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Sanna-Maria Riikonen

“Wordplay five!”

Comparing the Translation of Wordplay in the Finnish Subtitles of *How
I Met Your Mother* on Netflix and DVD

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UNIVERSITY OF VAASA**School of Marketing and Communication****Author:** Sanna-Maria Riikonen**Master's Thesis:** "Wordplay five!"Comparing the Translation of Wordplay in the Finnish Subtitles of *How I Met Your Mother* on Netflix and DVD**Degree:** Master of Arts**Programme:** Language Expertise in a Specialized Society**Date:** 2020**Supervisor:** Helen Mäntymäki

ABSTRACT

Sanaleikit ovat mahdollisesti yhtä vanhoja kuin kieli itse. Dirk Delabastitan mukaan sanaleikeissä on mukana vähintään kaksi kielellistä rakennetta, joiden muoto ja merkitys ovat enemmän tai vähemmän samanlaisia, joten sanaleikit riippuvat kielen rakenteellisista piirteistä. Siksi niiden kääntäminen englannista suomeen voi olla hankalaa etenkin tekstityksissä. Audiovisuaalisuudesta johtuvat aika- ja tilarajoitteet ja sekä kuva että saatavilla oleva alkuperäinen dialogi tuovat nimittäin omat haasteensa tilanteeseen.

Tässä pro gradu –tutkielmassa oltiin kiinnostuneita kolmesta tutkimuskysymyksestä: miten sanaleikit on käännetty tekstityksissä, jos sanaleikkityyppi näyttää vaikuttavan sen käännösstrategiaan, niin mitkä syyt voisivat olla taustalla, ja mitä eroja Netflixin ja DVD:n tekstityksissä on. Tutkimuskohteena oli paljon sanaleikkejä sisältävä amerikkalainen tilannekomedia *How I Met Your Mother*, joka tunnetaan Suomessa nimellä *Ensisilmäyksellä*. Aineistoksi valittiin sarjan toisen ja neljännen tuotantokauden 46 jaksoa. Jaksoista löytyneet sanaleikit ja niiden suomenkieliset käännökset jaettiin kahdeksaan eri kategoriaan, joita olivat leksikaalinen, kollokationaalinen ja lausetason homonymia, paronymia, homofonia, homografia, alluusion sisältävät sanaleikit ja sulautumat. Niiden kääntämisen analysoinnissa sovellettiin Henrik Gottliebin ja Dirk Delabastitan käännösstrategioita sanaleikeille. Tutkimuksessa myös vertailtiin sanaleikkien käännöksiä Netflix- ja DVD-tekstityksissä.

Tulokset olivat odotetun mukaisia. Selvästi suosituin käännösstrategia oli sanaleikkien kääntäminen sanaleikeillä, kun taas toiseksi suosituin oli sanaleikkien korvaaminen ei-sanaleikeillä. Sanaleikkityypillä oli vaikutusta sen käännösstrategiaan: homonymia näytti kääntyvän useammin tekstityksissä kuin muut tyypit, mikä mahdollisesti johtui siitä, että niissä olivat usein vastakkainasettelussa kirjaimelliset ja kuvaannolliset merkitykset. Sanaleikit säilyivät lisäksi Netflix-tekstityksissä useammin kuin DVD:llä.

KEYWORDS: wordplay, pun, subtitling, audiovisual translation

1 INTRODUCTION

It appears that when Samuel Beckett (1938: 48) wrote “In the beginning was the pun” in his novel *Murphy*, he was right. Wordplay, or puns, could namely be as old as language itself: earliest forms of it have been found in ancient Egypt and Iraq and in the Mayan settlements (Žyško 2017: 1). Perhaps the most famous usages of wordplay can be found in *The Bible* and in the multiple works of William Shakespeare. Nowadays the popularity of puns can also be seen in their frequent usage in advertisements, jokes, and book and film titles (Chiaro 2000: 161; Winter-Froemel, Thaler & Demeulenaere 2018: 1) among others. In addition, wordplay is often used in films or comedy series on television. This combination of wordplay and series or films has provided material for numerous theses and articles all over the world. Puns are truly “ubiquitous textual phenomen[a]” (Chiaro 2000: 161).

This prevalence of intentionally used puns is no wonder since they have been described to be “inherent in the structure of language and therefore natural to the human mind” (Delabastita 1996: 127). Puns are most common in languages such as English and Chinese, which have many monosyllabic words and thus provide an easy way to make wordplay, but they can indeed be found in every language since they are made possible by the facts that, for instance, all languages have a limited number of phonemes and it is usual that similar or even identical words are used to mean completely different things (Delabastita 1993: 229–230; Delabastita 1996: 131; Newmark 1988: 211). In Alexieva’s (1997: 139) opinion, these multiple meanings of identical or nearly identical words can be attributed to the asymmetric relationship between a language and the surrounding world that contains many more objects and phenomena than it is even possible for the language to have words for. If a language with separate words for every object or phenomenon existed, it would be “extremely unwieldy and inefficient” and “impossible to learn in the first place” (Alexieva 1997: 139).

The universality of wordplay does not, of course, mean that puns translate easily from one language into another as languages have differing characteristics. For example, the Finnish language has longer words and case suffixes, and puns are often based on words

which are written identically but which do not share a meaning (Leppihalme 1997a: 142). Furthermore, in Finnish words do not move as easily from one word class to another as they do in English (Leppihalme 1996: 212–213). In contrast, languages that are related, such as English and Danish, which belong to the family of Germanic languages, appear to, naturally, have puns that could be translated more directly interlingually (Gottlieb 1997a: 211; Low 2010: 63).

Wordplay has indeed been considered a difficult phenomenon to translate because its semantic and pragmatic effects of the source language wordplay depend on such features of the source language that often do not have an equivalent in the target language (Delabastita 1994: 223). These features could be called an area of privacy, which is something that no other language can touch or imitate (Redfern 1984: 159). According to Chiaro (2000: 161), “the pun must surely be the only linguistic feature which is so inextricably linked to its source language as to [...] seriously challenge translators”. Likewise, Schröter (2005: 1) states that since it can be presumed that puns in one language “cannot normally be transferred directly into another language”, the challenge that wordplay poses to translators is generally considered formidable or perhaps even insurmountable. Landers (2001: 109) writes that puns are the most likely aspect of translation to “cause translators sleepless nights”.

Due the nature of wordplay and the difficulties that surround their translation, they are an interesting phenomenon to study especially in the context of audiovisual translation that, according to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 23), has numerous time, space, and multimodal constraints and other restrictions. In other words, translating puns can be even more difficult in subtitling (Delabastita 1993: 228; Schröter 2005: 2; Sanderson 2009: 125). This is also revealed by some of the previous studies done on the translation of wordplay from English to Finnish in the subtitles of a comedy television series. For instance, Juusti (1999) and Palomäki (2015), who both studied *Frasier* (1993–2004) for their Master’s thesis, discovered that less than half of the puns were preserved in the Finnish subtitles. Hintsanen (2004), Korhonen (2008) and Finer (2019) got the same results from *Will & Grace* (1998–2006, 2017–), *The Simpsons* (1989–) and *Modern Family* (2009–2020), whereas Ivshina (2014) found that exactly half of the source-text

wordplay was translated as target-text wordplay in *Friends* (1994–2004). In contrast, for example Ritala (2010) and Merenheimo (2012), who examined *Sex and the City* (1998–2004), found in their Master’s theses that the majority of puns were translated with puns. Likewise, Hautakoski (2013), Perttola (2014) and Juntunen (2019) concluded that more than half of the puns in *Arrested Development* (2003–2006), *Blackadder* (1983–1989) and *2 Broke Girls* (2011–2017), respectively, were rendered by puns. In addition, Ritala (2010) reports that many other studies have shown similar results. She does not, however, specify which studies she is referring to. Furthermore, I discovered that in my Bachelor’s thesis, in which I studied the translation of wordplay *How I Met Your Mother* (2005–2014), the most common translation strategy was rendering puns by puns. All in all, previous studies on the translation of wordplay in subtitles have shown mixed results. Hence more research on the subject is needed.

In this thesis, the translation of wordplay will be examined and compared in the Finnish subtitles of the American situational comedy *How I Met Your Mother* on the American streaming service Netflix and on DVD. The series is also known by its abbreviation *HIMYM* and as *Ensisilmäyksellä*¹ in Finnish television. I have three research questions: 1) Which strategies have been used when translating wordplay in the Finnish subtitles on Netflix and DVD? 2) If it appears that the type of wordplay has had an effect on its translation strategy, what could be the reasons for this? 3) What kind of differences are there in the translation of wordplay between the subtitles on DVD and on Netflix? The two translations are compared in order to see how different subtitlers tackle the challenge of translating puns. My hypothesis is, based on the results of my Bachelor’s thesis, that the majority of wordplay is retained in translation and that the wordplay type affects its translation strategy.

My Bachelor’s thesis already proved that *How I Met Your Mother* provides more than suitable material when examining the translation of wordplay is of interest as puns are

¹ *At First Glance* or *At First Sight*, if *Ensisilmäyksellä* is referring to the saying “rakkautta ensisilmäyksellä”, or “love at first sight”.

abundant in it. I chose the series as the material of this study because it is, in my opinion, worthy of further research especially with a different focus. The work of different subtitlers, especially on Netflix and DVD, has not been studied extensively although comparative studies could give insight on how individual factors and the wordplay type may affect its translation. Another reason for the choice of the series is its laugh track which, as will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis, helps the translators to notice the puns. What is more, it appears that wordplay in *How I Met Your Mother* has rarely been used as material of a study, at least in Bachelor's and Master's theses available online – especially the ones in Finland. In fact, it appears that Paajoki (2012), Savilampi (2016) and Hyyryläinen (2017) are the only ones who studied the Finnish subtitles of *How I Met Your Mother* in a Bachelor's or Master's thesis in Finland.

Paajoki (2012) watched the first season of the series and compared the translation of wordplay in DVD and amateur, also known as fan and crowdsourced, subtitles for her Bachelor's thesis. She did not, however, count the amount of wordplay or the translation strategies used in the material. Savilampi (2016) did not concentrate on wordplay in his Bachelor's thesis, but compared the translation techniques used in, similarly to Paajoki (2012), DVD and crowdsourced subtitles of one episode of the seventh season. Hyyryläinen (2017) wrote her Master's thesis on verbal humour, or wordplay and allusions, and its translation in the Finnish subtitles of the series' first and third seasons. She found that, in accordance with her hypothesis, more than half of the wordplay in the original dialogue was translated as puns. However, Paajoki (2012) and Hyyryläinen's (2017) studies differ from mine as they neither compared the subtitles on DVD and Netflix nor utilised the same translation strategies. They did not examine the effect of the wordplay type on its translation strategy either. As Hyyryläinen (2017) watched the first and third seasons for her thesis, I have decided to choose the second and fourth season as my material to fill the gap in the literature.

In the following two sections I present my method and material. After this, I examine the different definitions, categories, and translation strategies of wordplay, or puns. The relationship between wordplay and humour, what is meant by translation and translatability in the context of this thesis, and the effect the wordplay type may have on

its translation are also explained in the next chapter. In the third chapter, I continue discussing the theoretical framework of this thesis by focusing on subtitling, including its constraints and restrictions and translating puns in subtitles. Thereafter, I provide categorised examples of wordplay found in the series and analyse them by explaining why they can be considered wordplay, what kind of puns they are and speculate what has affected their translation. In addition, I compare the Netflix and DVD subtitles in the analysis. Finally, in the fifth and the last chapter I draw conclusions based on what I have found and analysed in my research, discuss its limitations and give suggestions for further studies.

1.1 Method

The puns were identified with the help of a theoretical framework of wordplay and were categorised into lexical, collocational, and phrasal homonyms, paronyms, homophones, homographs, allusive wordplay and portmanteaux. The three types of homonyms are taken from a classification by Gottlieb (1997a: 210), while paronyms, homophones and homographs belong to Delabastita's (1996: 128) typology. Allusive wordplay and portmanteaux are based on Leppihalme's (1996: 199–202) and Nash's (1985: 143) definitions, respectively. Also the possible reasons for how the type of wordplay affects its translation were analysed with the help of the aforementioned theoretical framework of puns. The categorisation of translation strategies that was used in the analysis of how the puns have been translated is a combination of Gottlieb's (1997a: 210) and Delabastita's (1996: 134) classification and is the following²:

- 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect
- 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect
- 3) Replaced by non-wordplay

² See the second and fourth chapters for examples of the categorisation of wordplay and its translation strategies.

- 4) Replaced by related rhetorical device
- 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue

1.2 Material

The material for the analysis chapter of this thesis was collected by watching the second and fourth seasons of *How I Met Your Mother* and their 46 episodes twice on both Netflix and DVD. I wrote down every wordplay with the sentence it appeared in, which was facilitated by the series' laugh track. Every instance of wordplay was, as can be expected, accompanied with canned laughter for in comedy series such as *How I Met Your Mother* the purpose of wordplay is, naturally, mainly to elicit laughter. In addition, I noted the time at which the pun appeared in order to be able to easily return to it if necessary.

When I encountered a pun, I paused the episode, rewound and listened to the dialogue again. In order to be certain that I had everything right, I also checked the English subtitles, which are intended for the deaf or hard of hearing, and were available on Netflix. After watching all the episodes, collecting every single wordplay I noticed in the two media and writing them down, I categorised them first according to their type and then their translation strategy. I also examined the translated puns and arranged them by their type.

There were altogether 241 puns in the source text. 151 instances were found to be homonymic wordplay, of which 79 were lexical, 42 collocational, and 30 phrasal. Other types of wordplay consisted of 37 paronyms, six homophones, four homographs, 28 allusive wordplay, and 15 portmanteaux.

1.3 *How I Met Your Mother*

How I Met Your Mother premiered on September 19, 2005 and continued for nine seasons and 208 episodes until March 31, 2014. The episodes were approximately 22 minutes

long and aired on the American channel CBS. Craig Thomas and Carter Bays, who were also its executive producers and frequent writers, created the series. The American series was popular in the United States as it often had eight to nine million viewers on average. Furthermore, it was nominated for 118 awards, of which it won 25, including ten of the prestigious Primetime Emmy Awards. (Internet Movie Database 2020) In Finland, the situational comedy has been broadcast in its entirety on the channels MTV3, Sub and FOX.

As a situational comedy *How I Met Your Mother* has a recurring main cast whom the audience follows through the nine seasons. The central character and narrator is Ted Mosby (played by Josh Radnor, voiceover by Bob Saget), who in 2030 starts telling his two teenage children “the incredible story” of how he met their mother. This long, complicated story is shown to the audience through a series of flashbacks, which begin in 2005 and end nine years later. The identity of the titular mother is, however, revealed a little earlier, namely in the last episode of the penultimate season.

In the first episode Ted is a single 27-year-old architect living on New York City’s Manhattan together with his two best friends from college, Lily Aldrin (Alyson Hannigan), a kindergarten teacher, and Marshall Eriksen (Jason Segel), a law student, who are also a couple. The two get engaged, which makes Ted want to settle down even more. Another friend of Ted’s is Barney Stinson (Neil Patrick Harris), a womaniser. The last one to join this group of friends is Robin Scherbatsky (Cobie Smulders), a Canadian news reporter. Ted is determined to find the one true love of his life, which could be called the main plot of *How I Met Your Mother*. The series also follows the various life experiences of Ted’s four best friends mainly through their late 20s and early 30s. In the following chapter, the theoretical framework of wordplay will be discussed with examples from the series.

2 WORDPLAY

As wordplay is a complex phenomenon, it has been studied from, for example, cultural, socio-cultural, cognitive and psychological perspectives. The main focus has, however, been on its linguistic aspect which is what will be concentrated on also in this thesis. In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework of wordplay: its definition, categorisation, translatability, how its type may affect its translation and translation strategies for it. Moreover, I briefly examine the relationship between wordplay and humour.

2.1 Defining wordplay and pun

First of all, it is important to mention that some scholars do not see the terms pun and wordplay as synonyms and think about them, for instance, as a subcategory of wordplay, which is what Leppihalme (1997a: 142) does by considering puns a subclass of homophonous or paronymic wordplay. Chiaro (1992: 4) also classifies puns as a subcategory of wordplay. However, other scholars, such as Delabastita (1993, 1996, 2004), Gottlieb (1997a), Redfern (1984) and Vandaele (2011), use the two terms interchangeably. Nevertheless, Schröter (2005: 85) calls Delabastita “the translation scholar who has had the greatest influence on how the discipline looks on wordplay”. Indeed, Delabastita’s work on wordplay, such as his study on them in Shakespeare’s plays and his editing of two collections of essays about the concept, has been referenced multiple times in other studies and articles concerning wordplay. Therefore, it makes, in my opinion, sense to adopt his way of using the two terms interchangeably. After this clarification, we can examine the definition of wordplay, or pun.

According to Dirk Delabastita (2004: 601), wordplay is notoriously difficult to define and classify. Other scholars who have discussed wordplay appear to agree, such as Leppihalme (1997a: 141), who believes that it is challenging to define wordplay exhaustively since it is such an eclectic phenomenon. Many scholars have even chosen not to search for a definition of wordplay that would allow differentiating between it and

non-wordplay because of the pun's difficult nature (Delabastita 1997: 2). The scholars who have decided to continue the search have different definitions and classifications for the term as it is a widely investigated issue especially in the field of literary and, more recently, also audiovisual translation.

The challenges of defining wordplay are further illustrated by the various differing definitions found in dictionaries. For instance, it is defined as “playful use of words: verbal wit” (Merriam-Webster 2020), “the activity of joking about the meanings of words, especially in an intelligent way” (Cambridge Dictionary 2020), and “the action of playing with words; witty use of words, esp. of verbal ambiguities; an instance of this, a play on words, a pun” (Oxford English Dictionary 2020). None of these definitions state what wordplay precisely is and are rather vague and even confusing because, for example, one can have problems knowing what playing with or on words exactly means and what could be considered intelligent, playful or witty use of words. Furthermore, wordplay that appears in comedies is not always what could be called exactly witty or intelligent, at least not if you ask the other characters: sometimes they react to another character's “playful use of words” in a disapproving or otherwise negative way, such as by groaning or rolling their eyes, and therefore see it as a demonstration of, for instance, stupidity or being annoying instead of verbal wit. Even if these other characters in comedy series treated wordplay as witty or intelligent, thus making the dictionary definitions accurate, it can be argued that the definitions are not clear enough. In addition, too many questions arise from them, such as whether wordplay has to always be witty or intelligent in order to be considered wordplay.

On the other hand, the second definition in Oxford English Dictionary (2020), also known as OED (henceforth used in references), does mention that verbal ambiguities are used in wordplay, which is what many scholars who have written about wordplay emphasise. Żyśko (2017: 7) explains that a linguistic item is ambiguous when it has “one representation at one level (e.g. phonetically) and more than one representation at another level (e.g. semantically)”. In addition, for instance Gottlieb (1997a: 168) considers verbal ambiguities a central feature of wordplay that often includes words that are ambiguous in the sense that they share multiple meanings. Low (2010: 62) has the same opinion as he

claims that a verbal ambiguity is essential to every pun. Chiaro (1992: 43) concurs by saying that the crux of wordplay is the two-facedness of sounds, words, parts of words and syntactic structures.

However, none of these statements about the ambiguity of words is comprehensive enough, and Attardo (1994: 133–134) and Ritchie (2004: 112–116) note that ambiguity is not enough to consider a word a pun. A more elaborate and precise definition is therefore needed in order to properly locate the instances of wordplay in the source and target texts, that is, the English dialogue and the Finnish subtitles of *How I Met Your Mother* on Netflix and DVD, and analyse them as the material of this study. As Delabastita (1997: 208) points out, this operational definition of a pun needs to include “criteria for describing and comparing puns in terms of (say) their formal structure, semantic structure, underlying linguistic mechanism, textual function, and/or any other aspect deemed relevant to the comparison”. Otherwise differentiating between wordplay and phenomena that can be considered related to wordplay, such as alliteration and rhyme, would be no doubt difficult.

