

Translating boulevard comedy: Is it possible to evaluate the adequacy of theatre translation?

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Abstract

Due to its historical development and restrictions that French theatre artists had to face in the beginning, boulevard comedy is viewed as a farce about the everyday problems of ordinary men and women. Its only aim is to entertain the audience. In the Czech environment, boulevard comedy occupies an important place, especially for financial reasons, which can motivate both theatre artists and translators, who then resort to various abbreviated translations, shifts in meaning and incomprehensibility of individual lines. However, boulevard comedy encompasses a wide range of positions and comedies, from the most ridiculous farce full of wacky moves or conversational comedy based on wordplay to philosophical treatises on the meaning of life. Is the translator's task to produce a typical, commercially successful comedy, or to understand author's intention and individual situations and to translate them into the target language and culture in a way that preserves the original meaning? Is it possible, as with literary texts, to judge the adequacy of a theatre translation when neither the translation nor the original text is a final product?

1. Introduction

Theatre translation is an independent discipline. To be able to practise it, one needs to know the environment of the theatre and be able to imagine how the text will be put on stage. At the same time, as with any other translation, one must understand the meaning, intention, and context of the text being translated in order to be able to translate it adequately into the target language. It is also necessary to know the characteristics of the genre, which is why I will present the specific features of boulevard comedy texts. Also, the translator must be aware of the role of the dramatic text and how theatre practitioners work with it. This view has changed over the years and centuries, and even today there is no single view of the role of the dramatic text on stage. This raises the question of whether the adequacy of a translation of a dramatic text can be judged at all.

2. A theoretical view of the dramatic text: a brief overview of Czech theories

Important Czech theatre theorists who have contributed to the development of the understanding of dramatic works, and specifically the dramatic text, are, in particular, Otakar Zich, Jan Mukařovský, and Jiří

Veltruský. I will draw on their theoretical works, but I will also inspire me of Klára Vencová, who compares all three of these theorists.

2.1 Otakar Zich on the dramatic text

Zich offered a very revolutionary view in his time, namely that the dramatic text cannot be classified as a literary text, because the dramatic text is part of the dramatic work, which is perceived by two senses at the same time: hearing and sight. Neither can be taken away from the dramatic work. Thus, according to Zich, the mere reading of a dramatic text is not enough, as it needs to be performed at the same time (1986, 13, 15, 17). Therefore, the dramatic text is written by the playwright for the director and the actor, and the audience receives only the comprehensive dramatic work. The dramatic text is not a dramatic work, but a component of it, because a dramatic work is a dynamic whole and consists of several artistic areas (synthetic theory) that are in harmony and interconnected: the visual component, the poetic component, the musical component, and the acting component, which is the most significant of them. These components, although different arts in each case, work together on completely different principles and adapt to each other (Vencová 2012, 11). The text is thus merely a component, albeit an essential one, according to Zich, which is a kind of foundation on which the other components are built. In contrast, dramatic works not based on texts are, according to him, vernacular works, i.e., primitive. But why dramatic? Because in a dramatic work, dramatic figures interact in real time, forming an artificial plot, a dramatic plot that affects the audience aesthetically, but the audience does not engage with it. Zich is also clear about stage notes, which, although part of the dramatic text, are no longer part of the dramatic work because they are not read aloud (1986, 72). However, as Vencová (2012, 20) rightly adds, since the director and the actors follow them, they are one of the components that influence the dramatic work, and therefore they are part of it.

2.2 Jan Mukařovský on the dramatic text

Mukařovský completely disagrees with Zich and says that the dramatic text can fulfil both functions: to be the basis for a dramatic work/theatre piece and to function independently as a poetic work (Vencová 2012, 25). Indeed, Mukařovský explains on p. 395, using the example of a statue, that this can apply to any branch of art; it always depends on the context: a statue placed on stage during a performance plays a dramatic role, but a statue placed in the foyer of a theatre is "only" a work of art. On the other hand, Zich agrees that a dramatic work is a dynamic whole, which, however, does not build on the textual component as its foundation, but may be dominated by different components in different ways; on the other hand, not all components are necessarily present in the work, but may substitute for each other. Only two components are irreplaceable and non-excludable: direction and acting (2007, 395). However, for Mukařovský the basic building block is the dialogue, which takes place not only between the

figures, but, moreover, between the figures and the audience, even after the performance is over, when the audience absorbs its impressions. He perceives the dramatic space in a similar way. To Zich's ingredients, then, he adds audience and light.

