

# THE TRANSLATION OF HUMOUR IN ENGLISH COMEDY SERIES

103698- Treball de Fi de Grau

Grau en Traducció i Interpretació  
Curs acadèmic 2014-2015

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10 de juny de 2015

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## Dades del TFG

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**Títol:** The Translation of Humour in English Comedy Series

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## Paraules clau

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*Humor, cultura, traducció, efecte, jocs de paraules, equivalent.*

*Humour, Culture, translation, effect, wordplay, equivalent.*

## Resum del TFG

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Aquest treball tracta sobre la traducció de l'humor i sobre les dificultats i elements que formen part de la seva traducció, tot desde la perspectiva de les sèries angleses. El treball inclou la definició i una petita reflexió de l'humor segons varis autors i segons l'autora del treball. També s'inclouen vàries teories relatives a l'humor i a la seva traducció. Es realitza una descripció sobre la traducció de l'humor i sobre els elements i dificultats que en formen part, com per exemple elements culturals, socials i lingüístics. Per posar a prova tot el que fa referència a la part teòrica del treball, s'analitzen les traduccions humorístiques de la sèrie Modern Family i es proposa una traducció més adequada si escau. Finalment, es posen a prova tots els coneixemens adquirits realitzant la traducció d'unes escenes del monologuista Michel McIntyre. Per acabar, s'arriba a unes conclusions finals que reflecteixen tot el que s'ha après durant el treball.

This project is about the translation of humour and the difficulties and elements involved in its translation. From the point of view of English Tv series this project includes the definition and a little reflection about humor made by some authors and by the author of this project. It also covers different theories of humor and its translation. There is a description about humour translation and the elements and difficulties it involves, such as cultural, social and linguistic difficulties. In order to prove the theoretical part, an analysis of the humor translation of Modern Family discusses the problems and suggests a solution. Finally, by means of the translation of Michael McIntyre sketches all knowledge acquired during the project is tested and applied to real source material.

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## INTRODUCTION

Humour has always been one of the major challenges for translators, especially when it comes to translating extra linguistic elements such as culture. Even though humour is said to be universal, each culture has its own, and sometimes one culture's humour is hard to understand for others. This project will focus on understanding how humour should be translated, which are the difficulties in translating humour and what elements are involved in its translation.

Nowadays, most of the humoristic TV series or movies shown on Spanish television, such as *The Simpson* or *Family Guy*, come from English-speaking countries, especially from the United States. Hence, since understanding culture plays a key role in humour, it is therefore not surprising that sometimes when we are watching English comedy in Spanish, we do not laugh at comical parts or, we do not understand the jokes. This is because humour is rooted in culture; it is part of our manners, our way of life and history. That is the reason why the translation of humour, or I would even say *transculturation*, not only requires a deep understanding of both languages but also requires a lot of understanding of the culture of origin and the target culture in order to produce the same effect of the original in the translation.

What I aim to do with this project is to approach the complexity of humour translation by doing a critical analysis of the translations in the English comedy series *Modern Family*. To do so, I will analyze both the Spanish and English versions and see if the translation into the target culture produces the same effect as in the original version and if necessary, I will propose a more adequate new translation.

Since I want to become a professional translator, I would like to test the abilities I have learned by applying them to a real source, which will be Michael McIntyre *Hello Wembley*. By doing so, I will see the real complications translating humour can have, such as to what extent culture is important for the translation or whether or not humour can be translated.

I would like to clarify that throughout the project, you will see the initials SL and TL, meaning Source Language and Target Language respectively. The bibliography will include all the references used for this project.

## METHODOLOGY

For this project I will first research about humour, its characteristics and definitions of different authors. Second, I will read different theories about humour and about its translation to have a little background before the analysis I propose to do. Third, I will reflect on humour translation and will discuss from my point of view, how to translate it. Fourth, I will analyse some excerpts of the episodes of *Modern Family*. Here I will focus on the mistakes in the Spanish translation and I will propose a new version when necessary. Fifth, I will translate some comedy stand-up sketches by Michael McIntyre in *Hello Wembley* and I will test on a real source what are the difficulties I encounter when translating comedy. Last but not least, I will form the conclusions based on this project. On the bibliography, I will cite the references quoted in the project and the references consulted.

## DEFINITION OF HUMOR

If I think of a proper definition of humour, I would say humour is what makes people laugh and causes amusement. However, what might make someone laugh might not produce the same effect on another person, so there are more aspects that need to be taken into account when defining and translating humour.

The difficulty on the definition of humour is that it is very subjective. Many authors have attempted to find a proper definition for humour, while others have concluded that no definition can be formulated.

JEROEN VANDAELE<sup>1</sup> “the task of defining humour has driven some desperate scholars to give up on any attempt at defining humour”.

For ARTHUR DUDDEN<sup>2</sup>, humour is “a culturally shaped individual cognitive experience, culturally determined because the sociological factors are the primary mechanisms leading to its occurrence”.

As for STEPHEN BUTLER LEACOCK<sup>3</sup>, “The best definition of humour is: Humour may be defined as the kindly contemplation of the incongruities of life, and the artistic expression thereof. I think this is the best because I wrote it myself.”

According to WALTER NASH<sup>4</sup>, humour has three principles:

- a) A “genus” or derivation in culture, institutions, attitudes, beliefs, typical practises, characteristic artefacts etc.
- b) A characteristic design, presentation, or verbal packaging by virtue of which the humorous intention is indicated and is recognized.
- c) A locus in language, some word or phrase that is indispensable to the joke.

In my opinion, Dudden’s and Nash’s are the most adequate definitions for the purpose of this project. Both consider culture and social factors as an important part of understanding, and subsequently translating humour. Plus, Nash’s definition includes a characteristic

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<sup>1</sup> Young, Trajan Shipley. “Towards a Humour Translation Check-List for Students of Translation.” *Interlingüística* Vol. 17. (2007): 981–988. Web. 17 Jan 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Tisgam, Khalida Hamid. “Translating Cultural Humour : Theory and Practice.” 1–15. Web. 12 Feb 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Kaufman, David M. “Using Humour in Teaching.” *Learning and Instructional Development Centre*. Canada (2002): 1-6. Web. 3 Jan 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Nash, Walter. *The Language of Humour*. New York: Routledge (2013). Google Books. 12 Feb 2015.

design that has an intention (e.g. joke construction) and mentions the words etc. as being the core of the joke. However, to the Dudden's definition I will add that the "sociological factors are the primary mechanisms to its occurrence and to its understanding", because they are also necessary to understand jokes. Finally, I think Stephen B. Leacock definition is very limited, humour includes more aspects rather than incongruities of life, such as wordplay.



## THEORIES OF HUMOUR TRANSLATION

Despite the fact that there are countless theories of humour, I will first focus on Salvatore Attardo *General Theory of Verbal Humour*, which is an adaptation of Victor Raskin's *Semantic Script Theory of Humour*. Second, I will focus on Jeroen Vandaele *View of Humour Translation* and finally on Eugene Nida *Formal and Dynamic Equivalence*.

### Salvatore Attardo General Theory of Verbal Humour

This theory is basically focused in the linguistic translation approach of humour. Salvatore Attardo, editor-in-chief of *Humour*, the journal for the International Society of Humour Research and professor at the Texas A&M University-Commerce, suggests 6 parameters or, as he calls them 6 Knowledge Resources to make up jokes. The application of these Knowledge Resources<sup>5</sup> to translation will help the translator decode and recode humour.

1. LANGUAGE (LA): is the linguistic material for the verbalization of a text, the words a joke is made of. If a sentence can be expressed in different ways (using synonyms or other constructions) a joke can also be expressed in a different way without changing its content (meaning words). Puns are an exception.
2. NARRATIVE STRATEGY (NS): refers to the narrative organization of the joke, dialogue, riddle, simple narrative etc.
3. TARGET (TA): groups or individuals with humorous stereotypes attached to each who are the target of the joke. When a joke does not ridicule someone or something this parameter has no value, so it can be optional.
4. SITUATION (SI): people, objects or instruments needed for the joke to function. Basically, what the joke is about.
5. LOGICAL MECHANISM (LM): the most problematic parameter according to Attardo. It consists on the resolution of the incongruity of the joke, the way the joke is organised; it may be two scripts juxtaposed, irony etc. Since some type of humour is nonsense or absurd and does not require resolution, it is also another optional parameter.

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<sup>5</sup> For this section (Knowledge resources and advice of KR used for translation) even I wrote it my own words it is based on:

Attardo, Salvatore. *Linguistic Theories of Humour*. Humour Research. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994. Google Books. Web. 15 Feb 2015.

6. SCRIPT OPPOSITION (SO): this parameter says that a joke needs to meet two conditions to work:

- The text need to be compatible with two scripts (two pieces of information about something)
- The two scripts must be opposite or overlapped

When it comes to translation, Attardo provides some advice to the Knowledge Resources that might be useful to translate humour.

1. LANGUAGE (LA): he suggests a literal translation, that is, substitute language in TL for language in SL.
2. NARRATIVE STRATEGY (NS): if the format of the joke is unknown in the TL the translator may use a different Narrative Strategy.
3. TARGET (TA): the translator can substitute the target in the SL for one more suitable in the TL.
4. SITUATION (SI): if the situation on the TL is not the same or does not exist, the translator can replace the situation.
5. LOCAL MECHANISM (LM): he believes Logical Mechanisms are easily translatable from SL to TL, with the exception of puns.
6. SCRIPT OPPOSITION (SO): if two jokes differ in Script Opposition then they are different jokes. So the translator will not change Script Opposition unless it is unavailable in the TL. For example:

“Is the doctor at home?”

