TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES AND TRANSLATOR'S CHOICES USED FOR CONVEYING THE HUMOROUS EFFECT IN THE ADAPTATION OF THE "DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES" SERIES FROM ENGLISH INTO RUSSIAN

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The problem of the quality of audio-visual translation (AVT) and especially of translating humour remains present as of today. The existing studies on the question of humour adaptation in audio-visual material are far from being exhaustive. Moreover, not many translators share their experience in AVT, the difficulties they encountered and the solutions they found. The lack of research and discussion on the topic increases the chances of an unsuccessful translator's choice, resulting in a loss of humour – an event that is incompatible with a comedy's success. In this context, scholars emphasize the need for research on possibilities and limitations of application of translation techniques in the process of television comedy dubbing [6, p. 250].

The purpose of the study was to analyse what translation techniques were chosen to convey the humorous effect in the adaptation of an American comedy series. Considering that certain television shows are known worldwide and others were hopelessly forgotten, we suggested that some translation techniques are more suitable for the adaptation of humour in the dubbing of comedy. The object of our study was humour and its translation in an audio-visual text. As the research material, one of the most successful American television comedies "Desperate Housewives" (seasons 1-3) and its Russian dubbing by the company "Nevafilm" were chosen.

The paper's main objectives were: to familiarise with the concept of humour; to define a translation technique; to identify types of humour in the series; to identify translation techniques that were applied in its Russian dubbing; to determine whether the intended humorous effect was preserved or not; to summarize which techniques are potentially more useful in rendering humour in audiovisual texts. The following methods were used: contextual analysis, stylistic analysis, comparative analysis, translation analysis, continuous sampling method, and descriptive statistical analysis.

Despite the fact that the earliest humour and laughter studies can be traced back to the ancient times, the question of defining humour remains unresolved. M. Minsky notices that the reason of such complex nature of humour is hidden in the absence of limitations that would frame the concept and make it domain-specific [3, p. 13]. In the field of audio-visual translation (AVT), humour is subdivided into verbal and

non-verbal, that is created with background sounds, music, and the visual aspect of an audiovisual text [1, p. 433]. Whether a translator is working within dubbing, subtitling or other AVT mode, s/he can always implement changes only on the level of the text. For this reason, in the framework of this article, the terms "verbal humour" and "humour" are interchangeable and defined, according to V. Raskin, as follows: humour, which is produced by means of language or text [46]. According to M. Dynel, verbal humour, in its turn, is divided into the following two categories: canned jokes, which represent a combination of a narrative and a punch, revealed at the end [2, pp. 1284-1285]; and conversational humour, that is the interaction of language units in a non-humorous context that creates comic effect [2, p. 1286]. Unlike canned jokes, conversational humour is non-intentional and unique in its form.

Translator's choices involve applying various translation solutions. Translation techniques constitute a subgroup of these and represent "micro methods for operationalising a general or globalising translation strategy" [5, p. 49] applied on the level of words, collocations, clauses etc. Classifications of translation techniques can be more general (e.g., the ones by M. Baker or A. Pym) and more specific (e.g., D. Chiaro, D. Delabastita, P. Zabalbeascoa focus on humour in AVT). For our research, we amplified the main classification of translation techniques by J.-P. Vinay and J. Darblenet with solutions that were suggested by A. Pym and the technique of paraphrase, as it was frequently mentioned by other scholars.

A corpus of 135 SL-TL humorous pairs (or 270 examples in total) from the series was analysed. Humour categories were identified according to M. Dynel's taxonomy. The most frequent ones were retort (34), pun (17), and putdown (16). In general, various forms of conversational humour (133) prevailed over canned jokes (2). It was established that humour in the series serves as a marker of relationships between characters. For example, teasing and banter occur only between friends or good acquaintances, witticisms are mostly used to state one's position without initiating an open disagreement, and putdowns occur when there are tensions between characters.

As a result of translation analysis, we established that the most used solutions were paraphrase (43), literal translation (28), and adaptation (17). The overall predominance of oblique translation techniques (104) over literal ones (31) indicates the importance of a natural-sounding dialogue for the preservation of the humorous effect. The techniques of addition, omission and resegmentation are notable as well: they were applied in 48 examples. Even though, in most cases, they do not directly contribute to the translation of humour, they help preserve the naturalness of the dialogue as well.

