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ODSJEK ZA ANGLISTIKU

**AUDIO-VISUAL TRANSLATION: HUMOR TRANSLATION IN
TV SERIES *VEEP***

**AUDIOVIZUELNI PREVOD: PREVOD HUMORA U TV SERIJI
*VEEP***

Završni magistarski rad

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to examine translation strategies used to preserve humor in subtitles. The corpus consists of excerpts from TV series *Veep*. The analysis is focused on comparing humor in the source and target versions by utilizing Incongruity-resolution Model and Semantic Script Theory of Humor in order to determine if humorous elements were successfully preserved in the subtitles. The analysis relies on identifying incongruity-carrying punchlines in both source and translation. Selected jokes were especially challenging for the translator because they are language-dependent and culture-specific. The strategies used to retain humor in the translation are identified, each example is analyzed and the differences are pointed out and discussed. Although it is possible to translate humor, some of the elements of the original are lost in translation, mostly because of constraints of subtitling and *Veep*'s fast-paced dialogue.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, humor, subtitling, translation strategies.

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1. Introduction

Humor is linked to language and culture in which it is produced. Given that *Veep*'s bipartisan criticism of the government and politicians involves wordplay and often relies on viewers' familiarity with American culture, the analysis of audiovisual translation of humor in this paper focuses on the following types of jokes: language-based jokes, culture-specific jokes, and complex jokes. It is important that the translator has the ability to recognize humor and to have a thorough understanding of the show, the characters and their relationships. The translator also has to be familiar with the source language culture, historical events and public figures. This knowledge is a prerequisite for a good translation of audiovisual material rich in culture-specific and language-based humor.

Translating audiovisual material by subtitling is easier and cheaper than dubbing. However, the temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling do not give translators the liberty of keeping all the elements of the original in the translated text. Some of the hurdles that translators of audiovisual material are faced with include "highly culture-specific references", "language-specific features" and "areas of overlap between language and culture."¹ Different translation strategies are used to deal with such issues and these solutions either rely more on the source text (ST) or target text (TT).

Examples of jokes from TV series *Veep* were selected to be analyzed in this paper. The transcripts of the jokes in the source language (SL) were found on the webpage transcripts.foreverdreaming.org. The translation of the jokes in the target language (TL) – Croatian – were copied from the subtitles available on HBO GO webpage. The selected jokes are analyzed in detail by paying attention to their translation and humorous effect. The jokes were divided into three categories – language-based jokes, culture-specific jokes and complex jokes (e.g., those that contain both wordplay and cultural references). Both ST and TT are presented side-by-side to facilitate the comparison. The analysis is mostly limited to verbal humor and examples of relatively short joke-carrying texts are presented in tables. The analysis is based on Zabalbeascoa's classification of jokes and Chiaro's and Pedersen's translation strategies. The incongruity of the

¹ Delia Chiaro, "Issues in Audiovisual Translation," in *Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Jeremy Munday (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 155.

jokes is analyzed based on the Semantic Script Theory of Humor and Suls' Incongruity Resolution Model. The goal is to check if the humor from the original is retained in the subtitles.

1.1 Audiovisual Translation and Subtitling

Given that audiovisual programs have both an image and a sound component, the translation of this material has to be synchronized with them. Since viewers of audiovisual materials are primarily watching – not reading – the program, it is important for the subtitles to consist of a condensed version of the text that is placed on the screen in a way that does not obscure the image and distract the viewers.

It is said that the best subtitles are those that are not noticed by the viewer. To achieve this, the translator has to keep the subtitled text shorter than the original. A subtitle typically consists of one or two lines of “32 to 41 characters per line”² displayed at the bottom of the screen. Given that translators have to deal with temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling, more flexibility is allowed when it comes to audiovisual translation.

Since subtitling entails a change of mode from oral to written, not everything that is in the original will be retained in the translation. It is not possible to preserve the original dialogue in its entirety because that would take up a lot of space on the screen. This means that the translator has to simplify the original and eliminate some elements such as false starts, hesitations and the information that can be understood from the visuals. It is said that the translator has to assume the role of *an editor*³ to achieve this. Because of the omission of some parts of the original text and simplification of the syntax and vocabulary, audiovisual translation was initially considered to be an act of *adaptation* rather than that of translating. Although audiovisual translation was not initially considered to be an act of translation, today there is no doubt about it being “part and parcel of the translation ecosystem.”⁴ Given that subtitling is essentially the process of transferring a message in a SL into a message in a TL, it is certainly an instance of translation that allows

² Jorge Diaz Cintas and Aline Remael, *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 9.

³ Heidi Zojer, “Cultural References in Subtitles: A measuring Device for Interculturality?” *Babel* 57, no. 4 (January 2012): 394–413.

⁴ Łukasz Bogucki and Jorge Díaz-Cintas, “An Excursus on Audiovisual Translation,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility*, ed. Łukasz Bogucki and Mikołaj Deckert (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 11.

people to understand a message in a foreign language. This indicates that translating audiovisual material is no different than translating any other material.

The process of editing is just one part of translation process. It is a way that translators are dealing with technical, textual and linguistic constraints of subtitling. Although certain elements of the soundtrack are omitted in subtitles, “the visual information often helps viewers process the subtitles”⁵ and compensates for the omitted elements of the speech.

The multimedia nature of audiovisual material is what makes this type of translation more difficult. Namely, what is shown on the screen has to synchronize with what is being said, which means that the timing for subtitle insertion has to coincide with the original speech. In addition to speech, audiovisual material also contains sounds, images, written text and music, which represents another challenge for the translator. Therefore, it does not matter if the translation is perfect in terms of its content, it will be deemed unsuccessful if the viewers are not given enough time to read it.

According to Georgakopoulou, in order to find the best translation strategy, each translation issue should be analyzed in terms of its “function (relevance to the plot), connotation (implied information), target audience’s assumed knowledge of the language and culture of the source language programs.”⁶

Although it is known that some countries prefer subtitling while others prefer dubbing, Jorge Diaz points out that the debate about which translation practice is better – dubbing or subtitling – “has become obsolete.”⁷ There are countries in which both dubbed and subtitled material is used. Therefore, the division into dubbing and subtitling countries is not so clear-cut anymore. For example, over-the-top media services such as Netflix now offer both dubbed and subtitled versions and allow the viewers to choose how to watch the program. In addition to this, they also provide “subtitling for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing and audio description for the blind and the partially sighted.”⁸

⁵ Panayota Georgakopoulou, “Subtitling for the DVD Industry,” in *Audiovisual Translation: Language Transfer on Screen*, ed. Jorge Díaz Cintas and Gunilla Anderman (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 25.

⁶ Georgakopoulou, op. cit., 29.

⁷ Bogucki and Díaz-Cintas, op. cit., 15.

⁸ Ibid.

