

# Shakespeare in Polish. On puns and translation strategies in *Love's Labour's Lost*

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## *Abstract*

*The article is pertinent to aspects of translation with regard to the rendition of puns in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. The primary objective of the paper is to present and expound on the tendencies and choices germane to the translation of humour and wordplay. Furthermore it also aims at arriving at an overall illustration of the formal arrangement of puns, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, as well as at the qualitative and quantitative juxtaposition of translation strategies applied by the three Polish renderers i.e. M. Słomczyński, L. Ulrich, and S. Barańczak.*

*Keywords: Shakespeare, wordplay, puns, humour, translation, translation strategies, *Love's Labour's Lost*.*

## **Introduction**

Much as humour and laughter are pondered universal and pervasive concepts, they most frequently seem to pose a challenge for translators preoccupied with the subject. The preponderance of humour and its subcategory, i.e. wordplay in Shakespeare's plays as juxtaposed with translation technicalities triggers linguists' interest both at the linguistic and pragmatic level. Chiefly, the paper aims to delve into the renditions delivered by the three Polish translators, viz. M. Słomczyński, L. Ulrich, and S. Barańczak respectively, as regards Shakespeare's play entitled *Love's Labour's Lost* i.e. one of the most exquisite and bountiful in wordplay in his entire oeuvre. Thus, the formal arrangement of wordplay in Shakespeare's play *Love's Labour's Lost* was scrutinized – both quantitatively and qualitatively – based on a commonly adapted dichotomy, i.e. vertical and horizontal puns, further subdivided into homonymous, homophonous, and polysemous instances. Subsequently, an overall quantitative and qualitative distribution of translation strategies furnished by the three Polish renderers, viz. Słomczyński, Ulrich, and Barańczak was presented. Alongside, the rationale behind the lavish application of wordplay and particular translation choices did not go unrecognized, and was comprehensively explicated.

## **Pun – a definition**

Needless to say, the wordings and taxonomies germane to the notion of pun are multifarious. To start with, in order to arrive at a succinct, yet comprehensive theoretical framework it is instructive to furnish a formulation registered by The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, henceforth abbreviated as CODLT that employs the following definition: “an expression that achieves emphasis or humour by contriving an ambiguity, two distinct meanings being suggested either by the same word or by two similar-sounding words”. Leech (1969: 209) ponders on puns in akin terms: “[it] is a foregrounded lexical ambiguity, which may have its origin either in homonymy or polysemy”. As affirmed by Heller (1974: 271),

“the pun represents not just one pattern but rather an entire class of different patterns which all share the following structural characteristics: namely, that a single manifesting mark signals more than one conceptual function”. Interestingly enough, having juxtaposed the three divergent wordings, one may conspicuously notice that the adduced elucidations do not account for the term exhaustively. For instance, CODLT repudiates wordplay that is predicated upon syntactic ambiguity or homography, and Leech – upon homophony. Heller’s wording excludes puns based on the syntagmatic axis i.e. contingent upon close vicinity of at least two lexical items, thereby covers only those focused on the paradigmatic one. Therefore, Delabastita’s (1993: 56) standpoint appears not only germane, but also the most precise:

wordplay is the general name indicating the various textual phenomena (i.e. that is on the level of performance or parole) in which certain features inherent in the structure of the language used (level of competence or langue) are exploited in such a way as to establish a communicatively significant, (near)-simultaneous confrontation of at least two linguistic structures with more or less dissimilar meanings (signifieds) or more or less similar forms (signifiers).

Most conspicuously, all the definitions – excluding Heller’s that lacks any reference to relations between pun’s lexical equivocation and formal correspondence – endeavour to locate the pun’s essence in similitude of meanings and dissimilarity of forms. Concurrently, Delabastita patently pinpoints the difference between ‘langue’ and ‘parole’, whereas CODLT in terms of structural *langue*-features, explicitly shuns from any reference to the role of grammar, for the word-level is emphasized. Thus, lexical polysemy along with phonological structure are also omitted. In further elaboration, as regards “the lowest admissible threshold of the meaning difference” (Delabastita 1993: 56), Leech merely mentions lexical ambiguity, however without any reference to the issue of meanings correspondence. An ultimate pivot of the formulation furnished by Delabastita is that wordplay imparts “communicative significance”, which is non-existent in Leech’s and Heller’s delineations, and CODLT remains rather vague about it highlighting merely the “emphasis or humorous effect”. In formal terms, Delabastita’s wording is complex enough, inasmuch as it manages to cover a number of degrees of correspondence between signifiers, namely paronymy, homophony, homography, and homonymy.

Contrastively, semantically speaking the degree of dissimilitude may well alter. Thereby, a pun may be deemed to be comprised of a composition of considerable divergence of primary i.e. surface-level, and secondary meanings. Having arrived at a fairly elaborate theoretical framework, one may well recapitulate that however assorted the accounts of wordplay are, all of them concur in the recognition that it locates its pivot in the juxtaposition of at least two dissimilar meanings and two similar forms. That said, the jocularity is reliant on the relation between formal and semantic contrast – the subtler the first and the sharper the second, the more effective the resultant pun. In simplified terms, the pun is most successful where concurrently the forms differ to the smallest and the senses to the greatest extent viable.