Multiple scholars have attempted to define wordplay. These scholars with differing definitions of wordplay include, for example, Chiaro, Newmark, and Redfern. Chiaro (1992: 2, 11) defines wordplay rather broadly as it including “every conceivable way in which language is used with the intent to amuse” and it playing “on the knowledge which is shared between sender and recipient”. Newmark (1988: 211), in turn, proposes that a pun can be made by using one, two or a group of words “with the same sound [...] in their two possible senses”, while Redfern (1984: 15, 82) calls puns “a verbal practical joke” and also states that they are “a kind of code, which the reader, spectator or hearer is invited to crack”. However, according to Delabastita (2004: 601), most of the differing definitions of wordplay are similar in the sense that they “agree on the basic principle that all forms of punning directly or indirectly derive their special effect from a specific combination of differences of meaning and likenesses of form”. Leppihalme (1997c: 3) additionally notes that the number of definitions is so great because they are based on the definer’s own views of wordplay and specific needs for it.

Perhaps the most precise, comprehensive and often-cited definition and therefore possibly the most suitable one for finding puns in the original English dialogue and Finnish subtitles has been given by Delabastita (1996: 128), who has studied wordplay extensively (emphasis original):

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*.

In other words, as a textual phenomenon wordplay has to be in a special or abnormal context in order for the relevant multiple meanings or associations to be activated from all the available ones and for the semantic or pragmatic effect – which is nearly always making the viewers laugh or at least smile in the case of situational comedies – to be created. In addition, the two or more linguistic structures have to be placed near each other or otherwise the confrontation might not be clear enough. Puns could be based on phonological, graphological, morphological, syntactic and two kinds of lexical structures, which are idioms and polysemy (Delabastita 1996: 129–130; Delabastita 1997: 2). Phonological and graphological wordplay are based on pronunciation and spelling, while most puns that utilise morphological structures are made with derivatives and compounds “in a way which is etymologically ‘incorrect’ but semantically effective”. In syntactic wordplay phrases or sentences can be understood in more than one way. Puns that exploit lexical structures can be based on either idioms or two words that look the same but have a different meaning. (Delabastita 1996: 130–131)

Furthermore, when Delabastita (1996: 131) emphasises that the effect of the pun must be “communicatively significant”, he distinguishes between intentional and accidental wordplay, which appears from time to time and could be, for example, only slips of the tongue. This view is contrary to that of Chiaro’s (1992: 17–20), who thinks that also slips of the tongue and pronouncing words wrongly count as wordplay. It can be argued that in situational comedies, wordplay is always clearly intentional, or communicatively significant, since its purpose in that context is to create a humorous effect. Moreover, puns are often accompanied either with a laugh track or the reactions of other characters or both of them, all of which emphasise the intentionality of wordplay. In other words, if

slips of the tongue and wrong pronunciations appeared in comedy series, they would always be intentional instead of accidental because of their function, provided that, of course, they fit the definition of wordplay. Consequently, there is no need to discuss the difference between intentional and accidental wordplay further.

However, although puns are used mainly with the intent to amuse (see Chiaro 1992: 2; Newmark 1988: 211; Winter-Froemel 2016: 13) in situational comedies, they can have many other additional functions. These functions include persuading, argumentation, drawing attention to something, characterisation, and making taboos more acceptable or avoiding censorship by not talking directly about them (Delabastita 1993: 139, 150; Leppihalme 1997c: 3)³. One pun can also have multiple different functions (Leppihalme 1997c: 3). In situational comedies, other, less important functions of wordplay are likely to be characterisation, drawing attention and making taboos more acceptable. For instance, in the case of *How I Met Your Mother*, the womaniser Barney's puns are often of sexual nature. This is clearly meant to be an important part of his character, and presumably at the same time another purpose of his sexual wordplay is to make it more acceptable to talk openly about sexual matters. One example of characterising and talking about taboos is the sexual pun in the following example 1, which has been taken from the twenty-first episode (E21) of the second season (S02):

(1) S02E21 ST

Barney: Hey, you wanna know what line doesn't work on a harp player?
 "Hey baby, wanna **pluck**?"

The wordplay is based on the similarity between the verbs "pluck" and "fuck". This and other types of puns are examined in section 2.3.

³ For over ten additional functions, see Thaler 2016: 51–52.

2.2 Wordplay and humour

As has been previously mentioned, the main purpose of wordplay in situational comedies is, especially together with canned laughter, to be humorous and make the audience laugh or at least smile. Hence the concepts of wordplay and humour are closely related and overlapping. Schröter (2005: 55), who studied the dubbing and subtitling of language-play⁴ in animated films in his doctoral dissertation, thinks that it is necessary to briefly distinguish between the two related subjects. As I neither analyse the translation of humour nor judge what is humorous, it is, in my opinion, enough that I discuss the relationship between humour and wordplay briefly as well.

One connection to wordplay is that some humour theories define humour through laughter and thus stress the function, or effect, of humour (Schröter 2005: 59). Furthermore, like wordplay, humour is a widely investigated issue that is very difficult to define. The definitions that exist often partially conflict each other. (Schröter 2005: 56, 71) It appears that these difficulties of defining humour have not changed since the early 2000s: Chiaro (2018: 8) claims that even though everyone knows what humour is, “the concept itself is not only difficult to pin down, but also to unequivocally define”. No unified definition of this “linguistic, semiotic, cognitive and social phenomenon” has been reached. As a result, scholars have instead concentrated on “unveiling the mechanisms that [it] entails and its function(s) within the context and text it occurs”. (Dore 2020: 1)

Even though there is no one definition of humour that scholars have agreed on, there is a widely accepted division into humour that relies on language and humour that does not. The first type has two subcategories, referential and verbal humour, the latter of which includes wordplay, or puns. The second type may be based on, for instance, visual or acoustic effects. (Schröter 2005: 70) Jokes that contain referential humour are, according

⁴ Schröter (2005: 84) sees wordplay as “a very important and prominent subcategory” of language-play. He considers, for example, rhyme and alliteration as other categories of language-play (ibid. 238).

to Attardo (1994: 95), “based exclusively on the meaning of the text and do not make any reference to the phonological realization of the lexical items (or of other units in the text)”.

What appears to be especially related to wordplay is the oft-cited General Theory of Verbal Humour (Attardo & Raskin 1991), which is a revised and expanded version of the Semantic Script Theory of Humour (Raskin 1985). The General Theory of Verbal Humour postulates that a so-called script opposition is essential to verbal humour. There are two overlapping scripts, one of which is clear and shielding the other script that is not immediately visible. The reason why this theory and wordplay are related is that the idea of the script opposition is similar to the linguistic ambiguity of puns: there are usually two linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings, one of which is clearer than the other and thus shielding it. Chiaro (2018: 18) appears to agree as she also mentions the script opposition and two meanings when writing about puns. What is more, according to the General Theory of Verbal Humour, jokes are similar to each other because they all rely on up to six knowledge resources, one of which handles “[p]uns of all sorts and all configurations”. This Language knowledge resource consists of information about how often units and clusters of units occur “at each linguistic level (i.e., phonemes and clusters of phonemes, as well as the frequency of occurrence of morphemes, phrases, etc.)”. (Attardo 2017: 126–129) The information about the frequency of the aforementioned units and clusters of units helps with recognising wordplay.

After this brief discussion on the similarities between wordplay and humour, we can move to examining different categories for wordplay.

2.3 Categorising wordplay

Similarly to the varying definitions of wordplay, there are also several ways of categorising its types. Two different scholars may place the same type of wordplay into different categories or have differing names for what is essentially the same kind of pun. Furthermore, some of the classifications include more than ten types, while other

scholars' categorisation consists of less than five. Wordplay is such a complex phenomenon that using as many main and subclasses as possible for it may seem desirable, yet this may not be the best option since a broad categorisation could lead to unclear shared characteristics of the classes. Classifications by Delabastita (1996: 134), Gottlieb (1997a: 210) and Nash (1996: 199–202) are presented in this section as their categories will be used in the analysis of the material of this study.

Delabastita (1996: 134) is one of the scholars whose typology of puns is restricted. He categorises wordplay into four different types: homonymy, homophony, homography, and paronymy. Two words that have exactly the same sound and spelling but not the same meaning are homonyms. A homonymic relationship between the two meanings of the adjective “sick” in the senses “to have a cold” and “be tired of something” can be seen in example 2:

(2) S02E11 ST

Robin: You're **sick**.

Barney: Do you know what, I am sick, **sick** of you telling me I'm sick.

Homophones are different words that have identical pronunciation. This is illustrated in the following example 3:

(3) S04E08 ST

Barney: It breathes **fire, Marshall**.

Marshall: **Fire marshal**.

In this example, “fire, Marshall” and “fire marshal” have the difference of one letter and one comma, but the proper name and the noun “marshal” are said identically as their pronunciation is /'mɑ:ʃəl/. In turn, homographic words are spelled identically but pronounced differently (Delabastita 1996: 134). They are unlikely to appear in television series as their spelling is the same, but their sound is not, and therefore they rely more on sight than hearing. Nevertheless, there were instances of homographs in the material. One of the homographs can be seen in the below example 4, in which the wordplay is based

on the two different ways “Christmas” can be said. Lily has taken down the Christmas decorations in her, Marshall and Ted’s apartment after getting angry with Ted. Marshall, who loves the decorations, is unaware of what has happened, and Ted is trying to make him think that Christmas is not about decorations. Marshall has just asked “What else would it be about?” before Ted’s line.

(4) S02E11 ST

Ted: Try the birth of Christ. You know, **Christmas**. **Christ Mas** [sic], which means “More Christ” to our Spanish friends.

The festival in the above example is written identically but pronounced differently. The “mas” in “Christmas” is namely pronounced /məʃ/, while the pronunciation for the Spanish adjective “más” is “/ mas/”.

The definition of paronymy, the fourth category in Delabastita’s classification, is different from the previous three types of wordplay in the sense that paronyms have slight differences in both spelling and pronunciation and are therefore either “near-homographs or “near-homophones” (Delabastita 1993: 80). This is arguably very vague as it raises questions about what kind of graphemic and phonemic differences can exactly be considered slight and whether there is “a minimum number of formal characteristics (e.g. phonemes) that the components have to share for there to be ‘sufficient’ paronymy”. However, Delabastita (1993: 83) does not believe that “a wordplay definition that can guarantee clear-cut boundaries” is possible. He goes on to say that there is no limit for these differences and instead one has to understand paronymy as a continuum and look at the textual context of the words that are in the communicatively significant confrontation. This principle can be easily applied to *How I Met Your Mother*. For example, the surrounding words and the canned laughter, which can be heard after “Rock and Roland” and “Roland”, make it clear that punning is happening in the following line:

(5) S02E07 ST

Barney: Rock and **Roland**. Warsaw is the capital of what? **Roland**.

Just before this line, Robin gets mistakenly called “Roland” which Barney starts immediately making fun of. There are two instances of paronymy in the above example, both of which are easily recognisable: the first one is based on the phrase “rock and roll” and the second on the similarities between “Roland” and “Poland”.

In addition, Delabastita (1996: 128) differentiates between vertical and horizontal wordplay. In the former, the linguistic structures are co-present in the same place of text: only one of the meanings is visible and therefore the receiver has to recognise the other sense or senses through their own knowledge or mental association. In the latter, as the communicatively significant confrontation is brought about by linguistic structures occurring one after another in the text, the receiver should immediately be able to realise what is included in the wordplay. Vertical and horizontal puns have also been called implicit and explicit puns, respectively (Offord 1997: 234). Similarly, Winter-Froemel (2016: 18) names them “wordplay in *absentia*” and “wordplay in *praesentia*” (italicisation original). She (2016: 29–30) additionally notes that the two “represent basic modalities of wordplay, involving fundamentally different forms of cognitive processing”, in which the pun has to be either recognised or decoded. The following two examples 6 and 7 illustrate vertical and horizontal puns, respectively:

(6) S04E24 ST

Barney: Say you and I went suit-shopping and you happened upon a beautiful suit, a beautiful Canadian suit. **Double-breasted**. Mmm! You try it on, but it’s not exactly the right fit for you. [...] Then I try it on.

The context for the above example is that Barney has fallen in love with Robin, who is Canadian. As Ted and Robin were previously in a relationship, Barney is trying to indirectly ask Ted for permission to date her. The audience has to recognise that, in this context, the adjective “double-breasted” is a homonym that refers to both a garment that has buttons symmetrically on both sides (OED 2020) and someone who has two breasts.

(7) S04E02 ST

Lily: After all these interviews, after all these disappointments, you deserve a triumphant **mouthful** of meat.

Barney: You know what else is a **mouthful**? All that double-talk other banks give you.

Before Lily's line Barney was talking about a new bank for which he is working. When he repeats the word "mouthful" and answers his own question, the noun becomes a homonym for it gets the second meaning of "a word or phrase which is difficult to articulate" (OED 2020).

Gottlieb's (1997a: 210) categories are, according to himself, based on Hausmann (1974). His categorisation is also very similar to that of Delabastita's in the sense that three of their categories and their definitions – homophones, homographs, and paronyms – are exactly the same. The only difference in their classifications is that Gottlieb divides homonyms into three different subclasses. The defining characteristics of all three categories of homonyms are the same, that is, two expressions with different meanings and the same pronunciation and spelling, but the central features at play are different. In lexical homonymy, the ambiguity is caused by a single word, whereas collocational homonymy means that it is the word in context that is ambiguous, and in phrasal homonymy the whole clause could be understood in more ways than one. (Gottlieb 1997a: 210) As there are over a hundred homonyms in the material, it makes sense to use all these three subclasses in the categorisation of the source- and target-text puns. They may namely be of help when trying to determine whether the wordplay type affects its translation.

An instance of collocational homonymy was already presented in this section: example 2 consisted of the collocations "be sick" and "be sick of something". Lexical homonymy can be seen in the following example 8:

(8) S04E16 ST

Lily: **Lilies**, clever. I'm sorry, I don't have a **scooter** for you.

In the above example, Lily has just met her old boyfriend, whose nickname is Scooter and who has brought her lilies. As only the two nouns, “lilies” and “scooter”, can be understood in more ways than one, this example belongs to the category of lexical homonymy. In contrast, in the next example the whole clause can be understood in more ways than one:

(9) S02E10 ST

James: You know, speaking of **things, that would look good wrapped around you**, have you met my straight brother, Barney?

James, Barney’s brother, has just complimented a woman’s scarf. The clause “things, that would look good wrapped around you” refers to both the scarf and Barney and is therefore ambiguous.

Some scholars use the term polysemy instead of homonymy or have separate categories for them. Polysemy, in which the words that are in a punning conjunction are pronounced and spelled identically, differs from homonymy only in one way which is, according to Delabastita (1996: 130), the fact that there is an etymological relationship between the two words which consequently have one or several related meanings, whereas homonyms have unrelated meanings and origins. Winter-Froemel (2016: 31) presents another criterion to differentiate between polysemy and homonymy: the motivational aspect, in which polysemous words are only thought to have a semantic or a cognitive connection. A classic example of a word that has two or more unrelated senses without any etymological relationship is “bank”. Two of its main senses can describe, depending on the context, both a financial institution and an edge of river. (Schröter 2005: 104) Nevertheless, Delabastita (1997: 5) argues that it is sometimes difficult to know the true origin of a word, especially if the meanings have changed in the course of time. That is why he does not consider the difference between homonymy and polysemy straightforward. His approach to polysemy and homonymy is adopted in this thesis as no puns whose form and pronunciation are the same without an etymological relationship were found in the source text.

Another category that is useful in studying what kinds of source-text puns especially survive the translation is allusive wordplay. The category is provided by Leppihalme (1996: 199–202), who studied allusive wordplay and allusions, both of which require culture-specific knowledge in order for them to be understood. She explains that in allusive wordplay a frame is modified and that a frame means “a combination of words that is more or less fixed in the minds of a group of language users”, such as catchphrases, idioms, proverbs or allusions to various sources. The modification of a frame can be divided into two categories: lexical substitutions, in which one essential word in the frame is replaced, and syntactic modifications, which are rarer as they could make recognising the source of the allusion virtually impossible since in them so much is changed compared to the original. Also both types could be involved in one modification of a frame. (Leppihalme 1996: 199–202) Allusions are references to books, films and celebrities, for instance. Its categories are proper-name and key-phrase allusions, meaning that the allusions either contain a proper name or not. Both of these types can further be divided into regular and modified allusions. The former is “an unmarked category of ‘prototypical’ allusions”, while the latter consists of “allusions containing a ‘twist’, that is, an alteration or modification of preformed material” (Leppihalme 1997b: 10). Allusive puns, of course, belong to the latter category as they consist of both an allusion and wordplay, which is the twist. An example of allusive wordplay is illustrated in this example 10:

(10) S02E15 ST

Lily: Vera **Wang**!
 Robin: You said “**wang**”.

Lily is looking at wedding dresses in the above scene and notices a dress by Vera Wang, a famous American fashion designer. Robin is laughing at designer’s name, thus bringing attention to its homonymic nature: in addition to being a common Asian surname, it has the colloquial meaning of a male genital.

Nash (1985: 139–145) is one of the scholars with many categories: in addition to homonyms and homophones, his classification consists of homophonic phrases,

homonymic phrases, mimes, mimetic phrases, contacts and blends, pseudomorphs, portmanteaux, etymological puns, bilingual puns and pun-metaphors. As was mentioned in the beginning of this section, names of pun types differ between scholars: what Nash calls mimes are what Delabastita (1996: 134) and Gottlieb (1997a: 210) define as paronyms. Since portmanteau is the only type that will be used in this thesis, Nash's other categories of puns will not be explained in detail. Nash (1985: 143) explains that the term portmanteau was first used by Lewis Carroll in his novel *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) "as a label for the coinage that packs two meanings into one word", one of which can be seen in the below example 11:

(11) S02E01 ST

Barney: The average male brain can only store a finite number of boob images or "**b-pegs**" and your hard drive's filled to the capacity with Lily's.

Instead of jpeg, which is a widely used digital image format, Barney says "b-pegs", having combined the nouns "boob" and "jpegs".

In conclusion, the material of this study will be categorised into lexical, collocational, and phrasal homonyms, homophones, homographs, paronyms, allusive wordplay, and portmanteaux.

2.4 Wordplay in translation

Before examining the translatability of wordplay, how the wordplay type affects its translation, and the strategies developed for translating wordplay, all of which will be done in the next three subsections, it is necessary to first define the term "translation". This issue is debated in translation studies in the sense that there are multiple theories about what translation is and how translating should be done. Nevertheless, it makes sense to define translation through subtitling as this study focuses on wordplay in them and audiovisual translation is a subdiscipline of translation studies. Therefore, in this thesis, translation is seen as a Finnish rendering that is in the form of one or two lines of text and

that is ideally a semantically adequate account of the English verbal messages (Schröter 2005: 26; Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 8). More detailed definitions of subtitling and a discussion on it can be found in the next chapter.

2.4.1 The translatability of wordplay

As Delabastita (1993: 171) puts it, “the untranslatability of the pun appears to be one of the obligatory *topoi* in any discourse on the subject”. Therefore, the (un)translatability of wordplay is discussed also here. First of all, it is clear that wordplay is translatable at least to some extent or otherwise it would not have made sense to choose the translation of wordplay as a subject for a thesis. Chiaro (2008: 580) defines translatability as “the capacity of some kind of meaning⁵ being transferred from one language to another without undergoing radical change”. When discussing translatability in the context of wordplay, it appears that it is, in general, assumed that “the target language cannot provide, in the same way the source language does, the type of specific building material that would be required to create an exact equivalent of the original pun” (Schröter 2004: 98).

