literal translation, free translation, translation, literal translation, annotation and other methods, but it really takes a lot of effort to express it well” (p.75). There are four types of translation strategies of English movie titles in this part.

1. Literal Translation

The so-called literal translation is to point to keep the original text, and keep the original form in translation when conditions permit, particularly to maintain the original metaphor, image and local contents. The purpose of English movie title translation is to show the main idea of the film. If the film name suits the novel closely, literal translation is the best method to employ. The particularity of different nations has universality. In general, whatever peoples' race, color, nationality, their feelings are, their moral standard is same. They are parts of different folks, but their views of things are same in many ways. Most of the English film names are composed of some nouns or verb phrases and sum up the primary thought of the film, literal translation is suited in this case, because literal translation can not only keep the main story of the title, but also the language construction of the initial title. The film title translation in general is divided into two kinds of circumstances. One kind of circumstance is the word order should be same. The other is to replace the initial word order. Some translations can be completely copied according to the English film titles. Generally speaking, the translated titles ought not to be sounding uncomfortable or unnatural and are capable of describing the story as same as the original English titles.

2. Free Translation

Although the literal translation's effect is good, not all of the title is fit for literal translation. Due to differences in language and culture between east and west, some titles must adopt free translation strategy. The translation of the

American film *Gone with the Wind* is using the method of the free translation. The novel *Gone with the Wind* belongs to the literal translation, the translation is loyal to the initial text, and this translation is fine. The difference between free translation and literal translation centralism manifests in the expression. In reality, a lot of titles involve many cultural meanings. Literal translation is difficult in reflecting the essence of the movie, the translators ought to analyze and understand the content, style, plot and even style to carry out the title on the basis of the creative process. In this way, it can show the traits of the original title, and realize its cultural, aesthetic, and economic value.

CONCLUSION

This article determines the alternative ways of translating puns in English literature and English movies. And also gives some examples of puns. Article also identifies differences between translating methods.

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