

Cars 2* Film and Its Translation into Turkish: A Relevance-Theoretical Approach to Translations of Puns and Wordplays

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the translations of expressions containing humour or wordplay in the Turkish dubbing of the film *Cars 2* through a relevance-theoretical approach. Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995) was developed in the mid-eighties by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson to examine cognitively how people carry out their meaning-making processes during their interactions with the outside world. Within the scope of this theory, the relationship between the source text and the target text is based on 'interpretive resemblance' rather than 'equivalence' (Gutt, 1998, 2004). According to the principle of relevance and its principles, the translator must first identify the humour or wordplay in the source text. Then, by coming up with various strategies, the translator should try to evoke similar effects in the target text as much as possible. The strategies used by the translator in the film *Cars 2* are classified under four headings and comparatively analysed through 17 randomly selected examples. As a result, it is concluded that the translator prioritizes maintaining cognitive effects, therefore the puns and wordplays, rather than equivalence (i.e. semantic content) in most cases, avoiding any increase in the cognitive cost in the process.

Keywords: translation studies, relevance theory, puns, wordplays, pragmatics

1. Introduction

In translation processes, the presence of puns and wordplay or is often considered a difficulty or problem due to the inability to carry out translations with pre-determined strategies (Delabastita, 1994; Díaz-Pérez, 2014). As González Davies and Scott-Tennent (2005) express, such situations constitute exceptional cases beyond the usual and require creativity (p. 164). Therefore, it can be said that the translator's primary task is to identify and understand the function of wordplay or humour in the source text (ST) from the perspective of the text's recipient. In the next stage, the translator must determine a strategy to ensure that similar

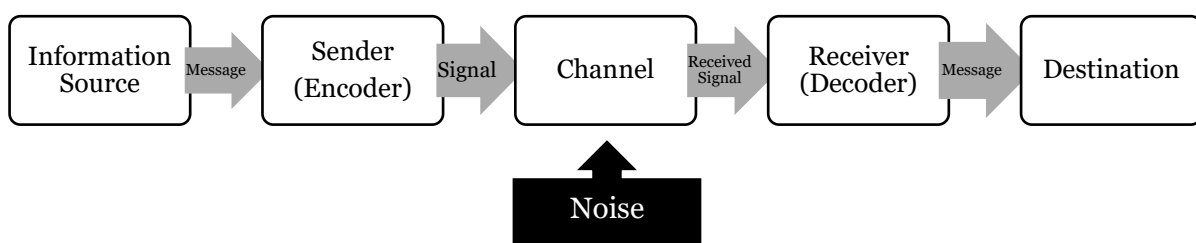
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effects come alive in the target text (TT) reader and therefore employ creativity during the translation process. Because, as Gutt (2004) suggests, for translated texts to be considered successful, these ST effects need to be preserved as much as possible or re-created in TT when necessary. Arguably, due to the open-ended nature of puns and wordplay, an investigation into the depth and origin of this necessity can only be conducted through a competence-oriented approach. This approach, since competence has more to do with human cognition, should be grounded with a theory that relies on cognitive science, central hypothesis of which is built upon mental representations and procedures, i.e. how mind operates with propositions and images (Gutt, 2004, p. 77; Thagard, 2023).

One such theory, according to Gutt (1998; 2004), is Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995), which has been selected as the theoretical framework of this study, in an attempt to examine the American animated film *Cars 2* (Lasseter and Lewis, 2011) and its Turkish translation in terms of humour and wordplay. Briefly defined, Relevance Theory examines the cognitive processes by which individuals make sense of the external world through their interactions. Therefore, it may not be viable to narrow the theory down to a mere theory of pragmatics, since it is also widely accepted as a theory of cognitive sciences and communication (Doğan, 2022). In addition to its principles and sub-principles, one of the most prominent features of the theory is its presupposition that language and communication are not at all inseparable. In other words, there is not necessarily a need for a model that involves ‘coding’ and ‘encoding’ of linguistic structures, as seen in Shannon and Weaver’s (1949) communication model. Thus, Relevance Theory significantly diverges from traditional theories that assume communication processes will always result in ‘correct’ understanding under appropriate conditions, and that any negativity arises mostly from errors during encoding and decoding processes. (Wilson and Sperber, 2004, p. 607).

Figure 1

Shannon and Weaver’s communication model



(Shannon & Weaver, 1949, as cited in Sperber & Wilson, 1995, p. 4)

As emphasized by Hatim and Mason (1997), any translation should be classified as an act of verbal communication. Since the scope of translation extends far beyond merely substituting words to conveyance of meaning (shaped by intent, culture, nuances, and many other

contextual factors), Relevance Theory seem to be offering a uniform account of translation processes, giving an in-depth account of how intra- and interlingual structures operate.

