An intercultural pragmatic approach to English-Russian and English-German renditions of the formulaic *That's what she said*-punchline in telecinematic discourse

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Abstract

This paper takes an intercultural pragmatic approach to identifying and discussing rendition strategies of one specific punchline recurrent in scripted telecinematic discourse: That's what she said. *While this formulaic punchline demonstrates a relatively high salience in the US, particularly in oral and scripted genres, it issues more than one challenge to translators seeking to render it for other speech communities in a manner that acknowledges and retains the source pattern's complexity as a discursively triggered and formulaic pragmatic idiom. We shall focus here on two specific target cultures, i.e. the Russian and the German, in demonstrating the challenges that this complex and linguistically as well as cognitively multi-faceted formula poses for its appropriation into either cultural sphere. Our study is based on a self-compiled parallel dataset of context-embedded source occurrences of* That's what she said *and their renditions into German and Russian, thus offering immediately contrastive insights into the rendition strategies that translators have been employing to interculturally transfer this highly evasive idiomatic formula from one speech community to others.*

Keywords: rendition strategies, telecinematic discourse, humour translation, That's what she said, *idiomatic punchlines.*

1. Introduction[1]

This paper takes an intercultural approach to renditions of one specific recurrent punchline in scripted telecinematic discourse:[2] *That's what she said* (henceforth *TW'SS₂*; cf. Kirner-Ludwig 2018). The present study discusses the range of strategies that translators have been employing in transconveying this punchline from its original source context and culture (i.e. US American) into other target cultures and speech communities. We shall focus here on two specific target cultures, i.e. the Russian and the German, to demonstrate the challenges that this complex linguistically and cognitively multi-faceted formula poses for its appropriation into each of of these cultural spheres.

We seek to take on an inter- and cross-cultural approach to the complexities and the merely unavoidable shortcomings that a translator may face when attempting to transfer the socio-cultural load tied to this utterance into another language and into a whole different cultural sphere for a different audience. Our hypothesis is that there is, in fact, a lot of room for semantic and pragmatic loss in translation when it comes to *TW'SS₂*, as no precise or synonymous rendition of this (or, arguably, any) formulaic utterance will be possible – even though a literal, word(class)-by-word(class), translation would be no challenge *per se* (i.e. That's what she said/ *Das ist was sie sagte/ Это то, что она сказала*).[3] We shall carve out such conceptual forfeits that English-into-German and English-into-Russian translations must admit to themselves when rendering this demonstrative cleft. We use a contrastive dataset of 102 samples representing 34 source samples from US TV series and movies (1992–2016) and their renditions into German and Russian.

2. A literature review on the challenges entailed in translating humour interculturally

Translation studies as a discipline in its own acclaimed right has been in existence since the 1970s, with its focus having shifted gradually from literal towards cultural approaches of rendition (cf. Bassnett & Lefevere 1992). This being said, scholars and practitioners have come to systematically take into account the essential factor of cultural (re)conceptualisation entailed in any translator's decision in addition to the choices s/he will need to make regarding morphological, syntactical, semantic and pragmatic aspects of the to-be-rendered material (cf. e.g. Bassnett 2007; House 2015; Bădoiu 2015; Heydon & Kianbakht 2020). Bădoiu in specific speaks of the need to "translat[e] culture" (2015: 112), admitting that having to "render the cultural elements within a text without interpreting them" is a "highly complex" task for any translator (Bădoiu 2015: 112). He goes on to suggest that "the ideal is to transmit the original, maintaining its essence and yet make it accessible and intelligible" to the recipient (Bădoiu 2015: 112). In the following, we address issues concerning the translation of humour (Section 2.1) and the dubbing of telecinematic discourse (Section 2.2).

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[1] We would very much like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments, which contributed significantly to enhancing both the structure and the argumentative rigor of this paper.

[2] *Telecinematic discourse* (TCD), as defined by e.g. Bednarek (2017, 2018; *television dialogue*) and Piazza et al. (2011: 1), covers merely any kind of monologue and dialogue in fully scripted movies, TV series and stand-up comedy shows, partially or non-scripted reality TV and talk shows, TV interviews, subtitles, newscasts, documentaries (of which interviews are often a feature), and other forms of infotainment.

[3] Renditions that would arguably grasp the tone of the utterance much better would be *Das hat sie auch gesagt!* in German and *Она то же самое сказала!* in Russian. See Section 4 for further examples.

2.1. *That's what she said* as an isolated formulaic punchline hard to pin down cross-culturally

The focus of the present study is set on a particular punchline, i.e. *That's what she said,* which – despite its relatively high saliency in US culture – has not received much scholarly attention so far. This may be due to its generally perceived inappropriateness (as per the sexual innuendo it can evoke). The few exceptions show rather disperse study interests (cf. Kiddon & Brun 2011; Kirner-Ludwig 2018; Meier & Medjesky 2018; Medlin et al. 2018), with none of these few studies having tackled the complexities entailed in translating or rendering this punchline into other languages and appropriate for other cultural audiences. This is a gap that the present paper will seek to address.

We shall retain the notion of *isolated formulaic punchline* (IFP) and the abbreviation *TWˈSS₂* here, both of which were introduced by Kirner-Ludwig (2018) based on the distinct discursive characteristics this formula demonstrates. The humorous effect of *TWˈSS₂* lies in the sexual innuendo its uttering creates: The formula is (meant to be) saliently perceived as an incoherent turn following a usually inadvertent trigger turn that itself needs to fulfil certain structural criteria. Samples (a) and (b) demonstrate authentic examples of *TWˈSS₂* being thus triggered by a preceding utterance that contains a lexical phrase that allows for a sexual re-interpretation (i.e. "is coming", "is big"), and a noun phrase that may be more or less vague in reference ("my mother", "it"). Usually, combining these two criteria in an utterance clears the way for another interlocutor "interjecting" *TWˈSS₂*, which is then, usually, incoherent with the topic just talked about. As such, it represents the kind of formulaic language that, according to Norrick, will "generate the incongruity required for humour" (2016: 303).

(a) Turn 0:   [Michael:] Pam? [What are your plans?]
     Turn 1:   [Pam:] My mother's coming.
     Turn 2:   [Michael:] **That's what she said.**   (*The Office*, S2 Ep2)

(b) Turn 1:   Lorelai: [while looking at the Twykham house] *sighs* It's big.
     Turn 2:   Sookie: **That's what she said.**
     Turn 3:   Lorelai: Good one.   (*Gilmore Girls,* S6 Ep2)

2.2. On interculturally translating intentionally humorous and sexually suggestive dialogue for the screen

Although Bădoiu's remarks concerning the need to "translat[e] culture" (2015: 112) were made in reference to literary translations specifically, they are just as relevant to renditions of audiovisual texts, which have only gained focused attention in recent years (cf. especially Chiaro 2010; Ranzato 2011; Dore 2020). Bădoiu (2015: 113) suggests that, in order to best possibly "avoid unnatural translations", a translator needs to come up with "semantic equivalents, functional equivalents, reductions, expansions or paraphrases". He does admit, however, that no such procedures will ever be rendition-proof by default, as a translator may find it significantly more challenging to produce a "natural translation" particularly for such patterns that represent what Baker calls "conventionalised expressions and patterns […] conveying implicatures" (2001: 229f.).

This being said, natural and yet functionally equivalent translations are particularly hard to achieve when it comes to humorous utterances. Popa maintains that it is

> worth distinguishing between two levels of translation [i.e.] the pragmatic function of translations of humorous texts [for one thing, which] involves the genre-related function of humour in general, namely, to produce amusement and even cause laughter. The second level concerns the

interpersonal functions involved at the moment joke translation goes further than to amuse. This works in the target-language socio-cultural context.