The difference between dialogue and monologue is simple: a monologue talks about feelings or events that are not temporally related to the character's current situation. Dialogue, on the other hand, is connected to what is happening 'here and now' and aims to affect not only the *dramatis personae* but, more importantly, the audience. The essence of dialogue is the complex interplay of meanings: what is uttered and when and by whom in front of whom. Mukařovský describes this more exemplarily in his study of stage dialogue.

2.3 Jiří Veltruský on the dramatic text

Veltruský follows Mukařovský and agrees with him that a dramatic text becomes a dramatic work just by being read. According to him, the basis for a dramatic work can also be any lyrical or epic text that is translated into a script. For Veltruský, however, the basic component is language, specifically dialogue, which is artificial, not random, and consists of two elements: the topic of conversation and the extra-linguistic situation. Depending on which element predominates, the dialogue becomes either a sequence of actions or a conversation for the sake of conversation. Acting and negotiation form another important component. A dramatic work is based on a dramatic text built on dialogue and stage notes. The latter is, according to Veltruský, an inherent component, influencing all the other components of a dramatic work, although these components may defy the text. As for improvisation, on which, for example, *commedia dell'arte* is based, Veltruský believes that in such a case the actor is limited by the subject matter and the linguistic means, and therefore it is just a different way of performing the play (Vencová 2012, 39). Thus, if the character were to step out of the given framework by improvising, it would exceed the limits of the text, disrupting the entire dramatic work (2019, 102).

2.4 Dramatic text gives way to direction

The dramatic text is understood in the Czech milieu as the basis for staging and it is generally accepted that it is not binding and it is not necessary to adhere to it strictly in staging practice. The staging approach, the specific role of the text itself, and the degree of intervention of other actors (playwright, director, actors) have changed over the centuries, as is, incidentally, also evident from the views of the theatre theorists mentioned above. Pavel Janoušek (2020, 15-114) discusses this topic in *Text and Theatre*. In antiquity, the text was written retrospectively if a given production was successful. Later, dramatic production began to be guided by various rules and uniformities, and the quality of individual works was judged on these rules. Over time, however, both playwrights and actors wanted to define themselves against the rules, and so the emphasis was

placed on improvisation (Italian *commedia dell'arte*). Too much freedom, often leading to chaotic or rambling performances without a punchline, sparked protests from within the ranks of theatre-makers. A prominent opponent of improvisation was, for example, the Italian playwright Carlo Goldoni, who sought to reclaim the importance of the dramatic text. It was thus a return to drama as the starting point and cornerstone of theatrical production. Since the mid-20th century, however, with the director's growing authority, this role of the text has been changing again, or rather disappearing, and the basic element of a theatrical production is not the text, not even the actor, but the director. The director has every right to treat the text as he or she sees fit and to change its tone, structure, and even the cast.

3. Boulevard comedy: characteristics and specifics of the genre

3.1 Boulevard theatre

Boulevard theatre encompasses a set of multiple genres that have emerged, developed, and functioned in parallel. According to Brigitte Brunet, these are faerie, melodrama, drama, comic opera, vaudeville, and boulevard comedy. I will only be focusing on one of these in detail, namely boulevard comedy. However, vaudeville and boulevard comedy are closely related: both genres are based on the mediaeval farce, and according to many vaudeville is the precursor of the boulevard comedy (Pavlovský 2004, 280). In France the word 'vaudeville' is used to describe low comedies about the bourgeoisie, whereas in the Czech Republic such comedies are called boulevard comedies. The term is as broad as the place where it flourished. In fact, boulevard comedy is not a rigidly defined genre and encompasses a wide range of comedies that nevertheless share certain common features that are similar to those of vaudeville.

3.2 Characteristic features of boulevard comedy

The boulevard comedy follows the classical rules of play-making, adhering to the conventional structure of plot and form. It usually respects the triple unity of time, place, and action. The action takes place in one room, usually a living room with a typically bourgeois interior, during one day and closely concerns the people who are present. Precisely because it is so classically conceived and, in some ways, utterly predictable, many have accused it of being unoriginal and ossified. On the other hand, the adherence to traditional rules had two compelling reasons. On the one hand, the audience is used to such a structure, so it will be well oriented in the plot and will look forward to what is to come, because it will partly expect it; on the other hand, such a set-up is less financially and technically demanding, because it remains unchanged, possibly with only minor shifts. It is the adherence to these unities that has been one of the means of making the game "well done" (see below).

