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1 Introduction

In chapter 3 of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* Alice has a conversation with a mouse:

(1) However, it was over at last, and they sat down again in a ring, and begged the Mouse to tell them something more.
   “You promised to tell me your history, you know,” said Alice, “and why it is you hate—C and D,” she added in a whisper, half afraid that it would be offended again.
   “Mine is a long and a sad tale!” said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.
   “It is a long tail, certainly,” said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse’s tail; “but why do you call it sad?” And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that her idea of the tale was something like this:

   [Carroll 2001: 34]

It is quite apparent that the humorous effect in the quotation comes from the simultaneous actualisation of two possible meanings that are associated with the phonetic sequence [tejl] in English: 1) spelled *<tale>*: ‘something told or related; relation or recital of happening’ (WNW: 1365); 2) spelled *<tail>*: ‘the rear end of an animal’s body, esp. when forming a distinct, flexible appendage to the trunk’ (WNW: 1363). The joke on *tale/tail* is, strictly speaking, limited to spoken English and thus primarily intended for a listener rather than a reader, but, provided that the reader has mastered the relevant English spelling conventions, the pun effect will also be actualised during a silent reading of the text.\(^{10}\) In addition, the text of the Mouse’s tale is pre-

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\(^{10}\) On the relationship between visual impression and aural understanding cf., for example, Sundmark 1999: 125f.
sented in the shape of a tail, and this visual effect supports the connection between the two meanings.¹¹

How can such a word pun that is based on English-specific homonymy be translated into another language such as, for example, Russian? Or is it even possible to do so?¹²

Before a closer look at the Russian translations of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* can be undertaken, a short presentation of the meanings that can be actualised in wordplay is needed. I will apply a modified version of the terminology suggested by Offord, who uses the expression *pivot (P)* for “the word or phrase that the ambiguity hinges on” (Offord 1997: 235).

Following Offord (1997: 238), two surface elements can be identified in the *tale/tail* pun: the first expression $P_1$ (*tale*), and the second expression $P_2$ (*tail*), are associated with particular meanings: $Q_1$ ‘something told or related; relation or recital of happening’ and $Q_2$ ‘the rear end of an animal’s body, esp. when forming a distinct, flexible appendage to the trunk’, respectively. The connection between the meanings $Q_1$ and $Q_2$, which are produced through the expressions $P_1$ and $P_2$, and primarily through the similarity in sound between them and the graphic layout of the written text,¹³ creates the pun. This makes it possible to identify an additional “wordplay” meaning for the expression as a whole ($P_1/Q_1+P_2/Q_2$), that is, $F$, which is actualised by the listener or reader and makes her/him accept the expression as a pun. This type of wordplay, in which two (or more) expressions ($P_1, P_2, ...$) are explicitly present in the text will be called *horizontal* wordplay.

However, if the listener or reader can be made to associate an expression $P_1$ with a second expression $P_2$ that is not explicitly present in the text, the “wordplay” meaning $F$ may still be actualised. Examples of this type of wordplay can be found in chapter 9 of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, when Alice talks to the Mock Turtle, who informs her of the subjects that he took in school:

(2) “Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with,” the Mock Turtle replied; “and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision.”

(Carroll 2001: 102)

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¹¹ For a collection of examples of tail-shaped layouts of the text of the mouse’s tale in a number of editions of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, see Schaefer & Schaefer 1995. The wider question of the relationship between the text and the illustrations in the original and translations of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* will not be elaborated in the present investigation.

¹² For a general discussion of wordplay and translation that includes examples from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, see, for example, Koller 2001: 258–266.

¹³ Cf. also Nash 1985: 138, who gives a pun on *tale* and *tail* in Shakespeare’s *As you like it* as an example of a “homophonic pun”.

31
Of course, the listener or reader associates all the subjects that were mentioned by the Mock Turtle (P₁ Reeling, Writhing, etc.) with the “normal” subjects Reading, Writing, Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division (P₂). Even if the P₂ expressions are not mentioned in the text, the connection between the explicitly given Reeling etc. and the implicitly present Reading etc. (through similarities in both pronunciation and spelling) evoke—for most listeners or readers—a similar wordplay meaning (F) as in the tale/tail pun.¹⁴ This type of wordplay is usually called vertical wordplay.¹⁵

The discussion of the present investigation will focus on horizontal wordplay and its translation into Russian. The source text (ST) material includes three puns in the text of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. The first of these is the tale/tail pun that has already been mentioned, cf. example (1). The second pun follows closely after the first, when the Mouse complains that Alice is not listening properly to its story, and is built on the homophony of the English words not and knot:

(3) “You are not attending!” said the Mouse to Alice, severely. “What are you thinking of?”
   “I beg your pardon,” said Alice very humbly: “you had got to the fifth bend, I think?”
   “I had not!” cried the Mouse, sharply and very angrily.
   “A knot!” said Alice, always ready to make herself useful, and looking anxiously about her. “Oh, do let me help to undo it!”

(Carroll 2001: 35f)

The third pun occurs in chapter 9, when Alice is introduced to the Mock Turtle, and involves the Mock Turtle’s childhood memories:¹⁶

(4) “When we were little,” the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, “we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle— we used to call him Tortoise—”
   “Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?” Alice asked.

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¹⁵ The horizontal/vertical terminology for these two distinctive types of wordplay were, as far as I am aware, first introduced by Wagenknecht (1965: 21f). Cf. also Hausmann (1974: 16f, 76–80) for a detailed discussion of the classification of vertical and horizontal wordplay. The same terminology is used also by Delabastita (1996: 128) and others. Offord (1997: 234ff, 238ff), mentions also the terms explicit and implicit puns. For a theoretical introduction to Russian wordplay see Sannikov 1999: 490–513.
¹⁶ For a discussion of the gender of the Mock Turtle and other creatures in Wonderland in the Russian translations, see Eliferova 2009.
“We called him Tortoise because he taught us,” said the Mock Turtle angrily. “Really you are very dull!”

(Carroll 2001: 100)

A tortoise \( (P_1) \) is ‘a turtle, esp. one that lives on land […]’ (WNW: 1412), and the word can be pronounced similarly to the expression taught us \( (P_2) \) in some varieties of English.\(^{17}\)

Following Delabastita (1993: 202–210), three main strategies for translating puns will be distinguished:\(^{18}\)

1) PUN > ZERO. The source text (ST) that contains the pun is not translated, and the corresponding target text (TT) is omitted.

2) PUN > NO PUN. The meanings of the ST expressions \( P_1 \) and \( P_2 \) are both present in the TT, but the wordplay meaning \( F \) is lost in the translation.\(^{19}\)

3) PUN > PUN. The focus in this type of translation is on the wordplay meaning that is present in the ST.\(^{20}\) In addition to the wordplay meaning \( (F) \), which is more or less similar to the ST \( F \), the TT can focus on the following meanings in the ST:\(^{21}\) a) the meanings of both \( P_1 \) and \( P_2 \); b) the meaning only of \( P_1 \);\(^{22}\) c) the meaning only of \( P_2 \);\(^{23}\) d) the meanings of neither \( P_1 \) nor \( P_2 \).\(^{24}\)

\(^{17}\) In addition, the two expressions can be associated with the almost homophonous tortuous \( (P_3) \) ‘1 full of twists, turns, curves, or windings; winding; crooked 2 not straightforward; devious; specif., deceitful or tricky’ (WNW: 1412), which contributes an element of vertical wordplay. Cf., for example, Oittinen 1997: 80 and Weissbrod 1996: 230, who report the actualisation of the meaning ‘one who quarrels’ in Finnish and Hebrew TT corresponding to the tortoisetaught us pun. Example (4) also contains a vertical pun on school ‘educational establishment; collection of fish’, which is mentioned, for example, by Nash (1985: 141) in his section on homonyms (Cammarata 2007 and Ting 1984, however, do not mention it). Among the Russian translations that are discussed in the present article only JA seems to make an attempt to offer a pun in the corresponding TT: “— Byla, značit, naša škola pridonnaja. – Pridonajja? Pri vašem dome? – peresprošla Alisa. – Pridon-naja! Na dne morskom! – rasserdila’ Telepacha.” (Jachnin 2002: 117).

\(^{18}\) A fourth possible strategy, PUN > PUNOID (rhyme, alliteration, etc., cf. Delabastita 1993: 207f), is of less relevance for the investigated Russian translations and will therefore not be discussed in the present article.

\(^{19}\) According to Delabastita (1993: 202), this type of translation (into a “non-selective non-pun”) is often used when the translator concentrates on a “literal” translation of the ST.