Such distribution between oblique and literal translation techniques is present in cases of specific translation difficulties as well. For example, out of 135 instances, 26 represent the category of language-based humour, that is puns (17), lexemes or phrasemes (7), and riddles (2). The application of literal translation techniques (8) was observed in cases of universally shared humour (e.g., - *But you kissed other girls before that, right? - Sure, but most of them* ***were 12… As was I*** *[S03E03, 00:13:05-*

00:13:18] (SL). - Но ты же целовался с другими девушками? - Верно, но им ***было 12… Как и мне*** *(TL)*) or when TL grammar norms allowed for their application (e.g., *- I didn't say that! - But if you had, Susan or booze? - A little of both, so* ***"Booze-an."*** *[S03E06, 00:32:17-00:33:02] (SL). - Я так не говорила. - Ну ладно, но, если бы сказала, это была бы Сюзан или спиртное? - И я, и оно, так что* ***"Спирт-юзан"*** *(TL)*). In other cases, oblique translation techniques (18) were applied, with adaptation (8) being the most frequent one (e.g., the following conversation is about the number of people that interlocutors had dated before: *- You know my number. It's only fair. Is it more than three? -* ***Nine.*** *- Please, tell me you were answering* ***in German*** *[S03E03, 00:13:46-00:14:08] (SL). -* ***Ты тоже знаешь мою цифру. Это было бы справедливо. Она больше трёх? - Девять.*** *- Ты, как видно, ответила,* ***который час?*** *(TL)*).

In cases of culture-related humour (26), a clear priority is given to oblique translation techniques as well (22). The choice of a technique depends on the importance of a cultural reference in a given instance. If it plays a secondary role in the creation of the humorous effect, it can be rendered by means of generalisation (e.g., *- It's a business meeting. - It's a* ***frat party****. -Regional manager, corporate manager, head of sales. - Margarita, cigar, sombrero [S01E03, 00:13:10-00:13:17] (SL). - Это деловая встреча. - Это просто* ***пьянка****. (TL).* The fact of having a "frat party" is not the main component of the instance). On the contrary, a reference that is central to a joke needs to be understood and can be rendered by means of adaptation (e.g., *- It's a fabulous location… - Right, from here I can see a bail bondsman and an adult bookshop. - What do you expect in your price range?* ***Tara?*** *[S03E09, 00:18:50-00:19:04] (SL). - Потрясающе расположен… - Именно. Отсюда виден ломбард и книжный магазин для взрослых. - А чего вы хотите по такой цене?* ***Тадж-Махал?*** *(TL)*).

However, the use of oblique translation techniques does not always guarantee successful translation. We identified the following reasons for humour loss: breaking the structure of a SL/TL set phrase (e.g., *- Well, it was nice talking to you, dr. Van de Kamp. - Please, you're dating my wife. Call me Rex [S01E11, 00:24:48-00:24:52] (SL) - Поправляйтесь, доктор Ван де Камп. - Брось! Идёшь с моей женой – зови меня Рекс (TL). In the TL, paraphrase violated the structure of a set phrase "идти на свидание"*), ignoring semantic nuances (e.g., *- Do you think it will be hard to replace that screen? - That depends. If you nail it in yourself, you might want to wear gloves. Or pants. Pants wouldn't hurt [S01E03, 00:28:23-00:28:43] (SL) - Думаешь, будет трудно починить? - Ну, смотря как. Если самому, нужны перчатки… И белье, белье не помеха (TL).* The English idiom "it doesn't hurt to do something" means that one benefits from doing it, whereas saying that something is "не помеха" implies that something does not pose a problem). In some cases, grammar mistakes negatively influenced the perception of humour as well.

On the grounds of the data received within the research, we would like to provide the following recommendations for AVT translators: paying attention to set phrases, semantic nuances of the SL and the TL; exercising one's skills not only in the foreign

language, but also in the mother tongue; remembering that even though oblique translation techniques generally produce good results in the dubbing format, their use does not guarantee correctness. Lastly, more thorough research on the relation between characters and their preferred types of jokes could help establish common speech patterns and suggest exact translation solutions that could be used in these cases.

The practical value of the study consists in a new way of approaching translation of audio-visual humour and, more precisely, humour in the genre of comedy. The information from the practical part of the paper can be used by translators, who work in the field of audio-visual translation. Students, who want to broaden their knowledge, may familiarise with the theoretical part of the paper. Scholars and critics may use the information in the paper for their further research.

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