ABSTRACT

The pun is a form of word play, which suggests two or more meanings, by exploiting multiple meanings of words, or of similar-sounding words, for an intended humorous or rhetorical effect. These ambiguities can arise from the intentional use and abuse of homophonnic, homographic, metonymic, or metaphorical language. The pun as a sentence or utterance in which two different sets of ideas are expressed, and we are confronted with only one series of words. Puns may be regarded as in-jokes or idiomatic constructions, given that their usage and meaning are entirely local to a particular language and its culture.

Non-humorous puns were and are a standard rhetorical and poetic device in English literature. Puns and other forms of word play have been used by many famous writers, such as Alexander Pope, James Joyce, Vladimir Nabokov, Robert Bloch, Lewis Carroll, John Donne, and William Shakespeare, who is estimated to have used over 3,000 puns in his plays.

Like other forms of wordplay, pun is occasionally used for its attention-getting or mnemonic qualities, making it common in titles and the names of places, characters, and organizations, and in advertising and slogans.

When it comes to translation in general and to the problem of the comic effect transmission in particular one should take into consideration the very essence of any pun, it linguistic and cultural basis. Thus, it is important to classify puns in order to make them more or less translatable since it could provide a translator with some linguistic tools of further semantic analysis.

The translation of puns is a great and uneasy job. It requires special skills and abilities including a good sense of humour, oratory skills as well as a good deal of cultural background knowledge to compensate whatever turns out to be or just to seem untranslatable.