Some scholars indeed argue that “real” translations of puns are impossible or that puns are simply untranslatable (see e.g. Delabastita 1993: 177–178). In contrast, others disagree completely with the claim about untranslatability and think that there is always or at least almost always a way to translate a pun (e.g. Delabastita 1994: 223; Hofstadter 1997: 404; Landheer 1989: 41). Low (2010: 59) is of the opinion that regarding puns as untranslatable is due to either the translators’ incompetence, meaning that humorous content is not translated with the same effect because the translators have not done enough serious work, or the combination of translators’ narrow view of translation and an unrealistic standard of success. Chiaro (1992: 85) appears to think this way also by saying

⁵ Meaning is a controversial concept in translation studies (see e.g. Malmkjær 2011).

that if a source-text pun does not work in the target text, translators could often be afraid to be so unfaithful in their translation that they would substitute the source-text pun with a completely different instance of wordplay in the target text.

Delabastita (1994: 229) sees the effect of the wordplay as the most important factor in their translation and states that translators are allowed and should “depart from source text structures for the sake of recreating certain effects”. He (1996: 135) additionally proposes that paradoxically, the only way to be faithful to the source text is being unfaithful to it. In other words, the same linguistic or formal structures do not have to be used in the target text in order to translate wordplay. Similarly, Newmark (1988: 211) suggests that in cases where the pun’s only function is to raise laughter, there is sometimes a possibility to translate it with “another pun on a word with a different but associated meaning” and therefore “compensate” the wordplay in the source text. Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 223) also agree as they say that one way to achieve a similar effect could be considering puns in their co-text and thus finding a solution in, for instance, the register of the speakers even though this might lead to semantic shifts. These shifts may also concern the pun’s “immediate or wider textual environment” in case the target-text pun requires a new contextual setting in order to work (Delabastita 1996: 135).

Moreover, Gottlieb (1997a: 215) stresses that “what is funny in the original should also be (made) funny in the translated version”. In other words, there should be functional equivalence⁶ between the source text and the target text. Chiaro (1992: 86) appears to agree as she mentions functional equivalence that is gained when a joke is replaced with another joke. The translated joke does not have to be as funny as the joke in the source text: translators should only “deliver, broadly speaking, the same joke” (Low 2010: 60). Nonetheless, prioritising the effect of the wordplay and using linguistic structures that differ from the source text can sometimes be impossible in audiovisual translation as

⁶ Another name for functional equivalence is dynamic equivalence. The term was introduced by Nida (1964): if it is not possible or desirable to translate the form of the source text and thus maintain formal equivalence, the text may instead be translated with its effect in mind. This way the target text has the same function as the source text.

opposed to literary translation, in which the source text is invisible to its audience, thus making it more possible for changes to be made. The reasons for why audiovisual texts are different will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter.

2.4.2 The effect of the wordplay type

Several scholars have offered theories about how the type of the pun may affect its translation. Delabastita (1997: 10) claims that it is a fact that certain types of wordplay, some more than others, tend to “resist (to a greater or lesser extent, depending on many circumstances) certain kinds of translation”. Gottlieb (1997a: 217), who studied wordplay in the Danish subtitles of a British television comedy, claims that homophony is often thought as “too language-specific to be retained in translation” because it is likely that two words that sound similar in any source language sound more different in any target language. However, if the languages are historically related, it is more likely that the instance of wordplay can be translated “with minor shifts” (Delabastita 1996: 135). Gottlieb (1997a: 211) additionally hypothesises that homographic wordplay is another type that is most likely to be lost in translation since it is language-specific. Homographs may resist translation also because it is unlikely that two different languages have identically spelled words “in (nearly) the same semantic fields”. In other words, the phonological and graphemic levels differ between two separate languages. In contrast, pun types that may be retained in translation are paronyms and homonyms as they “allow for greater differences between the core elements played with” and may therefore be less language-specific than homophones and homographs. (Gottlieb 1997a: 211)

Delabastita (1996: 135) apparently supports Gottlieb’s (1997a: 211) view about the translation of homonyms for he writes that polysemes – which are considered synonymous with homonyms in this study – are “somehow rooted in extralingual reality” and may consequently occasionally be translated as target-text wordplay “with little loss even between historically unrelated languages”. Another factor that may affect the translation of homonyms is whether or not the source and target languages belong to what Delabastita (1993: 241–242) calls the Western society as “certain experiences and, therefore, certain instances” of homonymy may be widespread within it. He (1993: 233)

also insists that, statistically, it is easier to translate paronymy than homonymy or homophony because “[l]anguages contain far more pairs of paronyms” than of homonyms or homophones. In addition, Delabastita (1993: 233) claims that the easiness of translating a portmanteau depends on the “degree of overlap between its two components”.

However, in contrast to what Gottlieb (1997a: 211) and Delabastita (1993: 241–242; 1996: 135) hypothesise, Alexieva (1997: 140) points out that polysemes in the source language may not be polysemes in the target language or if they are, they may be polysemous in a different way. In addition, Delabastita (1996: 136) suggests that interlingual borrowings, especially the ones with Graeco-Latin origins, can be found in both source and target languages. In addition to loanwords, semantic borrowing between languages affects “the ‘translatability’ of wordplay” in some cases. In this kind of linguistic borrowing, the meaning of a word in one language is changed because of the influence of some other language. The change usually adds a new meaning to the existing ones and thus makes the word more verbally ambiguous. (Delabastita 1993: 245–246)

Whether or not the pun contains an allusion influences its translation. As allusive wordplay requires culture-specific knowledge in addition to consisting of words whose more or less similar forms and meanings are in a confrontation, the challenge of translating it may be even bigger than other categories of puns (Schröter 2005: 104). Of course, culture-bound linguistic items, or realia, are seen also in other types of wordplay. In the following example 12, “promise ring” and “homecoming dress” are items that do not exist in the Finnish culture. Marshall did not participate in a fight, unlike Ted and Barney, and is trying to say what he did instead of the fight, but the others are not listening to him and are instead making fun of him being feminine.

(12) S04E10 ST

Marshall: I’ll tell you what I was doing.

Robin: The captain of the football team, because he gave you his promise ring and you looked so pretty in your open-back homecoming dress?

Realia are related to what Alexieva (1997) calls domains of knowledge and experience. They are also another factor that may affect how wordplay can be translated. She theorises that the domains of human knowledge and experience can be associated with identical or similar strings of letters or sounds and their different meanings and that the confrontation in wordplay results also from between two or more of these domains. (Alexieva 1997: 138) What furthermore makes translating wordplay difficult is the asymmetry between languages, or interlingual asymmetry. This exists in addition to the asymmetric relationship between a language and the world, which was briefly mentioned in the introduction of this thesis. (Alexieva 1997: 138)

In addition to interlingual asymmetry, the nature of the target language has an effect on which wordplay types can be used in the translation: according to Delabastita (1993: 231), “languages tend to exhibit a propensity for giving rise to particular types of wordplay on the basis of their structural peculiarities”. In Finnish, for instance, words do not change as easily from one word class to another as they do in English, and many puns in Finnish are homonyms, or polysemes if the two are differentiated (Leppihalme 1996: 212–213; Leppihalme 1997a: 142). In addition, homophones and homographs are very rare in standard Finnish as it is not possible for non-inflected Finnish words to have identical pronunciation but different spelling or identical form but different sound. This is because Finnish words are pronounced very regularly: as a rule, they are written as they are meant to be pronounced since Finnish is a phonetic language. Indeed, the target-text instances of wordplay did not contain any homophones or homographs. Furthermore, the material of this study demonstrates that, in addition to homonymy, also paronymic wordplay can be found in Finnish. Another factor that likely has an effect on the translation of wordplay from English to Finnish is the fact that Finnish words are inflected and modified depending on their roles in the sentence.

In conclusion, it appears that it is possible to translate wordplay if one’s view of translation is not narrow in the sense that only “exact mirroring of discrete items” is seen as translating (Chiaro 1992: 98). Indeed, Delabastita (1996: 127) states that the translatability of puns “depends on the type of translation (in terms of kinds and degrees of equivalence, as well as of genres and communicative situations)”. Moreover, Schröter

(2005: 103) notes that if replacing the puns in the source text is allowed in translating them, “[w]hat remains then, it seems, are essentially problems having to do with creativity, practicality, functions and quality, and these can of course often be serious”. He goes on to say that, nonetheless, the choices that translators are able to make are still restricted by certain constraints and influenced by various factors. The issue of translating wordplay will be discussed from other points of view in the next subsection, where the translation strategies of wordplay are examined, and in subsection 3.2.2, in which the focus is on subtitling puns.

2.4.3 Translation strategies for wordplay

While there are multiple definitions and categories for wordplay in addition to the ones already mentioned in the two previous sections, translation strategies for wordplay have not, oddly enough, been studied with similar intensity. In addition to defining and classifying wordplay, Delabastita (1996: 134) proposes a model of eight different strategies that can be used when translating wordplay in literary texts. Translation strategies refer to both the conscious decisions by the translator and descriptive categories for an analysis (Heibert 1993: 194). Puns can be translated interlingually in the following ways, two or more of which could in some cases be combined:

- 1) PUN → PUN: the source-text pun is translated by a target-language pun, which may be more or less different from the original wordplay in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or lexical function.
- 2) PUN → NON-PUN: the pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of 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’.
- 3) 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.

4) PUN → ZERO: the portion of text containing the pun is simply omitted.

5) 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”.

6) 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.

7) 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.

8) 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.

(Delabastita 1996: 134)

The technique of replacing an empty space in the source text with wordplay in the target text is almost impossible in audiovisual translation as, according to Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 9), the rhythm of the programme must be followed and most of everything that has been said in the dialogue must be translated as well and as comprehensively as possible. There is thus rarely time or even a possibility to add something completely new to the subtitles. In addition to ZERO → PUN, it is unlikely that its opposite, the strategy of PUN → ZERO is used in audiovisual translation for, again, subtitles must be in synchrony with the sound and image (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 9). Another reason for the likely rare use of omission is the laugh track, which forces the translator to use

some other strategy. The laugh track and the aforementioned demand for synchrony also make using the category of NON-PUN → PUN unlikely since the compensating pun would have to appear at the right time with the canned laughter. It might, moreover, be challenging to differentiate between a pun that is used as a compensatory device and new wordplay that exists for some other reason. Furthermore, editorial techniques cannot, naturally, be used as a translation strategy in audiovisual translation because of the numerous ways in which it differs from translating literature, which will be explained in the next chapter. Although this list of possible translation strategies has been utilised often, it is better for this study to use a typology that would be more suitable to subtitles.

In addition, by rendering wordplay by a related rhetorical device, translators can signal that they have detected the source-text pun. Delabastita (1993: 88) emphasises that all these and other wordplay related rhetorical devices are somewhat ambiguous in one way or another but still different from puns as their ambiguity “cannot be explained in terms of linguistic structure (phonology, lexicon, grammar)”.

Leppihalme (1997b) states that her three translation strategies for wordplay are based on Delabastita’s (1996: 134). They are the following (my translation):

- 1) Pun → pun at the same place or compensated somewhere else if necessary
- 2) Pun → related rhetorical device
- 3) Pun → zero or explained

These strategies do not appear to be suitable for the purposes of this thesis because of four reasons. Firstly, translating a pun at the place where it is in the source text is an entirely different translation strategy from having a compensatory pun somewhere else. Secondly, this is also the case with the third strategy. Thirdly, compensating and removing the pun completely can be expected to be relatively rare in audiovisual translation. Fourthly, as mentioned before, explaining the pun is not possible in subtitles. Hence, some other kinds of translation strategies are needed.

Leppihalme is not the only scholar whose categories of translation strategies are similar to Delabastita's. Gottlieb's translation strategies, which have been developed specifically for translating wordplay in subtitles, are also based on or inspired by Delabastita's (1996: 134), although Delabastita's name is not mentioned. According to Gottlieb (1997a: 210), puns could be:

- 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect
- 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect
- 3) Replaced by non-wordplay
- 4) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue
- 5) Inserted in different textual positions, where the target language renders it possible

Gottlieb does not give any more information about the strategies. Furthermore, in contrast to Delabastita and Leppihalme, there is no strategy in which source-text puns have been translated as wordplay related rhetorical devices. This could naturally be because the data for which Gottlieb developed his typology did not contain puns that were translated with wordplay related rhetorical devices. Hence, the strategy "Replaced by related rhetorical device", borrowed from Delabastita, could be added to the categorisation of the translation strategies. It appears that although Gottlieb (1997a: 216) did not include the strategy, he would approve of it as he believes that "[i]n a few situations even non-wordplay [...] may trigger the desired effect in the audience, and thus fulfil the function of the original wordplay". Rhetorical wordplay related devices may do exactly that. In addition, as explained before, having a pun in the source text as a compensatory device is unlikely in subtitles of a series with canned laughter. Therefore, the strategy of "5) Inserted in different textual positions, where the target language renders it possible" can be removed from the classification. As Gottlieb's strategies were created for the translation of wordplay in the subtitles, they are utilised in this thesis. Moreover, the emphasis that source-text puns can be translated as an adaptation in the target text "to maintain humorous effect" fits this study well since it is expected that the subtitlers prioritise translating puns in situational comedies, but it may not be possible to transfer the same meanings to the target text.

In conclusion, the translation strategies that are used in this study are the following:

- 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect
- 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect
- 3) Replaced by non-wordplay
- 4) Replaced by related rhetorical device
- 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue

Other categorisations have been done in addition to the three ones developed by Delabastita, Leppihalme, and Gottlieb by, for instance, Heibert (1993) and Low (2010).

3 AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

Audiovisual translation is a term that has been used since the 1980s. The first term, used in academic studies before videos and television became widespread, was movie translation (Gambier 2007: 76–77). After the premiere of the first film with some audible dialogue in 1927, the need for translating movies appeared as European or North American film directors wanted their work to be seen outside their own country (Schröter 2005: 4; Chiaro 2009: 141). Later, the term movie translation was replaced by language transfer, which concentrates mainly on language and thus ignores the visual and auditory sides of films and series. Finally, the term audiovisual translation became slowly popular. Alongside it another term, screen translation, has also been used to cover all translation that involves screens. Since audiovisual translation is the more commonly used term in Finland, it will be used in this thesis. (Gambier 2007: 76–77)

Subtitling, dubbing, and voice-over are the three most common forms of audiovisual translation, also known by the abbreviated form AVT (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 8). Other types of translations that include the image and sound in addition to verbal texts are, for instance, video game translations (Oittinen & Tuominen 2007: 11). In dubbing, the original dialogue is replaced with a recording in the target language. The dubbed audio is in synchrony with the actors' lip movements whenever mouths are seen on screen so that it looks like the actors are truly speaking the target language. Voice-over, like dubbing, involves a translated audio in the target language. Unlike dubbing, there is no lip synchronisation and the original dialogue is minimally audible in the background. Often the volume of the original soundtrack is increased to normal for a few seconds when the original dialogue starts, after which its audio is reduced, and the translated recording can be heard. The translation finishes earlier than the original speech, and the audio of the source language can be heard again at a normal volume. (Díaz Cintas 2009: 4–5) In addition, voice-over can be used to mean the translation of the narrator's speech in documentaries. In that case, the source language is completely replaced with the target language. In Finland, subtitling has been the norm for over 50 years and the aforementioned two main forms of audiovisual translation are used only in two cases: in children's programmes, which are dubbed, and in television documentaries, some of

which have a voice-over in Finnish. Therefore, dubbing or voice-over will not be discussed further.

Chiaro (2009: 150) claims that the most significant advantage of subtitling is that subtitles do not affect the source language in any way. Another benefit is that audiences can always listen to the original dialogue that is always present. This is useful to people who are familiar with the source language since they are able to “follow the acoustics”. (Chiaro 2009: 150) In addition, subtitling is much cheaper than dubbing in places such as Finland and other Nordic countries where the number of potential viewers of films or series is relatively small and therefore hiring voice actors and recording the translated dialogue may not be cost effective (Vertanen 2007: 149).

In the following two sections, subtitling is defined, and its norms, restrictions and challenges are discussed. Thereafter, guidelines for subtitles on Netflix and on DVD are presented. The last section concentrates on translating wordplay in subtitles.

3.1 Subtitling

According to Díaz Cintas and Remael’s (2007: 8) definition, subtitling is a form of translation that gives ideally a semantically adequate account of what is heard in the original dialogue of the speakers and also includes other linguistic elements seen on screen, such as letters, banners and inserts. Chiaro’s (2009: 148) definition is very similar with one difference: instead of semantical adequacy she uses “a condensed version” to describe subtitles. Vertanen (2007: 150), in turn, stresses that the subtitles should be loyal to the source language expression and attempt to convey its style and mood as well as possible. The written text is generally written with white letters and presented on the lower part of the screen either center justified or aligned to the left (Schröter 2004: 31). In Finland, Netflix and DVD have subtitles in the middle and on television they are left-justified in the bottom part of the screen. The place of the subtitles may have to briefly change in case there is overlap with onscreen text or a speaker’s mouth is in a closeup.

Gottlieb (1997b: 70–71) defines subtitling more comprehensively as a unique form of translation with five different defining qualities that are 1) written form, 2) additive role, 3) immediate exposure, 4) synchronous presentation, and 5) polymedial text-type. According to him, since subtitles are written, as opposed to spoken, they differ from other types of audiovisual translation. Subtitles can be called additive because in them verbal material is added to the source text and this verbal material maintains the original discourse. The label immediate states that “in filmic media all discourse is presented in a flowing manner” which cannot be controlled by its audience, while the adjective synchronous means that the subtitles are presented simultaneously, or in synchrony, with the programme. Finally, the label polymedial refers to the fact that the total meaning of the source text is conveyed by “at least two parallel channels”, that is, usually sound and image. (Gottlieb 1997b: 70–71) In addition, subtitling is called an overt type of translation since the original language version is available to the audience. This also makes it possible for subtitles to be criticised by anyone with the slightest knowledge of the source language. (Gottlieb 1997b: 108)

Subtitling is traditionally classified according to two perspectives: technical and linguistic. From the technical point of view subtitles can be either closed or open. Closed subtitles are part of the image and cannot be removed from it, which is the case in the cinema if the movie is in a foreign language, whereas open subtitles can be turned off or added to the programme at will. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 21) The subtitles on both DVD and Netflix are open, which is customary nowadays. From the linguistic perspective subtitling can be categorised to five types, two of which, interlingual and intralingual subtitling, are used in this study. They are the two main types of subtitling, and can also be called diagonal and vertical subtitles, respectively (Gottlieb 1997b: 71, 111). Interlingual subtitles are what is generally meant by subtitling as in them translation is done between two languages: the audio in a foreign language is presented as a written domestic language. This is called the diagonal quality of transmission as the language changes from one to another and the mode changes from spoken to written. (Gottlieb 1997b: 71) In contrast, in intralingual subtitling nothing is being translated per se because the subtitles are in the same language as the dialogue and repeat what the characters on screen are saying as closely as possible. As the primary audience of intralingual subtitling

are the deaf or hard of hearing, the subtitles contain other relevant information in addition to the dialogue that is heard on the audio track. This paralinguistic information can, for example, tell the audience that a phone is ringing. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 14) In addition, subtitles can be bilingual as in Finland, where two languages are official. In Finnish cinemas, the first line is reserved for Finnish, while the other line of subtitles is in Swedish. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 18)

The subtitling process starts from spotting or cueing in which a technician marks the transcript or the dialogue list according to where subtitles should start and stop. Their length is determined by the cueing times of each frame. After this, the actual translation process can begin. The third stage is editing the subtitles in which both language and technical aspects are checked and which can also be made by a third operator. However, nowadays it is common for one person to do all three stages by themselves. (Chiaro 2009: 148–149) On Netflix, the subtitler does the first two steps themselves and then sends the subtitles to Netflix which approves of the translation after controlling its technical quality, such as whether the reading speed guidelines are followed, and checking the existence of translation issues and typos (The Netflix Tech Blog 2020). This process may be less thorough for series like *How I Met Your Mother* as the quality control consists of watching altogether seven minutes of the programme at five different points for everything else than original programmes distributed by Netflix and something that Netflix calls “high profile content”. Their subtitles are namely checked by watching the whole episode or film. (Netflix Partner Help Center 2020: Introduction to Netflix Quality Control [QC]) It is not known what the subtitling process is like for the translators of the DVD subtitles.