What has also changed over time is the fact that different genres are translated now, such as documentaries, cooking shows, musical video clips, etc. As a result, greater number of digital videos are being consumed around the globe. Increased availability of audiovisual material and greater number of on-demand streaming services – such as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, HBO GO – have led to audiovisual translation boom. And it seems that the growing demand for audiovisual translation is here to stay. The first international journal dedicated to audiovisual translation studies *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* was launched in 2018, which shows that there is a growing interest in researching audiovisual translation as well. Yet another proof of interest in this topic is this very paper that focuses on audiovisual translation of political satire *Veep*.

1.2 *Veep*

Given that *Veep* premiered on HBO in 2012 and that the final episode premiered in 2019, it encompassed two presidencies – with Democratic and then Republican incumbent. *Veep* continued to be relevant and, although it always enjoyed bipartisan support, it was never apolitical. Instead, Armando Iannucci's political satire *Veep* mocked contradictions of the political culture through the story about political career of ex-senator Selina Meyer whose political party was never identified. The series thus made fun of all politicians, and it could be enjoyed by everyone regardless of their party identification. The show satirizes gruesome workings of politics by presenting gaffes and failures of Selina Meyer and her incompetent staff. Her team includes chief of staff Amy Brookheimer, head of communications Mike McLintock, deputy director of communications Dan Egan, personal aide Gary Welsh, and personal secretary Sue Wilson. After president Stuart Hughes resigns, Selina Meyer becomes the first female president of the United States. Her team then also includes White House chief of staff Ben Cafferty and political strategist Kent Davison. Also frequently featured in all seven seasons of the series is Jonah Ryan, a White House liaison and later a congressman.

Veep is similar to other workplace comedies such as *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*. Although it is not a documentary like these two TV series, it is shot in *cinéma-vérité* style. This makes dialogue between the characters seem real and gives the series a documentary feel. The dialogue in *Veep* is fast-paced and filled with colorful insults, shocking comparisons and foul

language. It contains political humor which is aimed at politicians, political leaders, and political parties. Given that humor in *Veep* includes clever language-based insults, creative cursing and culture-specific references, the translator is forced to leave some elements out since it is not possible to retain everything in subtitles. As a satirical show, *Veep* can encourage viewers to examine and question prevailing systems of power. And although laughter can be an outcome of satire, it is not a necessary component. In addition to entertaining its audience, satire can also enable it to think critically about the power and politics. This paper, however, focuses on the elements of humor. And theories of humor can show what is it that makes the jokes funny.

2. Theories of Humor

It is not a job of a translator to discuss what is funny or to provide a detailed definition of humor. However, it is useful to reflect on some of the theories of humor that can be used to analyze jokes. In his book *Linguistic Theories of Humor* Salvatore Attardo discusses what counts as humor. He states that “linguists, psychologists, and anthropologists have taken humor to be an all-encompassing category, covering any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses, or is felt to be funny.”⁹ It has been proposed to use laughter as a criterion of humor. In other words, what is funny makes people laugh and what makes people laugh is funny. However, not everyone will find the same things to be funny and the reasons behind this will be discussed later. The analysis of selected humorous elements is based on theories of humor.

Theories of humor can be divided into three groups: *incongruity*, *superiority*, and *release theories*.¹⁰ These theories characterize humor from different angles and “supplement each other.”¹¹ They will be briefly described below.

Incongruity theories maintain that bringing together of two or more incongruous elements is what creates humor. For example, incongruity produced by unexpected occurrences of words results in laughter because people usually laugh at things that surprise them. According to incongruity theory, “a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke”¹² is what creates humor. The element of surprise is important in a joke and this surprise is usually delivered by a punchline. Proponents of incongruity theory emphasize “the importance of the element of surprise in a joke.”¹³ For example, the incongruity that arises from two meanings of the word in a wordplay is a surprise that can result in laughter after both meanings of the word are processed.

Superiority theories emphasize humor’s aggressive side. This theory maintains that people laugh at someone else’s misfortunes, mistakes or stupidity. The superiority theory poses that laughter is related to superiority one feels when laughing at someone else. Examples of aggressive humor include targeting someone with sarcasm and verbal irony. This type of humor also includes jokes in which both less powerful groups (e.g., stereotypes) and powerful groups (e.g., political satire)

⁹ Salvatore Attardo, *Linguistic Theories of Humor* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), 4.

¹⁰ Attardo, op. cit., 47.

¹¹ Victor Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985), 40.

¹² Alison Ross, *The Language of Humour* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 7.

¹³ Raskin, op. cit., 33.

can be targets. This theory emphasizes that humor can also be used as social corrective “to correct deviant behavior.”¹⁴ Vandaele recognizes two types of superiority: “negative superiority” in which a clear target or a butt of the joke can be identified and “positive superiority”, which describes the non-aggressive varieties of superiority.¹⁵ For example, positive superiority results from the superiority or heightened self-esteem one feels after solving incongruity in a joke. Also, when a hearer recognizes an “in-group” reference in a joke, it makes them happy that they understood it and that they belong to the group as opposed to the out-group members.

Release theories maintain that “humor releases one from inhibitions, conventions and laws.”¹⁶ It states that people laugh when their thoughts and feelings are liberated. According to this theory of humor, laughter is triggered by “the sense of release from a threat being overcome—such as a reduction of fears about death and sex.”¹⁷ This theory covers jokes which are taboo (e.g., euphemisms for sex, jokes about death and religion). However, different cultures “have different ideas about what is and what is not a ‘taboo’ area.”¹⁸ Because of this, a translator can omit or replace certain jokes in order to account for expectations of the target audience.

However, especially significant for the analysis in this paper is incongruity theory. In order for incongruity to be funny, it has to be resolved. Incongruity is created by the punchline of a joke because it contains information that is incongruous with the expectations of the hearers and the joke setup. Incongruity-resolution theory therefore differentiates between the setup and the punchline of a joke. According to incongruity-resolution model proposed by Jerry Suls when listeners hear a joke setup, they make assumptions about its outcome. But when the punchline does not confirm their expectation, it surprises them and prompts them to look for a cognitive rule that will make punchline congruous with the joke setup. The incongruity is resolved when the cognitive rule is found which subsequently leads to laughter. If a cognitive rule is not found, the incongruity remains unresolved and leads to confusion.¹⁹

¹⁴ Attardo, op. cit., 50.

¹⁵ Jeroen Vandaele, “Each Time We Laugh. Translated Humor in Screen Comedy,” 255.

¹⁶ Attardo, op. cit., 50.

¹⁷ Ross, op. cit., 61.

¹⁸ Mona Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 234.

¹⁹ Rod A. Martin and Thomas Ford, *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Academic Press, 2007), 57.