(Popa 2005: 50)

Quite a few handbooks and standard references have provided comprehensive accounts on intercultural translation, with many of them positioned in anthropological research (e.g. Keesing 1985; Conway 2012), linguistics (e.g. Rojo & Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2013) and translation studies (e.g. Chiaro 2010; Maitland 2017). Scholars have also zeroed in on intercultural renditions of humorous utterances, wordplay and jokes (e.g. Low 2011; Knospe et al. 2016), with dubbing and translation techniques within the context of animated film having become its very own strand of research in recent years. A salient focus has been put on discussions of English-into-Arabic and English-into-Farsi renditions in this regard (e.g. Di Giovanni 2016; Hejazi & Hamidi 2019; Yahiaoui et al. 2019).

This study's interest in German and Russian renditions, now – in combination with the fact that we are dealing with a sexual formulaic punchline here – seems to have hit a cross-linguistic niche that has not been tackled before.[4] In fact, Low (2011: 60) stipulates that the "[t]ranslatability [of sexual innuendos] does not require that the [target text] use the same linguistic structures [as the source text], but merely that it delivers, broadly speaking, the same joke."[5] At the same time, however, the author admits that "[o]bscenity [in a joke…] involves some tricky decisions which must be made by a translator very aware of the target culture. One danger is to turn a mild vulgarity into something very offensive in the [target text]. But the converse danger is excessive caution" (Low 2011: 68). The more extensive and authentic a translator's knowledge is about the source culture of a "dirty" joke as well as the target culture's threshold of (dis-)comfort regarding obscene humour in general, the potentially more interculturally appropriate of a rendition they will be able to create.

2.3. Translating and re-voicing for telecinematic audiences – with a focus on German and Russian

Fedorova (2011) claims that any translation is a product of cultural hybridisation since each translation decision is a way of seeing culturally significant facts from different perspectives. Thus, a translator must evaluate the impact of each culturally significant unit on the translated text as a whole and, based on this, choose a (combination of) translation strategy(ies). This is particularly true for telecinematic texts, as these are conventionally recognised as cultural phenomena.

The translation of jokes and punchlines in telecinematic discourse poses a particularly complex challenge. In fact, humour transfer to another language can turn out to be a next-to-impossible task. Kim (2013: 257) postulates that specific translation decisions depend very much on the ability of the translator to develop a rendition that fits the text-internal situational and the external cultural context of the recipient. He concludes that the differences between an original text and its translation cannot be overcome entirely, which holds particularly true for film text, as puns and jokes often additionally co-rely on non-verbal means of expression.

While there has been a lack of consensus on the scope of the term *re-voicing* (Luyken et al. 1991; Baker & Hochel 1998), we postulate that it technically designates a range of oral language transfer procedures: voice-over, narration, audio description, free commentary, simultaneous

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[4] There are, however, a number of strong studies that have investigated intercultural translation in other crosscultural spheres, such as Australian and British (e.g. Sinkeviciute 2017), English and Spanish (e.g. Martínez-Sierra 2006; Valdeón & Vidal 2019), or English and Mandarin (e.g. Tsai 2015).

[5] He remarks that "[i]f I find it hard to translate effectively a West African joke about traditional polygamy, or a Chinese one about bird's nest soup, the key reason is not that they are humorous but simply that they are not part of my culture" (Low 2011: 67).

interpreting and lip-synchronised dubbing. Dubbing involves the replacement of the original voice track with a voice-over rendition that attempts to be as close as possible to the timing, articulatory movements and tempo of the original. To what extent dubbing may be regarded as overlapping with translating has never ceased to be controversial since the 1980s (e.g. Götz & Herbst 1987), although Pisek (1994: 8) affirms that dubbing should be seen as a blend of translator decisions and cinematic activity and restriction. Thus, dubbing in practice will seek to do justice to the lexico-semantic and pragmatic meaning of a source text, whilst making do with the inevitable restraints posed by visual equivalence. Nowadays, the voice-over technique is being more often replaced by dubbing in Russia, while it has to be noted that this technique is still very much restricted to such programmes that are endorsed by the Federal Government.[6]

When it comes to re-voicing punchlines, there is an additional layer of intricacy that a screen translator will have to take into consideration – and this is a factor so far rarely touched upon by the research literature available. The IFP of interest here is inherently a phenomenon of oral and spontaneously uttered speech (Calude 2008; Kirner-Ludwig 2018), and mostly a feature in audio(-visual) media. This being said, a post-production screen translator will be constrained extensively in their adaptive rendition, depending on what they have been commissioned to deliver. A subtitler, for instance, has an average of 50 characters and a set number of seconds at their disposal;[7] the dubbing or voice-over of an audiovisual source text, i.e. the production of an adapted text in the target language that will replace the original dialogue, then will require a particular set of skills on the translator's part. The rendered utterances should be in total synchrony with the original dialogue. Furthermore, the number, manner, and place of articulation of clearly distinguishable consonants (e.g. bilabials, plosives) featuring in each locution will have to be as close as possible to the original, particularly for a lip-synchronised rendition.[8] While one might think that all these aspects and factors will constrain a translator's creative leeway when accomplishing a dubbed adaptation of a screenplay, Section 4 shall demonstrate that there is quite a range of varying renditions at one's disposal when it comes to rendering *TWʿSS$_2$*.

2.4. On the cross-cultural concepts of "joke" and "(isolated) punchline" at the centre of this study

Conventionally and prototypically – at least from an Anglo-American point of view – a punchline usually represents the final utterance in a short, often tripartly composed humorous narrative that breaks with the expected frame and thereby (potentially) creates a humorous effect (Suls 1972; Hockett 1977; Giora 1991: 465; Attardo & Chabanne 1992; Dynel 2009: 1284).[9] However, the literature on alternative joke structures and variations is vast, which suggests that it is impossible to assign all phenomena of conversational humour to established categories (e.g. Dynel 2009; Norrick 2016). As our approach in this study is an intercultural one focusing on German and Russian renditions of a (US) English punchline, it needs to be mentioned that we

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[6] Traditionally, Russia used to be grouped with the "voice-over countries" (Gottlieb 1998), mostly using voice-over dub technique, which means that in Russian telecinematic texts the original speech would still be audible underneath the Russian voice-over. The latter would conventionally be done by one single narrator interpreting the entire dialogue. This dubbing strategy became a frequent practice in the 1990s, when the number of films from abroad, especially from the US, coming to Russia increased significantly. On the history of voice-over and dubbing in Russia, see Gorshkova (2006).

[7] Note in addition that it has been found that e.g. swearwords and offensive language have a stronger effect in subtitling than in dubbing, which is why the AVT practice of toning down or omitting swearwords appears more in subtitled versions of audiovisual products than in dubbed ones (e.g. Briechle & Duran Eppler 2019).

[8] Most studies applying translation theory to movies zoom in on interlinguistic renditions of film titles, usually scratching no more than the lexical surface of the rendition process and generally neglecting any cognitive or cultural implications (e.g. Geng & Wei 2016; Shi 2014).

[9] But see Chiaro (1992) for "shaggy-dog stories", i.e. jokes without a punchline.

are bound to be dealing with cross-culturally distinct understandings of what a joke or punchline may encapsulate. In English discourse, the notion *joke* conventionally refers to a short (generally fictional) humorous story, with a punchline that bears incongruity in relation to its lead-up text (Dynel 2009; 2012: 10). The German notions *Witz* and *Pointe* are semantically and conceptionally highly synonymous with *joke* and *punchline*, respectively. However, the Russian understanding of these notions requires further semantic explication. In Russian, *анекдот* (the latter being a transliteration from English *anecdote*; also cf. *шутка*) may refer to a short imaginary humorous story with a punchline as a structural component. Note that *анекдот* pertains to an intraculturally known and commonly believed-to-be-true story related to a historical persona or a historic event; such stories are not necessarily humorous but can be.