On the other hand, in Türkiye, due to potential biases against the term ‘theory’ in translation circles (Bengi-Öner, 1999, p. 111), and in the world, because of the relative novelty of Relevance Theory, it can be proposed that only a limited number of studies taking a relevance-theoretical stance on the translation of puns and wordplays can be found in literature, some of which are as follows:

Delabastita (1994), in their *Focus on the Pun*, underscores the complexity of translating wordplay and the need for creative solutions to achieve relevance and interpretive resemblance in the target language (Delabastita, 1994, p. 227), yet without any direct reference to Relevance Theory. They highlight the fact that it seems not viable to adopt a strictly taxonomic approach to analyse puns, due to the infinite number of descriptive categories that can be used in the process (Delabastita, 1994, pp. 236-237).

Subscribing to Delabastita’s (1994; 1996, as cited in Xiaoi, 2022) views and approach, Xiaoi (2022) explores the same issue by analysing English translations of the Chinese novel *Jinpingmei*, employing a cognitive-pragmatic view within a relevance-theoretic framework. The study reveals that most puns and wordplays are either lost or misconstrued in translation, highlighting the translators’ varied approaches and the impact of translational skopos and sociocultural contexts on their choices (Xiaoi, 2022, p. 17).

Díaz-Pérez (2014), on the other hand, in their study titled *Relevance Theory and translation: Translating puns in Spanish film titles into English*, examines the translation of puns in film titles from Spanish to English, through the lens of Relevance Theory. The study analyses 190 Spanish and Latin American film titles, concluding that translators use various strategies to render puns: When the linguistic phenomena of the puns coincide in both languages, translators tend to opt for literal translation. Otherwise, they are forced to make a decision between maintaining the semantic content or the effects created by the pun (Díaz-Pérez, 2014, p. 123).

Considering the focus of this study, the following section will be devoted to Relevance Theory (1986/1995), before delving into the methodology and the analysis of the texts in question.

2. Relevance Theory

In contrast to Shannon and Weaver’s (1949) above-mentioned communication model, Relevance Theory (1986/1995) emphasizes the inferential dimension of communication. In

this sense, the tasks of encoding and decoding function only as a supportive 'element', while the completion of the process of interpretation is essentially dependent on the inferential enrichment carried out by the hearer (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, pp. 172-176). In other words, the decoded utterances by the hearer remain merely as incomplete propositions on their own; while the gap between the intended meaning by the speaker and the sentence meaning corresponds to the area that the hearer has to fill by making inferences. In this sense, the hearer initially identifies the logical form within the utterance of the speaker in context-free manner. Subsequently, the enrichment process that begins beyond the scope of linguistic context proceeds through explicatures and implicatures (either weak or strong) until it takes the form of a 'complete propositional form'. In other words, according to Relevance Theory, it is not precisely possible for the speaker to present everything to the hearer in a full explicit and semantically-complete manner; therefore, during communication, the hearer always has varying degrees of inferential tasks. In this sense, Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995) gained prominence as a consequence of the cognitive research that had built up since the 1970s, on the basis of the view that humans can perceive the inputs from their environment and process them as pieces of information. While the theory is quite comprehensive, this section will not delve into all the details, but rather focus on the relevant aspects related to the discussion in the following sections.

Relevance Theory is built around the principle of relevance to explain the role of relevance in communication and meaning-making processes (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 158). The 'cognitive principle of relevance', according to which human cognition tends to maximize or maintain relevance, consists of two fundamental sub-principles: The first, known as the principle of 'communicative relevance', posits that every explicit communicative act (the communicative input presented to the hearer's attention) carries a presumption of its own (optimal) relevance. According to the second sub-principle, the principle of 'optimal relevance', an input can be considered 'optimally relevant' when it is relevant enough to a degree that justifies the cognitive effort expended by the hearer to process it (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 158).

At this point, it may be viable to briefly touch upon the concept of 'contextual effect' in order to better understand the aforementioned principles of relevance; especially within the scope of optimal relevance. According to Relevance Theory, in order for an assumption to be relevant, it must have a 'contextual effect' in the context from where it originates. On the other hand, the magnitude of the contextual effect, and therefore the relevance, is inversely proportional to the amount of cognitive effort the receiver must expend during utterance interpretation. In other words, the less cognitive effort an assumption requires to be

understood, the greater its contextual effect and relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1987, pp. 702-703).