The patient asked in his bronchial whisper.

“No”, the doctor’s young and pretty wife whispered in reply.

“Come right in.”

Here the two scripts are doctor and lover.

Finally Attardo says, “if possible respect all six Knowledge Resources in your translation, but if necessary, let your translation differ at the lowest level (starting with LA, at the bottom and ending with SO, at the top) necessary for your pragmatic purposes”<sup>6</sup>.

In my opinion, this mechanism of analysing humour and translating is very literal; it focuses on the form and similarity of the joke rather than the message and intention. I say

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<sup>6</sup> Zabalbeascoa, Patrick. “Humor and Translation- an Interdiscipline.” 185–207. Web. 20 Nov 2015.

this because in most jokes you may need to change all the parameters so that the joke works in the TL. I think it might not work as well as other theories because humorous texts involve different aspects other than words and meaning, like cultural referents and extra linguistic factors. Therefore, we may need to change all parameters in order to produce the SL effect in the TL.

### **Jeroen Vandaele View of Humour Translation**

According to Jeroen Vandaele, researcher and professor at the University of Oslo, “humour translation is qualitatively different from ‘other types’ of translation and, consequently, one cannot write humour translation in the same way one writes about other types of translation”<sup>7</sup>.

In his article *Humour and Translation*<sup>8</sup>, he mentions the problems of humour translation. First of all, humour requires implicit knowledge. All cultures have their own particular factors and taboos, which they laugh at. Therefore, the translator needs to understand a specific culture’s humour and decide what can be translated and how to translate it in order not to cause offense in the target culture.

The second problem is that humour includes sociolinguistic factors (culture). Inside this category he distinguishes between linguistic denotation and connotation two concepts that make the translation even more difficult:

Linguistic denotation is difficult to translate when we are dealing with a concept, word or reality specific of a certain language (e.g. Brazilian *saudade*; it is believed to be untranslatable). Linguistic connotation may cause difficulty when a concept in the SL is not known or has a different meaning in the TL (Argentina verb *coger*; has a very different meaning in Spanish from Spain and Spanish from Argentina).

He believes culture plays a key role in humour translation, and supports the idea of finding a TL equivalent because literal translation may not produce the same humoristic effect or, in some case, may cause offense amongst the TL audience.

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<sup>7</sup> Lutviana, Rizky, and Subiyanto, Arif. “The Failure in Translating Humor: A Case Study in the Indonesian Translation of Humour.” 1–12. Web. 20 Nov 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Vandaele, Jeroen. “Humor in Translation.” *Translation Review* (2007): 1-6. Web. 12 Jan 2015.

He also points out four elements<sup>9</sup>:

- a) “Humour, as an intended effect, has an exteriorized manifestation (laughter), which is quite difficult to render”.

True, even if we translate a joke for another, it might not produce laughter in the TL because we are dealing with two different cultures that may not have the same view of humour. For example, jokes about black people, will probably not work in the black community.

- b) “The comprehension and appreciation of humour and humour production are two distinct skills; translators may experience its compelling effect on themselves and others, but feel unable to reproduce it”.

I agree with this point in the sense that not everyone knows how to convey humour. Think about stand up comedians, in my opinion they are talented people, but not everyone has the same skills to do this work. With this I am not saying that only talented-people can translate humour texts, but for those who don't have this ability, the translation might require a deeper understanding and creativity.

- c) “The appreciation of humour varies individually”.

Not everyone has the same perception and understanding of humour. What could be funny for me might not be funny for someone else. So translators have the task of understanding the jokes, ironies and fun parts of a text, and translate them, because even if they are not funny for them, they might be for the target public.

- d) “The rhetorical effect of humour on translators may be so overwhelming that it blurs the specifics of its creation; strong emotions may hinder analytic rationalization”.

Since humour is very subjective, the translator might face several problems. First, he needs to keep within the purpose of the text. Certainly the text will have humoristic parts to be translated, but the translator cannot get swept up by imagination and create a new text. Second, the translator may have to select the information that works for the TL public. This is, if a joke will cause more drama than fun in the TL, he is left with the choice of either adapting it or omitting it.

I totally agree with his view of translation. As opposed to Attardo, Vandaele insists on paying attention to the culture and tries to find an equivalent in the TL not to lose the humoristic manifestation found in the SL focusing on the message and effect rather than

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<sup>9</sup> Tisgam, Khalida Hamid. “Translating Cultural Humour : Theory and Practice.” 1–15. Web. 15 Feb 2015.

the form. At the same time, he makes a good point when he makes a distinction about writing humour translation and other types of translation, because when translating literature, for example, we focus on the meaning and message, but if within this text we encounter humoristic parts, we have to bear in mind that other aspects such as cultural and extra linguistic concepts must be translated too, so we have to find the equivalents in the TL that reproduce the SL.

## **Eugene Nida Dynamic and Formal Equivalence**

Eugene Nida, linguist and one of the founders of the modern discipline of Translation Studies, opposes to the linguistic theories which claim that a word for word translation will convey the same message of the SL in the TL. In his essay *Principles of Correspondence* he asserts that "no two languages are identical, either in the meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the ways in which symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages. Hence, there can be no fully exact translations."<sup>10</sup> According to this statement, no translation will be identical to the original.

“Translating consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning, secondly in terms of style”<sup>11</sup>

He believes there are no “identical equivalents” in languages, and what the translator should do is to try to find the “closest natural equivalent” and he introduces two concepts: Dynamic and Formal Equivalence.

With formal equivalence he refers to the translation emphasizing the literal fidelity to the original text, this is, translating word for word respecting the grammatical structure, word order etc. The resulting translation will be exactly the same as the original text in form and content, and because of its literal correspondence some parts can be misinterpreted or not understandable at all, so it may require extra knowledge of the reader in order to understand the text.

Dynamic equivalence supports a more natural translation. It emphasizes the readability of the text, meaning that thoughts are translated in order to convey the same message.

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<sup>10</sup> Nida, Eugene. *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden, The Netherlands: J.E. Brill, 1964: *Google Books*. Web. 5 Feb 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Translationjournal.net. Ordudadi, Mahmoud. “Good Translation: Art, Craft, Or Science?.” *Translation Journal* (2007). Web. 30 Feb 2015.

Therefore, the translation will not be like the original in terms of words, structure etc; but it will reproduce the original so that the target reader can understand it in a different cultural context. It is important to note that not all the text will be different, there will certainly be faithfulness to the original but the words will not be the same. With this technique, the target audience perceives the translated text as the source language perceives the original. According to Nida, dynamic equivalence could be used to translate a novel, where the faithfulness to the original is not as important as the natural message, but in diplomacy, for example, the accuracy to the original is more important.

I certainly support the Nida's theory. I think that when translating, one should find the best way to convey the message of the original text, even if we have to use new words that are not part of the original. If we translated word for word, sure the text will be exactly the same but the reader will not understand it. In my opinion, Nida's vision of dynamic equivalence seems the most appropriate form of translation to me, especially with culture-bound elements. Let's take a Spanish joke about Lepe as an example:

Un catalán, un madrileño y uno de lepe se presentan a la prueba de la verdad.

El catalán dice:

"Pues yo pienso que los catalanes no somos tacaños."

La máquina pita.

El madrileño dice:

"Pues yo pienso que los madrileños no somos tan chulos. La máquina pita.

El de lepe dice: "Pues yo pienso..."

La máquina pita.

Here, if in the English translation we leave the word Lepe, the reader will not understand the joke. Lepe is a small village in Spain and it is a popular belief, (though not true), that its inhabitants are dumb and rural. The jokes often ridicule their intelligence and ignorance. In my opinion, formal equivalence here will not work, but if we used dynamic equivalence and changed Lepe for another village whose inhabitants in the target culture are believed to be rural and ignorant, the joke could work.

However, unlike Nida, I do not support the usage of formal equivalence to translate diplomacy. For example, I do not agree that the more literal a text is, the more accurate it is. A text can be translated using different words, but still be an accurate version of the original.

## TRANSLATION OF HUMOUR

The translation of humour is a challenge for many translators because it is rooted in the culture of a specific country. Some authors believe that humour cannot be translated whilst others disagree. When translating humour, not only does the message have to be communicated but also the effect (laughter) in the SL has to be conveyed in the TL. I support the idea that humour can be translated, but there are a lot of aspects that the translator needs to be careful with.

### Cultural and Social References

One of these aspects is **cultural** and **social references** being the traits that allow cultures and societies differentiate from each other. As each country has its own culture it also has its own humour. Therefore, when translating humour the translator needs to have certain knowledge about both cultures. By this I do not mean that someone who does not know a culture cannot translate a text about it, but understanding cultural background is important because if the translator does not understand the culture, how is it possible to understand the joke? And how is it possible to translate it?

Examples culture-rooted elements:

What's the only thing that grows in  
Oakland?

The Crime Rate!

¿Qué es la única cosa que crece en  
Oakland?

¡La tasa de criminalidad!<sup>12</sup>

Mom, where are you?

I'm heading home from Target.

Mom.

What?!

You took me to Target with you.

I'll be there in a second.

Mama, ¿dónde estas?

Llegando a casa, estaba en Target.

Mama.

¿!Qué!?

He ido a Target contigo.

Llego en un minuto.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Jokes4us. California jokes. Jokes4us, 2015. Web.

