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### **Peculiarities of translating a pun (on the basis of sitcoms)**

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linguistic and stylistic features of the English pun and ways to recreate it in  
translation. The relevance of this study is due to the fact that a clear methodology  
that regulates the translation of puns has not yet been  
developed, and the study of the features of using puns in the situation comedy  
genre is still insufficient. The purpose of the study is to analyze the existing  
methods of translation of puns from English language into Russian, to present the  
process in the form of a certain system and to identify possible patterns of  
wordplay transmission with keeping a comic effect. In order to reach this purpose  
we will need to analyze peculiarities of wordplay in existing scientific works, to  
consider the main classifications of wordplay and to analyze existing approaches to

translate puns. We will also determine the most common ways of translating puns and the ways of translating puns that allow you to save the comic effect.

The research material is the examples of puns selected from different situation comedies and their translations. The object of the study is the wordplays in the American and British situation comedies and their translation into Russian. The subject of the study is the ways of transferring the wordplays from English language into Russian. The theoretical significance is determined by the fact that the study deepens into the theory of wordplay and considers various ways of transferring this technique from one language to another. The practical significance lies in the fact that certain provisions of this work can be used in the theory of translation courses, comparative stylistics, as well as in practical classes of translation and in the practice of written and oral translation. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that humor being a branch of translation theory is studied to a much lesser extent than its other aspects is a great difficulty for translation, and also that the situation comedies such as "Friends", "Fry and Laurie", "How I met your mother" and their translation into Russian language for the first time become objects of comparative interlingual analysis from the point of view of the problem of equivalence and adequacy of translation. Humor is a unique trait inherent in the human species that enables us to successfully perform a number of functions in society. Humor allows people to exchange thoughts and feelings, as well as to express criticism or dissatisfaction in a socially acceptable way [1]. For example, humor is used to smooth criticism, making it less offensive than direct accusations. [2] Humor facilitates social interactions when exchanging unpleasant information. The joint perception of humor allows you to establish and maintain social relationships, which enhances mutual understanding between people [3]. With the help of humor people exchange feelings and emotions, and it is important to note that not only positive, but also negative ones, which are usually not accepted in society. Humor is a special social tool that relieves psychological stress and generally improves human relationships. Undoubtedly, humor contributes to socialization [4]. The understanding of humor and the functioning of a person in society are closely interconnected, since the ability to perceive humor develops social behavior, and therefore humor plays a special role in social relations. [5]. On the contrary, the inability to understand humor has a negative impact on a person's life. Let us analyze how the concept of humor is defined in different sources. The meaning of the word "humor" according to T.F. Yefremova [6]: Humor – 1. Goodnatured laughter, gentle mockery; attitude to something, imbued with such a mood. 2.

Literary device in works of literature and art based on the image of something in a comic, funny way; a set of works of art imbued with such an attitude to reality. The Webster Dictionary [7] defines the word "humour" as follows:  
1.The quality that makes something laughable or amusing; funniness;  
2.That which is intended to induce laughter or amusement;  
3.The ability to perceive, enjoy, or express what is amusing, comical, incongruous,

or absurd. The attempts to establish the necessary and sufficient conditions for a situation to seem funny to us is the cornerstone of the definition of humor. Representatives of various scientific disciplines such as linguists, philosophers, biologists dealt with this issue, however, until now all the necessary and sufficient criteria could not be identified. Among the universal characteristics of humor causing the corresponding reaction in the form of laughter, you can list the following: “incompatibility, inconsistency; absurdity/nonsense, curiosity/ludicrousness, frivolity; unforeseen future; a pleasant surprise; great surprise; emotional chaos recalled in a state of calm” [1]. Attempts to establish the nature of humor have been made since ancient Greek thinkers; over the past two or three decades, the number of works devoted to humor has increased [8], [9], [10], [11]. In 1989 The International Society for Humor Studies was formed. In many countries there are regular conferences on humor, specialized magazines such as *Witty World*, *International Journal of Humor Studies*, *Thalia Studies in Literary Humor*, *International Journal of Humor Research* and many others are published. As we have already mentioned, most modern researchers hold the view that the source of the comedy is discrepancy between expectation and reality, the clash of two perception angles. The wordplay, in the broadest sense of it is a vivid example of understanding a comic thing. Here’s what O.A. Chernovol-Tkachenko says about pun: “The most natural and prevalent linguistic means of expressing comical things are paradoxes, puns, allusions, metaphors, artistic comparisons due to the fact that they have a double meaning, which means that they carry bisociation within” [12] Some researchers argue that pun and wordplay are concepts of different scope and these stylistic devices are in a generic relationship. This opinion is shared by S.N. Vlahov and S.V. Florin. They believe that pun is a type of wordplay [13].

