

”IF YOU CAN’T STAND THE MEAT, STAY
OUT OF THE KITCHEN”

Translation of verbal humour in television series
Coupling

Bachelor’s thesis
Eeva Kuusisto

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
English
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Eeva Kuusisto

**“IF YOU CAN’T STAND THE MEAT, STAY OUT OF THE KITCHEN” -
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Suurin osa Suomessa näytettävistä televisio-ohjelmista on vieraskielisiä. Monet näistä ohjelmista ovat komedioita, joissa huumori usein perustuu sanaleikkeihin ja verbaaliseen huumoriin. Tästä syystä on tärkeää kiinnittää huomiota näiden televisio-ohjelmien suomenkielisiin käännöksiin. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, millä tavoin kääntäjät selviytyvät hankalista ja usein mahdottomista sanaleikeistä sekä kulttuuriin liittyvästä huumorista. Tarkoituksena on myös ottaa selvää, mitä eri strategioita kääntäjä käyttää hankalaa vitsiä kääntäessään.

Tämän tutkimuksen aineistona käytettiin brittiläistä komediaohjelmaa *Paritellen*, koska samankaltaisia tutkimuksia on aiemmin tehty amerikkalaisista komedioista. Aineisto kerättiin katsomalla kahdeksan jaksoa valitusta sarjasta ja kirjoittamalla ylös hauskat sanaleikit ja vitsit sekä niiden käännökset. Vitsit ja käännökset jaettiin kuuteen eri kategoriaan; neljään eri sanaleikkiluokkaan, kulttuurisidonnaiseen huumoriin sekä kaksimerkityksiin lauseisiin.

Tulokset osoittivat, että joissain huumorikohdissa kääntäjällä oli ollut vaikeuksia kääntää vitsi ja säilyttää sen hauskuus. Tällaisia vitsejä olivat muun muassa lauseet, jotka voidaan tulkita kahdella eri tavalla sekä sanaleikit, joille ei ole suomenkielistä vastinetta. Joissain kohdissa kääntäjä oli onnistunut säilyttämään käännöksen hauskana siirtymällä pois alkuperäisestä käännöksestä ja korvaamalla sen suomalaisen sanastoon ja kulttuuriin paremmin sopivalla käännöksellä.

Avainsanat: Screen translation, verbal humor

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to study conducted by Finnpanel in the year 2008, Finns watch TV for two hours and 51 minutes per day. That is ten minutes more than the previous year. Finns also have more channels to choose from now that the country has transferred into to digital network. (Finnpanel 2009) One has to only look at a TV guide to realize the large number of comedy programmes shown on television. With the same look, it is clear that most of the comedy programmes are foreign. Culture related humour can be very difficult and sometimes even impossible to translate from one language to another. In addition, language can make the jokes impossible to translate if there is no equivalent word for the pun or the joke. It is important to find out ways to solve these problems. That is why it is essential to pay attention to and to study the translations in the TV shows.

Almost all translations in Finnish television are done by subtitling (Vertanen 2002: 131). That is why the translator has to take into account what is going on in the background as well, and not just strictly focus on the speech itself. In order to recognize something to be funny, people often need to sense other people responding to jokes and humour. That is why ‘canned laughter’ is often used for television sitcoms (Ross 1998: 1). That also makes the translators’ task that much harder. If the translator fails to translate a joke or a pun, the Finnish audience is left to wonder why the audience in the background of the show is laughing.

In this paper, I will try to find out how humour is translated into Finnish in the TV- series *Coupling*. The aim of this study is to find out how humour is translated in television. I am going to be looking at a specific show and find out how humour, that is difficult to translate and still keep the humorous effect, is translated. My hypothesis is that there will be some jokes that have a clumsy or awkward Finnish translation. I also expect to find jokes where the humorous effect is lost all together.

First, I am going to introduce some of the theories concerning translation and then move on to some of the difficulties the translator might face during the translation process. I am also going to introduce some of the methods used in subtitling TV- programmes, concentrating on the Finnish

techniques and ways of subtitling. After that, I will present my data and the results I found and analyze them in the discussion part.