<http://www.jokes4us.com/miscellaneousjokes/worldjokes/californiajokes.html>

<sup>13</sup> Pinterest. "Target Jokes". Pinterest, 2015. Web. 30 Apr 2015.

<https://www.pinterest.com/christinewolzl/target-jokes/>

Dear BFF,  
if I die at Walmart,  
please drag my body to Nordstrom.

Querida amiga,  
si muero en Walmart,  
por favor, lleva mi cuerpo a  
Nordstrom.<sup>14</sup>

First of all, Oakland is a city near San Francisco that has a reputation of being an unsafe city full of crime, drive-by shootings, murders on the street, drugs etc.

Target and Walmart are the biggest discount retailers companies in the United States. You can practically buy everything at very cheap prices because of their huge discounts. In addition, Target stores are so big that people usually spend hours looking at the products because literally, you can find anything at Target. Nordstrom is an upscale fashion retailer all over United States.

In the first joke, if we are translating for Spanish audience, the translation stated above will not work because people in Spain will probably do not know Oakland. The best solution is try to find a city in Spain famous for its criminal rate. The same happens for the second joke with Target. In this case we have the extra difficulty that this concept of huge retail store does not exist in Spain, there is nothing similar to Target. I think the best option is choosing a large chain of cheap goods Spanish population may know. However, the translation above may work for Spanish audience living in the US, because they probably know what Target is. In the third joke, if the reader does not know what is Walmart or Nordstrom he will no understand the jokes. The target reader will not know that Walmart is a huge discount store usually directed towards people who cannot or do not want to spend a lot of money; and people who go to Nordstrom are usually wealthy. Again, keeping the original store names may cause confusion.

Example solutions:

¿Qué es la única cosa que crece en la Cañada Real?

¡La tasa de criminalidad!

Mama, ¿dónde estas?

Estoy llegando a casa, estaba en Ikea

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<sup>14</sup> Pinterest. "Walmart Jokes". Pinterest, 2015. Web. 30 Apr 2015.  
<https://es.pinterest.com/cck85/walmart-jokes/>



Mama.

¿!Qué!?

He ido a Ikea contigo.

Llego en un minuto.

Querida amiga,

si muero en Primark,

por favor, lleva mi cuerpo a el Corte Inglés.

## Stereotypes

In addition, cultures have **stereotypes** of other cultures. When translating jokes, the translator needs to be careful not to cause offence amongst the people of a specific culture, as happens with racist jokes. Every culture has its own stereotypes about foreigners, like Americans eat burgers for every meal and all are fat, or that all Spanish people dance flamenco and kill bulls. As for the racist jokes, if a joke about French people has to be translated for French public, the translator should change the targeted culture, and if choosing a different culture does not work in the TL, then he needs to change the joke.

## Language

Another aspect is **language**, which includes translating language-based jokes, such as wordplay or puns. Even though some authors make a distinction, I will consider them the same. When translating wordplay, it is difficult to find the same words and structure of the SL in the TL, so this poses a problem for the translator. First, because not all languages share the same wordplay, thus, trying to find an equivalent can be a hard task, and second because all languages differ in linguistic aspects (words, rhythm, structure etc.), so the linguistic aspects available in one given language, might not be available in a different one, meaning the wordplay cannot be translated literally.

When attempting to translate wordplay, the translator has three options:

1. Find an equivalent in the TL
2. Literal translation
3. Eliminate the wordplay

For example, the translator can focus in the meaning or in the effect. If focusing on the meaning, the wordplay may lose its effect but will be true to the text; if focusing on the effect, the wordplay will create the same effect but by using new words and will not be true to the text. I do support the option of finding an equivalent, but I do not consider literal translation the best option because in most of the cases, it would not produce the same effect. However, literal translation can work sometimes, so it is always an option worth trying. Moreover, wordplays are sometimes culture related, and what is acceptable for the audience of the SL culture, might be unacceptable for the TL audience.

In the case of the languages of this project, English language can have multiple meanings for one word, while Spanish tend to have one meaning for one word, so this “double-sense” is sometimes lost and unable to reproduce in Spanish translation. For all these reasons, the best option for the translation of wordplay is to find an equivalent. In my opinion, the translator should try to preserve the humorous effect rather than the form.

#### Examples equivalent TL

Modern Family Season 1 Episode 1: Pilot

- Original

Phil: I'm the cool dad, that's my thing. I'm hip, I surf the Web, I text. LOL: laugh out loud, OMG: oh my god, WTF: why the face.

- Translation

Phil: Soy un padre guay, es lo que me define. Soy enrollado, navego por Internet, escribo, MMR: me muero de risa, ADM: Ay Dios mío, QMD: qué me dices.

Here they decided to find an equivalent for the initials LOL, OMG, WTF most young people use to communicate through the phone. In Spain, although these initials are becoming more popular among young people every day, they can pose a problem for adults to understand. Since *Modern Family* is a TV series for all kind of audiences, the option of finding a Spanish equivalent makes the translation understandable for both young and adults.

#### Example literal translation:

Modern Family Season 4 Episode 7: Arrested

- Original

Cameron: Been on a little bit of a health kick lately, so I took a Vegan cooking class and my new thing is Fakon. It's like real bacon.

- Translation

Cameron: Me he vuelto muy sano últimamente, así que he tomado clases de cocina vegetariana y mi especialidad es el falcon. Es como el bacón.

- My suggestion.

Cameron: He ido a clases de cocina para veganos y mi nueva especialidad es el Facon. Es como el bacón.

The word fakon comes from fake+bacon. I think in this case literal translation works; the word fake and bacon are translated in Spanish as *falso* and *bacon*, which makes it possible to create the same wordplay in Spanish. I would suggest using *Facon* because its pronunciation is closer to bacon. Also, there is a mistake. The original says he took vegan classes, and it is translated as *vegetariano* (vegetarian), which is a different thing.

#### Example elimination:

Pretty Little Liars, Season 2 Episode 9

- Original:

Emily: Can we just get out of here? My goose bumps are getting goose bumps.

- Translation:

Emily: ¿Por qué no salimos? Me estoy poniendo muy nerviosa.

- My suggestion:

Emily: ¿Nos podemos ir de aquí? Mi piel de gallina tiene piel de gallina.

In this case, the translator decided to eliminate the wordplay. Although I consider this a good option, if we use the equivalent in Spanish *mi piel de gallina tiene piel de gallina* we keep the wordplay and the TL audience gets the same sense than the original.

In order to figure out this complexity wordplay translation, **Dirk Delabastia** suggests eight strategies<sup>15</sup> to translate wordplay:

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<sup>15</sup> Ulrichsen, Kit. "Wordplay in Sex and the City." 2011: 3-40. Web. 12 Feb 2015.

1. Pun \_ pun:

The source-text pun is translated by a target-language pun, which may be more or less different from the original wordplay in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or textual function.

2. Pun \_ non-pun:

The pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other; of course it may also occur that both components of the pun are translated 'beyond recognition.

3. Pun \_ related rhetorical device:

The pun is replaced by some wordplay-related rhetorical device (repletion, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox, etc.), which aims to recapture the effect of the source-text pun.

4. Pun \_ zero:

The portion of text containing the pun is simply omitted.

5. Pun ST = pun TT:

The translator reproduces the source-text pun and possibly its immediate environment in its original formulation, i.e. without actually 'translating' it.

6. Non-pun \_ pun:

The translator introduces a pun in textual positions where the original text has no wordplay, by way of compensation to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere, or for any other reason.

7. Zero \_ pun:

Totally new textual material is added, which contains wordplay and which has no apparent precedent or justification in the source text except as a compensatory device.

8. Editorial techniques:

Explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments provided in translator's forewords, the

‘anthological’ presentation of different supposedly complementary solutions to one and the same source-text problem, and so forth.

These techniques can be very useful since they cover target-oriented and source-oriented text translation options.

## **Verbal and Referential Humour**

Some authors have distinguished among **verbal** humour and **referential** humour. Verbal humour is the most difficult to translate because of its language-dependent nature (e.g. wordplay) and it makes it hard to find equivalents. However, referential humour (humour referring to some situation or something) is easier to translate because the translator has the option of changing the situation and adapt it to the TL. The problem with referential humour is in audiovisual translation, where the translator has to deal with double factors: the language and the audiovisual effects. Then, the joke needs to respect the image and vice versa, which leaves fewer options available due to the existent correspondence between the image and the joke.

## **Subjectivity**

Due to humour **subjectivity**, the translator may interpret humour in one way or another, or he may even not understand it at all (irony can be sometimes hard to understand). Here, if the translator fails at understanding humour, the translation will not work, because the text will be either badly translated or with a new meaning given. For this reason, it is important to have a deep understanding of the culture and the language of both SL and TL. As Vandaele states in his article *Humour and Translation* “any translation failure will therefore be very visible: it is obvious that the translator has failed when no one laughs at translated humour”<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, I would like to point out that the creativity of the translator plays a key role in a successful translation. Firstly because he is not only conveying a message but also laughter, and second because much of this laughter, depends on his ability to create humour.

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<sup>16</sup> Vandaele, Jeroen. “Humor in Translation.” *Translation Review* (2007): 1-6. Web. 12 Jan 2015.

# MODERN FAMILY ANALYSIS

## Background

*Modern Family* is an American TV series recipient of four consecutive Emmy Awards for Outstanding Comedy Series and a Golden Globe Award for Best Comedy Television Series. Christopher Lloyd and Steven Levitan conceived the series as the reflection of their own modern families.