As can be expressed based on the above-mentioned views put forward by the theory, there is always a gap that needs to be completed by the hearer, even in expressions that are descriptively used (as opposed to ‘interpretive’ uses such as puns and wordplays) in ordinary language and can therefore be classified as ‘complete propositions’ or ‘explicatures’ (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 224; Doğan, 1992, 2011). This gap is greater in the expressions containing puns and wordplay which this study focuses on, because the speaker does not directly mean (or stand behind) the semantic content of their utterance, leaving a room for other likely interpretations (via exophoric uses and so forth). The conditions for the effects intended to be evoked in the audience with such expressions primarily lies within the possibility of the screenwriter/translator and the audience to meet each other in the same cognitive environment, and the compliance of such expressions, which will pave the way for richness of meaning, with the ‘principle of optimal relevance’ (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, pp. 38-158). The hearer (audience of the film), who instinctively ‘calculates’ the cognitive ‘cost’, will terminate their inferential processes when they are unable to identify the referents of the puns and/or wordplays in the film, or when they realize that they need to spend far too much cognitive effort to do so. This is because the instinctive tendency governing the above-mentioned processes is geared towards achieving the highest level of efficiency at the expense of the least cost (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 116). If rephrased with the same analogy, this tendency of the audience can be compared to a shopper’s expectation of buying a lot of products (preferably of high quality) for as little money as they can.

If it is to be emphasized again in the light of Gutt’s (2004) views mentioned earlier, one might hold the view that the translator carries out these processes, both as an audience—that is, as a receiver of the source text—and in a sense, as a script writer, with their preferences and determined strategies when creating the target text. Therefore, it is expected that the translator should be able to identify the effects intended to be created by puns or wordplays in the source text and then transfer similar effects to (or if needed, recreate in) the target text.

3. Methodology

The official English subtitles of the film *Cars 2* on the *Disney+* platform is used as the source text, and the official Turkish dubbing of the film on the same platform, which is the same as the cinema version, is used as the target text. Examples of puns and wordplays are first scanned through the target text, and their equivalents are matched with the examples in the source text. A total of randomly selected 17 matching results are qualitatively analysed within the

framework of the principles and sub-principles of the Relevance Theory, without relying on any data analysis software.

In the film, Francesco Bernoulli, the main rival of the hero of the story Lightning McQueen, is voiced by Turkish comedian Cem Yılmaz. As a target text, it is deemed more viable to focus on Turkish dubbing rather than the subtitles, with the expectation that additions/alterations Yılmaz makes with his own interpretations in the dubbing could be important in terms of enrichment.

In this vein, the first aim of the study is to determine the strategies followed by the translator when transferring expressions containing puns and wordplays to the target language, which arguably make translation processes difficult or problematic due to the creativity they require (Delabastita, 1994). The secondary goal is to seek an answer to the question of whether the translator primarily prioritizes equivalence in the translation of expressions containing puns and wordplay in the source text, or to preserve the cognitive effects intended/constructed by the screenwriter —and in cases where the priority is on the preservation of the cognitive effects, to determine if the ‘cognitive cost’ of the utterances, or the ‘cognitive environment’ of the audience are taken into consideration. The last question that the study seeks to answer is whether the translator is able to identify all the puns or wordplays in the source text, and if so, whether the puns or wordplays that are present in the source text but not transferred to the target text are consciously left out.

4. Analysis of the Target Text

The examples selected from the film, the translation strategies followed by the translator as well as their decisions are classified under four main headings and evaluated through the lens of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995; Gutt, 1998, 2004).

4.1. Cases where puns and/or wordplays are not identified

As mentioned in the introduction of the study and explained in the previous section, the primary job of the translator is to identify the puns and wordplays in the source text with their possible connotations, from the perspective of the target reader or audience. However, this first step, the success of which Gutt (1998; 2004) directly associates with translation competence, is not always successfully achieved. The first of the few examples of this situation meets the audience in the fourth minute of the film, in the scene where the ‘baddies’ talk about agent Finn McMissile:

- (1) ST: This one we caught sticking his bumper where it didn't belong.
TT: *Bunu tamponunu girmemesi gereken yerlere uzatırken buldum.*

As can be seen in the example, the pun in the source text is based on the English idiom ‘to stick your nose into something’. Based on the definition of the idiom in the dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.), while its Turkish equivalent is ‘*bir şeye burnunu sokmak*’, the translator changed the verb with the word ‘*uzatmak*’ [stick something out], thus interfering with the integrity of the idiom. Since the word ‘nose’ was replaced with ‘bumper’ by the source text writer as part of the car analogy seen throughout the film, it has become almost impossible for the Turkish audience to understand the idiom in the target text, and the expression no longer concurs with the principle of relevance. It can be argued that this choice is not a conscious omission strategy, since the idiom that forms the basis of the joke in the source text has an exact equivalent (*burun* and nose) in common use in Turkish.