2. TRANSLATION THEORIES

In this chapter, I am going to talk briefly about some prevailing translation theories and ways in which texts are translated. In the two following chapters, I am going to introduce some of the problems that the translator might have to face during the translation process. I will provide some examples to clarify the terms used in these chapters. First, I will briefly introduce some of the problems in general. Then, as this study is about translating humour, I will focus on the difficulties that the translator is likely to face when translating humour

In her book, Bassnett (2002: 10) defines translation as a process that renders the source language (SL) into the target language (TL). The meaning of the two texts has to be somewhat similar and the structures of the SL and TL have to be alike, without distorting the TL structure too much (Bassnett 2002: 11). All translations begin with the tasks of taking a text that needs to be translated and choosing a method to translate it (Venuti 1998: 240). There are several different theories on how texts should be translated from one language to another. Every translator has his or her own viewpoint on what is the best way to translate a certain text and that is why there is no one right way to translate texts (Vehmas-Lehto 1999: 133).

There are almost as many theories of translation as there are translators. Throughout the history, translators have argued whether the translator should keep the text as original as possible and use a word for word translation or whether to take liberties in the translation process and just translate the idea of the original text (Koskinen 2002: 374). Nowadays the focus is on how well texts can be translated into another language without losing much of the original information (Bassnett 2002: 11).

Equivalence is a controversial concept in the field of translation. “Some theorists define translation in terms of equivalence relations” while others feel it is irrelevant or damaging to translation studies and some theorists are in between (Kenny 1998: 77). Despite the controversial opinions, the

theory nevertheless has its place among translations studies. Often culture bound sayings, idioms and puns create a problem of equivalence (Bassnett 2002: 31). When translating an idiom from SL to TL the translator has to take in to account the meaning of the idiom, rather than translating just the linguistic and lexical elements. When the meaning is clear, the translator can substitute one idiom with another. (Ibid.) Popovic (1976, as quoted by Bassnett) distinguishes four types of equivalence in translation:

1. Linguistic equivalence: where there is homogeneity on the linguistic level of both SL and TL texts i.e. word for word translation
2. Paradigmatic equivalence: where there is equivalence of the element of a paradigmatic expressive axis i.e. elements of grammar, which Popovic sees as being a higher category than lexical equivalence.
3. Stylistic (translational) equivalence: where there is functional equivalence of elements in both original and translation aiming at expressive identity with an invariant of the identical meaning.
4. Textual (syntagmatic) equivalence: where here is equivalence if the syntagmatic structuring of a text i.e. equivalence of form and shape.

Bassnett 2002: 32

2.1. Difficulties in translating in general

There are many problems and difficulties that a translator has to overcome in order to produce a fluent text that is equivalent to the original version. The translator has to analyse the text before he or she can reach a satisfactory translation. She or he must know what the text means and what the most important points of the text are. (Vehmas-Lehto 1999: 17) Bassnett (2002: 80) also adds that many translators have failed to deliver a good translation because they are only focusing on some aspects of the text and do not pay enough attention to the rest. She gives an example of a translator who focuses too much on the content of a text and ignores its style. In addition, if the translator him or herself does not know what the text means, he or she can end up writing something completely different than what was intended in the original text (Vehmas-Lehto 1999: 19).

2.2. Difficulties in translating humour

Translating humour can often cause problems that do not come up when translating texts that are more serious. The translator can often find himself giving long explanations to a joke and kill it in the process (Chiaro 1996: 77). Most problems seem to occur when the translator is faced with the “untranslatable”, a theory that relates to the theory of equivalence (ibid.). The most obvious cases of untranslatability are grammatical differences in languages, for example word order, that can be

replaced with different grammatical elements but still preserve the message of the original text (Pym and Turk 1998: 274). An example of this could be the passive form, which is often used in Finnish texts but cannot be used similarly in English. It is still possible to translate Finnish passive sentences into English by adding an object like *they, one, you* etc. to the English translation. For example, the Finnish sentence *kokous aloitettiin kahdelta* can be translated as *they started the meeting at two o'clock* by adding an object *they* instead of the grammatically incorrect word-for-word translation *the meeting was started at two o'clock*. The more problematic case in which untranslatability occurs is cultural context. In this case, the TL culture does not have a similar feature that the SL culture has (Catford, as quoted by Susan Bassnett 2002: 38). A common example from Finnish is the concept of “sisu” which is quite difficult if not impossible to translate into other languages.