Filmed in mockumentary <sup>17</sup> style, the series is about the daily life of three typical (or atypical) American families living in Los Angeles. Approved for all audiences in English Language.

## Cast

Jay Pritchett has two children Claire and Mitchell. Jay is remarried to Gloria (he was previously married to DeDe), a stunning Colombian woman much younger than him. They have a baby together, Fulgencio (Joe), and Gloria has a son from a previous marriage (Javier), Manny. Jay's daughter, Claire is a home wife married to Phil Dunphy, a real estate agent who believes to be the coolest dad. They have three children, Haley, the ditzy teenage girl, Alex as the nerdy teenager and Luke as the unconventional child. Finally, Jay's son Mitchell is a lawyer and is married to crazy emotional and eccentric Cameron. Together they adopt Lily, a Vietnamese baby girl.

Abc.go.com: "Critically lauded for revitalizing the television sitcom, "Modern Family" is also quickly cementing itself as a culturally defining series<sup>18</sup>."

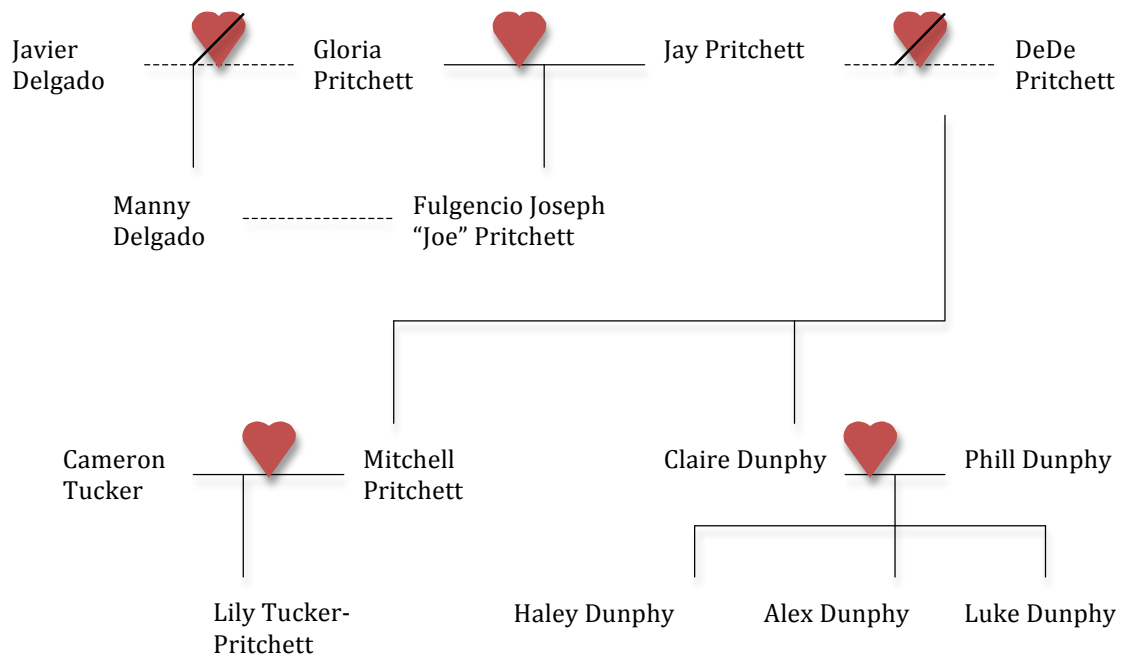
## Family Tree

Here is the family tree to better understand the family and have a little extra background about it.

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<sup>17</sup> American Heritage Dictionary: A fictional movie or television program that is a parody made in the style of a factual documentary.

<sup>18</sup> ABC FAMILY. "About Modern Family TV Show Series."ABC.Com. 2015. Web. 22 Jan 2015.



## Modern Family Analysis

In this section I will mention the mistakes I have found in the Spanish version of *Modern Family*. I will discuss some translations that although they are not wrong, in my opinion they either differ a lot from the original or could be improved.

For the analysis, I will first explain the mistakes I have found and I will mention why each is wrong from my point of view. Then, I will propose a new version that I consider more adequate and last, I will discuss the mistake from the perspective of the theories.

### Gloria's Dubbing Problem

First of all, I would like to point out the dubbing problem with the character of Gloria. She is a Colombian native who lives in the United States. Although she has been living there for a long time, she still has a very marked Colombian accent when speaking English. Most of Gloria's jokes in the original series are made by playing on her accent, which really works in English language.

The problem is when translating this into Spanish, where most of the jokes, if not all, lose their sense because they cannot be translated. In the Spanish version, she speaks the same Spanish as everybody else in the cast, and the parts of the English version where she makes mistakes with her natural Colombian accent have been dubbed as Latin Spanish, which

makes no sense and the jokes do not work. This happens because in the Spanish version she is a Colombian native who speaks as Spanish people without an accent.

What the translators did was to omit (I would even say destroy) her most characteristic feature. I know dubbing her character and accent is a difficult task, but dubbing her as a Spanish native makes it worse than not dubbing her. Instead, she could have been dubbed as an Italian or American native so that her accent jokes could be maintained. I have mentioned this problem because it is one of the major failures in *Modern Family* translation.

## **Humour translation problems**

### **Problem 1: Season 1, Episode 1. Pilot.**

Context: Claire and Alex are baking cookies and Haley has brought home her boyfriend for the first time.

Alex: So, if Haley got pregnant, would you ever pretend she has mono for a few months, and then, like, tell everyone the baby's yours?

Claire: What?

Alex: Oye, si Haley se queda embarazada fingirías que está enferma unos meses y luego le dirías a todos que el bebé es tuyo?

Claire: ¿Qué?

Although translating mono for *enfermedad* (disease) works in the context, it loses the connotation of mononucleosis. Normally, at least in Spain, someone who has mononucleosis can be seen as a person who kisses many boys or girls, and when Alex says it, what she really means is that her sister has mononucleosis because she kisses lots of boys. Alex picks that disease on purpose to suggest her sister is a bit promiscuous.

My version would be:

Alex: Oye, si Haley se queda embarazada fingirías que tiene mononucleosis y luego le dirías a todos que el bebé es tuyo?

Claire: ¿Qué?



Attardo GTVH	Vandaele View of Humour Translation	Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence
<p>Focusing on Attardo's theory, I would respect all knowledge resources because <i>mono</i> works in both languages. Note Language Strategy was changed into a new equivalent instead of meaning correspondence.</p> <p>We could also say Situation strategy was adapted, if not changed; by using <i>enfermedad</i> they used the hyperonym disease instead of using hyponym. This way, the joke loses the connotation the word <i>mono</i> has.</p>	<p>Using <i>enfermedad</i> does not produce the same effect as mononucleosis. Thus, although it could be considered as an equivalent for <i>mono</i>, it is not equivalent of the humoristic effect.</p>	<p>I think the translator tried to find the dynamic equivalent because in Spanish we do not use <i>mono</i> for mononucleosis; <i>mono</i> is when someone has withdrawal symptoms. Here formal equivalent works better for the context.</p>

**Problem 2: Season 1, Episode 2. Run for your wife.**

Context: It is the first day of school and Manny decides to wear a Colombian poncho.

Jay: Hold on. What are you wearing there? It looks like an old Christmas tree skirt.

Manny: It's a traditional Colombian Poncho.

Jay: Espera. ¿Qué llevas puesto? Parece una manta de navidad vieja.

Manny: Es un típico poncho colombiano.

Here, they totally made up a new translation. The red poncho Manny is wearing looks like a triangle and it has different colours and textures, which make him look like a Christmas tree skirt (because of its shape and colours). The Spanish translation *manta de navidad vieja* (old Christmas blanket) does not correspond with the image. Plus, it does not look like an old blanket, which normally have lost their original intense colour. Here, the first translation does not respect all knowledge resources and it is possible that the reader does not understand the joke because the comparison has no sense.

My version would be:

Jay: Espera. ¿Qué llevas puesto? Parece un faldón de árbol de navidad.

Manny: Es un típico poncho colombiano.

Since the translation is available in Spanish, I would go for *faldón de árbol de navidad*. This way, the spectator makes the image of Manny compared to a Christmas tree skirt, which is what the SL is looking for.

Attardo GTVH	Vandaele View of Humour Translation	Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence
<p>Language strategy was changed into a equivalent that is not adequate for this context. They also changed Situation strategy; the object of the joke was changed (Christmas tree skirt—old Christmas blanket) leading to a misinterpretation because there is no image-text correspondence.</p>	<p>The humoristic effect is not conveyed here. Although it could be funny to see someone look like an old blanket, again the joke does not match the visual image.</p>	<p>I understand they tried to use dynamic equivalent in here because in Spain Christmas tree skirts are not as common as in the US. However, some people do use them or at least, know what they are; with Formal Equivalent, the image and the joke are translated and the spectator can understand humour in this context.</p>

**Problem 3: Season 1, Episode 2. Run for your wife.**

Context: Claire and Phil are going to run a race. Claire knows she runs faster than him because she goes running every day but Phil thinks he is the one who runs faster and he is determined to run a race.

Claire: You really want to race me? I ran half-marathon last year.

Phil: Wow. I'm half-scared.

Claire: ¿De verdad quieres echar una carrera? El año pasado me hice media maratón.

Phil: Bu. Me muero de miedo.

In this case, wordplay was omitted. I think what the original version was trying to do when using half-marathon, was to prove Phil's dumbness and bad joke skills. By omitting it, this intention is not reflected in the translated version.