Another similar example can be given from the sixty-eighth minute of the film. After the ‘baddies’ play Finn McMissile a trick, their boss Kingpin encourages them with the following words:

(2) ST: And they will finally respect us! So hold your hoods high!

TT: *Ve bize saygı duyacaklar! O yüzden kaputlarınızı dik tutun!*

Based on the source text example above, it can be proposed that the cognitive cost of the expression is increased both by using an idiom and creating a wordplay: The ST joke is built on the idiom ‘keep your hopes high’; based on the phonetic similarity between ‘hopes’ and ‘hoods’, through which a car analogy is constructed and a semantic depth is achieved. When the target text is put under spotlight, however, it can be claimed that this complex-looking structure poses a difficulty for the translator in terms of both identification and conveyance of similar effects: The translator probably prefers to change (or attempts to blend) the Turkish equivalent of the idiom which serves as the stepping stone for the pun in the source text, ‘*umutlarını yüksek tutmak*’ [keeping your hopes high], with (and) another idiom ‘*başını dik tutmak*’ [holding your head up]. However, they seem unable to achieve the phonetic similarity that could perfectly be achieved through the Turkish words ‘*umut*’ [hope] and ‘*kaput*’ [hood], just like in the target text. It can be argued that this choice too is not conscious, based on the fact that no expression similar to the phrase ‘keep your heads (hoods) up’ is used in the target text.

On the other hand, while it is possible to hold that there are some wordplays and external references in the character names in the source text, it is seen that some of the names are translated into Turkish (e.g. Darrell ‘*Bintur*’ [Cartrip in ST]) and some are directly transferred (e.g. Brent Mustangburger) to the target text, arguably without any consistent strategy. Thus, it seems safe to take the stance (for either translation decision) that the translator fails to identify the puns or wordplays in some of the names. For example:

(3) ST: David Hobbscap

TT: *David Kaporta*

As one might argue, the surname of the character in the ST example contains a reference to both the word ‘hubcap’, and ‘Hobbs’, a common English surname (clothing brand *Hobbs*, electronic goods brand *Russell Hobbs*, etc.). The translator attempts to replace this word with another automotive term, ‘*kaporta*’ [bodywork]. The fact that the translator prefers the non-equivalent word ‘*Kaporta*’ instead a Turkish word related to wheels or tires (as is the case in ST), however, leads the audience to think that the reason for the change in question is the relatively difficult pronunciation of the word ‘Hobbscap’ for the Turkish audience, rather than the aim to identify the ST pun and evoke similar effects in the target text. On the other hand, through this change, the translator reduced the cognitive cost of the pun, which is relatively high in the source text, but withdraws from the weak implicatures and effects created in the ST pun: While ‘Hobbscap’ is phonetically similar to a common surname in English and operates on two levels (both as a pun and a wordplay), the TT surname ‘*Kaporta*’ neither has any similar connotations nor a use as a surname in the target culture. Moreover, it is difficult to draw any parallels between the ST and TT uses, other than the fact that the Turkish word ‘*kaporta*’ lends itself to the car analogy of the film.

Another name that gives the impression that the translator fails to identify the pun belongs to Siddeley, the British Intelligence agent plane who comes to rescue Finn McMissile and Sir Tow Mater from the airport. The surname ‘Siddeley’, to someone familiar with the source culture, is clearly a reference to the former British aircraft manufacturer Hawker Siddeley. However, from the point of consistency, ‘Siddeley’ differs from the other surnames which are similarly transferred from the source text to the target text as they are, such as ‘Mustangburger’, in terms of the weakness of the implicature it contains: Preservation of the surname ‘Mustangburger’ as it can easily be justified by the familiarity of the target audience to the American sports car Ford Mustang and the universal food name hamburger. However, it is almost impossible to similarly draw parallels between ‘Siddeley’ and ‘Hawker Siddeley’ in the target culture. Therefore, in a case where it is assumed that the pun is identified, one would expect the translator to opt to translate (and find equivalents for) the names which have relatively higher cognitive cost in ST and are not available in the cognitive environment of the target audience; to maintain optimal relevance and if possible, to preserve the ST pun. On that basis, since the translator does not choose to follow this strategy, it can be deduced that they fail to identify the puns at least in the above-given examples.

