

STORIES, ANECDOTES AND JOKES: LEXICO-SEMANTIC FEATURES AND TRANSLATION ANALYSIS

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**MAQOLA
MALUMOTI**

ANNOTATSIYA:

MAQOLA TARIXI:

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This article examines the lexical and semantic features of stories, anecdotes, and jokes, focusing on how cultural context, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language influence the process of translation. The study highlights how humor depends on lexical choices, implicit meanings, and pragmatic nuances that do not always transfer directly between languages. Special attention is given to the cultural background of humorous texts and the need to preserve both meaning and stylistic effect in translation. The analysis shows that successful translation requires balancing accuracy and expressiveness, as humor often relies on wordplay, semantic ambiguity, and cultural references.

Humorous texts stories, anecdotes, and jokes form an important part of oral and written culture. They reflect national mentality, everyday life, and social attitudes. Because humor often contains emotional, symbolic, and linguistic layers, its translation presents unique lexical-semantic challenges. Lexical choices in jokes and anecdotes are crucial for delivering the humorous effect. Such texts frequently use:

idioms,

colloquial vocabulary,
wordplay (puns),
homonyms and homophones,
exaggerated descriptive adjectives.

For example, English jokes often rely on double meanings (“bank” as a financial institution or riverbank). In Uzbek or Russian translation, the joke may lose its effect if no equivalent double meaning exists. Thus, translators must select lexical units that preserve the humorous intention, even if the wording changes. Anecdotes also contain culturally marked words — titles, professions, social roles — that differ across languages. For example, the figure of a “teacher” or “doctor” in anecdotes carries different stereotypes depending on the culture.

Humor frequently relies on semantic mechanisms such as:
incongruity (unexpected details),
irony,
hyperbole (exaggeration),
metaphorical associations.

An anecdote may use a metaphor or comparison that is familiar to one culture but unusual in another. For instance, English humor often builds on understatement, while Uzbek humor prefers exaggeration and sharp punchlines.

Consider the joke:

“I used to be indecisive, but now I’m not sure.”

The humor comes from the semantic contradiction. A literal translation would sound strange or lose the playful paradox, so translators must recreate the structure of the contradiction using equivalent semantic tools.

Cultural knowledge plays a key role in understanding stories and anecdotes. Humor often references:

customs and traditions,
social stereotypes,
daily routines,
historical events,
famous personalities.

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If the target audience lacks this background, the joke may not work. Sometimes translators must replace culturally specific references with equivalents familiar to the readers. For example:

“Sherlock Holmes” may be replaced with a locally known detective figure.

Food-related jokes may be adapted to culturally recognizable dishes.

In this sense, humor translation becomes not only a linguistic but also an intercultural task.

The Challenge of Preserving the “Voice” of Humor

Each humorous text has its own stylistic tone — ironic, playful, sarcastic, or absurd. The translator must maintain:

rhythm of the punchline,

timing of the joke,

emotional tone,

dialogue dynamics.

For instance, in short anecdotes, the humorous effect often depends on the final line — the punchline. If sentence order changes during translation, the emotion may weaken. Therefore, translators sometimes restructure the entire anecdote to preserve its comedic impact.

Stories as a Broader Narrative Form

Short stories with humorous elements combine narrative development with linguistic creativity. They may include dialogues, descriptions, or situational humor. Here the translator must consider:

coherence of the plot,

psychological subtleties,

stylistic unity of the narrator’s voice,

specific lexical fields (e.g., everyday life, professions, children’s speech).

Unlike short jokes, stories require more complex lexical-semantic adaptation, ensuring that style, humor, and cultural atmosphere remain intact.

The lexico-semantic analysis of stories, anecdotes, and jokes reveals the complexity of translating humor. Because humorous meaning depends on lexical choices, semantic ambiguity, cultural references, and stylistic nuances, translators must employ creative strategies to recreate the humorous effect in the target language. A successful translation

preserves both the meaning and the emotional-cognitive impact, ensuring that humor remains engaging and understandable for readers from different cultural backgrounds.

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