My version would be:

Claire: ¿De verdad quieres echar una carrera? El año pasado me hice media maratón.

Phil: Bu. Estoy medio asustado.

In cases of wordplay, I will try to respect the original if it exists in Spanish, and in this case it works as well as in the SL.

<b>Delabastia strategies translate wordplay</b>
In this mistake, the wordplay with the word half has been totally lost. Following Delabastia's strategies, they used pun-non-pun strategy, which is correct, but the essence of the wordplay is lost. I would suggest opting for the strategy pun-pun not to lose the wordplay.

#### **Problem 4: Season 1, Episode 5. The Incident.**

Context: Claire and Mitchell's mum DeDe is visiting town. Her relationship with Claire has never been anything exceptional. In the scene, DeDe and Mitchell enter Claire's house.

DeDe: why so long?

Claire: I know, I know, it's weird when we haven't talked to for a while.

DeDe: I mean your hair (she points at it).

Well, if I can't tell you, who will?

DeDe: Cuánto tiempo...

Claire: Lo sé, lo sé... tendría que haberte llamado hace mucho.

DeDe: mira qué pelos (señala el pelo de Claire)

Si no te lo digo yo, ¿quién te lo va a decir?

In this case, the humoristic content is totally omitted. First of all, when DeDe says *why so long?* it is a question. However, in the translated version they use ellipsis and a regretting

tone of voice. Second, The translation for I mean your hair, is not correct, it does not say the same than the original, therefore, the viewer does not understand the joke here.

In order to work, the translation should be formulated in a way the viewer can understand that when DeDe says why *so long?* She refers to Claire’s hair (probably because she needs to dye it or cut it), but she does not refer to the fact that they have not seen each other in a long time.

My version would be:

DeDe: Cuánto tiempo hace?

Claire: Lo sé, lo sé... es raro que no hayamos hablado en tanto tiempo.

DeDe: Me refiero a tu pelo (señala el pelo de Claire)

Si no te lo digo yo, ¿quién te lo va a decir?

Attardo GTVH	Vandaele View of Humour Translation	Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence
Narrative strategy was changed; the intonation of the first sentence is not the same in the translated version. Also, the last sentence I mean your hair, was translated in a new version. This way, Logical Mechanism does not work, because the incongruity cannot be understood. Also, we do not find two scripts overlapped, it looks like one only joke about Claire’s hair.	The joke is totally eliminated in the translation. The viewer does not understand that Claire’s mum refers to her hair.	There is not any equivalent here because the joke was translated into a new version if compared to the original. Following Nida’s theory, formal equivalent will work here because even translating the sentence being literal to the original the translation is appropriate because it produces the same effect in the target viewer.

**Problem 5: Season 1, Episode 20. Benched.**

Context: The whole family is having a Barbecue at Claire and Phil’s house. Phil is in charge of cooking the meat but when Jay arrives he takes Phil’s position.

Mitchell: I’m sorry; I know how it feels to have him stick his nose where it doesn’t belong. (Meaning Jay)

Phil: no biggie, its just Jay being Jay. But one day I'm gonna be a grandfather, and then everybody better hide their meat.

(Cameron puts a weird face)

Mitchell: lo siento, sé lo que se siente cuando alguien mete las narices donde no le llaman.

Phil: No pasa nada, Jay es así. Algún día seré abuelo y haré lo que quiera con la carne.

In this case, since the joke is omitted in a sort of way, the spectator cannot understand Cameron's face. Phil says, *everyone better hide their meat* in a naïve way of speaking, and meaning that when he is a grandfather, he will do whatever he wants to, he will be the one that cooks the meat. The way he says it sounds like he is referring to men's penis, and that is why Cameron puts a weird face. However, this is not reflected in the translation.

My version would be:

Mitchell: lo siento, sé lo que se siente cuando alguien mete las narices donde no le llaman.

Phil: No pasa nada, Jay es así. Algún día seré abuelo y más vale que todos escondais vuestras salchichas.

Attardo GTVH	Vandaele View of Humour Translation	Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence
Language strategy was changed into a new equivalent; however, this equivalent does not reflect the intention of the original. By changing it into <i>salchichas</i> (sausage), the Spanish audience can understand the Script Opposition ( <i>salchicha</i> barbecue and <i>salchicha</i> men's penis) and understand Logical Mechanism.	The spectator does not understand what Phil means and Cameron's face. The irony in the word meat is lost because it is changed into a new equivalent. Therefore, the joke cannot be fully understood.	It is obvious dynamic equivalent did not work in this context. The double-sense of meat is not clear. However, using formal equivalent definitely works best.

### **Problem 6: Season 1, Episode 20. Benched.**

Context: Mitchell and Cameron go to Charlie Bingham's house. He owns a company and he is a friend of Jay. They go see him because he could probably offer Mitchell a job.

Charlie: Pardon the get-up. Killer waves today. Do you guys surf?

Cameron: Only for bargains on the web.

Charlie: Perdón por estas pintas pero había unas olas de muerte hoy. ¿Hacéis surf?

Cameron: Sólo navegamos por Internet.

Although the humour is not totally lost here, I think it can be improved. We can see there is wordplay with the word surf. Charlie talks about surfing waves and Cameron about surfing the Internet. In the Spanish version it is clear they wanted to keep the word surf. As a result, the following sentence is changed and the wordplay is lost. In Spanish we do not say surfing Internet but navigate Internet, therefore, I think it is better to change the verb in order not to lose the sense of the joke.

My version would be:

Charlie: Perdón por estas pintas pero había unas olas de muerte hoy. ¿vosotros navegáis?

Cameron: Sólo para buscar gangas en Internet.

This way, we can maintain the sentence Cameron says.

<b>Delabastia strategies translate wordplay</b>
I would suggest choosing pun-pun strategy instead of Pun ST= related rhetorical device as it has been done here. By doing so, the translated version will work better despite being different from the original. Furthermore, in the image Charlie does not appear with a surfboard, which allows the translator to change the verb surf.

### **Problem 7: Season 1, Episode 21. Travels with Scout.**

Context: Dylan (Haley's boyfriend) has a music band; they are all around 18 years old or so. Now the drummer has quit the group and they need to find a new drummer for tomorrow's concert. Cameron offers and when Mitchell arrives home, he finds his house as a music rehearsal room.

Mitchell: What's up with 21 Jump Street?

Cameron: Well, their drummer quit, and I'm gonna fill in for him tomorrow night.

Mitchell: ¿Qué haces con estos niñatos?

Cameron: Ay, es que su batería les ha dejado y voy a sustituirle mañana.

What happens here is that the translator decided to make up a new translation instead of trying to find an equivalent for 21 Jump Street. 21 Jump Street is a movie about two undercover young-looking cops, who are sent to a high school to investigate a drug ring.

What Mitchell is doing, is making a parallelism between Cameron and the two young-looking cops infiltrated in the high school, insinuating Cameron is infiltrated with teenagers.

My version would be:

Mitchell: ¿Qué haces con One Direction?

Cameron: Ay, es que su batería les ha dejado y voy a sustituirle mañana.

Since in Spain the movie was not very famous, I would use another equivalent like music groups like One Direction or The Backstreet Boys, which in my opinion are more visible and help the viewer imagine the situation and make the parallelism.

<b>Attardo GTVH</b>	<b>Vandaele View of Humour Translation</b>	<b>Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence</b>
In this case, the Target Strategy was changed. The connotations attached to 21 Jump Street are omitted, leading to Logical Mechanism misinterpretation. In turn, Language Strategy is expressed into a new translation that although it does not change the meaning, it makes the joke lose some of its essence.	It is true that there is an equivalent, and it has some humoristic connotations. However, if we compare it with some movie or music group, we respect the original intention of visualising Cameron with a bunch of teenagers, which I think is what the original is looking for. Otherwise, they would have used kids, or babies.	In this case, formal equivalent does not work, because many people will not understand the joke with 21 Jump Street. However, dynamic equivalent does work, but instead of choosing such a general word like <i>niñatos</i> (kids, babies). I would choose a more specific culture-related one.

### **Problem 8: Season 1, Episode 11. Up All Night.**

Context: Javier is Gloria's ex-husband and Manny's biological dad. Today, although he normally stands Manny up, he has decided to show up in Jay's house to see him and stay the night. Jay does not like the idea of having Javier over at all, but he tolerates him because of Gloria and Manny. Plus, he is mad because the three of them were going out for dinner when he showed up with his car pulling a big pleasure boat.

Jay: I could be sitting grilled-side watching a guy build an onion volcano. Instead I've got Rico Suave in my kitchen and I got a stolen boat in my driveway.

Gloria: If it were for me, he'd be out of my life. But it's good for Manny to be with his father.

Jay: Podría estar sentado viendo como trinchan el pato laqueado, y en cambio tengo a ese chulo en mi cocina y una lancha robada en la puerta de mi casa.

Gloria: Por mi habría desaparecido de mi vida, pero es bueno que Manny esté con su padre.

Rico Suave is the Latin lover kind of guy. Handsome, muscular, and the guy every lady feels attracted to. He is very easy-going and friendly but also a bad guy who you would not want to mess with.

In the translated version they replaced Rico Suave for *chulo*, which means cocky. According to the description of what Rico Suave is, there are a lot of equivalents in Spanish language that will work better and will keep the humoristic comparison in Spanish language.

I could think of *El Duque*, a character of a TV series called *Sin Tetas no hay Paraíso*. He is a very good-looking guy but very dangerous at the same time. He is a drug trafficker and he does not trust anyone. Despite his bad guy appearance, he is very loving with those he wants, especially with the girl he is in love with. So I would definitely go for *El Duque* or another bad guy character existing in Spain.

