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## COMMUNICATIVE AND SEMANTIC TRANSLATION OF *CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY* BY ROALD DAHL

The aim of this article is to present the practical application of communicative and semantic translation methods on the basis of the two available Polish versions of **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** by Roald Dahl: **Karol i fabryka czekolady** translated in 1998 by Tomasz Wyżyński and **Charlie i fabryka czekolady** translated in 2004 by Jerzy Łoziński. Through an analysis of selected culture-specific words and expressions present in the original along with different solutions provided by the two translators, an attempt has been made to illustrate the point emphasized by Newmark (1988) that each text can be translated either communicatively or semantically, depending on the needs and expectations of the target readers and the decision of the translator choosing one of those two approaches.

The fundamental conflict as to what the nature of translation should be: literal or free, faithful or beautiful, exact or natural has not been resolved ever since translation and problems accompanying the process of translating were first given consideration to. The bias in favour of the author of the original or the reader of the translation and the source or the target language has been changing throughout centuries and different notions have existed side by side, advocated by some theorists and opposed by others<sup>1</sup>.

The twentieth century, called the age of translation, saw some successful attempts at specifying the notion of translation equivalence. Eugene Nida in his seminal work *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964) approached the problem in terms of equivalence appropriate to particular circumstances<sup>2</sup>. He distinguished between *dynamic equivalence* and *formal equivalence*, thus reformulating the ancient conflict between free and literal translation and shifting attention towards the effects of different translation strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> A general overview of the changing attitudes and perspectives on translation can be found e.g. in Adamczyk-Garbowska (1988), Pisarska, Tomaszekiewicz (1996), Pieńkos (1993).

<sup>2</sup> After Bassnett-McGuire (1991) and Hatim, Mason (1990).

*Dynamic equivalence* is based on the principle of equivalence of effect on the reader of the target text, i.e. the relationship between the target language receiver and the message should aim at being the same as that between the original receivers and the source language message.

*Formal equivalence*, on the other hand, can be defined as the closest possible match of form and content between the target language and the source language. In other words, it is a means of providing some degree of insight into the lexical, grammatical or structural form of the source text and it aims to allow the target reader to understand as much of the source language context as possible<sup>3</sup>.

This concept was further developed and reformulated by Newmark (1986, 1988), who introduced the terms *communicative* and *semantic translation*<sup>4</sup>.

In *communicative translation*, like in dynamic equivalence, the translator should attempt to exert the same effect on the target language readers as was produced by the original text on the source language readers. The target language text addresses itself to the second reader only; any foreign elements are usually transferred to the target culture and language. The text is set in an appropriate style and register and the units that express some individuality are normalized for the sake of the readership. Communicative translation is a very subjective procedure where the translator has the right to improve or correct the logic of the source language text or replace any clumsy elements with elegant or functional syntactic structures.

*Semantic translation*, like formal equivalence, is more source language oriented. The translator attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the syntactic and semantic restrictions of the target language. All the unusual collocations, original metaphors, neologisms, words used in a special sense, grammatical constructions are reflected in a corresponding degree of 'deviation' in the translation and the text remains embedded in the source language culture. Semantic translators pursue the thought process rather than the intention of the author; they attempt to recreate the precise flavour and tone of the original and to preserve the peculiar idiolect of the author.

Those two methods, as Newmark (1986) claims, are appropriate to any text, i.e. any text can be translated either communicatively or semantically. In theory, there are substantial differences between those two approaches but practice shows that their boundaries in actuality widely overlap and a text is translated only more or less communicatively or more or less semantically. It is also possible that communicative and semantic translation coincide in one text, especially when the matter is as important as the manner.

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<sup>3</sup> It must be stressed, however, that no translation is ever of a 'pure' type, i.e. the boundaries between formal and dynamic equivalence might often blur and each translation is only more or less dynamic or formal.

<sup>4</sup> According to Hatim and Mason (1990), the advantage of Newmark's reformulation of these concepts lies in the fact that the categories cover more of the 'middle ground' of translation practice, being less extreme than Nida's categories.