Although the basic situational scheme is always similar in boulevard comedy, there are still surprises and unexpected twists. In the beginning, the author always sets up the whole situation. The audience finds itself in the middle of a scene, during an argument or during a friendly conversation or a phone call, and the figures are introduced to it during this brief moment in such a way that it thinks it knows them personally. Soon, however, a problem, a clash, usually over some stupid little thing, starts to arise, and a wheel full of tricks, lies, and pretences starts to spin. Everything is constantly in motion, action replaces action, situation replaces situation, replica replaces replica like machine-gun fire. Faster and faster, everything builds up until it explodes, and then everything is settled, the problem is solved, the disagreements are explained. In this context, Eugène Scribe (1791–1861) uses the term "pièce bien faite" (well-made play), by which he means that the plot should be clear and lucid, it should follow logically, and once the situation and circumstances are outlined, a sequence of events should follow that further complicate the main plot, until finally there is a denouement that explains everything happily (Brunet 2005, 92). This definition is supplemented by the Polish literary critic Zygmunt Kałużyński (1955, 335), who says that a well-made play is a perfectly working mechanism with humour and tears in their proper place and a skilfully constructed denouement which concludes all the action.

It is thus a perfect "craft production" and the master of the field was Georges Feydeau (1862–1921), who could set off such a rapid whirlwind of events that the audience laughed so loudly that they could hardly hear the actors.

A favourite theme of these hilarious plays is the love triangle: they were made famous by the playwright and actor Sacha Guitry (1885–1957). While this theme still dominates boulevard comedy in various permutations, it is not the only one. The central role is played by members of the middle class and their vices, weaknesses, habits, and mores. Boulevard comedy usually tells a simple story from the everyday life of ordinary people, talking about their everyday problems. These are universal difficulties that any viewer can identify with, touching on family and love relationships, money, power, and social status. Although the aim is mainly to entertain, the boulevard comedy, through its thematic focus and choice of figures, gives a picture of the state of society and holds up a mirror to it, mostly just to let people relax, detach themselves from their problems, and laugh at the troubles of those who appear on the stage.

It is not, however, an exact reflection and imitation of the real world, but a kind of concentrate: the figures that appear in boulevard comedy offer a set of characteristics. The image of such human types is always exaggerated to the point of perfection. The figures, always the same in all the plays, behave according to their characteristics, the established mechanism, and the situations they find themselves in. They are not free beings, but puppets who are influenced by situations and always act in a "prescriptive" way, according to their character. They are artificially created to be sufficiently impersonal but touch a wider audience. In her study, Marie Voždová (2009) defends the theory that the authors did not aim at any

moral, socially educational plays, but merely at provoking laughter. However, she disagrees with other experts (e.g. Georges Pillement, Zygmunt Kałużyński, or the playwright Jean-Pierre Martinez) who see boulevard comedy as a critique of society or satire. The escalated situation in boulevard comedies usually arises as a result of petty things (something is said wrongly, a forgotten piece of clothing, an inappropriate joke...), which, however, grow into an existential problem for the figures involved (the threat of divorce, a quarrel between parents and children...), which, if not resolved (they do not admit the truth, apologise, explain the misunderstanding...), will have serious consequences for their future lives. The most important device is speech. It is the main means in the theatre in general, and through it the spectator learns everything about the character of the figure – as he or she speaks, so he or she is. Body language, facial expressions, and gestures are important, but the most important thing is the words and what the figures say to each other. The boulevard comedy is built on a perfectly elaborated plan for the construction of the whole play, i.e. plot and context, but above all on dialogue. There are monologues, but only rarely, and mostly they are the only moments when an idea is expressed with all seriousness and carries a certain message, often a so-called “*mot d’auteur*”, an author’s speech that is a maxim summarising his or her point of view or giving a piece of generally valid wisdom. But the real gem and the hallmark of boulevard comedies is the way that author plays with language: puns, exaggerations, double entendres, the art of argumentation, and also lies. Boulevard comedy works on the principle of the ambiguity of one-word expressions. This is achieved either by the use of a word that carries two meanings, or it is enhanced by the context of the statement or the play as a whole. This is how stage dialogue works, as Mukařovský describes (2007, 407-410).

