

HUMOR ACROSS LANGUAGES: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS IN TRANSLATION.

Zokirova Nargiza Savriyevna

Senior Lecturer of Foreign Languages Faculty

Bukhara State University

n.s.zokirova@buxdu.uz

Bahodirova Ruxshona Jahongir qizi

Student of Foreign Languages Faculty

Bukhara State University

Abstract. *Humor is one of the trickiest things to translate. It's not just about changing words from one language to another—it's about making sure the joke still makes sense and feels funny to a completely different audience. This article looks at the main issues translators face when dealing with humor, like language differences, cultural references, and wordplay. It also looks at how translators try to solve these problems, often using creative techniques. The goal is to show that translating humor takes more than just knowing two languages—it requires a deep understanding of context, culture, and tone.*

Keywords: *humor translation, language and culture, idioms, wordplay, translation strategies*

Introduction. Humor is one of the most difficult things to translate because it often depends on context, timing, and cultural background. A joke that's hilarious in one language might not work at all in another. Eugene Nida believed that translation should create the same effect in the target audience, not just mirror the words. Peter Newmark also pointed out that keeping the original meaning and feeling is key, especially when translating creative works. This article looks into what makes humor hard to translate and how translators try to deal with those challenges using different methods and strategies.

Methods. This article looks at humor translation problems by dividing them into two groups: linguistic and cultural. Based on theories from Nida and Newmark, the linguistic challenges are broken down into the following:

1. Wordplay and puns: These rely on double meanings or similar-sounding words. For example, Oscar Wilde's use of the word "Ernest" in *The

Importance of Being Earnest* loses its meaning when translated into languages where the pun doesn't work.

2. Idioms and expressions: These often don't have direct equivalents. In Molière's plays, idiomatic expressions are often changed to more familiar phrases in English so that the humor makes sense.

3. Irony and sarcasm: These are based on tone and context. In Chekhov's stories, the irony sometimes disappears in translation when the words are translated literally without capturing the mood.

The cultural side of humor translation includes:

4. Cultural references: These can confuse readers if they don't know the background. In the translation of Gabriel García Márquez's works, some cultural references are explained or replaced to avoid confusion.

5. Social norms and taboos: Jokes that are normal in one culture might be inappropriate in another. This is often seen in translations of Japanese media where family or social humor is adjusted.

6. Tone and register: Keeping the same tone is important. For example, translators of Shakespeare try to keep both the poetic style and the humor, which is not always easy.

These categories help show the types of problems translators face when working with humor, using examples from real texts.

Results. From the examples studied, it's clear that humor often changes or weakens when it's translated. In "The Importance of Being Earnest", the pun on "Ernest" and "earnest" doesn't work in French, so the name is changed to "Constant," which loses the original joke. The final line of the play doesn't have the same impact.

In Molière's "Tartuffe", the line "Couvrez ce sein que je ne saurais voir" becomes "Hide that bosom; I cannot endure the sight of it" in English. Although the meaning is there, the irony and rhythm of the original are mostly lost.

Chekhov's "The Complaints Book" has a joke about tea served at "90 degrees"—a pun on both temperature and angle. Early translations missed the joke, but later ones adjusted it to keep the humor.

These examples show how humor often doesn't survive translation completely. Some translators try to adapt the jokes, while others stick to the original wording, which can change the tone or meaning.

Discussion. The results show that humor can be hard to translate without losing something. Many jokes just don't work the same way in a different

language. Translators often have to make a choice—should they stay true to the words or try to keep the same effect? This connects to Nida and Newmark's idea that good translation should focus on meaning and reaction, not just accuracy.

Culture plays a big role too. What's funny in one country might not make sense—or might even be offensive—in another. That's why translators need to understand both the language and the culture they're working with.

Overall, translating humor is more than just switching words. It takes creativity, flexibility, and sometimes a bit of risk-taking to make sure the humor still works.

Conclusion. Translating humor isn't just hard—it's a balancing act. The translator has to think about language, culture, timing, and tone, all at the same time. A lot of humor gets lost or changed during translation, but with the right skills and approach, the effect can still be saved. Translators need more than just language knowledge. They need cultural awareness and a creative mindset. With proper training and experience, they can handle humor better and make it work in different languages.

References:

1. Nida, E. A. (1964). "Toward a Science of Translating". Brill.
2. Newmark, P. (1988). "A Textbook of Translation". Prentice Hall.
3. Wilde, O. (1895). "The Importance of Being Earnest".
4. Molière. (1664). "Tartuffe".
5. Chekhov, A. (1884). "The Complaints Book".
6. Baker, M. (1992). "In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation". Routledge.
7. Delabastita, D. (1996). "Introduction." "The Translator", 2(2), 127–139.
8. Zokirova, N. S. "The nature of translation transformations." *Innovative Development in Educational Activities* 2 (2023): 287-293.
9. Zokirova, N. S. "Translatology and the Analysis of Its Linguistic Mechanism." *European Journal of Humanities and Educational Advancements* 1.4 (2020): 8-10.
10. Zokirova Savrievna, Nargiza (2025) *Translation as a Cognitive Phenomenon*. American Journal of Education and Evaluation Studies, 2 (1). pp. 158-163. ISSN 2997-9439.

11. Zokirova Savrievna, Nargiza (2025) *The Task of Interlingual Adaptation in Translation Strategies*. American Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education, 3 (1). pp.168-174. ISSN 2993-2769.

12. Sergeyevna, Markova Yelena, and Zokirova Nargiza Savriyevna. "Translation as a Bridge Between Cultures: a Multidisciplinary Perspective." *Miasto Przyszłości* 48 (2024): 80-84.