The translator's choice of either a communicative or semantic translation method is visible especially in the strategies which s/he applies while dealing with culture-specific words and expressions. As has been mentioned above, communicative translation involves downplaying the foreign cultural elements found in the original text, thus bringing it closer to the culture of the target audience; semantic translation, on the other hand, accentuates the foreign elements in the translation, hence the target audience is brought closer to the culture and convention of the original. Those two approaches are clearly distinguishable in two Polish translations of a 1964 children's novel entitled **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** by Roald Dahl, which has by now become a classic in children's literature. The novel was first translated in 1998 by Tomasz Wyżyński under the title **Karol i fabryka czekolady** and in 2004 another version came out under the title **Charlie i fabryka czekolady**, translated by Jerzy Łoziński. The former translation seems to be more target language biased and target reader centred in transferring the cultural content of the source text to the target community culture, thus displaying the features of the communicative translation method. The latter, on the other hand, has more characteristics of semantic translation in being more source language oriented and concerned with retaining the cultural elements present in the original rather than conveying them to the cultural realities of the target audience.

In order to illustrate this point, selected culture-specific words and expressions found in the original text along with the way in which they have been rendered in the target texts come under scrutiny in this article. They include proper names, metric and monetary units, expressive phrases of religious character and cultural phenomena (cf. Adamczyk-Garbowska 1988).

## 1. Proper names in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

The category of proper names includes names and surnames, geographical names, names of buildings, institutions, organizations, addresses, events etc. Yet, the discussion here will be limited to people's names and surnames only, since the other elements occur only sporadically in the source text. A general principle says that a person's name should not be translated but transferred to the target language, with the proviso that it does not have an already accepted translation in the TL (cf. Newmark 1986, 1988 and Belczyk 2004). Thus, people's names in literary texts are usually adhered to in the translation; in consequence, the people preserve their nationality. However, in children's literature, fairy tales and folk tales the names are often translated, on the assumption that children and fairies are the same all over the world<sup>5</sup>. People's names in imaginative literature should also be translated if they carry connotations in the source language; if this is the case, an attempt must be made by the translator to recreate the connotations present in the source language name (Newmark 1986).

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<sup>5</sup> Adamczyk-Garbowska (1988) notices that it is common practice in the translation of children's literature to substitute the names with their target language equivalents, as long as they exist, whereas the surnames are usually left in an unchanged form.

In **Karol i fabryka czekolady**, translated by Wyżyński, the names of the main characters are translated into the target language, especially as most of them carry connotations in the source language. Thus, the hero of the book, Charlie Bucket, becomes Karol Szaflik, his grandparents, called Grandpa Joe, Grandma Josephine, Grandpa George and Grandma Georgina appear as dziadek Józio, babcia Józefina, dziadek Ernest and babcia Ernestyna, respectively. The names of the other children appearing in the novel are translated as follows: Augustus Gloop – August Smalec, Veruca Salt – Weruka Solony, Mike Teavee – Michał T. Elewic, Violet Beauregarde – Jagoda Beauregarde.

Wyżyński, however, does not show consistency in rendering the characters' names in the target language inasmuch as in other cases, especially when the characters are not crucial for the development of the plot, he simply transfers their names to the target text: Fickelgruber – pan Fickelgruber, Mr Prodnose – pan Prodnose, Mr Slugworth – pan Slugworth, Professor Foulbody – profesor Foulbody, Charlotte Russe – Charlotte Russe. It must also be noted that the name of the main adult character, Mr Willy Wonka, is not translated, either.

In **Charlie i fabryka czekolady**, translated by Łoziński, all the names are consistently transferred to the target text, i.e. left in an unchanged form, no matter whether they are children's or adults' names or whether they carry connotations or not.

## 2. Metric and monetary units

Metric and monetary units are often quoted as examples of untranslatability in view of the fact that they are inextricably related to the source language culture. Units of measurement used locally<sup>6</sup>, such as inches, feet, yards or miles for measuring lengths, ounces or pounds for measuring weights or pints or gallons for capacity do not pose translation problems in themselves; as Wojtasiewicz (1991) rightly notices, they are not something that is incomprehensible in that they easily lend themselves to being converted to other local units of measurement or to units of the metric system. What is untranslatable is the *names* themselves which can only be explained or defined by means of conversion, but not translated as such. Newmark (1988) proposes that in dealing with the problem of metric units, the translator has a choice of two strategies, depending on the type of the text and the implied readership: metric units can either be converted or transferred to the target text. In fiction, the translator's decision will largely depend on the importance of preserving the local colour and atmosphere.

The names of monetary units, on the other hand, are both untranslatable and not to be translated. Although it is achievable to express the value of a given unit by means of a different unit, translation as such is not possible. The universal practice is to transfer the name of a foreign monetary unit to the target language, possibly with certain

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<sup>6</sup> As opposed to units of the internationally adopted decimal metric system, where lengths and distances are measured in metres and kilometres, mass in grams and kilograms, capacity in litres and temperature in degrees Celsius.

adaptations or modifications as far as spelling or pronunciation is concerned, but basically the name remains recognizable in most languages (cf. Micewicz 1971, Newmark 1988, Wojtasiewicz 1991).