4. The theory of the manipulation school

Another interesting perspective in the study of the problem of translation of a dramatic text is the theory of the manipulation school, which was put forward by André Lefevere. He stresses that there are external factors that enter the translation process and influence the final product (1992). Rewriters, as Lefevere calls translators, but also literary theorists, critics, or journalists, form a certain idea about the original text and somehow interpret, present, and modify it, so that the work is considered acceptable within the poetics and ideology of the target culture. In their work, they are influenced by two forces: literary professionals (professional readers, university teachers) who are in charge of codifying the poetics in accordance with the ideology of the target culture, and patronage, which has the power to decide what, how, and if it will be published at all in the target culture. In the case of patronage, a threefold distinction is made: ideological, economic, and status. In the first case, patronage determines the choice of the form and subject matter of works, in the second case the amount of money allocated to literary actors, and in the last case it is mainly about the promotion of a certain lifestyle and the acceptance of the actor in

social circles. Depending on whether patronage controls all three areas or only one of them, Lefevere then divides patronage into undifferentiated and differentiated, with differentiated patronage prevailing today.

In his study, Lefevere (1992) uses individual examples to describe how transcribers adapted their texts to the ideology and poetics of the time. The manipulation school is characterised by a prospective orientation, i.e. a focus on the target culture. If a translation is to be acceptable in the target culture, the translator must be familiar with the cultural conventions of that culture, which inherently influence the translation process from the very beginning, from the stage of selecting the text to be translated. As far as cultural realities are concerned, Lefevere refers to them as the Universe of Discourse or "the image of the world". It is up to the translator to either translate the play into the setting of the target culture or to explain concepts or even omit them. The aim is to ensure that the recipient understands the message of the text. The translator therefore approaches the source text with the norms of the time in mind, and on the basis of these norms he or she also creates a translation strategy, deciding how to deal with the original text (for example, in terms of the freedom to select translation solutions).

Translation contributes significantly to the development of the literature of the language into which it is translated, as it can enrich it with new poetics. The translator also influences and manipulates the recipient by conveying a certain image of the foreign author and his/her work, while a recipient who does not know the original language cannot verify its adequacy and is forced to accept the image offered by the translator. The translator thus manipulates in two ways: first the original text, then the recipient, who is manipulated by the already manipulated text.

4.1 The Manipulation School and the translation of the dramatic text

Lefevere's conclusions above are therefore also relevant to the issue of the translation of a dramatic text. In the case of the translation of boulevard comedy, the economic issue comes to the fore in this context. The patronage (most often the theatre management) determines which dramatic text is worth staging, and therefore also the translation, how much the translator will eventually be paid for it, and by what deadline the translator must submit it. We have explained above that boulevard comedy, by its very nature, is a commercial genre whose main task is to ensure high attendance at the theatre and, consequently, a sufficient flow of funds. Patronage will therefore be guided in the selection of a play by whether the title has the ambition to be profitable.

The very term "boulevard comedy" evokes for most people the widespread stereotype of a silly, vulgar comedy where the actors overact and the aim is merely to entertain the audience. Translators, too, can be influenced by such preconceptions and consciously or subconsciously adapt the resulting text to this superficial idea. This can then lead to a failure to pay sufficient attention to preserving the specific features of the text in translation, or to

underestimating the need for careful interpretation of the meaning of the work and the revelation of the author's intention.

The ideology of a given cultural milieu may then exert an influence over whether the message of certain, often taboo, themes is preserved or modified in a given dramatic text. Boulevard comedies often publicly dissect social taboos, openly discuss them, or criticise or ridicule "outdated views". The translator may, however, for various reasons (most often, however, in accordance with the prevailing ideology) suppress or mitigate some overly open or critical views, or, on the contrary, reinforce certain meanings and features of the text (vulgarity, direct denunciation of certain acts, etc.). A personal example: during our seminar of theatre translation where we translated a play of Georges Feydeau *Affaire Edouard*. We were not sure how to handle a joke about Jews. There was a character, a domestic named Samuel, who was speaking badly about himself because of his name sounding Jewish. To understand this joke, we had to read a footnote explaining this joke as an allusion to his colleague-opponent who changed his surname to Samuel to sound Jewish and get more opportunities in the business. As this context was not translatable, we were afraid this joke would sound antisemitic in this era of extra politic correctness.

5. Specific features of theatre translation

As Boráková (2012, 12) writes, there are not too many studies dealing with the translation of drama and most translators and theorists start from theories of the translation of literary texts, which they then try to apply to the translation of drama. In the Czech environment, Jiří Levý has dealt with the translation of drama: he points out the specific features of drama that need to be considered when translating (2012).