In the Russian lexical inventory, two salient terms correspond to the notion of English *punchline*, i.e. *пуант* (transliteration of borrowed French *pointe*) and *панчлайн* (transliteration of borrowed English *punchline*). The term *пуант* is primarily found in poetry studies referring to stylistic devices as featuring in poems or short humorous stories (Kviatkovsky 2013). *Пуант* also represents a structural component of fables, epigrams and jokes, containing a sudden witty climax. On the other hand, *punchline* is usually applied in Russian within the context of rap battles, stand-up monologues, and internet memes (Goryachev & Prutskov 2017: 87). Rap battles are usually built on puns intended to put down an opponent (Goryachev & Prutskov 2017: 87; Tatanova 2018: 95); and in internet memes, an image will usually create the context, while the first line provides the set-up and the last line the punchline (Shchurina 2014: 88). Some researchers also mention the notion within the context of social media discourse (Zagudullina 2016) and short forms of internet poetry (Krongauz 2019).

3. Data and methodological approach

The dataset collected for this study contains 102 samples, i.e. 34 triple-sets of occurrences of *TWˈSS₂* for which we were able to access the parallel German and Russian renditions. Each of the identified instances of *TWˈSS₂* was extracted together with its context in the original English version, i.e. with 1 or 2 turns preceding the trigger utterance (turn 3) and representing the build-up to the punchline, i.e. the IFP itself (Turn 4). We itemise the pattern taken into account in Table 1a and specify the potential range of common clause patterns that *TWˈSS₂* will demonstrably respond to in Table 1b (see also Kirner-Ludwig 2018: 85; i.e. Turn 3). Note that an utterance triggering *TWˈSS₂* will usually feature one item of the "Component 1" column and one item (usually the one corresponding) from the "Component 2" column.

Table 1a: Pre- and post-turn sequences considered

Turns	Category of turn	Linguistic representation
[1]	[Contextualising turn (CT)]	random
2	Contextualising turn (CT)	random
3	Trigger utterance (TU)	[Component 1] + [Component 2]; cf. Table 1b
4	Isolated Formulaic Punchline (IFP)	That's what she said.

Table 1b: Makeup variations of *TW'SS₂*-trigger utterances (adapted from Kirner-Ludwig 2018: 85)

Component 1	**Component 2**
C1a. pronoun + copula verb *It is, I am, that is, this is; that tastes, feels, looks; make it*, etc.	**C2a. adjective/participle** (sexually ambiguous) *hard, soft, first, deep, huge, big, tight, long, good, satisfied, fit*, etc.
C1b. verbum sentiendi + pronoun *think about, consider it.*, etc.	**C2b. adverb** (sexually ambiguous) *face down, on top, deep*, etc.
C1c. pronoun + polysemous/ambiguous verb *be, come, do, get, go, need, stay, put, to put sth. in/on, to make sth. work, to go down, to screw, swallow, blow, hold, slide down, rise up, touch sth.*, etc.	**C2c. prepositional phrase** containing either a sexually ambiguous **noun**, or a vague **referential pronoun** *to/in bed, on top of, under her, in one's mouth*, etc.
C1d. verb phrase in the imperative (sexually ambiguous)	**C2d. direct object**

In order to get hold of the dubbed Russian renditions of the English versions, we searched http://cinematext.ru/, which reduced the cross-linguistic sample size to 9 movie samples and 25 TV series samples, i.e. a total of 34 English samples that we have been able to bring together with their Russian versions. These 34 samples were then identified in their German re-voiced versions, and the respective turns were transcribed according to turns.[10]

Our observations and analyses will cut across various phases entailed in the post-production re-voicing process of telecinematic discourse: we focus on the post-production stage specifically pertaining to how the *TW'SS₂*-samples under investigation are rendered from their source language and culture into both Russian and German. In doing so, we zoom in on one specific background agent involved in the re-voicing process, i.e. the dialogue writers. Considering that they are generally responsible for any final decisions that have to be made concerning the synchronised text, we can trace their work not only on the formal and functional levels of the cross-linguistically rendered dialogues, but also when we take into account the quasi- and suprasegmental levels in the final re-voiced version of the series and the samples under investigation.[11]

In our analysis, we focus on the following criteria when assessing the functional quality of the Russian and German target structures: (a) **Formal closeness to source structure**, i.e. how close or literal is the rendition on a phonemic, morphological, syntactical and lexico-semantic level? (b) **Conversational turns and context**, i.e. is the punchline integrated with the other constituent parts of the actual situational context? (c) Cross-cultural conventions, i.e. have differences in cross-cultural frames, scripts and values been taken into account? (d) **Audience-specific appropriateness of rendition**, i.e. do the phrasing choices also take into account socio-linguistic factors such as age and style of the target audience to make the rendition sound as natural as possible rather than archaic or artificial? The latter follow the introspection and

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[10] We provide all transcribed and categorised samples used for this study here for the reader's convenience: https://1drv.ms/u/s!AgY8EFuwgCExkMxH56Uuv7x7BKRNMQ?e=4birCM.

[11] We shall neither consider the stage of adapted or automated dialogue replacement, in which the original actors re-record and synchronise particular audio segments of the episode or film, nor translations given in the form of subtitles. On these and further processing stages, see Pahlke (2009).

intuition of the authors of this paper as well as the interraters involved in this research. These parameters represent a set of criteria boiled down from Zababeascoa's (2005) insightful discussion of humour translation as an "interdiscipline" and have been specifically tailored to the IFP under investigation here.

4. Quantitative results and qualitative analysis

In the following subsections, we provide quantitative results and a qualitative discussion of our data. In alignment with the literature that has specifically tackled the interface of linguistics and cross-cultural translation complexity (e.g. Zabalbeascoa 2005) and based on our samples, we have been able to identify six types of *rendition strategies* (hereinafter RSs) in our data, which we list in Table 2. Out of these, only RS1, i.e. the strategy of translating *TW'SS$_2$* literally, i.e. in a formally equivalent manner with the original utterance, is a solely formal strategy. The remaining five rendition strategies are functional ones in that they include features added by the translators that acknowledge the original punchline's conversational function to varying extents (cf. de Waard & Nida 1986: 7, 360; Vermeer 1990). Thus, the RSs range from literal translations not, in fact, capturing the source humour to cultural and interpretive equivalents (cf. Lederer 2003), where the translator achieves a rendition that is cross-culturally and functionally equivalent to the source utterance.[12]

We describe the strategies by employing Nida & Taber's (1982) terminology of *formal* (FE) and *dynamic* (or functional) *equivalence* (DE) when referring to various kinds of translation principles. FE entails literal or word-by-word translations retaining formal and denotative equivalence between source and target texts. DE refers to translations in which "the message of the original text has been so transposed into the receptor language that the response of the receptor is essentially like that or the original receptors" (Nida & Taber 1982: 200). While these two notions are helpful when it comes to our renditions strategies RS1, RS2, RS3 and RS6, they are inapplicable to cases categorised as RS4 and RS5, as these turn out to be non-equivalent renditions altogether (NE). Our contrastive analysis considers rendered syllable counts, syntactic complexity, lexico-semantic meaning equivalence, and context-embedded, interculturally pragmatic factors, compared to the original *TW'SS$_2$* punchline.

In the following sections, we discuss the translators' renditions in relation to the six rendition strategies that we have set up, and uncover to what extent the formally staying-close or even equivalent to the original punchline's length and composition can and will correlate with keeping the pragmatic force of the punchline intact.

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[12] Note that we use "rendition" as an umbrella term to describe and categorise the Russian and German versions of the English original texts in our data, whereas "translating" is merely regarded as a specific kind of strategy within the pool of the six rendition strategies we identify and discuss. We choose this distinction as we go from the idea that translating describes the process of communicating meaning from a source language into a target language with the purpose of conveying the original tone and cultural intent of the original message in a cross-culturally aware manner. Not every rendition strategy identified in our data will essentially accomplish this.

