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Wordplay in *Yes, Prime Minister*

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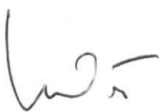
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INTRODUCTION

Wordplay is a language phenomenon that we can come across every day, either by creating a pun (pun and wordplay are used interchangeably) on our own with the intention to amuse or it can be found in newspapers where it is used to attract the reader's attention. Creating and resolving puns can be quite a difficult task. It very much depends on every individual, his or her knowledge of a given language, creativity and experience which might be helpful when creating or deciphering this language phenomenon.

Wordplay is a vast source of humor. Humorous texts are sometimes considered to be somehow light in its essence but the process of translating such texts and the task it requires is without any doubt rather difficult for many translators. Wordplay that has ambiguity as a central feature is highly language dependant. Languages all over the world are different in many ways therefore translation of a text containing wordplay from one language to another may be quite a difficult task. Translators face an important question whether to maintain the wordplay in the target text or not, whether to maintain 'the formal equivalence' or 'dynamic equivalence' of a given wordplay. Another possibility for translators is to omit the wordplay completely, which can affect the humorous aspect of the text, given the text is based primarily on wordplay and ambiguity. Thus, it is the translators' duty to recognize and provide adequate translation.

This thesis is divided into two main parts – theoretical and practical. The first section of the theoretical part deals with humor and the fact if humor as such can be defined. The attention then moves to the main feature humor, i.e. the aspect of incongruity (see Vandaele 1999).

In the second part of the theoretical part I am attempting to define wordplay. For the purpose of this thesis I will be referring to Delabastita's definition of wordplay, which will serve as a central frame of reference for my analysis. Delabastita defines wordplay as follows:

Wordplay is the general name for various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings (1996, 128).

In this section, puns based on ‘phonological and graphological structure’, ‘lexical structure (polysemy)’, ‘lexical structure (idiom)’, ‘morphological structure’, and ‘syntactic structure’ as defined by Delabastita (1996, 130) will be provided. The distinction between ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ puns (1996, 128) will be specified as I intend to sort out the puns according to these criteria as well.

As mentioned before, translation is, apart from the mere recognition, probably the most difficult part in translation. Therefore, one of the sections will be then dedicated to the notion of translatability of wordplay to see how different scholars tackle this issue.

The thesis will conclude in the practical part in which I attempt to apply Delabastita’s approach summarized in the theoretical part. In this part I will analyze wordplay in *Yes, Prime minister*, a book in the form of diaries, official documents and letters written by Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay (1989). The original text will be then confronted with the official Czech translation of *Yes, Prime Minister* translated by Jan Klíma (2011) to see whether the translator was successful in maintaining the ‘formal’ or ‘dynamic equivalence (see Nida 1964).

1. HUMOR

Humor has always been an integral part of our lives. From the moment people turn on their TVs they can watch various comedies, stand up shows and many sitcoms throughout the whole day. Books containing humor are very popular as well. Marketers worldwide try to catch people's attention with commercials utilizing humorous effect. It comes as no surprise when one of the most watched events like Super Bowl in the United States shows many of these during commercial breaks. Huge brands come up with brand new commercials just for this one night of football and it is an unwritten rule that the most hilarious one usually becomes the most favorite one which only proves that humor has a fashionable status. Even Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II displayed a good sense of humor when she agreed to a short video in which she starred alongside Daniel Craig, playing the British secret agent James Bond, as he escorts the Queen to a helicopter from which she eventually parachuted right in the middle of the Olympic stadium during the opening ceremony of London 2012.

Humor is very influential ranging from “political satire to joking as a way of establishing friendships and excluding others,” says Alison Ross in her book *The Language of Humour* (1998, 1).

1.1 Definition of humor

Dictionaries in general do not provide very thorough definitions of what humor really is as they somehow avoid the question of what it actually is that makes people laugh. Regarding humor and its definition, Attardo (1994, 3) remarks that, “not only has it not been possible to agree on how to divide the category on ‘humor’ (e.g. ‘humor’ vs ‘comic’ vs ‘ridiculous’), but it is even difficult to find a pretheoretical definition of ‘humor’ in the most general sense. Even though it is almost impossible to define what it is that makes something humorous, we are at least able to identify humor.” Ross (1998, 1) tries to provide her own insight observing that people laugh in company rather than on their own. Simply put, “there is a strong social aspect to the way people respond to humor.” (1998, 1) And it makes perfect sense as people want to share their joy from humorous situations which they encountered and it is probably one of the reasons why

they keep telling jokes to each other. Ross (1998, 1) also speaks about the fact that even a brilliant joke can completely die when uttered in a different context. Here, Chiaro (1992, 15) elaborates the question of the environment a bit more arguing that the joke-teller must take into consideration also the cultural, political, social and other backgrounds in which the joke is to be uttered.

...not everybody is amused by the same things, and what is more, over and above shared knowledge of whatever type, finding something funny relies on a number of subjective variables. What may appear amusing under the influence of a few drinks may not appear quite so funny in the cold light of the morning after. A homosexual is hardly going to enjoy being insulted by someone's idea of a witty remark at his or her expense, any more than the Irish are amused by the thousands of jokes which depict them as imbeciles. Some people are offended by sexual innuendo, while others by political references contained in a joke.

With regard to this Nash states that “[h]umour is an occurrence in a social play.” (1985: 12). Social aspect is nevertheless crucial for creation and reception of humor, so is laughter, although it is not considered as a necessary or sufficient condition of humor.

1.2 Incongruity and Superiority

One of the aspects of humor that will be mentioned here is incongruity. Chapman and Foot defined incongruity as “a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke” (1976, 12). Such aspect of humor refers to something that is regarded as out of place or absurd. To better understand what incongruity refers to, an example from Ross (1998, 7) is provided in which these “conflicts” and “what is expected” are obvious.

Example (1): *Do you believe in clubs for young people?*
Only when kindness fails.

The *club* may well correspond to leisure groups or a weapon, thus provoking something absurd or abnormal. Vandaele (1999, 243) sees incongruity as a part of “cognitive scheme” which he defines as a human ability to relate and to give meaning to certain stimuli from the outside world. So when we speak about airports, planes are expected, when we speak about dancing, some music is expected. “The cognitive schemes constitute the constructions a person has learned to use in order to cope with the world he or she lives in.” Therefore, incongruity can be considered as a “contradiction of the cognitive scheme.” (1999, 243)

Vandaele distinguishes various types of incongruity. Incongruity can be **linguistic**, for instance, stuttering can be considered as incongruity as we expect language to be fluid and economical which is somehow broken by stuttering which can lead, and usually does in comedies, to something funny. Another transgression of this scheme can be homonymy or paronymy respectively. **Pragmatic** incongruities are the anomalies which “receive their humorous charge by breaking cognitive schemes concerning the actual use of language.” (1999, 247) To put it more simply, utterances usually tend to have some informative value but in this case, the expectations or rules are broken. Such can be seen quite frequently in parodies. Other types according to Vandaele’s typology are **narrative** incongruity, usually employed by vagueness, and **intertextual** incongruity, technique that uses hyperbole, total irrelevance of the argumentation and absurd reframing. Social incongruity is considered to be the one where certain rules of protocols are violated. The last type is called **natural** incongruity which can be described as breaking logic and reasoning at the same time.

Superiority is defined by Vandaele (1999, 241) as a “heightened self-esteem” which highlights “its very visible social functioning.” He relates superiority to some sort of aggression, mainly used in sarcastic irony, where a victim is explicitly targeted. (1999, 241) Vandaele further differentiates between negative superiority and positive superiority. On the one hand negative means that “a target can clearly be identified” (1999, 255) it is a person who is laughed at. Such aggressive humor as irony is not only superiority (ridiculing the target or gaining sympathy with the audience) but it also inclines to incongruity as well, to be more precise, to pragmatic incongruity (transgression of certain communicative norms and principles). Thus, these two concepts, according to Vandaele do not function independently. They are subcategories

of humor rather than two separate categories and should be treated as such. (1999, 256) As implied before, superiority, a necessary but not a sufficient condition that gives humor some new dimension, and incongruity interact to some extent, something Vandaele refers to as “interactional incongruity-superiority framework.” (1999, 242)

On the other hand positive superiority is rather non-aggressive when compared to negative superiority. As Vandaele says “one does not need to find and destroy a target in order to feel superior.” (1999, 244) He further divides superiority into three categories: problem solving, institutionalization and general circumstances. First, general circumstances follow principle of “good mood and cueing” and function “as a general background which makes the inference ‘incongruity→humour’ more evident” (1999, 257-258). Humor can provoke various reactions and circumstances filter the right ones at the right moment. Second mental process is called humor solving which sometimes involves “recognizing allusive frames.” (1999, 258) This is obviously the case for parodies that play heavily on allusions which requires an extra effort. The last, but no less important mechanism of humor is institutionalized humor which may refer to repetition of utterances that become institutionalized and thus very comic after some time. The same can be applied to characters or protagonists, an example might be Mr. Bean from whom some comic situation is expected as soon as he appears on the screen. Some stereotypes, including themes of sex, stupid blondes or some cultural clichés may be institutionalized as well. (1999, 260)

It is evident that humor as such cannot be defined as it is a very broad and subjective social phenomenon. It can be studied from various points of view, but factors such as subjectivity, different sense of humor, state of mind and various cultural aspects prevail.

2. DEFINING WORDPLAY

In order to analyze wordplay, it is necessary to understand the term itself and discover what exactly is behind this language phenomenon. There are quite a few definitions as to how wordplay should be understood and treated, yet many of these definitions provide only very brief sketches of what it actually is. It is basically impossible to expect a definition of this phenomenon from monolingual dictionaries, yet definitions from monolingual dictionaries are provided which might be a good starting point for understanding wordplay as such. For instance, two well-known dictionaries provide rather fuzzy definitions. The following definition from the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* says that wordplay is:

The activity of joking about the meaning of words, especially in a clever way.

This definition does not precisely states what exactly wordplay is, however, in layman's terms it implies that some sort of joking and playing with meanings of words is activated. A bit more elaborate definition, this time the from *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, states that wordplay is:

The clever or amusing use of words, esp involving a word that has two meanings or different words that sound the same.

Both definitions here still do not provide the solution and might be considered rather vague, even though the latter one mentions that some sort of ambiguity is triggered, which is according to Gottlieb (1997, 186) a central feature of the phenomenon. The term wordplay might be still confusing or more precisely not elaborate enough. Many scholars, linguists and academics offer lengthy surveys of literature on humor, rendering many theories, classifications and definitions of wordplay. For the purpose of this thesis a definition is needed. Having this in mind, the following definition of wordplay by Dirk Delabastita (1996) is used as a central frame of reference:

Wordplay is the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings. (1996, 128).

First, pun as such is based on at least two linguistic structures resembling each other in **form** (in a simplified way words that look and/or sound the same) which have **different meanings**. They are then contrasted which eventually gives rise to ambiguity and creates humorous effect. Delabastita (1996, 128) then specifies this complete or partial formal identity in terms of homonymy (identical sounds and spelling), homophony (identical sounds but different spelling), homography (different sounds but identical spelling), and paronymy (slight differences in spelling and sound).

Second, Delabastita (1996, 129-130) in his study argues that puns are **textual phenomena**, meaning that they are dependent on the structural characteristics of language as an abstract system. He further says that languages are full of potential ambiguities and associations, “which are not normally perceived as significant in ordinary, non-significant discourse.” (1996, 129) To create the humorous effect of puns, mere ambiguity does not always prove to be sufficient enough. That being said, puns usually require something more. Possibilities and various associations that are omnipresent in languages need to be somehow evoked. Where any potential ambiguity might fail, the context is required. It is important to mention that the context can be verbal or situational. As Delabastita puts it:

Verbal contexts follow from our expectation of grammatical well-formedness (thus, the fact that certain word classes are normally used in certain syntactic positions only will tend to block a reading of *can* as a verb in a phrase like 'can of lager' and of thematic coherence (1996, 129).

