The Dubbing of Wordplay:
The Case of *A Touch of Cloth*

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Abstract

This paper examines the dubbing of the British comedy series *A Touch of Cloth* into French. Building on existing descriptive theory regarding wordplay translation – particularly the model of translation techniques laid out by Delabastita (1993) – translation patterns are identified. A corpus of instances of wordplay is established, correlations are identified between particular types of wordplay and particular translation results, and a case-by-case examination is undertaken to determine how different factors impacted these results. A wide range of factors are found to contribute to the way wordplay is translated, notably: the languages at hand, the nature of the joke, and the audiovisual features the joke brings into play. Conclusions are then drawn regarding the technique likely to be employed on a given occasion and why, as well as how closely the translation can be expected to reflect the original segment.

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1. Introduction

Wordplay – owing its effect to the structure of the language in which it originates (Delabastita, 1996, p. 127) – presents a particular challenge to translators (Chiaro, 2010; Delabastita, 1993, 1996; Schröter, 2004). This challenge is further complicated in the case of audiovisual wordplay, whereby the translator must also take into account the specific features of the audiovisual text (Gottlieb, 1997; Schröter, 2004). In this paper, the singular challenge of translating wordplay in an audiovisual context is addressed, by means of a case study – the dubbing of the British comedy show *A Touch of Cloth* into French. Building on Delabastita's (1993) model for the translation of wordplay, a framework of translation techniques is established, and an attempt is made to identify correlations between these techniques and particular types of wordplay, as well as determining how closely different types of wordplay tend to be rendered in the target text (TT). Based on these observations, an in-depth analysis is undertaken as to the factors influencing how different types of wordplay are translated, allowing several conclusions to be drawn regarding the audiovisual translation of wordplay as a whole.

The growing prominence of audiovisual translation (AVT) has called for a re-evaluation of what it means to translate a text (Gambier, 2008, pp. 22–24). This paper aims to contribute to this process, applying existing theoretical ideas to the audiovisual realm. In particular, this study aims to contribute to existing research on the translation of wordplay by expanding theoretical ideas founded on the study of written wordplay – notably those laid out by Delabastita (1993) – to account for the characteristics of the audiovisual text. Indeed, the application of his hypotheses to the realm of television comedy is a direction of study suggested by Delabastita himself (p. 343). Gambier (2008) notes that a wide range of studies surrounding translational issues such as humour have focused on interlingual subtitling, often applying their findings to the characterisation of AVT as a whole (pp. 16–18); however, this paper focuses on the medium of dubbing. An analysis is made of the ways in which this medium's particular characteristics – substituting source text audio with audible speech in the target language, while maintaining all of the original text's visual features – come into play in the translation of wordplay.

2. Literature Review

2.1.   The Concept of Wordplay

The notion of wordplay denotes "every conceivable way in which language is used with the intent to amuse" (Chiaro, 1992, pp. 1–2). As Delabastita (1993) explains, instances of wordplay consist of "textual phenomena" whereby two or more formally similar structures, with differing meanings, are made to clash by being (near-)simultaneously co-present in the text (p. 57).

Similarly to wordplay, the pun is described as speech establishing "elusive relations" between language and concepts (Delabastita, 1993, p. 55) so that single (or multiple similar) utterances can be made to refer to differing contexts (De Vries & Verheij, 1997, pp. 72, 74). Delabastita (1993, pp. 79–80) – along with scholars such as Gottlieb (1997, p. 210) and De Vries and Verheij (1997, pp. 72–76) – identifies four types of pun, based on the types of formal similarity which may occur between its components:

- Homonymy: identical spelling and pronunciation (e.g. *bank* 'financial establishment' and *bank* 'edge of a river'); this includes polysemy – "the same word in different meanings" (De Vries & Verheij, 1997, p. 72) (e.g. *picture* (n.) and *picture* (v.))
- Homophony: identical pronunciation but different spelling (e.g. *right* and *write*)
- Homography: identical spelling but different pronunciation (e.g. *use* (n.) and *use* (v.))
- Paronymy: near-identical spelling and pronunciation (e.g. *collision* and *collusion*)

In addition, Delabastita (1993) identifies a variety of 'punoids' (p. 88) – "borderline cases that have clear affinities with wordplay" (p. 56), including:

- "speech-act ambiguity": the purpose of speech is toyed with (e.g. the purpose of the question "Can you pass the salt?", which may be a request or a question about literal, physical ability)
- "referential vagueness": the vagueness of a reference is toyed with (e.g. the verb *come* when the mode of transport is not specified);
- "referential equivocality": the meaning of a deictic expression (e.g. *it*) shifts, so that it may have multiple referents

While Delabastita (1993) excludes these phenomena from the concept of wordplay (p. 88), scholars such as Schröter argue that the notion extends beyond puns to include such cases (Schröter, 2004, p. 157; Schröter, 2010, p. 55).

On top of these linguistic categories, a number of scholars have identified types of wordplay based on their construction. These include: "name-giving" wordplay, whereby the author creates some "ambiguity between common noun and proper noun" (De Vries & Verheij, 1997, p. 84); "modified expressions", whereby recognisable formulations are "altered in unexpected ways" (Schröter, 2010, p. 139); and "idiom-based wordplay", whereby the meaning of an idiom is transformed based on its contextual use (Veisbergs, 1997, p. 156).