A linguistic extension of incongruity theory called the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) was presented by Victor Raskin in his book *Semantic Mechanism of Humor* (1985). The main hypothesis of this theory is that a text can be considered as a carrier of humor if it is fully or partially compatible with two different scripts and if those two scripts are opposite.²⁰ According to Attardo, “a script is an organized chunk of information about something.”²¹ The SSTH states that humorous text has to contain script opposition. There are three classes of script oppositions: actual vs. non-actual, normal vs. abnormal, and possible vs. impossible.²² In short, according to the SSTH, the text will be considered funny if both conditions are met – a text contains two scripts that are fully or in part compatible and the scripts are opposed. Raskin also pointed out that “bona-fide communication” is serious, information-conveying and unambiguous form of communication governed by the cooperative principles.²³ However, joke telling is a type of “non-bona-fide communication”. The purpose of this mode of communication is not to convey any information but to make the hearer laugh. This is the mode of communication that will be discussed in the analysis and it is Raskin’s SSTH and Suls’ Incongruity-resolution Model that will be used to analyze incongruity of the jokes and of their translation.

²⁰ Raskin, op. cit., 99.

²¹ Attardo, op. cit., 198.

²² Ibid., 204.

²³ Raskin, op. cit., 100.

3. Humor in Translation

When dealing with humor, translator's main goal should be preserving the humorous elements. What makes this task challenging is the fact that verbal humor often contains linguistic and cultural elements that are characteristic of the source culture. In other words, jokes can contain words that have more than one meaning and references to people and events that are unknown in the target culture. This combination of linguistic and culture-specific elements in a joke is especially challenging for translators. If these elements are translated literally, the joke will be unsuccessful in TL.

The process of translating humor involves recognizing the joke in the original text and making a decision regarding how significant humor is in the ST. Most of the jokes cannot be directly translated or retained so the translator has to use interventional strategies. These strategies include *specification*, *generalization*, *substitution* and *omission*.²⁴ These strategies are used in order to reformulate the ST joke so that it can be understood and appreciated by the target audience.

Although translation is about being faithful to the meaning and the effect of a text, the nature of humor does not have to be the same in both the source and translation.²⁵ Translation of jokes depends on the types of jokes that the translator is dealing with. One useful classification of types of jokes is that proposed by Zabalbeascoa.²⁶ He recognizes the following types of jokes.

International/binational jokes are those in which the comic effect does not depend on the language or culture of the source. In other words, these are the jokes that do not contain any obstacles because both the source and target language users have the same shared knowledge and values that are required to appreciate the joke in the same way.

National-culture-and-institution jokes are those that are challenging because of some difficulty related to text users' linguistic or encyclopedic knowledge. These jokes contain "national, cultural or institutional references"²⁷ that have to be adapted in order to retain the humorous effect.

²⁴ Jan Pedersen, "How is Culture Rendered in Subtitles?" in *Challenges of Multidimensional Translation: Proceedings of the Marie Curie Euroconferences MuTra*, ed. Heidrun Gerzymisch-Arbogast and Sandra Nauert (Saarbrücken: Advanced Translation Research Center, 2005), 113-130.

²⁵ Patrick Zabalbeascoa, "Humor and Translation, an Interdiscipline," *Humor* 18, no. 2 (2005): 185-207.

²⁶ Patrick Zabalbeascoa, "Translating Jokes for Dubbed Television Situation Comedies," *The Translator* 2, no. 2 (1996): 235-257.

²⁷ Zabalbeascoa, "Translating Jokes for Dubbed Television Situation Comedies," 252.

National-sense-of-humor jokes are joke-types and joke-themes that are more popular in some countries than in others. For example, some communities like to make fun of themselves, while others prefer to laugh at somebody else's expense. These preferences can depend on historical or political connections with neighboring nations.

Language-dependent jokes rely on polysemy, homophony and zeugma. These jokes can be translated literally when SL and TL are very closely related. However, language-dependent jokes are often challenging because of the language barriers.

Visual jokes are those in which humor is derived from what is displayed on the screen.

Complex jokes are those in which two or more types of the jokes discussed before are combined (e.g., jokes that are both language-dependent and culture-specific).

Regardless of the type of the joke, a translator has to make a decision whether the funniness or the sameness of the joke is more important. Other than judging whether humor or meaning is more important, the translator also has to be aware of the target audience – their age, expectations, background knowledge, their moral and cultural values. The translator therefore has to decide whether to translate the joke directly, change it by including or excluding some elements, or to change it completely to preserve the humorous effect.

3.1 Language-based Jokes

Verbal humor is not limited to puns and other form of language play. It is any text which can create humorous effect. Language-based humor can occur on various levels of language. These include semantic level, phonological level, syntactic level (ambiguity of sentence structure), register (inappropriate style or sudden change in register) etc. When source and target languages are different, it is not possible to directly translate wordplays. This untranslatability of wordplays is further increased when they are culture-specific. One of the most common types of wordplay are puns.

Puns are jokes that exploit different meanings of the words which sound alike. For example, homonyms are the words that have the same spelling or pronunciation but different meanings. Homonyms include homographs and homophones. Homophones are the words that sound the same

but have different meanings, and homographs are the words that have the same graphemic representations but different meanings.

Other examples of language-based jokes rely on polysemy, rhyme and alliteration. English language is rich in such wordplay. Jokes in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian do not rely on wordplay as much since words in these languages are pronounced the same way they are spelled. Translating language-based jokes into these languages can be challenging for this reason.

According to Chiaro²⁸, translators usually handle verbally-expressed humor (VEH) by adopting one of the following strategies:

- leaving the VEH unchanged,
- replacing the source VEH with a different instance of VEH in the TL,
- replacing the source VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL, or
- ignoring the VEH altogether.

3.2 Culture-specific Jokes

The challenge of some cultural references is understanding rather than translating them. Translation process of cultural references forces the translator to decide whether to leave the reference as it is or to amend it to fit the foreign target audience. Luckily for the translators, political jokes are “freely interchangeable from one country to another.”²⁹

It is sometimes possible to leave a culture-specific reference untouched because the audience is exposed to different cultures via digital technology and internet. It is suggested that non-translation of such culture-specific references is not a sign of translator’s laziness but a reflection of the globalization and “dissolving of cultural borders.”³⁰ Such references are transcultural and can be understood by the viewers all over the world. The advantage of translating audiovisual material in

²⁸Delia Chiaro, “Translation and Humour, Humour and Translation,” in *Translation, Humour and Literature*, ed. Delia Chiaro (Continuum, 2010), 11-12.

²⁹Raskin, op. cit., 222.

³⁰Zojer, op. cit. 407.

English is the fact that references to famous singers and actors are usually familiar to the audiences in the most countries in the world.

Other references are monocultural and translators need to make some adjustments to guide the viewers in order to ensure that the audience can comprehend them. When dealing with culture-specific items, it is important to keep the TL viewers in mind. The reason for this is the fact that what is considered to be funny in one culture is not necessarily funny in another. Even when two cultures share the same language, adjustments have to be made sometimes. For example, British documentary sitcom *The Office* was made anew for US television. This is because, as Chiaro noticed, British sitcoms are usually based on the issue of class, while US comedies rather play “on the characterization of the individual.”³¹ When the joke contains a culture-bound reference, which could be unknown in the TL audience, a translator has to find a way to get the humor across and retain the humorous effect of the joke.