## Puns – a taxonomy

Most conspicuously, there are many approaches regarding the taxonomy of puns. Offord (1990) employs a strictly structural one, drawing a distinction into three subtypes, *viz.* implicit, explicit and syntactic puns. Implicit ones, otherwise delineated as vertical or paradigmatic, or as Ritchie (2005) puts it – “self-contained puns”, consist of one occurrence of the word and more than one sense is triggered. Attardo (1994: 115) avers that a pun encompasses:

two senses of a linguistic expression (or string). What sets these apart from other types of puns is that only one of the two strings is actually present in the text (the uttered string), and the second has to be retrieved by the hearer from his/her storage of homonymic or paronymic strings (i.e., the paradigm of the targeted string).

Ritchie (2005) presupposes that no adequate semantic context is needed as regards this pun, by reason of the fact that the pun core, the pivot, is covered by wordplay, therefore may well find application in diverse situations. Attardo distinguishes four subtypes of paradigmatic puns, *viz.* phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical ones. Syntagmatic puns, also referred to as horizontal or “contextually integrated puns”, contrary to paradigmatic ones do necessitate a semantic context for it is pivotal to create wordplay. As delineated by Ritchie (2005), the jocularity is activated by former contextual knowledge, present in previous passages of the text. That said, as opposed to paradigmatic puns, syntagmatic ones require the syntagm. Regarding the classification, Attardo (1994: 116) categorizes them into phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical ones. Most certainly, puns may also be viewed from the perspective of lexical relations, *viz.* homophony, homonymy, and paronymy. Naturally, in other cases, the taxonomy also covers homography. Notwithstanding, as affirmed by Kökeritz “no Shakespearean pun was ever based upon the spelling of a word; either meaning or pronunciation is involved, but never orthography”, thus homographic puns are not adduced hereafter. Much as the lexical relations are largely recognizable, a compendious account is indeed instructive. Homonymy encompasses words having identical spelling and pronunciation, but dissimilar meaning. Homophones are lexical entries that share the same phonological representations, yet differ in enunciation and meaning. The last one, paronymy, points out to akin sound and spelling (Adamczyk, 2006: 309). All the four notions are tabulated below:

	<b>Paronymy</b>	<b>Homography</b>	<b>Homonymy</b>	<b>Homophony</b>
<b>Spelling</b>	akin	+	+	-
<b>Pronunciation</b>	akin	-	+	+

Table 1 *Paronymy, Homography, Homonymy, Homophony*

In compliance with this classification, and as used in the subsequent analytical part, puns were further subdivided into vertical homonymic, homophonic, and paronymic, as well as horizontal homonymic, homophonic and paronymic ones.

## Translation strategies

With reference to translation strategies it is Delabastita (1993) whose contribution to translation theory, *viz.* translation strategies pertinent to puns seems to be the most sizeable thus the most frequently applied one. What is also worth remarking is that – if required – two or more strategies may be applied concurrently. The taxonomy encompasses:

### *PUN > PUN Strategy*

Patently enough, the PUN > PUN strategy is the most ideal one, should there be a translational solution offered in the TL to be applied in the TT passage. Notwithstanding, as regards formal and semantic structure along with textual function the pun present in the TT does not have to bear the same functions and peculiarities as the ST one, thus is likely to be subject to certain language shifts. Therefore, the ST linguistic features and structural properties may fluctuate in the course of translation. In simplified terms, if the ST jocularity is predicated upon paronymy, in the TT it may well be imparted by means of homonymy.

### *PUN > NON-PUN Strategy*

As the name suggests, the source jest is translated into the target language, much as the punning conjunction is not salvaged. TT passage supplants the ST pun, and the jocular effect is lost as it lacks the confrontation of linguistic meanings and akin forms.

### *PUN > PUNOID Strategy*

By means of this strategy, the pun is rendered as a rhetorical device, be it paradox, rhyme, repetition, irony, alliteration, referential vagueness etc. As presupposed by Zboch (2016: 106), one may discern that the strategy in question conveys certain similitude to the previously discussed one, yet in the case of PUN > PUNOID, the renderer attempts to impart the ST meaning.

### *PUN > ZERO Strategy*

Source text passage is omitted in the TT.

### *DIRECT COPY Strategy*

Here, as the name implies, the ST pun is copied directly into the TL and no concern is put on the resultant semantic consequences. In linguistic terms, ST signifiers are transferred into the TT.

### *TRANSFERENCE Strategy*

As regards transference, foreign linguistic material is imposed upon the TL, yet it is the signified, not the signifiers, that is inflicted on the TT.

### *NON-PUN > PUN Strategy*

“The TT contains wordplay in a passage that is obviously meant as a translational solution to a ST passage that features no wordplay”.

### *ZERO > PUN Strategy*

This strategy implies an addition of new textual material in the TT, whereas it is impossible to find a counterpart in the ST. If no ST counterpart may be found in TT, new textual material can be added into the target language.

### *EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES Strategy*

The use of explanatory comments or footnotes.

## **The overall quantitative distribution of puns**

The part aims to arrive at the overall account of puns – both quantitatively and qualitatively – amassed from Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost* that with regard to his entire oeuvre may readily be considered a pun-addled witfest. That said, hardly can one deny truth in Mahood’s (1988: 9) words, who posits that “[w]ordplay was a game the Elizabethans played seriously”. Much as diligent efforts were made to pinpoint the finite number of Shakespearean puns in the corpus, and the inventory of wordplay seems exhaustive, the play may well still be found subject to further research.

