

**PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING SATIRE AND SARCASM IN FICTION****Salikhova Malika Bakhtiyorovna**

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**Abstract**

This article addresses the challenges of translating satire and sarcasm in literary texts. It examines theoretical approaches of both Western and Russian scholars to the understanding of satirical and sarcastic devices, their role in shaping the artistic effect and communicative impact of a text. Special attention is paid to the distinction between satire as a genre-stylistic technique and sarcasm as a locally expressed ironic evaluation. Based on the analysis of Russian classical works (Gogol, Bulgakov, Saltykov-Shchedrin) and their English translations, key difficulties in conveying the author's intention and expressive effect are identified. The article applies comparative, pragmatic, contextual, and cognitive methods of analysis. It concludes that translation should prioritize the pragmatic and communicative meaning of the text.

**Keywords**

satire, sarcasm, literary translation, pragmatic meaning, communicative effect, Russian and English text.

Translation of literary texts is a complex interpretive process in which the translator conveys not only the linguistic form, but also the cultural and ideological content of the work. Particular difficulty arises in translating satire and sarcasm, since these phenomena are based on implicit meaning, evaluative attitude, and the violation of readers' expectations. Their function lies not so much in creating a comic effect as in expressing the author's critical position.

The relevance of this study is determined by the fact that, in the course of intercultural transmission of a literary text, satirical and sarcastic elements are often neutralized or misinterpreted, which leads to distortion of the author's intention. The purpose of this article is to identify key problems in translating satire and sarcasm and to analyze existing theoretical approaches to their rendering in translation.

**The Concepts of Satire and Sarcasm in Linguistics and Literary Studies**

Satire has traditionally been viewed as an aesthetic category and as a genre-stylistic device aimed at social and moral criticism. N. Frye defines satire as a form of moral exposure in which laughter functions as a means of ideological influence [1, p. 257]. In the Russian scholarly tradition, M. M. Bakhtin links satire with carnival culture and the principle of "lowering" [3, p. 40], while Yu. M. Lotman emphasizes its semiotic nature and the conflict between norm and deviation [4, p. 128].

Sarcasm, unlike satire, has a more local and pragmatic character. In Russian linguistics (I. R. Galperin), sarcasm is viewed as an expressive device that marks the speaker's evaluative stance [5, p. 259].

**Translation of Satire and Sarcasm as Translation of Pragmatic Meaning**

The translation of satire and sarcasm in literary texts inevitably goes beyond lexical-grammatical equivalence and requires consideration of pragmatic and cultural aspects of meaning. Thus, A. V. Fedorov notes that in translating expressively marked elements of a literary text, the translator is often forced to resort to functional substitutions oriented toward the perception of the target reader [7, p. 272].

**Main Problems in Translating Satire and Sarcasm**

Key problems include the implicit nature of satirical meaning, the cultural conditioning of humor, and differences in pragmatic norms between languages. For instance, in the satirical works of N. V. Gogol, social criticism is often masked as everyday absurdity, which in translation may be perceived merely as eccentricity rather than moral exposure.

Let us consider an excerpt from Gogol's play *The Government Inspector*:

Khlestakov: "I tell everyone openly that I take bribes — but what kind of bribes? Greyhound puppies." [6, p. 4]

Here the sarcasm is built upon intentional logical absurdity: the confession of bribery is presented as a form of "honesty." The comic effect arises from the clash between

- social vice (corruption);
- concrete everyday detail ("greyhound puppies");
- the speaker's feigned naivety.

In English translation, the phrase is often rendered literally:

**"I tell everyone plainly that I take bribes, but what kind of bribes? Greyhound puppies! That's a totally different matter."** [8, p. 6]

However:

- the cultural connotation of greyhound puppies as a symbol of the landowning class is lost;
- the sarcasm may be perceived simply as an odd detail rather than social criticism.

A typical loss occurs in the weakening of the satirical force, turning social satire into an eccentric remark.

In M. A. Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*, sarcasm is often expressed through the speaker's intonational and philosophical detachment. In translation, such elements are frequently shifted towards neutral irony, which changes the character's image and the overall tone of the work.

Woland remarks: **"People are like people. They love money, but that has always been the case..."** [9, p. 186]

In English this is rendered as:

**"They're people like any others. They're over-fond of money, but then they always were . . ."** [10, p. 66]

This is an example of philosophical sarcasm masked as calm observation. Woland does not openly condemn — he normalizes vice, which creates the sarcastic effect.

Here sarcasm lies:

- not in the wording itself, but in the speaker's stance;
- it is based on moral inversion;
- it requires contextual knowledge (who is speaking and why).

In English translations the sarcasm is often weakened because:

- the intonation of "weary superiority" is difficult to reproduce;
- Woland begins to sound like a philosopher rather than an ironic judge.

### Conclusion

The translation of satire and sarcasm represents one of the most challenging tasks in literary translation. The main difficulties are associated with the implicit nature of meaning, cultural conditioning, and the ideological load of these expressive devices. Failure to account for these dimensions often leads to a reduction or distortion of the author's evaluative perspective in translation.

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