The translation of a dramatic text is classified as a literary, artistic translation, and just as the translation of fiction differs from the translation of poetry, the translation of dramatic texts has its own specific features, which are based on the characteristics of dramatic texts as such.

The first and perhaps most controversial feature is the fact that a dramatic text is not a final product.

Above (Section 2) I briefly characterise the current view of the dramatic text and its role in performance practice. If the director has such a free hand, what role will the translator have in translating the original text into the target language? Can he or she take the same liberties as the director and translate the text as he or she wishes, or should he or she stick literally to the original text and translate it into the target language almost "without change"? Can the adequacy of the translation of a dramatic text be judged at all – and what tools can be used to do so?

The starting criterion can be taken from theories of artistic translation. Here, too, three requirements for the translator apply, as defined by Jiří Levý in *The Art of Translation* (2012): 1) the stage of understanding the subject matter, 2) the stage of interpreting the subject matter, and 3) the stage of re-stylising the subject matter.

Since the function of translation in this case is also to present the author and his/her work to the target audience, the translation should aim to preserve the author's intention and, if possible, the characteristic stylistic elements of the text. At the same time, the target audience must be kept in mind in order to ensure that they understand the text and that it provides them with an experience similar to that of the recipients of the original work. If the text contains some allusions on source culture, the translated text must either explain it or use a similar cue typical for the target culture. For instance, in a play of Laurent Baffie *Toc toc*, there is a character named Blanche and another character is making allusion on a tale, very known in France, about a goat named the same way. The translator translated it literally but the Czech public does not know this tale and would not understand this joke.

If the translator were to project his or her own visions, ideas – as mentioned in the section 4.1, the translators of boulevard comedy could often be influenced by the common perception of the genre and change the text of the translation in order to comply with this opinion of silly humorous play – and a narrower interpretation into the translation (in Levy's words, there would be noise/šum) than the original text offers (or if he or she was asked to do so directly by the commissioning body, most often a specific theatre venue), a note should be included with the translation that it is an adaptation, an adaptation of the text for a specific production. During an interview with translator and director Jaromír Janeček, he claims that he likes to translate the theatre because he has such a liberty in changing the translated text to comply with his own vision of the play (Töröková 2019, XI-XII).

Another specific feature of a dramatic text is its form, specifically its two basic building blocks: the figures' speeches and the stage notes (see below). The individual lines are uttered in the context of situations that shape the outcomes. We do not find, with a few exceptions, an impartial narrator accompanying us through the plot and giving us information about the individual figures and the events that have taken place between them. The figures' speeches thus carry the plot line, moving the action forward, but they also have other meaning-making features. For example, they talk about the character of individual figures (each figure expresses him- or herself in his or her own specific way). Sometimes, the translator of boulevard comedy wants the language to be popular and informal that he forgets to make a difference between the characters and their register, for instance, in a translated play *Toc toc* of Laurent Baffie by Jaromír Janeček, Marie, an old religious woman is using vulgarities, or Vincent, a sworn atheist and blasphemer is saying things like "Oh my God" which is very improbable for both of them.

Stage notes are an aid to determining the character of the figures, but also for the meaning of the whole scene. These are additional notes on the way a given line is spoken, on the disposition of a given character, but also on the setting in general (especially at the beginning of an act). Scene notes are often misunderstood as superfluous ballast, hence the view that they can be translated approximately or vaguely. Let us recall, however,

that they have their own significance in the text, not infrequently helping the theatre-makers to grasp the character and scene in question. In the beginning of the play "C'est jamais facile" of Jean-Claude Islert, there is this stage note:

Une petite radio cassette posée sur une table basse joue doucement une chanson rock de Bob Dylan. Édouard un homme d'une cinquantaine d'années sort de sa chambre en T-Shirt et caleçon à motif moderne (style BD). Il s'étire, baille puis appuie sur l'interrupteur électrique. Rien ne s'allume. Il essaie deux ou trois fois. Toujours rien. Il soupire, puis il traverse la pièce et se regarde machinalement dans un miroir. Il s'arrête et se regarde.

It is a simple text but its translation made by Jaromír Janeček is containing incomprehensible words borrowed from French language and the translator even added a few notes missing in the original text:

Jednoduchý interiér. Všude knihy. Na nízkém stolku hraje tiše rádio rockovou skladbu Boba Dylana. Z ložnice vyjde Eduard, asi padesátiletý muž, oblečený **v tričku T-Shirt** a moderních **spodkách ve stylu BD**, zívne, protáhne se. Chce rozsvítit. Nic. Zkouší to znovu. Nic. Povzdychne si, přejde místnost a zadívá se do zrcadla.