My version would be:

Jay: Podría estar sentado viendo como trinchan el pato laqueado, y en cambio tengo a El Duque en mi cocina y una lancha robada en la puerta de mi casa.

Gloria: Por mi habría desaparecido de mi vida, pero es bueno que Manny esté con su padre.



<b>Attardo GTVH</b>	<b>Vandaele View of Humour Translation</b>	<b>Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence</b>
<p>In my opinion, Target Strategy is substituted for a word that does not imply the same than the original. Thus, Logical Mechanism is slightly different than the original intention, but it is this slight difference what makes the joke does not have the same strength.</p>	<p>Although the Spanish version has humorous effect, I think it is not as visual as the original. By using a real character of Spanish television we can keep this visual comparison.</p>	<p>It is true that formal equivalent will not work here because Spanish audience might not know Rico Suave. However, by using <i>chulo</i> (cocky), dynamic equivalent makes the joke lose its intention. I think it is better to replace it for a famous existing character.</p>

# MICHAEL McINTYRE TRANSLATION

## Background

Michael McIntyre is a British comedian, actor and presenter. According to The Telegraph, he is the world's most successful comedian.

In this section I will translate some stand-up sketches from Michael McIntyre *Hello Wembley*, a live stand-up show at London Wembley Arena in 2009. Despite the fact it was not a very challenging translation overall, I did find some jokes that were quite hard to verbalize in Spanish. I will mention the main problems I have found and I will explain why they posed a problem to translate.

I would like to point out, that since in the original version<sup>19</sup> Michael only appears talking, it was easier to translate because I did not have to respect the image.

## Spanish Translation and Problems

### *Gasolineras*

En la vida, hay pocos momentos  
en los que puedes divertirte.  
Últimamente, me divierto mucho  
en las gasolineras.

Venden champús anticaída,  
y en cada gasolinera compro uno  
solo para hacer la típica broma,  
lo pongo en el mostrador y digo:  
“¿me estás tomando el pelo?”

Me anima mucho en viajes largos.  
Os diré lo que también me gusta.  
Y es decir cuatro números  
cuando pongo el pin de la tarjeta.

No son mis números,  
pero la gente se acojona.

Porque la mayoría son muy cuidadosos,  
se ponen la capucha, crean una capucha

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<sup>19</sup> You can find the original version in the ANNEX section.

para la mano. ¿Dónde hay un toldo?

Y yo, “siete, cuatro, dos uno,

creo que eran esos”.

“¡Este tío está loco!”

### Problem 1

Venden champús anticaída,  
y en cada gasolinera compro uno  
solo para poder la típica broma,  
lo pongo en el mostrador y digo:  
“¿me estás tomando el pelo?”

They sell these wind-up torches  
and I buy one in every petrol station  
just so I can make this quite childish  
joke. I put in on the counter and go,  
“Is this some kind of a wind-up?”

*Problem:* the translation of the word wind-up. In English it has two meanings, which make the wordplay possible:

Wind-up: wind-up something to give power by turning.

Wind-up: in the sense of a joke, like are you kidding me?

The Spanish translation of wind-up is *dar cuerda* (1<sup>st</sup> English meaning). The polysemy in the English version is not available in Spanish, making it not possible to use literal translation of wordplay.

*My solution:* I think the best option is to replace the original with a word in Spanish that has two meanings. I thought of using *champús anticaída* (shampoo for hair loss). This way, although the wordplay has been lost, the sense of the joke is still the same in both languages.

Wind-up → *Champú anticaída*

Wind-up → *¿Me estás tomando el pelo?* (Same sense than the original are you kidding me?)

From the point of view of each of the theories:

Attardo GTVH	Vandaele View of Humour Translation	Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence	Delabastia strategies translate wordplay
<p>(LA): changed The original text words have been translated for a different Spanish equivalent.</p> <p>(NS): changed Wordplay cannot be formulated.</p> <p>(TA): changed Although the target has been changed the sense is the same.</p> <p>(SI): changed What the joke needs to function is not the same.</p> <p>(LM): respected The joke incongruity is the same: wind-up → are you kidding me? <i>Champú</i> → ¿me tomas el pelo ?</p> <p>(SO): respected The opposite information is respected.</p>	<p>In order to keep the humorous effect, the joke needs to be expressed with a different Spanish word that is not the literal meaning of wind-up. This results in the loss of the wordplay, but the sense is translated and respected.</p>	<p>Formal equivalent is not possible here because the joke would be lost. The best option is to use Dynamic equivalent, so that sense is translated in a way the TA audience can understand.</p>	<p>I would use Pun-Zero strategy. The original will be translated by a new construction that even being totally different from the original, the target culture will understand better.</p>

## Problem 2

Y es decir cuatro números  
cuando pongo el pin de la tarjeta.

Is saying four numbers  
when I do chip-and-pin.

*Problem:* Chip-and-pin is the brand name of a credit card paying system in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It does not exist in Spain, so using literal translation was not possible because Spanish people would not understand it.

*My solution:* There is not any similar payment method in Spain we could use for this case. I decided to describe the action of dialling the numbers in a pin pad, so that the audience knows what he means. It could be considered as a descriptive translation.

From the point of view of each of the theories:

Attardo GTVH	Vandaele View of Humour Translation	Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence
(LA): changed Original words cannot be replaced because there is no Spanish equivalent. (NS): respected Since the format is known in both languages, it can be respected. (TA): respected The joke talks about the same thing in English and Spanish. (SI): respected Situation is easily translatable. (LM): respected The joke means the same in both languages. (SO): respected Two scripts are overlapped.	Chip-and-pin needs to be replaced by the Spanish action description in order to have the same humoristic effect.	Formal equivalent is not known in Spanish culture. Dynamic equivalent has to be used in order to render the same effect and meaning of the original.

### Problem 3

Porque la mayoría son muy cuidadosos, se ponen la capucha, crean una capucha para la mano. ¿Dónde hay un toldo?

Because most people are so secretive, they hood, they create a hand hood. I'm hand-hooding.

*Problem:* In this case the problem was translating hand-hooding. In English there are a lot more ways than in Spanish to create wordplay and verbs with words. It is not the same in Spanish, and translating it for *mano-capucha* sounded very unnatural, as an English calque.

*My solution:* Since literal translation does not work and there is not any similar sentence in Spanish to translate the wordplay, I decided to use a new sentence *¿Dónde hay un toldo?* meaning can I hide somewhere?

*From the point of view of each of the theories:*

<b>Attardo GTVH</b>	<b>Vandaele View of Humour Translation</b>	<b>Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence</b>	<b>Delabastia strategies translate wordplay</b>
<p>(LA): changed The wordplay needs to be lost in order to respect the sense of the joke. (NS): respected The format is still the same. (TA): changed It has been replaced by a new sentence. (SI): respected Although the wordplay is lost he joke still works. (LM): changed The sense had to be changed into a new joke, and it made the joke have a different sense. (SO): respected It still has two scripts overlapping.</p>	<p>Although a new joke has been formulated, the humorous effect is translated, which is what we are looking for.</p>	<p>Formal equivalent does not sound like natural Spanish language. The only option is using dynamic equivalent to respect and translate the original text meaning.</p>	<p>By using Delabastia's Pun-Zero strategy, the wordplay is lost but, by using a new sentence, we can keep the overall sense of the original.</p>

### *Dieta*

Últimamente como mucho en gasolineras.

Sinceramente, he estado viajando mucho.

Intento perder peso,

no solo intento perder peso,

señoras y señores,

pero tuve ese momento,

ese momento en el que la gente

que necesita perder peso empieza una dieta.

Llega ese momento y piensan,

“ahora sí. Esta vez perderé peso”.

Me ha llegado ese momento y no he adelgazado.

Y ese momento fue cuando

me subí a un avión Ryanair.

Ryanair utiliza aviones tan pequeños

que no parecen ni aviones.

Cuando estás en el aeropuerto

miras por la ventana y piensas...

“Ese no puede ser nuestro avión. ¿Es un avión?”

“¿Vamos a tener que ir en esa cosa?”

¡Es del tamaño de un coche!”

“No puedo ir en esa cosa”.

No me gusta ningún avión

en los que el piloto se gira y dice,

“¿Estáis preparados?” No, gracias.

No, gracias.

Resulta que estoy sentado,

y la azafata viene y dice,

“Perdone señor, podría moverle

al asiento 6A?”

Y yo, “¿Por qué?”

“Creo que será mejor,

que no haga tantas preguntas

y mueva sus cosas hacia allí”

“¿Qué quiere decir no hacer preguntas?”

Este es mi asiento, y tengo todas mis cosas aquí”

“Me sentaré aquí. Muchas gracias”

“Disculpe señor,

son ordenes del capitán”

“Deje que le mueva al 6A.”

“Pero por qué? Estoy bien aquí,

tendrá que decirme el porqué.”

“Será mejor que no lo sepa.”

Era para equilibrar el peso del avión.

Qué deprimente es tu vida

cuando te dicen

“Podrías ponerlos en este lado

y apoyarlos hacia la ventana?”

“Y los gorditos en este lado solitos, si?”

No funcionó.

Me he planteado adelgazar antes de verano

porque siempre hay una especie de

entusiasmo por bajar de peso antes de verano.

Todas las revistas de mi mujer:

“Adelgaza para este verano”

“Trucos para lucir cuerpazo en bikini”

“Por qué ir en ascensor

cuando puedes ir por las escaleras?”