\(^{20}\) Cf. Heibert (1993: 170), who stresses that the most important level of the translation of a pun is “die rhetorische Funktions-Ebene”.

\(^{21}\) Cf. Offord 1997: 245, who distinguishes between translations “majoring” on the meaning of the first, second, or both expressions of the ST pun.

\(^{22}\) Cf., for example, the translation of the tortoisetaught us pun into Italian by Pietrocòla-Rossetti (1872: 140): “Quando eravamo piccini,” continuò la Falsa-Testuggine, un poco più quieta, ma sempre singhiozzando, “andavamo a scuola, al mare. La maestra era una vecchia Testuggine—e noi la chiamavamo Tartaruga—” “Perché la chiamavamo Tartaruga perché c’insegnava a tartagliare,” disse la Falsa-Testuggine con dispetto: “Avete poco comprendonio!”“. According to Cammarata, tartaruga is mainly used to refer to the marine species, whereas testuggine corresponds to the land-living tortoise. Pietrocòla-Rossetti’s translation, thus, switches the species in order to...
2 Russian translations of wordplay in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

For the present investigation, the main TT corpus includes twelve translations of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland into Russian.25

1. **GR** – Priključenija Ani v “mirě čudes”, tr. into Russian by M. Granstrem, first published in 1908 (Granstrem 1908).
4. **OG** – Alisa v strane čudes (tr. into Russian by A. P. Olenič-Gnenenko, first published in 1940 (Olenič-Gnenenko 1940/2007).

pun on the P₁ tartaruga, whereas several other Italian translations keep the ST order, punning on a P₁ testuggine (cf. Cammarata 2007: 159–162).

23 Cf., for example, the translation of the tale/tail pun into French by Parisot (1979: 114f), which preserves only the meaning of the ST P₂ tail (P₂ vos queues ‘your tails’) introduced by an innovative TT P₁ C’est que ‘it is that...’: “Tu m’avais promis, t’en souvient-il, dit Alice, de me raconter ton histoire et de me dire pourquoi tu hais... les Ch... et les Ch... » ajouta-t-elle à voix basse, craignant presque de l’offenser de nouveau. « C’est que... c’est long et triste! » dit la Souris en se tournant vers Alice et en exhalant un soupir. « Vos queues, à vous autres souris, sont longues, sans doute, dit Alice, en abaissant avec étonnement son regard vers l’appendice caudal de son interlocutrice; mais pourquoi dire qu’elles sont tristes ? »”.

24 Cf., for example, the translation of the not/knot pun into Swedish by Snellman (1946: 38): Neither the meaning of the ST P₁ not nor P₂ knot is preserved, but it does contain a pun on the homophonous Swedish words kära ‘dear’ (Å kära då ‘Oh dear’) and tjära ‘tar’: “– Jag ber om ursäkt, sa Alice mycket ödmjukt, du hade kommit till den femte kröken tror jag? – Å kära då! skrek musen vasst och mycket ilsket. – Tjära? sa Alice, alltid redo att vara till nytta och såg sig ängsligt omkring. Låt mig hjälpa dig att få bort den!”.

25 For an overview of the translations of the Alice books into Russian up to 1988, see Rušajlo 1991. Cf. also the discussion by Weaver (1964: 60–61) on the early Russian translations, as well as the checklist on pp. 130–132. Some of the problems pertaining to the translation of the puns in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland are addressed in the short studies by Kurdjukova (2004), who discusses the translations by Ščerbakov, Demurova, Zachoder, and Nabokov), Garsija (2006: the translations by Nabokov, Demurova, Zachoder), and Čaryčanskaja (2005: the translations by Nabokov and Demurova).

In addition, a short excerpt (**SO**), which includes the pun on *tale* and *tail* from the translation by Solov’eva (Solov’eva 1909), has been included in the TT corpus.  

Chronologically, the target texts represent almost a century of the translation history of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* into Russian, and include 1) the pre-Soviet period (**GR, SO**); 2) the nineteen twenties, both in the Soviet Union and abroad (**FR, NA**); 3) the prewar Soviet period (**OG**); 4) the Soviet nineteen sixties and seventies (**DE, ZA, SC**); 5) the Perestrojka period (**JA**); and 6) the post-Soviet period (**NE, KO, BL, ST**). Evidently, the later translators had at least the theoretical possibility of accessing the earlier translation, but this possibility was reliant on the degree of availability of the respective editions; that is, before the appearance of electronic editions. However, a complete picture of the relationship between the different Russian TT is impossible to present without a much broader investigation than the present one.

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26 **SO** is quoted by Demurova (2000: 99f). Unfortunately, I have had no access to the original text. For Solov’eva and her translation cf. also Karlinsky (1970: 311f). Two more translations, by Tarlovskij (2007) and Čarova (2009), omit all three TT sections that correspond to the ST puns discussed in the present article.

27 **NA**, originally published in 1923 (according to Boyd 1990: 557, Nabokov probably made the translation during the summer of 1922), was not published in the Soviet Union until much later. According to Rušajlo (1991), the first Soviet edition was published in 1989, and neither Zachoder nor Demurova seem to have had access to it for their translations (cf. Friedberg 1997: 124f). Vdovenko (2000), referring to Vera Nabokova, claims that Nabokov had not read any other translations of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* before creating his own, whereas Karlinsky (1970: 312) assumes that Nabokov must have been acquainted with **SO**. Commenting on Karlinsky’s article, Nabokov himself claims that he had not seen any other Russian translation of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* when he was working on the translation or afterwards (cf. Nabokov 1990: 286).

Several of the later translators explicitly refer to their knowledge of earlier translations: in the preface to his translation Blechman, for example, reports being acquainted with **DE, ZA, SO**, and **Demurova** (2000: 87–100) discusses her own translation in relation to **SO, NA**, and others. Zachoder (1972/2007: 9) sweepingly refers to earlier translations into Russian of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in a negative way.

2.1 The pun on tale and tail

In the ST (cf. appendix I), the tale/tail pun precedes an illustration in which the Mouse’s tale is embedded within the shape of a tail, and a particular problem for any translator is how to motivate the tail-shaped layout of the written text of the Mouse’s tale.29 Thus, most translations can be expected to concentrate on the meaning of the second expression of the pun (P₂ tail).

2.1.1 No pun

Three of the TT contain little or no punning (F) and shift from tale (istorija, rasskaz) to tail (chvost) more or less straightforwardly. In (5), the Mouse itself calls its tale “long-tailed” (dlinnochvostym), which only provokes exclamations of interest from the audience, but no particular reaction from Alice.

(5) – Razskaži nam’ ešče čto-nibud’! – prosili oni myšku.
– Da vy ne budete slyšat’, i razskaz’ moj pokažetsja vam’ dlinnochvostym”.
– Razskaži, razskaži! – razdalos’ so vsėch’ storon”. – Dlinnochvostyj razskaz’! Ėto interesno!
– Ja razskažu vam”, kakaja bėda odnaždy so mnoju čut´ ne slučilas’:

[GR, p. 33f]

In (6), the long and simple story (dlinnaja i prostaja istorija) is compared to a tail (kak chvost), and the source of Alice’s surprise is the particular comparison in itself and not the problem of the ST of how a tail can be sad. The long and sad tale has become a long and simple tale.

(6) – Ėta istorija dlinnaja i prostaja. Kak chvost, – skazala myš’.
«Istorija – kak chvost?» – udivilas’ pro sebja Alisa.
No myš’ uže načala, i perebivat’ ee voprosami Alisa ne rešilas’. Ona liš’ smotreła na myšinjy chvost i predstavljala sebe takuju če dlinnuju, kak chvost, istoriju. Vitievatyj rasskaz myši vilsja v voobraženii Alisy chvostom.

[JA, p. 42]

In examples (7) and (8) the translators introduce a certain uncertainty into what Alice hears. The source of this uncertainty, however, does not primar-

29 The only exception I have encountered is the translation into Swedish by Runeberg (1921), where the visual shape of the text of the poem has been changed into a bowl, and the pun adapted accordingly: “»Du lovade berätta mig om ditt sagolika liv», sade Alice, »och varför du hatar – K och H», sade hon sakta, för hon var rädd att sära mösset en gång till. »Mitt liv har verkligen varit ganska sagolikt», sade mösset med en suck. »Det måtte då ha varit väldigt välsmakligt!» sade Alice, för hon tyckte att sagosoppa var det allra bästa som fanns; och så här blev därför hennes föreställning om mössets sagolika liv, medan det berättades för henne:”

36
ily lie in Alice’s perception, but in the insufficient clarity of pronunciation on the part of the Mouse. In example (7) the Mouse coughs: “but on the word rasskaz [the Mouse] coughed and produced some indistinct sounds, which Alice heard as being similar to the word chvost”, whereas in example (8) the Mouse adds the word prost ‘simple’ to the description of the tale (‘my tale is simple, sad, and long’) and the author/translator then explains that Alice heard prost ‘simple’ instead of chvost ‘tail’. However, in both (7) and (8) Alice’s final question, why the Mouse calls its tail sad, is translated literally.

