

HUMOUR AND IRONY: WAYS OF TRANSLATION

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The article deals with the problems of translating humour and irony. In the research the author considers and point outs all specifics and diversities of humour and irony in literature and ways of their translation.

Keywords: *humour, irony, translation techniques, translation strategy, literary work, translation accuracy, Jenny Colgan, Christmas Surprise*

Problem statement. Translating a literary work is the most challenging task to perform. A translator does not only have to be aware of lexical and grammatical aspects of the SL, but he has to be able to render social, cultural, historical and emotional components of the text. The translation of stylistic devices and expressive means plays one of the biggest roles in providing the readers with a proper equivalent of fiction as they maintain the intention of the author and preserve the expressiveness of the text. The translation of humour and irony is quite challenging because of the cultural differences and lack of vocabulary extent. Therefore, a translator has to apply a number of translation techniques and strategies to tackle that problem.

The goal of the research is to define the notion of humour and irony and explain the translation techniques and strategies applied for their transmission.

Recent research and publication analysis. The problem of translating humour and irony has been studied by a large number of different literary scholars, linguists and translators. For instance, the significance of humour as a literary element and the ways of its translation were investigated by such prominent linguists as M. Apte, S. Attardo, L. Broeder, A. Chesterman, D. Delabastita, R. Martin, C. Moncelet and V. Raskin. The role of irony in literature and different ways of its conveying and translation were studied by the following linguists: W. C. Booth,

R. Chakhachiro, D. Crystal, L. Hutcheon, D. C. Muecke, F. Muir, H. G. Widdowson and others.

Humour as a phenomenon, its philosophical, psychological and physiological nature, its aesthetic value, its relation to truth, ethical standards, customs and norms, its use in literature and culture have occupied the minds of a great number of thinkers for centuries. Attempts have been made to explain humor in various ways. According to Aristotle humour can be defined as a ridicule of a human fault or error, but not too serious, because then it would not be an appropriate cause for laughter (Raskin, 1984: 326). The modern definition of humour in literature is the following – humour is a literary tool that evokes laughing in the audience or that means to motivate laughter or amusement. Its aim is to break boredom, dullness and melancholy of the reader (Raskin, 1984: 326). Humour, depending on the level of comprehension of the audience to which it is directed, may be divided into three levels for analysis. The first level to be considered is a universal humour that can be comprehended by everyone, without concerning cultural or formal education. On the second level humour operates as a facilitation of suppression or containment in political, religious or sexual context. The third level demands a high possession of language and its stylistic devices. Humour of this level is considered to be elite, posh or high class (Raskin, 1984: 326).

Irony is a stylistic device based on the interaction of dictionary and contextual meanings, when they stand in opposition of each other. Humour expresses well-meaning laughter and is direct, whereas irony expresses mockery, criticism and is veiled. There are two main types of irony as a stylistic device: verbal and sustained. In case of verbal it is easy to spot the word on which the device is based or in other words whose contextual meaning diametrically opposes its dictionary meaning. We deal with sustained irony when it is impossible to indicate such a word and the effect is created by a number of statements or by the whole text (Galperin, 2010: 146–147).

Thus, having defined the concepts of humour and irony, we can further detect them in the SL text and offer the appropriate translation techniques and strategies to be applied for their conveying.

For our research we decided to take a book of Jenny Colgan, a British writer of romantic comedy fiction, which is entitled *Christmas Surprise*. Colgan believes that comic aspect is an integral component of our lives. It is natural to laugh at some life stories and situations in order to be able to stay afloat.

So let us first examine the examples of humour in the analyzed text and the translation techniques applied.

«Oh my goodness», said Stephen. «Miss Hopkins, you do not mess about».

Rosie choked, half laughing, half crying.

«Plus, I was rather under the impression that I'd already sealed the deal».

«That's right, I did it all by myself». Stephen let out a short, barking laugh (Colgan, 2015: 9).

– О, Господи. Міс Гопкінс, ти не жартуєш?