Pedersen (2005) presented seven strategies for translating cultural references³², ranging from those ST oriented to TT oriented. These strategies include *official equivalent*, *retention*, *specification*, *direct translation*, *generalization*, *substitution*, and *omission*.

Official equivalent does not require any intervention by a translator. A typical example of an official equivalent is that Donald Duck is called “Paja Patak” in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, and there is no reason for it to be rendered in some other way.

Retention is the strategy that is most SL-oriented. The retained cultural reference is sometimes placed in quotes or appears in italics. The retained element can be adjusted to the TL in terms of its spelling. Although it is the most common strategy, it is not the most useful one as it offers no guidance to the TL viewers.

Specification also involves leaving the cultural reference in its untranslated form, but also making it more specific by adding information that is not present in the ST. There are two ways to do this. One of those is explicitation, which is any strategy that involves expansion of the text and spelling out anything that is implicit in the ST. One example is adding someone’s first name to make the cultural reference less ambiguous for the target audience. Addition includes adding material that

³¹ Chiaro, “Translation and Humour, Humour and Translation,” 22.

³² Pedersen, “How is Culture Rendered in Subtitles,” 113-129.

is latent in the ST cultural reference. One example would be adding the profession of a person referenced to give guidance to the target audience.

Direct translation is a strategy that can be used to render names of companies and official institutions. There are two subcategories of this strategy in which nothing is added or subtracted: calque and shifted. A calque is the result of a literal translation which can seem exotic to the TL audience, while shifted direct translation is more common and less exotic.

Generalization is a strategy that involves replacing the cultural reference that refers to something specific by something more general. This typically results in producing a TT item that is less specific than the one in the ST.

Substitution is a strategy that involves removal and replacement of the ST cultural reference. The reference can be substituted with a different cultural reference or a paraphrase. Cultural substitution includes removal of the ST reference and substitution with a cultural reference that is expected to be known by the TL audience. The original cultural reference can also be replaced with a TL cultural reference. This strategy is often used to render cultural references to official institutions or titles. Paraphrase means rephrasing the cultural reference. There are two types: paraphrase with sense transfer in which the sense or relevant connotations of the original cultural reference are kept, and situational paraphrase in which every sense of the ST reference is completely removed, and replaced by something that fits the situation regardless of the original sense. This method is often used to render cultural references in puns.

Omission is a translation strategy that involves replacing the SL cultural reference with nothing.

According to Chiaro, translators can deal with culture-specific references by making the reference in the TL more general by using hyperonymy, by replacing the reference with a reference that is more specific in the TL than it is in the SL, or by replacing the reference with the same level equivalent.³³

Translation of humor is a decision-making process in which the translator has to consider whether to leave a joke in and why the joke was told in the first place. Then the translator needs to decide if humor is a priority and to check if there are any obstacles that prevent the same joke from

³³ Chiaro, "Issues in Audiovisual Translation," 157.

working in TL. For example, a lot of profanities used in *Veep* in the SL are not translated. Some brutal jokes are simplified and less specific in the TT. One of the reasons for this is the fact that subtitling does not allow the translator to produce a completely faithful translation. Translator's decision-making depends on the task at hand and it is always influenced by the constraints of subtitling.

Translators first need to understand what is humoristic in the ST, only then can they transfer the perceived humor into TT. Sometimes laughter is more important than translating the exact meaning of an utterance, and sometimes the reverse is the case. When choosing the best translation strategy, translators have to consider the language of the target audience and their expectations. Therefore, translation should not be restricted to conveying semantic and lexical features of the humorous text. And the translation should invoke the same or similar reaction in the target audience.

4. Analysis

4.1 Language-based Jokes

Extract 1

ST	TT
Selina: I wanted to say a few words and speak very frankly. I was gonna say baldly, but I know how sensitive Mike is about his hair.	Selina: Htjela sam vam se iskreno obratiti s nekoliko riječi. Htjela sam reći nešto drugo, no Mike bi se vjerojatno uvrijedio.

This joke plays on the two meanings the word bald – blunt and hairless. The incongruity in the joke is caused by polysemy of the word *bald*. The reference to Mike’s alopecia is not congruous with the setup of the joke. When the word hair is mentioned, it becomes clear Selina is alluding to Mike’s hair loss. The viewers can find cognitive rule MIKE IS BALDING, which resolves the incongruity. When it comes to translation, the joke in ST is hostile to Mike, who is balding, but this is not clear in the TT. The verbally expressed humor was ignored and translated with a non-humorous text. This loss of humor is the result of the fact that the translator decided to omit the wordplay and focus on the overall meaning of Selina’s utterance.

Extract 2

ST	TT
Tom: Madam President, I am here to serve. You are the sun, I the moon. Of Jupiter. Not even one of the good ones.	Tom: Gospođo predsjednice, vaš sam sluga. Ti si Sunce, a ja Mjesec.

The wordplay in this example is based on the expectation that Tom is talking about Earth’s satellite. However, when he says “of Jupiter”, it becomes clear that he is alluding to one of Jupiter’s moons. The punchline is initially incongruous with the preceding metaphorical utterance. Then the cognitive rule JUPITER HAS MANY MOONS leads to resolution of incongruity. It is then clear that Tom is making fun of himself in the ST. However, in the TT the rest of his utterance is not translated – possibly because of constraints of subtitling. The humorous effect is thus not preserved in the TT. The subtitler was likely forced to adopt a solution that focuses on semantics. It was not

possible to translate all the details which is why the strength of Tom's exaggeration is lost in the TT.

Extract 3

ST	TT
Gary: Okay, what about us? Is there a panic room or something? Sue: Gary, every room you're in is a panic room.	Gary: A mi? Imamo li sobu za paniku? Sue: Sve su takve.

This dialogue happened after it was announced that there is an intruder in the White House. The butt of the joke in the ST is Gary who asks about a panic room. The viewers anticipate that Sue will simply answer Gary's question, but she pokes fun of him instead. The cognitive rule is found GARY IS A TIMID PERSON and this makes her utterance congruous. In the TT, however, it is simply implied that all the rooms in the White House are panic rooms. Although both SL and TL audiences are familiar with the fact that Gary is a person prone to panicking, the translator substituted the original joke with a joke about the environment in which Sue and Gary work. Different cognitive process is used to resolve the incongruity of Sue's answer in the TT. Namely, the viewers find a rule WORKING AT THE WHITE HOUSE IS STRESSFUL. This resolution can lead to laughter and humor is therefore retained in the TT.

Extract 4

ST	TT
Dan: Tom and Felix spent the entire morning French-braiding each other's bald spots.	Dan: Tom i Felix cijelo si jutro pletu pletenice.