In short, verbal contexts are related to the human knowledge and expectations of grammatical and coherent texts. Situational contexts, on the other hand, might include, for instance, visual image in media or punning advertisement, which gives an additional

meaning to the accompanying text. That is something that Henrik Gottlieb is well aware of when he states: “The intended effect of wordplay can accordingly be conveyed through dialogue (incl. intonation and other prosodic features), through dialogue combined with non-verbal visual information, or through written text...” (1997, 210). Since this thesis deals with written text only, Gottlieb’s statement serves only as an extension of Delabastita’s broad definition of context.

Third, according to Delabastita (1996, 128), the following features exploited by the punster can be found at all levels of language, meaning the **linguistic structures** through which the pun can be embedded:

- *Phonological and graphological structure*: According to Delabastita (1996, 130) there are only limited number of graphemes (letters) and phonemes (sounds capable of generating meaning difference) in languages that can be combined together in certain combinations. This means that there are supposedly many unrelated pairs of words, which are somehow identical in meaning or form. Terms such as ‘soundplay’ (alliteration, consonance and assonance) and ‘anagrammatic’ wordplay (based on spelling) used by Delabastita (1996, 30) are bound to be found within puns. For instance, *love at first bite* is derived from *love at first sight*.
- *Lexical structure (polysemy)*: Languages are full of polysemous words, i.e. words that are related not only through their formal realization, moreover there is also a semantic connection between them. The example of polysemous word *do* is provided by Delabastita (1996, 30) in *Surfers do it standing up*.
- *Lexical structure (idiom)*: Puns can be based on idioms, i.e. an expression that cannot be understood from the individual meanings of its elements. According to Delabastita, (1996, 130) it is the distance between the idiomatic and literal reading of idioms that gives the punster an opportunity for creation of a pun (as in *Britain going metric: give them an inch and they’ll take our mile*).

- *Morphological structure:* Many derivatives and compounds can be utilized in punning as well as a distinction between the accepted meaning of the words (for example, a result of compounding) and the interpretation of the components (as in “*I can’t find the oranges,*” said Tom fruitlessly).
- *Syntactic structure:* Grammar can also generate puns as sentences or phrases can be parsed in more than one way. Delabastia offers the following example of a slogan – *Players Please*, referring to either a brand of cigarettes that please smokers or to a request to a shop assistant.

Fourth, one of the most important features of a pun is its intentionality. This is what Delabastita refers to as **communicative significance**. According to him “a pun is communicatively significant if and when it is intended as such.” (1996, 132) It is nevertheless crucial to differentiate between accidental ‘wordplay’ such as slips of the tongue or pen and those used intentionally. What can cause problems to readers is the mere recognition and appreciation of puns in the text. Sometimes, interpretation and analysis of puns may be peculiar for several reasons. Usually, many critics avoid the element of subjectivism and rather scan the text, looking for wordplay signals. Of course, it is quite an instinctive way of decoding puns within texts but translators or students of translation may find it very hard when assessing puns in which such signals are, for some reason, obviously missing. Therefore, decoding puns can cause problems in several categories of texts. The following section is taken from (Delabastita 1996, 132).

- *Written records of oral texts:* contexts and signals are often non-verbal and are thus in serious danger of not being recorded and of getting lost in the transmission process.
- *Experimental ‘open’ texts:* the contexts are full of effective or potential ambiguity and it is difficult to decide which associations and double meaning are relevant to the text and which are misleading.

- *Older texts*: here it is a matter of changing conventions in languages and our knowledge of the semantic range of words. Due to the passage of time, some wordplay may have been obscured and vice versa, wordplay may be construed falsely.

Last but not least, the aspect of incongruity is missing in Delabastita's definition as I believe that 'unexpectedness' is a characteristic feature of puns. As a reminder, Chapman and Foot define incongruity as "a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke" (1976: 12). Incongruity or unexpectedness is then a matter of reader's experience and ability to decipher the second reading in a given context.

It is not always clear to see the intention of the author and there is a thin borderline between 'underreading' and 'overreading' of the text containing this textual phenomenon. As Delabastita (1996, 132) argues, the recognition depends heavily on the reading habits of the text user, as well as the genre conventions and language conceptions.

For the purpose of this thesis Delabastita's definition will be used as a frame of reference based on his categorization of wordplay/puns:

- Phonological and graphological structure
- Lexical structure (polysemy)
- Lexical structure (idiom)
- Morphological structure
- Syntactic structure

Moreover, it is not always clear to which category the given wordplay should be classified. Delabastita (1997, 4) is well aware of the discrepancies that lie in the definition and classification of wordplay when he states that wordplay should be described in terms of a cline, rather than a binary option.

2.1 Phonological and graphological structure

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are numerous ways of creating wordplay on the phonological and graphological level which include homonymy (identical sounds and spelling), homophony (identical sounds but different spelling), homography (different sounds but identical spelling), and paronymy (slight differences in spelling and sound).

For my analysis, Delabastita's (1996) typology is used, which I will try to demonstrate on his examples. The following table provides specific typology of wordplay with illustrative examples, the table below is borrowed from Delabastita (1996, 128).

Table 1: Typology of puns

Homonymy	Homophony	Homography	Paronymy
<u>VERTICAL</u> Pyromania: a burning passion	<u>VERTICAL</u> Wedding belles	<u>VERTICAL</u> MessAge [name of a band]	<u>VERTICAL</u> Come in for a faith lift [slogan on church]
<u>HORIZONTAL</u> Carry on dancing carries Carry to the top [article on a dancer named Carry]	<u>HORIZONTAL</u> Counsel for council home buyers	<u>HORIZONTAL</u> How the US put US to shame	<u>HORIZONTAL</u> It's G.B. for the Beegees [article on pop band]

From the table above, it is evident that Delabastita also distinguishes between **horizontal** and **vertical** pun.

Horizontal pun

According to Delabastita, (1996, 128) in horizontal puns, linguistic structures occur one after another in the text. "The mere nearness of the pun components may suffice to bring about the semantic confrontation; in addition, grammatical and other devices are

often used to highlight the pun,” says Delabastita (1996, 129). It is the repetition of a word in the text that triggers the secondary meaning. Usually, the components mentioned in the horizontal pun tend to appear one after the other very shortly as can be seen in:

Example (2): “I [Humphrey] wouldn’t want to go there, though. It’s an awful country. They cut people’s hand off for theft, and women **get stoned** when they commit adultery. Unlike Britain, where women commit adultery when they **get stoned**.”

Example (2) above can be considered a typical illustration of a horizontal pun in which the two highlighted linguistic structures appear one after another.

Vertical pun

On the contrary, vertical puns differ from horizontal puns in its representation and its mere recognition can be considered a bit more demanding. While in a horizontal pun both linguistic structures (components) are present in the text, in a vertical pun “one of the pun’s components is materially absent from the text and has to be triggered into semantic action by contextual constraints” (1996, 129). An example of a vertical pun found in *Yes, Prime Minister* follows, preceded by context in which the pun appears.

Hacker’s first TV appearance as Prime Minister gives his advisers some troubles when deciding what he should say in front of cameras as he has been in office for seven days only. Hacker himself comes up with an idea to tell the press that he is an ordinary man, one that can identify with the problems of ordinary people. One of his advisors is cautious about this idea saying that this sort of publicity can be counterproductive:

Example (3): “Perhaps it’s better that we build you up a bit – photos of you doing the washing might make you look a bit **wet**.”

This example of homonymic pun is vertical because only one component is present in this fragment of text. First meaning of the word *wet* (moisture) then clashes with the second meaning of the word *wet* (a British informal term for someone who is feeble or foolish) needs to be recovered from the context.

When Delabastita refers to a vertical pun, he refers to punning in which “two formally similar linguistic structures may clash associatively by being co-present in the same portion of text.” (1996, 128) This means that only one component of the pun is present in the text and the reader’s knowledge of language and his/her ability to associate the materially present component with some other semantic reading is needed.

It is obvious that homonymy, homophony and homography have something in common. In the following few paragraphs, some important differences will be mentioned together with some examples.

2.1.1 Homonymy

Homonymy is based on a lexical ambiguity that refers to words with the same spelling and same pronunciation, although the meaning differs. For instance, consider one of Delabastita’s examples:

Example (4): *Carry on dancing carries Carry to the top.*

Firstly, this wordplay is considered to be horizontal (the components of the pun come one after the other). Second, the punning here is realized by homonym *Carry* (carry as a verb and Carry as a proper noun).

It should be noted that homonymy may be easily mistaken for polysemy. For the purpose of this thesis I will differentiate between the two. On the notion of polysemy, Klein and Murphy (2001, 259) provide the following definition:

[w]ords that have a number of related senses. They use the word ‘paper’ as an example, saying that it can refer to both a substance and a publication printed on that substance.

While polysemous words are defined clearly as words with related meaning, homonyms are according to Klein and Murphy (2001, 259) seen as:

[t]wo different word meanings converge on the same phonological representation, or in which a single word diverges into very different meanings.

Again, they use an example, this time it is the word 'bank' referring to a financial institution and a land along the sides of the river. It is necessary to add that these two, apart from the same spelling and pronunciation, do not have anything in common, no related meaning. To further highlight the difference between homonymy and polysemy, Small (1988, 4) reiterates: "Homonymy refers to words whose various definitions are unrelated." Taylor (1989, 99) says that polysemy is the association of two or more related senses with a single linguistic form. It is nonetheless quite a difficult task to differentiate between the two. There is a certain level of subjectivity when deciding whether the given lexical item is homonymous or polysemous. The aspect of relatedness is also questionable as Lyons (1977, 550) puts it:

Relatedness of meaning is a matter of degree. Those lexical items which one person might regard to be semantically related to a certain degree, the other person might see them to be very far apart.

Another clue when deciding if the given word belongs either to homonymy or polysemy is to look into dictionaries. Lexicographers show the distinction by entering homonyms separately, while polysemous lexical items can be found as one item.

As a result, for the purpose of this thesis I decided to include seemingly unconnected or very weakly linked polysemes under the category of homonyms.

2.1.2 Homophony

This typology refers to the situation where two words have identical sounds but are spelled in a different way. Homophones usually create the humorous misunderstanding, something everybody is exposed to during his or her life. Therefore, homophones are predominantly matter of spoken language rather than written but it is not always the case as reading is sometimes required so that the pun occurs to reader as seen in the

example below. Another important aspect of homophonous wordplay is the fact that it can be seen as unintentional. The example borrowed from Delabastita shows a vertical wordplay:

Example (5): *Wedding **belles***.

The interpretation of the above example when pronounced may sound either as *belles* (referring to beautiful girls) or *bells* (metal object that makes a ringing sound). The example proves that reading here is required as ‘*belles*’ is rather an archaic word, thus the pun works rather visually.

2.1.3 Homography

In this typology of wordplay, homographs work with the same spelling and different sound. Thus, meaning of homographs differs as well. As Henrik Gottlieb (1997, 210) remarks, the central feature at play is graphemic ambiguity. This proves to be the case in the following examples given by Delabastita in which the play with graphemes is employed:

Example (6): *How the **US** put **US** to shame*.

The punster utilizes the abbreviation of the United States *US* in contrast to capitalized pronoun *us*. Pronunciation of the two is, of course, different. While the abbreviation sounds like [ju:es], the personal pronoun is pronounced [ʌs] or [əs] in its weak form. Puns based on homography are mainly prevalent in advertising, therefore it is rare to find them in literary works.

2.1.4 Paronymy

The paronymic pun is based on the similarity both in pronunciation and spelling. Paronyms are derivatives of cognate words as can be seen below:

Example (7): *Come in for a **faith** lift*.

This slogan posted on a church plays with the close sound resemblance of the words *faith* [feiθ] and *face* [feis]. The punning here is realized when the collocation *face lift* is changed into *faith lift*, playing on religious theme.

2.2 Lexical Structure (polysemy)

Languages are full of polysemous words, i.e. words that are related not only through their formal realization, moreover there is also a semantic connection between them. As a reminder, Klein and Murphy (2001, 259) say about polysemy:

[w]ords that have a number of related senses. They use the word ‘paper’ as an example, saying that it can refer to both a substance and a publication printed on that substance.

To better illustrate the definition, Cruse (2011, 115) in his broad study offers the following examples of the word *branch*.

Example (8): *The **branch** John was sitting on snapped.*

Example (9): *Semantics is a **branch** of linguistics.*

Clearly, the two share the same formal properties (phonological and graphic) together with a semantic connection, as both refer to a part of something larger.