2.2. The Translatability of Wordplay

Zabalbeascoa (1994) notes that the translation of humorous content is a distinctly problematic task. As he explains, this process involves navigating a number of "recurring restrictions" inherent to the realm of humour, such as differences in the source and target audiences' background

knowledge, values, customs and traditional joke themes (p. 96). Beyond humour in general, wordplay, in particular, has long been seen as a "special" obstacle for translators (Chiaro, 2010, p. 2; Delabastita, 1993, pp. 153, 173–177; Schröter, 2004, p. 157). Drawing attention to its own form, wordplay highlights, by extension, the specific characteristics of its language of origin (Davis, 1997, p. 23), making the process of translation a complex task. Indeed, in a study examining the translation of different forms of humour, Jankowska (2009) found that, second to humour hinging on culture-specific references, language-dependent jokes were the least likely to be successfully rendered in the TT, with only 70% of instances being successfully rendered.

Accordingly, translators dealing with wordplay often resort to techniques whereby the text is heavily modified, such as omission or substitution with new wordplay (Chiaro, 1992, p. 98; Delabastita, 1993, p. 188; Schröter, 2010, p. 142). However, in an empirical study on the dubbing of American comedy series *The Simpsons* into Spanish, Martínez-Sierra (2009) observed that significant changes in the form and content of an instance of humour did not necessarily result in a reduction of its "humorous load", which may in fact be increased through the creative use of translation techniques (p. 294). As Zabalbeascoa (1994) explains, the aim of the translator in the case of humour should be 'comic equivalence', whereby the humorous effect of the source text (ST) is maintained – and this may be either at the level of the single joke, or the text as a whole (p. 96).

 A key contributor to the categorisation of techniques for wordplay translation is Dirk Delabastita (1993). He identifies nine techniques for the translation of puns, with no order of preference (pp. 191–218):

1. PUN>PUN: the pun is replaced by another pun; if the two are highly similar – involving the same linguistic feature, formal structure and semantic meaning – this is referred to as a congenial translation, or a congenial rendering;
2. PUN>NON-PUN: the punning aspect of the segment is removed;
3. PUN>PUNOID: the pun is replaced by a punoid;
4. PUN>ZERO: the segment containing the pun is omitted;
5. DIRECT COPY: the pun retains its original form;
6. TRANSFERENCE:[1] the TL text adopts values set up in the SL;
7. NON-PUN>PUN: a pun is added;
8. ZERO>PUN: a segment containing a pun is added;
9. EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES: a second level of communication is employed (e.g. footnotes).

Several scholars have indicated that the way wordplay is translated often depends on the languages at hand. For instance, Delabastita and Gottlieb highlight the abundance of French homophones, facilitating the translation of homophone-based puns into French (Delabastita, 1993, p. 231; Gottlieb, 1997, p. 217), and Delabastita notes a similar abundance of French homonyms, of which English

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[1] An example of this would be the creation of the English term "yoo" ("yellow-or-orange") as a translation solution for the equivalent Navaho term (Delabastita, 1993, p.212).

has incorporated many (p. 231). Indeed, often members of a same language group share many linguistic properties, making it easier to translate wordplay, thanks to parallel cases of features such as polysemy (Delabastita, 1993, p. 182). Indeed, Newmark (1988) argues that "[p]uns are most easily translated if they are based on Graeco-latinisms that have near-equivalents in the source and target languages, particularly if they simply contrast the material and the figurative sense of the word" (p. 211). Additionally, according to Kristal (2014), languages with a history of close contact are likely to have increased "translatability", due to their tendency to borrow vocabulary and concepts from one another (p. 30).

Upon analysing a corpus of Shakespearean wordplay translations, Delabastita (1993) makes a number of conjectures regarding the translatability of different types of wordplay (pp. 233–247):

- Phonetic puns are likely to find congenial renderings if the languages are historically related;
- Paronymic puns are more likely to find congenial renderings than homonymic puns;
- The likelihood of polysemic puns finding a congenial rendering is slightly increased if the languages are genetically related;
- The cultural closeness of the linguistic communities increases the likelihood of reproducing a pun;
- Phonetic or polysemic puns are likely to find congenial renderings if interlingual borrowing takes place;
- Puns involving multiple linguistic features are less likely to find congenial renderings than those involving a single feature.

Additionally, Chiaro (1992) – examining the translation of several British comedy series into Italian – notes that cases of verbal humour which incorporate culture-specific elements present a further obstacle to the translator, often resulting in less successful outcomes than those hinging on more global themes, such as social class (pp. 6–7).

2.3. The Audiovisual Context

The notion of translation takes on a particular meaning when applied to AVT, wherein the "text" is redefined as a multimodal object, made up of a variety of visual and acoustic elements (Gambier, 2008, p. 22). Chiaro (2010) describes this polysemiotic characteristic as the "main setback" to the translation of audiovisual texts (p. 4). Indeed, certain immutable elements of the ST, such as visual information, are unavoidably incorporated into the TT (Gambier, 2008, p. 22), and Chiaro (2010) notes that humour which combines both verbal and visual features is especially challenging to translate (p. 5). Thus, AVT, like wordplay, has gained a 'special' status as a particularly challenging form of translation (Yau, 2014, pp. 493–494). It has been recognised that the combination of the challenges surrounding wordplay translation and those surrounding AVT can make for an exceptionally difficult translation (Delabastita, 1993, p. 288; Schröter, 2004, p. 157). Indeed,

in an empirical study on the translation[2] of wordplay in British audiovisual comedy, Schröter (2004) found that roughly one third of original instances of wordplay were lost through the process of translation (pp. 165, 167).

 The medium of dubbing is further limited, particularly in close-up shots, by issues such as isochrony, lip synchronisation and kinesic synchrony, as dialogue renderings must simultaneously be consistent with characters' duration of speech, lip movements, and gesticulations, as well as any other contextual information (Chaume, 2012, pp. 66–69). However, certain features of this medium may, on occasion, prove advantageous in the translation of wordplay. For instance, with the audience unable to hear the ST dialogue, a dubbing team may omit a joke if a suitable translation is not found, or even introduce new wordplay (Schröter, 2004, p. 167).