4.2. Changes and recreations in expressions with puns and/or wordplays

Since *Cars 2* is marketed as an animated comedy film, and the age range of its target audience is excessively wide, conveying the puns and wordplays as easily noticeable and understandable as possible is of crucial importance in achieving the goal of the work. Therefore, from a relevance-theoretical perspective (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995), the translator is expected to preserve or recreate similar inferential effects in the target text, even if it requires a complete change of the expression that contains the pun and/or wordplay.

In this vein, the translator demonstrates high levels of creativity in *Cars 2*, based on the examples provided in this section. In line with this strategy (of changing or recreation of the ST puns), the first example where the translator unleashes their creativity meets the audience at the end of the seventh minute of the film, in the scene where Sir Tow Mater comes to rescue Otis, who seem to be a ‘rotbox’ that frequently breaks down:

(4) ST: Smooth like pudding, huh? Ah, who am I kidding? I’ll always be a lemon.

TT: *Turp gibiyim, değil mi? Kimi kandırıyorum, benden cacık bile olmaz.*[†]

Arguably, when Otis says ‘smooth like pudding’, he resorts to irony through some of the most relevant connotations of pudding dessert, such as ‘smooth, in shape, problem-free’ and ‘shiny, eye-catching’, despite the fact that his bodywork is full of rust and his paint is faded. Since the expression in question has no equivalent in the target language that would create the same effect operating on two levels (except for words in local dialects in target language, such as ‘*cıncık gibi*’ [(shiny) like a glassware/porcelain] in Adana dialect), the translator goes for the expression ‘*turp gibi*’ [meaning ‘as fit as a fiddle’ or ‘as fresh as a daisy’ in TL]. Although this choice does not involve any visual references in TL unlike the ST pun, it is a simile used for people in TL, so it reinforces the analogy established throughout the film between cars and humans, and allows the pun to operate on the basis of ‘being problem-free and healthy’ similarly for the target audience. The fact that the expression the translator opts to use in TT is in the cognitive environment of almost all Turkish speakers preserves or even reduces[‡] the cognitive cost of the expression in the source text. The expression ‘lemon’ in the second part of the pun appears frequently throughout the film and is consistently used as ‘*hurda*’ [scrap, rotbox] in the target text. In the above-given example (4), the translator, probably by considering the sentence as a whole, chose the expression ‘*bir cacık olmaz*’, meaning ‘the worst of the worst’, which is commonly used by adults in the target culture. Although this choice enriches the ST expression in terms of puns, however, one might propose that it increases the

[†] In the Turkish subtitle, the sentence reads as “*Kimi kandırıyorum? Ben hep külüstür kalacağım.*” [Who am I kidding? I will always be a rotbox.]

[‡] What Otis means by this expression has been a subject of discussion on a forum website, creating the impression that the pun in question is not easy to understand in the ST either: [https://forum.wordreference.com/threads/smooth-like-pudding.2304466/]

cognitive cost of the pun for children, considering the fact that the film appeals to a wide age range.

Another case of changing of a pun, therefore creativity, appears in the scene where Sir Tow Mater takes up the role of a waiter so that he can stay close to Lightning McQueen:

(5) ST: My name is Mater and I'll be your waiter. Mater the waiter. That's funny right there.

TT: *Mater benim adım, yakınınzdayım bir adım^s. Garson Mater. Bence çok komik ya.*

As seen in the ST example, the character's name 'Mater' rhymes with the word 'waiter'. Yet, it does not seem possible to achieve a similar wordplay in Turkish while preserving the semantic content, since it is not possible to change the name of the character only for this purpose. Therefore, the translator chose to preserve the cognitive effects and cost created by rhyme, at the expense of changing the semantic content of the sentence. Apparently, the appreciation of waiters in the target culture depends on their close attention to their customers' table and their availability when they are needed. Therefore, when Mater says '*Yakınınzdayım bir adım*' [I am just a step away from you] rather than explicitly declaring that he is a waiter does not increase the cognitive cost of the TT statement when compared to ST example, especially thanks to the visual clues such as the waiter napkin he carries and the statement '*Garson* [Waiter] *Mater*' he makes immediately after the expression containing the wordplay.

Another example (6), in which the same strategy as the previous example (5) is followed, draws the audience's attention in the scene where Mater is looking for something to eat. This time, however, the pun goes in favour of the translator:

(6) ST:

- (Mater) Hey, what you got here that's free? How about that pistachio ice cream?

- (Sushi Chef) No. No. Wasabi.

- (Mater) Oh, same ol', same ol'. What's up with you? That looks delicious.