2.3 Lexical structure (idiom)

Languages contain many idioms which are considered to be semantically peculiar. In general, an idiom is usually defined as a fixed or ‘frozen’ expression where meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of its individual parts. *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* defines an idiom as

a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own.

Such definition is adequate for the purpose of this thesis. More importantly, the “fact that idioms differ semantically from the corresponding strings of morphemes taken in the literal sense, idioms also have special syntactic properties. (Jackson and Amvela 2000, 78) Although, to illustrate these properties Cruse (2011, 86) offers much broader classification which is used below.

- Elements are not separately modifiable without loss of idiomatic meaning:

Example (10): **She pulled her brother's legs.*

Example (11): **She pulled her brother's left leg.*

Example (12): **She pulled her brother's leg with a sharp tug.*

Example (13): *She pulled her brother's leg mercilessly.*

From the above examples, it is clear that only the idiom as a whole is modifiable as in example (13).

- Elements do not coordinate with genuine semantic constituents:

Example (14): **She pulled and twisted her brother's leg.*

Example (15): **She pulled her brother's leg and arm.*

Examples (14) and (15) are not ungrammatical as they are perfectly correct, however, both lose their idiomaticity due to violation of the fixed phrase.

- Elements cannot take contrastive stress, or be the focus of topicalizing transformations:

Example (16): **It was her brother's leg that she pulled.*

Example (17): **What she did to her brother's leg was pull it.*

- Elements cannot be referred back to anaphorically:

Example (18): **Mary pulled her brother's leg; John pulled it, too.*

- An idiom does not survive the substitution of any of its constituent elements by a synonym or near synonym:

Example (19): **The poor old chap kicked the pail.*

Example (20): **She tugged his leg about it.*

Example (21): **She pulled his lower limb about it.*

Cruse (2011, 87) also argues that it is the ‘superficially anomalous behaviour’ of idioms that in fact blocks almost all the possible alterations, referring to the reality that its constituents are meaningless. Therefore, replacing such constituents with a synonym is viewed as irrelevant.

- *Some aspects of grammar (e.g. voice) may or may not be part of an idiom:*

Example (22): **The bucket was kicked by him.*

Here the idiomatic meaning is destroyed when the active voice is changed into passive voice. As Jackson and Amvela (2000, 79) point out, “syntactic restrictions vary from one idiom to another.” Yet, they provide another useful type criterion:

- *None of the constituents in an idiomatic expression may normally be omitted:*

Example (23): **Turn a new leaf.*

The example (23) is idiomatically unacceptable because the constituent *over* has been omitted.

As stated before (see section 1), puns can be based on idioms. To have a pun based on an idiom, its idiomatic reading needs to be violated, see the properties of idioms above. Another option is to have a literal meaning which would clash with the idiomatic reading of the given expression.

2.4 Morphological structure

Within this category, many derivatives and compounds can be found which may cause a humorous effect. Least but not last, morphological puns based on derivation and compounding are usually treated as rather incorrect, yet something semantically very effective. Delabastita (1996, 130) provides the following:

Example (24): *Is life worth living? It depends upon the liver.*

In the example (24) above, the punster used a derivational pattern in which he construed a new word on the basis of an existing word, in this case the verb *live* from which he/she derived a noun *liver* by adding a suffix *-er*. It must be mentioned that vocabularies do recognize such entry but with a completely different interpretation. While vocabularies recognize the word as a particular organ, the meaning of the given word used by the punster is meant to be or refers to a human being, someone who lives the life.

2.5 Syntactic structure

Wordplay so far has been described on a *phonological and graphological level* (see section 2.1), *lexical level* (see section 2.2 and 2.3) and *morphological level* (see section 2.4). The last piece of wordplay category will be dealt with on a syntactic level.

MacDonald et al. (1994, 676) suggest a simple, yet very thorough definition of this phenomenon: “Syntactic ambiguities arise when a sequence of words has more than one syntactic interpretation.” Simply, ambiguity can be achieved through the use of several syntactical devices, such as prepositions, article usage, etc. Let me demonstrate on the following example taken from Ivan Poldauf’s study *The Have Construction* (1967, 24):

Example (25): *Our girls sell well.*

Obviously, the example (25) can be considered as a pun only if it is intended as such. Double reading of the sentence above can be triggered by the so called medio-passive voice, trying to point out that call girls are in demand. Obviously, literal meaning of the sentence is also possible, i.e. girls are good in sales. Another good example of a syntactical pun is taken from Cruse (1997, 66).

Example (26): *Old men and women.*

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It is unclear whether the adjective *old* is related to both lexical units – men and women or just to men.

3. MORE ABOUT WORDPLAY

Bistra Alexieva (1997, 138) tackles the issue of wordplay from a slightly different point of view. She envisages that wordplay should be studied as not only words and their meanings but rather as what she refers to as “domains of human knowledge and experience they can be associated with” (1997, 138). Alexieva provides the following joke on which she explains her notion:

Example (27): *Teacher: What does it mean when the barometer falls?*

Boy: Er... the nail has come out of the wall, sir?

The joke above can be interpreted two ways. What causes the humorous effect here is the semantic shift of the word *fall*. According to Alexieva (1997, 138), the goal of this joke is to confront two different domains. First, the teacher is asking a technical question about barometric pressure. Second, it is the student’s answer which has to do with gravity. Moreover, what Alexieva (1997, 138) tries to suggest is that puns are not based on the confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures only. For her, it is a matter of human knowledge and experience, saying that the “distance” between the linguistic structures and the “way they are connected” influence the humorous effect of wordplay.

Similar approach is being used by Kathleen Davis (1997, 24) who observes that wordplay does not apply solely to linguistic ambiguities. According to her, wordplay refers to “the systemic operation of language itself” (1997, 24) as she further develops her theory claiming that wordplay relies heavily on a conjunction and yet a difference between two (or more) words that are part of the whole language system. She also provides an example from a movie on which she illustrates her idea. Using the homophonic words *jeans* and *genes*, one of the characters, named Kevin Kline, is asked by a lady to father her child because of his good *genes*. She tries to advocate that the pun cannot be deciphered unless the relationship between designer jeans – known for sexiness and social superiority (encouraged by Calvin Klein through advertising) and genes – associated with reproduction, has already been decoded. As Davis (1997, 24) puts it: “We cannot get the joke without thinking of meaning in terms of a system.”

To sum up what has been said about puns so far in this thesis. It seems that scholars use the terms wordplay and puns interchangeably, they agree to some extent that this language phenomenon is based on ambiguities and associations in languages in which linguistic structures (such as polysemy, homonymy etc.) are further exploited to bring about an intentional confrontation of those linguistic structures which are similar in form but different in meaning (see Delabastita 1996). The aspect of incongruity should not be omitted as it is a characteristic feature of punning.

On the other hand, many researchers try to elaborate on wordplay a bit more arguing that the domains (see Alexieva 1997) or the whole system of language (see Davis 1997) play its very important role when deciphering and understanding wordplay as such.

3.1 Wordplay or puns?

Difficulties may arise, however, when an attempt is made to distinguish between puns and wordplay. Whereas some scholars seem to use both terms interchangeably, Chiaro (1992, 4) in her exploratory investigation of wordplay uses the term pun as a subcategory of wordplay, in other words, she uses the term wordplay only as a blanket term that in covers much more. For instance, she says that “the term word play includes every conceivable way in which language is used with the intent to amuse” (1992, 2) and later she goes on to explain that “the term word play conjures up an array of conceits ranging from puns and spoonerisms to wisecracks and funny stories” (1992, 4).

Chiaro’s definition of wordplay only demonstrates how broadly the term can be interpreted. In layman’s terms, she refers to a playful way of using language. To make her statement even more extensive, the Free Dictionary (2013) offers the following explanations:

Pun is a play on words, sometimes on different senses of the same word and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words. (The Free Dictionary, 2013: pun)

Spoonerism is a transposition of sounds of two or more words, especially a ludicrous one, such as *Let me sew you to your sheet* for *Let me show you to your seat*. (The Free Dictionary, 2013: spoonerism)

Wisecrack is a flippant, typically sardonic remark or retort. (The Free Dictionary, 2013: wisecrack)

Funny story is an account of an amusing incident (usually with a punch line). (The Free Dictionary, 2013: funny story)

It can be quite confusing for the reader when the two terms are being mentioned. Even Delabastita provides his definition of wordplay, using the term pun later in his paper which can be quite misleading. As mentioned above, both terms – **wordplay** and **pun** – are treated interchangeably in the following paragraphs but I will try to use the term pun in my analysis.

4. TRANSLATABILITY

Translators face one big problem when dealing with translation of puns: whether maintain the translation or not. In an ideal case, a translator should be able to provide perfectly equivalent translation but this is not always the case. Languages differ in their typology and it is hardly possible to find a viable solution every time. Of course, original piece of text can be substituted for by something equally effective or can be omitted completely (see Delabastita 1996, 133-134), which on the other hand can affect the humorous aspect of the text, given the text is built primarily on puns and ambiguity. Thus, it is the translators' duty to recognize and provide correct translation.

Ideally, translators should respect the source text and should be able to find the best possible solutions for its counterparts in the target language. However, it is not always possible for several reasons. There are many differences between languages and translators have to overcome these 'obstacles' in order to provide equally consistent translation. As Delabastita (1996, 131) points out, structural differences between languages are evident even between Western languages which, of course, may affect the wordplay. Considering that even Germanic languages can be distinct from one another, it is easy to imagine how difficult it can be for a translator to work with more distant languages.

Discussing the notion of translatability of wordplay, Delabastita (1996, 133) remarks: "[f]ocusing on wordplay and ambiguity as facts of the source text and/or the target text, we may be tempted to say that wordplay and translation form an almost impossible match, whichever way one looks at it." On the one hand, translating the accidental wordplay, translators usually eliminate any unintended wordplay, trying to avoid any clumsiness themselves. Such disambiguation is according to Delabastita (1996, 133) an "automatic and unconscious process." That said, any potential ambiguity is selected by translators even before they consider other possible readings.

On the other hand, intentional wordplay is deemed as something valuable that should be preserved. Delabastita (1996, 134) provides the wide range of translation methods:

- *PUN* → *PUN*: the source-text pun is translated by a target-language pun, which maybe more or less different from the original wordplay in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or textual function
- *PUN* → *NON-PUN*: the pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other; of course, it may also occur that both components of the pun are translated ‘beyond recognition’
- *PUN* → *RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE*: the pun is replaced by some wordplay-related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox, etc.) which aims to recapture the effect of the source-text pun
- *PUN* → *ZERO*: the portion of text containing the pun is simply omitted
- *PUN ST* = *PUN TT*: the translator reproduces the source-text pun and possibly its immediate environment in its original formulation, i.e. without actually ‘translating’ it
- *NON-PUN* → *PUN*: the translator introduces a pun in textual positions where the original text has no wordplay, by way of compensation to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere, or for any other reason
- *ZERO* → *PUN*: totally new textual material is added, which contains wordplay and which has no apparent precedent or justification in the source text except as a compensatory device
- *EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES*: explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments provided in translators’ forewords, the ‘anthological’ presentation of different, supposedly complementary solutions to one and the same source-text problem, and so forth

Interestingly, even the *PUN* → *PUN* conversion cannot be translated that easily as it may seem at first sight.

Such shifts may affect the pun's formal structure, its linguistic make-up, or its meaning content. Sometimes even its immediate or wider textual environment has to be altered, namely when a new contextual setting has to be created for the target-text wordplay to come to life. (Delabastita 1996, 135)

Translators then face a dilemma whether to completely omit the pun in their translation or to provide say a free adaptation of the source-text pun based on the methods mentioned above. It is without any doubt a very serious question the translators face during their years. Delabastita (1996, 135) says about this issue: “the only way to be faithful to the original text (i.e. to its verbal playfulness) is paradoxically to be unfaithful to it (i.e. to its vocabulary).” Eventually, translators often opt for a pragmatic approach with various factors that affect the translation. Time usually play its role as translators need to meet the deadline, therefore they might very often favor the first more or less suitable translation of wordplay that occurs to them. And last but not least, it is the translators' ability to recognize and translate wordplay. Then, of course, personal taste and willingness to take the trouble to deal with wordplay as such to satisfy the target-text audience can play its role as well. While many puns and the contextual settings in which they appear have to be sometimes altered, thus bringing the translator to a question whether to translate and how to translate. (Delabastita 1996, 135) The three following observations prove that some categories of puns are to some extent reproducible in other languages.