A criterion of a good translation of a drama that is not without significance is that the individual lines are pronounceable and full of meaning.

Puns, deliberate misunderstandings, humorous comments, innuendo, etc. are an integral part of dramatic texts – and thus of their translations. Especially in the case of translating boulevard comedy, given that it is mostly conversational comedy, it is necessary to preserve these textual elements, even more so because every word in this type of comedy has its fixed place.

5.1 Differences between theatre and literary translation

The very first important difference is in the sponsor. There is a difference in the ratio of translations made to order (in the case of literary translations for publishers and of theatrical texts for the theatre) compared to translations made "for later". In practice, literary translators have more translations to order, whereas translators for the theatre tend to translate more "for later", into the database of a theatre agency, and wait until a theatre contacts them through the agency to inform them that they are interested in producing their translation.

This leads to the second point, and that is remuneration. Given the above practice, there is also a difference in the way translators are remunerated. In literary translation, the translator usually receives (depending on the contract) the remuneration after the translation is completed, whereas in theatre translation, the translators are remunerated

in the form of royalties from the performance. Thus, the translator often works for the theatre for free at first, with the prospect that someone will take up his or her translation in the near or distant future. The literary translator (regardless of market conditions, the treatment of translators by publishers, the level of remuneration, etc.) is thus rewarded immediately for the work he or she has done.

Translation should include editing and proofreading. These are provided (whether of good quality or not) by the publishing house for literary translations. In the case of theatre translation, the translator does it him- or herself or finds someone on his or her own. Since theatre practitioners do not pay attention to grammar (since the text is only a sketch for a given production) and the text is often not even distributed in print, translations of theatre texts do not have a uniform form, and there are typos, incorrect punctuation marks, etc. Here are some examples of sentences taken from translations of boulevard comedies which are available at Dilia database:

To jistě, ale prohrávat v kasínu, které vás nakonec úplně zruinuje vyvolává představu bankrotu, to ve vás vyvolává úzkost! (*Georges et Georges* by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, translation Jan Cimický)

Sarah Prosím. Tak mluv!. Naše schůzky se nám teď asi zkomplikují. Vzhledem k mým výsledkům ve škole, došla máma k názoru, že to doučování nemá žádnéj smysl a že ty, jako učitel nestojíš za nic.

Eduard A ty si myslíš, že se jí, jako tvůj manžel, budu zdát lepší?

Sarah Proč ne? Fysicky ses jí vždycky líbil. (*C'est jamais facile* by Jean-Claude Islert, translation Jaromír Janeček)

Last but not least, there is the matter of the form in which the text reaches the recipient. In the case of a literary translation, unless it is an audiobook, the recipient is the reader who reads the translation (printed or as an e-book). Any editorial or proofreading interventions in the text are, or should be, for the benefit of the work and to maintain fidelity to the original. In a theatrical text, there are several stages of reading and processing. The basic path leads from the author to the audience through the translator, dramaturge, director, and actor, and each participant in the chain, especially the director, who is expected to do so, can significantly modify the text.

6. Conclusions

Although the view of the role of the dramatic text has changed over time, it is now generally considered that it is a rough basis for the production, and the director is free to use, modify, or shorten it or change its structure. That may cause theatre practitioners and translators to think that the quality of the translation does not matter, even more so when it comes to a commercial and humorous genre such as boulevard comedy.

However, the most characteristic features of boulevard comedy are precise construction, humorous plotting, and wordplay. This is what the translator should bear in mind and this is also a reason why it can often be difficult to translate a text into Czech without losing the humorous elements. Not only that, but it is also not uncommon for translators to modify the text according to their imagination and overly specific interpretation of situations, which can distort or alter the author's original intent. Especially since, unlike translations of literary texts for publishing houses, translations of drama do not undergo any editorial control and are offered in the condition in which the translator submits them to the theatre agency.

The translator should therefore honour the author's intention and seek a form that adequately preserves the specific features of the source text, since he or she guarantees the quality of the picture he or she gives of the play and its author.

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This text was proofread within the project Development of Research and Popularisation Resources of the Institute of Czech Literature of the CAS, CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/18_054/0014701, co-funded by the EU's European Structural and Investment Funds within the operational programme Research, Development and Education.