Yablonska Tetyana

Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design (Kyiv, Ukraine)

Language and scientific supervisor – Goncharenko S., senior lecturer

CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING HUMOR:

AI vs HUMAN TRANSLATION

Humor is one of the most challenging and delicate spheres of human communication. It is affected by cultural references, paronomasia (wordplay), historical background, and emotional coloring, making it hard for translators to deal with. Nowadays, many people use machine translation tools like Google Translate, DeepL, or ChatGPT. However, the question of whether artificial intelligence can understand and report humorous essence between languages arises at this point.

Machine translation has simplified a lot. AI uses statistics and factual bases, patterns, and vast language data to process the text, but it has neither a deep understanding of the context, nor emotional intelligence. These are very important factors to be considered when translating humor or any other emotionally colored message, and they should be more thoroughly analyzed via various examples, thus researching complications translators face when working with humor.

The first is translating puns. For instance, the English phrase "I used to be a banker, but I lost interest" is a play with the word "interest" (financial – money, percent on investment, and emotional – curiosity). Google Translate says, "I used to be a banker, but I lost interest", which is correct grammatically but doesn't keep the joke. A human translator can change the joke into something different in wording but making similar sense in another culture and thus being funny as well.

Then goes sarcasm. The phrase "Oh great, another Monday!" is usually used ironically. Machine is unable to catch the speaker's tone and translates it as reporting happiness, not challenge expectation, which confuses people. At the

same time, a human translator understands the context and the speaker's feelings and might change the words or use punctuation marks (italics or quotation marks) to show sarcasm.

In sitcoms and stand-up comedies, humor depends on the situation, tone of voice, body language and culture. For example, in the TV shows "Friends" or "The Office", people use idioms, cultural jokes and references. A human would adapt these parts to make the joke clear and funny in another language, whereas machines often translate word by word, either confusing people or making a new joke by mistake.

One more good example is the American TV show Hacks. It contains many cultural references, extracts with stand-up comedy, jokes about generations, soft satire or sarcasm, and vividly demonstrates how hard it is to translate comedy into another language for another culture. The main character, Deborah Vance, jokes: "I told my gardener to plant more trees". He asked, "How many?" I said, "You figure it out. You're a tree-mendous one." The word "tree-mendous" combines the two: "tree" and "tremendous" – a wordplay. Machine does not see any joke, consequently gives a direct translation, and the joke is gone. A human translator would adjust the message to a locality, producing something: "You decide. You're the most tree-like". Such an interpretation could keep both the idea and the joke.

Another issue is cultural references. For example, Ava says: "This place is like Titanic before the iceberg", anticipating the bad. It associates with a well-known catastrophe, and the Americans know that. But in other countries, it might not work well, and a human translator might choose to change it into something local, like: "This place is like a volcano before eruption", thus bringing the feeling of something bad and dangerous.

Sarcasm is exemplified in the scene where Deborah says: "Oh, great. Another young comedian who thinks they're edgy because they have a podcast". It is funny because of the tone, the context, and understanding the ways and means of gaining popularity. Machine gives direct meaning with serious

connotation, while a human normally keeps the irony and sarcastic tone with something like: "Oh, perfect. Another young comic thinking being special just due to having a podcast".

And finally, public speeches. For example, women leaders' speeches more frequently demonstrate feelings, irony and cultural ideas. Oprah Winfrey is one of the such, being a famous TV show host and the "voice" of women in America. In her speech at the Golden Globe in 2018, she reported strong political messages: "A new day is on the horizon", meaning hope, on the one hand, and the "MeToo movement", on the other. Machine interprets it as only "the beginning of a new day", missing the emotional and associative content. Another quote is: "I had never seen a black man being celebrated that way". She said that with surprise, pride, and a bit of irony, making it hard to translate for AI. The direct translation sounds dry, lacking the feeling and emotion.

To sum up, translating humor, irony, and jokes from various resources is rather challenging. It requires language knowledge, cultural awareness, emotional appeal, empathy, human touch and carefulness, accuracy, and creativity, apart from language skills. These features are significant for translating jokes. The examples show that humor is not only about words but also a part of culture and reference to associations. Translators have to know the context, each character's tone, feelings, nature, and style. They are co-creators of meaning. Machine translation works well for formal or technical texts but is still unable to translate humor well. In the future, AI might learn more about emotions and context, but now, humor is still something only people are capable of coping with.

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