When translating jokes and puns, for example, homonyms and homophones are often quite hard to translate if the target language does not have the same equivalent, as is often the case (Chiaro 1996: 86.). Few lexical word-play options might be difficult to translate from one language to another (Chiaro 1996: 37). Some of these are listed below:

Homophones:	words have the same sound but different spelling and meaning, eg: <i>plane/plain, knight/night</i> .
Homonyms:	words have similar spelling and sound but they have different meaning, eg: i) <i>can</i> , a verb, being able to and ii) <i>can</i> , a noun, container for food etc. (Chiaro 1996:38)
Paronymy:	words have slight differences in both spelling and sound. Eg: <i>beat/meet, hair/hail</i>
Mimetic phrase:	mimes some famous quotations or common saying. Eg: <i>No noose is good new</i> from the film <i>Men in Tights</i> , mimicking the saying <i>No news is good news</i> . (Nash 1985: 138)

In these kinds of cases, the translator is often unwilling to move away from the original joke and come up with another one that would work in the target language but does not have the same meaning as the original joke (Chiaro 1996: 86).

3. SUBTITLING TV-PROGRAMMES IN FINLAND

In this chapter, I will discuss the ways and methods in which television programmes are subtitled in Finland. I will also give reasons for why most of the foreign TV- shows in Finland are subtitled instead of being dubbed. In addition, I will discuss some of the pros and cons of using screen texts.

Screen texts have been used in Finland for more than forty years. It is the cheapest way to translate television shows in a country of five million people, and over 80 per cent of all foreign TV-programmes are subtitled. (Vertanen 2001: 131) Subtitling is estimated to be ten to twenty times cheaper than dubbing (Anderman 2003: 196). It also has many advantages that have made it the most favoured mode of audiovisual translation. Besides being the cheapest method, it is also the quickest. In addition, subtitling can be used to translate all audiovisual products, such as films, news, interviews, series, etc. Probably the most noted advantage of subtitling is that the viewer is able to hear the original version at the same time he or she sees the translated text on the screen. That is thought to assist foreign language learning. (Anderman 2003: 196) However, at the present time both modes, subtitling and dubbing, coexist in some countries, for example in Denmark and in Finland (*ibid.*). In Finland, for example, TV- programmes aimed for children are usually dubbed (see Oittinen 2000 for more information).

The different stages in subtitling a TV-show are perpetually readjusted, and methods that were common some fifteen years ago are now clearly outdated. (Anderman 2003: 201). In Finland, the current way of subtitling is to use two rows of text, which both contain approximately 30 marks. A full two-rowed line has to be shown in the screen for four to five seconds and a full one rowed line for two to three seconds. The minimum length of a line is one and a half seconds and the maximum is thirty seconds. However, keeping the text on the screen longer than ten seconds is in most cases too long. (Vertanen 2001: 133)

Despite being the most popular method in Finland, subtitling has its own challenges. The text has to be big enough so that the viewer can see it without problems but on the other hand, it cannot take very much space on the screen. The text has to follow the rhythm of the speech as specifically as possible, and it has to stay on the screen the exactly same amount of time as the spoken sentence

lasts. However, it has to stay on long enough so that the audience has time to read the text. The emphasis of the speech also has to be on the same spot in the text as it is in the spoken sentence. The screen text is comprehensible only when the text is on the screen at the exactly right moment so that the audience knows whose speech the text is representing. Because of the limited time and space, not everything that is said in the show can be directly translated. The translator has to pick the main points of the sentences and summarize them into understandable entities. However, as the screen text always represents the speech of someone, the text cannot be cut too much. It has to make sense from the point of view of the speaker and of the plot. (Vertanen 2001: 135) In an ideal scenario, the screen text follows the speech rhythm of the program precisely and the text is synchronized with the visual and the audible ambiance of the show. Then the viewer does not necessarily even realize that he or she is reading the translation on the screen. (ibid.)

Having now discussed some of the theories and problems concerning translation and subtitling, I will move on to discuss my research questions in the following section. I will also briefly introduce some of the previous studies that have been conducted and after that, I will introduce my data.

3.1. Previous studies and research questions

Some similar studies have been conducted previously in this area of research. The translations of humour in the American TV- series *Friends* have been studied in the University of Jyväskylä and in other Universities in Finland as well. One of the most recent ones conducted in the University of Jyväskylä is a pro gradu thesis “Sgt. Pompous and the fancy pants club band” by Sini Nieminen 2007. In her thesis, she studies the Finnish translations of the movie *Shrek* and she also compares them to the Finnish dubbing of the same movie. However, she studies a film directed mainly for children and my data is aimed for adult audience. In addition, different translators use different methods to translate and that is why it is important to study this area of research as widely as possible.

