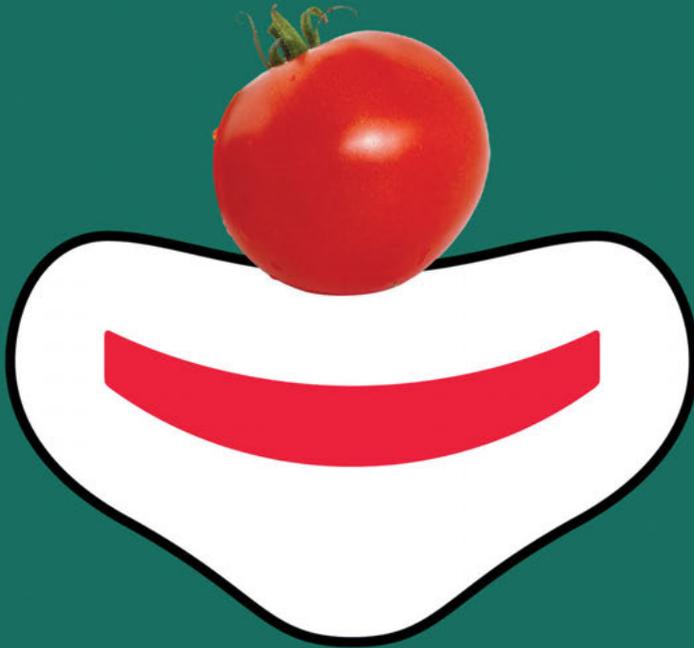


Interdisciplinary Humour Studies
**Humour and Translation
in Children's Literature**
A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

Sylvia Klos



UNIWERSYTET ŚLĄSKI
WYDAWNICTWO

Sylwia Klos, PhD

is a linguist and translator,
Assistant Professor at
the Institute of Linguistics,
University of Silesia
in Katowice, Poland.
Her academic interests
include interdisciplinary
humour research in
the context of cognitive
linguistics, translation
studies, cognitive
and developmental
psychology as well
as children's literature
in English, Polish
and Portuguese.

Humour and Translation
in Children's Literature
A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

To my daughter Marta

Sylvia Klos

Humour and Translation
in Children's Literature
A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

Series
Interdisciplinary Humour Research (1)

Series editor
Sylvia Klos

Interdisciplinary Humour Research – Advisory Board
Joanna Wilk-Racięska, Prof. dr hab. (Uniwersytet Śląski, Poland) –
cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics and humour semantics
Delia Carmela Chiaro, Prof. (Università di Bologna, Italy) –
translation studies, literature,
sociolinguistics, intercultural communication and humour studies
Willibald Ruch, Prof. dr (University of Zurich, Switzerland) –
psychology, humour studies
Mara Burkart, PhD (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina) –
sociology and cultural studies
Thaís Leão Vieira, PhD (Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso, Brazil) –
history and humour studies
Luis R. Franzini, PhD (San Diego State University, USA) –
psychology, humour studies

Referee
Dorota Brzozowska

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Foreword	9
Introduction	11
Chapter One	
Mapping Thoughts in (a Translator’s) Mind – Categories, Metaphors and Blends	15
1.1. Mapping and Categorisation	18
1.2. Classical Approach to Categorisation – Aristotle	19
1.3. Prototypes – an Alternative to the Classical Theory on Categories – Ludwig Wittgenstein and Eleanor Rosch	21
1.4. Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) – George Lakoff	26
1.5. Domains, Frames and Scripts	28
1.6. Conceptual Metaphor – George Lakoff and Mark Johnson	30
1.7. Conceptual Blending – Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner	32
1.7.1. The Network Model of Conceptual Integration	34
1.7.2. Types of Blends	39
Chapter Two	
Humour Theories and Children’s Ability to Understand Humorous Texts	41
2.1. Superiority Theories	42
2.2. Relief Theories	44
2.3. Incongruity Theories	46
2.4. Linguistic Theories of Humour	47
2.5. Jean Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development and Paul McGhee’s Four-Stage Model of Development of Children’s Comprehension of Humour	49

Chapter Three	
Translating Humour in Children’s Literature	55
3.1. Translation Procedure Based on Theory of Mental Spaces and Conceptual Integration	55
3.2. Translating Wordplays with the Use of Mental Maps	58
3.3. Mental Spaces Analysis and its Relation to Skopos Theory, Developmental Psychology and Semantic Dominant	62
3.4. Translation Procedure – Final Comments	73
Chapter Four	
Case Studies: Some Examples of Using Cognitive Approach in Translating Humour in Children’s Literature	75
4.1. To Mean or to Sound – That is the Question. Mental Map Analysis in Translation of Wordplays in <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> by Lewis Carroll	77
4.2. Humorous Power of Invented Language. Mental Map Focus on Expressions Used by Big Friendly Giant in <i>The BFG</i> by Roald Dahl	118
4.3. Horrid or Perfect. Mental Map Analysis in Search for Proper Translation of Proper Names in <i>Horrid Henry</i> by Francesca Simon	137
Conclusions	142
Bibliography	147