- Puns based on sound similarity with only minor shifts between historically related languages.
- Since polysemy is somehow rooted in extralingual reality, puns based on it can occasionally be reduplicated with little loss even between historically unrelated languages.

- Whatever the type of pun, the reproducibility of puns will be higher if it somehow involves interlingual borrowings common to both the target language and source language.

While Delabastita speaks about the structural differences between languages with the same system i.e. Western languages for instance, Kathleen Davis (1997, 26) goes a bit deeper when she observes that wordplay refers to the different relations within one specific language. It is due to the fact that languages have their own manner of meaning, not reliant on the individual words, but the complexity of the linguistic system. In other words, what works within one language, does not have to work within other language. However, Davis (1997, 32) rejects the notion of untranslatability of wordplay, declaring that untranslatability stands in relation to translatability with no “clear-cut dichotomy” between them. What prevents a word from being purely untranslatable or translatable is, according to her, the fact that such word is always part of a context and a language system, as no word can ever be separated from the rest of language.

Moreover, in her paper, Davis (1997, 33) further develops her thoughts on un/translatability saying that if all text were translatable, the eventual translations would lose their divergence, would be almost identical. The opposite applies to purely untranslatable texts which would have no relation to other language systems in which other texts are written. Obviously, this conception is very hypothetical, in fact, unreal. It just shows that translations are always relative.

Davis also pays attention to the notion of translation studies from a source-text to a target-text when she remarks that a translation is considered to be a translation only when it is regarded as such by a receiving culture. She also points out that a source-text can be freely cited by a target-text, with its meaning being determined by a new context in the target culture. (1997, 37)

All that was mentioned above can be applied to wordplay as well, that said, wordplay is accessible to recognition and translation into other languages. Even though wordplay is considered to be highly idiomatical and can be difficult to translate due to its complexity, wordplay still remains available to translation and its valuable role in

ensuring the identity and the alterity of languages and on that account should not be overlooked. (Davis 1997, 40)

With Alexieva's understanding of wordplay as something not solely relying on a confrontation of two (or more) different meanings only, she comes to a conclusion that wordplay has something to do with human knowledge and experience as well. She also tackles the question of translatability of puns, saying that wordplay, a universal feature of language, is possible in any language. (Alexieva 1997, 138) She does not provide anything new since the features such as polysemy, homography, homophony, synonyms and near-synonyms that evoke different associations are discussed. These features, however, "exemplify the basic asymmetry between language and the extralinguistic world it is used to denote." (1997, 139) Moreover, she says that languages do not provide a sign for every single object or event, otherwise such "one-to-one correspondence" would be very inefficient and almost impossible to learn. (1997, 139)

If every language functions independently and autonomously, then one cannot expect that the asymmetry between its signs and the extralinguistic entities will reflect an identical pattern across languages. (1997, 141) Having that in mind, translators are sure to know that different structures within languages occur, for instance their semantic structure:

A polysemous word in the source language may not be polysemous, or may be polysemous in a different way, in the receptor language; words may be found in the target language that are referentially synonymous with a source-language word, but have radically different emotive or stylistic meanings; and so on. (1997, 141)

Last but not least, in addition to the above quotation, translators also have to deal with differences on the phonological and graphemic level respectively. Nevertheless, Alexieva believes that the process of translating does not necessarily mean translating on the semantic or grammatical level only. She observes that asymmetry within source-language and target-language may be analyzed on a broader scale. That said, translators might deal with two completely different languages and have to find another ways of creating wordplay as there might be certain limitations when translating from English to

Czech, for example. Moreover, punning has a specific application within different languages and cultures. Interestingly, such differences in the application are said to depend mainly on the perception of entities and events, meaning that it depends not only on how people perceive such things but also from an angle they have seen or heard it. Another factor such as the ‘frequency of the instances of perception’, which somehow promotes greater familiarity and such entities are then better stored in our minds, plays its role as well. In addition to it, our own interaction with those entities play its irreplaceable role as it also very much depends whether such contact or interaction is rather direct or indirect. (1997, 141)

To put it more plainly, let me provide an example. Children in the Czech Republic will probably react to stories about dogs and hedgehogs more promptly than to stories about seagulls or sharks. Understandably it is because of the experience children have with them and the nature of contacts. Thus, such relatively unknown entities/animals are described to children only indirectly via magazines, television etc. Children living along the coast will probably have better understanding of sea life as they have more hands-on experience of fishing or seafood markets. This example is based on Alexieva’s own example comparing Bulgarian children with those in America. (1997, 142)

What Alexieva tries to point out here is that there are several obstacles that await translators. He or she has to bear in mind not only linguistic or stylistic devices when translating texts. Cultural aspects, own sense of humor and translator’s perception of the world can affect the translator’s work more than one could think. Punning is, therefore, language- and culture-specific. As Alexieva (1997, 153) puts it:

wordplay should be studied not only in terms of the vehicles of expression that language put at our disposal, but also in terms of what lies beneath, i.e. in terms of the mechanisms governing the structuring of the various domains of knowledge and experience across languages and cultures.

The best outcome of translating wordplay is the one that is fully preserved in the target language. As this is not always the case when dealing with puns in translations, Henrik

Gottlieb (1997, 217) provides the following factors that can lead to the loss of wordplay:

- *Language-specific constraints*: the presence of ‘untranslatable’ elements in the original which fail to have linguistic counterparts in the target language.
- *Human constraints*: lack of talent, interest, or experience in the translator, time pressure, lack of incentives, etc.

Even though Gottlieb’s paper deals with subtitling wordplay I believe his thoughts are well applicable on translations in general if slightly modified. It might seem that Gottlieb’s factors that can influence translators and their respective work is the same as of Alexieva’s and it is, in fact, true. Gottlieb does his research comparing Danish translations of English commercials and thus has specific data to support his analysis. Regarding the *language-specific constraints* he comes up with the results showing that wordplay based on homophony is the most difficult to translate, in most cases almost untranslatable. He says that “two specific words that sound alike in any source language will possibly sound more differently in any target language involved.” (1997, 217) To further support his claim, he provides a nice example of homophony from one of the Tequila commercials.

Example (28): *Watch out for that crazy Mexican licker!*

The pun here plays heavily on the identical pronunciation of the words *licker* and *liquor*. To trigger the punch line, however, the visual aspect of the commercial plays its role as well as one can see a Mexican licking various objects in that TV spot. The point is that if this commercial was translated into Czech, translators would have to think of other ways of maintaining the wordplay as they would struggle to find a homophonic counterpart in Czech.

Gottlieb (1997, 226) concludes his study convinced that wordplay is in most cases translatable, with translations of certain types of wordplay more feasible than others, translators dealing with puns either ignore wordplay completely for some unspecified reason or the mere recognition of wordplay fails.

As mentioned before, translators face many constraints and limitations rendering the verbal humor, hence they often fail to recognize and fail to provide any viable solution.

As a conclusion, the aim of this section was not to state whether wordplay is or is not translatable. Rather, I tried to provide some different views on the un/translatability and see if there is a general consensus, if any, among the mentioned linguists such as Delabastita, Alexieva, Davis and Gottlieb. While some linguists discuss the un/translatability itself, offering various techniques how to deal with puns, some linguists provide rather broader view regarding the un/translatability. They all agree that wordplay, apart from being language-specific, is also a culture-specific phenomenon. That said, translating puns is without any doubt a heavy burden for every translator. It is his or her ability to recognize wordplay, his or her willingness to find the best possible counterpart or provide a solution that preserves the intended meaning. Such ability goes hand in hand with certain knowledge, perception of world and a specific sense of humor.

4.1 Formal and Dynamic Equivalence

Talking about translating puns, the challenge it brings has been examined. The term equivalence has been widely discussed in translation studies. For the purpose of my analysis, I will focus on two types of equivalence as described by Nida (1964). These are *formal equivalence* and *dynamic equivalence*.

Formal equivalence, according to Nida, “focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content” (1964, 159) It means that the equivalence is oriented towards the source text and should match the target text in its form and content.

Dynamic equivalence is, according to Nida, based on “the principle of equivalent effect” where “the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message.” (1964, 159) This concept moves away from strict word-for-word equivalence in which cultural expectations and the receptor’s linguistic needs are favored in order to achieve a more

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natural expression. Therefore, changes in phrasing, lexicon etc., can be employed in such translations. (Munday 2001, 42)

I will use these two concepts when commenting on the translation of *Yes, Prime Minister*.

5. ANALYSIS

In this practical part, wordplay will be sorted out according to Delabastita's categorization of wordplay (see section 2). After analyzing the found instances of wordplay, the official Czech translation will be provided which can serve as a starting point for further translation or linguistic studies. Short but brief comments on the translation will be provided according to Nida's *formal* and *dynamic equivalence*.

5.1 Homonymy – Horizontal puns

Although the material from which wordplay was analyzed is in a written form, the graphological wordplay was not found. On the other hand, many examples of phonological wordplay were recognized.

Example (29) is based on the homonymous reading of the word *banger*. Hacker, slightly drunk, asks Sir Humphrey if he is looking forward to the Cabinet Office, Humphrey's new position within government.

(29) Sir Humphrey enthused, but added kindly that everyone was still very excited over the vexed question of the Eurosausage.

“Ah yes,” slurped the Minister, “the **Eurobanger**.”

Sir Humphrey was unable to resist a little joke at Hacker's expense and replied that surely the **Eurobanger** was NATO's new tactical missile.

“Is it?” asked Hacker, confused.

(Party Games, 19)

In this case, the pun is based on the word *banger* which is misleading for Hacker after Humphrey plays a little trick on him. Hacker uses the word *banger* (British colloquial expression for sausage) in its most common way when he refers to a traditional British dish – bangers and mash. Of course, *banger* can also refer to a small noisy firework. When Humphrey refers to Eurobanger as NATO's new tactical missile, Hacker, partly because of alcohol, does not understand the joke. The Czech translation follows:

(29') Sir Humphrey se začal rozplývat nadšením a pak mile dodal, že nicméně jsou všichni neobyčejně zvědaví, jak on, Hacker, vyřeší ten zapeklitý problém **europárku**.

„Jo, ten,“ napil se ministr. „**Eurotalián!**“

Sir Humphrey neodolal, aby na Hackerův účet nezavtipkoval a řekl, že Eurotalián je spíš Ital, který věří ve sjednocenou Evropu.

In this case, the phonological structure of the pun is lost. *Europárek* and *Eurotalián* do not clash associatively and thus, second reading is not triggered.

Another example (30) of homonymy can be seen in a situation when Annie (Hacker's wife) uses the phrasal verb *run in* in a completely different meaning than what her husband wanted to say.

(30) “So the resignation is to give time for the new leader to be **run in** before the next election.”

“Now, that the Home Secretary's been **run in** already,” said Annie with a quiet smile.

(Party Games, 26)

Hacker's usage of *run in* is meant as a time for the new leader to run the campaign and eventually become popular within the electorate. The phrasal verb *to run in* is used in connection with cars, which implies that it needs some time before it will function properly. Annie, Hacker's wife, is aware of the situation that the Home Secretary had been charged with drunken driving uses the phrasal verb in its figurative meaning – that the Home Secretary has been taken into legal custody.

(30') „Takže skutečně rezignoval, aby se nový předseda strany stačil do příštích voleb **zaběhnout**.“

„Teď, když ministr vnitra **doběhal**,“ usmála se Annie.

The translator tried to preserve the same meaning as in the target text, using the verb *zaběhnout* as certain time that is needed for a car to run properly and the verb *doběhat*

in its figurative meaning – that something is over. The translation can be considered more or less successful.

In the case below, the pun occurs in a situation when Annie is writing some Christmas Cards and asks Bernard for some help which he immediately refuses, saying that as a Civil Servant he is not allowed to help with the Minister's political activities.

(31) Annie replies: "I'm just asking you to **lick** some stamps."

I [Bernard] explained that it would be government **lick**.

"Suppose all these cards were to journalists?" she asked.