(7) — Éto dlinnyj i pečal’nyj rasskaz, — načala Myš’, no na slove rasskaz ona zakašljalas’ i izdala kakie-to nečlenorazdel’nye zvuki, kotorye Alise pokazal’s pochoţimi na slovo «chvost».
— Éto i vpravdu dlinnyj chvost, — skazala Alisa, s udivleniem razgljadja myšinyj chvost, — no počemu vy nazyvaete ego pečal’nym?
[ST]

(8) „Moj razskaz˝ prost˝, pečalen˝ i dlinen˝“, so vzdochem˝ skazala Myš’, obraščajas´ k˝ Aně.
„Da, on˝ nesomněnno, očen´ dlinnyj“, zamětila Anja, kotoroj poslyšalos´ ne „prost˝, a „chvost˝: „No počemu Vy ego nazyvaete pečal´nym”?“
[NA, p. 25]

2.1.2 Puns on expressions corresponding to the ST P₁ tale

Instead of the words rasskaz, istorija, etc., in (9) the Mouse refers to its tale with the word kanconetta ‘canzonet, canzonetta’, and explains that it is called kanconetta because it is short (potomu čto ona korotkaja). Alice, however, interprets the accusative form kanconettu as konca netu ‘there is no end (to it)’ (in the standard, akanie pronunciation, the unstressed a in kanconettu and the unstressed o in konca netu are pronounced similarly) and, consequently, claims that the tale should be very long instead!

(9) — Ja ispolnju vam pečal´nuju kanconettu, — vzdochnuv, skazala Myš’. — Kanconettu, potomu čto ona korotkaja.
— Počemu že? Esli konca netu, značit, ona dolžna byt´ očen´ dlinnoj, — nedoumenno vozrazila Alisa. No Myš´ izognula drožaščij chvostik, sžala ego lapkami i ispolnila nižesledujuče stichi, kotorye v pamjati Alisy byli teper´ nerazryvno svjazany s dviženijami myšinogo chvosta:
[SC, p. 54]
2.1.3 Puns on chvost, chvostik, corresponding to the ST P2 tail

Among the Russian translations that recreate the pun effect F of the ST in the TT, five make puns on the word chvost ‘tail’. In example (10–12) the role of P1 is played by the word prochvost ORD\(^{30}\) ‘scoundrel’, leading to the homonymous P2 pro chvost ‘about a tail’ (a story about a tail). In (10) the Mouse declares the name of the story to be Prochvost ‘The scoundrel’.

(10) – Rasskaz moj nazyvaetsja «Prochvost»; on dlinnyj i pečal’nyj, – Myš’ povernulas’ k Alise i vzdochnula.
   «Pro chvost? On dejstviteľ’no dlinnyj, – podumala Alisa, s udivleniem razgлjadyvaja chvost Myši, odnako čto že v nem pečal’nogo?»

[NE]

In (11), the Mouse tells Alice that it is going to tell her a very long and sad story (Ēto očen’ dlinnaja i grustnaja istorija) and then suddenly exclaims prochvost ‘the scoundrel’ without any apparent motivation.

(11) – Ėto očen’ dlinnaja i grustnaja istorija, – načala Myš’ so vzdochom.
   Pomolčav, ona vdrug vzvizgnula:
   – Prochvost!
   – Pro chvost? – povtorila Alisa s nedoumeniem i vzgljanula na ee chvost.
   – Grustnaja istorija pro chvost?
   No Myš’ ee ne slušala – ona vsja ušla v svoj rasskaz. I poka ona govorila, Alisa vse nikak ne mogla ponjat’, kakoe ėto imeet otnošenie k myšinomu chvostu. Poētomu istorija, kotoruju rasskazala Myš’, vygljadela v ee vo-obraženie vot tak:

[DE\(_1\), p. 30]\(^{31}\)

In (12), the Mouse starts talking about its story, but, overcome by emotion, cries out prochvost podlyj ‘the mean scoundrel’, whereupon Alice wonders how a story can be mean (instead of the ST sad): “A story about a long tail—that is understandable, but how can a story be mean?” (Rasskaz pro chvost dlinnyj – ēto ponjatno, no kak možet byt’ chvost podlym?).

(12) Myš’ povernulas’ k Alise i skazala s drož’ju v golose, grustno i tjaželo vzdychaja: «Moj dlinnyj rasskaz pro to, ... čto ...on, prochvost podlyj, odnaždy... V obščem, delo bylo tak.»
   «Rasskaz pro chvost dlinnyj – ēto ponjatno, no kak možet byt’ chvost podlym?» – razmyšljala Alisa vsluch, gljadja na chvost Myši i pytajas’ vo-obrazit’ podlyj chvost. Poētomu rasskaz myši predstavljalsja ej primerno tak:

[KO]

\(^{30}\) The English translations marked ORD are quoted from The Oxford Russian Dictionary, Oxford & New York, 1993.

\(^{31}\) In DE\(_2\) the last section begins: “I poka Myš’ govorila, Alisa vse nikak ne mogla […]”. 38
The pun in (13) plays upon the polysemy of the word *chvostik* ‘little tail’ but also ‘a little more’, *s chvostikom* ‘and a little more’. The Mouse explains to Alice that its tragic saga, its terrible story (‘Étoj tragičeskoj sage, ėtoj strašnoj istorii’) is a little older than a thousand years (*s chvostikom tysjača let*), where the expression *s chvostikom* refers to *tysjača let*. Alice, however, connects the expression *s chvostikom* with the immediately preceding *istorija* (‘Istorija s chvostikom’) and, consequently, has difficulties understanding how a story can have a tail.

(13) – Vnemli, o ditja! Étoj tragičeskoj sage, ėtoj strašnoj istorii s chvostikom tysjača let! – skazala ona.

– Istorija s chvostikom? – udivlenno peresprosila Alisa, s interesom pogl-jadev na Myškin chvostik. – A čto s nim slučilos’ strašnogo? Po-moemu, on soveršenno cel – von on kakoj dlinnyj!

[ZA, p. 41]

The pun on *chvost* in (14) is of a different kind. Here the Mouse presents a lengthy introduction to its story, which includes reference to its own courage (*muţestvo*) and self-sacrifice (*samopoţertvovanie*). Then the Mouse declares that Alice certainly will not call the Mouse a *chvastun´ja* ‘boaster, braggart’ (derived from the verb *chvastat´sja* ‘to boast (of)’) (‘Uznav ee, vy ne nazovete menja chvastun´ej’) after having heard the story. However, Alice interprets this as a neologism *chvostun´ja*, which is associated with the noun *chvost*, thus showing that her Russian pronunciation adheres to the standard, *akanie* norm, according to which the unstressed *a* and *o* are pronounced similarly (stressed on the second syllable, *chvastun´ja* and *chvostun´ja* are pronounced the same). Looking at the Mouse’s tail, Alice cannot see why the Mouse refuses to be called *Chvostun´ja* *‘tailer’*.


– Ja uverena, čto vaša istorija očen´ interesna, – skazala Alisa, nevol´no gljadja na chvost Myši, – no nazvanie Chvostun´î vse-taki očen´ k vam pod-chodit, i ja ne ponimaju, počemu vy ne chotite, čtoby ja vas tak nazyvala.

Ona prodolţala smotret´ na chvost Mysi v to vremja, kak ta načala govori-t´, tak čto rasskaz predstavilsja ej v sledujuščem vide...

[SO]

2.1.4 Puns on other expressions corresponding to the ST P₂ tail

In (15), Alice asks the Mouse to continue (‘prodolţit´’) its tale to the end (‘do konca’). The Mouse promises to do so, but adds that the continuation (‘prodolţenie’) will be long and sad. However, Alice interprets the
In (16), Alice asks the Mouse to tell its istorija and it declares that fate has given it an ordinary, but sad konec ‘end’ (Mne dan sud’boju obyčnyj, no pečalnyj konec). However, Alice understands konec to mean the end of the Mouse’s tail and follows the tail with her eyes to its very end (do samogo konca).