### *The formal arrangement of vertical and horizontal puns*

	VERTICAL		HORIZONTAL	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
<b>TOTAL</b>	174	52,4%	158	47,6%

Table 2 *The overall quantitative distribution of virtual and horizontal puns detected in Love’s Labour’s Lost*

Upon an all-embracing analysis, no perceptible disproportion is visible pertinent to vertical and horizontal puns, with the overall ratio equating to 332 instances, as the first added up to 52,4% and the latter to 47,6%. Interestingly enough, as affirmed by Offord (1997: 237), vertical wordplay constitutes averagely subtle intellectual jests, “with a scornful, cutting edge”. Comparatively, the subtlety in horizontal wordplays is inclined to be “replaced by a more conscious, deliberate and obvious effort to produce comedy, or sometimes self-deprecatory irony”.

### *The formal arrangement of homophony, homonymy, and paronymy*

	HOMOPHONY		HOMONYMY		PARONYMY	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
<b>PARTIAL</b>	39	11,8%	173	52,1%	120	36,1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	332 (100%)					

Table 3 *The overall quantitative distribution of puns detected in Love’s Labour’s Lost with regard to homophony, homonymy, and paronymy*

As plotted in the table, appreciably disproportionate representation may well be discerned, with the paronymous and homophonous instances equating to 47,9%, which altogether

constitutes less than half of the total ratio. That said, it seems instructive to re-adduce Delabastita's wording germane to puns which says that wordplay is based on a near-simultaneous confrontation of two – or more – dissimilar signifieds, and at least two similar or identical signifiers. Accordingly, the more patent the semantic contrast, and the smaller the formal one, the sharper the jocularity. Thereby, the most successful ones are those of homonymic nature, for they differ as regards meaning, and correspond in terms of elucidation and spelling. On that account, the subcategory of homonymy – with 52,1% – incorporated the greatest amount of puns. Interestingly enough, ambiguity is deemed to appear unconditionally only in the case of homonymy, as it is predicated upon the same pronunciation and spelling, together with dissimilar meanings (Adamczyk: 2006). Homophonous instances amounted merely to 11,8%.

*The overall formal arrangement of puns*

	HOMOPHONY		HOMONYMY		PARONYMY	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
<b>VERTICAL</b>	28	8,4%	97	29,2%	50	15,1%
<b>HORIZONTAL</b>	11	3,3%	76	22,9%	70	21,1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	39	11,7%	173	52,1%	120	36,2%

Table 4 *The overall quantitative distribution of puns detected in Love's Labour's Lost*

The data tabulated above present the total formal arrangement of puns amassed from *Love's Labour's Lost*. Patently enough, homophonous instances to a large extent skew the overall ratio downwards amounting to 3,3% occurrences. Insofar as there is a marked disproportion – as juxtaposed with the paronymous and homonymous instances – it is instructive to present Kökeritz's (1953) stance on the subject. As adduced in Adamczyk (2006) he avers that, only half of homophones are effortlessly available having imparted the initial quality of enunciation up till now. One may presuppose it is underlain by certain terminological discrepancies, viz. the distinction into the notions of pure- and near-homonymy, with the first being germane to identity and the latter to near-identity in sound. Correspondingly, inasmuch as paronymy may be investigated with regard to close-similarity, stating where the notion of near-homophony (near-identity) should be dropped and taken over by the notion of genuine paronymy (close-similarity), may only be intuited. Therefore, for the sake of clarity only instances with pure identity in sound and spelling were deemed homonymous.

**The overall qualitative distribution of puns**

For the sake of simplicity and proper understanding of various types of puns, a six-partite taxonomy inclusive of examples and succinct explanations is presented below.

*Homonymy – vertical puns*

- (1) COSTARD  
True, true; and now you will be my purgation and let me loose.

The wordplay is perceived homonymic and vertical, since one string within the passage conveys two disparate meanings, namely the term 'loose' is understood as being free, as in the phrase 'let somebody loose', and the reverse of 'constipated' as in 'loose bowels'.

*Homonymy – horizontal puns*

- (2) ARMADO  
We will talk no more of this matter.  
COSTARD  
Till there be more matter in the shin.

The wordplay is deemed homonymic, for the words denote identity in pronunciation and spelling, as well as horizontal, due to the jocular element triggered by the former contextual knowledge. The howler is predicated upon two senses of the word 'matter', the primary being 'an issue', and the secondary pointing out to 'a secretion or discharge, such as pus'.

*Homophony – vertical puns*

- (3) BOYET  
Fair ladies mask'd are roses in their bud;  
Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixture shown,  
Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown.

The pun is deemed homophonic for the words differ merely with regard to spelling, whereas the enunciation is the same, with both words pronounced as ['veilɪŋ], as well as vertical since one occurrence of the word is involved and more than one sense is activated. The pun imparts two dissimilar meanings, because the term 'vailing' activates two strings, viz. vailing understood as 'taking off' – primary meaning, and 'vailing' understood as 'veiling', i.e. covering, masking – secondary meaning.

*Homophony – horizontal puns*

- (4) BIRON  
Would that do it good?  
ROSALINE  
My physic says 'ay'.  
BIRON  
Will you prick't with your eye?