The research questions of this paper are:

1. What methods have been used to translate humour in the TV- series *Coupling*?
2. What kind of humour is the most difficult one to translate?

After analyzing my data I will present my findings in the discussion part and prove my hypothesis, which I mentioned in the introduction, to be either right or wrong.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will present my data and the methods used in the process of gathering the data. First, I will introduce the TV- show I decided to analyze and give reasons for why I chose this particular show. Then I am going to move on to the results I found and in the discussion part I am going to analyze the results.

I chose the British TV- sitcom *Coupling* to be my source of data since I wanted a show that was not American. As I mentioned in chapter 3.1., similar studies have been conducted of American TV-shows. That is why I wanted to study a British version in a comparison. The reason why I chose this particular series as my data was because the settings of *Coupling* is very similar to the American sitcom *Friends*, and it has been said to be “Friends without the sugar”. The four seasons of *Coupling* aired between 2000 and 2004 in Britain. The series was shown in the Finnish television around the same time and it was shown as a rerun in the Finnish pay television channel *MTV3 SARJA* in the autumn of 2008. The show is created and written by Steven Moffat. The humour in the show is created mainly by few unconventional personalities and the characters’ problems and mishaps in their relationships.

I watched eight episodes from two seasons of the show on the DVDs. The first two seasons of the show seemed most logical to me to choose and that is why I used them to collect my data. I chose to watch two seasons instead of just one because one season only includes a few episodes and I felt that did not provide enough material. The first season consists of six and the second season of nine episodes. Each episode lasts from twenty to twenty-five minutes. The Finnish translation is by Timo Ruokolainen from Pre-Text Oy.

I collected the data by watching the show on DVD. I looked for jokes and puns, and the way they were translated. There is canned laughter in the background of the show, so I have interpreted everything that the audience reacts with laughter to be humorous. I have examined the translations on the screen and written the joke in English and then the Finnish translation. I tried to find transcriptions of the show but I could not find any so I had to write all the data down myself.

5. RESULTS

In this part, I will present the results found in this study. I found 14 examples from the eight episodes that I watched and I have divided the examples into six different themes. Four of the themes represent the four lexical word play possibilities, as discussed in chapter 2.2. I have also categorized culture related jokes and jokes with double meaning. Some of the jokes can fall into two or even three different categories but I have put them in the categories I feel are the most relevant ones.

5.1. Homophones

Patrick, Steve and Jeff are talking about an ex of Patrick's who was only interested of him sexually. She was a sculptor and she made a sculpture of his penis and then stopped seeing him.

- (1)
- Patrick: Last I heard she started some kind of Mail Order Company
Hän perusti kuulemma postimyöntifirman
- Patrick: But you know what, though, she misspelled "mail"
Mutta hän kirjoitti sen "miesmyynti"
- Steve: I think you may have been had, mate
Sinua on pantu halvalla
- Jeff: And a lot more often than you realize
Useammin kuin tiedätkään
- s.2.e.2.

This pun is based on the homophony words *mail/male*. Finnish has no equivalent to this word combination. Here the translator has moved away from word to word translation and slightly changed the literal meaning of the pun. By using the Finnish saying *panna halvalla* he has been able to keep the double meaning of the joke.

In the second example of homophones, Patrick states his opinion about Tony Blair:

- (2)
 Patrick: The thing about Blair is... the thing about blah
 Blairissa on yksi juttu
 s.1.e.2

Patrick uses homophonic word pair *Blair/blah* to state his opinion about the prime minister of England. The pronunciation of the words is similar and that creates the pun. It is quite difficult to translate it to Finnish as such and so the translator has decided not to translate it at all. However, in this case the viewer is able to hear the *blah* and connect it to Blair so the joke is not completely lost even though it is not translated.

5.2. Homonymies

Susan and Steve are on a date in Susan's home. Steve is trying to watch TV but the batteries of the remote control have run out. Susan gets more batteries and says:

- (3)
 Susan: You find your batteries always run out very quickly
 Patterit loppuvat tosi pian
 Steve: I've never had any complaints
 Ei minusta ole valitettu
 s.1.e.2.