— Mne dan sud’boju obyčnyj, no pečalnyj konec, — skazala Myš’, povoravčivajaš’ k Alise i vzdychaja.
— Vaš konec nesomnenno obyčnyj, — skazala Alisa, vnimatelno ogljaddev Myš’ i proslediv ee dlinnyj chvost do samogo konca, — no počemu vy nazyvaete ego pečalnym?

[FR, p. 51]

2.1.5 Puns on expressions that correspond neither to the ST P1 nor P2
In (17), finally, the TT pun is of a different kind than in the other translations. After promising to tell its story, the Mouse complains that it is hungry (chočetsja est’) and that it feels damp (syro). Alice interprets the word syro as syra, genitive sg. of syr ‘cheese’ (akanie again), and, looking at the Mouse, Alice notices that even the Mouse’s tail has grown thin due to the Mouse’s lack of food.

(17) — Pomnite, vy mne obeščali koe-čto rasskazat’, — obratilas’ k nej Aliska šepotom, opasajas’, kak by Myš’ snova ne obidelas’. — O tom, počemu vy ne ljubite mjau i gav.
— Rasskažu, — soglasilas’ Myš’, — chotja sejčas ne samoe udobnoe vremja: chočetsja est’... syro... — i ona tjaželo vzdchnula.
— Syra u menja, k sožaleniju, ni kusochka, — skazala Aliska, — a pro sebja podumala: «Bednjakha! u nee daže chvostik pochudel! »
Myš’ načala svoj rasskaz, i Aliska vse smotrela i smotrela na Myšin chvost i uslyšala vot čto:

[BL]
2.2 The pun on not and knot

2.2.1 Omission
In (18), the Mouse’s protest (“I had not!”) that is directed towards Alice’s assumption about the “fifth bend”, and Alice’s following pun have both been replaced by an exchange of words; “Why did you interrupt me...” followed by “Oh, don’t be angry with me!”.

(18) – To byli kot” i pětuch”! – prervala myšku Anja.
– Začɛm” ty perebila menja i ne dala dokončit’ razskaz”, glupaja děvočka!
– skazala serdito myška.
– O, ne serdis’ na menja! – prosila Anja.

[GR, p. 35]

2.2.2 No pun
In (19), there is a lengthy addition to the TT so that the movement from not (Da net Že!) to knot (Uzel!) can be achieved. This explains why Alice thinks that “in some way or another a knot had formed on the Mouse’s long and sad tail” (kakim-to obrazom na ee dlinnom i pečal’nom chvoste obrazovalsja uzel).

(19) – Vy ne slušaete, – strogo skazala Myš’ Alise. – O čem vy dumaete?
– Prošu proščenija, – otvetila Alisa s podobostrastiem. – Vy kažetsja při-bližaetes’ k pjatomu izgibu?
– Da net Že! – serdito zakričala myš’, dergaja chvostikom, – vy prosto svjazyvaete mne ruki!
Uvidev kak Myš’ dergaet chvostom i v to že vremja govorit o kakom svjazyvani, Alisa rešila, čto kakim-to obrazom na ee dlinnom i pečal’nom chvoste obrazovalsja uzel.
– Uzel! – vskričala Alisa, vsegda gotovaja pomoč’ bližnemu, s trevogoj gljadja na Mys’. – Ach, pozvol’ te mne pomoč’ vam razvjažat’ ego!
[ST]

2.2.3 Puns on expressions that correspond to the ST P₂ knot
In (20), the translator adds a P₁ ne konfuzil ‘didn’t confuse’ (Ešče nikto men-ja tak ne konfuzil: So far no one has ever confused me like this) so that he can arrive at the P₂ uzel ‘knot’. According to the so-called ikanie pronunciation of Russian, the unstressed i and e are pronounced in a similar way, and the two last syllables of ne konfuzil are pronounced the same way as uzel.

(20) — Prostite, — otvetila Alisa očen’ skromno. — Vy došli do pjatogo izgiba, ja polagaju.
— Ty sudiš’ obo vsem vkriv’ i vkos’! — razdraženno vskričala Myš’. — Ešče nikto menja tak ne konfuzil…
2.2.4 Puns on zavjazat’ ‘to tie, to bind; to start’

In (21) and (22), the pun is created by the polysemous use of the verbs zavjazat’ and zavjazvat’ ORD ‘to tie, to bind; to start’, and the noun zavjazka ORD ‘beginning, start; opening (of novel, etc.’). In (21), the Mouse says, “This was [only] the beginning!” (Èto byla zavjazka!), which Alice interprets in terms of a knot having been tied (Uzelok zavjazalsja), and she subsequently offers to untie (rasputat’) the knot.

(21) – Prostite, požalujsta, – smirennno proiznesla Alisa, – vy ved’, kažetsja, dosli do p yatogo izgiba?
– Éto byla zavjazka! – vzvizgnula raz´jarennaja Myš´.
– Uzelok zavjazalsja! – ponjala Alisa, i, poskol’ku ona vsegda gotova byla prijti na pomoč’, tut ze predložila: – Pozvol´te, ja pomogu ego rasputat´!

In (22), the TT dialogue is more complicated. The Mouse asks, “Why did you begin a conversation about some tail?!” (Začem ty razgovor o kakom-to chvoste zavjazala?!), wherupon Alice, looking for a knot in the Mouse’s tail, excuses herself: “Did I tie up the tail? I’m sorry! Please, I can help to untie [it]!” (Ja chvost zavjazala? Och! Prostite! Pozvol´te, ja pomogu razvjazat’!). However, the Mouse is not happy and replies: “No one tied anything anywhere!” (Nikto, ničego i nigde ne zavjasyval!).

(22) «Izvinite», – robko otvetila Alisa – «esli ne ošibajus´, vy ostanoviliis´ na tret´em izgibe chvosta.»
«Kakoj ešče izgib? Začem ty razgovor o kakom-to chvoste zavjazala?!» – sprosila Myš´ očen´ serdito, daze neskol´ko grubovato.
«Nikto, ničego i nigde ne zavjasyval!» – skazala Myš´, vstavaja i sobirajasˇ uchodit´. – «Dlja menja ěta tarabarščina prosto oskorbitel´na!»

2.2.5 Puns on expressions that correspond neither to the ST P₁ nor P₂

In (23), the pun is created by the homonyms točka ‘full stop, dot’ (P₁) and točka ‘sharpening; grinding’. The Mouse becomes silent, and when Alice asks “And what next?” (A čto dal´še?) it angrily replies “Next: a full stop” (A dal´še točka). Alice tries to understand: “Sharpening? And what was sharpened?” (Točka? A čto točili?).
In (24), the pun is created by the homonyms *perëbit‘* ‘interrupt’ and *perebit‘* ‘break’. After a short conversation without any correspondence in the ST, the Mouse growls: “Now look! You interrupted [me]!” (Nu vot, […] perebili), to which Alice replies: “Excuse me, but I didn’t break anything. I never break anything at all, no cups, no plates…” (Prostite, no ja ničego ne perebila […] Ja voobščé nikogda ne b’ju ni čašek, ni tarelok...).

In (25), the pun is similar to the one in (24), but in (25) it is created with the verbs *vynesti* ORD ‘to bear, to stand, to endure’ and *vynesti* ORD ‘to carry away, to carry out’. The Mouse is tired of Alice’s stupid remarks: “I am so tired of them! I just can’t stand this!” (Kak ja ot nich ustala! Ėtogo prosto ne vynesti!). Alice replies: “What has to be carried away?” (A čto nužno vynesti?).

In (26), the pun is created with the slightly different meanings of the adjective *glavnyj* ‘chief, main, principal’. Reacting to Alice’s interruption, the
Mouse replies: “I haven’t even come to the main [part of the story] yet” (Ešče ne bylo daże samogo glavnogo). Alice, however, looks at the bend of the tail and asks: “In that case, which one of them is the main one?” (V takom slučae kakoj že iz nich samyj glavnyj?).

(26) Izvinite, požalujstva — skazala Alisa pokorno. — Vy, kažetsja, došli do pjatogo izgiba?
— V takom slučae kakoj že iz nich samyj glavnyj? — s ljubopytstvom sprošila Alisa, usilennyy vgljadyvajas’ v chvost.
— Ty sověršennno nevozmožna, — skazala Myš’, vstavaja, i v negovonanii pošla proč’. — Ty okorbljaješ’ menja, melja podobnyj vzodor.