TT:

- (*Mater*) *Buralarda beleş neler var? Şu çam fıstıklı dondurma nasıl?*

- (*Suşi Şefi*) *No. No. Wasabi.*

- (*Mater*) *Geçmiş olsun abi, neden asabisin ki? Çok leziz görünüyor.*

As seen in the above-given example (6), the wordplay in the ST is constructed through the (rather far-fetched) phonetic similarity between word 'wasabi' and the question 'what's up?'. However, the fact that a true rhyme cannot be achieved due to the ending of the word 'wasabi' is, arguably, 'unmusical' in the ST. In the target text, the translator keeps the word 'wasabi' as

it appears in the ST and goes for the fully rhyming word ‘*asabi*’ [angry] in TT at the expense of a change in the semantic content, which does not have a key function in the storyline of the film. In this way, the translator achieves both an optimal relevance and an equivalent (arguably better) wordplay in the target text. On the other hand, in other cases where the translator resorts to a direct transfer rather than making the change in (6), it can be argued that the cognitive cost would inevitably increase, due to the fact that the expressions ‘*wasabi*’ and, for example, ‘*senden ne haber?*’ [what about you?] are not relevant at all.

The scene where Finn McMissile and Sir Tow Mater meets at the airport, reminding the audience of *James Bond* films, can be provided as another example of creativity:

(7) ST:

- (Finn McMissile) I never properly introduced myself. Finn McMissile. British Intelligence.

- (Mater) Tow Mater. Average intelligence.

TT:

- (*Finn McRoket*) *Affedersiniz, kendimi tam olarak tanıtamadım. Finn McRoket. İngiliz Haber Alma.*

- (*Mater*) *Çekici Mater. Pek haber almam zaten.*

It can be observed that the pun above is constructed on the synonyms of the word ‘intelligence’ in the source text: While Finn McMissile means that he is an intelligence agent, Mater uses the same word to openly express, both verbally and through his misunderstanding, that he is of ‘average intelligence.’ However, in the target language, there is no synonym for the word in question, or a phrase that carries the same meaning that would construct the pun in the same way. Therefore, the translator opts for a phrase that could easily be associated with the idiom ‘*dünyadan haberi olmamak*’ [to be out of touch with the world], which is in common use in the target language to describe naïve people. Thus, it can be argued that both the pun and the semantic content are preserved as much as possible in the TT. However, from the perspective of Relevance Theory, the cognitive cost has arguably increased in the target language; because the directness of the pun constructed with the synonyms of the word ‘intelligence’ in the ST is lost in the TT.

Another example that is similar, but resulting in a different case due to the dynamics of the target language, is found in the scene where Sir Tow Mater first encounters the word ‘agent’:

(8) ST:

- (Holley) “A good agent gets what he can, then gets out before he’s killed.” Sorry.

- (Mater) Agent? You mean like insurance agent, like [...]

TT:

- (Holley) *İyi bir ajan son hızla alabildiğini alır ve oradan çıkıp gider.*

- (Mater) *Ajans mı? Yani reklam ajansı gibi bir şey mi? [...]*

As is the case for the word ‘intelligence’ in example (7), the pun in (8) is constructed through the synonyms of the word ‘agent’. Although Turkish allows for a similar parallel to be drawn with a small nuance (*ajan* [agent] – *ajans* [agency]), the word ‘ajans’ is not used together with the word ‘sigorta’ [insurance], despite some common uses such as ‘news agency’ and ‘advertising agency’ in TL. That may explain why the translator chooses to replace the expression of Sir Tow Mater with ‘advertising agency’ so as to preserve the pun, rather than going for the direct transfer of the expression ‘*sigorta acentesi*’ [insurance agency], which would eliminate the wordplay. Thus, the translator manages to preserve the cognitive cost of the pun as well as the semantic content; in other words, it is made possible for the TT audience to similarly identify the wordplay at the expense of a reasonable cognitive effort.

One other example where effects similar to the wordplay in the ST are created by following a substitution strategy appears in the airplane scene. McMissile instructs Siddeley to change course, yet Tow Mater completely misunderstands the command:

(9) ST:

- (Finn) Paris. Tout de suite.

- (Mater) Yeah, two of them sweets for me too, Sid!

TT:

- (Finn) *Paris. Tout de suite.*

- (Mater) *Evet, lütfen bana da bir suit tut!*

In (9), rather than choosing to use an expression along the lines of ‘*bana da o şekerlerden iki tane lütfen*’ [please give me two of those candies], within which the semantic content is preserved but the wordplay is lost, the translator opts for conveying the pun by changing the semantic content of the line (appearing as ‘book me a suite too’ in TT), which is of no crucial importance in the storyline of the film. In the source text, the pun relies on the phonetic similarity between the words ‘tout’ – ‘two’ and ‘suite’ – ‘sweet’. The translator, however, focuses their efforts on the word ‘suit’, which is widely used in Turkish while etymologically belonging to French, and thus creates similar effects in the target text. In this case, despite the fact that the word ‘suit’ is of foreign origin for TT audience, the cognitive cost is preserved without any increase due to its widespread use in TL.