Table 2: The six rendition strategies (RSs) we use for sample classification

RS No.	RS description	RS categories		Results of the RS use
RS1	rendering the original formula morpheme-by-morpheme	literal translation	FE	The rendition is a literal translation, but as such incoherent with the original utterance; thus, it fails to convey the originally intended meaning.
RS2	rendering the original formula by adding a pragmatic/discursive marker or a syntactic tweak	semi-literal, functional translation	DE	The rendition is a semi-literal translation that is pragmatically enriched by the addition of a marker or a syntactic tweak; the rendition allows for the originally intended meaning to be retained.
RS3	rendering the original formula by explicitly disambiguating *she*	semi-literal, functional, interpretive translation	DE	The rendition allows for the originally intended meaning to be retained.
RS4	rendering the original formula in a way that completely erases the originally expressed *double entendre*	functional, re-interpretive rendition, non equivalent	NE	The rendition fails to convey the originally intended meaning.
RS5	rendering the original formula in a way that shifts the innuendo to the meta-level	functional, re-interpretive rendition	NE	The rendition fails to convey the originally intended meaning but acknowledges it on the meta-level.
RS6	rendering the original formula by reframing the *double entendre* altogether	functional, cultural, interpretive rendition	DE	The rendition fails to convey the originally intended meaning but presents a both cross-culturally appropriate and functional (pragmatic/functional) equivalent.

FE = "formal equivalence"
DE = "dynamic (or: functional) equivalence"
NE = "non-equivalent"

In Subsection 4.1., we turn towards the rendition strategies attested in the Russian and German data. In doing so, we focus on whether and to what extent the renditions retain or cancel out the original meaning and function of the punchline. Based on our sample analysis and in reference to literature from the field of Translation Studies, we employ the already-mentioned set of six rendition strategies in all our examples (cf. Table 2). Based on these, we propose a systematic classification and assessment of renditions, which will provide us with a general overview of the extent to which our Russian and German renditions demonstrate faithfulness with regard to the original texts.

Then we work our way to various microlevels of analysis, taking into account quantitative observations pertaining to syllable counts and parts of speech (in)equivalence (4.2.). In Section 4.3., we investigate whether and to what extent the renditions into German and Russian go beyond renditions that may work on paper: after all, these renditions would ultimately be used for re-voicing the original, which would involve additional decisions on the directors and dubbers' parts. An important add-on feature to consider is discursive and pragmatic markers in both German and Russian. Thus, this is a layer of analysis that bridges the gap between the cross-linguistic rendition, on the one hand, and the re-voicing performers, on the other.

4.1. Punchline rendition categories identified

As for both our German and Russian data, the strategies chosen spread out as displayed in Table 3. Consider that only RS2 and RS3 would ensure for the originally intended lexical and pragmatic meaning to be retained. This is accomplished by 19 German target samples (i.e. 56 %) and 23 Russian renditions (65 %). Both datasets demonstrate pragmatically unsuccessful renditions at 44 % (German data) and 35 % (Russian data) respectively.

Table 3: Distribution of punchline rendition strategies as demonstrated in our dataset

RS No.	Count of German rendition strategies (GRSs)			Count of Russian rendition strategies (RRSs)		
	AF	RF	Sample Nos.	AF	RF	Sample Nos.
RS1	6	17.6 %	(7), (10), (21), (24), (28), (29)	3	8.8 %	(29), (31), (34)
RS2	16	47.1 %	(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (11), (12), (14), (16), (17), (18), (19), (20), (22), (23)	17	50 %	(10), (11), (13), (14), (15), (16), (18), (19), (20), (21), (22), (24), (25), (26), (27), (28), (30)
RS3	3	8.8 %	(8), (9), (27)	5	14.7 %	(3), (6), (7), (8), (9)
RS4	6	17.6 %	(13), (15), (25), (26), (30), (31)	1	2.9 %	(4)
RS5	2	5.9 %	(32), (33)	2	5.9 %	(17), (12)
RS6	1	2.9 %	(34)	5	14.7 %	(1), (2), (23), (32), (33)
unclear	0	---	---	1	2.9 %	(5)

AF = absolute frequencies, RF = relative frequencies

Since our categorisations of rendition strategies pose a subjective judgment variable significantly determining the path of our argument in this paper, we have adhered to two Russian native speakers and two German native speakers as interraters in determining their agreement with our categorising decisions.[13] We calculated the agreement at a median of 62 %, which translates into a solidly moderate level of agreement overall.

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[13] All four interraters are academic colleagues of the authors with an expertise in various linguistic subfields. Before giving their consent to do the interrating for us, we only gave them a minimum of information on the task ahead so as to not bias them. Only after they gave their consent did we provide them with our definitions of the various RSs. Based on these only – i.e. without any additional, potentially subjective information from us – did the interraters rate our examples. We thank them kindly for their service.
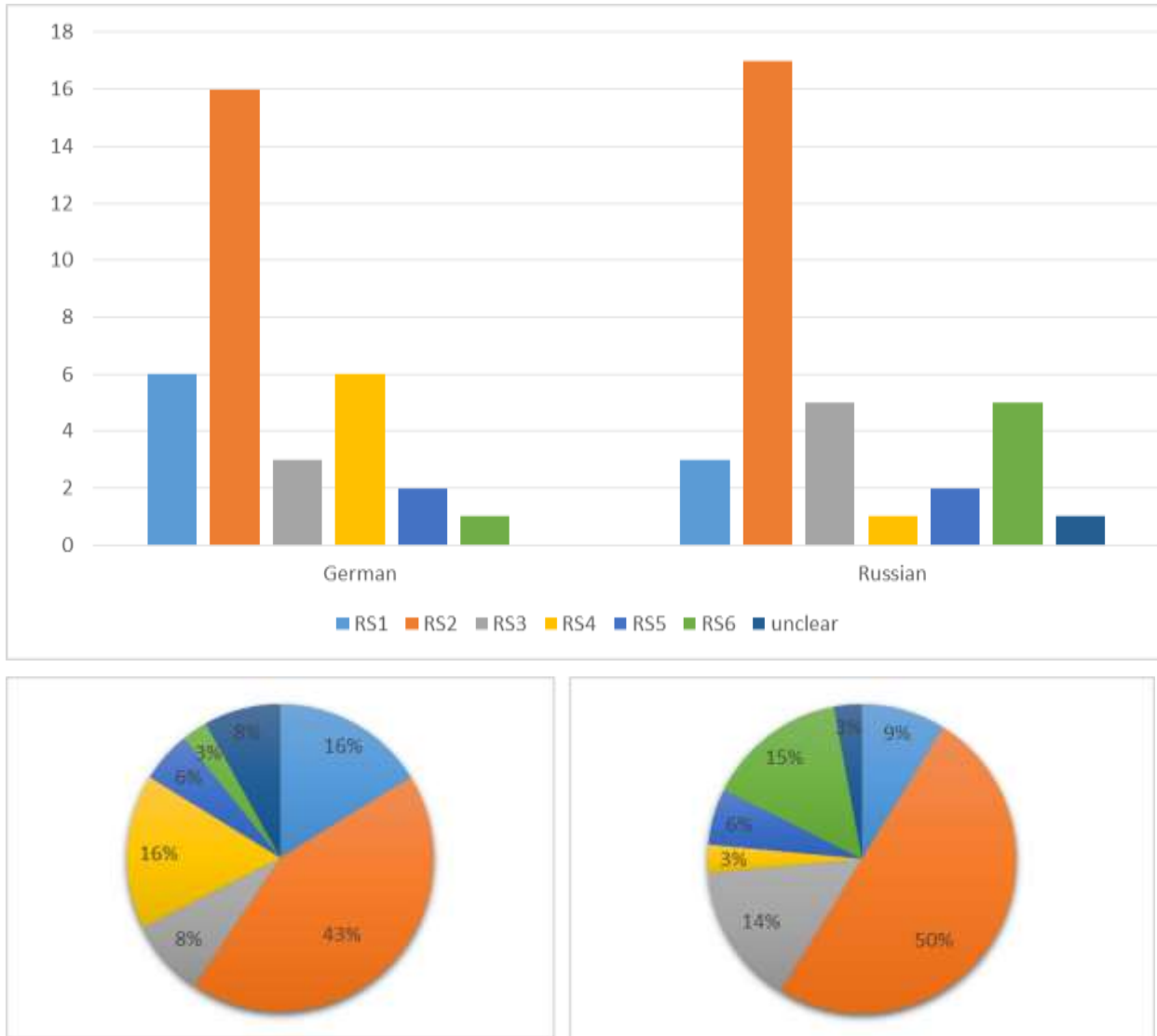
Figure 1. German vs. Russian rendition strategies

In both the German and the Russian range of rendition strategies, we find RS2 the most frequent strategy chosen – in 50 % of all cases in the Russian and at 47.1 % in the German data. Cf. Samples (6) and (11).