[FR, p. 53]

In (27), ZA offers a pun on the noun nit’ ‘thread’, but inserts a comment from the narrator33 in which he explains that the Mouse is thinking of the thread of the narration, the gist of the story (tkan’ povestovovanija). The Mouse explains that it has lost the thread (poterjala nit’), whereupon Alice thinks that the Mouse has lost a literal thread, and thinks that it might have fallen into the grass (Poterjala nit’? Ona, navernoe, v travu upala!).

(27) — Prostite, ja sležu, sležu za nim, — smirenno skazala Alisa, — pomenu, vy ostanovilis’... na pjatom povorote.
— Spasibo! — ešče gromče zapishičala Myš’, — vot ja po tvoej milosti poterjala nit’!
Myš’ govorit pro tu nit’, iz kotoroj sostoit TKAŃ’ POVESTVOVA-NIJA (eto éto takoe, ja i sam tolkom ne znaju!). Vobsyče vpervye vstrečaju takich obrazovannyh i obidčivych myšey! I už sovsem neponjatno, počemu ona sčitae svoj sobstvennyj chvostik postoronnim predmetom!
— Poterjala nit’? Ona, navernoe, v travu upala! — okliknulas’ Alisa, vsegda gotovaja pomoč’.— Pozvol’te, ja ee najdu!

[ZA, p. 43]

In (28), the wordplay relies on the referential ambiguity of the accusative ego of the 3rd person masculine personal pronoun on.34 Alice mentions both the tale (rasskaz) and the tail (chvostik)35 and thinks that it would be best to shorten it, i.e., the tale, a little bit: Lučše, naverno, nemnožko ukorotit’ ego. The Mouse, however, apparently understands this as a suggestion to shorten its tail, and reacts strongly (Da ēto že prjamo oskorblenie!! : Now this is a direct insult!!).

33 ZA is characterised by the presence of a separate narrator who comments on some details of the story, cf. below.
34 Cf. Delabastita 1993: 93f on “referential equivocality”.
35 Both rasskaz and chvostik are masculine nouns that can be referred to with the pronoun on in Russian.
(28) – Простите, пошалуйста, – робко отохвала́ Али́ка. – Просто рассказ мо́жет не поместиться: у вас чвостико пошти не остало́. Лю́шке, насерно, ненамо́жко укороти́ его.

– Чё?! – возмутись́ Мышь. – Да это же прямое оскорбление!! – Она вско́чила и пошла́ про́чёт.

[BL]

Finally, in (29), the translator has chosen to replace the *not knot* pun with not one, but three puns. These puns are on the words *pogib* ‘bend, twist’ and *pogibnut’ ‘to die, to perish’, *sputat’ ‘to tangle; to confuse’ and *rasputat’ ‘to disentangle’, and a particular use of the verb *dat’ ‘give; let’, respectively (cf. 29‘):

(29) „Простите“, krotko prolepetala Anja, „Vy, kažetsja došli do pjetago pogiba“?

„Ни чего подобного, никто не погиб“?! ne na šutku razserdilá Myšь. „Нилко. Вот Vy teper’ menja sputali“.

„Ах“, dajte ja rasputaju . . Gdê uzel”?“, vosklknula usluživo Anja, gljadja na chvost Myšь.

„Нилко Vam ne dam“, skazala ta i vstav’ stala uchodít. „Vy menja oskorbljaete tèm“, čto govorite takuju čuš’!“

[NA, p. 27]

(29‘) – Excuse me, – Alice prattled humbly, – it seems that you have reached the fifth bend (došli do pjetogo pogiba)?

– Not at all, no one died (nikto ne pogib)! […] Look, now you confused me (menja sputali).

– Oh, please let me disentangle (dajte ja rasputaju) … Where is the knot? […]

– I will not give you anything (Ni čego vam ne dam), – said [the Mouse] […]

2.3 The pun on *tortoise* and *taught us*

2.3.1 Omission

In (30), there is an example of omission of the relevant TT (cf. the ST, appendix III). After the phrase “When we were children” (Kogda my byli det’mi) the TT omits the whole section about the teacher, continuing directly to “we went to the best sea school, even if you don’t believe it…” (my chodili v lučšuju morskuju školу, cho ty ētomu ne poveriš’…), which prompts

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36 The noun *pogib* ‘bend, twist’ has the stress on the first syllable (cf. SSRLJa 10, col. 163), whereas the preterite *pogib* (of *pogibnut’ ‘to die, to perish’) is normally stressed on the second syllable. Thus, in contrast to most other puns in both the ST and the Russian TT, this pun plays primarily on homography rather than on homophony.
Alice’s reply “I believe [it]!” (Ja verju) and the Mock Turtle’s “I don’t believe [it]!” (Ne verju!).

(30) — Kogda my byli det’mi, — prodolžala nakonec Fal’šivaja Čerepacha uže bolee spokojno, chotja vremja ot vremeni u nee i proryvalis rydanija, — my chodili v lučšuju morskiju školu, chotja ty etomu ne poveriš’...
— Ja verju! — skazala Alisa.
— Ne verju! — skazala Fal’šivaja Čerepacha.

2.3.2 No pun
In (31), the translator has chosen a literal translation of the $P_1$ tortoise and the $P_2$ taught us into Suchoputnaja Čerepacha (‘land turtle/tortoise’) and učil nas, respectively, which makes the Mock Turtle’s explanation of the teacher’s nickname more or less incomprehensible without reference to the ST.\textsuperscript{37}

(31) — Kogda my byli det’mi, — Mnimaja Čerepacha nakonec zagovorila bolee spokojno, chotja inogda ne mogla sderžat’ rydanij. — My chodili v školu. V glubine morja... Učitelem byl starik, my zvali ego Suchoputnoj Čerepachoj...
— Počemu že vy zvali ego suchoputnoj čerepachoj, esli on žil v more? — sprosila Alisa.
— My nazyvali ego Suchoputnoj Čerepachoj, potomu čto on učil nas, — serdito ovtětila Mnimaja Čerepacha, — ty čto, sovsem tupaja?

A different type of translation can be found in (32). Here the explanation for the teacher’s nickname Brjuzga ‘grumbler’ is her constant grumbling: “she was grumbling all day” (ona brjuzţala s˝ utra do večera). This explanation can be perceived to be logical, but the pun is missing.

(32) — Kogda my byli malen’kie, — prodolžala čerepacha, — my chodili v’ more učit’šja. Učiteľ’nicej našej byla staraja čerepacha. Vsě my zvali ee Brjuzgoj...
— Ža čto vy ee tak’ prozvali? — sprosila Anja.
— Za to, čto ona brjuzžala s’ utra do večera, — ovtětila čerepacha. — Začem’ ty menja peribivaeš’, glupaja děvočka.

\textsuperscript{37} Cf. Delabastita 1993: 202f on “formal disjunction” as a result of this type of translation.
2.3.3 Puns on expressions that correspond to the ST $P_1$ tortoise

In (33), there is a joke on the expression *Rimskaja Čerepacha* that can be interpreted as both ‘Roman (antique) turtle’, and ‘[Roman] *testudo* formation’, which is a military formation where the Roman soldiers would form a square and cover their heads and all the sides of the square with their shields.

The Mock Turtle replies to Alice’s question, “‘Why did you call him a *Rimskaja Čerepacha*, if he wasn’t one?”, by stating “Because he was the oldest of all the turtles and he filled our skulls* with trash. However, if the Mock Turtle’s answer is interpreted in relation to the second, military meaning of *Rimskaja Čerepacha*, and plays on the polysemous verbs *na-bit’/nabivat’* ‘to stuff (with), fill (with); to drive, to smash (a lot of something hard into something else)’, it also evokes a picture of the teacher beating on the skulls of the pupils like enemies beating on the shields of the Roman soldiers in a *testudo* formation.

(33) — Kogda my byli malen’kimi, — prodolžal Mok-Tartl’ bolee spo-kojno, chotja on vremja ot vremeni prodolžal slegka vschilipyvat’, — my chodili v morskuju školu. Staraja Čerepacha byla našim učitelem. My obyknovenno nazyvali ego Rimskoj Čerepachoj...
— Počemu vy nazyvali ego Rimskoj Čerepachoj, esli on ne byl eju? — sprosila Alisa.
— Potomu čto on byl samoj drevnej iz čerepach i nabival truchoju naši čerepa! — otvetil Mok-Tartl’ serdito. — Poistine ty očen’ nevežestvenna!

[OG, p. 95]

In (34), the translator concentrates on the $P_1$ tortoise and creates an explanation for the nickname that has no counterpart in the ST, *Čeremama*, a neologism made from the first part of *čerepacha* ‘tortoise/turtle’ and *mama* ‘mother, mom’:

> Učitel’nicej u nas byla tetja Čerepacha. No my ee zvali Čeremama ‘Our teacher was a lady tortoise/turtle. But we called her Čeremama’.  