3.2 Other norms and challenges of subtitling

Subtitles should be seen whenever people are talking, the soundtrack includes information that is relevant in one way or another, such as songs in animated movies, or there is something on the screen that requires a translation. In other words, subtitles should be in synchrony with sound and image, the two codes that audiovisual programmes use. (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 8–9) The audience should at all times know which speaker’s

lines the subtitles represent. Furthermore, in the best case, the synchrony gives the viewer an illusion of understanding the original dialogue. (Vertanen 2007: 151).

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, audiovisual translation has numerous restrictions and norms. There are perhaps three rules that are the most restrictive. Firstly, the subtitles cannot in general be longer than two lines at one time. Secondly, the maximum length for both lines is 35 or 37 characters, including spaces and punctuation marks. (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 23) This character limit is due to the size of the television screen and the minimum letter size legible to the average viewer (Gottlieb 1997b: 73). Thirdly, if the subtitles include two full lines of text, they should be visible for six seconds, which is the average reading speed of 70 to 74 characters and therefore optimal for preventing both re-reading the subtitles and failing to read everything. (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 23) However, the so-called six second rule and the limit of 35–37 characters may not be required for DVD or Netflix subtitles as the viewers have the possibility to pause and rewind the programme if necessary (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 24). As will be explained in the next section, Netflix’s norms for subtitling differ in both the time and space limits. Subtitles often have to be more condensed than the original audio for it is not possible to fit everything that has been said aloud into them with the limit of the average reading speed. The amount of words that it takes to express the same content varies across languages. (Schröter 2004: 34)

The nature of film and television is polysemiotic in contrast to monosemiotic texts such as novels. This means that films and series “are made up of numerous codes that interact to produce a single effect” (Chiaro 2009: 142). Gottlieb (1997b: 89) writes that there are altogether four simultaneous channels that the translator must take into account in their work: the verbal and non-verbal audio and visual channels. The verbal audio channel consists of dialogue, “including intonation and other prosodic features” and background voices, and the verbal visual channel means written text in the screen that could be conveyed through displays and captions, or “headings, street signs, and the like as ‘seen’ by the camera” and “titles, verbal graphics, etc. added in post-production”. (Gottlieb 1997a: 210; Gottlieb 1997b: 89) The non-verbal audio channel includes music and sound effects, whereas the non-verbal visual channel refers to the picture composition and flow

(Gottlieb 1997b: 89) Chiaro (2009: 143) adds laughter, crying, humming, and body sounds, such as breathing, to the list of non-verbal visual codes and gestures and facial expressions et cetera to the category of non-verbal audio channel.

In addition to these aforementioned restrictions and norms, audiovisual translation has several challenges. For instance, is an obvious problem that subtitles have to stay on screen for around six seconds if the characters are, for instance, talking very quickly. This forces the translator to decide what is most important and essential in the dialogue and leave the rest untranslated. Of course, the translator must make this decision other times also for it is often impossible to fit everything that has been said in the original dialogue into the very limited space and time that subtitles can use. Other features of informal spoken language that are problematic for subtitles are, for instance, false starts, self-corrections, interruptions and idiosyncrasies. (Gottlieb 1997a: 105–106)

Another problematic feature of spoken language is that it leads to subtitles that could be called fragmentary because they are able to represent only the lexical and syntactic features of the dialogue. The prosodics are not really transferred in the subtitles as the tools to convey it are limited to only question and exclamation marks. (Gottlieb 1997a: 105–106) In addition, in some cases verbose subtitles may stay visible for less than the norm of six seconds. Gottlieb (1997a: 218) calls these challenges the media-specific constraint that concerns the processing capacity of the audience of the translated version. The other two constraints he mentions are language-specific, which was already discussed in subsection 2.3.3 of this thesis, and human constraints. He emphasises that the latter is crucial in subtitling as it is related to how creative the subtitler is with their solutions. (Gottlieb 1997a: 217, 219) Human constraints will therefore be discussed again in section 3.4.

3.3 Guidelines for subtitles on Netflix and on DVD

Netflix has its own guidelines for Finnish subtitles, or timed text, which is the term Netflix uses instead of subtitles. According to them, the maximum length of subtitles is two lines

and 42 characters, while the reading speed is 17 characters per second, or almost five seconds for two full lines of text. Proper names should not be translated unless Netflix has provided approved translations, nicknames should be translated only when their meaning is specific and for historical/mythical characters language-specific translations should be used. Likewise, titles of published works, existing movies and TV shows should be translated with official or well-known translations if they are available. (Netflix Partner Help Center 2020: Finnish Timed Text Style Guide)

In addition, the dialogue must never be censored, including expletives, which should be translated as faithfully as possible. If there is on-screen text that overlaps with dialogue, the most plot-pertinent message should precede. Likewise, if there are deliberate misspellings and mispronunciations, they should be reproduced only if they are plot-pertinent. If words are repeated more than once by the same speaker, they should be translated only once. The guide also instructs that “in order to better meet the expectations of a Finnish audience, a condensed translation style is required” and that “[s]ubtitles should be merged as much as possible whenever a character’s dialogue extends over several subtitles”. Despite that other requirements can be found, they will not be mentioned here since they are not relevant for this thesis. (Netflix Partner Help Center 2020: Finnish Timed Text Style Guide)

It is not known what kind of instructions the DVD translators received from BTI Studios, for which the subtitlers worked, as there is no public guidebook available online. There could be differences between the Netflix and DVD subtitles in, for instance, translating expletives. Vertanen (2007: 153), who writes about the conventions of subtitling in Finnish, namely states that when subtitling coarse language and swearing it is good to remember that the effect of a swearword is greater when it is written than when it is heard. The translator should rely on the viewer understanding how coarse the language is from the speaker’s facial expressions and tone of voice and therefore may censor words that can be considered offensive. Nevertheless, expletives should not be left untranslated when the context in the source text so requires, for instance when swearwords have a specific function in the scene. (Vertanen 2007: 153)

3.4 Subtitling wordplay

In this section, some issues concerning the translation of puns in subtitles are explored: whether or not translating wordplay should be prioritised, how puns can be recognised in the source text, how the special nature of audiovisual media possibly affects the translation of wordplay, and what kind of an effect human factors may have on subtitling wordplay.

Díaz Cintas & Remael (2007: 214–216) discuss the translation of humour. They claim that a difficulty arises when the translator has to decide whether to translate humour or not, which depends on, for example, the importance of it for the source text. One solution which could help produce adequate translations is determining how essential humour is for both the whole text and a particular exchange. (Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 214–216). Zabalbeascoa (1996: 243) supports this view as he insists that translating humour in a comedy should be “top priority” in audiovisual translation. However, Díaz Cintas & Remael (2007: 214–216) argue that humour should not be preserved at all costs and “certainly not at the expense of textual coherence, loss of fluency and idiomatic language” which is contradictory to Delabastita’s (1996: 135) claim about how the only way to be faithful to the source text is sometimes to be unfaithful. Nonetheless, if the subtitles are not humorous or do not contain something else that works as a replacement for the pun, the audience might be confused as to why laughter is heard or the characters in the programme are reacting to what has been said or both in spite of the fact that nothing that should elicit laughter has been said in the subtitles.

Leppihalme (1996: 199) mentions the difficulty of identifying instances of source-text wordplay. Chiaro (1992: 11) states that puns have to “play on knowledge which is shared between sender and recipient” which is perhaps the main reason for the aforementioned difficulty. However, it can, in general, be expected that professional translators recognise instances of wordplay when they encounter them, especially when the puns are accompanied with a laugh track. In addition, it is reasonable to expect that the translators at least attempt to retain the pun or translate it in a way that intends to capture the effect

of the source-text wordplay. In other words, canned laughter in a television series should make the translator aware of the pun and, therefore, the translator's knowledge or sense of humour have no effect on noticing the instance of wordplay. This is also emphasised by Gottlieb (1997a: 216), who argues that “[a]ny academic discussion of the culture-specificity of humour is irrelevant to the subtitler of TV shows including canned laughter”. Consequently, also Leppihalme's (1996: 199) claim about how the difficulty of identifying source-text puns is overlooked “[i]n much of the theoretical discussion of (un)translatability” does not apply here.

Delabastita (1994: 227) and Leppihalme (1997: 141) both mention the problem of not knowing whether a pun is accidental or intentional. However, in audiovisual media translators and viewers should always assume that the puns are in the text for a reason and have some kind of function, as was already mentioned in section 2.1 of this study. It is, of course, an entirely different – although not a relevant one for this thesis – question whether the audience notices that the subtitles include wordplay. Indeed, according to Gottlieb (1997a: 211), no matter the quality of the subtitles, it is possible that target-language viewers do not discern the puns because they neither “share the world view or the local knowledge of the source-language viewers” nor understand the dialogue at all or all of it. Furthermore, for wordplay to be successful, it primarily must be understood or “the speaker(s) and hearer(s) must recognise that a specific instance of wordplay is realized, and be able to identify the linguistic items involved and their respective meanings” (Winter-Froemel 2016: 15)

Not belonging to the target audience and not understanding everything that is said is related to what Gottlieb (1997a: 211) calls the ever-present dual gap in television subtitling. The first can be found between the two audiences of the target text, whereas the second gap is between “the two modes of reception involved” which means that the source-language audience only listens to the dialogue in English, whereas, in contrast, the audience of the translated version reads Finnish while listening to the original English dialogue. Gottlieb (1997a: 211) finds this dual gap perhaps the most challenging obstacle of subtitling wordplay: at the same time the subtitles have to “sound right, yet be endowed with the same semantic and deictic power as the lines spoken and still heard”. The

subtitles also must both be similar to the semantic content of the source text and “reflect its function in the polysemiotic symphony of television comedy” (Gottlieb 1997a: 211). Schröter (2004: 42) identifies another challenge of subtitling puns that is due to the dual gap: revealing the punchline too early. He claims that it is not uncommon for translators to show the punchline together with the preceding utterance. This makes it possible for fast readers to read the joke before it has been finished in the original dialogue, thus leaving fast readers with “an undesirable choice of when to laugh”.

The dual gap and revealing the punchline too early are not the only aspects of subtitling that hinder translating wordplay in subtitling. Gottlieb (1997a: 210) namely points out that in audiovisual translation, one or both senses of wordplay could be combined with or based on what is seen on the screen. Delabastita (1996: 129) notices this feature of audiovisual media as well for he emphasises the role of situational contexts in the functioning of wordplay. The intended effect of puns could come through dialogue, non-verbal visual information or written text such as displays or captions or through all three (Gottlieb 1997a: 210). Usually it is possible for translators to edit the source-text pun to some extent in order to make it work in the target text, but when there is a pictorial link, in which the meaning of an instance of wordplay is created together with picture and dialogue, translating wordplay could be more difficult. This is because the subtitles are forced to take into account what is seen on the screen and only one of the pun’s senses might thus be salvaged.

Furthermore, in cases where elements in the picture interact with verbal ones, the audience’s “re-ambiguation of the verbal message in question” is affected (Gottlieb 1997a: 220). Picture 1 is an example of a pun whose translation is constrained by what the audience sees. Right after this scene, Marshall presents a bar graph of his favourite pies. That is when Marshall’s line is re-ambiguated as it becomes clear that he is joking about the two senses of the words “bar” and “pie”: “bar” can refer to both a bar graph and a bar and “pie” can mean a pie chart and a pie. As the pie charts and bar graphs are clearly seen on the screen and referenced in Marshall’s lines, subtitlers are restricted in how they are able to translate the puns.



Picture 1. Example of a pictorial link that affects the translation of wordplay (S04E22)

In addition, Gottlieb (1997a: 209–210) writes that the frame of reference for wordplay that works as its semantic basis is either text-internal or text-external. In the former, the instance of wordplay is referring to “everything which is said, or shown/written on the screen”, and in the latter the reference for the pun exists outside the text in “knowledge of people, social events, cultural institutions, etc. that the audience may possess prior to viewing the programme”. Especially allusive wordplay is prone to text-external frame of reference. Examples of this are presented in the next chapter.

Finally, Gottlieb (1997a: 220) and Zabalbeascoa (1996) consider the effect of human factors on translating wordplay in subtitles essential. Aaltonen, Siponkoski and Abdallah (2015: 7) also appear to agree because when discussing translations, they emphasise factors such as having good working conditions, having enough time to do the translation, getting paid enough and the possibility to discuss the translation with the employer. Hence, it is important to note that SDI Media, the translation company that is one of the providers of Finnish subtitles for Netflix, faced major criticism in Finland in 2015 because it did not sign the collective labour agreement reached between other major translation agencies and the trade unions representing the translators. This happened even after SDI

Media participated in the five-year-long negotiations for the agreement. (Akavan erityisalat 2015) Furthermore, time constraints could easily lead to poor quality in many ways: the translator may not have enough time to proofread, edit and cue the subtitles. The translators might not have had enough time to think about ways of rendering wordplay by wordplay and might therefore have gone “for the first more or less acceptable solution that crosses their mind” (Delabastita 1996: 135). Another factor that could affect the choice of translation strategies is the minimum wage that the translation agencies responsible for the Finnish subtitles pay their freelancer-entrepreneurs: the compensation can be less than three Euros per one translated minute. (Mäkelä 2016) The translators namely might not have been motivated to do as good work as possible or it simply may not have been worth doing. Another important note is that, in contrast to the DVD version of the seasons, the name of the translator is not mentioned in any of the episodes I watched on Netflix. This may be because the subtitlers have forbidden Netflix to include their names for some reason, or that Netflix has not respected their rights. The former is more likely at least according to Netflix since they claim that “[t]ranslator credits may be omitted only if the translator has submitted a formal waiver of rights to be credited” (Netflix Partner Help Center 2020: Timed Text Style Guide: General Requirements)

4 ANALYSING THE TRANSLATION OF WORDPLAY

In the following sections and subsections I provide altogether 32 examples of wordplay from the 46 episodes of *How I Met Your Mother* and examine how the pun in each example has been translated, why it is a pun and which factors have possibly affected its translation. The Netflix and DVD subtitles are also compared and contrasted. The taxonomy used in this chapter consists of lexical, collocational, and phrasal homonymy, homophony, paronymy, homography, allusive wordplay, and portmanteaux (Delabastita 1996: 128; Leppihalme 1996: 199–202; Gottlieb 1997a: 210; Nash 1985: 143). In addition, a differentiation is made between horizontal and vertical wordplay (Delabastita 1996: 128). The sections are arranged according to the wordplay type, and the subsections are divided into two according to whether the translation strategies on Netflix and DVD are the same or different. The classification of translation strategies is the following (Delabastita 1996: 134; Gottlieb 1997a: 210):

- 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect
- 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect
- 3) Replaced by non-wordplay
- 4) Replaced by related rhetorical device
- 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue

As in the examples presented in the theoretical framework chapter, the original English dialogue, or source text (ST), is presented first, after which come the target texts, or the Finnish subtitles, first from Netflix and then from the DVD. For instance, S04E04 indicates the fourth episode (E) of the fourth season (S). In addition, backtranslations have been provided for both versions of subtitles and they are marked with square brackets. In the tables and figures, VERBA is used to mean the first translation strategy, ADAPT refers to source-text wordplay that has been adapted to the local setting and can therefore be considered a target-text pun, NON-WP is short for non-wordplay, RHETO means related rhetorical devices, and ZERO indicates that the pun has not been translated at all and instead neighbouring dialogue is using its space. NF and DVD refer to the subtitles either on Netflix or on DVD.

As can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2, there were altogether 241 puns in the source text of two seasons and 46 episodes. 32.8% of these puns were lexical, 17.4% collocational, and 12.4% phrasal homonyms, 15.4% paronyms, 2.5% homophones, 1.7% homographs, 11.6% allusive wordplay, and 6.2% portmanteaux.

Table 1. Translation strategies for wordplay on Netflix

Strategy Type	VERBA	ADAPT	NON- WP	RHETO	ZERO	TOTAL
Lexical	0	60	18	0	1	79
Collocational	0	29	13	0	0	42
Phrasal	0	28	2	0	0	30
Paronymy	4	21	10	2	0	37
Homophony	0	3	3	0	0	6
Homography	0	1	3	0	0	4
Allusive	5	14	9	0	0	28
Portmanteaux	0	7	8	0	0	15
TOTAL	9	163	66	2	1	241

The most popular translation strategy for the Netflix subtitles was clearly 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect (67.6%), whereas the second most used strategy was 3) Replaced by non-wordplay (27.4%). The translation strategy of 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect is used notably less often (3.7%) than the first two aforementioned ones. 4) Replaced by related rhetorical device was used twice (0.8%) in the Finnish translation, and 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue appeared once (0.4%) in the material. The translation strategies on DVD can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Translation strategies for wordplay on DVD

Strategy Type	VERBA	ADAPT	NON- WP	RHETO	ZERO	TOTAL
Lexical	0	50	28	0	1	79
Collocational	0	29	12	0	1	42
Phrasal	0	27	3	0	0	30
Paronymy	7	15	12	3	0	37
Homophony	1	3	2	0	0	6
Homography	0	2	1	0	1	4
Allusive	6	11	10	0	1	28
Portmanteaux	1	6	7	0	1	15
TOTAL	15	143	75	3	5	241

Similarly to the translation strategies on Netflix, the most prevalent translation strategy for the DVD subtitles was 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect (59.3%), while the second most used strategy was 3) Replaced by non-wordplay (31.1%). The latter strategy was, however, used more often than on Netflix, and at the same time fewer source-text instances of wordplay were translated as target-text puns than on Netflix. The translation strategy of 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect (6.2%) was the third most common, which was the case also with the Netflix subtitles. 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue (2,1%) was, in contrast to the subtitles on Netflix, used the fourth most often, whereas the least popular translation strategy was 4) Replaced by related rhetorical device (1.2%). The DVD translators used these three aforementioned strategies more often than the Netflix subtitlers. However, the differences in the amounts of these three strategies on DVD and on Netflix are not notable.

Table 3. Comparison of the translation strategies

Strategy Wordplay type	SAME TRANSLATION STRATEGIES	DIFFERENT TRANSLATION STRATEGIES
Lexical homonymy	58	21
Collocational homonymy	27	15
Phrasal homonymy	29	1
Paronymy	21	16
Homophony	4	2
Homography	3	1
Allusive wordplay	18	10
Portmanteaux	13	2
TOTAL	173	68

As can be seen from Table 3, the majority of the translation strategies on Netflix and DVD were the same for each wordplay type. Most often the translation strategy on both Netflix and DVD was either 3) Replaced by non-wordplay or 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect for individual puns. Examples of cases in which the translation strategies are either the same or different are explored in this chapter.

4.1 Lexical homonymy

Lexical homonymy was the most common wordplay type in the two seasons. As many as 79 puns in the source text were single words that are ambiguous in the sense that they have two or more meanings.