The pun is of homophonous nature since the words differ only with reference to spelling, whereas their enunciation is the same, as both are pronounced as [aɪ]. The wordplay is of horizontal nature, due to the activation of two strings. The jocularity is activated by former contextual knowledge, present in previous passage of the text, with 'ay' used to express consent, and 'eye' denoting an organ of sight.

*Paronymy – vertical puns*

- (5) ROSALINE  
How needless was it then  
To ask the question!  
BIRON  
You must not be so quick.  
ROSALINE  
Tis 'long of you that spur me with such questions.  
BIRON  
Your wit's too hot, it speeds too fast, 'twill tire.  
ROSALINE  
Not till it leave the rider in the mire.

The pun is found paronymic on the grounds that the words share neither identical pronunciation nor spelling, with 'spur' accentuated as [spɜ:ɹ], and 'speer' as ['spɪr]. Moreover, the wordplay is vertical for it is predicated merely on one word that activates two strings, *viz.* 'to spur' meaning 'to give an incentive or encouragement to (someone), to encourage someone to do something or something to happen', and 'to speer' which – as postulated by Delabastita – is a northern word, meaning 'to put or pose a question'

*Paronymy – horizontal puns*

- (6) BOYET  
Therefore, as he is an ass, let him go.  
And so adieu, sweet Jude! nay, why dost thou  
stay?  
DUMAIN  
For the latter end of his name.  
BIRON  
For the ass to the Jude; give it him: - Jud-ass,  
away!  
HOLOFERNES  
This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.  
BOYET  
A light for Monsieur Judas! it grows dark, he  
may stumble.

The pun is deemed paronymic since the terms share neither the same pronunciation nor spelling, as well as differ with regard to word class, with 'Jud-ass' enunciated as [dʒu:'dɑ:s] meaning the buttock of Jude, and 'Judas' as ['dʒu:dəs], conveying the sense of the apostle who betrayed Jesus, or somebody who betrays a comrade. Additionally, the wordplay is considered horizontal as the two strings are present in the text. Interestingly enough, in the passage multiple strings are activated, including 'an ass' understood as an asinine person and 'Jude', and 'as' meaning 'since'. Moreover, a simultaneous game is also played on 'adieu'



[ə'dju:], 'a jew' [dʒu:], and 'Jude' [dʒu:d], meaning 'goodbye', 'a member of community, whose traditional religion is Judaism', and 'Judas' respectively.

### The overall quantitative distribution of translation strategies

The following table presents the overall ratio of the translation strategies applied by the three Polish translators, *viz.* M. Słomczyński, L. Ulrich, and S. Barańczak. Interestingly, the count of puns corresponds to the total number of translation strategies applied, i.e. 332.

STRATEGY	PUN>PUN	PUN>NON-PUN	PUN>ZERO	DIRECT COPY	TRANSFERENCE	NON-PUN>PUN	PUN>PUNOID	ZERO>PUN
COUNT	171	763	21	2	2	16	20	1
PERCENTAGE	17,2%	76,6%	2,1%	0,2%	0,2%	1,6%	2,0%	0,1%

Table 5 *The overall quantitative distribution of translation strategies applied by the Polish translators*

Interestingly enough, EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES appears to be the only strategy that none of the renderers decided to have employed. Therefore, it was not entertained in the table. Most patently, PUN>NON-PUN drew translators' interest to a great extent equating to 77% of all choices, as in any case it constitutes the most feasible solution, for the jocularity does not have to be conveyed. Humorous instances were more or less successfully imparted in 17,2%, by means of the PUN>PUN strategy. Translation strategies that did not meet with considerable interest were TRANSFERENCE and DIRECT COPY with merely two occurrences. Admittedly, it ensues from the fact that though being seemingly feasible solutions, these two are most likely not only to deprive the ST passage of any jocularity, but also to impose foreign signifieds and signifiers upon the TT. Consequently, the recipient may not grasp the core sense of the source play fully.

### Translation strategies applied by the three Polish translators

STRATEGY	PUN>PUN	PUN>NON-PUN	PUN>ZERO	DIRECT COPY	TRANSFERENCE	NON-PUN>PUN	PUN>PUNOID	ZERO>PUN
Słomczyński	54 (16,3%)	265 (79,8%)	5 (1,5%)	-	1 (0,3%)	1 (0,3%)	6 (1,8%)	-
Ulrich	54 (16,3%)	270 (81,3%)	2 (0,6%)	1 (0,3%)	1 (0,3%)	-	4 (1,2%)	-
Barańczak	63 (19%)	228 (68,7%)	14 (4,2%)	1 (0,3%)	-	15 (4,5%)	10 (3%)	1 (0,3%)

Table 6 *Translation strategies applied by the Polish translators*

Upon a perfunctory analysis, one may affirm that the three translators extensively concurred in their translation choices, on the grounds that the numerical values do not differ substantially and the very renditions, excluding the one delivered by Barańczak's, are largely akin. Once again, since none of the translators ventured to have entertained the strategy of EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES, it was not tabulated. Most patently, Słomczyński's and

Ulrich's penchant for the application of the PUN>NON-PUN strategy with 265 and 270 occurrences respectively is substantial. Strategies that did not draw much interest were DIRECT COPY, TRANSFERENCE and ZERO>PUN with merely 1 occurrence that added up to 0,3%. In general, translators' predilection towards the use of the PUN>NON-PUN strategy, and concurrently reluctance towards the PUN>PUN one, may well be predicated upon strictly language-specific constraints, i.e. lack of linguistic equivalents offered by the target language. Most obviously, inasmuch as English and Polish belong to separate language groups, finding two language counterparts with regard to homonymy that share the same purport and spelling may well be considered challenging if not insurmountable. In akin vein, with reference to homophony, it is fairly improbable to find two words that have the same enunciation yet different spelling in both languages. Last but not least, other constraints e.g. those of purely human nature, such lack of skills, experience or incentives, time-pressure and the like should also be taken into consideration as those decreasing the use of the PUN>PUN strategy.