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Foundation

This study takes a descriptive approach. One of the key contributors to the descriptive analysis of wordplay translation is Delabastita. In his empirical study of Shakespearean wordplay translations (1993), he attempts to draw generalisations regarding wordplay translation more broadly, adopting Toury's (1995) three-step approach: 'situate' the text in its target culture, determining its acceptability; analyse the relationships between corresponding segments of the ST and TT; and attempt to make generalisations based on the patterns observed. The present study also adopts this model, aiming to build on the work undertaken by scholars such as Delabastita by expanding it to account for the audiovisual realm. In Section .2, the audiovisual text under examination is introduced and 'situated' within its target culture, determining its representativeness. Subsequently, in Section 3, a summary is provided of the types of relationship encountered between corresponding ST and TT segments. In Section 4, these relationships are examined using a qualitative analysis, whereby individual segments are analysed in detail. Finally, in Section 5, several generalisations are put forward based on these findings, regarding the way different factors influence the translation of particular types of audiovisual wordplay.

This study examines not only puns, but also the wider spectrum of wordplay phenomena referred to by Delabastita (1993) as 'punoids'. Thus, the techniques identified by Delabastita were adapted as follows:

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[2] Instances of both dubbing and subtitling were examined.

1. WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY, including: PUN>PUN; PUN>PUNOID; PUNOID>PUNOID or PUNOID>PUN;

2. WORDPLAY>NON-PUN, including: PUN>NON-PUN and PUNOID>NON-PUN;

3. WORDPLAY>ZERO, including: PUN>ZERO and PUNOID>ZERO;

4. DIRECT COPY;

5. TRANSFERENCE;

6. NON-WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY, including: NON-PUN>PUN and NON-PUNOID>PUNOID

7. ZERO>WORDPLAY, including: ZERO>PUN and ZERO>PUNOID;

8. EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES

3.1.1. Corpus Creation

A corpus of instances of wordplay was drawn from the British comedy television show *A Touch of Cloth* (*ATOC*)*,* and its dubbed French version, *Close Case: Affaires Closes*. This show, written by Charlie Brooker and Daniel Maier, and parodying the crime thriller genre, follows the detective work and private lives of characters DCI Jack Cloth – a grieving widower with an abrasive personality – and DC Anne Oldman – a struggling alcoholic – as they solve a series of murders. *ATOC* relies heavily on verbal humour, and visual elements are often employed to produce humorous twists on characters' words. This programme, emanating from the mainstream British television channel Sky One, was dubbed and broadcast on a mainstream, national French television channel, France 4, indicating its acceptability – that is, its conformity to the standards and norms of audiovisual texts translated for a French audience (Munday, 2012, p. 173). Additionally, it was deemed a representative example of a British television show translated for French television, given Britain's well-established history of exporting television comedies (Chiaro, 2010, p. 9) and France's tendency to dub such imported material. The show was also considered to be representative of wider trends in these countries' audiovisual material, with crime dramas being one of the most popular television genres among European audiences, and much transnational importation of such shows taking place between these different countries (Hansen, Peacock & Turnbull, 2018, pp. 1–2).

Three seasons of the series were aired between 2012 and 2014, with two 45-minute long episodes per season. Two episodes were selected for analysis: the first episode, *The First Case: Part One* (Brooker & Maier, 2012) – referred to as 'Episode A' –, and the final episode, *Too Cloth for Comfort: Part Two* (Brooker & Maier, 2014) – 'Episode B'. Together, these episodes make up a third of the content of this series. Every instance of wordplay across these episodes was numbered, and the key features of its ST and TT versions were recorded, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Example of a Joke Card

Joke:	A4	
Context:	Anne Oldman introduces herself to Jack Cloth.	
ST:	- <u>Anne Oldman.</u> - Well where is he?	
TT:	- <u>Anne Vieilhomme.</u> - Alors il est oú?	
Technique:	PUN>PUN	
Features:	ST	Homophony
	TT	Homophony
Meanings:	M1: Name of the character. M2: An elderly gentleman.	
Comments:	Congenial Rendering	

For each linguistic feature at play, the different meanings associated with its components were identified as 'M1' (Meaning 1) and 'M2' (Meaning 2). The components in question were underlined, and where further components came into play, these were emboldened. The same presentation is employed in this report.

The term "joke" is employed herein to refer to any instance of wordplay. A single "instance" or joke is considered to equate to the portion of text needed to understand and recognise the humorous nature of the wordplay. The linguistic features identified as sources of wordplay in *ATOC* were: homonymy; homophony; paronymy; speech-act ambiguity; referential equivocality; and referential vagueness. Often, multiple features were found to interact within a single joke; these were considered "puns" if they incorporated the features of homonymy, homophony, or paronymy (along with any other features), and "punoids" if none of these three features were present.

Overall, 157 instances of wordplay were identified: 108 puns and 49 punoids. Of these 157 instances, 67 incorporated the feature of homonymy, 23 incorporated homophony, 18 incorporated paronymy, 37 incorporated speech-act ambiguity, 20 incorporated referential equivocality, and 12 incorporated referential vagueness.

4. Quantitative Results

Through an examination of the techniques applied to different cases of wordplay in *ATOC*, correlations were observed between particular types of wordplay and particular translation techniques, as well as how closely the ST wordplay was rendered in the TT. A quantitative summary of these correlations is provided in this section, while in the following section, these results are analysed, and individual instances of wordplay are examined in detail, in order to gain an understanding of the reasons behind the approaches applied to different types of wordplay.