Here there is a homonymic word *batteries*. Susan refers to the actual batteries of the remote control but Steve interprets it as a hint of his activity level. In Finnish the word *patterit* does not have the same double meaning and so the pun is lost all together.

In example 4, Jeff is picking on Steve about the fact that Steve has fantasies of Mariella Fostrup when he is having sex. He describes what would happen if Steve ever actually met her.

- (4)
 Jeff: It'll be like, you know, the end of E.T when you saw the spaceship.
 There'll be organ music.
 Kuten *ET*:n lopussa on avaruuslaiva ja urkumusiikkia
 Steve: Yeah, thanks for the clearing that up
 Kiitos selvennyksestä
 Jeff: Hey, organ music!
 Urkujen "polkija"
 s.2.e.2.

Jeff: Never mind, plenty more naked fish in the... cupboard. Water cupboard. Water closet.
 Kaapissa on muitakin kaloja. Vesikaapissa. Vesiklosetissa.
 s.1.e.6.

Here there are two things creating the joke; the synonyms *cupboard/closet* and the saying *plenty more fish in the sea* turned into a mimetic phrase. The word *water* combined with the word *closet* creates a whole new meaning. In Finnish the word *klosetti* only means a toilet and it does not have any other meanings. The Finnish translation does not have any logical connection from cupboard to toilet so the translation loses the pun of this wordplay.

In the second mimetic phrase example, the characters are having a dinner party. Jane and her friend are fighting because Jane claims to be a vegetarian, although she eats meat. Her friend, who is a vegetarian, tries to point out to her that if she eats meat, she is not a vegetarian. They start arguing and Jane says to her friend:

(7)
 Jane: If you can't stand the meat, stay out of the kitchen!
 Jollet kestä lihaa, pysy poissa keittiöstä
 s.1.e.4.

Here the wordplay consists of the use of a mimic phrase. The common saying “*If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen*” is twisted in to a mimetic phrase by replacing the word *heat* by a paronymy word *meat*. Finnish does not have an equivalent saying to the English one, although it has become familiar to viewers through other English TV- programs. The translator has translated the sentence using word to word translation. In Finnish the words *kuumuus* and *liha* are not paronymous and because of that there is a loss of meaning in the translation. That has caused the pun to be a bit weaker in Finnish than it is in English.

5.5. Culture related jokes

The men are discussing who they fantasize about during sex. Jeff says to Steve:

(8)
 Jeff: With you it's always Mariella Frostrup
 Sinähän fantasioit juontaja Mariella Frostrupista
 s. 1 e. 2

This pun is related to culture and in order to get the joke the viewer has to have knowledge of the British television. A Finnish viewer cannot be expected to know this so the translator has tried to clarify the joke and has provided extra information in the Finnish translation about who Mariella Frostrup is. However, even with this extra information the pun is lost because the title *juontaja* does not give much information about the persona of Mariella Frostrup.

In the second example, Susan and Sally are talking about if it is a turn off if a man is otherwise naked but have his socks on.

(9)

Susan: Maybe Angus Deyton

Sally: What?

Susan: I think Angus could pull off naked in socks

Ehkä näyttelijä Angus Deyton. Hän voisi mennä alasti sukissa.

s. 1. e. 2.

This pun is similar to example 8. The average Finnish viewer has no way of knowing who Angus Deyton is so the translator has mentioned his profession in the translation. However, the viewer is still left to wonder what kind of person Mr. Deyton is and why it is funny that Susan would consider just him to be able to pull off naked in socks.

In the third example of culture related jokes, Susan asks Sally what kind of man she would consider.

(10)

Sally: I would consider anything but animals and Tories.

Vain eläimet ja konservatiivit eivät käy.

s.1.e.2

In the fourth one, the characters are discussing their political views and Patrick feels strongly that Blair is bad for the country.

(11)

Patrick: The Tories have gotta find a way to save the country from him

Toryjen on pelastettava maa hänen käsistään

s.1.e.2.

In both of these examples the English dialogue uses the word *Tory* to describe the political views of the Conservative Party of England. In example 10 the word *Tory* is translated as *konservatiivi* but in example 11 it is translated as *tory*. To an average Finnish viewer the word might not mean anything so it is logical to change the word to a more descriptive word *konservatiivi*.

The final example of culture related jokes is about Sally and Susan, who are talking about Susan's ex-boyfriend, Patrick.