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I offer my sincerest gratitude to Prof. dr hab. Joanna Wilk-Racięska (University of Silesia) whose lectures on cognitive linguistics inspired me to write this monograph. Throughout all my PhD studies (and later on) I could count on Professor's support, guidance and encouragement without which my monograph would not have been completed.

I would also like to thank the reviewers of my monograph: Prof. dr hab. B. Krzysztof Bogacki (University of Warsaw), Prof. UŁ dr hab. Marek Baran (University of Łódź) and Prof. UO dr hab. Dorota Brzozowska (University of Opole) for their prompt feedback and critical comments to my work.

I am using the opportunity to acknowledge Prof. dr hab. Jerzy Brzozowski (Jagiellonian University) for providing me with thorough background in the field of translation studies.

I would also like to honour Prof. dr hab. Andrzej Ciuk (University of Opole) for showing full confidence in me in my first steps in using psychology as a tool for analysing literary texts.

I also wish to give thanks to all professors – participants of the conferences on cognitive linguistics that I had the pleasure to attend for their challenging questions and valuable suggestions that helped me to look at my work from different perspectives.

I also include special thanks to my friends Beata Panuszewska and Jacek Szostok for their support in preparing illustrations and diagrams in my monograph.

Last, but not the least, I would like to thank my daughter Marta for patience and enthusiasm that I can always count on. Thanks to her I discovered my passion for children's literature and decided to devote my research to a better understanding of children, especially their needs as young readers.

Foreword

My adventure with children's literature in its original and translated versions started with the birth of my daughter Marta. Reading bedtime stories in Polish, English and Portuguese became a part of our daily evening routine and soon children's books in their great variety evoked the natural and deep passion in us.

I also got interested in developmental psychology, first of all to better understand my daughter and to have a good relationship with her, later I wanted to find out how children perceive reality surrounding them and how books can contribute to their psychological and linguistic development.

As humour is an essential element in literature devoted to young readers, it became a subject of my studies in relation to translation: I wanted to learn how humorous elements should be transferred from one language to another so that the translation would have the same or similar effect on its recipient as the original. Although research in the field of translation studies to certain extent provided some answers on the mechanism of translation, full understanding of translation processes was only possible by including cognitive aspects of meaning construction and reconstruction in the mind of author and translator.

The present book combines the results of my studies on developmental psychology, theories on humour, translation theories and cognitive linguistics with the special emphasis on the theory of mental spaces and conceptual integration. Gill Fauconnier and Mark Turner's model of conceptual blending serves as a basis for creating mental maps that can be used by translators as tools in translating humour, especially wordplays.

The book contains several examples of translating humorous elements taken from English children's literature (Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Roald Dahl's *The BFG* and Francesca Simon's *Horrid Henry*) into

Polish and Portuguese in its European and Brazilian version with the use of mental maps. Cognitive aspects of translation are strongly emphasised, while translation theories and developmental psychology can be treated as a background for translation analysis and evaluation.

The book does not present a full account of the research in the field of children's literature translation studies, but, as it might be of some readers' interest, I decided to include some references on the subject at the end of this book.

Introduction

Translation means an ability to capture a highly complex process of meaning creation in a writer's mind, the meaning hidden in words, phrases and texts treated separately and as a whole. Translation involves understanding mechanisms governing operations in the writer's mind leading to structuring the meaning in the language system used by its speakers to communicate, convey knowledge, and express emotions. A translator, conscious of how the meaning is created in a source language, is able to recreate the meaning in a target language.

Translating humour requires specific capacity to recognise what are the circumstances that provoke laughter and what are the conditions that a given text/speech must fulfil to be considered funny by the humour recipients – the speakers of both source and target language.

Translating a text also means to make it understandable to a different language reader, the reader with different cultural identity shaped by his/her language perspective. In Umberto Eco's words, translation is "saying almost the same thing" in a different language (Eco 2005: 7), the translation means transferring a text into a new cultural environment.

A translated text is made understandable to a reader if a translator knows the cognitive capacities of the reader group the text is directed at. It is especially important in case of translating literature dedicated to children. Young readers constitute a group of literature recipients that calls for special attention due to their needs and expectations as to the content and language used in children's books.