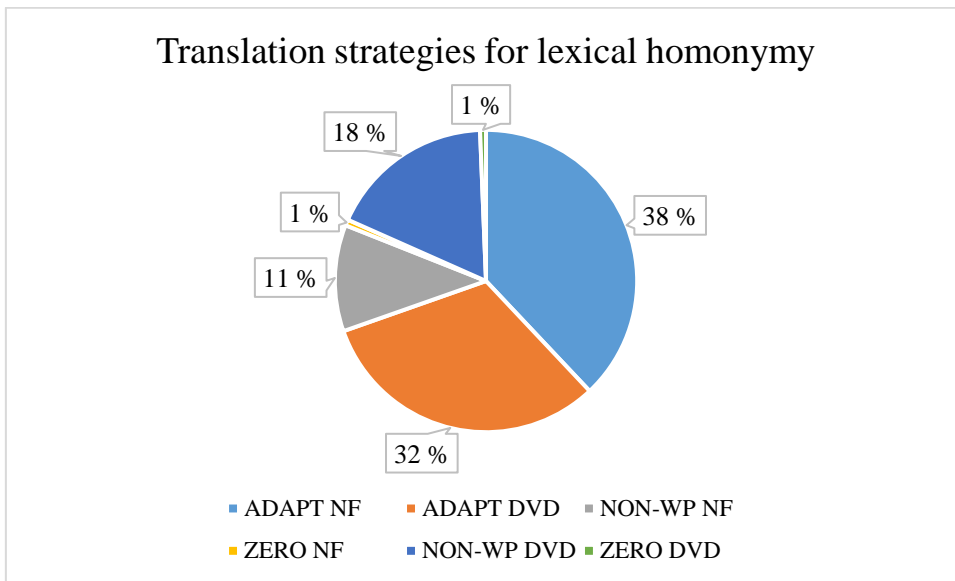


Figure 1. Translation strategies for lexical homonymy in the target texts

Figure 1 reveals that, on Netflix, 60 of the 79 lexical homonyms were translated with the same wordplay type, whereas the DVD subtitles consisted of 49 lexical homonyms and one paronym. Puns that were not rendered by puns appeared to be homonymic in a language-specific way, which very likely influenced the strategy they were translated with. As Alexieva (1997: 140) argues, polysemes, or homonyms, may not be polysemous in the same way in the target text or may not polysemes at all in it.

4.1.1 Same translation strategies

In example 12, it is Lily and Marshall's wedding day. Lily's cousin is in beauty school and Lily did not want her cousin to touch her hair. Therefore, in Marshall's words, Lily sacrificed him by telling her cousin that she could do his hair.

(12) S02E21 ST

Lily's cousin: Ooh, I could give you some **cool guy tips**.

Marshall: I don't think I need advice on how to be cool, but yeah, go ahead, lay them on me.

NETFLIX

Lily's cousin: Laitan sinulle coolin kampauksen.

Marshall: En usko tarvitsevani apua cooliudessa, mutta mikäs siinä. Anna mennä.

[Lily's cousin: I will make you a cool hairdo.

Marshall: I don't believe I need help with being cool, but okay. Go for it.]

DVD

Lilyn serkku: Entäs siistit värijutut?

Marshall: Minun ei tarvitse olla siistimpi, mutta kerro vain juttujasi.

[Lily's cousin: How about cool colour stuff?

Marshall: I don't need to be cooler, but tell your stories.]

After Lily's cousin is done with Marshall's hair, he discovers that when she said "cool guy tips", she referred not to pieces of advice on how to be cool, but to dying the ends of Marshall's hair blond which, in her opinion, are the tips of a "cool guy" and which is shown to the audience a few minutes after this scene. These two differing meanings of the word "tips" are thus in a punning conjunction. Since the communicatively significant confrontation of the two meanings becomes clear only after Marshall's new hair colour is revealed, the pun is horizontal.

In the Netflix subtitles, only one of the senses of the source-text wordplay is visible and the double meaning of what Lily's cousin said is lost. The Finnish words for "tips" are "latvat" and either "vinkit" or "neuvot", when talking about hair and advice, respectively. In addition, as the other meaning of the nouns "tips" was left untranslated, the story in this scene changes a little: Marshall willingly lets Lily's cousin make him a cool hairdo instead of misunderstanding what she says. However, this change is not significant as it does not affect the rest of the episode.

Similarly to the Netflix translation, "värijutut" in the DVD subtitles has only one meaning, "colour stuff", or "colour things". The "jutut" part of the noun can additionally mean "stories", which is probably why the DVD subtitler has made Marshall say "kerro juttujasi" to Lily's cousin: the literal English translation of "kerro juttujasi" is "tell your

stuff”, but it can also mean “tell your stories”. However, as a whole “värijutut” is not ambiguous at all, which makes Marshall’s misunderstanding a little illogical.

In this case of two words that happen to have the same meaning in the source language, interlingual asymmetry is likely to occur. It is no doubt difficult, if not impossible, to find a Finnish word that would refer to both the ends of hair and advice. The translation would have to mean both of them since, as was already mentioned, a few minutes after the scene there is a pictorial link in which the “cool guy tips” are shown. Hence, the translation strategy of 3) Replaced by non-wordplay was perhaps the only possible choice for both subtitles.

The context for example 13 is that whenever Ted is dating someone, Lily does something she calls the Front Porch Test: she imagines herself, Marshall, Ted and his partner living together when they are old and playing bridge on the front porch. Lily imagines how Robin would behave if she was married to Ted in the future.

(13) S04E17 ST

Robin: Mmm, **a deuce**. Exactly what my career dropped once I decided to settle down and marry Ted.

NETFLIX

Robin: Kakkonen. Aivan kuin urani, joka tipahti kakkossijalle päätettyäni asettua aloilleni ja mennä naimisiin Tedin kanssa.

[Deuce. Just like my career that dropped to the second place after I decided to settle down and marry Ted.]

DVD

Robin: Pata! Sen sain urani tilalle, kun päätin naida Tedin.

[A spade/casserole! That’s what I got in my career’s place when I decided to marry Ted.]

“A deuce” refers here to the number two on playing cards, while “drop a deuce” is a colloquial expression meaning “to defecate”. The second meaning of the word “deuce” is

revealed when Robin uses it in the different, unexpected context of a colloquial expression. Therefore, this wordplay is a horizontal homonym.

“Kakkonen” in the Netflix translation is in the same semantic register as it also means the number two on playing cards. Interestingly, the translator on Netflix has used an expression that can be considered less vulgar than the source-text wordplay since “drop to the second place” is not a euphemism. This choice was made despite that there is an idiom with the exact same meaning in Finnish, namely the euphemism “käydä kakkosella”, or “go for a number two”. What further makes this choice interesting is that Netflix’s guidelines for subtitling state that nothing should be censored and expletives should be translated as faithfully as possible. Nevertheless, the translation belongs to the category of lexical homonyms.

The first meaning of the word “pata” in the DVD subtitles is similar to the Netflix translation and source text for it refers to a suit in playing card, but its second meaning, “casserole”, differs from the two aforementioned texts. The subtitler has apparently interpreted that Robin means that after marrying Ted, she became a housewife who spends her time cooking, although this is not clear in the source text. The playing card that Robin has is not shown to the audience, which makes a change like this possible.

In conclusion, the translation strategy for both Finnish subtitles is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. The source-text pun may be an example of wordplay that is easy to translate because it is “somehow rooted in extralingual reality”, a point made by Delabastita (1996: 135). Playing cards are namely known all over the world and it may be a shared characteristic of many languages that the number two is used when referring to defecating.

4.1.2 Different translation strategies

In example 14, Barney is trying to get a young woman to have sex with him while dressed in his “old man makeup”.

(14) S04E04 ST

Barney: What do you mean, “Nothing in common”? We’re both **seniors**.

NETFLIX

Barney: Miten niin meillä ei ole mitään yhteistä? Sinäkin olet jo täysi-ikäinen.

[How come we have nothing in common? You’re already of age too.]

DVD

Barney: Miten niin ei mitään yhteistä? Olemme senioreita.

[How come nothing in common? We’re seniors.]

Since the word “senior” has two meanings, both of which refer to older people but only one of which is visible, it is a vertical pun. As can be seen from the backtranslation of the Netflix subtitles, “täysi-ikäinen” denotes a person who is of a legal age and can in this context refer to both old Barney and the young woman. Although “täysi-ikäinen” is not a word that is normally used to refer specifically to the elderly in Finnish, the context makes it relatively clear that in this case it is used to refer to both Barney and the young woman. In other words, the translation strategy in the Netflix subtitles is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

In the DVD subtitles, “senioreita” is the inflected form of “seniori” which, like in English, is a word with a positive connotation for the elderly. However, it does not, unlike in English, have the another meaning of a student in the fourth year of college or university in Finnish. In fact, no such word with the exact same meaning even exists in Finnish: university students in their penultimate year of studying do not have a special name. The source-text wordplay is therefore an example of a culture-specific pun. Since there is no way “seniori” could be used to mean the young woman in the scene in the same sense as the source text, only one of the senses of the pun has been salvaged. The translation strategy is 3) Replaced by non-wordplay. It is possible that the translator of the DVD version has either missed the wordplay, presumed that the Finnish audience knows that “senior” can also mean students in the American culture or simply did not find another solution.

As Lily and Marshall's relationship has ended before the scene in example 15, Lily has asked Barney, who lives alone in a big apartment, whether she could live there while searching for a new place. As Barney's apartment is meant only for him long-term, he says that as a woman Lily is "illegally in the country".

(15) S02E05 ST

Barney: Now, you can try to apply for a sex visa, but that only lasts 12 hours. 14 if you qualify for **multiple entry**.

NETFLIX

Barney: Voit anoa seksiviisumia, mutta se kestää vain 12 tuntia. Neljätoista, jos päästät useammin sisään.
[You can apply for a sex visa, but it lasts only 12 hours. Fourteen, if you let one enter more often.]

DVD

Barney: Voit hakea seksiviisumia, mutta se on voimassa vain 12 tuntia. 14, jos hommat luistavat.
[You can apply for a sex visa, but it is valid only for 12 hours. 14, if things go smoothly.]

In this wordplay, "multiple entry" is a vertical lexical homonym. Together with the mention of a sex visa and the context that as a womaniser Barney likes having so-called one night stands, it refers to both the permission to enter a country or an area multiple times, as opposed to a single entry visa, and Barney having sex with Lily, or entering her, more than once. It is vertical because the different meanings of multiple entry are co-present.

The Netflix and DVD translations are very similar, but the latter has lost the double meaning that "multiple entry" has in the source text. The connection between the visa lasting for two hours more if "things go smoothly" may appear arbitrary to the audience, whereas in the Netflix subtitles the second meaning of a multiple entry visa has been retained. It is possible that the DVD subtitler has not noticed the source-text pun or has decided to censor Barney. Censorship does not, however, seem likely as other lexical

homonyms that were of sexual nature were translated as such in the DVD subtitles. The strategy that was used when translating on Netflix is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. In contrast, the DVD subtitles were translated with 3) Replaced by non-wordplay.

4.2 Collocational homonymy

Collocational homonyms were the second largest category of puns. A pun belongs to this category when it is included in an ambiguous collocation.

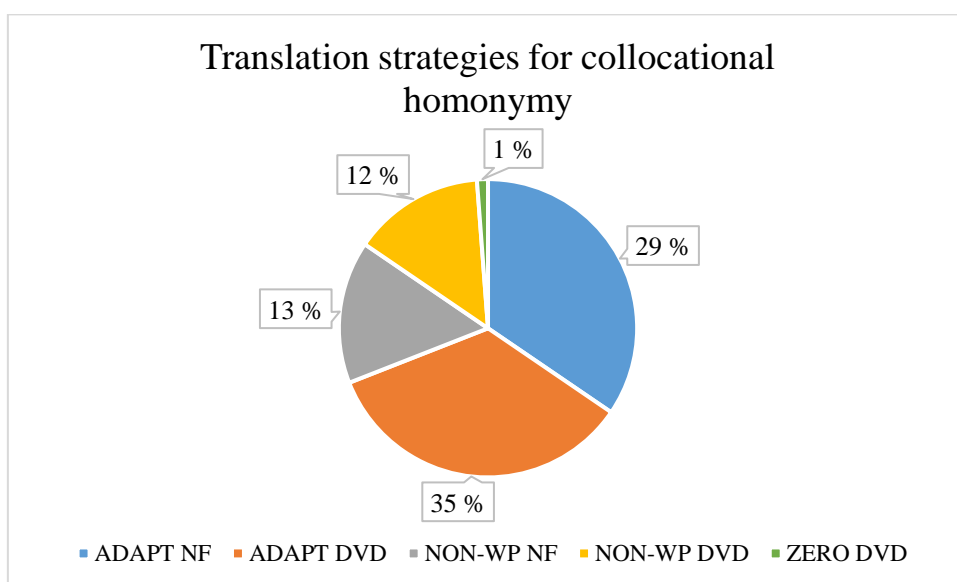


Figure 2. Translation strategies for collocational homonymy in the target texts

According to Figure 2, 27 of the 42 collocational homonyms were translated as collocational homonyms on Netflix and DVD. In addition, two instances of collocational homonymy were translated with paronymy in both target texts. The strategy of 3) Replaced by non-wordplay was utilised 13 times on Netflix and 12 times on DVD. One source-text pun was not rendered at all in the DVD subtitles. Translating collocational

homonymy with non-wordplay may be due to the nature of collocation: since collocations are words that often occur together in a language, there is a chance that they are not as prevalent in another language. One collocation like that can be seen in example 16.

4.2.1 Same translation strategies

In example 16, Robin is attracted to Doug because of his aggressiveness. He is starting a fight with Ted and Barney while she and Lily are watching.

(16) S04E10 ST

Robin: Is Doug **seeing anyone**?
Lily: Are you **seeing anyone**? You really should.

NETFLIX

Robin: Onkohan Dougilla tyttöystävää?
Lily: Tapailletko ketään? Pitäisi.
[Robin: I wonder if Doug has a girlfriend?
Lily: Are you seeing anyone? You should.]

DVD

Robin: Seurusteleeke Doug?
Lily: Hanki ammattiapua.
[Robin: Is Doug in a relationship?
Lily: Get professional help.]

The collocation in the above example is “to see someone” which has two meanings: while Robin is curious whether Doug is dating someone, Lily is recommending that Robin should see a therapist for her odd attraction. Since the aforementioned collocation is repeated in order to bring attention to its ambiguous meaning, it is yet another example of horizontal wordplay.

In the Netflix translation, Lily appears to indicate that Robin should date someone instead of seeing therapist. The verb “tapailta” namely cannot be used to mean going to therapy in Finnish unless, of course, the intention is to say that someone is dating a therapist. Consequently, the meaning of the source-text line has changed in the translation which

may be due to the subtitler's misunderstanding of Lily. It is also possible that the translator decided, or simply was able, to translate only one of the senses of the pun. This is what happened also in the DVD subtitles: there is no ambiguity, or wordplay, in Robin's or Lily's lines and only the explicit meanings have been translated in them. All in all, the use of the translation strategy 3) Replaced by non-wordplay in both target texts may again be due to interlingual asymmetry: the double meaning of seeing someone in the romantic and therapeutic senses does not exist in Finnish.

Barney has participated in a fight and Robin is now attracted to him in example 17.

(17) S04E10 ST

Robin: I'm surprised to see **you had it in me**. You. **Had it in you**.

NETFLIX

Robin: Ihme että se oli minussa – Sinussa. Sitä oli sinussa.
[It's a miracle that it was in me – You. It was in you.]

DVD

Robin: En tiennyt, että osaat olla noin kova... Siis kovis.
[I didn't know you can be so hard... I mean a badass.]

This horizontal homonymy plays with what the pronoun "it" can mean in the context of the collocation "have it in oneself". Robin presumably says "have it in me" to refer to Barney having his genital in her and then quickly corrects herself as she meant to say that she is surprised that Barney had the ability to fight in himself. Robin's line is additionally an example of a slip of a tongue that are arguably always intentional in comedies.

In contrast to example 16, the double meaning of "have it in oneself" is easily translatable into Finnish as a collocational homonym on Netflix: the pronoun "it" can be understood in the same exact two ways in Finnish as in the original dialogue. The subtitler on DVD has been more creative since "kovis" means a badass or a tough guy. It is likely derived from the adjective "kova" that could be translated also as "tough" in addition to "hard". The adjective "kova", in turn, appears to refer to male genitalia in this context. As the

form and pronunciation of the words “kovis” and “kova” is similar, the DVD translation is an example of one of the two puns whose type was changed from collocational homonymy into paronymy. Both subtitles were translated with 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

4.2.2 Different translation strategies

Ted and Robin, who appear to have gotten back together after ending their relationship in the third season, have a so-called inside joke: whenever a military rank is mentioned before another word in a sentence, they do a military hand salute. Lily has just asked what their relationship situation is before Robin and Ted’s lines in example 18.

(18) S04E12 ST

Robin: Look, guys, this is a **private thing** between me and Ted.
Ted and Robin: **Private Thing.**

NETFLIX

Robin: Tämä on minun ja Tedin välinen yksityisasia.
Ted ja Robin: Yksityisasia.
[Robin: This is a private thing between me and Ted.
Ted and Robin: Private thing.]

DVD

Robin: Tämä on minun ja Tedin välinen asia.
Ted and Robin: -
[Robin: This is a thing between me and Ted.]

The source-text pun here is based on the fact that the military rank and name are homonymic with the collocation “private thing”. In other words, the intended meaning of “Private Thing” is a private whose name is Thing. As the pun’s second meaning is revealed only after Ted and Robin repeat the word and salute each other, it is horizontal.

In the Netflix subtitles, only the first meaning of “private thing” has been translated, which is why the strategy used is 3) Replaced by non-wordplay. In contrast, the repetition

of the words “private thing” was not translated on DVD and Robin’s line is left on the screen for as long as it takes for her to finish talking and do the hand salute with Ted. Therefore, the translation strategy in the DVD subtitles is 4) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue.

It is, however, no surprise that the source-text wordplay was not translated as wordplay for salvaging the pun is perhaps impossible. This is because there is no word in Finnish that can be used to mean both the military rank and the adjective. It appears that using a wordplay related rhetorical device is not possible either, for which there is at least one major reason. What Robin says about her and Ted’s relationship is namely pertinent to the plot as it is an answer to a question and a major theme in the episode, which is why it is not possible to make changes in the dialogue. The translators are forced to simply ignore the possible effect that the translation might have on its audience: Robin and Ted’s repetition of the words “private thing” and their synchronised hand movements could appear random and odd to the members of audience who do not know the two meanings of “private” in this context and who might thus be left confused.

Robin, who lives in an apartment in Brooklyn, is thinking about giving up her five dogs in the below example 19.

(19) S02E16 ST

Robin: It’s got me thinking, maybe I should get rid of my dogs. Might be time to **send them to the farm**.

Lily: You’re gonna kill your dogs?!

Robin: No! No, no, no, there really is a farm. My aunt has a farm upstate.

NETFLIX

Robin: Tämä on saanut minut harkitsemaan koirista luopumista. Ne pääsevät paremmille metsästysmaille.

Lily: Aitko tappaa koirasi?

Robin: En. Tädilläni on pohjoisessa maatila. Siellä tosiaan on hyvät metsästysmaat.

[Robin: This has made me consider giving up my dogs. They will get to go to better hunting grounds.

Lily: Are you going to kill your dogs?

Robin: No. My aunt has a farm in the north. There are indeed good hunting grounds there.]

DVD

Robin: Ehkä minun pitäisi luopua koiristani. Ehkä lähetän ne maatilalle.

Lily: Aiotko tappaa ne?

Robin: En, tädilläni on maatila.

[Robin: Maybe I should give up my dogs. Maybe I'll send them to the farm.

Lily: Are you going to kill them?

Robin: No, my aunt has a farm.]

The phrase “send to the farm” in this horizontal homonymy can be used in its literal and figurative senses, the latter of which is more common. That is why Lily thinks that Robin is going to kill her dogs instead of understanding that she is sending them to physically live on a farm.