¡Eh! Buen consejo.

Lo que me gustaría entender es

¿Por qué salen estas revistas cada primavera?

Es como si engordamos automáticamente

en invierno.

No es como si las revistas en otoño dijeran

“atibórrate estas navidades!”

“Por qué ir por las escaleras cuando puedes

tumbarte en el ascensor comiendo chocolate?

El gimnasio es importante.

Por eso todos dicen: “ves al gimnasio”.

#### **Problem 4**

me subí a un avión Ryanair.

Ryanair utiliza aviones tan pequeños

Que no parecen ni aviones.

I was on a Flybe flight.

Flybe is one of those tiny planes

that you can't even believe is your

plane.

*Problem:* The main problem I found in this case is the word Flybe. Flybe is a British low-cost airline, which I assume operates small planes. A low-cost airline in Spain is Vueling.



However, Vueling is not much of a low-cost company (although they consider themselves like so), and people in Spain generally use Ryanair for cheap flights. Also, it is popular belief that Ryanair planes look weak and small.

*Solution:* I decided to use Ryanair because I thought it would be the equivalent that best reflected what Flybe is.

*From the point of view of each of the theories:*

<b>Attardo GTVH</b>	<b>Vandaele View of Humour Translation</b>	<b>Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence</b>
(LA): Respected I could say I have used an airline synonym. (NS): respected The format is the same, only the core of the joke was changed. (TA): respected It still talks about an airline. (SI): respected. Both original and translation talk about an airline. (LM): Respected The joke's incongruity is the same in both versions. (SO): Respected The Scripts are the same and also overlap.	The humorous effect is easily translatable from one language to another. I just changed the company for a better equivalent.	In my opinion we could consider Vueling as a formal equivalent, and Ryanair as a dynamic equivalent. In this case, dynamic works better.

### **Problem 5**

No es como si las revistas en otoño dijeran  
 “atibórrate estas navidades!”

It's not like in the autumn the  
 magazine goes,  
 “Chub up for Crimbo.”

*Problem:* The main difficulty in this case is that Chub up does not even exist in English, so it was hard to understand the meaning of the joke at first. However, it does exist the word chubby, which means fat. With this, I guessed the meaning was to stuff yourself before Christmas, just so you can follow what diet magazines claim over the spring.

*Solution:* Having understood the meaning, the Spanish equivalent *atiborrarse* (stuff up) allowed me to translate and reproduce the same effect found in the original version.

*From the point of view of each of the theories:*

<b>Attardo GTVH</b>	<b>Vandaele View of Humour Translation</b>	<b>Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence</b>
(LA): respected According to what I understood from the original, it is the literal meaning. (NS): respected The organisation is the same. (TA): respected Target easily translatable. (SI): respected Same meaning in both jokes. (LM): respected The joke can be understood the same way in both languages. (SO): respected There is script opposition in the two languages.	Once the meaning of chub-up is understood, the equivalence is translatable, even with its literal equivalent and meaning.	Formal equivalent works in this context and the joke works as well as in English language. The audience does not need further knowledge in order to understand the joke.

### *Taunton Sándwich*

En el descanso de mi actuación,  
 una mujer vino  
 y dijo “Hola Michael,  
 me llamo Margaret”.  
 “Soy la jefa del teatro”.  
 “Ella es mi asistente Jenny”.  
 Jenny era una cosa digna de observar.  
 Sus ojos apuntaban uno a cada lado.  
 Lo cual es incomodo,  
 porque no sabes si ignorarlo  
 o intentar ponerte delante de uno.  
 Margaret dijo,  
 “¿Michael te has comido el sándwich?”

“Lo he hecho yo misma,  
con mi asistente Jenny,  
y me preguntaba si  
te ha gustado o no.”

Bueno, para decir verdad,  
era un sándwich asqueroso.  
Pero claro, para ser educado dije,  
“Muchas gracias Margaret,  
por el sándwich.”

Pero el sándwich,  
daba asco, ¿vale?

Solo llevaba  
tomate y lechuga,  
ningún ingrediente más.  
El sándwich no tenía nada más.  
No parecía ni un sándwich.  
Un sándwich necesita un ingrediente  
principal, embutido o queso,  
y luego le pones los extras.  
Ese sándwich era un extra.  
Una humillación de sándwich.  
Entonces, estuve pensando,  
¿Quién en su sano juicio, sirve eso  
y encima lo llama sándwich?  
Y lo único que se me ocurrió  
fue que intentaba hacer un PLT,  
pero se confundió con la “P” de pan.  
Es la única expiación que veo.  
Estaba en al cocina con Jenny,  
“vale”, a este hombre le haremos  
un sándwich PLT.  
“Necesitaremos “P” de pan, dámelo.”  
“L” será la lechuga,  
y la “T” el tomate.

Y ya está hecho.”

“¡Margaret!”

“¿Qué pasa Jenny?”

“No deberías interrumpirme,  
deberías escuchar y aprender.”

“¿No debería haber pollo en un PLT?”

“Me suena que sí...,  
pero eso sería un PPLT.”

“Ni siquiera le he podido poner ni  
aceite para que cuadre, Jenny.”

### **Problem 6**

fue que intentaba hacer un PLT,  
Pero se confundió con la “P” de pan.

she was trying to make me a BLT,  
But got confused cause of the “B” in  
bread.

*Problem:* BLT sandwich translation. BLT stands for beacon lettuce and tomato sandwich. This way of describing a sandwich is pretty much an English thing, and there is not equivalent in Spanish. First of all, because we do not call sandwiches sandwich, we call the *bocatas*, and second, because gastronomy in Spain is different; we use to eat more one focal ingredient sandwiches.

Here I found three problems:

1. The translation of BLT
2. Understanding of BLT for Spanish audience
3. The problem of the B meaning beacon and bread

*Solution:* fortunately, for the first problem I could come up with the solution of PLT *pollo, lechuga y tomate*. For the second problem, if Spanish audience does not understand what PLT means when they first hear it, it is explained later in the text, so the problem of Spanish audience not knowing what PLT means is covered as well. For the third one, P stands for *pan* and *pollo* (bread and chicken), which is the same as in the original version and

makes it possible to make the joke of only eating bread, lettuce and tomato in Spanish, *pan, lechuga y tomate*.

*From the point of view of each of the theories:*

<b>Attardo GTVH</b>	<b>Vandaele View of Humour Translation</b>	<b>Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence</b>
(LA): respected Only beacon had to be changed for a new ingredient. (NS): respected The initials could be translated into Spanish. (TA): respected Both versions talk about a sandwich. (SI): respected The situation has not been changed. (LM): respected The resolution of the joke is the same in both languages. (SO): respected Easily translatable.	In order to reproduce the same effect, the Spanish translation had to be compatible with the problems mentioned before. Using PLT worked perfectly to translate the English version containing the same sense.	Clearly formal equivalent does not work in this context. However, dynamic equivalent makes the Spanish joke the same as the English one, it is just slightly changed.

### *Comer fuera*

Reservas mesa en un restaurante caro...

“¿Le apetece un poco de pan?”

“¿Un poco de agua?”

Llegados a este punto,

la mesa está mejor que yo.

Y ¿a quién le apetece pan y agua

antes de comer?

Eso me lo darían en un orfanato.

Estoy pagando mucho por comer aquí.

Pero te lo tomas bien,

porque estás en un restaurante.

Pides el primer plato.

“¿Querría alguna tapa aparte?”

¡No, solo déme la comida en el plato!

No quiero platitos de comida  
Alrededor de mi comida.  
¿Es para hacerte sentir que comes menos?  
“Sí, quiero tapas aparte”  
“De hecho, quiero  
una de bravas detrás mío”  
“Póngalas detrás de mí”  
“Quiero una ensalada en un cajón bajo la mesa”  
“Una de calamares bajo la cisterna,  
en el baño. Nadie los encontrará.”  
Pero te lo tomas bien,  
porque estás en un restaurante.

### Problem 7

“¿Querría alguna <u>tapa aparte</u> ?”	“Would you like some <u>side orders</u> ?”
¡No, solo déme la comida en el plato!	No, just give me food on a plate!
No quiero platitos de comida alrededor de mi comida.	I don't need satellites of food surrounding my food.

*Problem:* in this case the problem is the translation of side orders. The problem is not the translation of side orders itself, but the next sentence, which uses the meaning in side, to create a joke.

*Solution:* To render the same effect, I had to use a word in Spanish that also had the connotation of side. I thought about *tapa aparte*, which can be understood as: would you like any other *tapa*? Or would you like any *tapa* on the side of your food? This two meaning is what the English uses to create the joke.

*From the point of view of each of the theories:*

<b>Attardo GTVH</b>	<b>Vandaele View of Humour Translation</b>	<b>Eugene Nida Dynamic and formal equivalence</b>
<p>(LA): respected Both versions mean the same.</p> <p>(NS): respected The organisation is the same.</p> <p>(TA): respected Both talk about side orders.</p> <p>(SI): respected Same side order confusion.</p> <p>(LM): respected The incongruity is translated into Spanish.</p> <p>(SO): respected Two opposite scripts in both versions.</p>	<p>To render the same humoristic effect the word in Spanish needs to have this double sense as the English word.</p>	<p>I consider the formal equivalent is <i>aperitivo</i> or <i>entrante</i>, if we use it in the Spanish joke, it does not work. Using dynamic equivalent makes it possible for the audience to understand what the sentence “just give me food on a plate” is referring to.</p>

## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, I would like to say this project allowed me to have a better idea of how to translate humour. I have been able to see the difficulties, elements involved and how to translate humour as I first proposed at the beginning.