The incongruity arises when the friendly relationship between Tom and Felix is described by stating that they *braid each other's hair*. It is clear from this that they are bonding but this information is conveyed in a condescending way because they are compared to little girls. In addition to that, this is an example of absurd and aggressive humor because it is said that they are braiding each other's *bald spots*. Therefore, the scripts triggered by this joke are that of

ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL and POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE because it would not be possible to braid a bald spot. The listeners are able to process the punchline and recognize that it is implied that Tom and Felix are close. The translated joke does not refer to bolding and simply states that they are braiding each other's hair. However, this expression does not carry with it the same implication as the one in the SL does. This can lead to confusion rather than laughter in the TL audience.

Extract 5

ST	TT
<p>Ben: Ma'am, someone opened a Twitter account for the pimple.</p> <p>Selina: What?</p> <p>Ben: It's called POTUS. Pimple of the United States.</p>	<p>Ben: Netko je otvorio "Twitter" za prišt. Zove se Prištavnica.</p>

The ST audience is certainly familiar with the acronym POTUS (the President of the United States) that this joke is based on. The incongruity in this joke arises when it is said that POTUS stands for *Pimple of the United States*. This incongruity is resolved when a rule SELINA HAS A BIG PIMPLE is found. It is common for Twitter users to create accounts for body parts of politicians and to write tweets pretending to be those body parts. For example, there is a Twitter account called *Donald Trump's Hair* and in the description of this account it says: HOTUS (Hair of the United States). Similarly, there are Twitter accounts called *Ted Cruz's Facial Hair* and *Mitch McConnell's Neck*. Therefore, this type of humor is common in the US. This is an example of *national-sense-of-humor joke* that is not common in the TL.

The joke in the ST is a pun that plays on the expectation that "p" in the acronym POTUS stands for *president*. It is then revealed that it stands for *pimple*. This pun is translated with a pun in the TT. The pun in the TT, *prištavnica*, is a play on words *prišt* and *predsjednica*. The incongruity in the TT also arises when the name of Twitter account is revealed. However, the wordplay in Croatian is less apparent than the original one. And given that this type of humor is not common in the TL, the TL viewers might understand the wordplay but still be confused by the joke.

Extract 6

ST	TT
Jonah: Hey, don't shoot the messenger. Dan: Is punching allowed?	Jonah: Nemojte ubiti glasnika. Dan: Mogu li ga udariti?

After Jonah comes to inform Selina about a viral video in which Selina is criticized for vetoing environmental protection although she claims to be an environmentalist and for firing a Secret Service agent for smiling, he demands that they “don’t shoot the messenger”. This idiom is translated with an equivalent *nemojte ubiti glasnika* and poses no difficulty. Dan then responds to it by asking if punching is allowed. This is where incongruity arises because Dan referred to the word *shooting* rather than the overall meaning – not blaming the person who brings the bad news. This incongruity is resolved when a rule is found DAN DOES NOT LIKE JONAH AND WANTS TO PUNCH HIM. The translated joke contains the same incongruity and the process of resolution of incongruity is identical. The humorous element is therefore successfully translated.

Extract 7

ST	TT
Gary: He should really be on suicide watch. Dan: Yeah, make sure he goes through with it.	Gary: Treba pripaziti na njega. Dan: Da, da mu uspije da se ubije.

Although topics like suicide are not used as source of humor in some communities, this topic is used for humor in the episode “The Vic Allen Dinner” when Dan and Gary watch Jonah walk down the runaway after he has been thrown out of the Air Force Two. Gary makes fun of Jonah by saying that he should be put on suicide watch. The incongruity arises when Dan responds to this by saying: “Yeah, to make sure he goes through with it.” This is an example of a language-based joke because the meaning of *suicide watch* is reversed. The joke activates scripts of ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL and POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE. While it is possible for a person to be prevented from committing suicide, it is not possible for them to be put on suicide watch that will ensure they carry it out. There is also an opposition between the scripts LIFE/DEATH. The script opposition in the TT is also that of LIE/DEATH, because looking after someone is contrasted with

observing suicide. In the TT Gary's utterance is less specific because suicide watch is translated as *pripaziti na njega*. The viewers are nevertheless able to perceive that Gary and Dan are not actually worried about Jonah because they are familiar with the character dynamics of the show.

Extract 8

ST	TT
Dan: So... so, ma'am... so you're the one who's pregnant? Selina: I might be pregnant. Dan: So, we're looking at a wedding. Selina: Or a suicide. I haven't decided which.	Dan: Gospođo, vi ste trudni? Selina: Možda. Dan: Čeka li nas vjenčanje? Selina: Ili samoubojstvo, nisam odlučila.

As in the previous example, suicide is a source of humor in this scene. The incongruity arises because of Selina's response "or a suicide". This is because "looking at" functions as a zeugma – modifying words *wedding* and *suicide*. The joke activates scripts PREGNANCY, WEDDING and SUICIDE. The opposition is that of ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL and OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE because it is not common for someone to openly mention suicide as an option they are considering after finding out about pregnancy. The same incongruity arises in the TT and the same script oppositions exist. This means that the process of resolving incongruity is the same for the target audience. This is because the translated text contains the same zeugma that allows the viewers to understand the exaggerated response.

4.2 Culture-specific Jokes

Extract 1

ST	TT
Gary: What's happening right now?	Gary: Što se događa?
Selina: What are those, chips?	Selina: Ono je čips?
Gary: Why is there Coke Zero behind us?	Gary: Zašto ima “Cole Zero”?
Richard: Ma'am, your guests will arrive in a half hour. And they set up the Blue Room for your use.	Richard: Gosti stižu za pola sata. Pripremili su Plavu sobu.
Selina: What is this Dixie cup shit show? It's like we teleported to post-Katrina Mississippi.	Selina: Kakvo je ovo sranje? Poput Mississippija nakon Katrine.
Gary: I know! There's no tablecloths.	Gary: Nema stolnjaka.

In episode “Blurb” Selina and Gary go to the White House to attend her portrait unveiling. Because of the government shutdown, Selina’s portrait unveiling was a lot less glamorous event than she had hoped it would be. They expected to see Jackie’s glasses brought out for the occasion, but what they saw were paper cups, soda and no tablecloths. Translating the references to chips and Coke Zero was not problematic. However, the reference to disposable cups made of paper – Dixie cups – is omitted in the TT. Also, comparing the event to post-Katrina Mississippi is not likely to shock the target audience because not everyone is aware that this is a reference to the hurricane that hit this state in 2005. The joke belongs into the category of *national-culture-and-institution jokes*.