“Päästä paremmille metsästysmaille” in the Netflix subtitles can be understood in the figurative sense of killing one’s pets. The translator has added the clarification “There are indeed good hunting grounds there” to Robin’s second line instead of translating the sentence “No, no, no, there really is a farm”. Translating it is not necessary because the following sentence “My aunt has a farm upstate” essentially repeats the same information with the difference that it is Robin’s aunt who has the farm. As the translation on Netflix can be understood in two ways, the translation strategy is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

In contrast to the Netflix subtitles, the collocation “send them to the farm” seen on DVD exists only in the literal sense in Finnish, that is, literally sending something to live on a farm, rather than as a euphemism for killing. Hence, the DVD subtitles were translated with the strategy of 3) Replaced by non-wordplay. Its usage most likely leads to the audience – at least those who have no knowledge of the English expression – not understanding why Lily would think that sending the dogs to a farm means killing them.

4.3 Phrasal homonymy

The 46 episodes contained 30 phrasal homonyms, in which the whole clause is ambiguous. This category appeared the fourth most often in the material.

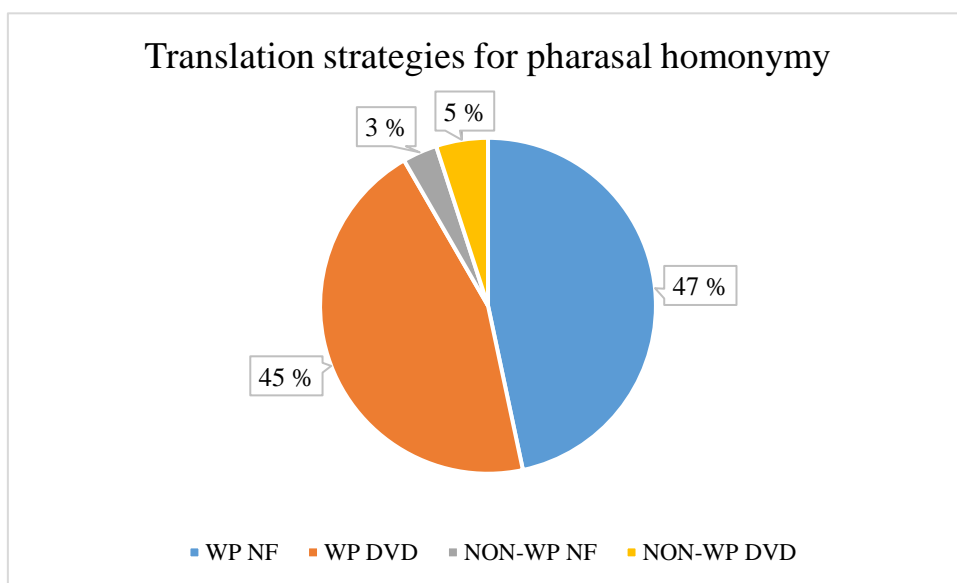


Figure 3. Translation strategies for phrasal homonymy in the target texts

As can be seen from Figure 3, only two translation strategies were used: the phrasal homonyms were rendered either as phrasal homonyms or translated as non-wordplay. All phrasal homonyms except two were retained in translation on Netflix, while the DVD subtitler managed to translate one pun less. Nearly all of the phrasal homonymies were of sexual nature and ambiguous in the sense that their literal and figurative, or the sexual, meaning is contrasted, which presumably made their translation easier. As the translation strategies were different from each other only once, there is only one example in subsection 4.3.2.

4.3.1 Same translation strategies

Lily is trying to list fifty reasons to have sex and is missing five before the scene in example 20.

(20) S04E09

Lily: **Wow, this is getting a little hard.**

Barney: Forty-six!

NETFLIX

Lily: Nyt käy jo vaikeaksi.

Barney: Neljäkymmentäkuusi.

[Lily: Now it's getting difficult.

Barney: Forty-six.]

DVD

Lily: Tämä alkaa käydä vaikeaksi.

Barney: Neljäkymmentäkuusi.

[Lily: This is getting difficult.

Barney: Forty-six.]

Lily's line is ambiguous as it can be understood in two ways. The first one is that Lily is finding it hard, or difficult, to list more reasons to have sex, whereas the second way means that one reason to have sex is a man's beginning sexual arousal. When Barney says the number, he immediately directs the audience to think about Lily's line as ambiguous. This makes the pun horizontal.

The translation for the adjective "hard" in the abovementioned second, sexual sense of the source-text pun would be "kova", which was already seen in example 17. "Kova" is not a synonym for "difficult" in Finnish, which may explain why the translation strategy for both subtitles is 3) Replaced by non-wordplay. It was perhaps impossible for the translators to find a word that would convey the double meaning of the source-text wordplay as it happens that in Finnish, the translation for the adjective "hard" differs depending on the context. Although a difficult situation could be considered a reason to

have sex and thus Barney's line would still make sense in the subtitles, the ambiguity that the original dialogue had is lost in the subtitles.

In example 21, Barney is trying to impress Robin, who he is in love with, by behaving well. They are having dinner together, and Robin has noticed that Barney's behaviour is odd, which is why she is trying to make him act like his usual self by saying things he would normally comment on. Robin has just said that she was at the dentist.

(21) S04E01 ST

Robin: **That guy drilled me all day long. He drilled me hard. He filled all of my cavities.**

NETFLIX

Robin: Mies porasi minua koko päivän. Porasi kovaa. Hän paikkasi kaikki reikäni.

[Today I was at the dentist. The man drilled me hard the whole day. Drilled me hard. He filled all my cavities.]

DVD

Robin: Se mies porasi minua koko päivän. Porasi kunnolla. Täytti kaikki reikäni.

[Today I was at the dentist. That man properly drilled me the whole day. Drilled me hard. Filled all my cavities.]

All Robin's lines in the original dialogue can be understood in two ways. The first meaning is actually being at the dentist, while the second sense is of sexual nature in which "drilling" and "cavities" are euphemisms for intercourse. These two meanings have to be understood by making an association between the literal and figurative senses, which makes the puns vertical.

The Finnish translations are ambiguous in the exact same way as the source-text puns. The reason for this could be that the drill that dentists use is a phallic object and therefore rooted in extralingual reality. What is more, "reikä", or "a cavity", can also be understood as "a hole" in Finnish, which perhaps makes the last sentence in Robin's line even more

sexual. As both translations are also phrasal homonyms, the 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect strategy was utilised in them.

As Lily and Marshall are not able to elope in Atlantic City, they are trying to find a ship captain that would be able to marry them in international waters in example 22.

(22) S02E08 ST

Lily: I found **a guy who said he'd be willing to put his boat in my slips**, so we're getting close.

NETFLIX

Lily: Löysin miehen, joka halusi laskea ankkurinsa vesilleni. Läheltä liippaa.

[I found a man who wanted to let down his anchor to my waters. We're getting close.]

DVD

Lily: Eräs tyyppi halusi pistää paattinsa satamaani, joten pian onnistuu.

[One guy wanted to put his boat in my harbour, so (we) will soon succeed.]

The expression on Lily's face and the canned laughter that can be heard after her line emphasise the ambiguity in this scene. In that context, the vertical source-text pun is a euphemism that most likely means that Lily found a man who implied that he wants to have intercourse with her. Therefore, this is yet another example of a phrasal homonym with literal and figurative senses. A slip can namely mean both a space where boats can be stored and an undergarment.

As in example 21, both translations can be understood as euphemisms. The nouns "anchor", "waters" and "harbour" can be thought as ambiguous in the same way as in the original English dialogue, especially since they also retained the water theme of the source text. The translation strategy used in both subtitles is, again, 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

4.3.2 Different translation strategies

Lily and Marshall have not seen each other since their breakup. In the following example 23, they were having brunch together with Ted, Barney, and Robin before they disappeared. Barney has just asked Ted where Lily and Marshall went.

(23) S02E03 ST

Ted: They've been fighting lately. **They're probably off somewhere going at it.**

NETFLIX

Ted: He ovat riidelleet viime aikoina. He ovat varmaan hommissa.
[They've been fighting lately. They are probably doing it.]

DVD

Ted: Riitelemässä tai sekstaamassa.
[Fighting or having sex.]

In the context of the original dialogue, the two meanings of “go at it” are fighting and having intercourse. This vertical phrasal homonym is another example of a pun whose translation is affected by what is seen on screen: it was previously implied to the audience that Marshall and Lily were indeed having intercourse in the bathroom of the restaurant. The translation has to reflect this.

Although not as clearly as the source-text wordplay, “hommissa” can refer to both having a fight and having intercourse. Whereas the ambiguity has been retained in the translation in the Netflix subtitles, both senses of the source-text are made clear in the DVD subtitles, thus removing all ambiguity and making the DVD translation non-wordplay. It could be that since the subtitler was not able to come up with a solution that refers to both actions, they perhaps decided to translate the source-text pun in a way that conveys both meanings so that the audience would not be confused when they hear the canned laughter. In conclusion, the strategy 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect was

used by the Netflix subtitler, while the DVD subtitles were translated with 3) Replaced by non-wordplay.

4.4 Paronymy

37 instances made paronymy the third most dominant wordplay type. Words whose form and pronunciation resemble each other are considered paronyms.

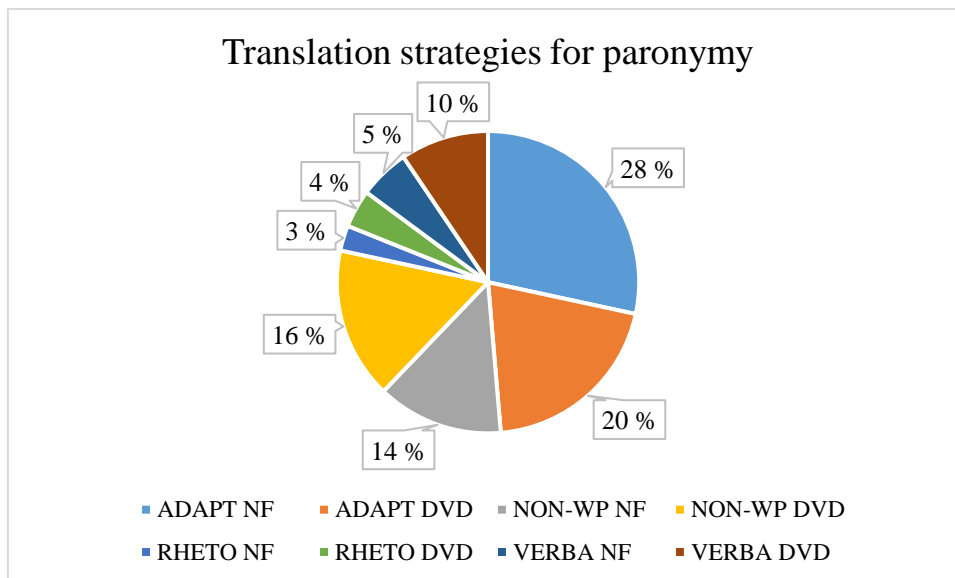


Figure 4. Translation strategies for paronymy in the target texts

Altogether three strategies were used when translating paronyms. 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect was used more than for any other pun type on DVD. Furthermore, not all source-text puns were paronyms: three of them were translated as lexical homonyms on Netflix and five on DVD, whereas two instances of collocational homonymy were found in both Netflix and DVD subtitles. Therefore, altogether 21 instances of target-text wordplay were found on Netflix and 15 on DVD. In contrast to what Delabastita (1993: 233) claimed, it appeared to be more difficult to translate

paronymy than homonymy. One reason for this could be that many of the paronyms were words that were transformed into wordplay by adding or changing a few letters, which is dependent on language.

4.4.1 Same translation strategies

In example 24, Ted is on a date in a restaurant and has just asked his date whether she would like to share a plate of oysters, to which she has answered yes.

(24) S04E07 ST

Ted: Good. ‘Cause if you didn’t, that would be mighty **shellfish**.

NETFLIX

Ted: Hyvä, koska jos et haluaisi, se olisi todella limaista.
[Good, because if you wouldn’t want, it would be really slimy.]

DVD

Ted: Hyvä. Jos et olisi halunnut, se olisi ollut kovin limaista.
[Good. If you hadn’t wanted, it would have been very slimy.]

The pronunciation of the words “shellfish” and “selfish” is very similar as they are pronounced as /'ʃɛl,fiʃ/ ja /'sɛlfiʃ/, respectively. As this vertical paronym plays mainly with the sounds of a language, it appears to be virtually impossible for it to be translated with the exact same meaning in the target text and therefore the subtitler has translated it as a homonym instead. The translated pun is, in contrast, a homonym since the adjective “limaista” has two meanings in this context. It can be seen here that wordplay can have other – and multiple – functions than humour. In addition to eliciting laughter, it appears that this pun is meant to characterise Ted since it is made clear in the episode that this is supposed to be a bad joke.

This example is the only one in which the translation of a pun is exactly the same on Netflix and on DVD. Although the translations differ from the source text in their semantic structure, the translation strategy is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain

humorous effect. The reason for this is that, according to Delabastita's definition, the target-language pun can be more or less different from the original wordplay. The Finnish inflected word "limaista" can be used to reference oysters and human behavior, just like "s(h)el(l)fish". Oysters can be described as "limainen", which is the non-inflected adjective, or "slimy", and "limainen" can also mean negative behavior. Hence the target-text pun still has an associated meaning to the source-text one. Of course, "slimy" does not have the same meaning as "selfish", which would be "itsekes" in Finnish, but both of them refer to undesired behavior. In the case that there is no word in the target language that refers to both negative behaviour and oysters, the wordplay could be salvaged by changing the food Ted is talking about since there is no pictorial link. In other words, what has happened in the translation is an example of precisely what Delabastita (1996: 135) means when he discussed translating wordplay: departing from the source text in order to be able to recreate its effect and being faithful to the source text by being faithful to it.

Robin is working as a reporter and has to often read news that contain wordplay. One of these puns can be seen in the following example 25.

(25) S04E03 ST

Robin: Four transit workers were electrocuted when a subway train jumped the tracks. Stay tuned for the shocking details!

NETFLIX

Robin: Työntekijät kuolivat sähköiskuun, kun metro keikahti raiteiltaan. Pian lisää uutisia. Suistakaa pysyä kanavalla!

[Robin: Workers died of electrocution when a subway was derailed. Soon more news. Derember to stay on the channel!]

DVD

Robin: Neljä ihmistä kuoli, kun metro suistui raiteiltaan. Pian kuulette... suistattavat yksityiskohdat.

[Four people died, when a subway was derailed. Soon you will hear... the dreepy details.]

The plural noun “derails” is most likely used here to refer to not only the derailing of the subway train but also to “details”, which appears a fitting ending to the phrase “Stay tuned for the shocking --“. “Details” and “derails” are pronounced and spelled similarly. Consequently, they belong to the category of paronymy. In addition, since only “derails” is visible, this wordplay is vertical.

As in the previous example, the type of the wordplay has not changed in the subtitles. “Suistakaa” and “suistattavat” are similar to “suistua”, meaning “to derail”. In addition, “suistakaa” resembles the verb “muistakaa”, which is the conjugated form of “muistaa”, or “remember”, and which denotes a request that is aimed at the plural form of the personal pronoun “you”. In the DVD translation, “suistattava” is nearly identical to the adjective “puistattava”, or “creepy”, of which “puistattavat” is the plural form. All in all, as the Netflix and DVD subtitlers found words that happen to be close to the verb “suistua”, or “derail”, the translation strategy for both target texts is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

4.4.2 Different translation strategies

In example 26, Ted, who is an architect, is telling about a dream he had.

(26) S04E20 ST

Ted: And then, at the end of the meal, Frank Gehry slides the check over to I.M. Pei, and he says, “Buddy, tonight, your name is I.M. Paying.”

NETFLIX

Ted: Sitten aterian päätteeksi Frank Gehry sujauttaa laskun I.M. Peille ja sanoo: ”Kaveri, tänään lasku tulee I.M. Teille.”

[Then at the end of the meal Frank Gehry slips the bill to I.M. Pei and says: “Buddy, today the bill comes to I.M. You.”

DVD

Ted: Sitten Frank Gehry työntää laskun I.M. Pein eteen ja sanoo: ”Tänään nimesi on I.M. Paying.”

[Then Frank Gehry pushes the bill in front of I.M. Pei and says: “Today your name is I.M. Paying.”]

The name I.M. Pei, who is a famous architect, is similar to “I.M. Paying”. As the pronunciation and spelling of the two names are not identical, and the architect’s name is made into a pun by repeating his name a little differently, this is a horizontal paronym.

The pun type has not changed in the translation on Netflix because “I.M. Peille” and “I.M. Teille” are very close to each other. “I.M. Peille” is an inflected version of “I.M. Pei”. The suffix -lle in it indicates in this context that I.M. Pei is getting something. Likewise, “Teille” is an inflected form of the word “te” that can mean either the formal or informal version of “you”. This was translated with 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. Moreover, since “I.M. Peille” and “I.M. Teille” rhyme, it can be said that a second translation strategy was also used, namely 4) Replaced by related rhetorical device. In contrast to the Netflix subtitles, the pun has been translated verbatim for one reason or another in the DVD translation. It is possible that “I.M. Paying” was not intentionally left in the subtitles: perhaps the subtitler intended to change it after coming up with a pun as it appears odd that the Finnish subtitles would contain something that requires knowledge of English to be understood.

Marshall thinks that his strict law teacher needs to have sex in order to relax as a teacher. Barney is interested in testing his hypothesis. As the teacher is over 40 years old, Barney considers her a cougar and is talking about her breasts as if he is narrating a nature documentary in the following example 27.

(27) S02E06 ST

Barney: If you’re watching them bounce, she’s about to pounce.

NETFLIX

Jos näet niiden pomppivan, olet joutumassa uhriksi.
[If you see them bounce, you’re about to become a victim.]

DVD

Jos katsoo ryntäitä, se ryntää luokse.
 [If you look at the boobs, it will rush to you.]

The verbs in the punning conjunction, “bounce” and “pounce”, are pronounced /baʊns/ and /paʊns/ and are therefore paronymic. Because they are repeated in order to make a pun, this is a second example of a horizontal pun in a row.

The Netflix subtitles were translated with the strategy of 3) Replaced with non-wordplay. This is because both senses of the wordplay were salvaged but in a non-punning conjunction since the senses in the translation are not similar at all. This is not the case in the DVD translation: as “ryntäitä”, or “boobs”, and “ryntää”, or “rush”, are similar to each other, the translation strategy is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. “ryntäitä” is an inflected form of “ryntäät”, which is in this context a colloquial synonym for a woman’s breasts. The DVD subtitler possibly achieved this solution by being creative enough to search for synonyms for pouncing and breasts. What is interesting is that “ryntäät” can also mean the second person singular of the verb “rynnätä”, which means that “ryntäät” may be an example of a word that has two or more unrelated senses without any etymological relationship.

4.5 Homophony

Homophones, or words that are pronounced in the same way but have different spelling, were the second smallest category.

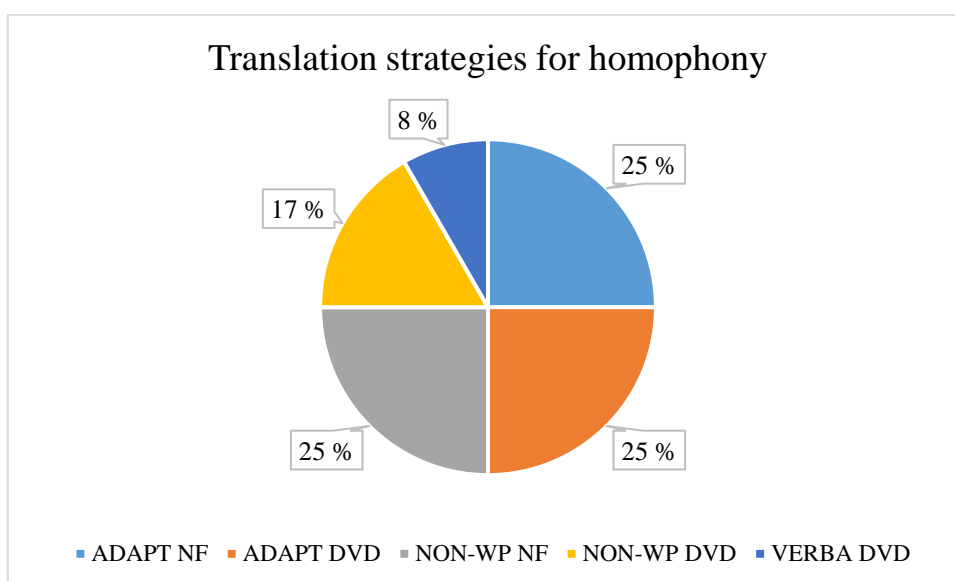


Figure 5. Translation strategies for homophony in the target texts

Figure 5 shows that three target-text puns were found on DVD and Netflix. None of them belonged to the category of homophones, as was expected. In both the Netflix and DVD subtitles, one source-text homophone was translated as a paronym and two as lexical homonyms. Hence, homophony is not always “too language-specific to be retained in translation”, which is what Gottlieb (1997a: 217) claimed, if it can be translated with another wordplay type.