Wyżyński in his translation, **Karol i fabryka czekolady**, in dealing with metric units consistently applied the first strategy proposed by Newmark (1988), i.e. conversion to units of the metric system, thus downplaying the elements of the source culture:

... for half a mile around in every direction ... (p. 18) – W promieniu paruset metrów ... (p. 14)

Thousands of gallons per hour ... (p. 89) – Tysiące litrów na godzinę ... (p. 67)

... no more than four inches high... (p. 154) – ... co najwyżej dziesięć centymetrów wzrostu ... (p. 126)

He's about ten feet tall ... (p. 183) – Ma chyba ze trzy metry wzrostu ... (p. 151)

As far as monetary units are concerned, Wyżyński transfers their names to the target language, which is in line with the accepted practice:

Out fell a single silver sixpence. (p. 52) – ... i wytrząsała srebrną sześciopensówkę. (p. 41)

It was a fifty-pence piece! (p. 59) – Znalazł monetę półfuntową! (p. 47)

I'll give you fifty pounds. (p. 65) – Dam ci pięćdziesiąt funtów, co ty na to? (p. 50)

At one point, Wyżyński even introduces an idiomatic phrase containing the name of a Polish monetary unit, although a general term *money* is used in the original:

But a toothpaste cap-screw is never paid very much money ... (p. 15) – Ale robotnicy zatrudnieni przy takiej pracy zarabiają grosze ... (p. 12)

Łoziński, on the other hand, chose to retain the local flavour and atmosphere in **Charlie i fabryka czekolady** by transferring the names of metric units to the target text:

... for half a mile around in every direction ... (p. 18) – Na dobre pół mili dookoła fabryki ... (p. 15)

... it lay four feet deep ... (p. 55) – ... była już gruba na cztery stopy ... (p. 53)

Thousands of gallons per hour ... (p. 89) – Tysiące galonów na godzinę ... (p. 87)

... not more than an inch tall. (p. 166) – Miał nie więcej niż cal wysokości. (p. 164)

Łoziński also introduces a foreign metric unit into the target text where it is not to be found in the original:

... about fifty paces away from the camera ... (p. 157) – ... o jakieś pięćdziesiąt stóp od kamery ... (p. 155)

The names of monetary units found in **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** are transferred by Łoziński to the target text according to standard practice:

... a famous gangster robbed a bank of a thousand pounds... (p. 38) – Słynny gangster zrabował w (...) banku tysiące funtów ... (p. 36)

... he managed to earn a few pennies ... (p. 56) – ... mógł zarobić kilka pensów... (p. 54)  
 The coins were all five-penny pieces. (p. 63) – ... dziewięć monet pięciopensowych.  
 (p. 61)

### 3. Expressive phrases of religious character

Expressive phrases of religious character are by definition rarely to be found in literature written in English. As Przedpeńska-Trzeciakowska (1975) notices, the Puritan tradition, still cherished in the Anglo-Saxon culture and literature, enforced total obedience to the Second Commandment, *Do not take the Lord's name in vain*. Consequently, God's name has been avoided in literature as well; instead, innumerable idiomatic expressions, now widely used, have come into being. They include phrases like *gosh, goodness, my goodness, for goodness' sake, for heaven's sake* and also expressions which do not hold any religious associations, such as *by golly, oh dear* or *dear me*. Przedpeńska-Trzeciakowska observes that rendering such phrases by means of their dictionary equivalents, in which God's name is usually contained (*na Boga, wielki Boże, Boże Świąty, rany boskie*) results in certain mystification, since an English-speaking Puritan would not use such words to excess. Nevertheless, she reaches the conclusion that this is probably the only workable solution inasmuch as using too many neutral equivalents would in turn adversely affect the naturalness of the target text, in this case Polish. As Adamczyk-Garbowska (1988) further comments, it is inevitable that phrases containing God's name should appear in the Polish text; all the same, translators should limit themselves to using them in cases where it seems absolutely necessary.