Table 1 provides an overview of the techniques employed to translate instances of wordplay in *ATOC*, and the percentage of the overall translation process each technique accounts for. As shown, almost 90% of all instances of wordplay were rendered using the WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY technique, and over 40% resulted in congenial renderings of the original wordplay. The majority of the remaining instances were translated using the WORDPLAY>NON-WORDPLAY technique, whereby the wordplay was removed.

Table 1.

Summary of Translation Techniques Used

	Episode A	Episode B	Total	Percentage
WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY	77	63	140	89,17%
Congenial rendering	41	27	68	43.31%
WORDPLAY>NON-WORDPLAY	9	2	11	7.00%
DIRECT COPY	4	1	5	3.18%
Humor retained	1	1	2	1.27%
Humor lost	3	0	3	1.91%
Other:				
WORDPLAY>NON-WORDPLAY (spoken) **DIRECT COPY** (written)	1	0	1	0.64%
Total instances	91	66	157	100%

The linguistic features which came into play within a given instance appeared to considerably influence these outcomes. On occasion, multiple linguistic features were found to overlap within a joke;[3] thus, the results for each feature recorded below are not mutually exclusive.

In the case of punning elements, the PUN>PUN technique was applied to over 85% of instances incorporating homonymy and almost 80% of those involving paronymy (see Tables 2 and 3 respectively), and a slightly lower majority of around 70% of instances involving homophony (see Table 4). In all such cases of puns involving paronymy, and the vast majority of those involving homonymy, these linguistic features were retained, whereas the feature of homophony was retained in only half of its PUN>PUN renderings.

Where the PUN>PUN technique was not employed, the presence of wordplay was occasionally maintained (particularly for homonymy-based puns) by using the PUN>PUNOID technique. In the majority of the remaining cases, the PUN>NON-PUN technique was employed, and it is worth noting that, where, on occasion, the DIRECT COPY technique was used, this did not always result in a humorous outcome, as shall be explored in the following section.

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[3] A case in point is Example 9 (see Section 6.2.2), which combines homonymy and referential equivocality.

Table 2.

Translation Techniques Used for Puns involving Homonymy

	Episode A	Episode B	Total	Percentage
PUN>PUN	29	28	57	85.07%
Homonymy retained	28	23	51	76.12%
Congenial rendering	10	9	19	28.36%
PUN>PUNOID	1	2	3	4.48%
PUN>NON-PUN	5	1	6	8.96%
DIRECT COPY	1	0	1	1.49%
Humor retained	1	0	1	1.49%
Humor lost	0	0	0	0.00%
Total instances	36	31	67	100%

Table 3.

Translation Techniques Used for Puns involving Homophony

	Episode A	Episode B	Total	Percentage
PUN>PUN	9	7	16	69.57%
Homophony retained	7	1	8	34.78%
Congenial rendering	6	0	6	26.09%
PUN>PUNOID	1	0	1	4.35%
PUN>NON-PUN	2	1	3	13.04%
DIRECT COPY	2	0	2	8.70%
Humor retained	0	0	0	0.00%
Humor lost	2	0	2	8.70%
Other:				
PUN>NON-PUN (spoken) **DIRECT COPY** (written)	1	0	1	4.35%
Humor retained	0	0	0	0.00%
Total instances	15	8	23	100%

Table 4.

Translation Techniques Used for Puns involving Paronymy

	Episode A	Episode B	Total	Percentage
PUN>PUN	9	5	14	77.78%
Paronymy retained	9	5	14	77.78%
Congenial rendering	1	1	2	11.11%
PUN>PUNOID	0	0	0	0.00%
PUN>NON-PUN	2	0	2	11.11%
DIRECT COPY	1	1	2	11.11%
Humor retained	0	1	1	5.56%
Humor lost	1	0	1	5.56%
Total instances	12	6	18	100%

Little difference was observed between the results for the three remaining linguistic features. In each case, the vast majority of jokes were rendered using the WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY technique. Over 90% of puns incorporating speech-act ambiguity (see Table 5), and 100% of those involving referential equivocality or referential vagueness (see Tables 6 and 7 respectively) were rendered this way, while all punoids were rendered using this technique. Additionally, in the large majority of cases, these linguistic features were successfully retained.

Punoid translations tended to retain a stronger faithfulness to the ST than pun translations, with the number of congenial renderings for punoids featuring each linguistic feature ranging between 70% and 80.77%, and those for puns ranging between 0% and 36.36%.

Table 5.

Translation Techniques Used for Wordplay involving Speech-Act Ambiguity

	Episode A	Episode B	Total	Percentage
PUNS:				
PUN>PUN	7	3	10	90.91%
Speech-act ambiguity retained	7	3	10	90.91%
Congenial rendering	3	1	4	36.36%
PUN>NON-PUN	1	0	1	9.09%
Total instances	8	3	11	100%
PUNOIDS:				
PUNOID>PUNOID	17	8	25	96.15%
Speech-act ambiguity retained	16	8	24	92.31%

Congenial rendering	14	7	21	80.77%
PUNOID>PUN	0	1	1	9.09%
Speech-act ambiguity retained	0	0	0	0.00%
Total instances	17	9	26	100%

Table 6.

Translation Techniques Used for Wordplay involving Referential Equivocality

	Episode A	Episode B	Total	Percentage
PUNS:				
PUN>PUN	2	2	4	80.00%
Referential equivocality retained	2	2	4	80.00%
Congenial rendering	0	1	1	20.00%
PUN>PUNOID	1	0	1	20.00%
Referential equivocality retained	0	0	0	0.00%
Total instances	3	2	5	100%
PUNOIDS:				
PUNOID>PUNOID	8	7	15	100.00%
Referential equivocality retained	8	6	14	93.33%
Congenial rendering	7	5	12	80.00%
Total instances	8	7	15	100%

Table 7.