So I settled down on the sofa to **lick** some stamps, reflecting privately that **licking** is an essential part of relationships with the press.

(Party Games, 24)

In this pun, Bernard plays with the word *lick* that Hacker's wife uses in its literal meaning. However, quick-witted Bernard reacts with a remark that *licking*, meaning beating or thrashing in this context, is a part of relationships with the press.

(31') Usadil jsem se tedy na pohovce, a jak jsem tak **olizoval** známky, napadlo mě, že komunikace s tiskem zpravidla spočívá v tom, že to člověk **slízne**.

The formal equivalence is maintained in the Czech translation. Using the verb *slíznout* clashes associatively with the verb *lízat* employed in the first part of the text.

In another homonymous example of horizontal pun, the punning is realized by the *get stoned* with copulative *get* as to become. Humphrey compares the situation in Qumran, an archeological site in Israel, to the situation in Britain when he says:

(32) "I [Humphrey] wouldn't want to go there, though. It's an awful country. They cut people's hand off for theft, and women **get stoned** when they commit adultery. Unlike Britain, where women commit adultery when they **get stoned**."

(The Bishop's Gambit, 217)

Humphrey elegantly uses the *get stoned* which has two meanings. First, *get stoned* is a form of capital punishment where a group of people throws stones at a person until death ensues while the second meaning refers to a situation when one becomes very drunk.

(32') „Já bych tam rozhodně nejel. Je to příšerná země. Zlodějům tam uřezávají ruce a nevěrné ženy kamenují.“

Any type of equivalence is missing in the translation, not even the humorous effect is preserved. The pun is completely ignored.

After some information leaked to the press which might have seriously damaged Hacker's reputation, it turns out that it was one of the Civil Servants who told the press and Hacker asks for the immediate dismissal of the man. Humphrey warns Hacker that it is not in his interest to do it.

(33) “Not in my interest to punish people for undermining the whole **fabric** of government?” I [Hacker] enquired icily.

Bernard said: “Um, you can't undermine a **fabric**, Prime Minister, because fabric hangs down so if you go underneath you...”

(Official Secrets, 325)

Example (33) above is an example of homonymous realization of the word *fabric* which, in Hacker's interpretation, means structure or system while Bernard yet again substitutes the meaning for different meaning of the word *fabric*. When Bernard is speaking about undermining the fabric he refers to a piece of cloth which cannot be undermined physically.

(33') Není v mém vlastním zájmu potrestat člověka, který podkopal dobré jméno této vlády?“ zeptal jsem se chladně.

Bernard řekl: „Ehm, pane premiére, můžete podkopat důvěru nebo pošpinit dobré jméno, ale nemůžete...“

Again, the punning is lost in the translation. In this case, it is not possible to maintain the formal equivalence in the Czech translation and the phonological structure of the pun is lost. Humorous effect is not achieved as well.

5.2 Homonymy – vertical puns

Hacker's first TV appearance as Prime Minister gives his advisors some troubles when deciding what he should say in front of cameras as he has been in office for seven days only. Hacker himself comes up with an idea to tell the press that he is an ordinary man, one that can identify with the problems of ordinary people. One of his advisors is cautious about this idea saying that this sort of publicity can be counterproductive. Later on Malcolm clarifies his point of view:

- (34) “Perhaps it's better that we build you up a bit – photos of you doing the washing might make you look a bit **wet**.

(The Grand Design, 74)

This vertical pun relies on the homonymous word *wet* which, of course, can be understood as covered in water or moistened but Malcolm meant something totally different. Another meaning of the word *wet* is a British informal term for someone who is feeble or foolish.

- (34') Možná bude lepší, když se spíš zaměříme na to, abyste vypadal jako energický chlap – na fotografii, jak **perete**, byste vypadal trochu jako **bačkora**.

The Czech translation is not successful in this case as the word *bačkora* does not confront with activity of doing the washing (*prát*) at all. The pun is lost.

As Hacker's first TV appearance is fast approaching, certain things like what color of suit he wants to wear or what gestures to use to make his non-verbal communication more appropriate, Godfrey, an ex-BBC producer, is called to advise Hacker on the art of television. When Godfrey raises one final matter, asking Hacker about the opening

music, Hacker feels that it might be appropriate if they used music by British composers. Something that would reflect his image. Godfrey likes the idea:

(35) “Elgar, perhaps?”

“Yes,” I said (Hacker), “but not *Land of Hope and Glory*.”

“How about the *Enigma Variations*?” said Bernard.

(The Ministerial Broadcast, 102)

The well-known music by famous British composer Edward Elgar plays a big part in this pun. Hacker refuses a British patriotic song *Land of Hope and Glory* and this is a chance for Bernard to come with his own, rather ambiguous, suggestion. *Enigma Variations* is Elgar’s famous composition and the word *enigma* refers to something mysterious and impossible to understand and, of course, to the famous German machine used during the Second World War for enciphering and deciphering secret messages.

(35’) „A co třeba **Záhadné variace**?” navrhl Bernard.

The translator omitted the word *Enigma* which is the source of punning. Using the word *enigmatický* could be employed instead but the confrontation with the German coding machine would be still missing.

The following example (43) is a vertical pun where the word *mike* is, in fact, a colloquial term for microphone.

(36) Perhaps he’s called **Mike** because he’s always on the radio.

(The Bishop’s Gambit, 217)

Hacker uses the first name of *Mike* Stanford, which at the same time refers to shortened version of the word microphone. Mentioning the radio obviously triggers the pun as microphone is one of the basic radio equipments.

(36’) Možná mu říkají **Mike**, protože mluví pořád v rádiu.

Mike je zkrácenina pro mikrofón. (Pozn. překl.)

The Czech translation is in this case impossible as there is simply no equivalent which might work effectively, so the translator decided to use footnotes (*Mike je zkrácenina pro mikrofon.*), one of the translation techniques described by Delabastita. (See section about Translatability)

5.3 Homophony

Only two puns were found based on homophony, both are horizontal.

Daily Post published a story which should discredit Hacker for attempting to suppress memoirs of his predecessor. One specific part of the memoirs says that Hacker once supported the proposal to expand a nuclear plant, which, according to Hacker, is not true. The press is waiting for a statement. Hacker is furious:

- (37) “Now this happens and they charge in like a **herd** of vultures.”
“Not **heard**, Prime Minister,” said Bernard inexplicably.
I [Hacker] told him I’d speak louder. Then I realised I’d misunderstood.
“Herd,” he said, “not heard. Vultures, I mean they don’t herd.....”

(Official Secrets, 300)

The misunderstanding which leads to this horizontal pun is based on an identical sound of two different words *herd* and *heard* [hɜ:d]. *Herd* refers to a large group of animals and when Bernard tries to correct Hacker that vultures do not herd, Hacker confuses these two words thinking that Bernard cannot hear what Hacker says.

- (37’) „A teď když došlo k tomuhle, útočí na mě jako stádo supů.“
„Promiňte, pane premiére,“ ozval se Bernard, „ale supi se nesdružují ve stádo. Sdružují se v hejno. A neútočí, supové...“

The punning is ignored due to fact that it is practically impossible to find a homophone in Czech which would preserve the pun.

The day after the grant for National Theatre was voted down, Hacker is to attend the British Theatre Awards. Together with his advisors he is worried about a cool reception from the audience.

- (38) “What about when I make my speech?” I [Hacker] asked hopelessly. “The audience will be totally hostile. There may even be **boos**.”
 There’s always lots of **boos**,” said Malcolm. I was appalled. Was he serious? “But we don’t have to pay for it,” he continued reassuringly. I suddenly realised he meant **booze**, not boos.
 “Booo!” I hooted in explanation, and added a “Ssss” for good measure.

(The Patron Of The Arts, 435)

This example of horizontal pun is based once again on misunderstanding of two different words with an identical sound. Boos and booze [bu:z] are misinterpreted by Hacker who is worried about boos – an expression of disagreement. When Malcolm confirms that there is always lots of booze – alcohol, Hacker cannot believe his ears.

- (38’) „A co až budu mít já projev?“ zeptal jsem se deprimovaně. Publikum bude absolutně nepřátelské. Bude tam plno nepřátelských emocí.“
 Touhle dobou je vždycky plno nemocí,“ řekl Malcolm. „Ale nevím, proč by zrovna tam byly nepřátelštější než jinde.“
 „Emocí!“ opakoval jsem zlostně. Nepřátelských emocí. Můžou mě taky vypískat!“

It is the same case as in the previous example, finding homophonic equivalents is a difficult task. Unlike the example (37), the translator tried to play with the text and is more or less successful. The translator ignored the pun based on homophony and substituted it with the pun based on paronymy. The words *nemocí* and *emocí* sound similarly and are spelled almost identically. The dynamic equivalence is maintained.

5.4 Homography

No instances of puns based on homography were found.

5.5 Paronymy – Horizontal puns

Sir Humphrey cannot stand the presence of Mrs Wainwright and Hacker accuses him that he wants her out of the way. Humphrey reacts:

(39) “No, no. Splendid woman, Mrs **Wainwright**. **Upright**, **Downright**, **Forthright**.”

(The Key, 120)

In this horizontal pun, Humphrey uses three adjectives *upright*, *downright* and *forthright* which has the same ending as Mrs *Wainwright*.

(39') „Ne, to ne. Skvělá žena, paní Wainwrightová. Čestná, ctnostná, skvostná.

The pun is lost as it is impossible to find a good translation in this case because the pun is based on a certain part of the lady's surname.

(32) is a situation when Hacker needs to send several Christmas cards and is advised by Bernard to send one to Maurice, an EEC Agriculture Commissioner in Brussels, who has forced through the plan to standardize the Eurosausage.

(40) Bernard tactfully suggested that I [Hacker] should send Maurice a Christmas card, nonetheless. I toyed with the idea of wishing him an **offal** Christmas and a **wurst** New Year, but Bernard advised me against it.

(Party Games, 12)

The words *offal* ['ɒf.əl] and *wurst* [wɜ:st], (even though a German word, I believe it can be used for punning, especially when Hacker himself uses the word intentionally), have a close phonemic resemblance with words *awful* ['ɔ:.fəl] and *worst* [wɜ:st]. This paronymic pun also serves as an example of a vertical pun when one of the pun's components is absent from the text and needs to be triggered by the previously mentioned *sausage*. The Czech translation follows:

(40') Bernard mi diplomaticky poradil, abych nicméně Mauriceovi vánoční pozdrav poslal. Pohrával jsem si s myšlenkou, že bych mu popřál v novém roce hodně rekonstituované svaloviny na kostře, ale Bernard mi to rozmluvil.

In this example, the translator decided to ignore the pun which is based on two languages.

5.6 Paronymy – vertical puns

Example (50) is also considered to be a paronymic pun. A senior member of the Church of England is sent to Qumran on a mercy mission to plead for a nurse who is held in Qumran for the alleged possession of a bottle of whisky. When Hacker questions the purpose of such travel, Bernard remarks:

(41) “Although he’s a Christian he’s an expert on Islam. It’s a **faith to faith** meeting.”

(The Bishop’s Gambit, 223)

This vertical pun plays with the close sound resemblance of the words *faith* [feiθ] and *face* [feis]. The punning here is realized when the collocation *face to face* is changed into *faith to faith*, playing on a religious theme.

(41') „Je to sice křesťan, ale je expert na islám.“

It seems that translating puns based on paronymy is quite a difficult task as the translator omitted the part containing the pun in his translation.

When deciding what to say in a speech that would give Hacker more popularity, Humphrey comes up with an idea to announce a cut in interest rates, saying that a cut in interests would give him a considerable success. Dorothy Wainwright is thinking ahead:

- (42) “Won’t a cut in interest rates mean that prices will go up?”
She’s right, of course, but frankly at that moment I just didn’t care, so long as I got a **standing inflation**.

(A Conflict Of Interest, 381)

Again, not very similar but still at least some resemblance of the words *inflation* [ɪnˈfleɪ.ʃən] and *ovation* [əʊˈveɪ.ʃən]. The pun is realized when the collocation *standing ovation* is changed into *standing inflation* – a term used for continuous increase in prices. It is a case of a vertical pun.