#### *Słomczyński's translation choices*

STRATEGY	PUN>PUN	PUN>NON-PUN	PUN>ZERO	DIRECT COPY	TRANSFERENCE	NON-PUN>PUN	PUN>PUNOID	ZERO>PUN
COUNT	54	265	5	-	1	1	6	-
PERCENTAGE	16,3%	79,8%	1,5%	-	0,3%	0,3%	1,8%	-

Table 7 *Słomczyński's translation choices*

Rendition delivered by Słomczyński was published in 1979, and the translator himself largely drew from translation strategies pursued by Ulrich, described already in the paper, which is corroborated by the data in table 7. The translator decided to have applied the PUN>NON-PUN strategy where the punning conjunction is not imparted in 79,8% of the cases. Needless to say, the motivation behind the use of this strategy may be found in the language-oriented constraints, and the lack of corresponding elements in the target text. That said, one should also draw attention to the mentioned language-specific constraints that contributed to the selection of the PUN>PUN strategy, such as culturally-bound elements and bilingual wordplay.

#### *Ulrich's translation choices*

STRATEGY	PUN>PUN	PUN>NON-PUN	PUN>ZERO	DIRECT COPY	TRANSFERENCE	NON-PUN>PUN	PUN>PUNOID	ZERO>PUN
COUNT	54	270	2	1	1	-	4	-
PERCENTAGE	16,3%	81,3%	0,6%	0,3%	0,3%	-	1,2%	-

Table 8 *Ulrich's translation choices*

On the grounds that Ulrich's rendition was published in 1895 and constitutes the earliest in the corpus, it may have served as a basis for other translators. In particular, when juxtaposed with the translation furnished by Słomczyński, one may readily discern that a great deal of data overlap. Patently enough, the translators primarily accommodated their predilection in the PUN>NON-PUN strategy as it was adapted in 81,3% of all occurrences. Frequently, if not followed by any form of compensation, it is the least successful one for the bemusement

is not conveyed and the pun is simply ignored. Punning was conveyed in the TT in merely 54 cases, by means of the PUN>PUN strategy, which equated to 16,3%. Amid other translation strategies, merely PUN>PUNOID exceeded 1% of all occurrences adding up to 1,2%. The strategy that did not meet with great interest was TRANSFERENCE and added up to 0,3% with only one occurrence. The application of this strategy forces SL signifieds upon the TL, which usually takes place when the translator faces the challenge of rendering culture-bound elements or puns on proper names.

#### *Barańczak's translation choices*

STRATEGY	PUN>PUN	PUN>NON-PUN	PUN>ZERO	DIRECT COPY	TRANSFERENCE	NON-PUN>PUN	PUN>PUNOID	ZERO>PUN
COUNT	63	228	14	1	-	15	10	1
PERCENTAGE	19%	68,7%	4,2%	0,3%	-	4,5%	3,0%	0,3%

Table 9 *Barańczak's translation choices*

Barańczak's rendition was published in 1994, therefore is the most recent one in the corpus. Most frequently, the renderer had a predilection towards applying the PUN>NON-PUN strategy, as it occurred 228 times, which amounted to 71,7% in the entire corpus. Second strategy that Barańczak decided to have applied was PUN>PUN with 63 (19,8%) instances. The strategy that did not meet with great interest was DIRECT COPY and added up to 0,3 % with only one occurrence. Patently enough, the strategy of DIRECT COPY was only selected twice and added up to 0,3%. The strategy imposes SL signifiers upon the TL, therefore is likely to be conducive to a situation when the TT reader has difficulty understanding the passage. The rationale behind the use of DIRECT COPY is once again the issue of culturally-bound elements as in the case of Słomczyński's choices, which can hardly be deemed straightforward.

### **The overall qualitative distribution of translation strategies**

#### *Homonymy – vertical puns*

Below, homonymic vertical wordplay was detected on the word 'excrement', which is understood as an outgrowth of hair, and simultaneously as 'faeces'.

- (7) Source text:  
 ADRIANO DE ARMANDO  
 [...] and with his royal finger, thus, dally with my excrement,  
 with my mustachio; but, sweet heart, let that pass.  
 By the world, I recount no fable: some certain special  
 honours it pleaseth his greatness to impart to Armado,  
 a soldier, a man of travel [...].

Barańczak's translation:

ARMANDO

[...] i monarszym palcem poigrać z tą odrośłą mej twarzy,

jaką są wąsy – ale zamilczmy i o tym, kochaneczku.

Na honor! Nie opowiadam tu przecież bajek!

Owszem, jego majestatowi podoba się czasem złać jakieś  
szczególne łaski na don Armada, żołnierza, podróżnika [...].