One final example for the substitution strategy can be given from Sir Tow Mater’s lines in the same scene:

- (10) ST:
- (Finn) You obviously have plenty of experience in the field.
- (Mater) Well yeah I live right next to one.
TT:
- (Finn) *Sahada çok büyük bir tecrüben olduğu ortada.*
- (Mater) *Evet, evimin yanında halı saha var.*

In (10), the translator chooses to play with the word ‘field’, although it has an exact equivalent in Turkish (‘*saha*’) and is frequently used in professional language, by turning it into the phrase ‘*halı saha*’ [lit. football field with synthetic pitch]. The reason for this is that the word ‘field’ within the context of Finn’s line means ‘*saha*’ in Turkish, whereas the Turkish equivalent for the word in a way that Mater (mis)understands it is ‘*tarla*’ [an area of land where crops are grown]. Thanks to this minor addition and change in the semantic content, the pun is preserved, and the cognitive cost is reduced compared to the ST, since no indefinite noun is used in TT.

4.3. Additions and subtractions to the expressions containing puns and/or wordplays

In some of the expressions containing puns or wordplays, it can be observed that the translator resorts to addition and subtraction strategies. The reason for this may be to ensure that the pun can be ‘optimally’ understood in the target language. In this vein, redundant parts of speech that increase the cognitive cost are generally removed, and phrases that makes the pun more understandable or funnier are added. This strategy is often seen in the lines of the character Francesco Bernoulli, voiced by Cem Yılmaz with a so-called ‘Italian accent’:

- (11) ST:
- (Francesco) Yes, you will see Francesco, but not like this. You will see him like-a this as he drives away from you.
- (McQueen) So you had one of those made up for all the racers?
- (Francesco) No.
- (McQueen) Okay.
TT:
- (Francesco): *Francesco’yu göreceksin tabi. Ama böyle görmeyeceksin. Sen beni hep böyle göreceksin. Ciao McQueen!*
- (McQueen) *Bütün yarışçılar için bunlardan bir tane yaptırın mı?*
- (Francesco) *Sana özel!*
- (McQueen) *Peki.*
- (Francesco) *Kızarante bozarante!*

The first noticeable change in the example above is the subtraction of the phrase ‘as he drives away from you’ in Francesco’s first line. Although the phrase ‘drive away’ does not have an exact equivalent in the target language, equivalents that could capture similar semantic effects such as ‘*sana fark atarken*’ [as I leave you in the dust] or ‘*seninle arayı açarken*’ [as you get ‘gapped’ by me] are not preferred in the target text. This may be because of the fact that Francesco is already showing McQueen his back (his taillights in colloquial terms) as he is talking. The phrase ‘Ciao McQueen’, which is added to the end of the line in the TT (and written at the back of Francesco), is not found in the source text. The reason for the addition may be to reinforce the character’s ‘Italian accent’. It can be argued that the same applies for the phrase added at the end of (11), ‘*kızarıntı bozarantı!*’ (not grammatically correct in TL (should read ‘*kızarıp bozar*’), suffixes are made up so that the words sound ‘Italian’ – meaning ‘to go beetroot red’).

Another addition can be seen in Francesco’s line at the beginning of the race in Japan, where he speaks of himself in the third person out of arrogance:

- (12) ST: It’s really getting him into the zone!
 TT: *Beni havaya sokare, asfaltları yakare!*

In example (12), the translator creates a pun that is not in the source text by adding the expression ‘*asfalt yakmak*’ [to tear up the tarmac] to the part of the line after the comma, which he also reinforces with fake ‘Italian accent’ (again by making up rhyming suffixes). The effects of this addition are reflected and reinforced (through the repetition of the word ‘*asfalt*’ [tarmac]) in a later scene, where a changing strategy is followed: ‘Onu bugün asfaltta ağlatacağım!’ [I will make him cry on the asphalt today! – which appears in ST as ‘I will beat his cry-baby bottom today!’. In addition, the words ‘*asfalt*’ and ‘*ağlatmak*’ [to make somebody cry] serve as implicit references (weak implicatures) to a highly popular Turkish oil company advertisement from roughly a decade ago in the target culture, which is also voiced by Cem Yılmaz.