- (42’) „Nezpůsobí snížení úrokových sazeb zdražování?“ To má samozřejmě pravdu, ale mám-li být upřímný, to mi v té chvíli bylo jedno, na srdci mi leželo jen jedno: inflace! (Podle našeho názoru chtěl říct Hacker „ovace“, ale.....)

It is quite surprising that the Czech translation does not preserve the pun, which in my opinion, is not impossible in this case. It is quite common to use *ovace ve stoje* where *ovace* can be replaced by *inflace*. *Inflace ve stoje* would have the same humorous effect as its English counterpart – *standing inflation*.

5.7 Polysemy – Horizontal puns

Hacker receives some confidential report about Eric, a serious candidate to become the next Prime Minister, from the Security officers. The report briefly explains that Eric is a sex maniac and a dirty old man. Hacker sees a chance how to get rid of one of his opponents. He tries to persuade Eric to withdraw.

- (43) “I [Hacker] mean, I wouldn’t care to explain your private life to Her Majesty, would you?”
“I’ll **withdraw**,” he muttered.
About time too, I thought. If he practised **withdrawal** a little more often he wouldn’t be in this predicament now.

(Party Games, 47)

The punning here is realized by the verb *to withdraw* which means to retreat and the noun *withdrawal* which, in this case, refers to an intentionally interrupted sexual intercourse.

- (43') „Chci říct, nestojím o to, abych vysvětloval tvůj soukromý život Jejímu Veličenstvu, ty ano?“
 „Dobře, budu se držet zpátky,“ zamumlal.
 Nejvyšší čas, pomyslel jsem si. Kdyby se držel zpátky častěji, nebyl by dnes v takové bryndě.

The Czech translation is not successful at all. It does not preserve the pun. The dynamic equivalence could be maintained using the verb *stáhnout* which would be also polysemous in the meaning of (*stáhnout kandidaturu*) – to retreat and (*stáhnout kalhoty*) to pull down the pants.

Leslie Potts, the Minister of Sport who has 4000 tobacco workers in his constituency, wants to discuss Hacker's intended personal attack on the tobacco industry. When Hacker questions his interest in the matter, the Minister of Sport reacts:

- (44) “What about my **seat**?”
 “What about your lungs?” I [Hacker] said.
 “My lungs are fine,” he [Leslie Potts] snarled.
 “And he doesn't breathe through his **seat**,” said Bernard.
 Later on.....
 “But sometimes one must take a broader view.”
 “Even broader than your **seat**,” added Bernard.

(The Smokescreen, 198)

Example (32) is considered to be horizontal pun which plays on the polysemous word *seat*. When Leslie talks about his seat he refers to his post while Bernard humorously refers to his bottom.

- (44') „Myslete na svoje plíce!“
„Moje plíce jsou v pořádku!“

In this case, the translator ignored the pun completely. The formal, nor dynamic equivalence is maintained in the target text.

Annie, slightly drunk, is talking to a very small and dapper musician who had been appointed Principal Guest Conductor and finds Mrs Hacker extremely attractive. The first pun with *high-fidelity* is horizontal and concerns homonymy. The second pun is vertical and is realized by the homonymous word *bang*.

- (45) “I’m interested in **hi-fidelity** too,” she said. “My husband is a **high-fidelity** husband.”
“In a way,” she said conspiratorially, and giggled. “**High fidelity** but low frequency.”
The conductor, who clearly found Mrs Hacker extremely attractive, seemed unsure how to reply. “You mean, sort of **Bang and Olufsen?**”

“Well, **Olufsen** anyway,” said Mrs Hacker.” 447

(The Patron Of The Arts, 447)

In the example (47) two puns occur in a very short passage. Annie uses *high-fidelity* in two senses. She refers to a sound reproduction of a very good quality but only moments later she uses the word *fidelity* in its formal interpretation which means loyalty to a sexual partner. *High fidelity but low frequency* simply means that her husband is a faithful husband but they do not have sex very often. The conductor’s reaction does not surprise Annie when he mentions the famous manufacturer of audio and video products as she react with *Olufsen anyway*. She intentionally omits the *Bang* part as it means sexual intercourse, to put it mildly.

- (45') „Mám totiž **hi-fi** manžela, je vysoce **věrný**.“
„Tak to vám gratuluju,“ řekl dirigent, který se proslavil tím, že se choval přesně opačně.

„Není k čemu,“ řekla Annie konspirativně a zahihňala se. Vysoká věrnost, ale nízká frekvence.“

Dirigent, kterému zjevně paní Hackerová připadala velice atraktivní, si nebyl jistý, jak má reagovat. „Vysoká frekvence není všechno. Záleží taky na **výkonu**.“

„To mi povídejte,“ řekla paní Hackerová.

The Czech translation is successful. The dynamic equivalence is preserved when the translator maintained the humorous effect with *hi-fi*, using the words such as *věrnost* and *výkon*. *Věrnost* and *výkon* are both ambiguous here, referring either to sexual intercourse or to the sound system and its parameters.

5.8 Polysemy – Vertical puns

The EEC tries to force through the plan to standardise the Eurosausage and Hacker is worried that Britain will have to accept this term.

The following example uses the verb *to swallow* in its figurative meaning

- (46) Of course, they can't actually stop us eating the British sausage. But they can stop us calling it a sausage. It seems that it's got to be called the Emulsified High-Fat Offal Tube. And I was forced to **swallow** it. I mean, it is a perfectly accurate description of the thing, but not awfully appetising.

(Party Games, 11)

The following example uses the verb *to swallow* in its figurative meaning – to put up with, while the most common interpretation of the verb *to swallow* in connection with food would be the process of eating when food passes through the mouth and throat. The humorous effect is achieved when one realizes that Hacker is talking about food and he is forced to swallow it, but not to swallow the sausage but the description of the thing.

(46') "A to jsem si musel nechat líbit!"

The translator completely ignored the pun. Literal translation would not work as *spolknout* does not mean to put up with. *Překousnout* would be more suitable in this case but it is questionable if it would trigger the meaning of biting.

The Minister of State for Health discusses a complete ban on all cigarettes with Hacker who wants to cut taxes. Aware of the fact that smoking brings in four billion pounds a year in revenue, Hacker plays a little trick on the Minister of State for Health. He will give him his support but knows that it is a battle he cannot win as four billion is probably too much to let go, so the Treasury will have to give him something in return – the income tax cut. Bernard is amazed by this plan and asks Hacker:

(47) "So you're using cigarettes to create a sort of **smokescreen**?"

(The Smokescreen, 193)

Bernard uses the word *smokescreen* in its figurative meaning – an action or statement used to conceal plans, while it can also mean a mass of dense artificial smoke. He deliberately uses the word *cigarettes* to make it ambiguous.

(47') „Takže chcete použít cigaret k vytvoření jakési kouřové clony?“

Smokescreen has two meanings in English, one is literal, the second is figurative. The Czech translation is yet again not successful as it ignores the figurative meaning.

The French Ambassador and Hacker discuss the arrival of the French President and his wife. Hacker then asks the French Ambassador to suggest to the President to bring a different gift. The French Ambassador then explains that it is the President's wife who wants to bring the puppy. Hacker feels that if he says no, he will be insulting the first lady but decides to tell him that it may not be possible. The French Ambassador, a bit disquieted, says:

(48) "I [The French Ambassador] fear it would be interpreted as both a national and a personal insult. To the President and his wife."

I'd had enough of this bullshit. I stood up too. "Excellency, please ask the President not to bring that **bitch** with him."

(A Diplomatic Incident, 340)

The example (57) is obviously a slip of tongue and the intentionality of the pun here is questionable but I decided to leave it here as it was the author's intention to make this part ambiguous. Hacker is weary of all this conversation and reacts angrily, suggesting that the President does not bring that bitch with him. As soon as he pronounces the word bitch he knows exactly what he said. He meant the puppy as *bitch* can refer to a female dog but it can also refer to a malicious or unpleasant woman, in this case the President's wife

(48) „Obávám se, že by to bylo interpretováno jako národní urážka, a to nejen pana prezidenta, ale i jeho manželky.“

Už jsem měl těch keců dost. Také jsem vstal a řekl: „Excellence, buďte tak laskavý a požádejte pana prezidenta, ať s sebou tu **čubku** nebere.“

One of the easier cases of punning. The formal equivalence is preserved. *Čubka* can be used the same way as the English word *bitch*.

The Burandan High Commissioner is concerned at the rumor that an investigation into Phillips Berenson bank will start soon. This shady bank lent a large amount of money to the President of Buranda and the Chairman of Buranda. The commissioner later accuses Hacker of racism and informs Hacker they would move to have Britain expelled from the Commonwealth. Hacker is furious:

(49) "The President of Buranda is a crook! He doesn't belong to the Commonwealth Club, he should be **blackballed**."

"He is already, isn't he?" said a smiling Bernard.

(A Conflict Of Interest, 380)

Hacker uses the word *blackballed*, its first meaning – to vote against a member of a group, the second meaning – to ostracize someone socially. Hacker uses the expression in its first sense but Bernard, being slightly racist with his remark, uses the expression in its second sense.

- (49') „Burandský prezident je podvodník!“ vztekal jsem se. „Ten nemá v Commonwealthu co dělat. Měl by být pranýřován jako **černá ovce!**“
„No **černý** už je, stačí ho pranýřovat jako ovci,“ zasmál se Bernard.

In this case, the dynamic equivalence is preserved. Černá ovce can be understood in its figurative meaning – to be a shame to one's family for example, while Bernard uses the adjective black literally referring to the color of the skin.

BBC wants to interview Humphrey for a documentary on the structure of government. Hacker is worried that he will say something controversial. Humphrey assures Hacker that he has no inclination to become a celebrity.

- (50) I [Hacker] told him that my understanding of the Civil Service was that we were supposed to be **faceless**.
“They don't show your face on radio.”

(The Tangled Web, 418)

The pun in the example (59) is based on the ambiguity of the word *faceless*. Hacker uses the adjective as for someone with no clear characteristics who wants to stay anonymous. Humphrey then reacts with the literal interpretation of the word faceless meaning without face.

- (50) Řekl jsem mu, že podle mého názoru by státní správa v **pozadí** zůstat neměla.
„V rádiu nebude vidět, jestli jsme vpředu nebo v **pozadí**.“

The translation is successful using the word pozadí which is ambiguous, the first meaning is to stay aloof from something. The second meaning is to stay in the background.

When further discussing Mike Stanford's impressive career details, Hacker feels he has found a significant gap in his CV and asks Bernard:

- (51) “Has he ever been an ordinary vicar in a parish?”

Bernard was surprised by the question. “No Prime Minister. Clergymen who want to be bishops try to avoid pastoral work.”

“He’s a **high-flyer**,” remarked Humphrey.

“So was Icarus,” replied Bernard.

(The Bishop’s Gambit, 221)

The pun in this case is based on the term *high-flyer* which is used for someone with a lot of ability and ambition. This term is perfectly adequate for an ambitious Mike Stanford but Bernard plays with the word high-flyer in its literal meaning (someone who can fly high up the sky) and compares Mike to Icarus, the son of Daedalus, who flew too near the sun and his wings melted. As an analogy to Icarus, Mike put himself out of the running by his ambition.

(51’) To ne, pane premiére. Kněží, kteří se chtějí stát biskupy, se snaží vyhnout pastorační práci.“

„Mířil vysoko,“ poznamenal Humphrey.“

„To Ikaros taky,“ dodal záhadně Bernard.

The Czech translation is successful and the formal equivalence is achieved by the translator.

Sir Humphrey asks Prime Minister to obtain a cassette player so that he could listen to his first radio interview. When Hacker informs Humphrey that he finally managed to borrow one from one of the Garden Room Girls, Humphrey is not sure if he knows what it actually is. Bernard recalls:

(52) Sir Humphrey hadn’t heard the word **ghettoblaster**, and enquired if it was used in the demolition industry. How true – the demolition of hearing.

(The Tangled Web, 423)

Ghettoblaster is a compound of ghetto and blaster, with the latter referring to a very loud noise. Humphrey, not aware of this slang term for a cassette player, asks if it is something that is used in the demolition industry as *blaster* is a term for someone who

is employed to blast with explosives. Bernard's last remark about the demolition of hearing only highlights the humorous effect of this pun.

- (52') Vypůjčil jsem si kazetový magnetofon od jednoho z děvčat ze suterénu.
Ke kazetě byl připojen nějaký lístek.