- (12)
- Sally: At least now, I know why you called him donkey brain
Sanoit häntä sonniaivoksi
- Susan: Actually I called him donkey
Sanoin häntä sonniksi
- s.1.e.2.

Here the translator has moved away from the original version and has changed the words in his translation in order to keep the pun. If he had used a word to word translation, the Finnish meaning would be completely different. In Finnish the word *sonni* has similar sexual innuendos as does the English word *donkey*.

5.6. Double meanings

Jane and Steve used to date but then they broke up. Jane is still longing after Steve and when her aunt dies she wants him to go to the funeral with him and pretend to be his boyfriend. Steve does not want to go because he is now seeing Susan. Jane gets upset, rushes out and yells:

- (13)
- Jane: I'm not trying to lure you in to bed with my dead aunt!
En yritä vikitellä sinua petiin kuolleella tädillääni
- s.1.e.3.

There are two ways in which the line can be understood in English. It can refer to a suggestion of threesome with a dead aunt or it can mean that Jane is not trying to use her dead aunt as an excuse to get Steve to sleep with her. However, in Finnish the both meanings of the sentence cannot be translated together, there would have to be two different translations in order to make the Finnish viewer aware of the both possible interpretations. That is impossible to do so the joke of the line is

lost in the translation and the raising eyebrow of a neighbor does not make sense to a Finnish viewer.

In the second double meaning example Susan finds out that Steve is going to the funeral of her ex-girlfriend's aunt and yells to Steve:

(14)
 Susan: Anyone can have a dead aunt!
 Kuollut täti kelpaa kenelle vain
 s.l.e.3.

Similar to example 13, this sentence can also be interpreted in two completely different ways. It can either mean that anyone's aunt can die or that anyone can have sexual relations with a dead aunt. In this one the translator has tried to keep at least some of the joke and decided to use the more unexpected translation. However, the translation seems irrelevant in this particular context because what Susan means to say is that anyone's aunt can die. What makes the joke funny is the other possible interpretation of this sentence.

6. DISCUSSION

Based on the results I have gathered from my data, it seems that homonyms and jokes with double meanings are the most difficult ones to translate. Both of these themes are very similar since they can be interpreted in more than just one way. In example 3, the humorous effect is lost completely because there is no equivalent to the English word in Finnish. The translator has decided to ignore the joke all together and translate the sentence without trying to force a pun to it. He could have tried to come up with some other joke to replace the original one although it could have been very difficult to make up a Finnish joke that fits into the situation. Anyhow, to the Finnish viewer the sentence *ei minusta ole valitettu* does not really make any sense and it seems to be out of place. In example 4, however, the translator has tried to translate the joke, although it loses a lot of its original meaning and wittiness. The homonymy word *organ* falls into the category of the untranslatable because in Finnish there is no homonymous equivalent. The Finnish translation seems quite far fetched, *urkumusiikki* and *urkujen polkija* do not really relate to each other. In addition *organ music* and *urkujen polkija* do not really convey the same meaning.

The other theme that caused problems with the Finnish translation is the sentences with double meanings. In examples 13 and 14 the situation is the same. Basically, the English viewer can understand the sentence in two different ways, which are completely different from each other. In Finnish, the sentences cannot be translated in both ways, at least not between the limits and restrictions of the subtitles. In these examples the translator has had no choice but to choose one of the possibilities and lose at least some of the joke. In example 13 the sentence makes more sense than in example 14, where the translator has tried to keep the joke alive by using the ‘funnier’ translation.

I found only one example of paronymy in my data. However, in my opinion it seemed to be a challenge for the translator. In example 5, Steve mishears the word *pucker*, believing it to be two separate words with an offending meaning. The translator has tried to create similar innuendo by using the word *panna*. Again, Finnish does not have the same equivalent and that makes it difficult to translate, although *panna* gets quite close. By looking at the Finnish translation, it is obvious where the joke is going but the translation by itself is a bit clumsy. In a normal, everyday Finnish conversation this kind of misunderstanding with these exact words would not happen but here the translator has done what he could to translate the text and keep the humorous effect.

Culture related jokes also turned out to be more or less tricky to translate. In examples 8 and 9 the characters are talking about celebrities who are not familiar with the average Finnish audience. Even though the translator has tried to give some extra information about these celebrities it does not give quite enough. A mere “anchorman” or “actor” does not tell much about the persona or appearance of the person in question. It feels somewhat pointless to give this information since it does not reveal anything important to the viewer. Since in this case the viewer would have to know the persons in order to get the joke, there is not much that the translator can do with the joke.