4.5.1 Same translation strategies

Barney has invented a new holiday, Not a Father’s Day, and is celebrating it by giving Marshall a card in the following example 28.

(28) S04E07 ST

Marshall: It appears to be some sort of Asian hooker.

Barney: Yes. Because on Not a Father’s Day, you get a **Thai** you’d actually wear. Wordplay five!

NETFLIX

Marshall: Tuo näyttää aasialaiselta huoralta.

Barney: Sillä ei-isänpäivänä saa sitä thai tätä. Melkoinen sanaleikki!

[Marshall: That looks like an Asian whore.

Barney: Because on Not Father's Day you get that or this. Quite a wordplay!]

DVD

Marshall: Se näyttää aasialaiselta huoralta.

Barney: Niin, sillä isänpäivänä on päästävä syömään thaimaalaista. Sanaleikille!

[Marshall: It looks like an Asian whore.

Barney: Yes, because on a Father's Day you must eat Thai food. To the wordplay!]

This wordplay is another example of homophony for the pronunciation of the nouns “Thai” and “tie” is identical: /tai/. Barney appears to mean that even though ties are a popular gift on a Father's Day, no one is wearing them in reality. Therefore, being in close contact with a Thai person is a much better gift. Since the double meaning of “Thai” is visible at one glance, this wordplay is vertical.

The word “thai” in the Netflix subtitles is also a pun as it has two meanings. Firstly, there is only a difference of one letter to the coordinating conjunction “tai”, meaning “or”, which makes the pun paronymic. Secondly, “thai” can be used to refer to something, for example food, or someone who is from Thailand. It is most likely a complete coincidence that the Finnish “tai” is similar to the word “thai”. As the source-text pun is translated with a target-text pun that has at least one differing meaning, the translation strategy is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. On DVD the source-text pun was translated with the same strategy as well since “thaimaalainen”, the non-inflected form of “thaimaalaista”, has two meanings that refer to the food and a person from Thailand.

In the following example 29, Lily is telling the reason why she has just quit working in a Hawaiian restaurant.

(29) S02E06 ST

Lily: Approximately fifty times a day some guy asked me for a **lay**.

NETFLIX

Lily: Miehet halusivat tilata hampurilaista munalla vähän väliä.
[Men wanted to order a hamburger with an egg all the time.]

DVD

Lily: Kaikki miehet halusivat vain nähdä ”seppeleeni”.
[All men wanted to see only my “wreath”.]

Lily appears to mean that when the guys “asked for a lay”, or “lei”, they used a colloquial expression to suggest intercourse to Lily. “lay” is pronounced identically to the word “lei”, the wreath of flowers that Lily had to wear at her job, for both of them are pronounced as /lei/.

“hampurilaista munalla” in the Netflix subtitles can be understood in multiple ways. The male customers could have ordered a hamburger with an egg or, as “muna” can be used colloquially to refer to the male genital in the Finnish language, “hampurilaista munalla” could also be understood as the hamburger including the male genital. In addition, the meaning of the expression could also be that the men offered to pay for the food with sex, which is suggested by the suffix -lla. Although the Netflix subtitles are a little illogical since Lily was previously shown working in a Hawaiian restaurant, which would unlikely sell hamburgers, the subtitles contain a lexical homonym and, thus, their translation strategy is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

The target-text pun seen on DVD is also a lexical homonym. However, the second meaning of the noun “seppele” in Finnish, the non-inflected form of “seppeleeni”, is not clear, but the DVD subtitler has emphasised its ambiguity by using quotation marks. Furthermore, as the subtitles talk about a wreath it can be said for certain that the translator has noticed the pun in Lily’s line and attempted to translate it similarly. In other words,

the DVD subtitles were translated with 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

4.5.2 Different translation strategies

In example 30, Barney, Robin and Ted have accidentally found a nude painting of Marshall made by Lily. They want to reveal their finding to Marshall. Barney is holding a dart in his hand.

(30) S02E13 ST

Barney: Hey, guys. Guess what I got. A **new dart**.

Robin: Oh, wow, a **new dart**.

Ted: Hey, that **new dart** is great.

Robin: I did not know you were such a fan of **new dart**, Barney.

Barney: Oh yes, Robin, I just love **new dart**. **Nude art**. **Nude art!**

NETFLIX

Barney: Ja minulla on uusi tikan mallikappale.

Robin: Uusi mallikappale.

Ted: Onpa se mallikas.

Robin: En tiennyt, että keräät mallikappaleita.

Barney: Minä rakastan mallikappaleita. Mallikkaita kappaleita. Oikeita mallikappaleita.

[Barney: And I have a new model piece of a dart.

Robin: A new model piece.

Ted: It's so model-y.

Robin: I didn't know that you collect model pieces.

Barney: I love model pieces. Model-y pieces. Real model pieces.]

DVD

Barney: Minulla on uusi dart-tikka.

Robin: Vau, uusi tikka!

Ted: -

Robin: En tiennyt, että tykkäät niistä.

Barney: Rakastan uusia dart-tikkoja. "New dart." (nude art)

[Barney: I have a new dart dart.

Robin: Wow, a new dart!

Robin: I didn't know you like them.

Barney: I love new dart darts. "New dart." (nude art)"

The pronunciation of the words "new dart" and "nude art" are identical because "new" and "nude" are pronounced /n(j)u/ and /n(j)ud/, while the pronunciations of "dart" and "art" are /dart/ and /art/, respectively. When Barney pronounces "new dart" as "nude art" after Robin and Ted's line, it is made clear that he has uttered a pun. Thus, this pun in the source text is horizontal and homophonic.

The pun type has changed into a homonym as the words "mallikappale", "mallikas" and "mallikkaita kappaleita" in the Netflix translation refer to not only Barney's dart but also to Marshall being a model, or "malli" in Finnish, for the nude painting. Although they are words that are not usually used about paintings, it should be clear to the audience that in this case that is what they refer to. Hence, the strategy for the Netflix subtitles is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. In contrast, two translation strategies have been used in the DVD subtitles as the source-text pun can be seen in them in almost the exact same form: both 3) Replaced by non-wordplay and 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect. It is possible that the "New dart." (nude art) part of Barney's line has been mistakenly left in the subtitles as it is very rare to have English like this in Finnish subtitles. Perhaps the subtitler intended to correct the subtitles later.

In example 31, Marshall is getting married. Ted is his best man and has planned a bachelor party that does not include a stripper since Marshall does not want one. Barney is strongly against this.

(31) S02E19

Barney: What can I say, Ted? You **won**.
(Ted and Barney enter a hotel room and find a stripper there)
Barney: ...you **one** sad, pathetic loser.

NETFLIX

Barney: Mitä sanoisin, Ted? Voitit. Senkin surkea luuseri.
[What would I say, Ted? You won. You miserable loser.]

DVD

Barney: Hieno veto, Ted. Vedit lyhyimmän korren.
 [Nice move/draw, Ted. You drew the short straw.]

The words “won” and “one” are in a punning conjunction in this example as their pronunciation is identical, while their form is different. They are namely pronounced as /wɒn/ and /wʌn/. The second meaning of “won” becomes clear only after the entourage enters the room and Barney continues talking and says, “one sad, pathetic loser”. This changes the meaning of the words “you won”. The pun is therefore horizontal.

There is no wordplay in the Netflix translation. The reason for this is most likely the fact that the source-text pun is based on a phonological structure. It may be confusing to the audience that Barney tells Ted he won even though there is a stripper in the room because the stripper’s presence means that Barney, not Ted, has won. As the double meaning has been lost in the Finnish translation, 3) Replaced by non-wordplay is the translation strategy.

The language-specificity of homophony was not, surprisingly, a problem for the DVD subtitler, who managed to retain it in the translation. “veto” in the DVD subtitles is a noun, while “vetää”, which is the unconjugated, present tense form of “vedit”, is a verb. The two words could be understood as being in a punning conjunction here: at first Barney seems to compliment Ted as “veto” in “Hieno veto” can mean both “to draw” and “a move”, but then Barney reveals that he used “draw” in a negative sense of Ted being chosen to do an undesirable task, or drawing the short straw. Even though Ted was not actually chosen to do anything in the source text, “veto” and “vetää” could be thought as paronymic, which is why the translation strategy is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

4.6 Homography

In the 46 episodes, there were only four instances of homographic wordplay. This is no wonder since homographs are based more on sight than hearing, as mentioned in the chapter about categorising wordplay.

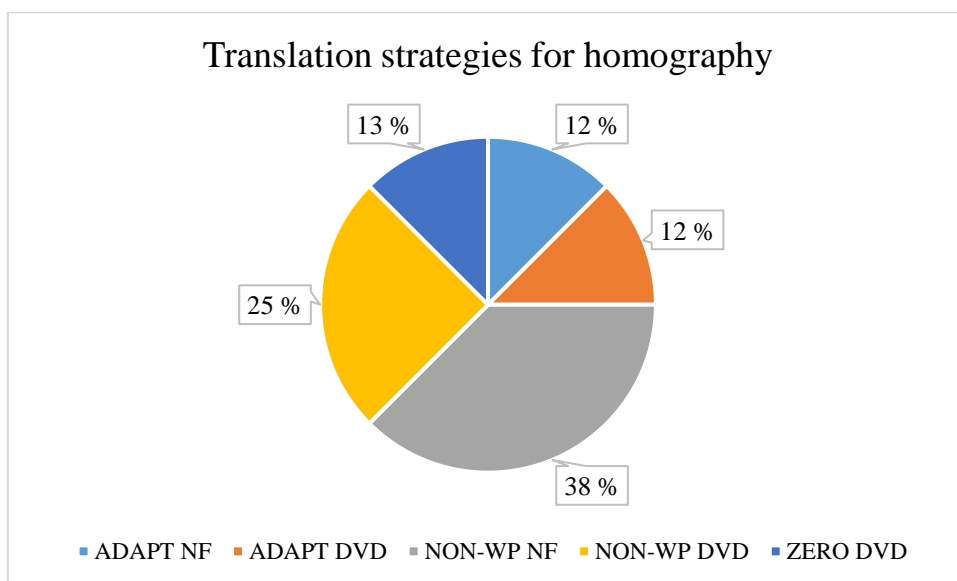


Figure 6. Translation strategies for homography in the target texts

As there were only four homographs in the source material, example 4, which was already presented in the section 2.3, will be discussed in more detail as example 35. Furthermore, as Table 3 already showed, the translation strategies were different on Netflix and DVD only once, which is why there are three examples in the next subsection. The reasons for the translation strategies presented in Figure 6 are also explored in the subsections below.

4.6.1 Same translation strategies

Barney has two different catchphrases, “Challenge accepted” and “Wait for it”. The former he says randomly when another character is talking about something that is

impossible or something they would like to do, which Barney takes as a challenge, whereas the latter he usually uses in between when saying the beginnings and endings of words, a frequent example of which is “Legen... Wait for it... Dary!”. He has told Marshall and Ted that he has gotten a speeding ticket. He soon gets convinced that he can talk his way out of a ticket.

(33) S04E23 ST

Barney: Challenge accep... Wait for it.
 (Barney points at Ted)
 Ted: But I don't get it. Oh, “Ted”. “**Accep-Ted**”.

NETFLIX

Barney: Haaste vastaanot... Odottakaa.
 Ted: En tajua. Aivan, Ted. VastaanoTEDtu.
 [Barney: Challenge recei... Wait.
 Ted: I don't get it. Right, Ted. ReceiTED.]

DVD

Barney: En saa sakkoja täs... Ei vielä.
 Ted: En tajua. Aivan. Ted ja es. ”Tästedes”. Nyt tajusin.
 [Barney: I won't get tickets from n... Not yet.
 Ted: I don't get it. Right. Ted and es. “Tästedes”. Now I got it.]

The wordplay class has changed from homography to paronymy in the Netflix translation. The original one is a horizontal homograph because the forms of the two words, “accepted” and “accep-Ted”, are the same, but the pronunciation of the suffix -ted is different.

In contrast, the Netflix translation is a paronym as “vastaanotedtu” is not a real word, but it is very close to one for the standard version would be “vastaanotettu”. In addition, the translator has emphasised the pun in the Netflix subtitles by capitalising Ted's whole name in the subtitles and has thus perhaps wanted to make the pun clear to the audience. Also the DVD subtitles have been translated with 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. This target-text pun, however, differs a little from the Netflix

subtitles: this time the pun is a real word, “tästedes”, or “from now on”, which contains Ted’s name. All in all, as the wordplay in both subtitles

Barney and Marshall, who both think they are Ted’s best friend, found out that Ted had a dream about one of them just before the scene in example 34

(34) S04E21 ST

Barney: Crazy, right? Ted’s having gay dreams about **me**.

Marshall: And by **me**, he means **M-E**, Marshall Eriksen, star of Ted’s gay dreams.

NETFLIX

Barney: Hullua, eikö? Ted näki märkiä unia minusta.

Marshall: Hän tarkoittaa siis minua. Marshall Erikseniä, Tedin homounien tähteä.

[Barney: Crazy, right? Ted had wet dreams about me.

Marshall: He actually means me. Marshall Eriksen, star of Ted’s gay dreams.]

DVD

Barney: Hullua, eikö vain? Ted näkee homounia minusta

Marshall: Siis minusta, Marshall Eriksenista. Olen hänen uniensa tähti.

[Barney: Crazy, right? Ted is having gay dreams about me.

Marshall: Actually about me, Marshall Eriksen. I’m the star of his dreams.]

This horizontal pun plays with the two ways in which “me” can be said. Marshall’s initials are M.E., which are written as M-E in the intralingual subtitles on Netflix. This “M-E” part of the original dialogue was not translated in either of the subtitles and as a result no wordplay can be seen in them. Only the parts “And by me” and “Marshall Eriksen” were rendered.

The target texts were translated with the strategy of 3) Replaced by non-wordplay. Since Marshall said his name clearly and it is recognisable to the audience, the subtitlers were supposedly forced to include his name in the translation. The time and space constraints might have also affected the translation as the discussion continues immediately after Marshall’s line. It is possible that there is no way to translate the source-text homograph

also because of its very language-specific meaning. An interesting note is that there is a word in Finnish, the pronoun “me”, meaning “us” or “we”, but it cannot be used here as it would not make sense to use the plural pronoun in the context of the argument Barney and Marshall are having about Ted’s dream.

The following example 35 was already used as an example in section 2.3.

(35) S02E11 ST

Ted: Try the birth of Christ. You know, **Christmas. Christ Mas** [sic], which means “More Christ” to our Spanish friends.

NETFLIX

Ted: Miten olisi Kristuksen syntymä? Joului eli Christmas. Christ-mas tarkoittaa muuten ”lisää Kristusta” espanjaksi.

[How about the birth of Christ? Christmas or Christmas. Christ-mas means by the way “more Christ” in Spanish.]

DVD

Ted: Entä Jeesuksen syntymä? Ilman Jeesusta ei olisi joulua.

[How about the birth of Jesus? Without Jesus there wouldn’t be Christmas.]

The “mas” in “Christmas” can be said in two ways in the source text: either as /'mæs/ or as /'mas/. Since this horizontal homograph appears in an unchanged form in the Netflix translation, the subtitler utilised the strategy of 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect. The question of whether the translation is humorous depends on, of course, one’s opinion of what is funny. “Joulu” has no relation to Jesus Christ and is instead named that because Christmas is celebrated in December, which is “joulu” in Finnish. That could be why the translator has chosen to explain to the audience that “joulu” is “Christmas” in English. In the DVD subtitles, 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue was the used translation strategy because the original dialogue including the pun is missing. Instead, the subtitler has added their own emphasis of the importance of Christ to Christmas. These translations are yet another example of how the language-specificity of homographs hinders their translation.

4.6.2 Different translation strategies

In example 33, Ted's parents have come to New York to visit Ted. Barney wants to impress them.

(33) S02E03 ST

Virginia: Barney, you're just delightful.

Barney: No, Virginia, you're delightful, I'm **deligh-Ted**. And he's **just Ted**.

NETFLIX

Virginia: Barney, olet aivan ihastuttava.

Barney: Ei, sinä olet ihastuttava. Minä olen ilahtunut. Ja tuo tuossa Ted.

[Virginia: Barney, you're delightful.

Barney: No, you're delightful. I am delighted. And that there is Ted.]

DVD

Virginia: Barney, olet ihastuttava.

Barney: Itse olet. Ted on ihastunut.

[Virginia: Barney, you're delightful.

Barney: No, you are. Ted is infatuated.]

This horizontal source-text pun is based on how the two words, delighted and deligh-Ted, are written similarly but pronounced differently. In contrast to example 33, the Netflix translation is not a pun for there is no ambiguity in Barney's words when he says "ilahtunut" and "tuo tuossa on Ted". Only the literal meaning has thus been translated. It is, however, possible that the audience has noticed the emphasis of Ted's name in the dialogue. Nevertheless, the strategy that was utilised on Netflix is 3) Replaced by non-wordplay.

The meaning of Barney's line has changed in the DVD translation. Even though it is true that Ted is infatuated with Robin, it is, of course, not what Barney meant when saying "And he's just Ted" in the original dialogue. As the "I'm deligh-Ted" part of Barney's

line has been omitted from the DVD translation and no wordplay can be seen in it, the translation strategies are 3) Replaced by non-wordplay and also 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue.

4.7 Allusive wordplay

Altogether 28 puns contained an allusion that is a reference to, for example books, films and celebrities. Allusive puns were the

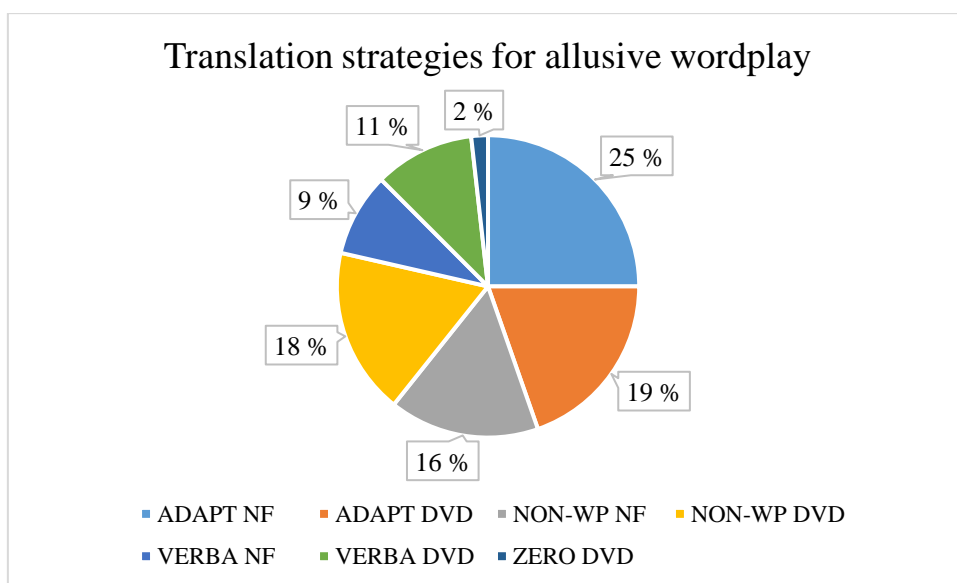


Figure 7. Translation strategies for allusive wordplay in the target texts

Figure 7 shows that 14 instances of allusive wordplay were translated as wordplay on Netflix and on DVD the number was 11. Two of these target-text puns in the Netflix subtitles were lexical homonyms and 12 allusive, whereas the DVD subtitles consisted of one paronym, three lexical homonyms and seven allusive puns. It appears that – as Schröter (2005: 104) speculated – especially the culture-specific knowledge that allusive puns contain hindered their translation from English to Finnish.