The pun is lost in translation as Czech language has no equivalent to the English word *ghettoblaster* which could be later confronted with the *blaster* (someone who is employed to blast with explosives).

Hacker is informed by the Security officers about Eric, a serious candidate to become the next Prime Minister, and his sexual deviances. He is considered to be a sex maniac. As Hacker is lost for words and cannot find a correct term for what Eric does in his free time. Sir Humphrey supplies it:

- (53) "I believe the current expression is **horizontal jogging**, Minister."

(Party Games, 40)

Hacker cannot find a right term for sex and Humphrey uses the metaphorical expression *horizontal jogging*. The humorousness of this pun lies in its realization as jogging is by definition a vertical activity and jogging itself is substituted for sexual intercourse. I decided to include this example as its humorousness is unquestionable, yet the jogging (running) as an activity has nothing in common with a sexual act.

- (53') „Myslím, že dnes používaný termín je **horizontální jogging**, pane ministře.“

The Czech translation is successful in this case, preserving the formal equivalence.

The pun in (53) is based on the metaphor which is difficult to define but Cruse sees metaphor as a “figurative usage based on resemblance”. (2011, 117) This may be the case of *jogging* which is interpreted in its figurative meaning and the resemblance with sex is achieved by the insertion of *horizontal* which is typical position for having sex. Moreover, metaphor refers to cases where a word appears to have a ‘transferred

meaning'. For instance, the words for parts of the body provide the best illustration. It is therefore very common to come across metaphors such as the *hands* of a clock, the *foot* of a bed or of a mountain or the *eye* of a needle etc. Peprník (2001, 45) also provides very good example of metaphor using the word *head* which is being understood as a part of body but also as a leader. Assuming that the words *hands*, *foot*, *eye* or *head* apply first to body from which they derive their literal meaning, the resemblance to parts of the body is only implied to achieve the metaphorical effect whilst only some of them can be transferred to certain objects as the bed has no *eyes* or *hands*. (Jackson and Amvela 2000, 70)

5.9 Polysemy - Idioms

Puns can be based on idioms. To have a pun based on an idiom, its idiomatic reading needs to be violated. Another option is to have a literal meaning which would clash with the idiomatic reading of the given expression. Dividing puns into horizontal and vertical would be irrelevant as they are always based on the idiom which is present in the text.

Hacker and Humphrey have a meeting about a study paper that Humphrey sent Hacker on the subject of reintroducing conscription. When Hacker informs Humphrey that he will no longer accept any delaying tactics and that the conscription is going to be reintroduced during his time as Prime Minister, Humphrey replies:

(54) "I'm not sure it would be **fruitful**. The time may not be **ripe**. It could turn out to be a **banana skin**."

(The Smokescreen, 190)

This pun is based on the usage of the words *fruitful* (producing good results) and *ripe* (ready to be collected or as in this example used in the idiom *the time is ripe* – suitable time for certain activity) which can be easily associated with fruit. Both these expression, however are not used in the connection with fruit. The same applies to the idiom *banana skin* which in this case is not used in its literal meaning, but rather as something unforeseen that might result in faux-pas or can be considered as an obstacle.

(54') „Pochybuj, že by to přineslo ovoce. Ještě nenazrál čas. Mohlo by se to obrátit proti vám.

The pun is ignored by the translator. The first two sentences are equivalent to the source text but the *banana skin* is translated indirectly because it is an idiom, and it results in the loss of punning effect.

The Home Secretary is charged with drunken driving. It transpires that the Home Secretary had an accident in which he smashed his car into a car which was being driven by the editor of the local newspaper. Hacker asks Humphrey:

(55) “What will happen to him?”

“I [Humphrey] gather,” he replied disdainfully, “that he was as **drunk as a lord** – so after a discreet interval they’ll probably make him **one**.”

(Party Games, 24)

This pun is based on an idiomatic expression *drunk as a lord*, meaning very drunk. Humphrey then uses one of its constituents – *lord*, the title denoting a peer of the realm, referring to the fact that the Home Secretary will most probably have to retire and will receive this title from the Queen.

(55') „Co s ním bude?“ podíval jsem se na Humphreyho.

„Až se na to zapomene,“ řekl Humphrey opovržlivě, „nejspíš z něho udělají lorda.“

The Czech translation ignores the pun completely even though Czech language offers various possible equivalents. (*Opilý jak zákon káže, navalený jako děkan* etc.) It would obviously require something more to trigger the punning effect.

Hacker needs some public success to improve the chances of becoming the new Prime Minister. His problem with the Eurosausage remained.

- (56) I was stuck with the awful Eurosausage hot potato, and somehow I've got **to pull something rather good out of the hat**. Or out of the delicatessen.

(Party Games, 47)

The punning in the example (59) uses the idiomatic expression *to pull something out of the hat/bag* which means to do something quickly which may solve a problem. Once again, Hacker uses the idiom and substitutes one of its constituents with his own word – *delicatessen* – which would result in *to pull something out of the delicatessen*. The altered idiom loses its idiomaticity but the punning here is triggered by the word *delicatessen* which can be associated with sausages.

- (56') Jenže problém byl, že jsem ještě pořád měl na krku ten příšerný europárek. Musím přijít na to, jak z toho nějak úspěšně vybruslit.

The formal or dynamic equivalence is not achieved as the translator ignores the part with the *delicatessen*. Hence, the pun is lost.

The French President wants to present Her Majesty with a labrador puppy and Hacker has to come up with a solution in order to avoid a diplomatic incident. The puppy would have to stay in a quarantine for six months and the French would refuse to understand it officially. Hacker sends for the Foreign Affairs Secretary, expecting some positive suggestions. Hacker is informed by the Foreign Affairs Secretary that the Home Office is responsible for quarantine and that he does not know how to deal with this situation. Hacker's thought:

- (57) I think he was **passing the buck**. Or the puppy.

(A Diplomatic Incident, 336)

The idiom *to pass the buck* means to give the responsibility to someone else. As in the previous example, Hacker substitutes the constituent *buck* with the word *puppy* (both representatives of the animal kingdom) and violates the fixed phrase as *to pass the puppy* loses its idiomaticity.

(57') Jenom se to snažil přehrát na někoho jiného.

Again, as in the previous example, the Czech translation ignores the second part which further exploits the idiomatic expression.

Hacker informs the French Embassy that the puppy will have to remain in a quarantine for six months but the French are determined to bring it anyway. Humphrey bursts into the room with urgent news. The French President is coming by car so that he can bring the puppy in the car. Humphrey then question Hacker if he is ready to give instructions for the President's car to be stopped and searched. Humphrey starts the conversation.

(58) “Are you prepared to violate their diplomatic immunity and search the **diplomatic bag**?”

I [Hacker] was confused. “You can't put a puppy in a bag.”

“It would be a **doggy bag**,” said Bernard.

“That would really **set the cat among the pigeons**.”

“**And let the dog out of the bag**,”

(A Diplomatic Incident, 348)

This short excerpt of the text contains two puns. First, *diplomatic bag* is “a container or bag in which official mail is sent, free from customs inspection, to and from an embassy or consulate” (The Free Dictionary, 2013: diplomatic bag). Hacker, confused, says that they cannot put a puppy in a bag. That is a chance for Bernard's witty remark saying that it would be a *doggy bag*. The humorousness of this pun lies in its realization as *doggy bag* can be understood in its literal meaning as a bag for a dog or its figurative meaning which refers to a small bag that restaurants provide for any leftover food. This pun could be included in the part which analyses polysemy but I decided to include it under idioms because of the second pun which is based on idioms and very much depends on the part with the *doggy bag*. Second pun employs an idiomatic expression *set the cat among the pigeons* which means to do or say something that causes trouble. Another idiomatic expression which immediately follows is altered by Bernard. *Let the cat out of the bag* which means to reveal a secret is altered by Bernard when he substitutes the *cat* with the word *dog* so that it fits into context with the dog that is to be brought over from France.

- (58') Nemůžete přece nacpat psa do kufru," namítl jsem. „Spíš ho bude mít někde pod dekou.“
„Pod psí dečkou," řekl Bernard.
„Řekněme, že bychom to auto skutečně prohledali a toho psa našli,"
uvažoval jsem o všech eventualitách. „To bychom si ale hráli s ohněm.“
„A oni by si pak hráli s námi – jako pes s myší," přisadil si Bernard.

In this excerpt, dynamic equivalence is achieved at least for the second part concerning the last two sentences. The translators preserved the pun when replacing the component *kočka* with *pes* in the expression *hrát si jako kočka s myší*.

Monsieur le Président wants a private word with Hacker concerning the puppy they brought from France. Hacker is adamant that it is not a misunderstanding and informs the President:

- (59) “I [Hacker] cannot ask the Queen to **break the law**.”
He smiled. “I do not want the Queen to break the law, I merely ask the Prime Minister **to bend it**.”

(A Diplomatic Incident, 350)

Hacker uses the phrase *to break the law* which means to violate or obey a law, to act contrary to a law. The President counters when he says he merely asks the Prime Minister *to bend it* which means to change the rule in a way that is not harmful. The pun plays on a semantic similarity of the verbs *to bend* and *to break* meaning that if something is bent too much, it will eventually break.

- (59) „Nemohu požádat královnu, aby přestoupila zákon.“
Usmál se. „Nežádám paní královnu, aby přestoupila zákon. Žádám pouze pana premiéra, aby přimhouřil oko.“

The translation does not provide the formal or dynamic equivalence. *Přestoupit zákon* and *přimhouřit oko* are too far from each other semantically.

Hacker is to attend the British Theatre Awards and together with his advisers they try to come up with any idea how to avoid this ceremony. Hacker realizes that he has no other option, he says:

- (60) “I’ll have to go,” I decided. I’ll **keep stiff upper lip. Grin and bear it.**”
 Bernard said, “You can’t actually grin with stiff upper lip because...”
 And he demonstrated.
 “You see, stiff lips won’t stretch horizontally...”

(The Patron Of The Arts, 437)

The idioms *to keep a stiff upper lip* which means to hide someone’s feeling when being upset and to *grin and bear it* which means to accept something bad without complaining are interpreted literally by Bernard. *To grin* means to smile which cannot be done without stretching your stiff not moving lips horizontally.

- (60’) „Zachovám kamennou tvář a budu se na ně usmívat.“
 Bernard namítl: „Omlouvám se, pane premiére, ale nemůžete zachovat kamennou tvář a přitom se usmívat, protože,“ předváděl, „když se usmějete, tak se vám tvář...“

The Czech translation is successful and the formal equivalence is achieved. Both idioms are interpreted literally by Bernard, thus the pun is preserved in the translation as well.

Humphrey, Bernard and Hacker are in discussion about the educational system in Britain. Humphrey objects that the educational system is in a bad condition and that it will not improve unless the responsibility for education is taken away from local councils and put under the Department of Education and Science. Hacker likes the idea:

- (61) “Humphrey,” I [Hacker] said, “do you think I could? Actually **grasp the nettle** and **take the bull by the horns**?”
 Bernard spoke for the first time. “Prime Minister, you can’t **take the bull by the horns** if you’re **grasping the nettle.**”
 “I mean, if you grasped the nettle with one hand, you could take the bull by one horn with the other hand, but not by both horns because your hand

wouldn't be big enough, and if you took a bull by only one horn it would be rather dangerous because..."

(The National Education Service, 469)

Two idiomatic expressions used by Hacker are once again interpreted literally by Bernard. *Grasp the nettle* means to deal with something that is unpleasant. *Grab the bull by the horns* basically means the same, to confront a problem. Bernard's analysis of what can be grabbed at a same time or not is a word-for-word interpretation of the idioms mentioned by Hacker.

(61') „Humphrey,“ řekl jsem, „myslíte, že bych mohl... vzít kormidlo pevně do rukou a chytit býka za rohy?“

Bernard poprvé zasáhl do hovoru. „Pane premiére, když budete svírat pevně kormidlo, nemůžete chytit býka za roh.“

„Chci říct, i kdybyste kormidloval jenom jednou rukou a měl druhou volnou, nevešly by se do ní oba dva rohy, takže byste mohl chytit býka pouze za jeden roh, což by ale bylo dosti nebezpečné, protože...“

Again, the pun is preserved as the punning is based on an idiom and its literal interpretation.