Back-translation:

ARMANDO

[...] and fidget with his royal finger with these sprouts on my face,

my moustache – but let's keep silent on that, my dear.

For God's sake, this is no fable. Indeed, it pleases

his Majesty to send down some special grace on Armado sometimes,

a soldier, a man of travel.

In the example adduced above, the homonymous relation was abandoned, by virtue of the fact that merely one sense was rendered more or less equivalently, i.e. by means of the word 'odrośl' ['sprout'] that has no connotation with 'faeces'. Furthermore, no connotation of other type was detected and the passage is thought to be entirely deprived of the punning conjunction. Notwithstanding, Barańczak decided to have compensated for this form of loss occurring, and entertained the ZERO>PUN strategy previously in the target text:

(8) Barańczak's translation:

BANIA

[...] Zuch z ciebie, wszystko masz w małym palcu

– pniij się w górę; jak to uczeni państwo powiadają,

pędź Kaspra nas Kaspra.

HOLOFERNES

Czuć tu zepsutą łaciną: Per aspera ad astra?

Back-translation:

COSTARD

Good boy, you have it at your fingertips

– rise above; as it is said by wise men,

pędź Kaspra nas Kaspra.

MOTH

Smells like stale Latin: Per aspera as astra?

Here, the new textual material was incorporated into the target text, viz. *per aspera ad astra*, which while collated with *pędź Kaspra nas Kaspra* [no meaning, randomly combined words], produces a slip of the tongue which constitutes a rhetorical device that Delabastita (1996) counts as a form of compensatory device. Therefore, the ZERO>PUN strategy was applied, so that the loss occurring subsequently in the target text was recompensed.

*Homonymy – horizontal puns*

The wordplay below is underlain by the relation between the verb ‘to fast’ and the phrase ‘fast and loose’, with the first one meaning ‘to starve’ and ‘abstain from all or some kinds of food or drink, especially as a religious observance’ and the latter ‘in a dexterously deceitful way’. Interestingly enough, the passage is based upon a multi-layered wordplay, again between ‘fast and loose’ and ‘loose’, meaning ‘free’ as in ‘let somebody loose’. Both ones are of homonymous horizontal nature as the first one is predicated upon the same spelling and enunciation of the word ‘fast’, pronounced as /fɑ:st/, and the second upon ‘loose’ enunciated as /lu:s/.

(9) Source text:

COSTARD

Let me not be pent up, sir: I will fast, being loose.

MOTH

No, sir; that were fast and loose: thou shalt to prison.

Ulrich’s translation:

ŁEPAK

Nie zamykaj mnie, łaskawy panie,  
dozwól mi pościć na wolnym powietrzu.

ĆMA

Nie, nie mopanku, będziesz żył powietrzem,  
ale pod kluczem.

Back-translation:

COSTARD

Let me not be pent up, my gracious lord,  
let me fast in the open air.

MOTH

No, no my nobleman, you will eat nothing but air,  
but locked.

As translated by Ulrich, the pun is predicated upon the words ‘to fast’ and ‘loose’, for he seems to have commingled the two words to arrive at a wordplay. Polish phrase ‘na wolnym powietrzu’ [‘in the open air’] may be viewed an equivalent term to English ‘loose’, and ‘żyć powietrzem’ [‘to eat nothing but air, not to eat anything at all’] to English to ‘fast’. One may therefore consider the rendition by means of the PUN>PUN strategy as successful. As regards Barańczak’s rendition, the howler was approached a great deal dissimilarly, as neither of the senses was salvaged and the renderer decided to have used the PUN>PUNOD strategy, for a rhyme – constituting a rhetorical device – was applied:

(10) Ulrich’s translation:

BANIA

A może by mnie nie zamykać, co, panie?  
Powiedzmy, że będę pościć na zwolnieniu.

ĆMA

Jeszcze się skończy na rozwolnieniu.  
Nie, mój panie, idziesz za kratki.

Back-translation:

COSTARD

And you will end up with loose bowels.

No, sir, you are to be pent up.

MOTH

Let's say, I'll fast being put on a conditional discharge.

Interestingly enough, the word 'loose' was associated by Barańczak with another English term, i.e. 'loose bowels', which is noticeable in the target passage by means of the word 'rozwolnienie' ['loose bowels'] that constitutes an equivalent term in Polish. Nonetheless, this translation choice does not suffice to be categorized as the PUN>PUN strategy, thus based on the rhyme applied, the renderer may well be deemed to have applied the PUN>PUNOID strategy.

### *Homophony – vertical puns*

- (11) Source text:  
ROSALINE  
Well, then, I am the shooter.  
BOYET  
And who is your deer?  
ROSALINE  
If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near.  
Finely put on, indeed!

Ulrich's translation:

ROZALINA

Jednak przyjacielu, ja lepiej trafię.

BOYET

Gdzie jeleń na celu?

ROZALINA

Jeśli się jeleń po rogach poznaje, to ty nim jesteś.

Jak ci się to zdaje?

Back-translation:

ROZALINA

Well, my friend, I am a better shooter.

BOYET

Where is the deer at a gunpoint?

ROZALINA

If a deer is judged by the horns, then you are one.

How do you find that?