The objective of this monograph is to present a translation procedure that responds to the requirements mentioned above and that can be applied in translating humour in children's literature, with the special focus on translating wordplays, funny phrases and proper names.

Chapter One deals with cognitive aspects of meaning creation in mind: categories, metaphors and blends are treated as basic components in structuring and organising knowledge resulting from linguistic and non-linguistic experiences with the world. Mapping thoughts is a key process in discovering a potential meaning in a text; it also serves as a way to visualise how the meaning is created, what are its constituent parts and how they are interconnected. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner's theory on conceptual blending, their basic diagram displaying the process of blend construction, shall be used as an integral part of the translation procedure based on mental map analysis discussed later in the book.

Chapter Two provides a brief account of superiority, incongruity and relief theories on humour together with their most significant assumptions. It also gives an insight into developmental psychology (Jean Piaget) with the special attention paid to stages in development of children's appreciation of humour (Paul McGhee).

Chapter Three describes in detail a translation procedure in which conceptual blending (Gilles Fauconnier, Mark Turner), skopos theory (Hans Vermeer, Katharina Reiss, Christiane Nord), the concept of semantic dominant (Stanisław Barańczak) and psychological functions of children's literature (Bruno Bettelheim) together with the research findings on developmental psychology within the field of humour studies (Paul McGhee) give origin to a new method of translating humorous texts dedicated to children. The procedure is founded on mental map analysis of humorous text components (wordplays, funny phrases, and proper names) that enables a visualisation of crucial semantic and phonetic layers of the components to be preserved in translation. The mental map analysis also takes into account a general knowledge on the literary work (cultural and social aspects, author's biography, etc.) in which the humorous text components are incorporated and it shows how it influences the final outcome of the translation.

In Chapter Four various cases of implementation of the translation procedure based on conceptual blending are discussed. Mental maps are used to analyse humorous text components such as wordplays in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, humorous phrases spoken by the Big Friendly Giant in Roald Dahl's *The BFG* and funny proper names invented by Francesca Simon in *Horrid Henry* series. Mental map analysis serves as a point of reference for reconstruction of humour in Portuguese (both European and Brazilian versions) and Polish translations.

Conceptual blending theory applied in translation of humour in children's literature sheds a new light on the analysis of translation process in which a writer, a translator and a young reader are active agents in meaning construction, reconstruction and interpretation. Mental maps enable a thorough analysis of the thought paths followed by each of the agents on their way to recognise and appreciate humour.

Copy editor
Krystian Wojcieszuk

Cover design
Tomasz Kipka

Technical editor
Małgorzata Pleśniar

Typesetting
Marek Zagniński

Copyright notice valid until 31.12.2021
Copyright © 2020 by Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego. All rights reserved
We support open science. As of 1.01.2022, publication available under
Creative Commons license
Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)



The electronic version will be published in the open access formula
in the Repository of the University of Silesia www.rebus.us.edu.pl

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3239-844X>
Klos, Sylwia
Humour and translation in children's literature :
a cognitive linguistic approach / Sylwia Klos. -
Katowice : Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2020. -
(Interdyscyplinarne Badania nad Humorem ; 1)

<https://doi.org/10.31261/PN.3968>
ISBN 978-83-226-3866-8
(print edition)
ISBN 978-83-226-3867-5
(digital edition)
ISSN 2719-8235

Publisher
Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego
ul. Bankowa 12B, 40-007 Katowice
www.wydawnictwo.us.edu.pl
e-mail: wydawnictwo@us.edu.pl

Printing and binding
Volumina.pl Daniel Krzanowski
Księcia Witolda 7-9
71-063 Szczecin

First impression. Printed sheets: 9.75. Publishing sheets: 10.0. Offset paper grade III, 90g. PN 3968.
Price 29.90 PLN (VAT included).

The series *Interdisciplinary Humour Studies* presents research on humour from the perspective of various academic disciplines, with special emphasis on cognitive linguistics. Depending on the theme of the particular volume, the cognitive analysis of humour will be complemented by references to other sub-disciplines of linguistics such as humour semantics, neurolinguistics and sociolinguistics as well as other scientific fields including cognitive and developmental psychology, sociology, literature, translation studies, cultural and media studies.

In *Humour and Translation in Children's Literature. A Cognitive Approach* Sylwia Klos uses Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner's theory of mental spaces and conceptual blending to create a translation model based on mental maps that visualise thought paths followed by the author and the translator while inventing and translating humour in literature dedicated to young readers.



ISSN 2719-8235

Price 29.90 PLN (VAT included)

ISBN 978-83-226-3867-5



9 788322 638675

About this book