(6)	[Doctor:] Does the skin look red and swollen?	Ist die Haut gerötet oder geschwollen?	Есть покраснение, припухлость? [Is there redness, swelling?]
	[Michael Scott:] **That's what she said.**	**Das hat sie mich auch gefragt.** [that's what she asked me, too]	**Вы как подружка** [You are like a girlfriend.]

The Office: The Injury Konttori: Unfallfolgen Офис: Ущерб (2006), S2 Ep. 12, 00:18:20

(11)	[Turk:] Get off my back, I'm not in the mood.	Das wird nichts, ich bin nicht in Stimmung. [Not going to happen. I am not in the mood.]	Отстаньте, я не в настроении [Leave me, I'm not in the mood.]

[J.D.:] Say it again!	Los wiederhol das. [Say that again.]	Эй, повтори что ты сказал [Hey repeat what you said]
[Turk:] Get off my back, I'm not in the mood?	Das wird nichts? Ich bin nicht in Stimmung? [Not going to happen? I am not in the mood?]	Отстань, я не в настроении? [Leave me, I'm not in the mood?]
[J.D.:] **That's what she said!** Zoom, zoom, zoom!	**Dasselbe hat sie auch gesagt.** [She said the same thing, too.] Zoom, zoom, zoom!	**Она то же самое сказала!** [She said the same thing!]

Scrubs: My Rite of Passage Konttori: Mein Sinn für Humor Клиника: Моё посвящение (2006), S5 Ep.2, 00:17:41

This suggests that most renditions seek to retain both form and function of the original punchline, while demonstrating awareness of the fact that the intercultural transfer of the originally intended pragmatic meaning would require discursive aid in the form of discursive-pragmatic markers (cf. Section 4.3. below). It is striking that the German renditions that choose to erase the sexual innuendo altogether three times more often (GRS4, 17.6 %) than the Russian ones (RRS4, 5.9 %). RS1 and RS5 are used twice as often in the German dataset than in the Russian one. On the other hand, the Russian renditions use both RS6 and particularly RS3 significantly more often than the German samples.

4.2. Trigger utterance renditions

It is not sufficient to look at the punchline alone but one also has to include one or even more of the preceding turns into one's deliberation when one seeks to understand how the IFP works in context. Table 4 summarises the rendition strategies demonstrated by our German and Russian samples for the turns immediately preceding the punchline.

Table 4: Distribution of rendition strategies in pre-punchline turns as demonstrated in our dataset

	Trigger utterance rendition					
	in the German dataset			in the Russian dataset		
RS1	1	2.9 %	(10)	7	20.6 %	(10), (22), (24), (25), (30), (31), (32)
RS2	21	61.8 %	(1), (2), (3), (5), (6), (8), (9), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), (16), (18), (19), (20), (21), (22), (23), (31), (32)	20	58.8 %	(2), (6), (7), (9), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), (16), (17), (18), (19), (21), (23), (27), (28), (29), (33), (34)
RS3	0	---	---		2.9 %	(3)
RS4	7	20.6 %	(7), (24), (25), (26), (28), (29), (33)	4	11.7 %	(1), (5), (20), (26)
RS5	1	2.9 %	(30)			-
RS6	2	5.9 %	(27), (34)	1	2.9 %	(8)
n/a	2	5.9 %	(4), (17)	1	2.9 %	(4)

As Table 4 shows, RS2 applies to almost 62 % of the renditions of trigger utterances in the German data and almost 59 % in the Russian data. In 47 %, i.e. in all 16 cases in the German data and in 41 %, i.e. in 14 out of 17 cases in the Russian data, an RS2- or RS3-rendered

punchline coherently follows an RS2-rendered trigger utterance. In fact, certain samples would have been unclear with regard to their rendition category had we only considered the punchline itself. The preceding turns (all RS2-rendered) allowed us to assign the punchline renditions to this strategy in most cases, too. Overall, if the trigger utterance was appropriately rendered, the humorous potential would be carried home by a respectively rendered punchline. We found three cases only in the German dataset where the translator set up the joke by using RS2, but then applied RS1 or RS4 to the punchline itself, thereby having it fail altogether:

(13)

[Jessie to Walter:] Fucking do it already.	Also, machen Sie's endlich. [So, just do it already.]
[12 seconds, cut to shoe store.]	
[shoe sales person to a friend on the phone:] **That's what she said**.	**Hat sie gesagt.** [She said.]
[shoe sales person to customer:] Yeah, I think we have some of those [shoes in stock].	Ja, ich glaube die haben wir noch. [Yes, I think we still have those in stock.]

Breaking Bad: ...And the Bag's in the River … und der Sack ist im Fluss Во все тяжкие: …И мешок в реке (2008), S1 Ep. 3, 00:12:37

(15)

[M.D. House tells Wilson that he had intercourse with Cathy and has not smoked a cigarette for almost 24 hours]	
[Wilson:] Wow. Wow! One for each.	Wow…Und nochmal wow. Das war für beides. [Wow and wow. That was for both.]
[M.D. House:] **That's what she said. Ha...**	**Sie hat gesagt ahhh.** [She said 'aaah']
[Wilson:] How's the pain?	Und die Schmerzen? [And the pain?]
[M.D. House:] She's probably got some bruising...	Ich glaub sie ist nur ein bisschen wund. [I think she only is a little sore.]
[Wilson:] Yeah, I get it. You're a stud.	Du bist'n Hengst, ich weiss. [You are a stud, I know.]

House M.D.: Both sides now Dr. House Nichts geht mehr Доктор Хаус: Обе половинки вместе (2009), S5 Ep. 24, 00:06:06

(21)

[Lyndsey:] what kind of ring...	…wie gross der Ring… [how big a ring]
Holy crap, that thing's huge!	Heilige Scheisse, das Ding ist riesig! [Holy crap, that thing is huge!]
That's what she said.	**Das sagte sie.** [She said that.]
I know, not the right time.	Ich weiss; nicht der richtige Zeitpunkt. [I know: not the right time.]

Two and a Half Men: Cab Fare and a Bottle of Penicillin Der Resteverwerter der Liebe Два с половиной человека: Деньги на такси и пузырёк пенициллина (2014), S11 Ep. 15, 00:05:35

Conversely, in all seven cases where the trigger utterance was rendered by RS4, this was complementarily the case for the punchline, too (cf. Samples (7), (24), (25), (26), (28), (29), and (33)).

There are five cases in the Russian dataset where an RS2-rendered trigger utterance is followed by an RS5- or RS6-rendered punchline (two and three cases respectively), which seem

to be attempts to convey the initially intended humorous implication (cf. Samples (2), (12), (17), (23), and (33)). In Sample (12), for instance, *TW'SS₂* is replaced with the explanation "people who express themselves with ambiguity, are just joking" which does not necessarily imply sexual innuendo. At the same time, in the Russian rendition of Sample (23), the comparison with rabbits was introduced to establish sexual context.

(12)	[A:] You know how some people make double-entendres and they go	Иногда люди, которые двусмысленно выражаются, [Sometimes people who express themselves with ambiguity]
	'That's what she said.'	**просто так шутят** [are just joking.]
	[B:] Yeah, I did go to junior high school.	Знаю, я ходил в школу [I know, I went to school.]
	I think Jesse is 'she'.	Так вот, Джессика именно такая. [Now, Jesse is that kind of person.]