Ulrich decided to have mingled with the three senses of the noun 'jeleń' ['a deer'; 'a foolish person'; 'a cuckold']. In this very passage it triggers an animal-connotation and an association either with someone asinine or – more likely – with a husband of an adulterous wife. For the comic element is retained, one may easily ponder that the PUN>PUN strategy was employed. Barańczak and Słomczyński decided to render the passage in an akin vein, i.e. using the PUN>NON-PUN strategy.

- (12) Bańczak's translation  
ROZALINA  
Owszem, poluję i ja.  
BOYET  
Gdzie się skryło  
płowe stworzenie, w które mierzysz?  
ROZALINA  
Gdyby sądzić po rogach, ty sam bez ochyby  
winienieś skryć się. Co, trafiła strzała?

Translation presented by Barańczak salvaged merely one of the two senses, albeit the word 'płowy' is rather uncommon in everyday use and activates two strings i.e. 'a deer' and 'of yellowish and grey colour'. The rendition is not successful on the grounds that there is no indication of any punning conjunction, therefore the PUN>NON-PUN strategy was furnished.

- (13) Słomczyński's translation:  
ROZALINA  
Cóż, więc ja będę strzelcem.  
BOYET  
A kto twym rogaczem?  
ROZALINA  
Jeśli sądzić po rogach, unikaj mnie raczej.  
To doprawdy celny strzał!

Back-translation:  
ROSALINE  
Oh, well. I will be the shooter then.  
BOYET  
And who will be your deer?  
ROSALINE  
If judging by the horns, you had better avoid me.  
That indeed is an accurate shot.

Similarly, Słomczyński translated the passage applying the PUN>NON-PUN strategy, as the wordplay was abandoned.

*Homophony – horizontal puns*

The wordplay below is of homophonous and horizontal nature since the two adjacent words, i.e. ‘ay’ and ‘I’, correspond in pronunciation – /AI/ – and vary in spelling. Having conducted a thorough analysis, neither of the three Polish renderers conveyed the jest.

(14) Source text:

FERDINAND

Ay, that is study's godlike recompense.

BIRON

Come on, then; I will swear to study so,

To know the thing I am forbid to know.

Ulrich's translation:

KRÓL

Tak, to nauki owoce są święte.

BEROWNE

Zgoda, przysięgam, że uczyć się będę,

jak zakazaną naukę posiędę.

Back-translation:

FERDINAND

Ay, that is the godlike fruitage of learning.

BEROWNE

So be it, I swear to learn till I acquire the forbidden knowledge.

(15) Słomczyński's translation:

KRÓL

Tak; taka boska jest studiów zapłata.

BEROWNE

A wiec przysięgnę i będę z mozołem

studiował sprawy, których nie pojąłem.

Back-translation:

FERDINAND

Ay, that is the godlike remuneration for learning.

BEROWNE

I will swear then, and study arduously the things I failed to comprehend.

(16) Barańczak's translation:

KRÓL

Jedyna droga to nauka zbożna.

BEROWNE

Dobrze więc; mogę uroczyście przysiąc,

że na tej drodze spędzę i lat tysiąc.



Back-translation:

FERDINAND

The only way is to study devoutly.

BEROWNE

Well then; I may solemnly swear that I will spend one thousand years following this way.

Insofar as it is unnecessary in Polish for a verb in the first person to be accompanied by the first-person personal pronoun due to its inflectional nature, the ST passage proved difficult and demanding to render. Consequently, all the three translators decided to have applied the PUN>NON-PUN strategy.

#### *Paronymy – vertical puns*

The wordplay is paronymic and vertical for one word triggers two strings, *viz. a senior and signor*, the first indicating somebody no longer young, and the later conveying the connotation with a form of addressing somebody as Sir or Mr. The two terms share akin pronunciation, i.e. /'si:nɪə/ and /'si:nɪə/, as well as spelling.

(17) Source text:

MOTH

By a familiar demonstration of the working,  
my tough signor.

ARMADO

Why tough signor? why tough signor? [...]

MOTH

And I, tough signor, as an appertinent title to your old time, which we may name tough.

Ulrich's translation:

ĆMA

Przez potoczny wykład ich smutków, mój twardy staruszk.

ARMANDO

Dlaczego: twardy staruszk? dlaczego: twardy staruszk?

ĆMA

A ja powiedziałem: twardy staruszk, jako tytuł właściwy twoim podeszłym latom, które słusznie możemy nazwać twardymi.

Back-translation:

MOTH

By na ordinary demonstration of their sadness, my tough old man.

ARMANDO

Why: tough old man? Why tough old man?

MOTH

And I said: my tough old man, as an appertinent title to your old time, which we may well name tough.

One may ponder that the PUN>NON-PUN strategy was applied, for the word ‘staruszkę’ which is a vocative form, meaning ‘my old man’ does not convey any possible connotations with addressing someone as Sir or Mr. In addition, the term ‘signor’ is of foreign, namely Italian origin, which was also not incorporated into the target passage.

(18) Barańczak’s translation:

ĆMA

W ich znanych powszechnie objawach, mój łykowaty señor.

ARMANDO

Czemu „łykowaty señor”? Skąd „łykowaty señor”?

ĆMA

Podobnie ja, mój łykowaty señor, użyłem swego epitetu jako mającego ścisły związek z twoim podeszłym wiekiem, który cechuje pewna starcza łykowatość.