One more case where the strategy of addition is followed, with a similar ‘Italian’ flavour, is to be seen in the scene where Francesco takes over McQueen in the Japan race:

- (13) ST: [Subtitle] (*SPEAKS ITALIAN*)
 [English dubbing] [*Grazie and arrivederci!*]
 TT: *Canımın içi, arrivederci!*

In (13), despite the lack of a ST equivalent, a Turkish expression (‘*canımın içi*’ [my sweetheart]) is added to the TT by making use of the rhyme of the Italian word ‘*arrivederci*’ and the Turkish word ‘*ichi*’. Although ‘*arrivederci*’ is a foreign word, it can be argued that it is preserved and used to derive a pun by the translator as it is widely used in target culture (like some other

words such as ‘*ciao*’ and ‘*tshüss*’). Thus, a partially understandable foreign expression in ST is localized with the addition strategy in the TT and made more understandable, therefore cognitively less costly.

4.4. Direct transfers of puns and/or wordplays

According to Gutt, in contrast to the ‘indirect’ translation that involves interpretive uses, a translation is ‘direct’ when the SL utterance is translated directly into TL in cases where the TL utterance aims to achieve uniformity with the SL utterance (Gutt, 1990, as cited in Bengi-Öner, 2004, p. 167). As established by this study so far, a translator may safely resort to a direct or indirect translation when necessary. As Bengi-Öner (2004) holds, the choice the translator makes between the two above-mentioned alternatives when adopting a translation strategy directly affects the success of the end product. On the other hand, it becomes increasingly viable to argue that the sharp boundaries between direct and indirect translation disappears when it comes to puns and wordplays; because identifying the pun/wordplay in the source text and finding the exact equivalent for it in the target language involves varying degrees of interpretation, even in cases of direct translation. Therefore, the term ‘interpretive’, which Gutt (1990, as cited in Bengi-Öner, 2004) considers as more integrated, seems to be better suited for examining the strategies followed by the translator within the scope of this study. The first of the examples where the translator follows a direct translation strategy but enters the boundaries of interpretive use meets the audience in the fifteenth minute of the film, in the scene where Sir Tow Mater makes a live TV appearance and addresses Francesco:

- (14) ST: McQueen could drive circles around you.
TT: *McQueen senin etrafında daireler çizer.*

Arguably, the translator bases the pun in example (14) on the similarity with the English idiom ‘to run rings around somebody’. Italian racer Francesco fails to understand this statement and replies by claiming that all McQueen can do is to draw circles. At this point, the translator might be opting to preserve the ‘incomprehensibility’ of the expression for Francesco and therefore to adopt a direct translation strategy.

In some examples where the translator follows a direct translation strategy, it can be observed that the exact equivalent of the SL idiom is used in the TL. In this way, it becomes possible to convey the inferential richness of the expressions while maintaining optimal relevance. For example:

- (15) ST: You had it [race] in the bag.
TT: *Yarış çantada keklikti.*
- (16) ST: Lemons is a tow truck's bread and butter.

TT: *Külüstürler çekicilerin ekmek teknesidir.*

(17) ST: You can't do a three-point turn around here without bumping into some celebrity!

TT: *Elinizi sallasanız ünlü bir kişiye kesin denk gelirsiniz!*

Finally, it is observed that direct translation is also adopted for puns based on car brands and model names that are widely known in the target language. As is the case with the Mustangburger example mentioned in 3.1, the name of the Big Ben clock tower is changed to 'Big Bentley' in the seventy-fifth minute of the film in the source text; and due to the global recognition of the Bentley brand, it is directly transferred to the target text.

5. Conclusion

In the case of the Turkish dubbing of the film *Cars 2*, one might propose the view that the translator heavily adopts the strategy of changing the expressions containing puns and wordplays. As seen in most of the examples in the study, semantic content is not prioritized unless otherwise necessary, and the weight is given to preserving the pun or wordplay, therefore evoking similar cognitive effects in the target language, rather than achieving equivalence. All of the examples analysed in the above sections concur with Delabastita's (1994) view that the presence of puns and wordplays requires creativity in that they cannot be translated by adopting pre-determined strategies. When the translation strategies followed in the TT are reconsidered through the lens of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995), it can be argued that the translator pays attention to the cognitive environment of the target audience, thus manages to maintain optimal relevance while keeping cognitive costs at minimum. Although the principle of relevance in general proves to be useful in providing an account for the strategies adopted by the translator, one might hold that there are other factors are at play that mostly have to do with competence, such as translator's sense of humour, language abilities and level of attention to details. Speaking of competence, finally, it can be argued that the translator fails to identify some of the puns and wordplays in the ST, since there are sufficient clues indicating that ST expressions of this sort are not consciously/deliberately left out in the TT.

Disclosures

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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