

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS

The problem of (un)translatability of sound figures in Julian Tuwim's poems for children into the German language

Children's literature translations are undoubtedly a unique area and this encourages many to explore them as the research area within the translation scope. Scientists' interest in children's literature within translation should be considered a cultural turn – for many years this type of literature has been considered less valuable and its translations were rather a work of chance. Due to that, their quality left much to be desired. Nonetheless, handling children's literature and its translation has a wide impact – not without a reason children's literature has been named “a snowball, in which the same problems which we face in literature for adults are seen, but they are presented in a fabulous way”.¹ Just like in the case of fairy tales, in which everything is usually cartoonish, in children literature we also meet an abundance of elements that enrich content and linguistic layers of the texts. Among others, this aspect makes children's literature translation be considered in categories of cultural and linguistic challenge. However, the analysis of it makes a fascinating research area.

The aim of this doctoral thesis is the discussion of Julian Tuwim's poems for children (un)translatability with a special emphasis put on the analysis of the sound figures translations present therein. Although, in past translation research the analysis of Julian Tuwim's poems for children was included, thus no work that focuses so widely on the possibility of sound figures in the translation has been completed so far. This dissertation is then an attempt to fill in the research gap.

The theoretical part consists of three first chapters. In the first one there are general theories on translatability together with skeptical, realistic, and idealistic approaches presented. The second chapter is devoted to theoretical divagations of children's literature – apart from an attempt to define this phenomenon, the past status of translation research within this area has been presented. The last chapter from the theoretical part defines the sound figure and describes its main types. The empirical part contains a comparative analysis of nine of Julian Tuwim's poems for children together with their translation into the German language.

¹ Wyka, Kazimierz (1948): Pan Pickwick na łyżwach, [in]: „Odrodzenie“ 1948, no. 3, p. 7.

The realization of the set research aim enables us to answer the following research questions:

1. Do translations follow the rhyme and rhythmic structures of the original versions of the analyzed poems?
2. To which extent does the translation include sound figures (onomatopoeias, alliterations, and paronomasias) that are present in the original versions of Tuwim's poems?
3. What transformations did the translation make during the translation process? Did the introduced modification allow to maintain of the sound layer of the texts?
4. What factors make the translation of the analyzed sound figures more difficult? What are the potential causes of their intranslatability?

The analysis of each of the nine chosen Tuwim's poems ("Pstryk", "Kotek", "Mróz", "Kapuśniaczek", "Mowa ptaków", "Dwa wiatry", "Idzie Grześ", "Ptasie radio" and "Figielek") depicted in the empirical section was performed in a few stages. In the first step, the original version of the poem was analyzed in terms of rhymes and rhythmic structures (a regular, repetitive meter was a distinctive feature in the analyzed texts). Then the sound figures (onomatopoeias, alliterations, and paronomasias) were discussed in detail with the description of sounds, which in the case of onomatopoeia resulted in a specific sound effect. In the next step, the translation of a given poem was analyzed – at this stage, it was checked if a translation maintained the original rhyme and rhythmic structure and if they included in the translation onomatopoeias, alliterations, and paronomasias from the original versions. The compliance of the original sound figures and their equivalents in German texts were analyzed in terms of reference and formal layers. Additionally, based on the Barchudarov classification², it was examined which transformations were made by a translation in the translation of the investigated sound figures and if the translator used inversions, substitutions, amplifications, and reductions. The analysis of each poem was summarized by a discussion on (un)translatability issues of sound figures in a given text – based on the description it was considered if the sound figures in a given poem can be perceived within the limits of their translatability.

Based on the performed study it was demonstrated that the translation of the given sound figures present in Tuwim's poems for children was characterized by a different level of complexity. The translation of onomatopoeic exclamations did not cause any problems, but the

² Barchudarov, Leonid (1979): Sprache und Übersetzung. Probleme der allgemeinen und speziellen Übersetzungstheorie. Moskau: Progreß.

reflection of characteristic sound effects achieved in the original versions due to specific sound clusters was impossible in the translations. In order to overcome the difficulty connected with the sound figures translations, the translation made many transformations – in most cases they used different types of substitutions. Compensation played a key role in the translation process of the given elements as well. As a result of the performed study, it was stated that sound figures cannot be perceived as the absolute border of translatability of Tuwim's poems for children. In most cases, the translator was able, even partially, to reflect the original sound effects. The exception was the above-mentioned sound instrumentation which was not included in the translation of any case.

The performed analysis allowed us to conclude that one of the factors that impede the translation of sound figures is the differences in sound systems of Polish and German languages. The lack of certain sounds in the German sound system (e.g. [ɛ], [z], [tɛ] and [dʒ]) made it impossible to achieve the same sound effect which was present in the original text.

As discussed in the final part of the thesis conclusions derived from the performed analysis may become a source of theoretical knowledge and hints for translators who attempt to translate poems for children. Moreover, the study results may be used in a didactic process as a source of inspiration to take up a discussion on untranslatability in a broad sense.

Keywords: untranslatability, children's literature translation, sound figures, onomatopoeia, alliteration, paronomasia