4.7.1 Same translation strategies

In example 36, Lily, who temporarily quit her job as a kindergarten teacher, is now working as a secretary in the same architectural firm where Ted works. Their boss is Hammond Druthers, an arrogant, mean man. Before this scene, Lily has stolen his beloved autographed baseball ball, hoping that it would teach him to be friendlier, and written a letter as if it is from the ball. Druthers is reading the letter aloud.

(36) S02E06 ST

Druthers: “In fact, I overheard your iPod talking and he may **shuffle** off at any minute.”

NETFLIX

Druthers: ”Kuulin iPodisi sanovan, että se häipyä hetkenä minä hyvänsä.”
[“I heard your iPod say that it will go away at any minute.”]

DVD

Druthers: ”Kuulin, että iPodisi on harkinnut lähtemistä.”
[“I heard that your iPod has considered leaving.”]

The allusion here refers to iPod Shuffle, the digital audio player manufactured by Apple Inc. that was at the height of its popularity when the episode aired in 2006. The verb “shuffle” is a homonymic word whose meaning is two-fold: shuffling the songs in the iPod and shuffling off, or leaving.

In this case, it is very unlikely that both subtitlers would have missed the pun. Namely after Druthers’ line canned laughter is heard and, what is more, a smiling Lily nudges Ted, who is standing next to her. Both of these emphasise the intentionality of the wordplay and attract the translators’ attention. It is rather likely that this is another example of an instance of wordplay that is difficult, if not impossible, to translate as it appears that there is no possible solution that would include both the name of the iPod

and the verb with the meaning of “to leave”. The translation strategy for both subtitles is

3) Replaced by non-wordplay.

In the following example 37, Barney is listing names he would give to his truck if he had one.

(37) S02E18 ST

Barney: Number three, “**The Esca-Laid**”.

NETFLIX

Barney: Kolmantena Esca-Laita-Se-Häneen.
[In third Esca-Put-It-In-Her/Him.]

DVD

Barney: Kolme: Imuauto.
[Three: Suction truck.]

Barney’s line in the original dialogue alludes to the car Cadillac Escalade, and the vertical pun is based on how the “lade” part of the name is pronounced as /leɪd/, which is identical to “laid”. The allusion is visible also in the Netflix translation for it contains the word “Esca-Laita”. “Laittaa”, the unconjugated form of the imperative “laita”, appears to refer to intercourse in this context especially together with the rest of the word: as mentioned in the analysis of example 17, the pronoun “se”, or “it”, is ambiguous in Finnish.

Although no reference to the brand name can be seen in the DVD translation, the semantic field is the same as “imuauto”, or “suction truck”, is a type of a car. The noun is ambiguous in the sense of “imu”, or “suction” as it refers to oral sex, while “imuauto” is an actual car. In other words, this is an example of an allusive pun whose type was changed in translation and, since “imuauto” can be understood in two ways, the new type is a lexical homonym. Its translation strategy is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

4.7.2 Different translation strategies

In example 38, Barney is talking about his apartment in which he lives alone.

(38) S02E05 ST

Barney: **The Fortress of Barnitude?** Never.

NETFLIX

Barney: Barneyden linnakkeessa? Ei ikinä.
[In the Fortress of Barnitude? Never.]

DVD

Barney: Barney'n linnassako?
[In Barney's castle?]

Barney's line most likely alludes to the Fortress of Solitude that is an occasional headquarters for the DC Comics character Superman. The type of the wordplay is a vertical portmanteau since the name Barney and the noun "solitude" have been combined to form a new word.

As the superhero is well-known in Finland, there is a more or less official Finnish translation for the headquarters, Yksinäisyyden linnake. Since "Barneyden" is close to "yksinäisyyden", especially with the suffix -yden, the translator of the Netflix subtitles has apparently noticed the source-text allusion. Hence, it was translated with 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. In contrast, the translation strategy on DVD was 3) Replaced by non-wordplay as there is no allusion or wordplay. The translator has possibly missed the allusion as the name was translated with "linna" rather than "linnake".

In example 39, Marshall and Lily have decided that they want to elope in Atlantic City, a resort city known for its casinos, just like Las Vegas. The two have invited Ted, Barney and Robin as their guests. Ted and Marshall are in a casino, and Ted has just asked Marshall how he is feeling.

(39) S02E08 ST

Marshall: Great. A little nervous.

Ted: **Craps?**

Marshall: Not that nervous.

Ted: No, I mean do you want to play **Craps?**

NETFLIX

Marshall: Hienolta. Vähän jännittää.

Ted: Paskahousua?

Marshall: Ei sentään.

Ted: Ei, vaan pelataanko paskahousua?

[Marshall: Fine. A little nervous.

Ted: Shit pants?

Marshall: Not that much.

Ted: No, shall we play Shit pants?]

DVD

Marshall: Hyvä. Vähän hermostunut.

Ted: -

Marshall: -

Ted: Pelataanko?

[Marshall: Good. A little nervous.

Ted: -

Marshall: -

Ted: Shall we play?]

In this another example of a card game, the wordplay in the original dialogue is an allusion that refers to the dice game Craps played at casinos. Marshall misunderstands Ted and thinks that he is asking whether he has defecated himself. Since the two words have identical form and pronunciation and are repeated, the pun in question is a horizontal homonymic one.

The subtitles on Netflix mention a Finnish card game similar to Shithead called Paskahousu, or Shit pants. It not only fits the context of the casino – even though it is not played at casinos – but also can be used to refer to Marshall being extremely nervous for the same reason as the source-text instance of wordplay. Marshall and Ted are not shown playing the game after Ted’s suggestion, so the translation is not restricted by a pictorial

link. If there was one, the Finnish audience would have been able to see that they are clearly not playing Paskahousu, thus forcing the subtitler to use some other translation strategy than 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

Neither the pun nor Ted and Marshall's line have been translated in the DVD subtitles. Consequently, the translation strategy is 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue. Instead, Marshall's "Hyvä. Vähän hermostunut." line stays on screen until Ted suggests playing. The audience can clearly see that Ted and Marshall are saying something and the subtitle stays on the screen for so long that it can be re-read. The cultural domains suggested by Alexieva (1997) may have affected this choice: Craps is not known in Finland and perhaps the subtitler did not realise that there is another kind of game with almost the same name. The Netflix translation shows that it is not a question of space or time constraints.

4.8 Portmanteaux

Fifteen puns belonged to the category of portmanteaux, in which two meanings, or two words, have been combined to form a new word.

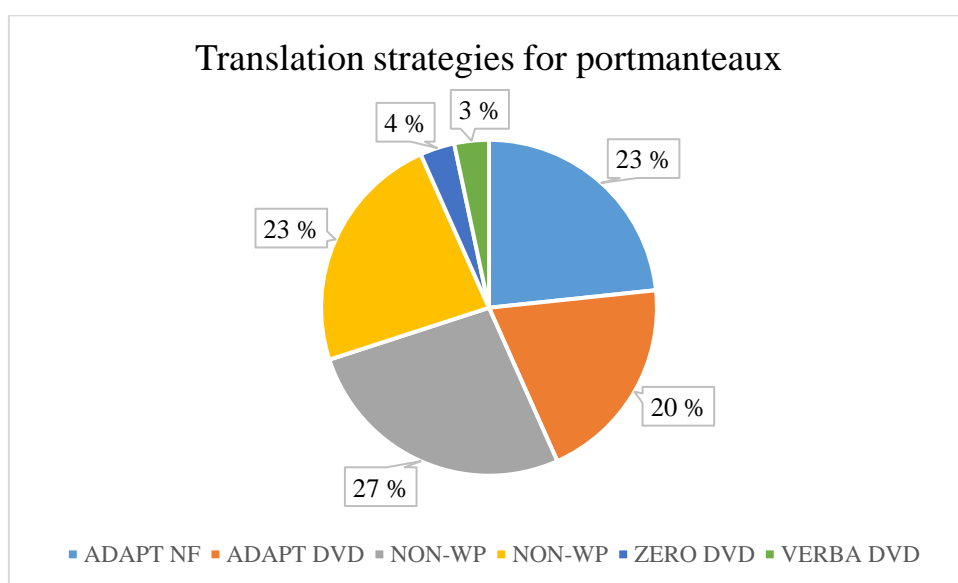


Figure 8. Translation strategies for portmanteaux in the target texts

Less than half of the portmanteaux were translated as portmanteaux, which can be seen in Figure 8. On Netflix, one portmanteau was translated as a paronym and the six other target-text puns were portmanteaux. All six instances of wordplay that were adapted to the local setting on DVD belonged to the category of portmanteaux. The translatability of portmanteaux seemed to especially depend on how far away from their original form the two words that have been combined are, which will be explained in more detail in the examples below. As can be seen in Table 3, the translation strategies on Netflix and DVD differed from each other only on one occasion. Consequently, the next subsection consists of three examples instead of two.

4.8.1 Same translation strategies

In example 40, Marshall and Ted are talking about Marshall's beloved car, which is a Pontiac Fiero, and a disastrous event that coincided with reaching 100 000 miles with the car.

(40) S02E17 ST

Ted: Remember the 100K fiasco?
Marshall: Ah, the **Fiero-asco**.

NETFLIX

Ted: Muistatko sen fiaskon?
Marshall: Niin, Fiero-askon.
[Do you remember that fiasco?
Marshall: Yeah, Fiero-asco.]

DVD

Ted: Muistatko 100 000 –fiaskon?
Marshall: Fierasko...
[Ted: Do you remember the 100 000 fiasco?

Marshall: Fierasco...]

The vertical portmanteau “Fiero-asco” refers to the proper name “Fiero” and the noun “fiasco”. “Fiasco” is almost the same in Finnish as there is just a difference of one letter: instead of a c, it is written with a k. The reason for this easy translation is presumably that the Finnish “fiasko” is a loan word common to also many other languages. Since the audience is told previously in the episode that Marshall’s car is a Fiero, it should be clear from where the portmanteau comes from. The DVD subtitles differ slightly from the Netflix ones, but they still clearly refer to the combination of Fiero and fiasco. The translation strategy for both subtitles is 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect.

Robin is thinking about quitting her job as a reporter, but is having doubts about it. Lily is trying to convince her in example 41.

(41) S04E03 ST

Lily: Robin, what did they make you call the Tropical Storm Hector when it was raining cats and dogs?

Robin: A **furricane**.

NETFLIX

Lily: Millä nimellä Hector-myrskyä piti kutsua kun oli oikea koiranilma?

Robin: Hurttakaani.

[Lily: Which name one had to use for the Hector storm when it was truly foul weather?

Robin: Houndcane.]

DVD

Lily: Vihasit sitä. Miksi jouduit kutsumaan sitä hurrikaania ja koiranilmaa?

Robin: Karvaturrikaaniksi.

[Lily: You hated it. What did you have to call that hurricane and foul weather?

Robin: Shaggydogcane.]

In the vertical source-text portmanteau the words “fur” and “hurricane” have been combined. In both target texts, the literal meaning of “koiranilma” is “dog’s weather”, which happens to be very close to the source-text expression “to rain cats and dogs”. The Netflix subtitler has translated the source-text wordplay as a combination of the nouns “hurta”, or “hound”, and “hurrikaani”, or “hurricane”. Similarly, the translator of the DVD subtitles has used the noun “karvaturri”, which refers to a shaggy or a long-haired dog, to replace the “hurri” part of the noun “hurrikaani”. In addition to “hurrikaani” being an interlingual borrowing, the fact that there is an overlap of only one letter in the combination of “furrricane” likely allowed the usage of the translation strategy of 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect. As was mentioned in chapter 2.4.2, interlingual borrowings and the degree of overlap in portmanteaux have an effect on how easily wordplay can be translated (Delabastita 1993: 233; Delabastita 1996: 136).

In contrast to examples 40 and 41 in which having a loan word in the source language makes translation even with almost the exact same form possible, example 42 illustrates a portmanteau that appears to be less translatable into Finnish. Before the scene in it, Marshall and Barney have made a slap bet about why Robin is afraid to go to a mall: the one who finds the reason first is allowed to slap the other. Barney thought he succeeded in finding the reason and slapped Marshall, but he was proved to be wrong afterwards.

(42) S02E09 ST

Marshall: Looks like someone suffered from **premature slapulation**.

NETFLIX

Marshall: Joku taisi kärsiä ennenaikaisesta läpsystä.
[Someone might have suffered from a premature slap.]

DVD

Marshall: Se taisi olla ennenaikainen läpsyttäminen.
[That might have been a premature slapping.]

It appears that the nouns “slap” and “ejaculation” have been combined to form a vertical portmanteau. “premature ejaculation” would be “ennenaikainen siemensyöksy” in

Finnish. Even though “läpsy”, the translation on Netflix, and “syöksy” both end in “-sy”, they are, in my opinion, too far away from each other to be recognised as wordplay. This is the case also with the DVD subtitles: “läpsyttäminen” was perhaps chosen because it resembles the noun “tuleminen”, or “coming”, in the sense of having an ejaculation, but the two words are arguably not close enough to evoke a connection between them. Hence, both the Netflix and DVD subtitles have been translated with 3) Replaced by non-wordplay.

4.8.2 Different translation strategies

Ted and Robin have decided to move in together before the scene in the below example 42. Barney wants to have “one last awesome night together as bros” with Ted before the move happens.

(43) S02E18 ST

It’s a **bro-ing away party**. A special **bro-casion**. A **bro-choice rally**.

NETFLIX

Se on poikien jäähyväisjuhla. Erityinen poikien tilaisuus. Mielenosoitus pojille.

[It is boys’ going away party. A special boys’ occasion. A rally for boys.]

DVD

Nämä ovat äijärit, äijäbileet...

[These are dude??., dude parties...]

There are three portmanteaux in the above example. The two first sentences are based on the combination of the words “bro” and “going” and “occasion” and the third is “bro-choice” instead of “pro-choice”. As the noun “bro” is used to replace some letters and added to words to form a portmanteau, the degree of overlap between its two components is even higher than in example 42.

The portmanteaux have not been translated in either target texts. On Netflix, no portmanteaux can be seen, and their meanings have been translated as two separate words instead: “poikien” is apparently used to convey the meaning of “bro”. Therefore, the translation strategy is 3) Replaced by non-wordplay. It is not clear what the suffix -rit of the word “äijärit” in the DVD subtitles refers to, which is why it has been backtranslated as “dude??”. Nevertheless, “äijärit” does not appear to be a combination of any Finnish words. “A bro-choice rally” is presumably the source-text portmanteau that was left untranslated in the DVD subtitles, which is why two translation strategies can be seen in them: 3) Replaced by non-wordplay and 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to examine and compare the translation of wordplay in the Finnish subtitles of the American series *How I Met Your Mother* on Netflix and DVD. The research questions were three-fold: 1) Which strategies have been used when translating wordplay in the Finnish subtitles on Netflix and DVD? 2) If it appears that the type of wordplay has had an effect on its translation strategy, what could be the reasons for this? 3) What kind of differences are there in the translation of wordplay between the subtitles on DVD and on Netflix? The hypothesis was that most of the puns are retained in translation and that the wordplay type does have an effect on how it is translated. In order to answer these questions, the second and fourth season, which contained altogether 46 episodes, were watched on Netflix and on DVD and every time an instance of wordplay was found, it and the sentence it appeared in were written down. Intralingual subtitles available on Netflix were then read to check that the dialogue was written down correctly. When all material was collected, it was categorised according to the type of the pun and the translation strategy. Also the translations were categorised according to the wordplay type.

241 instances of wordplay were found in the source texts. The typology of puns used in this study consisted of lexical, collocational, and phrasal homonymy, paronymy, homophony, homography, allusive wordplay, and portmanteaux. All these types except homophones and homographs were seen also in the Finnish subtitles, which was expected. The five translation strategies were called 1) Rendered verbatim, with or without humorous effect, 2) Adapted to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect, 3) Replaced by non-wordplay, 4) Replaced by related rhetorical device, and 5) Not rendered, using the space for neighbouring dialogue.

The results of this study revealed that more than half of the source-text puns were translated with the second translation strategy: on Netflix, it was used 163 (67.6%) times, and on DVD 143 times (59.3 %). The frequency of the aforementioned translation strategy indicates that the subtitlers likely preferred to translate the source-text wordplay in a way that preserves their humorous effect. For instance, also Ritala (2010),

Merenheimo (2012), Hautakoski (2013), Perttola (2014) and Juntunen (2019) discovered that the most popular translation strategy was translating wordplay as wordplay in the Finnish subtitles of a situational comedy. In addition, 66 (27.4%) instances of source-text wordplay were replaced with non-wordplay in the Netflix subtitles, whereas on DVD the amount was 75 (31.1%). More puns were therefore retained in the Netflix translation than on DVD. It is a shame that the strategy of replacing wordplay in the original English dialogue with wordplay related rhetorical devices in the subtitles was utilised only twice in the Netflix subtitles and thrice on DVD. They can namely be used to indicate that the source-text pun has been detected and thus show that there has been an attempt to create a similar effect.

The source-text puns that appeared to be especially retained in translation were the three different types of homonyms as they frequently contrast the literal and figurative senses of words. Several different reasons, such as interlingual asymmetry, culture-specificity, for replacing wordplay with non-wordplay were suggested in the analysis of the translations. What can furthermore be concluded is that it seems that the time and space constraints of audiovisual translation had a varying effect on the translations since, for example, a pictorial link was observed in some cases, whereas the six second limit, which is the average reading speed of two full lines of text, did not appear to be an issue.

No statistical test was used in the analysis of the material as this was a qualitative study. Therefore, it is not possible to say for certain whether or not the wordplay type affects its translation. Furthermore, although the amount of the data was appropriate for the scope of this thesis, it is not enough to make any major generalisations about the findings. In addition, it is possible that I did not notice all puns in the material despite watching all episodes twice. Another important note is that whether or not a source-text pun can be considered retained in the target text depends entirely on the definition of wordplay and translation strategies used in the analysis. If I had chosen, for instance, a looser definition of a pun, I might have found more instances of wordplay whose translation strategies might have been different.

Further studies could concentrate on interviewing different subtitlers regarding how they translate wordplay, how important they consider it and whether they recognised the puns. Interviews like that could additionally reveal some factors that possibly affect the translation of wordplay such as the poor working conditions and other human factors that were mentioned in section 3.4. It is namely possible that the working conditions of the translators of the DVD version influenced the translation strategies that were used. These interviews could have also made the results of this study more accurate since they would have perhaps allowed me to know for certain what translation strategies were used for puns and whether the wordplay type has an effect on their translation in reality. What could furthermore be worthy of research is examining subtitles in a language that is related to English and comparing them to the Finnish translation. A study like that may reveal how big of an effect belonging to the same language family may have on the translation strategies or the number of puns that were retained in translation. Another interesting study would be examining the reception of wordplay in Finnish viewers as in this thesis it was possible to only speculate whether, for instance, certain scenes with the translation strategy 3) Replaced by non-wordplay leave the audience confused and what they think about the possible loss of laughter.

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