In examples 10 and 11 the characters are discussing politics and they use the word *Tory* a lot. An average Finnish viewer might not be aware of the fact that to be a *Tory* means to be part of the Conservative Party of England. That in mind, it seems natural to change the word *Tory* to *konservatiivi*, since it can be assumed that that term is better known among the Finnish audience

and it clears up the sentence. The translator has done this in example 10 but for some reason he switches to *Tory* in example 11. That might cause confusion in some viewers because the term changes in the middle of the episode. In my opinion, the translation would have been more fluent if he had continued with the same term, especially since the term itself is in no way significant to the joke.

In example 12 there is no lexical word play that the translator has to be aware of. This joke is about culture related impressions that a certain word creates in people's minds. The translator has chosen to replace the literal meaning of the sentence and use a term that is more suitable in the Finnish culture. In Finnish, the word *sonni* has a double meaning similar to that of the English *donkey*. Had the translator used a word-for-word translation, the Finnish meaning would be quite different since a person described to be as *aasi* creates completely different mental image than *sonni*.

Mimetic phrases are somewhat similar to culture related jokes, since sayings and colloquialisms usually are culture bound. In both examples 6 and 7 of mimetic phrases the sayings do not have exact equivalents in Finnish. There are, of course, sayings in Finnish that convey the same message but with different metaphors. In these both jokes, however, the concrete meaning of the sayings is also important and that is why the use of Finnish saying would not work. The saying in example 6 *if you can't stand the heat stay out of the kitchen* is often used other American and British TV- shows and I do not believe it to be unheard of among Finnish audience. The same goes with the saying in example 7 *plenty more fish in the sea*. The problem with example 7 is that there is more than one word play in this joke. There is a mimetic phrase and synonym words *closet* and *cupboard* that create two whole different meanings when combined with the word *water*. There is also grammatical untranslatability because the word order is different in Finnish than it is in English. In the English dialogue the emphasis of the sentence is at the end. That makes the different place options to appear more fluently than in the Finnish translation, where the place is in the beginning of the sentence. Also, the words *klosetti* and *kaappi* are not synonyms in Finnish, and that makes the pun quite difficult to translate.

In this study, homophones turned out to be the ones with the most fluent translation. In example 1, the translator has quite nicely found a way to keep the joke by using a Finnish expression *panna*

halvalla. The expression can be interpreted in two ways, the literal or the abstract, as the *you may have been had* in the English dialogue. He has also chosen not to use word-for-word translation; instead he has translated the idea of the joke. That works well in this case, and the joke is similar in the original dialogue as it is in the Finnish translation. The other example of homophone, example 2, is a bit trickier than example 1. The equivalent of the English *blah* would be *blääh* in Finnish. The translator could have translate the *blah* in the sentence, for example, *bläährissä on yks juttu* but it works without it because the Finnish audience is still able to hear it and to see the expression on the characters face.

In these examples, there were jokes that were easy to translate and some jokes that the translator has struggled with. There were also some jokes that the translator has failed to translate at all because of untranslatable words or entities. I also had some difficulties dividing these examples into different categories, since some of them fit into more than one. Example 2 could also be a paronymy but I decided to put it in the homophony category because the character pronounces the words *Blair* and *blah* similarly. The difference can be seen through the characters facial expression and the different emphasis of the words.

7. CONCLUSION

My hypothesis was that there were going to be some jokes that were hard to translate. According to my data, that turned out to be true. I also got answers for my research questions. Some of the jokes were translated using word-for-word method and some were modified. I also found out that jokes with double meaning were the most difficult ones to translate, since the translator has to deal with untranslatability. In my opinion the jokes that were altered to fit the Finnish style and way of thinking were the ones that had the best translation this particular case. Of course, as my data was quite small, these results cannot be generalized. In addition, there was not that much variation in the puns and in the word play used in the jokes. I would have wanted to see more examples of the untranslatable jokes and puns and the strategies used to translate them. My suggestion for further research is to compare the ways that different translators use to translate the untranslatable. I think it would also be interesting to compare the different translations of the same show since usually there are different translators in the episodes shown on TV and in those that are on a DVD.

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