
CLASSIFICATION OF PUNS AND THEIR TYPES

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Acest articol abordează problema dificultăților traducerii umorului englez. Acesta rămâne unul dintre cele mai misterioase și specifice unități atât în ceea ce privește percepția, cât și în sensul transmis în traducere. Scopul prezentului articol este de a identifica dificultățile semantice de traducere a jocului de cuvinte, de a le analiza și de a prezenta metode prin care traducătorul poate face față acestor dificultăți.

English humor remains one of the most mysterious and specific both in terms of perception and in the sense of conveying typical jokes when translated into other languages. The peculiarity of English humor is that it is very difficult for a person unfamiliar with English speech patterns, which are often characterized by unexpected associations and semantic relationships between words, to understand jokes in which “all the salt” is just a play on words.

One of the most common types of jokes in English humor can be considered a pun, or a play on words. At the same time, some linguists are of the opinion that the most convenient version of the pun structure can be considered the one in which the pun consists of two components – a lexical base (stimulant or supporting component), which allows you to start the game, and a “flip” (result, resulting component), which completes the pun. However, there is also such an opinion that it is precisely the second element i.e. that part of the pun that provokes a new one, unexpected perception and interpretation of the first part, thus turning into a stimulant.

From the linguistic viewpoint, puns may be analyzed from the perspective of homonymic aspects, word building, symbols, grammar, etc.

Homophonic aspect. A homophonic pun is one that uses word pairs which sound alike (homophones) but are not synonymous. Walter Redfern summarized this type with his statement, "To pun is to treat homonyms synonyms. “For example, in George Carlin's phrase "atheism is a non-prophet institution", the word prophet is put in place

of its homophone profit, altering the common phrase "non-profit institution".

Similarly, the joke "Question: Why do we still have troops in Germany? Answer: To keep the Russians in Czech" relies on the aural ambiguity of the homophones check and Czech. Often, puns are not strictly homophonic, but play on words of similar, not identical, sound as in the example from the Pinky and the Brain cartoon film series: "I think so, Brain, but if we give peas a chance, won't the lima beans feel left out?" which plays with the similar – but not identical – sound of peas and peace in the anti-war slogan "Give Peace a Chance" [1].

Homographic aspect. A homographic pun exploits words which are spelled the same (homographs) but possess different meanings and sounds. Because of their origin, they rely on sight more than hearing, contrary to homophonic puns. They are also known as heteronymic puns. Examples in which the punned words typically exist in two different parts of speech often rely on unusual sentence construction, as in the anecdote: "When asked to explain his large number of children, the pig answered simply: "The wild oats of my sow gave us many piglets." An example that combines homophonic and homographic punning is Douglas Adams's line "You can tune a guitar, but you can't tuna fish. Unless of course, you play bass." The phrase uses the homophonic qualities of tune and tuna, as well as the homographic pun on bass, in which ambiguity is reached through the identical spellings of /beɪs/ (a string instrument), and /bæs/ (a kind of fish). Homographic puns do not necessarily need to follow grammatical rules and often do not make sense when interpreted outside the context of the pun.

Homonymic aspect. Homonymic puns, another common type, arise from the exploitation of words which are both homographs and homophones. The statement "Being in politics is just like playing golf: you are trapped in one bad lie after another" puns on the two meanings of the word lie as "a deliberate untruth" and as "the position in which something rests". An adaptation of a joke repeated by Isaac Asimov gives us "Did you hear about the little moron who strained himself while running into the screen door?" playing on strained as "to give

much effort" and "to filter". A homonymic pun may also be polysemic, in which the words must be homonymic and possess related meanings, a condition that is often subjective. However, lexicographers define polysemes as listed under a single dictionary lemma (a unique numbered meaning) while homonyms are treated in separate lemmata [2, p.52].

Compounded aspect. A compound pun is a statement that contains two or more puns. In this case, the wordplay cannot go into effect by utilizing the separate words or phrases of the puns that make up the entire statement. For example, a complex statement by Richard Whitely includes four puns: "Why can a man never starve in the Great Desert? Because he can eat the sand which is there. But what brought the sandwiches there? Why, Noah sent Ham, and his descendants mustered and bred." This pun uses sand which is there/sandwiches there, Ham/ham, mustered/mustard, and bred/bread. Similarly, the phrase "piano is not my forte" links two meanings of the words forte and piano, one for the dynamic markings in music and the second for the literal meaning of the sentence, as well as alluding to "pianoforte", the older name of the instrument. Compound puns may also combine two phrases that share a word.

For example, "Where do mathematicians go on weekends? To a Möbius strip club!" puns on the terms Möbius strip and strip club.

Recursive aspect. A recursive pun is one in which the second aspect of a pun relies on the understanding of an element in the first. For example, the statement " π is only half a pie." (π radians is 180 degrees, or half a circle, and a pie is a complete circle). Another example is "Infinity is not in finite", which means infinity is not in finite range. Another example is "a Freudian slip is when you say one thing but mean your mother." The recursive pun "Immanuel doesn't pun, he Kant", is attributed to Oscar Wilde.

Visual aspect. Visual puns are sometimes used in logos, emblems, insignia, and other graphic symbols, in which one or more of the pun aspects is replaced by a picture. In European heraldry, this technique is called canting arms. Visual and other puns and word games are also common in Dutch gable stones as well as in some cartoons, such as

Lost Consonants and The Far Side. Another type of visual pun exists in languages which use non-phonetic writing. For example, in Chinese, a pun may be based on a similarity in shape of the written character, despite a complete lack of phonetic similarity in the words punned upon. Mark Elvin describes how this "peculiarly Chinese form of visual punning involved comparing written characters to objects."

Visual puns on the bearer's name are used extensively as forms of heraldic expression, they are called canting arms. They have been used for centuries across Europe and have even been used recently by members of the British royal family, such as on the arms of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and of Princess Beatrice of York. The arms of U.S. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower are also canting, is an example of visual paronomasia where the players are supposed to identify the word in common from the set of four images [3, p.34].

The essence of the pun lies in the collision or, on the contrary, in the unexpected combination of two incompatible meanings in one phonetic and / or graphic form.

References:

1. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ru/>
2. SHTYRKHUNOVA, N.A. *Linguistic Pun in English and in Russian Translation*: Dissertation of the candidate of philological sciences. Moscow, 2005. 284 p.
3. YAKIMENKO, N.V. *Play on Words in English*. Kiev, 1984. 48 p.

Recomandat

Svetlana CORCODEL, lector, asistent univ.