The way in which expressive phrases of religious character are dealt with in **Karol i fabryka czekolady** in most cases seems to be consistent with the communicative translation method, adopted by Wyżyński. As a result, God's name is quite often used in different contexts, which is much more natural for speakers of Polish than for English-speaking characters:

... and for heaven's sake, get all that mud off your pants! (p. 72) – ... i, na litość boską, oczyść spodnie z błota! (p. 55)  
 Goodness me! (p. 78) – Boże drogi! (p. 59)  
 By golly, he's right! (p. 137) – Na Boga, racja! (p. 111)  
 Oh dear, oh dear ... (p. 165) – Moj Boże, mój Boże ... (p. 135)  
 Good heavens! What have they done to him? (p. 183) – Na Boga, co się z nim stało?! (p. 151)

Sometimes, however, Wyżyński introduces neutral expressions as well:

My gosh, so there is! (p. 91) – Ojej, to prawda!... (p. 69)  
 Good gracious me! (p. 145) – Wielkie nieba! (p. 118)

Łoziński, on the other hand, seems to render most of the expressive phrases of religious character by means of neutral expressions:

Good heavens above! (p. 21) – Wielkie nieba! (p. 19)  
 Dear me, this is going to be such an exciting day! (p. 81) – Ach, jakież to będzie  
 pasjonujący dzień ... (p. 80)  
 By golly, he's right! (p. 137) – Do diaska, ma rację! (p. 135)  
 Good gracious me! (p. 145) – To ci dopiero! (p. 143)  
 Good gracious! (p. 182) – O rany! (p. 180)

Yet, it also happens that Łoziński introduces expressions in which God's name appears so that the target text seems more natural for the Polish reader:

My gosh, so there is! (p. 91) – Na miłość boską! (p. 89)  
 Who wants a beard, for heaven's sake? (p. 116) – Na miłość boską, kto chce nosić  
 brodę? (p. 114)

#### 4. Cultural phenomena

This extremely broad category includes concepts which are limited to the source language culture and thus may be unknown in the target culture. Such concepts may range from abstract notions like religious beliefs or customs to something as concrete as a type of food (Baker 1991). In the case of children's literature, they will also include references to nursery rhymes, songs, ballads, heroes of folk and fairy tales, children's poetry and fiction, children's games. As Newmark (1986, 1991) notices, whenever the source text describes a situation which features an element exclusive to the source language culture, the translator's language can only be approximate and inevitable loss of meaning occurs. Unless there is already a recognized translation equivalent, the translator has scope for creativity and, depending on the type of text, is free to use one of the commonly applied strategies such as introducing a culture free term, translation by cultural substitution, transference<sup>7</sup>.

##### 4.1. *Using a culture-free term*

This strategy requires the use of a culture-free item, i.e. usually a more general word or expression in order to overcome the lack of equivalent of a source language culture-specific word or expression. By applying this strategy, the translator neutralizes or generalizes the source language item in the target text (Newmark 1988).

##### 4.2. *Translation by cultural substitution*

This procedure consists in substituting the culture-specific term found in the source text with a target language item which is bound to provide the target readers with

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<sup>7</sup> There are also other strategies used in dealing with concepts referring to cultural phenomena, which include e.g. translation by addition, translation by omission or translator's notes. For details see Baker (1991), Belczyk (2004), Newmark (1986), Pisarska, Tomaszkiwicz (1996).

a similar impression and to spark off similar associations in them. Hence, this strategy does not involve finding equivalents on the linguistic level but finding a similar term in the target language which is present in the target readers' consciousness and is likely to create the same effect as the original item. An unquestionable advantage of employing this strategy is that it provides the target readers with something familiar and appealing; something they can readily identify with (Baker 1991). Thus, as Newmark (1988) suggests, it is particularly useful in general texts, aimed at readers who are ignorant of the relevant source language culture, despite the fact that such translation is never accurate.

### 4.3. *Transference*

This strategy consists in transferring a source language item to the target text when the target language does not have an equivalent of the term, either on the linguistic level or when the phenomenon expressed by the source term does not exist in the cultural realities of the target audience. This is a procedure that helps to retain the flavour and atmosphere of the source culture which will always remain foreign and exotic for the target readership (Pisarska, Tomaszkiwicz 1996).

Interestingly enough, both translators of **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** seem to demonstrate marked preference for translation by cultural substitution or using a culture-free term whenever cultural phenomena appear in the source text; transference is to be detected in one case only. Those decisions may have been made as a result of the translators' sensitivity to the limitations exposed by the target readers, in this case children, who may not be well acquainted with certain elements of the source culture.