Rules of Engagement: Jeff's Wooby Konttori: Was nie gesagt wurde Правила совместной жизни: Одеяльце Джефа (2007), S1 Ep. 7, 00:09:32

(23)	[He:] Alright. Be right back. Stay in here.	Я сейчас вернусь. Сиди здесь [I'll be right back. Sit here.]
	[She:] In and out, babe.	Пошел-вышел, по быстрому. [Go and out, quick.]
	[He:] That's what she said.	**Ага, как кролики**. [Yeah, like rabbits.]

The Gallows Jede Schule hat ein Geheimnis Виселица (2015) 00:19:03

4.3.   Rendered syllable counts and syntactical constituents

The formulaic punchline *That's what she said* features 4 spoken mono-syllabic components, i.e. <that's>, <what>, <she> and <said> (syntactically speaking, 5 words: {that} {is} {what} {she} and {said}). The translators' goal would thus supposedly have been to create renditions syllabically identical or at least as close as possible to the original, considering that their renditions would have to be fitted into the performers' speaking slots designated by the original production. Table 5 displays the distribution of syllable counts in both German and Russian renditions and shows that 6 (17.6 %) of the German and 2 (5.9 %) of the Russian renditions opt for a rendition that is syllable-equivalent to the source utterance. So, in both linguistic spheres, the translators neither were apparently required nor felt the urgency to ascribe much importance to this criterion. Instead, 5, 6, and 7 syllables are the most frequent syllable choices.

Table 5: Syllabic makeup of German and Russian sample renditions

Syllable patterns	Syllable counts in German renditions			Syllable counts in Russian renditions		
	AF	RF	Sample Nos.	AF	RF	Sample Nos.
3 syllables	0	0	---	1	2.9 %	(5)
4 syllables	6	17.6 %	(13), (21), (24), (28), (31), (33)	2	5.9 %	(1), (2)
5 syllables	8	23.5 %	(7), (10), (15), (16), (19), (26), (27), (29)	6	17.6 %	(4), (6), (12), (15), (24), (32)

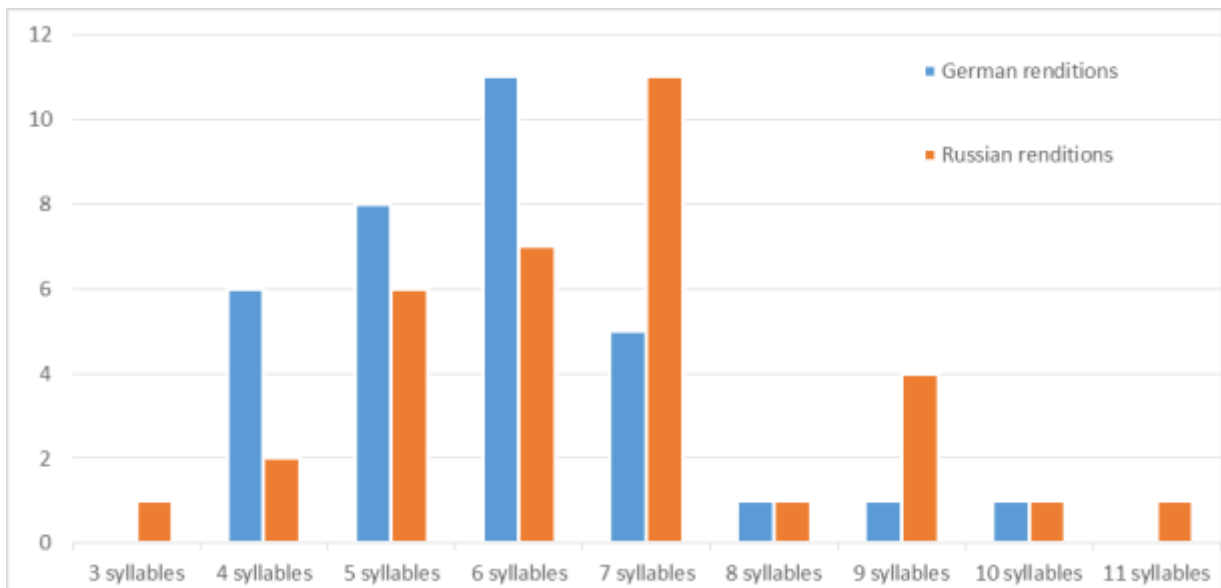| 6 syllables	1	32.4 %	(3), (4), (5), (14), (17), (18), (20), (22), (23), (25), (32)	6	17.6 %	(13), (22), (23,) (25), (28), (29)
7 syllables	5	14.7 %	(2), (6), (8), (12), (30)	1	32.3 %	(3), (7), (8), (9), (16), (19), (21), (26), (31), (33), (34)
8 syllables	1	2.9 %	(11)	2	5.9 %	(14), (30)
9 syllables	1	2.9 %	(9)	4	11.8 %	(10), (18), (20), (27)
10 syllables	1	2.9 %	(34)	1	2.9 %	(11)
11 syllables	0	0	---	1	2.9 %	(17)

Figure 2. Syllabic makeup of German and Russian sample renditions

In lockstep with syllable counts, the syntactical makeup of proposed renditions is another layer worth looking at: it shows whether and to what extent the German and Russian renditions would deviate from or stick to the original patterns. Being well aware that morphological and syntactic features differ extensively in English, German, and Russian, our initial contrastive analysis of sentence constituents did not yield coherently analysable results, as shown in Table 6. What we found, however, was this: as for the German renditions, the number of constituents alternates relatively consistently between 3 and 4 and the initial *that* is generally rendered by a lexical equivalent *das(selbe)* also in initial position (often elliptical). The range of constituents, however, is rather wide, stretching across merely all options except for the complement.

In the Russian samples, the number of constituents ranges from 3 to 11, with 5 to 7 constituent renditions prevailing. In the dubbing process, resultingly high numbers of syllables will have required the acceleration of speech rate so as to compensate for the excessive line length.

Table 6: Examples of the varied constituent range across German and Russian renditions in our data

	Constituent analysis					Sample No.
English original formula	That	is	what she said			
	S	V	C			
Examples of German renditions	[elliptical pronoun Das]	sagt	meine Frau	auch	immer	(8)
	Oacc	V	S	A	A	
	[elliptical pronoun Das]	sagte	das Mädchen	zum Matrosen		(9)
	Oacc	V	S	Odat		
	Das	hat	sie	gesagt		(10)
	Oacc	Vaux	S	V		
Examples of Russian renditions	Она	тоже	так	говорила/ говорила		(10) (14) (20)
	S	A	A	V		
	Так	она	сказала			(25) (28)
	A	S	V			
	И	она	так	сказала		(16) (19)
	Conj	S	A	V		
	[elliptical Это]	[elliptical verб]	слова	моей	подружки	(3) (7)
	Oacc	V	C	C	C	(8) (9)
	[elliptical Это]	сказала	она			(15) (24)
	O$_{acc}$	V	S			(32)

A = adverbial; C = complement; Oacc = accusative object; Odat = dative object; S = subject; V = verb (predicate); Vaux = auxiliary verb; Conj = conjunction

4.4. Intercultural awareness demonstration through the use of discursive markers

Having mentioned that RS2 is by far the most frequent strategy chosen in both our German and our Russian data, a parts-of-speech analysis carves out clear patterns with regard to the translators' cross-cultural awareness. We specifically focus on discursive/pragmatic markers inserted in all cases classified as RS2.

For German, these are the adverbs *auch* and *ebenfalls* "also, too," as well as the adverb combination *auch immer* (lit. "always as well"). In (11) and (12), *auch* is entailed in the economic renditions with the pronoun *dasselbe* "the same" and *genau das* (with the object neuter pronoun *das* being modified by the adverb *genau* "exactly, precisely").

In our Russian data, respective markers are the adverbs *тоже* /tɔʒə/ "also, too" and *так* /tak/ "thus, this way", the pronoun phrase *то же самое* /tɔʒə samajə/ "the same" as well as the conjunction *u* /i:/ "and also". Functionally, they establish the comparative link between what is

uttered and what is implied to provoke the frame shift to another situational context. Table 7 shows the distributions of discursive markers in the German and Russian rendition data.