Translation Techniques Used for Wordplay involving Referential Vagueness

	Episode A	Episode B	Total	Percentage
PUNS:				
PUN>PUN	1	0	1	50.00%
Referential vagueness retained	1	0	1	50.00%
Congenial rendering	0	0	0	0.00%
PUN>PUNOID	0	1	1	50.00%
Referential vagueness retained	0	1	1	50.00%
Total instances	1	1	2	100%
PUNOIDS:				
PUNOID>PUNOID	4	6	10	100.00%
Referential vagueness retained	4	6	10	10.00%
Congenial rendering	3	4	7	70.00%
Total instances	4	6	10	100%

These quantitative results indicated a number of tendencies in the way certain types of wordplay were translated in *ATOC*, providing the basis for an investigation into the factors influencing these translation choices.

5. Qualitative Analysis

6. The Impact of the Source and Target Languages

Unlike in the findings of Schröter (2004),[4] the vast majority of the wordplay in *ATOC* was reproduced in the TT. This may, to some extent, be attributed to the high level of historical and cultural closeness between the English and French languages.

6.1. Historical Closeness

As predicted by Delabastita (1993), due to the abundance of homonymy that both English and French exhibit, the vast majority of puns based on this feature were closely rendered in the TT. Thus, in the following example, both versions incorporated an expression whose polysemous components could act as both verbs and nouns:

Example 1.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A42	Jack Cloth and his team are examining a murder victim's body.	Let's talk to the wife, see if she can <u>light</u> some <u>shed</u>.	Voyons si sa femme peut <u>lanterner</u> notre <u>éclair</u>. [Gloss: 'Let's see if his wife can "lanterner" our "éclair".']

ST: M1[5]: "Shed light": provide clarity (fig.).
      M2: Light up a shed, or set a shed on fire (lit.).

TT: M1: "Éclairer la lanterne" [literally, "light the lantern"]: provide clarity (fig.).
      M2: Waste a moment of progress (fig.).[6]

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[4] Schröter's study dealt with translations from English into multiple languages. Only one translation into French was included in the sample set, along with two translations into German, two into Swedish, one into Danish and one into Norwegian, thus giving a more general, non-language-specific view of the translation of wordplay.

[5] 'M1' and 'M2' refer to the different meanings associated with the words at play.

[6] 'Lanterner': to waste time; 'éclair': a moment of aptitude.

The close rendering of many puns involving homonymy can also be explained by the numerous parallel cases of Latin-based polysemy resulting from the two languages' shared Indo-European roots, and long history of interlingual contact. This was particularly common among jokes hinging on the conflict between literal and figurative meanings, as in the following case:

Example 2.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A40	The team are examining the victim of a brutal murder.	- What kind of <u>animal </u>would do this? - Holding the weapon required opposable thumbs, so almost certainly a homo sapiens.	- Quel genre d'<u>animal</u> pourrait faire ça? - Tenir une arme requiert des pouces opposables, sûrement un homo sapiens. [Gloss : 'What kind of animal could do this? - Holding a weapon requires opposable thumbs, most likely a homo sapiens.']

M1: A <u>cruel</u> <u>person </u>(fig.).
M2: A living creature (lit.).

6.1.1. Cultural Closeness

Similarly, the cultural closeness of modern-day French and English linguistic communities was found to promote close renderings of ST wordplay. Indeed, as words are often given similar collocations across these languages, close reproductions were often possible for wordplay involving figurative speech, such as idiom-based wordplay or modified expressions. Indeed, for the following example of idiom-based wordplay, a congenial rendering was achieved, as the figurative meaning of "breaking a few eggs" is identical across both languages:

Example 3.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A44	A murder victim's widow discusses his abundance of enemies, which she attributes to his successful career.	- You can't build a restaurant empire without <u>breaking a few eggs</u>, inspector.	- On ne construit pas un empire de restaurants sans <u>briser quelques œufs</u>, inspecteur. [Gloss: 'One doesn't build a restaurant empire without breaking a few eggs, inspector.']

M1: Causing negative effects (fig.).
M2: Physically breaking multiple eggs (lit.).

Additionally, interlingual borrowing was found to be the source of several close renderings of ST wordplay. The following example demonstrates how the popular adoption of English terms by French speakers allowed for a direct translation of certain jokes:

Example 4.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
B1	Two characters are about to watch the recording of a police interrogation.	- <u>Show</u>'s about to begin. - Is it Geordie Shore?	- Le <u>show</u> va commencer. - C'est un télé-crochet? [Gloss: 'The show is about to begin. - Is it a talent show?']

M1: Spectacle.
M2: Television programme.

6.2.   The Impact of the Nature of the Joke

Tendencies were also observed in the way wordplay was translated depending on the characteristics of the joke at hand. Notably, it was found that the linguistic aspects of a joke heavily influenced its translation, as well as its complexity and cultural specificity, which often inhibited close renderings in the TT.

6.2.1. Linguistic Characteristics

Correlations were observed between the way instances of wordplay were translated and the linguistic features in play, as well as the types of speech forming the basis of the joke.

It has been shown above that punoids were given close renderings much more frequently than puns. Indeed, these linguistic features, tending to play on ambiguous phrasing and deceptive contextual cues, were found to be less tied to the formal features of the SL. Thus, often, a literal, congenial translation was possible, as in the following case involving referential vagueness:

Example 5.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
B6	One character is sitting in a toilet stall, while another is standing outside.	- Could you get me some more <u>paper</u>? - A3 or A4?	- Vous pourriez me chercher d'autre <u>papier</u>? - A3 ou A4? [Gloss: 'Could you get me more paper? - A3 or A4?']

M1: Toilet paper.
M2: Writing paper.