Back-translation:

MOTH

In their commonly known concerns, my tough old man.

ARMANDO

Why: tough old man? Why tough old man?

MOTH

In the same vein I, my tough old man, used my epithet as inextricably appertain to your old age, which is characterized by certain old-age toughness.

Barańczak’s version hardly seems to be successful, for the strategy of DIRECT COPY was applied. Therefore, the ST wordplay on ‘signor’ was copied directly into the target passage, without any concern germane to the resultant semantic consequences. Linguistically speaking, the source text signifiers were imposed upon the target text. Moreover, the original plays with an Italian term, whereas Barańczak, in the course of translation, applied a Spanish word ‘señor’ and did not conjugate it nor adjust to the target recipient.

### *Paronymy – horizontal puns*

The following example is predicated upon the paronymic reading of the verb ‘to beshrew’, and the noun ‘shrows’. The wordplay is of paronymous nature, for the words share similar pronunciation and spelling, as well as horizontal, due to the jocular item triggered by the previous contextual knowledge. ‘Beshrew’ constitutes an archaic word, and means ‘to condemn or curse’, whereas ‘a shrow’, or concurrently ‘a shrew’ is an old-fashioned, disapproving word for a domineering, grasping woman such as a harpy or a virago. Most interestingly, every of the three renderers decided to have pursued a divergent translation strategy.

(19) Source text:

KATHARINE

and I beshrew all shrows.

Słomczyński's translation:

KATARZYNA

To żart plugawy! Złoszczą mnie złośnice!

Back-translation:

KATHARINE

A pox of that jest! Shows annoy me!

Słomczyński decided upon applying the PUN>PUN strategy, and the resultant pun salvaged the paronymic horizontal relations of the original, *viz.* the correspondence of sound and spelling contingent upon two adjacent strings within the same passage.

(20) Ulrich's translation:

KATARZYNA

Dosyć przycinków!

Back-translation:

KATHARINE

Enough with the jibes!

Ulrich decided to have treated the passage loosely, and did not endeavour to convey the punning conjunction. Neither of the senses was retained, as the howler is simply omitted here. Furthermore, no other form of compensation was detected subsequently in the text. Thus, one may ponder that the PUN>ZERO strategy was applied.

(21) Barańczak's translation:

KATARZYNA

Złośnice! Co się dzieje z wami?

Back-translation:

KATHARINE

Shrows! What is wrong with you?

As regards translation furnished by Barańczak, it appears like a combination of Ulrich's and Słomczyński's ones, on the grounds that merely one sense of the original, *viz.* 'a shrew' was imparted. Consequently, new textual material was added. Here, one may easily notice that the PUN>NON-PUN strategy was applied.

## Conclusion

Having conducted an in-depth reading of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, the play was found a pun-addled witfest, as the total count equated to 332 instances of wordplay of various nature, *viz.* homonymous, homophonous and paronymous. Consequently, Shakespeare proved a virtuoso jester, dexterously delivering repartees whenever possible. In vertical puns, considered a paradigmatic variant, the howler was contingent upon the paradigmatic axis, with the emphasis laid on identity or similitude of two or more strings co-occurring in the

same portion of the text. Conversely, a horizontal one-liner was predicated upon the syntagmatic axis, with two adjacent substrings located lineally within the same passage.

Upon an all-encompassing analysis, the ubiquitous opinion that wordplay is merely “a carefree and naïve experimentation with words which lacks refinement, commonly ascribed to Shakespeare’s riper writing” does not correspond with his predilection towards punning and consequently the preponderant application of wordplay, not only in the corpus in question, but also in his entire oeuvre. Most importantly, in any of the 332 instances, the script opposition (Raskin 1985), or as formulated by Delabastita (1996) the “confrontation of at least two linguistic structures” (Delabastita 1996), also defined as two senses in a wordplay (Attardo, 1994) were found. As the research was primarily pertinent to translation strategies, it is instructive to re-adduce the conclusion that the translation strategies put forward by Delabastita proved sufficient to account for all types of puns detected in the corpus. The selection of the PUN>NON-PUN strategy turned out to be preponderant and most favourable one amid the renderers, on the grounds that it was chosen in over 76% of the cases. The strategy in question is admittedly the least successful one, as the jocular element is entirely lost, and in consequence the recipient may not utterly grasp the core sense of the source pun. Second most preferable strategy, as well as the most conducive to the maintenance of humorousness and jocularity was the PUN>PUN strategy, with merely 17,2%. One may therefore assume that form similitude or sameness posed a considerable difficulty for the translators. Most conspicuously, DIRECT COPY and TRANSFERENCE proved to have been of almost no use whatsoever, as they were applied merely in one and two cases which constituted less than 1%. Consequently, an insignificant amount of foreign signifiers and signifieds was imposed upon the target texts. The strategy of EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES did not draw translators’ interest. More challenging strategies, such as ZERO>PUN or NON-PUN>PUN which are underlain by the addition of new textual material to the target text and simultaneously necessitate certain effort inasmuch as any form of compensation is followed by alternations in the target text passage that in its source counterpart is not supposed to be inclusive of a jest, were selected rather infrequently. It is also noteworthy that the number of applied translation strategies equated to the number of all puns found in the corpus, i.e. 332.

To recapitulate, indeed, the number of puns encountered in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* is not finite and the paper may well be deemed a basis for further research.

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