Table 7: Distribution of discursive markers as part of RS2

German discursive markers		Example Nos.	Russian discursive markers		Example Nos.
auch	12	(1), (3), (4), (5), (6), (14), (16), (17), (18), (19), (20), (22)	*тоже*	3	(10), (14), (20)
ebenfalls	1	(2)	*так*	13	(10), (13), (14), (16), (18), (19), (20), (21), (25), (26), (27), (28), (30)
genau das	1	(12)	*то же самое*	1	(11)
dasselbe	1	(11)	*и*	3	(16), (19), (27)
none	1	(7)	*none*		(15)

The following are examples from our German and Russian datasets for illustration of RS2 by addition of a discursive marker – note that the numbering cites the master list numbering of each parallel sample-trio, which is why the examples are not subsequently numbered within this paper.

(1)	Jim?	Jim?
	No thanks, I'm good.	Danke, bin versorgt. [Thanks, I am all set.]
	That's what she said.	**Das hat sie <u>auch</u> gesagt.** [She said that, <u>too</u>.]

The Office, Sexual Harassment Konttori: Mobbing (2005) S2 Ep. 2, 00:11:46

(10)	[Carla:] And, Todd, if you say, **'That's what she said'**, I will brain you.	Тод, если ты ляпнешь мне "**Она <u>тоже так</u> говорила**" я тебе мозги вышибу [Tod, if you blurt out to me 'She said <u>that too</u>', I'll knock your brains out.]

Scrubs: My overkill Konttori: Mein Rundumschlag Клиника: Моё массовое убийство (2002), S2 Ep. 1, 00:12:05

(11)	[J.D.:] **That's what she said!**	**<u>Dasselbe</u> hat sie auch gesagt.** [She said <u>the same thing</u>.]

Scrubs: My Rite of Passage Konttori: Mein Sinn für Humor Клиника: Моё посвящение (2006), S5 Ep. 2, 00:17:41

(16)

Wow, you're moving pretty quick, aren't you?	Да, вы быстро продвигаетесь [Yes, you are moving fast.]
That's what she said.	**И она так сказала** [And she (also) said so]
What are you laughing at?	Ты что смеёшься? [What are you laughing at?]

Two and a Half Men: What a Lovely Landing Strip Die Lückenbüßerin Два с половиной человека: Какая же прекрасная взлётно-посадочная полоса (2011) S9 Ep. 11, 00:07:38

Note that some of these markers also occur in other rendition types, e.g. RS3 in German or RS4 in Russian. Example (19) qualifies as RS1 or RS4.

(8)

[I want you to think about your future at this company]	
…long and hard.	…lang und hart. […long and hard.]
That's what she said.	**Sagt meine Frau <u>auch immer.</u>** [lit. '<u>my wife, too, always says that</u>']

The Office: The Return Konttori: Die Rückkehr Офис: Возвращение (2007), S3 Ep. 14, 00:17:37

(12)

You know how some people make double-entendres and they go	Иногда люди, которые двусмысленно выражаются, [Sometimes people who express themselves with ambiguity]
'That's what she said.'	**просто так шутят** [are just joking.]

Rules of Engagement: Jeff's Wooby Konttori: Was nie gesagt wurde Правила совместной жизни: Одеяльце Джефа (2007), S1 Ep. 7, 00:09:32

(19)

[Yogi:] Joy! I told you to keep your nose out of my business!	Joy, Ich sagte Du sollst deine Nase aus meinen Angelegenheiten raushalten. [Joy, I said you should keep your nose out of my business.]
[Joy:] **That's what she said**. [referring to a blow-up doll in her hands]	**Hat sie <u>auch</u> gesagt.** [lit. 'has she <u>also</u> said', i.e. she <u>also</u> said [that].]

Hot in Cleveland: Fast and Furious Mord in bester Gesellschaft Красотки в Кливленде: Быстрые и неистовые (2013), S4 Ep. 11, 00:15:08

When taking the suprasegmental layer of meaning into account, it turns out that the German and Russian renditions do not only use the discursive markers *auch* and *так* respectively, but also systematically put the discriminatory stress on this nucleus of the sentence so as to highlight and enhance the formulaic feel of the phrase used (cf. Kurz 2006: 112). In the following examples, we indicate the nucleus with a bold capital X preceded by a stress sign, i.e. as <ˈ**X**>. While it has rightly been argued that the nucleus is generally emphasised non-verbally, i.e. by gestural and mimical means (see e.g. Kurz 2006: 112.), this is a layer of communication that we shall neglect here.

(1)

Jim?	Jim?	Джим? [Jim?]
No thanks, I'm good.	Danke, bin versorgt. [Thanks, I am all set.]	Спасибо, не хочу [Thanks, I don't want.]
That's what <u>she</u> said.	**Das hat sie <u>auch</u> gesagt.** [That she said, <u>too</u>.]	**Ну <u>конечно</u>** [Well, <u>of</u> course......]
/X X '**X** X/	/X X X '**X** x X/	/ x x '**X** x/

The Office: Sexual Harassment Konttori: Mobbing Офис: Сексуальные домогательства (2005), S2 Ep. 2, 00:11:46

(2)

Pam?	Pam?	Пэм? [Pam?]
My mother's coming	Meine Mum kommt gleich. [My mum is coming in a second]	Мама вот-вот приедет [Mom is about to come.]
That's what <u>she</u> said.	**Hat sie <u>ebenfalls</u> gesagt.** [She said that, <u>too</u>]	**Ну <u>коне(чно)</u>…** [Well, <u>of</u> course.]
/X X '**X** X/	/X X '**X** x X x X/	/ x x '**X** x/

The Office: Sexual Harassment Konttori: Mobbing Офис: Сексуальные домогательства (2005), S2 Ep. 2, 00:11:46

(3)

Why did you get so big?	Warum hast du so einen großen <u>ausgesucht</u>? [Why did you pick such a big one?]	Такой <u>толстый ствол</u>. [Such a thick trunk.]
A: That's what <u>she</u> said.	**Erstens: Das hat sie <u>auch</u> gesagt** [First of all: that's what she said, too.]	**Слова моей подружки** [The words of my girlfriend.]
/X X '**X** X/	/**X** x x '**X** x **X/**	/x '**X** x '**X** x '**X** x/
And B: […]	Und zweitens: […] [And second:…]	Видишь ли [...] [You see...]

The Office: Christmas Party Konttori: Weihnachtsfeier Офис: Рождественский вечер (2005), S2 Ep. 10, 00:01:26

(5)

[let's begin with Angela...] [Angela] You already did me.	Du hast mich schon gehabt. [You had me already.]	Странно, что с меня [Strange that [you are starting] with me]
That's what <u>she</u> said.	**Das hat sie <u>auch</u> gesagt.** [that's what she said, <u>too</u>]	**Все квиты** [Now everyone is square.]
/'X x '**X** x/	/X x x '**X** x X/	/X '**X** x/

The Office; Conflict Resolution Konttori: Konfliktbewältigung à la Michael Офис: Урегулирование конфликтов (2006), S2 Ep. 21, 00:08:45

(6)

Does the skin look red and swollen?	Ist die Haut gerötet oder geschwollen? [Is the skin red or swollen]	Есть покраснение, припухлость? [Is there redness, swelling?]
That's what <u>she</u> said.	**Das hat sie mich <u>auch</u> gefragt.** [That she asked me, <u>too</u>]	**Вы как подружка** [You are like a girlfriend.]
/X X '**X** X/	/X x x x '**X** x X/	/X x x '**X** x/

The Office: The Injury Konttori: Unfallfolgen Офис: Ущерб (2006), S2 Ep. 12, 00:18:20