In the case of puns, it was found that instances of wordplay involving homophony rarely received close renderings in *ATOC*, with this feature rarely being retained. Indeed, Gottlieb (1997) argues that wordplay hinging on homophony is often lost in translation, as two languages rarely "present identical-sounding […] expressions in (nearly) the same semantic fields" (pp. 211–212). Thus, in many cases, the original wordplay was abandoned, as in the following case, where homophony was replaced with homonymy:

Example 6.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A43	A widow is being interviewed about the last time she saw her husband, on the day of his death.	- He asked me to pop out to the shops to buy some herbs. - <u>Time</u>? - Coriander.	- Il m'a demandé d'aller au magasin, acheter <u>de l'herbe</u>. - Marijuana? - De la coriandre. [Gloss: 'He asked me to go to the shop, to buy "de l'herbe". - Marijuana? - Coriander.']

ST: M1: "Time": the time at which the widow left the house.
        M2: "Thyme": a herb.

TT: M1: Marijuana (slang).
        M2: Herbs.

However, the loss of homophony was often found to result from active choices made by the translator. For example, in the majority of cases, this feature was used in name-giving wordplay. In these cases, while a congenial rendering was generally possible (for instance, translating the surname "Oldman" as "Vieilhomme", a homophone for "old man" in French), often, a seemingly active choice was made to introduce the element of paronymy, in order to add further humorous effect. This can be observed in the following case, in which a character mispronounces Oldman's name:

Example 7.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A8	Oldman arrives at Cloth's home without giving prior notice.	- Why are you here, Oldman?	- Pourquoi vous êtes là, Vieillepomme ? [Gloss: 'Why are you here, "Vieillepomme"?']

ST: M1: Name of the character.
     M2: Elderly gentleman.

TT: M1: "Vieilpomme": mispronunciation of the name "Vieilhomme".
     M2: "Vieille pomme": "old apple".

Meanwhile, Gottlieb argues that paronymy and homonymy allow their components to be easily modified, facilitating their translation (Gottlieb, 1997, p. 212). This may explain why puns involving these two features tended to retain these elements in *ATOC*. While instances involving homonymy were often translated literally, in the case of paronymy, a tendency was observed towards modifying the components at play to better suit the TL or target culture.[7] This is exemplified in the following case of a modified expression:

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[7] This may explain the lack of congenial renderings for puns involving paronymy (see Table 4).

Example 8.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
B22	Jack reacts to the shocking news that the latest body discovered is the body of his ex-partner.	- The victim, who is he? [...] - It's your ex, sir. It's Deborah, sir. - Sweet Valley High!	- La victime, c'est qui ? [...] - C'est votre ex, chef. C'est Deborah, chef. - Grands Dieux du Stade! [Gloss: 'The victim, who is it? ...] - It's your ex, boss. It's Deborah, boss. - Great Gods of the Stadium!']

ST: M1: "Sweet Jesus!": expression of shock.
        M2: *Sweet Valley High*: American book and television series.

TT: M1: "Grand Dieu!": expression of shock.
        M2: *Dieux du Stade*: yearly calendar featuring nude photos of a Parisian rugby team.

6.2.2. Wordplay Composition

In addition to the linguistic characteristics of instances of wordplay, certain other aspects of these instances were found to heavily impact their translation. Notably, two recurring obstacles were found to engender renderings which involved heavy modification, or even removal of the ST wordplay: joke complexity and cultural specificity.

Firstly, it was found that complex jokes were unlikely to receive a faithful rendering. Indeed, jokes incorporating multiple linguistic features were rarely given congenial translations, and, on occasion, only one feature was retained. In the following example, the ST incorporates both homonymy (as a play is made on the literal and figurative meanings of the phrase to carry something out") and referential equivocality (as the word "this" is used to refer to two different referents). The PUN>PUNOID technique was employed, whereby these features were substituted by speech-act ambiguity alone (whereby only the purpose of the statement is toyed with):

Example 9.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A20	Jack and a forensic pathologist are discussing a gruesome murder, looking at the victim's corpse.	- Only a maniac could <u>carry **this** out</u>. [Jack turns to shout to his team] - Let's find a maniac to carry this out!	- <u>Il n'y a qu'un fou pour tuer comme ça.</u> [Jack turns to shout to his team] - Cherchons un fou pour tuer comme ça! [Gloss: 'Only a maniac could kill like this. […] - Let's find a maniac to kill like this!']

ST:
- "carry this out":   M1: Perform an activity.

                        M2: Literally carry something out of a room.
- "this":   M1: The brutal murder.
                        M2: The corpse.

TT: M1: Expressing disgust at an act which could only have been undertaken by a maniac.
       M2: Expressing the need to acquire a maniac to undertake the task.

Another characteristic which was found to affect the rendering of ST wordplay was cultural specificity. As shown in certain examples above (Examples 4 and 8), cultural references were generally substituted in order to be familiar to the target audience. On occasion, cultural references constituted the components at play within the joke, making the wordplay impossible to render. Thus, in the following example, the PUN>NON-PUN technique was applied:

Example 10.

Joke:	Context:	ST:	TT:
A19	At a crime scene, a member of Cloth's team is examining a blood-stained vinyl record.	- Any <u>prints</u>? - Only Purple Rain.	- Des empreintes? - Il y a une espèce de liquide sur toute la surface. [Gloss: 'Any prints? - There is some sort of liquid all over the surface.']

M1: "Prints": fingerprints.
M2: "Prince": musician.

6.3. The Impact of the Audiovisual Context

Finally, a number of features of the audiovisual realm were found to influence the way wordplay was translated in *ATOC*. While, on occasion, these features engendered a lack of faithfulness to the ST, or even a loss of humour, it was found that, at times, the characteristics of dubbing allowed for a creative freedom which promoted the retention, or even introduction of wordplay in the TT.