The first incongruity arises because of Selina’s language and insensitivity evident in comparing the event to a natural disaster. The second incongruity is caused by Gary’s agreement and subsequent comment about missing tablecloths. This joke activates scripts of OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE because the viewers recognize exaggeration in comparing a portrait-unveiling party to a hurricane-stricken place. The script opposition of OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE is preserved in the TT, because both Selina’s crude language and Gary’s and Selina’s insensitivity are present in the TT. This allows the TL audience to laugh at the perceived exaggeration.

Extract 2

ST	TT
Jonah: What's up, Mike? You gonna introduce me? Mike: Uh, yeah. Walt, Randall, this is Sasquatch.	Jonah: Kako si, Mike? Nećeš me upoznati? Mike: Walt, Randall, ovo je Sasquatch.

Bigfoot, also called Sasquatch, is a large, hairy, ape-like creature believed to live in the forests of North America. In this scene, Mike makes fun of Jonah's physical appearance by calling him Sasquatch. The incongruity arises when Mike introduces Jonah as Sasquatch. This incongruity is resolved after Jonah's appearance is accounted for and the cognitive rule JONAH RESEMBLES SASQUATCH is found and processed. Although the target audience is also familiar with this creature, it is more commonly referred to as Bigfoot in the TL. The target of the joke is Jonah in both ST and TT and this is something that both SL and TL audiences can recognize.

Extract 3

ST	TT
Kent: Ma'am, I spoke to Senator Doyle earlier, and he offered his input on configuration of guests. Selina: Doyle? You're kidding me. I'd rather get advice from a fucking Ouija board.	Kent: Senator Doyle iznio je svoje mišljenje o konfiguraciji uzvanika. Selina: Doyle? Radije bih da me savjetuje vračara!

In this joke the incongruity arises when *Ouija board* is mentioned. The semantic oppositions include ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL and POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE because, while it is possible to get an advice from Senator Doyle, it is not possible to get one from a spirit. Ouija board is a flat board, printed with letters and numbers, that can supposedly be used to communicate with spirits. Although some TL viewers might be familiar with Ouija board because of their exposure to American horror movies, it cannot be expected that all the viewers will know what it is. The translator thus resolved the issue posed by this *national-culture joke* by substituting *Ouija board*

with the word *sorcerer*. Both of these words are related to something supernatural. The TT also triggers ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL and POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE opposition. The humorous effect is thus preserved in the TT because the joke makes fun of Senator Doyle by pointing out how worthless his input is. Another incongruity in this joke is the language used by Selina in this scene because people would not expect the vice president to use such profanities. Her crude language is surprising for the viewers. But given that this kind of language is used throughout the TV series, it does not have to be preserved every time.

Extract 4

ST	TT
Selina: I mean, honestly, that is the most grotesque country I have ever been to - and I have been all over Florida.	Selina: Ovo je bila najgrotesknija zemlja koju sam vidjela, a bila sam u Floridi.

In the episode “Georgia” Selina goes to Georgia to help monitor the first free and democratic election in this country. On her way back to America, she describes it as the most grotesque country she has ever been to. And then she points out that she also visited different parts of Florida. When it comes to scripts, there is an overlap between the scripts COUNTRY/FLORIDA. The script opposition is ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL.

Another opposition is OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE because the joke mocks Georgians and Floridians. The state of Florida is often made fun of in America. The jokes about Florida are usually about hurricanes, drug use, alligators or news about bizarre crimes committed by people there. Some of the strange “Florida man” headlines include *Florida man protects car from Hurricane Dorian by parking it in kitchen* and *Florida man arrested for trying to get alligator drunk*. The stereotypes about Florida are well known in America, but it cannot be expected that the target audience will find this joke amusing since they are not familiar with this type of humor. Therefore, this is an example of a *national-sense-of-humor joke* that might not be equally amusing to the target audience despite its semantic faithfulness to the original.

Extract 5

ST	TT
Murman: I recently bought an English football club.	Murman: I kupio sam engleski nogometni klub.
Selina: Oh, wonderful!	Selina: Divno!
Murman: Leeds United. No English players, so pretty good team.	Murman: "Leeds United". Nema Engleza pa su dobri.

This is an example of a joke that travels well across the cultural boundaries. It could perhaps be enjoyed more by the TL audience than the American audience. The reason for this is the fact that the joke is based on the performance of the English football team. Given that Americans have their own version of football which is more popular than the one played in Europe, the European viewers are more likely to appreciate the reference to the performance of the English players. It can also be expected that some of the TL viewers will be familiar with the name of the football team retained in subtitles and placed in quotes.

The incongruity in this joke arises when it is revealed that they are a good team *because* there are no English players in it. This incongruity is subsequently resolved when a rule is recognized that THE ENGLISH ARE NOT GOOD FOOTBALL PLAYERS. The target of the joke, in both ST and TT, are the English players. This is an example of aggressive humor in which "humor operates as a group-defining element"³⁴ where the English are an out-group and the rest of the word is an in-group. The target audience can also find the rule that resolves the incongruity and laugh along at the English because the humorous effect is preserved in the TT.

³⁴ Salvatore Attardo, "Violation of Conversational Maxims and Cooperation: The Case of Jokes" *Journal of Pragmatics* 19, no. 6 (1993): 537-558.

Extract 6

ST	TT
Marjorie: We can't do anything about AIDS. Selina: Who are you, Ronald Reagan?	Marjorie: Ne možemo ništa s AIDS-om. Selina: Ti si Ronald Reagan?

In episode “Omaha” Selina starts a charitable organization, the Meyer Fund for Adult Literacy, and tells the person heading it, Marjorie, to add AIDS as one of the causes in order to make it more enticing. The incongruity caused by mentioning of Ronald Reagan is resolved when cognitive rule is recognized that RONALD REAGAN DID NOT RESPOND WELL TO THE AIDS EPIDEMIC IN THE 1980s. However, the target audience might not be aware of this. Therefore, although the TT is semantically faithful to the original, this joke might not be as successful in the TL because the TL audience might not have the necessary information required to resolve the incongruity and appreciate the joke. Because of this, the joke belongs to the category of *national-culture-and-institution jokes*.

Extract 7

ST	TT
Selina: And look at my neck. I- no, in the painting! Look at my neck. I have pardoned turkeys with fewer waddles.	Selina: Pogledaj mi vrat. Na slici! Purice imaju ljepši vrat.

In episode “Blurb” Selina is discussing her portrait before the portrait-unveiling ceremony. She was not satisfied with how she was depicted. Semantically, there is an overlap between scripts SELINA’S NECK and TURKEY’S NECK. The script opposition in this joke is that of ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL, since Selina’s neck does not literally resemble that of a turkey and the viewers recognize that Selina is using a hyperbole. It was possible to translate this joke and retain this hyperbole consisting of the reference to a fleshy neck of a turkey. The TL audience can understand the joke and resolve the incongruity that arises when *turkeys* are mentioned because the same overlap exists between Selina’s neck and that of a turkey in the TL joke. However, the reference to pardoning of turkeys was not retained in the TT possibly because it was not expected

that everyone would be familiar with the traditional ceremony in which the president issues a pardon to a turkey before Thanksgiving. For this reason, this joke falls into the category of *national-culture-and-institution jokes*. Another explanation as to why it was not retained are temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling.