I would like to mention some of the difficulties I have found. First of all, the field of humour translation has been investigated very little; this made my research of the theories a demanding task. Second, I have seen for myself, that translating humour is quite difficult. In some cases I had to be very creative and think deeply about some of the solutions because some English concepts did not exist in Spanish. I therefore, had to come up with a translation that produced the same effect in both SL and TL. Last but not least, I also had to use wordplay translation. I found that translating wordplay is quite challenging because the core of the joke is language, and not all languages have the same form or meaning. Most of the times, when attempting to translate wordplay the English words did not produce wordplay in Spanish, either because the translation did not have the same word form or the same meaning. Thus, literal translation was not possible because its translated equivalents did not function in the context. In most cases, I had to create a new translation using different words/concepts that reproduced the wordplay in the target language.

After the analysis of *Modern Family* and the translation of Michael McIntyre, I have come to the conclusion that culture is a fundamental factor in humour translation. The translator needs to bear in mind that when translating humour, we are not only dealing with linguistic aspects but also extra linguistic features, this is to say, we have to translate the meaning but also the effect. Most of the mistakes in the analysis were because the original translator did not understand the SL culture or did not know the cultural equivalent in the TL. This failure leads to the audience misunderstanding, which, therefore, makes the translation wrong. In my opinion, the most important factor in obtaining an accurate humour translation is to understand the original version. If we do not understand it, the translation will not convey the same message. My suggestion is that the translator first needs to identify humour elements. I know in some cases this may be difficult since humour is subjective, but if we translate a joke literally, the failure is very visible. Once the translator knows the humoristic parts of a given text, he needs to understand them, and this is crucial. If he does not understand them at first, then he needs to research so that he can comprehend the jokes. Finally, he needs to use the correct words in the TL to convey the



meaning and reproduce the effect of the original. Regarding the Modern Family analysis, from the eight mistakes listed, I found that literal translation worked for many of them. However, these did not include cultural or social references; for those including cultural elements I had to choose a new equivalent. On the contrary, for Michael McIntyre translation, I have used dynamic equivalent for almost all humour elements. Having said that, and based on this project, I could say literal translation has often been used with non-cultural referents and dynamic equivalent with cultural elements.

After having approached the translation of humour, I believe humour translation is as specialized as legal or scientific translation. Its specialized language, importance of communication and culture-bound elements confer on humour translation the need of a professional able to transfer and reproduce the same effect of the original in the target culture, rather than translate the meaning. Regarding the figure of the translator, I think that in order to succeed in translating humour, if compared with a more general translation, the translator needs to have a number of different skills: **communicative, creative and cultural skills**. I would call it the theory of the 3 C's. The translator needs to be able to know at least something about the **cultures** involved in the translation in order understand the original and be able to reproduce it. It's probable that he needs to use his **creative** skills to be able to create a translation that **communicates** the sense and extra linguistic elements of the original in the target culture.

In conclusion, this project allowed me to test my skills as a professional translator on a real source and gave me a hint of the problems I could face if working with humour texts. I would like to mention that this project is all based on my own perspective and my intention was not to devalue or criticise the work of other professionals in my field. On the contrary, I just wanted to prove and show how humour translation can be improved. Finally, I would like to highlight the importance of the translator not only as a linguistic mediator but also as a cultural mediator; thus it is important to give translators the recognition they deserve and highlight their professionalism.

*"Translators are the shadow heroes of literature, the often forgotten instruments that make it possible for different cultures to talk to one another, who have enabled us to understand that we all, from every part of the world, live in one world."*

*Paul Auster*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Allen, Esther. *To be Translated or Not To Be*. Barcelona: Crítèria sccl, (2007). *Google Books*. 25 Apr 2015.

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## ANNEX

### Michael McIntyre Original Version

#### Petrol Stations

There are little moments in life  
when you can have fun.  
I'm having a lot of fun in petrol stations  
at the moment.  
They sell these wind-up torches  
and I buy one in every petrol station  
just so I can make this quite childish joke.  
I put in on the counter and go,  
"Is this some kind of a wind-up?"  
Perks me up on a long journey.  
I'll tell you what I also like doing,  
is saying four numbers  
when I do chip-and-pin.  
They're not my numbers,  
but it freaks the shit out of people.  
Because most people are so secretive,  
They hood, they create a hand hood.  
I'm hand-hooding.  
I just go "Seven, four, two, one."  
I think those are them."  
"The bloke's insane!"

#### Diet

I've been eating too much on petrol stations,  
let's be honest, 'cause I've been on the road.  
I'm trying to lose weight.  
Not only am I trying to lose weight,  
ladies and gentlemen,  
but I had that moment,  
that moment when people  
who need to lose weight go on a diet.  
They have this one moment and think,  
"That's it. Now I will lose the weight".  
I had that moment and I still didn't diet.  
That moment was when  
I was on a Flybe flight.  
Flybe is one of those tiny planes  
that you can't even believe is your plane.  
When you're in the airport  
and you're looking out the window...  
"That can't be our plane? Is that a plane?"  
"We're gonna have to get on that thing?"

That's the size of a car!"  
"I can't get on that thing."  
I'm not happy with any plane where  
the captain turns around and goes,  
"Are you ready?" No thank you.  
No, thank you.  
So I'm sitting there  
and this stewardess comes over,  
she says, "Excuse me, sir, can I just  
pop you over there in seat 6A?"  
I'm like, "Why?"  
"It's probably better  
if you don't ask questions  
and just move your stuff over."  
"What do you mean, don't ask questions?  
This is my seat. I've got all my stuff here."  
"I'll seat here, thank you very much."  
"I'm sorry, sir,  
that's the orders of the captain."  
"Let me just move you over to 6A."  
"But why? I'm very comfortable here.  
You're gonna have to tell me why."  
"It's probably better if you don't."  
It was to balance the weight of the aircraft.  
How depressing is your life  
when they're going  
"Can I just get everyone to sit on this side  
and lean towards the window?"  
"And Fatty, over there on your own, okay?"  
That didn't do it.  
I consider losing weight before the summer  
because there's always a big sort of  
excitement to slim down for summer.  
All my wife's magazines:  
"Slim down for summer."  
"Easy steps to that bikini body."  
"Why take the lift  
when you can take the stairs?"  
Huh! Good advice.  
What I want to know is why do they have  
these magazine articles every single spring?  
We automatically put weight on  
over the winter.  
It's not like in the autumn the magazine goes,  
"Chub up for Crimbo."  
"Why take the stairs when you can  
lie in the lift eating chocky? Yay!"  
The gym is the big thing.  
That's why everyone says, "Go to the gym."

## Taunton Sandwich

In the interval of my gig there,  
This woman came in  
And said "Hello, Michael,  
My name is Margaret.  
"I'm the duty manager here at the theatre.  
"This is my assistant, Jenny.  
Say hello, Jenny".  
"Hello. My name's Jenny."  
Jenny was quite something to behold.  
She had her eyes pointing in different directions.  
Which is awkward,  
cause you don't know whether to ignore it  
or pick one and get in front of it.  
Margaret said,  
"Michael did you get your sandwich?"  
"I made you a sandwich myself  
with my assistant Jenny,  
and I was wondering whether  
you enjoyed your sandwich."  
Now, if truth be told,  
It was a terrible sandwich.  
But of course, out of politeness I said,  
"thank you so much Margaret,  
for my sandwich."  
But this sandwich  
was an abomination, okay?  
This sandwich consisted of  
tomato and lettuce  
and no further ingredients.  
There was nothing else in the sandwich.  
I couldn't even believe it was a sandwich.  
A sandwich needs a focal ingredient,  
a meat or a cheese,  
then you accessorise around it.  
This was an accessory sandwich.  
A humiliation of a sandwich.  
And I've been thinking, subsequently,  
who in their mind would present this  
and even call it a sandwich?  
And the only conclusion I came to is that  
she was trying to male me a BLT,  
But got confused cause of the "B" in bread.  
It's the only real thought I've had.  
She was in the kitchen with Jenny,  
going, "Right" we're going to go  
for a classic here today, the BLT.  
"We're gonna need "B" for bread, pass that.  
"L", that'll be the lettuce,  
and "T" has to be the tomato.

That's that done."  
"Margaret!"  
"What is it Jenny?"  
"You shouldn't be interrupting me,  
you should be listening and learning."  
"Isn't there supposed to be bacon in a BLT?"  
"I have heard the rumours."  
However, that would create a BBLT."  
"I've already had to lose the butter  
to get to this point as it is, Jenny."

## **Eating Out**

You sit in this most expensive restaurant...  
"Would you like some bread for the table?  
Some water for the table?"  
The table's having a better night  
than I am at this rate.  
And who actually wants bread and water  
before your meal?  
I could get this in an orphanate.  
I'm paying a lot of money to be here.  
But you go along with it,  
cause you're in a restaurant.  
You order your main course.  
"Would you like some side orders?"  
No, just give me food on a plate!  
I don't need satellites of food  
surrounding my food.  
Is it to make you feel like you're eating less?  
"Yes, I would like some side orders."  
"In fact, I'd like some  
potato dauphinoise behind me."  
"Put them behind me."  
"I want carrots in a drawer under the table."  
"Cream of spinach behind the cistern  
in the loo. No one will ever know."  
But you go along with it,  
Cause you're in a restaurant.