6.3.1. Audiovisual Constraints

A number of constraints pertaining to the audiovisual realm were found to complicate the translation process for *ATOC,* resulting in loss of humour on several occasions.

Firstly, the combination of visual and verbal elements appeared to present a particularly challenging translation task. In the following example, a gesture was combined with speech to create a pun in the ST. In the TT, Jack Cloth's surname was replaced by a creative alternative ("Close", the passed participle of "clore", meaning "to close" in French), allowing for many name-giving wordplay opportunities in the TL. However, on this occasion, the inevitable incorporation of the ST's visual features made a play on this new name infeasible, resulting in a PUN>NON-PUN rendering:

Example 11.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A57	Jack arrives at the mortuary, where the forensic pathologist, Natasha, is examining a body.	[Cloth walks into the room] - Natasha. - <u>Cloth</u>. [someone off-camera throws a cloth to Natasha]	[Cloth walks into the room] - Natasha. - Close. [someone off-camera throws a cloth to Natasha]

M1: Name of the character.
M2: Piece of fabric.

Additionally, it was found that a key factor in the rarity of PUN>PUN translations for homophony-based puns was the fact that they often employed written text, rather than speech. In such cases, the original image had to be incorporated into the TT, so that a DIRECT COPY rendering was inevitable. Often this meant that the joke's humorous effect would be lost on most viewers, as in the following example:

Example 12.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A1	The camera pans across a housing estate in a visibly rundown state, showing its inhabitants displaying improper behaviour such as violence and public sexual activity.	[camera pans in on a sign at the entrance to the estate] "<u>Rundowne Estate</u>"	[camera pans in on a sign at the entrance to the estate] "Rundowne Estate"

M1: "Rundowne Estate": the name of the estate.
M2: "Rundown estate": a description of the estate.

Often, audible speech and visible text were combined, and made to clash for humorous effect in the ST. Due to changes to characters' speech in the TT, and the inability to change the visible text accordingly – such jokes were often lost in the TT. For example, in the following homophony-based pun, the spoken utterance is changed completely using the PUN>NON-PUN technique, while the written text is unavoidably subject to the DIRECT COPY technique:

Example 13.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A31	Cloth and Oldman question a youth about an associate of his, who is a suspect in their case.	- Where does he hang out? - <u>Dat dere yute club</u>. [scene cuts to a building displaying a sign saying "<u>DATDERE YUTE CLUB</u>"]	- Oú est-ce qu'il passe son temps? - Au local, là-bas ! [scene cuts to a building displaying a sign saying "DATDERE YUTE CLUB"] [Gloss: 'Where does he spend his time? - That building over there!']

M1: Phrase "That there youth club" pronounced in a strong London accent.
M2: "Datdere Yute Club": name of the club.

Thus, this retention of the written text from the ST led to a rendering which lost its humorous effect. The audiovisual context was therefore found to imply a loss of humour not only in cases of WORDPLAY>NON-WORDPLAY translations, but also, occasionally, through the imposed use of the DIRECT COPY technique.

6.3.2. Advantages of Dubbing

Despite the above constraints, at times, the characteristics of the medium of dubbing were found to assist the translation process, allowing jokes to be modified and therefore maintained through the WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY technique.

In effect, without the audience being able to hear the original dialogues, it was possible to heavily modify certain jokes to better suit the TL – or even to build on the original joke. In effect, as demonstrated by Example 7

Example 7 above, the feature of homophony was substituted with paronymy in certain instances of name-giving humour, adding an extra layer to the wordplay surrounding a particular name, and arguably increasing its humorous load. Similarly, this freedom to stray from the ST occasionally allowed the translator to insert new wordplay into the TT. Thus, eight instances of the NON-WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY technique, and one instance of ZERO>WORDPLAY, were identified.

For example, at the beginning of Episode A, as an elderly man enters his home and greets his cat, a youth is heard shouting the following from outside:

Example 14.

ST	TT
Shitty old man got a cat!	Tu vois, il a une vieille <u>chatte</u>! [Gloss: 'See, he has an old "chatte"!']

M1: Cat.
M2: Female genitalia.

Thus, this utterance received a NON-PUN>PUN translation, adding to its humorous effect. It may be theorised that additions such as this constituted a form of compensation for instances of ST wordplay which were unable to be rendered in the TT. Indeed, on one occasion, this compensatory property seems evident. In the following case, a play on two British cultural references in the ST resulted in a PUN>NON-PUN rendering:

Example 15.

Joke	Context	ST	TT
A76	Two police officers approach an ice cream van.	Couple of <u>999s</u>.	Deux cornets, s'il vous plaît. [Gloss: 'Two ice cream cones, please.']

M1: "99": An ice cream cone,
M2: "999": The telephone number of the emergency services.

However, moments before this, the ZERO>PUN technique was employed, during a sequence in which the character speaking has his back to the screen. In the TT, he makes a reference to a recent murder, describing how chilling it is:

Example 17.

ST	TT
[Cloth and Oldman walk away from a crime scene, towards a nearby ice cream van] [no speech]	[[Cloth and Oldman walk away from a crime scene, towards a nearby ice cream van] Ça me <u>glace</u>. [Gloss: "It 'glace' me."]

M1: Third person singular of "glacer" (to scare).
M2: Ice cream.

The semantic and temporal closeness of these two ST and TT jokes (respectively) suggests that the latter is used to compensate for the absence of the former. This was made possible by the fact that the character's mouth could not be seen – avoiding the limitations of lip synchronisation and isochrony – and the (lack of) ST dialogue could not be heard, as per the conventions of the medium of dubbing.

Thus, while the text's audiovisual nature and the characteristics of the dubbing medium often resulted in renderings which differed considerably from the ST, at times, this was the result not of the medium's limitations, but rather its advantages, and the creative flexibility they imply.