Before moving on to a more detailed discussion of the phenomenon of pun we need to pay attention to the issue of its terminology. The scientific community has no single point of view of whether it is worth delimiting the concepts of "pun" and "wordplay". However, many scientists do not find it necessary to distinguish between these concepts and consider them synonymous. Many researchers adhere to this point of view, which is confirmed by a number of definitions: "A pun is a witty expression, a joke based on using words that sound similar but have different meanings of one word; play on words" [6]. "A pun is a play on words, the use of different meanings of the same words (or two similar-sounding words) in order to produce a comic impression" [14]. "A pun is a conscious play on words built on the possibility of their double understanding" [15]. In this article we will further consider the pun as a synonym of wordplay. Translation of wordplay causes many difficulties, because the translator is often faced with the need to donate either content or stylistic device of the language game. Researchers distinguish the following main approaches to the translation of puns: transmission of wordplays with dictionary equivalents or equivalent stylistic techniques, compensation, descriptive techniques, omission. Before proceeding to the practical analysis of the collected material, it is necessary to give a brief description of the situation comedy genre and determine its inherent

features. Sitcom, or situational comedy is a genre of comedy centered on a fixed set of characters who mostly carry over from episode to episode. Sitcoms can be contrasted with sketch comedy, where a troupe may use new characters in each sketch, and standup comedy, where a comedian tells jokes and stories to an audience. A situation comedy television program may be recorded in front of a studio audience, depending on the program's production format. The effect of a live studio audience can be imitated or enhanced by the use of a laugh track. Analysis of the collected material showed that all the puns encountered in the "Friends", "How I met your mother", "Fry and Laurie" sitcoms can be divided into two main categories: lexical and phraseological. Let us consider the features and the specifics of the translation of each category of puns. Sometimes the implementation of a pun is facilitated by extralinguistic means, specifically audio and video sequences.

Table

1.

Example 1.

What makes me really mad is this new drug, ecstasy. Makes me mad!	Что меня бесит, так это тот новый наркотик, экстази. Я от него бешусь!
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In this case, the implementation of the pun becomes possible due to video sequence. On the second phrase, a character begins to portray a madman. Thus, there is a simultaneous implementation of idiomatic meaning of the stable expression "to make mad" – "to make someone very angry", and the direct meaning of the word "mad" is "insane, crazy".

Table 2.  
Example 2.

John: Things could get a little hairy in the next forty-eight. Rick: You know me, John. Hairy is as hairy does.	Джон: В ближайшие двое суток ситуация может осложниться. Рик: Ты меня знаешь, Джон. Опасность будоражит кровь.
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The pun is based on the proverb "handsome is as handsome does" which means that character and behavior are more important than one's appearance. The authors get a stable expression by replacing the element "handsome" with "hairy". The humorous effect is enhanced by the fact that in the first replica the word

"hairy" is used in its figurative meaning – "scaring, dangerous, or exciting" [16], and being introduced into a hermetic proverb complex it loses its figurative meaning and is perceived in the literal sense – "having or covered with hair" [16]. The closest analogue of this proverb in Russian is «судят не по словам, а по делам». The translators omitted the wordplay translating the pun with the neutral expression «опасность будоражит кровь». The humorous effect is also not preserved.

Table

3.

Example 3.

<p>Claire: Do you still want to hear my joke? John: Sure. Claire: Three tomatoes are walking down the street: papa tomato, momma tomato and baby tomato. Baby tomato starts lagging behind. Poppa tomato gets really angry, goes back, squishes him and says: "Catch up!"</p>	<p>Клэр: Ты все еще хочешь услышать мою шутку? Джон: Конечно. Клэр: Три помидора идут по улице: папа-помидор, мама-помидор, сын-помидор. Сын помидор начинает отставать. Папа помидор, рассердившись, возвращается, давит его и говорит «Кетчуп!»</p>
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The pun is built on the complete homonymy of the word "ketchup" and a phrasal verb "catch up". The translator used the method of omission.

Table

4.

Example 4.

<p>Tony: It's after 10 o'clock and you haven't had your coffee. John: You're right. It never rains but it pours, huh Tony? Tony: Yes, but quite often it rains and pours at the same time</p>	<p>Тони: Уже больше десяти. А ты еще не выпил свой кофе. Джон: Не одно, так другое, да, Тони? Тони: Да, но очень часто одновременно бывает и одно, и другое.</p>
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In this case the proverb "it never rains but it pours" which means "unfortunate events occur in quantity" [17] due to adding qualifying expressions "quite often" and "at the same time". In this case it actualizes the literal meanings of its constituent elements. Russian language has several analogues of this expression: «пришла беда – отворяй ворота, «беда никогда не приходит одна», «не одно,

так другое». In this example the pun is conveyed with the preservation of the semantic and pragmatic load as well as preserving the way of transformation of stable expression and comic effect. Humor is an extremely broad concept and many questions related to the definition of necessary and sufficient criteria for humor continue to be of a big interest including for linguists. Until there is not a universal theory of humor that would explain all the comic situations without any exception; the most accepted theory is a theory of incompatibility according to which the source of anything comical is a clash of two planes of perception. Wordplay is a characteristic example of such an approach to understanding humor. We analyzed the existing approaches to the translation of wordplays and considered the difficulties involved. Translation of wordplays is difficult because in this case it is required not only to find new language form, but to change the very form of the original. Therefore the translator often encounters with the necessity to either sacrifice semantic content of a pun or to give up the transmission of a wordplay. On the basis of the researched theoretical material the main approaches to the translation of puns have been identified: the transmission of pun with the dictionary equivalents or stylistic devices, compensation, descriptive devices, omission. In the practical part of the work several puns were analyzed. It was found that most often approaches such as descriptive techniques and compensation were used. Some puns were impossible to translate, so the humorous effect was absent. A possible direction for further research could be in-depth analysis of examples of wordplay translation with the help of compensation and also a detailed study of the principles of Russian-speaking wordplays functioning in order to develop principles for translating puns that minimize the use of descriptive techniques and omission.

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