5.10 Morphology

Hacker is surprised when the Director-General of MI5 tells him that the meeting should be off the record.

(62) I [Hacker] was **agog**. And my **agogness** was soon to be rewarded.

(One Of Us, 238)

This pun is based on the adjective *agog* from which Hacker forms a noun *agogness* by adding a suffix *-ness*. This enrichment of vocabulary where affixes change the part of speech is known as **derivation**. (Veselovská 2009, 19) *Agog* means excited and *agogness* should probably refer to excitement.

- (62') Byl jsem napjatý, o co jde. A moje zvědavost, jak se vzápětí ukázalo, byla zcela na místě.

The pun is lost in the translation as the translator ignores the pun based on derivation.

Hacker wants to be known as a Great Reformer. He is playing with an idea to return power to the ordinary people. He already feels that such reform will grant him a place in the history books. He says:

- (63) “The strength of Britain does not lie in offices and institutions. It lies in the stout hearts and strong wills of the **yeomen**...”
 She [Dorothy] interrupted. “Women have the vote too.”
 “And **yeowomen**...” That didn’t sound right. “**Yeopeople, yeopersons**...”
 (Power To The People, 392)

Hacker uses the word *yeoman* a term used for free man who cultivated his own land. Dorothy objects, feeling that the term *yeomen* is too gender-specific. Hacker then tries to be gender correct when he pronounces *yeowomen*, *yeopeople* and *yeopersons*. Another mean of vocabulary enrichment employed in this punning is called **neologism**. Neologisms are defined as "newly coined lexical units or existing lexical units that acquire a new sense." (Newmark 1988, 140) Newmark points out the types of neologisms : old words with new senses, new coinages, derived words, abbreviations, collocations, eponyms, phrasal words transferred words or acronyms.

- (63') „Síla Británie nespočívá v úřadech a institucích. Spočívá v odvážných srdcích a silné vůli svobodných mužů...”
 „Ženy mají také volební právo,“ přerušila mě.
 „A žen...” To už tak neznělo. „Svobodného obyvatelstva. Svobodomyslných občanů...”

The pun is not preserved, yeomen has no equivalent in Czech. Therefore, it is difficult to find a suitable solution which would lead to either formal or dynamic equivalence.

When discussing the employment of actors with Nick Everitt, the Arts Minister, Hacker feels that some of them will have to find another job, outside the theatre. Nick disagrees with such claim saying that they are unemployable outside the theatre. Annie points out that half the mini-cab drivers are out-of-work actors. Nick explains:

(64) “It’s more glamorous than describing yourself as a ‘**Moonlighting** nightwatchman’.”

Bernard raised a forefinger and looked in my direction. Apparently he felt he had a useful contribution to make to the discussion.

“Er, nightwatchmen can’t moonlight. It’s a moonlight job to start with. If they drove minicabs they’d be **sunlighting**.”

(**The Patron Of The Arts, 443**)

The pun is based on the words *moonlighting* and *sunlighting*. *Moonlighting* means to have an extra job (usually working at night in addition to one’s full-time job). When Bernard says that nightwatchmen cannot moonlight, he actually points out to the fact that nightwatchmen already work during the night so it cannot be considered as *moonlighting* (extra job, working at night). If they drove minicabs, they would be *sunlighting*, meaning that they would drive by daylight. I believe that this is also an example of neologism as *sunlighting* is cannot be found in dictionaries, it is Bernard’s ability to play with word that gives *sunlighting* a certain meaning.

(64’) „Většina řidičů těch taxíků jenom tvrdí, že jsou herci. Dělá to lepší dojem, než kdyby řekli, že jsou to noční hlídači, co jezdí načerno.“

The translation of this pun is ignored. *Načerno* may refer to something illegal (extra job) but it can hardly refer to working during the night (potmě) and the analogy with sunlighting as working during the day is missing completely.

The press is waiting for Hacker’s statement following the leak which should discredit Hacker for attempting to suppress memoirs of his predecessor. One specific part of the memoirs says that Hacker once supported the proposal to expand a nuclear plant. Humphrey offers up a press release. Phrases like ‘Communication breakdown....misunderstanding.....acted in good faith....’ Hacker reacts angrily:

(65) “It’s a **whitewash**,” I [Hacker] complained. And not even a very effective whitewash.”

“More of a **greywash**, really,” agreed Bernard.

(Official Secrets, 326)

Hacker, obviously not happy that such information leaked to the press, uses the word *whitewash* which in this case means concealment of flaws but it can also refer to a white liquid used for painting the rooms. Bernard then intentionally substitutes the white color for grey when he remarks that it is more of a *greywash*, probably implying that the offered press releases are only bad excuses which will not work. I can see some analogy here to a whitewash (liquid used for painting the rooms) in a sense that when the painting is not done properly or only once, the walls will stay more or less grey, something undesired.

(65’) „Je to jenom takový pokus zahrát to do autu,“ stěžoval jsem si. „A ještě ke všemu nijak přesvědčivý.“

A mohl by skončit vlastní brankou,“ souhlasil Bernard.

Even though the translator ignores the morphological aspect of the pun, he managed to achieve the dynamic equivalence using other means how to exploit the pun.

5.11 Syntax

No instances of puns based syntactic structure were found.

CONCLUSION

Wordplay is a linguistic phenomenon that we can come across every day. It is important to mention that wordplay as such is intentional. Whether used by marketers or in fictional discourse, the intention of wordplay is clear, to amuse or attract the audience. The aspect of intentionality is important, otherwise, it can hardly be considered wordplay. Wordplay, in which two linguistic structures are confronted, is therefore a rich source of humor.

As was already mentioned, wordplay aims at the audience with the intention to amuse. However, the mere recognition of wordplay might present a very difficult task as it requires a lot of effort from the audience to spot the ambiguity. It is a matter of experience, language knowledge and imagination to understand what message the author of a pun wanted to convey. It usually happens that context does not disambiguate (especially in vertical puns). In analyzing wordplay, the aspect of incongruity proved to be a helpful tool. Such unexpectedness in texts usually indicates an instance of wordplay.

For the purpose of this thesis, I referred to Delabastita's categorization of wordplay which can be divided into *phonological and graphological structure*, *lexical structure (polysemy)*, *lexical structure (idiom)*, *morphological structure* and *syntactic structure*. However, Delabastita's categorization seems to be problematic when applied in practice, something Delabastita himself is very well aware of. The biggest challenge was to decide whether a given pun should be categorized as polysemy or homonymy since both are very similar. As a result, I decided to include seemingly unconnected or weakly linked polysemes under the category of homonyms. Such categorization of my own is of no consequence as it has very little effect on wordplay as such.

When talking about translatability, wordplay is, without any doubt, very challenging in terms of preserving the intended meaning. As expected and as the analysis proved, the translator many times chose to ignore the pun, destroying the humorous effect of wordplay. Thirty-seven puns were analyzed of which thirteen can be considered

CONCLUSION

successful, where the translator preserved either the formal or dynamic equivalence. Puns based on homography and syntactic structure were not found in the text.

Nonetheless, this thesis shows that puns are not untranslatable. The mere recognition of wordplay proves to be a difficult task and the translation of wordplay itself, trying to preserve the effect of the source text, can be very demanding. Considering the fact that only a minor part of examples were translated successfully, this thesis can serve as a starting point for further analysis in the area of translation or linguistic studies.

SHRNUTÍ

Slovní hříčky jsou lingvistický jev, na který lze narazit dennodenně. Ať už se jedná o vlastní tvorbu slovních hříček nebo těch, na které lze narazit při čtení literatury či sledování médií. Hlavním motivem slovních hříček je pobavit nebo přitáhnout pozornost diváka nebo čtenáře. Především je důležité zmínit, že základním rysem slovní hříček je určitá záměrnost autora. Slovní hříčky založené na víceznačnosti lze také považovat za zdroj humoru. Tato práce je pokusem o krátké shrnutí teoretických poznatků o slovních hříčkách a jejich následná aplikace na příkladech z knihy *Yes, Prime Minister*.

První kapitola je věnována humoru a především jeho typickému znaku – znaku neočekávanosti.

Druhá kapitola už se věnuje vymezení pojmu slovní hříčka, kde je představena Delabastitova (1996, 128) definice, která slouží jako výchozí bod celé práce. Na základě jeho typologie lze slovní hříčky rozdělit následovně: *fonologická a grafologická konstrukce, lexikální konstrukce (polysémie), lexikální konstrukce (idiom), morfologická konstrukce a syntaktická konstrukce*.

Třetí kapitola se dále věnuje slovním hříčkám, kde pozornost je věnována jiným autorům publikujících o slovních hříčkách, což slouží jako doplnění již tak obsáhlé problematiky slovních hříček.

Čtvrtá kapitola pojednává o samotné problematice překladu slovních hříček. Velká pozornost je věnována Delabastitovi, který navrhuje několik metod, jakými lze slovní hříčky překládat. Více autorů (Davis, Alexieva, Delabastita, Gottlieb) se pak věnuje otázce přeložitelnosti slovních hříček a různým nástrahám, které čekají na překladatele. Názory těchto autorů nejsou ovšem při samotné analýze slovních hříček použity. K tomuto účelu slouží termín *formální* nebo *dynamická ekvivalence* od Nidy (1964, 159). Jedná se o způsob překladu, kdy není důležité, aby slovní hříčka byla vždy přeložena stejně, což v důsledku dvou rozdílných jazyků ani není možné, ale aby byl zachován kontext a v případě slovních hříček i víceznačnost.

Praktická část se věnuje samotné kategorizaci slovních hříček, tak jak byly definovány Delabastitou. Slovní hříčky jsou roztrženy podle *homonymie*, *polysémie*, *homofonie* atd., které jsou dále rozčleněny podle jejich realizace na slovní hříčky horizontální a vertikální.

Již samotné rozpoznání hříček představuje pro čtenáře velký problém, což vyžaduje velké úsilí. Jde především o zkušenost jednotlivce a jeho/její znalost daného jazyka, kdy je potřeba i notná dávka představivosti k rozpoznání víceznačnosti. Při samotné analýze se ukázalo největším problémem rozdělení slovních hříček do kategorie homonymie nebo polysémie. Jelikož jsou si velice podobné, pro účely této práce jsou rozděleny podle společných významových rysů. Slova, jejichž významy, nemají zdánlivě žádnou spojitost, jsou tedy zařazena jako homonyma a u těch, kde je jistá spojitost zřejmá na první pohled, jsou zařazena jako polysémie.

Při porovnání originálního textu s oficiálním překladem vyšlo najevo, že překladatel si častokrát práci ulehčil tím, že slovní hříčku prostě ignoroval, což má ovšem za následek ztrátu humorného prvku textu. Ze sedmatřiceti slovních hříček jich lze pouze třináct považovat za úspěšně přeložené, kdy se překladateli podařilo najít vhodný ekvivalent.

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Table 1: Typology of puns..... 13

ANNOTATION

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Master's Thesis Topic in English	Wordplay in <i>Yes, Prime Minister</i>
Master's Thesis Topic in Czech	Slovní hříčky v <i>Yes, Prime Minister</i>
Abstract in English:	The aim of this thesis is to provide a brief view on wordplay as a phenomenon in languages. The theoretical part offers a categorization of wordplay and its characteristic features. The practical part attempts to apply the facts gained in the theoretical part on the examples from <i>Yes, Prime Minister</i> . These examples are then confronted with the Czech translation to see whether the translation is successful.
Key words in English:	wordplay, homonymy, polysemy, humor, idiom, ambiguity, equivalence
Abstract in Czech:	Cílem této práce je podat stručný pohled na problematiku slovních hříček. Teoretická část práce předkládá rozdělení slovních hříček a jejich povahových rysů. Praktická část práce je snahou o aplikaci daných poznatků z části teoretické na příkladech z <i>Yes, Prime Minister</i> . Tyto příklady jsou poté porovnány s oficiálním překladem za účelem zjištění, do jaké míry je překlad povedený.
Key words in Czech:	Slovní hříčka, homonymie, polysémie, humor, idiom, víceznačnost, ekvivalence
Attachments included in the thesis:	1 CD
Scope	76 p.
Language	English