4.3 Complex Jokes

Extract 1

ST	TT
Richard: He's nailing it, like Streisand hitting a high C.	Richard: Rastura! Kao kad Streisandova pogodi visoki C.
Jonah: My God, where were you born, Lake Homo?	Jonah: Bože, odakle si ti? S jezera Homo?

The wordplay in this dialogue relies on viewers' knowledge of the stereotype about homosexuals and familiarity with who Barbra Streisand is. It is possible that the target audience is not familiar with who Streisand is, but it can be inferred that she is a singer because Richard mentions hitting a high C. Jonah's response is incongruous and makes Richard the butt of the joke because he implies that only a homosexual man would listen to Barbra Streisand, who is considered to be a gay icon. Stereotypes about homosexuals are not exclusive to English-speaking countries, so this does not represent an obstacle when it comes to translation.

In addition to a pop-culture reference, this joke also contains a pun based on phonetic similarity between words *homo* and *Como*. Because the name of the lake and the word *homo* sound the same in both SL and TL, the translator did not have to use any interventional strategy and simply replaced the original words with their TL equivalents. The humorous effect is preserved and Richard is the butt of the joke in both ST and TT. The incongruity lies in the words Lake Homo that, unlike the lake with which it rhymes, does not exist. The listeners then process the punchline and resolve the incongruity by finding a cognitive rule **HOMOSEXUAL MEN LISTEN TO BARBRA STREISAND**. This process is possible in both SL and TL.

Extract 2

ST	TT
Selina: So, you guys have to stop the recount.	Selina: Morate zaustaviti prebrojavanje.
Ben: I'm sorry, what?	Ben: Molim?
Gary: Stop the count	Gary: Zaustavljaj!
Ben: Shut up, Gary. Ma'am, we can't.	Ben: Šuti, Gary! Ne možemo.
Selina: I don't care.	Selina: Briga me.
Ben: The train has very publicly left the station and derailed at high speed.	Ben: Taj je vlak pred svima krenuo i zahuktao se.
Gary: You got to stop the count.	Gary: Zaustavite ga.
Mike: Ma'am, this would look like a size-14 flip-flop.	Mike: A izjava o smrti vaše majke?

Selina pushes for a recount in Nevada after it was discovered that thousands of missing ballots have been found. However, it becomes clear that the recount in Nevada is not going in her favor since the uncounted votes were from military absentees who voted for her opponent O'Brien. Selina then declares that she wants to stop the recount. The joke in this example relies on polysemy of the word *flip-flop* – a sandal and a sudden change of plan. It also mentions a shoe size system that is not used in Europe. The incongruity in this joke arises due to the linguistic phenomenon of the polysemy. This incongruity is resolved when viewers find a cognitive rule SELINA KEEPS CHANGING HER POSITION ON RECOUNTS.

However, it was not possible to retain both the reference to a sandal and an abrupt change of plan in the TL. The humorous effect is therefore not retained in the TT. In addition to that, the translator did not preserve the meaning of ST either. Although the ST does not mention Selina's mother, the translator decided to translate Mike's utterance as a question about death of Selina's mother. The original joke ridicules the tendency of politicians to easily change their position depending on the situation they find themselves in. Although the translated joke is similar to it, it is missing the final punchline. As a result, the TL viewers have no incongruity to resolve.

Extract 3

ST	TT
<p>Selina: Anyway, the only question that I do have is do you think that I can be dating someone who's...</p> <p>Amy: So much younger?</p> <p>Selina: No, Muslim.</p> <p>Amy: Right.</p> <p>Selina: You know? Can I be with one of them?</p> <p>Amy: It would be political suicide.</p> <p>Selina: Oh, pfft, okay, last time I checked, my political career had answered a craigslist ad for a modeling shoot in the Angeles National Forest.</p>	<p>Selina: No bih li trebala biti s nekim</p> <p>Amy: Toliko mlađim?</p> <p>Selina: Ne. Muslimanom. Mogu li biti s njim?</p> <p>Amy: To je političko samoubojstvo.</p> <p>Selina: Moja politička karijera javila se na oglas za modno snimanje u šumi.</p>

Selina and Amy talk about Selina's relationship with the Qatari ambassador Mohammed Al Jaffar. The humor in this example relies on the fact that the public would not support a politician who is in a relationship with a Muslim. The opinion of the American public on Muslims is something that the target audience is probably familiar with. Selina is not a successful politician and she describes this by comparing political suicide with an actual potentially suicidal and dangerous action of answering a craigslist ad for a modeling shoot. The incongruity appears in the joke due to the linguistic phenomenon of anthropomorphism. Specifically, the joke activates script opposition of POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE, because it would be possible to answer a craigslist ad for a person but it would not be possible for a political career to do that. The same opposition exists in the TT. The concept of political suicide is translated as *političko samoubojstvo* in the TT. Both meanings in ST are preserved in the TT. The only difference is that *the Angeles National Forest* is translated with a general term *forest*. The translation strategy used here is generalization because the viewers are not familiar with this specific reference. Also, Amy's insinuation that Selina is too old to be dating Al Jaffar is also successfully translated. The humorous elements were preserved in the TT.

Extract 4

ST	TT
Selina: I leaked it to Leon. Amy: Why? Why would you Kurt Cobain your own library?	Selina: Ja sam dala tu priču Leonu. Amy: Zašto biste to učinili?

After finding out that Selina leaked a compromising story about her presidential library to a journalist, Amy asks her why she did it. The incongruity arises when Amy, seemingly out of the blue, mentions the name of an American musician. This incongruity is resolved when viewers find a cognitive rule KURT COBAIN KILLED HIMSELF. This information is processed and it becomes clear that Amy is implying that Selina's action will have damaging effects. While the name of the singer in the ST is used as a verb, the reference to Kurt Cobain is completely omitted in the TT. Although the target audience is probably familiar with who Kurt Cobain was and how he died, Amy's utterance is simplified and the dark joke about singer's death is replaced with a simple question that has no humorous effect or taboo elements. The SL cultural reference is replaced with nothing in the TT. The reason for this could be the fact that using a person's name as a verb is not a common joke type in the TL. This joke belongs to the category of *national-sense-of-humor jokes*. The humorous effect was not preserved in the TT.

Extract 5

ST	TT
Tom: O'Brien can't be president. He's still contracted to be the KFC logo.	Tom: Ne može on biti predsjednik! K'o da reklamira piletinu!