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38 Cf. Ru. *čerep* ‘skull, cranium’, which constitutes the first part of the Russian word for turtle/tortoise, *čerepacha*.
39 Cf. Ru. *trucha* ‘dust (of rotted wood); hay-dust; (fig.) trash’ (ORD).
40 The name for the Mock Turtle in JA, *Telepacha*, probably alludes to a child’s pronunciation of the word *čerepacha*.
41 This is followed by the explanation *Ne nazyvat’ že tetju Čerepapa!* ‘You couldn’t call a female [turtle] Čerepapa, could you!’, where *Čerepapa* would be the male equivalent of *Čeremama*. A similar pun, but with the gender references reversed, can be found in the Swedish translation by Behre (1976: 118–119): “Vi hade en gammal sköldpadda till lärare. Pärlemor brukade vi kalla honom . . . – Pärlemor! sa Alice. Pärlemor har jag hört talas om, men aldrig pärlemor! – Vi kunde väl inte kalla honom pärlemor när han var en han, sa den falska sköld-paddan otåligt.”
2.3.4 Puns on other expressions that correspond to the ST $P_1$

In the TT (35–38), the translators have created new puns based on an animal other than a tortoise as $P_1$, and a $P_2$ explanation of this nickname. In (35) and (36) the animal is a sprut or sprutik ‘octopus’ and the explanation for the nickname is that the teacher always had a prutik ‘twig; rod’ with him—the preposition $s$ ‘with’ combines with the instrumental case of prutik, prutikom, into a homonym with the teacher’s nickname, also in the instrumental: Sprutikom, Sprutom.

- Začem že vy zvali ego Sprutikom, – sprosila Alisa, – esli na samom dele on byl Čerepachoj.
- My ego zvali Sprutikom, potomu čto on vsegda chodil s prutikom, – otvetil serdito Kak by. – Ty ne očen’-to dogadliva!

[DE$_1$, p. 83]\(^{42}\)

(36) „Kogda my byli malen’kija“, soizvolila prodolžat´ Čepupacha, uže spokojněe, chotja vse-že vschlipyvaja po vremenam“, – „my chodili v” školu na dně morja. U nas” byl” staryj, strogij učitel”, my ego zvali Molodym” Sprutom“.
„Počemu-że vy zvali ego molodym”, esli on” byl” star”?” sprosila Anja.
„My ego zvali tak” potomu, čto on” vsegda byl” s” prutikom””, serdito otvětila Čepupacha. „Kakaja Vy, pravo, tupaja!”

[NA, p. 84]

In (37), the teacher’s nickname is another sea animal, a som ‘sheat-fish’, and, in a similar fashion to (35) and (36), the pun is created on the homonym of the instrumental case form somom and the expression $s$ omom ‘with om’. Om is then explained as referring to the German physicist Georg Simon Ohm (1789–1854), and, playing on the slightly different uses of the verb zvat’ ‘to call (someone something); to ask, to invite’, the phrase My predpočitali zvat’ ee Somom... ‘We preferred to call her the sheat-fish...’ is rephrased as Vot my i zvali Čerepachu s Omom provodit’ u nas zanjatija sovmestno ‘That is why we invited the Turtle together with Ohm to conduct the lessons together’.

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\(^{42}\) In DE$_2$, the Mock Turtle is referred to as Čerepacha Kvazi: “– My ego zvali Sprutikom, potomu čto on vsegda chodil s prutikom, – otvetil serdito Čerepacha Kvazi. – Ty ne očen’-to dogadliva!”
«Когда мы были маленькими», — в конце концов продолжил Мястрак в уж спокойнее, продолжая тем не менее врежма от врежмени вскочиват’, — «Мы ходили в морской лице. Классным рукоvoditelem у нас была старая Черепачка. Мy предложили звать её Сомом...»

«По чему, если он был черепахой?» — спросила Алиса.

«Потому что Georg Simon Om лучше в области акустик, вот мы и звали Черепачку с Омом проводит’ у нас занятия совместно», — сердито ответил Минтрак, — «Какая ты, право, глупая!»

[KO]

In (38), the animal is a *piton* ‘python’, and the *P*₂ is *pitoncy*, alluding to *pitomcy* ‘pupils’: *A počemu vy ego tak nazyvali [...] On byl Piton! Ved’ my – ego pitoncy! ‘Why did you call him that [...] He was a Python! Because we were his *pitoncy*.’ ⁴³

(38) — Кogda my byli malen’kimi, — заговорил Деликates менее патетическим тоном (хотя врежма от врежмени взрывацалься к предним стенаням), — my chodili v školu v more. Учителем был suščij Zmej Morskoj. V duše — Udvav! Meţdu soboy ego my nazyvali Pitonom.

— A по чему вы ego tak nazyvali, раз он был Udvav, a ne Piton? — zainteresovalas’ Alisa.

— On byl Piton! Ved’ my – ego pitoncy! — s negodovaniem otvetil Delikates. — Bojus’, ditja, ty umstvenno ostala!

[ZA, p. 120]

2.3.5 Puns on expressions that correspond to the ST *P*₂ *taught us*

In (39) and (40), the translators have concentrated on the *P*₂ *taught us*, and created new *P*₁ nicknames that can be used as antecedents in the new puns. In (39), *P*₂ appears as *Ved’ ona ž učila nas*! ‘but it was she who taught us!’.

The underlined sequence, ž *učila*, is pronounced almost the same as the noun žučicha ‘[female] beetle; [female] rogue, twister’, which, consequently, is the TT nickname for the teacher. Furthermore, by using the polysemous žučicha the translator also manages to create something similar to the vertical ST wordplay on *tortoise* and *tortuous* (*ST P*₃) (cf. above, footnote 17).

(39) — Kogda že my byli malen’kie — nakonec prodolţil Čerepacha-Teljač’i-Noţki, uspokoivos’i vschlipyvaja vremja ot vremeni, no gorazdo slabee, — my chodili v školu, v morskuju školu. Učiteľnicej byla staraja Čerepacha, no my obyčno zvali ee Žučicho.

— Počemu že vy nazyvali ee Žučicho, esli ona ne byla Žučicho? — sprosi-

la Alisa.

⁴³ Cf. the comment by the narrator: “Мeţdu pročim, piton i udav — četo odno i to že. Alisa četo znat’ ne objazana, a vam — ne mësæt. Slovo ‘pitoncy’, po-moemu, eti čudišča vydumali sami, tak četo nećego было im tak už stydit’ Alisu!” (p. 122).
In (40), $\mathbf{P_2}$ *zubrit’* focuses on the activity of the pupils: *on zastavljal nas zubrit’* ‘he forced us to cram [study hard]’, and $\mathbf{P_1}$ is not a tortoise, but a *zubr* ‘(European) bison’.

(40) – Kogda my byli malen’kimi, – prodolžil nakonec Jakoby Čerepacha bolee spokojno, chotja i vse ešče vschlipyvaja vremja ot vremen, – my chodili v školu v more. Našim učitelem byl starik Čerepacha – my obyčno nazyvali ego Zubrom...
– My nazyvali ego Zubrom, potomu čto on zastavljal nas zubrit’! – gnevno otvetil Čerepacha, – Voistinu, ty očen’ nesoobrazitel’na!

### 2.3.6. Sequence of puns

Finally, in (41), the single ST pun on *tortoise* and *taught us* is replaced by a whole series of puns. The Mock Turtle begins by explaining that they had a teacher, but instead of the expression *klassnyj rukovoditel’* ‘form monitor’, he uses *lapa* ‘paw’ instead of *ruka* ‘hand’ as the first component of the compound *rukovoditel’* ‘instructor’, lit. ‘one who leads someone by the hand’. Alice, however, does not understand this expression immediately, and the Mock Turtle explains: “Didn’t anyone ever lead you by the paw?”

Continuing, the Mock Turtle praises the teacher because he never made any of the pupils “stand in the corner” (nikogda ne stavil nas v ugol). Once again, Alice is surprised, and asks “But how can there be corners in the sea?” (Otkuda že v more ugly?), whereupon the Mock Turtle explains that on land there are only four, but in the sea there are many of them.

Finally, playing on the similarity of the words *učitel’* ‘teacher’ and *mučitel’* ‘torturer, tormenter’, the pupils address their teacher with *dorogoj mučitel’* ‘dear tormenter’, and the the teacher is quoted saying “To teach you is just torture” (Vas učit’ – splošnoe mučenie!).