As for types of food which are characteristic of the source language culture, both translators apply either the strategy of translation by cultural substitution or by using a culture-free term:

- marshmallows (p. 23, 100, 132) – ptasie mleczko (Wyżyński, p. 18, 100, 132); pianki żelowe, pomadki (Łoziński, p. 21, 98);
- ... to crave rich steaming stews and hot apple pies ... (p. 56) – marzyć o tłustych, gorących potrawach, o pysznych ciastkach z kremem ... (Wyżyński, p. 44); ... marzyć o wielkich dymiących stekach i gorących szarlotkach ... (Łoziński, p. 54);
- strawberry-flavoured chocolate-coated fudge (p. 100) – czekolady z nadzieniem karmelkowo-truskawkowym (Wyżyński, p. 77); truskawkową piankę w czekoladowej polewie (Łoziński, p. 98);
- roast beef, baked potato (p. 123) – befsztyk, kartofle w mundurkach (Wyżyński, p. 99); befsztyk, pieczone ziemniaki (Łoziński, p. 121).

In the case of references to children's literature, both translators substitute the names of the characters with ones that are well-known to the target readers, i.e. adopt the strategy of cultural substitution:

*The younger ones had Beatrix Potter / With Mr Tod, the dirty rotter,  
And Squirrel Nutkin, Pigling Bland, / And Mrs Tiggy-Winkle and –*

*Just How The Camel Got His Hump, / And How The Monkey Lost His Rump,  
And Mr Toad, and bless my soul, / There's Mr Rat and Mr Mole –  
Oh, books, what books they used to know, / Those children living long ago!*  
(p. 173)

*Młodzi czytali o Trzech Świnkach, / Królowie Śnieżce i Muminkach;  
znali przebiegłą Pchłę Szachrajkę / i kota, który palił fajkę;  
znali Sindbada, i Aladyna, / który korzystał z usług dżinna,  
i mając ledwo parę latek / wiedzieli, kim jest Miś Puchatek!  
Ach, cóż to były za dzieciaki! / Rzadko się zdarza rozum taki!*  
(Wyżyński, p. 142)

*Ach, Kaczor Donald, Myszka Miki, / Kubuś Puchatek, wilczur dziki,  
co pożarł babcie i Kapturka, / Kopciuszek i macochy córka,  
Biedna sierotka z zapalkami – / Tak, tak, widzicie oto sami,  
Jakież to książki dzieci znały, / W tych czasach, kiedy się czytało!*  
(Łoziński, p. 171).

At one point in his novel, Dahl introduces the character of The Lone Ranger, the hero of an American radio and television show. Both translators decided to use a culture-free term in their translations:

Who's the kid with a picture of The Lone Ranger stenciled on his windcheater? (p. 77) – A ten chłopiec z podobizną kowboja na kurtce? (Wyżyński, p. 58); A co to za chłopak z komandosem na kurtce? (Łoziński, p. 75).

At another point, a well-known colloquial saying appears, deeply ingrained in the source language culture – See you later, alligator! (p. 163) – which is, curiously enough, transferred by Wyżyński in an unchanged form (*See you later, alligator!*, p. 134), probably on the assumption that its popularity is such that it is understood internationally. Łoziński, on the other hand, decided on the strategy of translation by cultural substitution and introduced a colloquial saying well-recognizable for the target readers, Do widzenia, ślepa Gienia! (p. 161).

The above discussion seems to prove first and foremost that no translation is purely communicative or semantic, as has been shown by means of the examples provided in the article. All the same, through an analysis of selected aspects of the source text along with their realization in the target text, it is possible to tell which of the two general approaches has been adopted by a given translator. Another point that has been argued is that a given text can be successfully translated either communicatively or semantically. The two existing translations of **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** present the practical adoption of the communicative and semantic translation methods, both of which offer certain benefits to the prospective readers and at the same time have their drawbacks. In the case of children's literature, the translator should above all take heed of the target readers' needs and expectations and be aware of the fact that children are rarely fully acquainted with the cultural realities of the source language community (cf. Dąbska-Prokop 2000). Unlike informed, educated and critical adults, children by definition have a limited knowledge of the world and may show ignorance in certain areas, which weighs in favour of communicative translation. Yet,

it must be borne in mind that by introducing target language culture-specific items into the target text, the translator may inadvertently make the text sound contrived and non-authentic, causing the reader to view it with suspicion, as something made up by the translator and not by the original author (cf. Belczyk 2004). On the other hand, young readers are intensely curious about the world, inquisitive by nature and are ready to soak up novelties. As a result, they may as well accept any foreign elements in the target text as a matter of fact and treat them as a source of knowledge about other nations and cultures, which in turn makes out a case for a semantic translation method. Thus, it must be stressed that in the last analysis it is the individual translator who weighs up the pros and cons of the application of a given method, relying to a significant extent on his or her intuition, common sense and familiarity with the requirements of the target audience.

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