In the episode "Election Night" Selina says that she thinks her opponent Bill O'Brien will win the election. Tom responds to this by comparing O'Brien to the founder of the fast-food chicken restaurant KFC whose face is on the KFC logo. The incongruity that arises when the KFC logo is mentioned is resolved after the viewers recall what O'Brien looks like and find a cognitive rule O'BRIEN LOOKS LIKE COLONEL SANDERS. This joke relies on visuals because O'Brien truly does resemble the founder of KFC Colonel Sanders. But in order to understand this joke, the

viewers have to be familiar with the KFC logo. This is a reference to an American fast-food chain, so it could be said it is a *national-culture joke*. According to KFC website, there are “more than 25,000 KFC restaurants in over 145 countries and territories around the world”³⁵ – including Croatia and Serbia. But just because KFC is available in these countries does not mean that all the viewers will immediately recognize this allusion and remember what the logo looks like. The strategy used to translate this reference is generalization. The humorous effect is lost in the TT because the original reference is completely removed and not enough information is provided to guide the viewers and to ensure that they can resolve the incongruity.

Extract 6

ST	TT
Ben: Ma'am, you're gonna be drowning in money so dark it could get shot entering its own apartment.	Ben: Utapat ćete se u toliko novca da će novac trebati vlastiti stan.

The incongruity in this joke arises because of polysemy and anthropomorphism. Specifically, incongruity arises when it is said that *money is so dark it could get shot entering its own apartment*. The scripts DARK MONEY/DARK SKIN are overlapping in this example because of the multiple meanings of the word *dark*. Furthermore, when hearing this joke, the listeners activate scripts of POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE and ANIMATE/INANIMATE. This is because money is inanimate and as such cannot get shot and have its own apartment. However, it is possible for people of color to get shot in their own apartments. The joke is based on a metaphor that could confuse the target audience. Racial inequality in America and the excessive use of force by the police when it comes to dealing with people of color is well known, especially after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. However, the joke in the ST that is based on the different meanings of the word *dark* is replaced by a joke that does not refer to race and police brutality in any way. Instead, the joke in the TT is an exaggeration about the amount of money. Therefore, although script opposition that is triggered by TT is also that of POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE and ANIMATE/INANIMATE, the punchline is different. The laughter is triggered by resolution of different incongruity.

³⁵ “Our Locations,” KFC, accessed May 21, 2021, <https://global.kfc.com/our-locations/>.

Extract 7

ST	TT
Selina: Where? Where's his office?	Selina: Gdje mu je ured?
Ben: You know that portrait with the guy who looks like a fat Wolverine? It's just one door on the left from there.	Ben: Znate onaj portret tipa koji izgleda kao debela gorska kuna? Vrata dalje, nalijevo.

The viewers have certain expectations when it comes to how people working in the government should talk. For this reason, Ben's answer to Selina's question about the location of Kent's office is surprising. In this joke, the appearance of a man on the portrait hanging on the wall next to Kent's office is ridiculed. The incongruity arises when he is described as *a fat Wolverine*. However, when Selina walks past the said portrait it is visible that the man truly does resemble Wolverine portrayed by Hugh Jackman. The incongruity is thus resolved because the cognitive rule is found **THE MAN LOOKS LIKE A FICTIONAL CHARACTER WOLVERINE**. The translation, however, does not refer to the fictional character from comic books at all. Instead, the reference to Wolverine is substituted with *gorska kuna*. Because of this, the incongruity cannot be resolved in the TT and the resulting text is not likely to produce laughter. This is a *complex joke* because it is both culture-specific and it relies on the visual information.

Extract 8

ST	TT
Amy: Some paper is calling you the Europhobic Khaleesi from DC.	Amy: Novine vas zovu "Eurofobična rospija iz D.C.-ja".
Selina: Europhobic? Seriously? What is that supposed to mean? I'm scared of subtitles?	Selina: Eurofobična? A da? Što to znači? Da se bojim titlova?

In episode "Helsinki" Selina goes to Finland for trade negotiations. Before landing in Helsinki, Selina's staff informs her that her comic song was not received well in Finland and the rest of Europe because of the lines of the song such as "Don't be European, Ian". They proceed to tell her what some of the papers wrote about the song.

The original joke refers to a female leader by referencing the *Game of Thrones* character Daenerys Targaryen which the TL audience may or may not be familiar with. Although this show enjoyed a great popularity across the world, it is not guaranteed that all the TL viewers will know why it was used in this context. On the other hand, it sounds natural to the SL viewers. For example, during 2015 White House Correspondents' Dinner, comedian Keegan Michael Key who acted as President Obama's anger translator spoke of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign by announcing that: "Khaleesi is coming to Westeros". This comparison is clearly usual in the SL.

When it comes to translation, it is immediately clear that retaining rhyme in this joke - *Khleesi* and *DC* – was challenging. The rhyme in *Europhobic Khaleesi from DC* is omitted in the translation. In addition to this, the situational paraphrase *eurofobična rospija iz D.C.-ja* is too harsh since the word *rospija* is not equivalent to the word *Khaleesi* and connotations of the original cultural reference were not kept in the TT.

The incongruity arises when Selina asks if Europhobic person would be scared of subtitles. It is resolved when the rule is found EUROPEAN MOVIES HAVE SUBTITLES. However, the TL audience sees nothing extraordinary in movies having subtitles as they are used to watching movies with subtitles. The target audience is aware of the fact that Americans are more accustomed to watching movies in English – without subtitles. Although the punchline of the joke is adequately translated, the resolution of the incongruity might not be possible for all of the TL viewers because they might not relate the word Europhobic to the fear of movies that Americans perceive as foreign-language films and their hesitancy to read the subtitles.

5. Conclusion

Humor in subtitles of TV series *Veep* is examined in this paper. Theories of humor were applied in the analysis to compare humorous elements of the source and translation. Although theories of incongruity can be applied to both source and translation, some differences do exist. Since it was not possible to retain everything from the original, the translator instead aimed to convey enough information in the subtitles.

In addition to temporal and spatial constraints of subtitling, adjustments also had to be made because literal translation of language-based jokes can result in the complete loss of humorous effect. It was shown that homonymy and polysemy were particularly challenging as they often led the translator to omit the wordplay entirely. Somewhat less challenging were culture-specific references. Unsurprisingly, those jokes which are both language-based and culture-specific were the hardest to translate. However, many cultural references are known to the target audience due to the popularity of American movies and blending of cultures in today's world. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine that those viewers who decided to watch this TV series do not have basic understanding of American government and some familiarity with American culture.

Although this paper focuses on those jokes which were challenging for the translator, many jokes were easy to translate precisely because political jokes ridiculing hypocrisy and lack of principles in politicians are universal and transcultural. Political satire can be used to question powerful figures and hold those in power accountable. Despite the fact that it can serve as more than entertainment, the goal of this paper was to examine whether and how humor in this political satire was preserved in translation. And given that the translator was dealing with fast-paced dialogue filled with foul language, puns and jokes that rely on familiarity with American pop culture and history, it was not surprising that a lot of humorous elements were not preserved in the subtitles.

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