(41) Nakonec, Morskoj Byčok zagovoril, uže spokojnee, chotja i vschlipyvaja vremja ot vremen:
– Davnym-davno čto bylo. My byli togda sovsem malen’kie i chodili v školu. A škola byla na dne morskom. I byl u nas klassnyj lapovoditel’...

44 Whether or not the allusion here to the Russian text of the Book of Revelation would be understandable to the intended reader is a separate question: “I posle sego videl ja četyrech Angelov, stojaščich na četyrech uglach zemli […]” (Rev. 7:1, Synodal translation <http://bibleonline.ru/bible/rus/66/07/>).
– Otkuda že v more ugly? – udivilas’ Aliska.
– Ëto na sušê ich vsego četyre, – gordo skazal Byčok. – A v vode znaeš’, skol’ko! Nu, tak vot. My vse ego ljubili i zvali «dorogoj mučitel’».
– Čemu vas tol’ko v škole učat? [BL]

2.4 Conclusions
Taking into consideration the translation strategies that have been used to translate the ST puns, the TT examples that have been investigated can be assigned to the following types (cf. above):

1) PUN > ZERO (omission). Two examples (nos. 18, 30) in the main TT corpus.45
2) PUN > NO PUN. Seven examples (nos. 5–8, 19, 31–32), of which three belong to ST and two to GR.
3) PUN > PUN, focusing on the meaning of the ST P₁ (either on a more or less literal translation of the ST P₁, or on some other word replacing it). Seven examples (nos. 9, 33–38), of which all but one refer to the tortoise/taught us pun.
4) PUN > PUN, focusing on the meaning of the ST P₂ (either on a more or less literal translation of the ST P₂, or on some other word replacing it). Ten examples (nos. 10–16, 20, 39–40), of which seven refer to the tale/tail pun.
5) PUN > PUN, neither the TT P₁ nor P₂ corresponds directly to the ST P₁ and P₂, respectively. Eleven examples (nos. 17, 21–29, 41), of which nine refer to the not/knot pun.

45 In addition, the translations by Čarova and Tarlovenskij omit all three TT that correspond to the respective ST. Similar examples can be found, for example, in the Swedish translation by Emond (1979), where the TT that correspond to the ST with both the tale/tail and the not/knot puns have been omitted. However, the tortoise/taught us pun is translated by Emond with a focus on P₁, playing on the teacher’s nickname Räkan ‘the Shrimp’: “[…] Läraren var en gammal sköldpadda. Fast vi kallade honom Räkan!” ”Varför kallade ni en sköldpadda för Räkan?” frågade Alice. ”För att han lärde oss räkning förstå!” svarade Den Falska Sköldpad-dan”.

51
If we look at the distribution of the types of translations, we can notice individual differences between some of the TT.

1) In ST (nos. 7, 19, 31), all three examples follow the PUN > NO PUN strategy and replace the ST puns with what Delabastita (1993: 202) calls non-selective non-puns. According to Delabastita, this may in many cases be seen as the “default norm” for the translation of puns, particularly horizontal puns. However, among the Russian TT examples discussed in the present article ST is the only one who constantly applies this translation strategy. GR also avoids punning, replacing it with either non-punning expressions (nos. 5, 32) or by omitting the corresponding part of the TT (no. 18).

2) In NE (nos. 10, 21, 40), all three examples replace the ST pun with a TT pun and consistently focus on $P_2$. NE applies this strategy not only for the tale/tail pun, where it can be seen to be motivated by the necessity of preserving the connection between the content of the text and its layout (in the shape of a tail), but also in the TT that correspond to both the not/knot and the tortoise/taught us pun. Also OG shows a preference for punning on $P_2$ (nos. 15, 20).

3) Also in BL (nos. 17, 28, 41) all three examples show the results of a PUN > PUN strategy, but in none of the cases does the TT $P_1$ or $P_2$ correspond directly to the respective ST $P_1$ or $P_2$.

4) In contrast to all the other translations, ZA is characterised by the presence of an additional, external narrator (nos. 27, 38). This narrator, who in the preface (Glava nikakaja, pp. 4–11) is stated as being identical with the

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46 Note, however, that the present investigation is based on the analysis of only three of the approximately forty puns that have been identified in the ST (cf. Cammarata 2007: 79–200. Ting 1984 discusses some twenty puns or groups of puns and their translation).

47 Cf., for example, a similar translation of the tortoise/taught us pun into Italian by Galasso & Kemeny (1967, quoted by Cammarata 2007: 162): “La chiamavamo Testuggine perché era lei che insegnava”.

48 Cf. Nesterenko’s preface, in which he criticises other translators into Russian for creating their own puns instead of translating the original ones. In his own translation, Nesterenko claims to have attempted to stay close to the author’s original pun: “Je te demande pardon, dit, d’un air contrit, Alice : tu en étais arrivée, je crois, à la cinquième courbe. ». « Hein? ne... » articula d’un ton sec la Souris, furieuse. « Un nœud? dit Alice, toujours prête à rendre service, et jetant autour d’elle des regards scrutateurs. Oh! laisse-moi t’aider à le défaire! »”, or the Italian translation by Pietrocòla-Rossetti (1872: 38): “Le domando scusa,” rispose umilmente Alice: “ella è giunta alla quinta curvatura della coda, non è vero?” “No, doh!” riprese il Sorcio con voce acerba ed irata. “Che! c’è un nodo?” sclamò Alice sempre pronta e servizievole, e guardandosi attorno. “Mi conceda il favore di disfarlo!”

49 However, none of the investigated Russian TT contains a pun where both $P_1$, $P_2$, and $F$ are preserved, as in the French translation of the not/knot pun by Parisot (1979: 115f): “Je te demande pardon, dit, d’un air contrit, Alice : tu en étais arrivée, je crois, à la cinquième courbe. ». « Hein ? ne... » articula d’un ton sec la Souris, furieuse. « Un nœud ? dit Alice, toujours prête à rendre service, et jetant autour d’elle des regards scrutateurs. Oh! laisse-moi t’aider à le défaire! »”; or the Italian translation by Pietrocòla-Rossetti (1872: 38): “Le domando scusa,” rispose umilmente Alice: “ella è giunta alla quinta curvatura della coda, non è vero?” “No, doh!” riprese il Sorcio con voce acerba ed irata. “Che! c’è un nodo?” sclamò Alice sempre pronta e servizievole, e guardandosi attorno. “Mi conceda il favore di disfarlo!”

50 In the preface to BL, Blechman claims to have followed the principle “perevodit’ sleduet ne bukvu, a duch” ‘one has to translate not the letter, but the spirit’.
translator or “re-teller”, Boris Zachoder, appears now and then in the main text of the book, commenting on various details of the story.

3 Translation strategies and translation norms

In addition to possible ST-internal factors that influence the choice of translation strategy, and features related to the individual artistry of the respective translators, perhaps the most important causes for the differences between the translations can be found in their relationships to the changing norms that govern translational practice, in Russia and elsewhere. The discussion of the characteristics of the two main alternatives (or two endpoints of a translation-strategy-continuum), i.e., source-oriented or target-oriented translation, is too extensive to be retold here, but following Levý, I would like to see this rather as an opposition between the general and the specific or between the whole and its parts. A similar view is expressed by Delabastita, who discusses the choice “between different levels or kinds of translation equivalence, viz. maximal equivalence on the linguistic level as opposed to maximal equivalence on the level of textual synfunctions” (1993: 318).

Using these oppositions, the BL translation can be placed at the “general-focused” end of a continuum and the ST translation at the “specific-oriented” end, with the remaining TT being located somewhere in the middle.

According to Fedorov (1958: 299–301), wordplay was seldom carried over from the foreign ST into the Russian TT in nineteenth-century Russian translations, and especially rarely in prose translations. Fedorov also claims that this tradition changed during the Soviet period, which was characterised by an emphasis on recreating both homonymy and polysemy in the TT: wordplay, when it occurred, was seen as an integral part of the stylistic characteristics of the ST and thus needed to be recreated in the Russian TT. In

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51 As was already mentioned above, the tale/tail pun can be seen to be more essential for the progress of the story than the other two, which may explain the high proportion of corresponding TT puns focusing on the P tail.
53 Cf. Witt 2008: 219, who refers to a Soviet translation doctrine from the end of the 1930s that at least for translations into Russian prescribes “free translation” (vol’nyj perevod) instead of the earlier “literalist” tradition (bukvalizm). Cf., however, Sannikov 1999: 513–515 on the often negative evaluation of wordplay in Soviet literary criticism. For an overview of
the 1960s Komissarov et al. (1965) recommended that the translator “must always strive to recreate wordplay and only if all his trials have turned out to be in vain he has the right to abstain from this stylistic method. But in that case the loss must be compensated”. As Nikolajeva (2005: 237ff) emphasises, the translation of children’s literature differs in some important aspects from other literary translation, both in Russia and elsewhere. However, recreating wordplay can be seen as contributing to the accessibility of a text for the target audience, and this is often valued positively: “Such translation strategies may be less faithful to the source text, but instead more loyal toward the target audience” (Nikolajeva 2005:243). Among the Russian translations discussed here, all but ST comply more or less with this requirement.