7.   Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this study was to determine the different factors influencing the translation techniques selected, and the degree of faithfulness to the ST, for instances of dubbed wordplay. The factors influencing the selection and application of particular techniques were found to come in various forms, and interact in complex ways. Correlations were observed between the languages at hand, linguistic features, joke content, and joke formats – or combinations thereof – and the technique selected, as well as how closely the original wordplay was rendered.

Firstly, it was found that an important factor influencing the translation of wordplay is the particular source and target languages at hand. While Schröter (2004), studying the transfer of wordplay from English into various languages, found an overall considerable loss of instances through translation, it was found that in this case, the closeness of the English and French languages often resulted in a high degree of faithfulness to the ST. Jokes hinging on the homonymy of a word – a feature common in both English and French, as observed by Delabastita (1993) – were often found to be translated using the PUN>PUN technique, and to be closely reproduced. As predicted by both Newmark (1988) and Delabastita (1993), often this was due to the word in question stemming from a shared Latin root, and presenting a parallel polysemy between its literal and figurative meanings in both languages. Additionally, as in Delabastita's findings (1993), the cultural closeness of the linguistic communities in question was found to promote close renderings in the TT, as, for example, metaphorical speech was often found to be shared across the two languages, allowing for many congenial renderings of cases such as idiom-based wordplay. Similarly, much vocabulary was found to have been borrowed from one language to the other, allowing for it to be rendered in its original form in the TT, as predicted by Kristal (2014).

Meanwhile, it was found that the nature of the joke at hand, in terms of the linguistic characteristics at play and the joke's overall composition, often impacted how closely it was reproduced in the TT. It was found that the vast majority of punoids – less closely tied to the structure of the SL than many puns – could be translated using the WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY technique, often receiving congenial translations. Meanwhile, despite the abundance of French homophones highlighted by Delabastita (1993) and Gottlieb (1997), it was observed that puns hinging on his feature could rarely be closely rendered – a result corroborated by Gottlieb (1997), who noted the difficulty in retaining this feature through translation. Thus, it was found that, on occasion, the feature of homophony was substituted by other features in order to further the humorous effect of the TT, supporting the argument of Martínez-Sierra (2009), that instances of humour could be heavily modified in order to increase their humorous load in the TT. The feature of paronymy, on the other hand, employing flexible, often arbitrary structures, such as pun-based names or modified expressions, was generally found to allow the translator a high degree of flexibility, allowing the PUN>PUN technique to be used creatively, and the element of paronymy retained. Additionally, it was found that instances of wordplay with a complex construction were less likely to result in close renderings than simpler jokes, with those incorporating multiple features rarely maintaining each of these elements, causing a considerable disparity between their ST and TT renderings, as predicted by Delabastita's findings (1993). Lastly, as predicted by Chiaro (1992), it was found that jokes whose components incorporated culture-specific features rarely resulted in close renderings, and were often unable to be rendered through wordplay, therefore being subject to the WORDPLAY>NON-WORDPLAY technique.

Finally, a key factor found to limit the translatability of wordplay in *ATOC* was the audiovisual context. As indicated by Chiaro (2010), it was found that jokes which combined visual and verbal elements often could not be retained in the TT, resulting in WORDPLAY>NON-WORDPLAY translations. Meanwhile, due to the nature of the medium, cases of visual wordplay had to be rendered through the DIRECT COPY technique, often resulting in a loss of humorous effect. Nonetheless, it was found

that the medium of dubbing tended to promote the use of the WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY technique. As argued by Schröter (2004), the flexibility associated with the medium often allowed wordplay to deviate considerably from the ST where this was beneficial, and even allowed for a number of additions to be made, through the use of the NON-WORDPLAY>WORDPLAY or ZERO>WORDPLAY techniques. The use of such techniques appeared to serve as a form of compensation for the various cases in which a loss of wordplay had occurred. Thus, the dubbing context was often found to enable what Zabalbeascoa (1994) described as "comic equivalence", whereby techniques which heavily modified the ST wordplay could be used in order to maintain its humorous effect, either at the level of the specific joke, or over the course of the text as a whole.

Thus, this study's findings echo the predictions of various scholars' regarding the translation of particular types of wordplay. However, this analysis, applying Delabastita's (1993) model of translation techniques to the case of an audiovisual text, identified some potential gaps in its formulation. Delabastita's work, dealing purely with written texts, failed to account for cases whereby the DIRECT COPY technique resulted in a loss of humorous effect. Similarly, in *ATOC,* the presence of wordplay employing both written and spoken words led, on one occasion, to the application of two different translation techniques to a single instance – a possibility Delabastita did not consider. Thus, the inevitable incorporation of elements from the ST into an audiovisual TT presents a clear need for Delabastita's model to be re-examined when applied to audiovisual media.

Due to the time limitations of this project, the sample, consisting of 157 instances of wordplay from a single source, has limited generalisability. While Delabastita points out that the analysis of wordplay in a single text remains worthwhile (Delabastita, 1993, p. 251), it would be of value to expand on the findings established herein by applying a similar approach to further, and indeed larger, samples of wordplay translation. Furthermore, while this study focused on two closely related languages, it was found that this could considerably impact the results; thus, it would be of interest to perform a similar examination with two vastly disparate languages, or to undertake a comparative analysis on wordplay translation for close and more distant language pairs.

Considering the largely inductive nature of this research, the conclusions drawn are not final, and should be tested through more deductive research. Additionally, as Delabastita points out, the notion of wordplay is "relative and changeable" (Delabastita, 1993, p. 344); thus, there is a continued need for investigation into the intricacies surrounding its translation, particularly as it applies to the continually developing text forms introduced by technological advances, such as audiovisual texts.

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