Розі ї плакала, ї сміялася одночасно.

– Мені здалося, що я уклала якусь угоду.

Так ї є, угоду зі мною. – сміявся Стівен.

The following example reveals humour, the third level if to be precise. In order to understand a hint of humour in this piece of dialogue, one should possess high knowledge of the English language. There are such phrases as *to mess about* and *to seal a deal* that cannot be translated separately or by their dictionary meaning. In order to provide an adequate translation one should pay attention to the context and semantic meaning implied. Dictionary definitions of these phrases are the following: *to mess about* – to spend time doing things that are not useful or serious, to waste time; and *to seal the deal* – to make an agreement official, but these meanings do not concern the situation described above, hence, it cannot be used in its dictionary meaning while translating (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2021; Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2021). Regarding the translation itself – we decided to use the

translation techniques of modulation and reformulation in order to convey the original meaning and provide an appropriate translation for the TL audience.

Having analyzed the example of humour presented above, one can understand that a translator has to possess high language knowledge as well as cultural, social, historical and spiritual. Usage of different translation techniques helps to render the original information faithfully and provide adequate translation without humiliating the meaning.

While analyzing the text we have found that the author is fond of using humour and irony in her writing. Colgan's irony is not applied for the mockery purposes, but to defuse the tension of the whole situation and prove that even the most difficult life troubles can be perceived or diluted with a little humour and irony. Therefore, we have detected striking examples of irony and will present them below.

«And maybe... maybe we could put double glazing in».

«No, it's good for children to grow up totally freezing in a haunted house», said Stephen airily, and she knew she'd won him over (Colgan, 2015: 33).

– І, можливо... можливо, ми б могли додатково його засклити.

– Та ні, це цілком нормально для дітей рости замерзаючи в химерному будинку. – Безтурботно відповів Стівен і вона зрозуміла, що виграла цей поєдинок.

Here we can see that one of the main characters did not intend to offend the other, he wanted to cease the fact of his defeat in the ironically humorous way. We assume that here the author used a sustained one, since we cannot identify only one word that depicts irony – the whole sentence is written in the ironical way. Speaking of translation we decided that literal translation technique is the most appropriate to be used here, except for the last sentence. In the last sentence we used the grammatical transformation of replacement changing the verb in the ST into the noun in the TT.

The following examples that we are going to analyze reveal the simultaneous usage of humour and irony.

«Hm», he said again, and Mr Dog scampered over in case «hmm» meant «I appear to be holding some unwanted treats».

Stephen was staring at the computer screen.

«Do you want to tell me, or is it just going to be a mystery?» said Rosie. «Have some aliens landed? Prince William is a woman? A sheep is a bit poorly over in Carningford? They're introducing a new baby tax and the government is going to want forty per cent of our income?» (Colgan, 2015: 34–35).

– Гмм, – повторив він і Містер Дог розцінив це, як можливу загрозу, тому зіскочив.

Стівен витріщився в екран комп'ютера.

– Ти скажеш, що означає твоє «гмм» чи це так і залишиться таємницею? – запитала Розі. – На нас напали прибульці? Принц Вільям насправді жінка? Ягня загубилося в Карнінгфорді? Вони ввели якийсь новий податок на дітей і держава хоче 40% нашого прибутку?

Here we can indicate the usage of both humour and irony, but it is visible that humour implication dominates with a light, but clearly expressed, inclusion of irony. Again in order to understand the humour implied one has to possess great cultural and social knowledge of British civilization. Translating the dialogue we used literal translation and the strategy of domestication in order to make the text sounds familiar to a Ukrainian reader.

Conclusions. Thus, having analyzed the examples presented above, we can draw to the conclusion that translating humour and irony is not an easy task to do. To perform an adequate translation language possession is not enough, a translator has to be highly educated not only in the source language culture, history and society, but also in his own country's specifics. Among the translation strategies and techniques the following dominate: modulation, reformulation, literal translation, replacement and domestication.

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ILUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

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