The translator’s choice between strategies that focus on different levels of translation equivalence can be illustrated also by the translation in the Russian TT of some culturally specific items in the ST. For reasons of space, the discussion here will be limited to the translation of a short sequence in chapter 2 of the ST (ex. 42): Alice has just met the Mouse, and thinks about why the Mouse does not answer her.

(42) “Perhaps it doesn’t understand English,” thought Alice. “I dare say it’s a French mouse, come over with William the Conqueror.”

[Carroll 2001: 26]

Three culturally specific elements can be identified here: 1) the language that the Mouse does not seem to understand (and which, presumably, is the language that Alice normally speaks) (ST English); 2) the (foreign) nationality
of the Mouse (ST French); 3) the reason why the (assumed foreign) Mouse is in the same location as Alice.

Of the twelve main translations into Russian discussed in the present article, five (DA, ST, NE, SC, OG) preserve all three elements unchanged, whereas two (ZA, BL) do not deviate in any substantial way from the ST (in ZA, the language reference is less specific, changing it into “our language” (po-našemu), whereas BL omits it altogether; BL lets Alice suppose that the Mouse is a “foreigner, probably French (naverno, ona inostranka […] Skoree vsego, francuženka)), but both ZA and BL keep the reference to William the Conqueror unchanged. Thus, all seven translations clearly maintain the English setting of Alice’s adventures.

In JA (p. 33), however, the Englishness has been neutralised: the Mouse does not understand “human speech” (po-čelovečeski), it is probably “a foreign Mouse” (inostrannaja myš’). In GR (p. 22), Alice first thinks that the Mouse might speak Russian, but then decides to try with French instead: “Možet’ byt’, ona govorit’ po-russki, – podumala Anja, – a možet’ byt’, eto francuzskaja myš’. Zagovorju-ka ja s” neju po-francuzski“.”. In neither JA nor GR is any explanation given for the Mouse’s appearance.

In the two translations from the 1920s, NA and FR, the TT are even more adapted towards a Russian setting. The Mouse is still French but it does not understand Russian, and the reason for its presence is associated with Napoleon: either it has arrived together with Napoleon (“prišedšaja vmeste s Napoleonom” (FR, p. 41), or it has stayed on after the retreat of Napoleon (“ostavšajasja pri ostuplenii Napoleona” (NA, p. 18). Thus, the scene has been transposed into a Russian surrounding.

The remaining translation, (KO), carries the transposition even further, changing the Mouse’s presumed foreign nationality to English, and the reason for its presence is that it probably had come over the sea together with Columbus: “Možet ona po-russki ne ponimaet?” – podumala Alisa. – “Togda, skoree vsego, ona angličanka, naaverno priplyla vmeste s Kolumbom.” A possible reading would be that Wonderland has been located in a Russian-speaking America!

The most target-oriented of the twelve TT are NA, FR, and KO. The neutralised GR and JA can be placed in the middle of the continuum, whereas the remaining seven TT all show the results of a source-oriented

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59 A pun on the Russian verb priplyt’, which can mean both ‘to swim here’ and ‘to sail here’.
60 The domesticating strategy can also be illustrated with, for example, the translations of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland into Italian by Pietrocòla-Rossetti (1872) and Bossi (1963), into French by Bour (1934), Rouillard (1945), and Peter (1971), into Dutch by Reeldijk & Kossmann (1947) and de Jong (1982), into German by Enzensberger (1963), cf. Kibbee 2003: 311–313, Nord 1994, 2003.
4 Conclusions

A comparison of the translation strategies that have been applied in the investigated Russian TT, both with respect to wordplay and culturally specific elements, makes it possible to provide a tentative characterisation of approximately half of the main TT: ST, NE, and OG seem to prefer source-oriented translation strategies, whereas FR and NA apply more target-oriented strategies. JA, which combines different wordplay translation strategies (cf. examples 6, 24, 31) with a neutralised cultural setting, can be said to take an in-between position in the choice between source- and target-oriented strategies. The remaining TT (GR, DE, SC, ZA, KO, BL) are less easy to classify because the limited number of examples combine both source- and target-oriented characteristics.

In order to present a clearer characterisation of both the individual translations of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland into Russian and their position among texts translated into Russian in general, further analysis clearly needs to broaden the textual base, not only by including more TT that correspond to the ST puns, but also by broadening the analysis of the cultural specifics of the ST and TT texts. An analysis of the translation of the ST poems would also add substantially to the characterisation of the respective TT.

The present analysis has focused on translations from English into Russian, but a deeper understanding of the humorous effects of wordplay and its

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61 Cf., however, the preface to ZA (Zachoder 1972/2007: 5) where the narrator jokingly proposes some alternative titles for the story: Alenka v Voobrazilii, Alja v Udivljandii, Al’ka v Čepuchanii, or Aliska v Rasčudesii. For a short presentation of Zachoder as an author and translator, see Hellman 1991: 141–143.
62 Vdovenko (2000), referring to FR, GR, and the first translation into Russian in 1879 (Sonja v carstve diva), claims that NA is the last of the Russian translations to have been made according to the “metodom t.n. transponirovaniia” (the so-called transposition method). The translation by Kononenko (KO), however, is not mentioned by Vdovenko.
translation clearly requires a wider linguistic perspective; that is, the comparison and analysis of similarities and differences between translations into several languages. As I have tried to show in the present article, the Russian translations of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland do not constitute an isolated phenomenon, but are connected with other translations of the same text into other languages, and with the general development of translation strategies and translation norms. The reeling and writhing goes on!

64 Cf., for example, Capitano 1983, who presents a comparative analysis of the translation of the ST poems into Russian and Italian.
Sources

1. Source text by Lewis Carroll of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*


2. Russian translations of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* consulted for the present investigation


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66 The electronic version of Nesterenko’s translation used for the present article was last modified in January, 2001.

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3. Other translations of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*


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ASPAC = Amsterdam Slavic Parallel Aligned Corpus, maintained by Adrian Barentsen.67


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67 By September 1, 2009, ASPAC included six different translations into Russian of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland: DE, KO, NA, NE, ST, and ZA. I am much obliged to Adrian Barentsen for the possibility to use ASPAC.


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Appendix: the source texts

I. However, it was over at last, and they sat down again in a ring, and begged the Mouse to tell them something more.
   “You promised to tell me your history, you know,” said Alice, “and why it is you hate—C and D,” she added in a whisper, half afraid that it would be offended again.
   “Mine is a long and a sad tale!” said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.
   “It is a long tail, certainly,” said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse’s tail; “but why do you call it sad?” And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that her idea of the tale was something like this:

   [Carroll 2001: 34]

II. “You are not attending!” said the Mouse to Alice, severely. “What are you thinking of?”
   “I beg your pardon,” said Alice very humbly: “you had got to the fifth bend, I think?”
   “I had not!” cried the Mouse, sharply and very angrily.
   “A knot!” said Alice, always ready to make herself useful, and looking anxiously about her. “Oh, do let me help to undo it!”
   “I shall do nothing of the sort,” said the Mouse, getting up and walking away. “You insult me by talking such nonsense!”
   “I didn’t mean it!” pleaded poor Alice. “But you’re so easily offended, you know!”

   (Carroll 2001: 35f)

III. “When we were little,” the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, “we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle—we used to call him Tortoise—”
   “Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?” Alice asked.
   “We called him Tortoise because he taught us,” said the Mock Turtle angrily. “Really you are very dull!”
   “You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question,” added the Gryphon; and then they both sat silent and looked at poor Alice, who felt ready to sink into the earth. At last the Gryphon said to the Mock Turtle “Drive on, old fellow! Don’t be all day about it!” and he went on in these words:—
   “Yes, we went to school in the sea, though you mayn’t believe it—”
   “I never said I didn’t!” interrupted Alice.
   “You did,” said the Mock Turtle.
   “Hold your tongue!” added the Gryphon, before Alice could speak again. The Mock Turtle went on.

   (Carroll 2001: 100–101)