(8)	[I want you to think about your future at this company]	Ich will, dass Du darüber nachdenkst… [I want you to think about it…]	Подумай о своем будущем в этой компании [Think about your future at this company.]
	…long and hard.	…lang und hart. [long and hard.]	И подумай что между вами было в прошлом [And think about what happened between you [and it] in the past.]
	That's what <u>she</u> said.	**Sagt meine Frau <u>auch</u> immer.** [My wife keeps telling me [that], <u>too</u>]	**Слова моей подружки** [My girlfriend's words.]
	/X X 'X X/	/X x x X 'X X x/	/x 'X x 'X x 'X x/

The Office: Traveling Salesmen Konttori: Amazing Race   Офис: Продавцы на колёсах (2007), S3 Ep. 13, 00:18:07

(11)	[Turk:] Get off my back, I'm not in the mood.	Das wird nichts, ich bin nicht in Stimmung. [Not going to happen, I'm not in the mood.]	Отстаньте, я не в настроении [Leave me, I'm not in the mood.]
	[J.D.:] Say it again!	Los, wiederhol das. [Repeat that.]	Эй, повтори что ты сказал [Hey repeat what you said]
	[Turk:] Get off my back, I'm not in the mood?	Das wird nichts? Ich bin nicht in Stimmung? [Not going to happen? I'm not in the mood?]	Отстань, я не в настроении? [Leave me, I'm not in the mood?]
	[J.D.:] **That's what she said!**	**<u>Dasselbe</u> hat sie <u>auch</u> gesagt!** [She <u>also</u> said <u>the same thing</u>!]	**Она <u>то же самое</u> сказала!** [She said the same thing!]
	/X X 'X X/	/x 'X x x x 'X x X/	/x X x x **X** x x **x** X x/

Scrubs: My Rite of Passage Konttori: Mein Sinn für Humor Клиника: Моё посвящение (2006), S5 Ep. 2, 00:17:41

The examples indicate that the syllable count was partially retained or neglected. As far as functional rendering strategies are concerned, we find the rendered versions usually longer than the original one, as the translator was trying to insert some markers or additional explanations to convey the original implicature. When it comes to preserving the pragmatic load, the focus shifts from formal similarity to addressing the discourse as a whole, making the translator opt for the strategy that bridges the cross-cultural gap.

5. Discussion

We have shown that a faithful punchline-rendition involves consideration of a number of variable factors, which spread out as follows throughout our dataset:

(a) *Formal closeness to source structure*: Our case study highlights that restricting one's rendition to formal equivalency will significantly frustrate the purpose of causing a humorous effect and result in a loss of naturalness. Thus, RS1 is only used by 5 (14.7 %) of the German renditions and only 2 (8.6 %) of the Russian ones. However, what the vast majority of both German and Russian renditions do (over 40 % each) is to offer a near-to-literal rendition enriched by a discursive marker that helps set the tone right. Thus, RS2 is the preferred strategy used in our parallel datasets.

(b) *Conversational turns and context*: The punchline should be coherently embedded in the given discursive context and complement the trigger utterance. The importance of considering the context cannot be overstated. In 47 %, i.e. in all 16 cases, an RS2- or RS3-rendered punchline coherently follows an RS2-rendered trigger utterance. On the other hand, in all 7 cases where the trigger utterance is rendered by RS4, this is complementarily the case for the punchline; cf. Samples (7), (24), (25), (26), (28), (29), (33).

(c) *Cross-cultural conventions*: When it comes to cultural faithfulness of the renditions discussed in this study, we can conclude that only a small portion in both our German and Russian data fulfils this criterion. At the same time, we need to acknowledge the very different points of departure of each one of the cross-cultural audiovisual texts connected to a dialogue in the English original. Differences in background knowledge, moral and cultural values, and traditional themes for making jokes have to be considered. In Russian culture, it is not always appropriate to make sexual jokes,[14] yet the German variations chose to erase the sexual innuendo three times more often altogether.

(d) *Audience-specific appropriateness of renditions*: While we have compiled a considerable range of variations of German and Russian $TW'SS_2$-renditions, many of these are found lacking. This is due to either their literal makeup resulting in the loss of the humorous quality, or because they are rendered in an archaic manner that does acknowledge the joke, but will fail to maintain its humorous value for the target audience. For instance, the German renditions "*sagte das Mädchen zum Matrosen*" ("said the girl to the sailor", cf. (9)) as well as "*sprach die Frau Wirtin*" ("spoke the landlord's wife/the lady innkeeper", cf. (27)) will appear markedly out of style to a mixed audience,[15] sounding highly archaic and thus breaking with the base style of the target text.

Wechsler (1998: 124) maintains that "the first thing [a translator] should do is forget the idea of running and hiding behind literal translation;" instead, a translator "has to be exceptionally creative, to transform the humour into something that works just as well in English and that conveys pretty much the same idea". As we have shown, both the Russian and the German renditions include mere word-for-word translations from the source into the target language and thus fail to keep the original humorous value of the formula intact. In contrast, over 80 % of the German renditions and over 90 % of the Russian ones present renditions that are proof of the translators' intercultural understanding of the formula's semantic-pragmatic complexities. These figures even include those renditions that brush over or – at times even skillfully so – desexualise the joke altogether, which is the case for 15 % to 20 % of renditions in each dataset. We can assume that the respective translators preferred to discard the joke and replace it with something that would seem more appropriate, more coherent or more acceptable in the target version.

The most frequent strategy adhered to in over 50 % of the German data and over 60 % of the Russian dataset is RS2. These samples take a coherent approach to the punchline under investigation by rendering both the trigger utterance as well as the punchline itself in a manner

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[14] A matter that concerns both (c) and (d) pertains to the question of who commissioned the dubbing, which is a factor primarily to be considered for the Russian cultural context here: If a series or film is dubbed upon commission from a state-owned TV channel, censorship and channel management policies can put additional restrictions to a translation.

[15] We have also found the Russian rendition of *That's what she said* as "Гусары, молчать!" ("Hussars, hold your tongues!"), which is in fact a well-known catchphrase from a series of rather rough stories about a certain Lieutenant Rzhevsky. This rendition also appeared in some voice-over translations of *The Office* by amateur dubbing companies.

that retains the sexual innuendo and thus the humorous quality of the source formula. Still, given that this particular kind of formulaic joke in both German and Russian speech communities is much less salient than it is in the US American context, it is likely that such renditions would only be picked up on by viewers interculturally aware of this particular joke in the source frame.

While we claim that RS5, i.e. putting the joke on a meta-level, would have been the most interculturally insightful and elegant rendition strategy (also because the German stance marker *eindeutig zweideutig*, lit. "unequivocally ambiguous" (cf. (32), (33)) is a highly naturally sounding and salient pun in itself), this strategy is applied in only 2 renditions each in the Russian and the German dataset (i.e. 5.9 %).

All in all, the rendition strategies adhered to show that the vast majority of translators were aware of the originally intended meaning and sought to fit the punchline into the target-culture norms and frames.

6. Conclusion and outlook

Popa (2005: 49) maintains that "a successful transfer of all the situational, cultural, and linguistic features to the target joke does not necessarily mean that the translation is successful", while Low (2011: 69) claims that "[t]o translate a joke in a way that cannot elicit a smile is a betrayal, no matter how semantically accurate it may seem". While an audience may well measure the "success" of a joke based on whether they find it amusing, and to what extent the degree of amusement exceeds one's personal and subjective norms and situational thresholds for "laughing out loud", this can surely not be a feasible or valid means of measurement for a scholarly approach to joking and humour. This is why our study has exclusively based its claims upon describable, attestable and contextual aspects in the Russian and German rendition variants of *TW'SS₂* in our data.

The aim of this paper has been to identify and discuss intercultural rendition strategies pertaining to the isolated formulaic punchline *That's what she said* in telecinematic discourse. We specifically focused on German and Russian rendition samples of the original English formula. While we have certainly demonstrated that there is room for semantic and pragmatic loss when it comes to interculturally rendering *TW'SS₂* into Russian and German, we have also shown that the renditions in our sample data take various measures to keep the socio-cultural source load intact in their attempt to transfer the formula from one cultural sphere into another.

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