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## THE TRANSLATOR'S VOICE IN TRANSLATION OF PROPER NAMES: ROALD DAHL AS AN EXAMPLE OF FUNCTIONAL PROPER NAMES

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[...] there are no rules for the translation of proper names  
(Christiane Nord, 2003:184)

## Resumen

En todo libro infantil aparecen a menudo nombres propios para identificar los personajes como lugares que aparecen en estas historias. Unas veces son conocidos y familiares para los lectores, otras veces no son conocidos porque pertenecen a otras culturas y otras veces son invenciones de los autores de los libros y cuentos. Cuando estos nombres propios son inventados, suelen desempeñar algún tipo de función, como puede ser describir al personaje o dar algún tipo de información sobre el mismo. Por este motivo nos hemos planteado qué ocurre con la traducción de los nombres propios de algunos libros de Roald Dahl, dado el uso que este autor hacía de los nombres propios.

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**Palabras clave:** Nombres propios, traducción, referencias culturales.

### Abstract

Very often proper names are expected in books for children to identify characters or places which appear in these sort of texts. Sometimes they are well-known and familiar for these readers, sometimes they are not known because they belong to other cultures and sometimes they are conceived by the authors of the books and tales. When these proper names are conceived, they usually serve any specific purpose, as describing the character or offering information about the proper character. For this reason we put the question to ourselves how proper names appearing in books by Roald Dahl are translated. It is quite known the use Dahl made of proper names in his books.

**Key words:** Proper names, translation, cultural references.



### Introduction

Anybody would expect proper names in children's literature and see them as the functional communicative link with the reader such as those, for instance, in *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan in Neverland*, *Harry Potter*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Manolito Gafotas*, amongst many others. Proper names are used to identify characters, places, institutions, and so on, and are very often chosen deliberately by their authors for many reasons. Firstly, most probably, so that the name plays a major role in bringing the child-reader closer to the character in his or her mind from the very beginning of the story, or secondly, with the aim of describing the character in some way, through the use of some kind of rhyme, alliteration or wordplay, etc.

In any case, proper names in children's books are very important because they become the first thing young readers use to remember the names of those characters they like the most. So, we put the question to ourselves of how proper names are translated, taking into account, firstly, the variety, i.e. for people, places, institutions, etc., and secondly, the different nature they can have. Sometimes proper names are common, well known and familiar to the reader, but very often the nouns themselves, being fictional items as they are, have very often been invented. So, what does happen when a children's book is translated? How do proper names appear in

translations? Do they have or create the same effect in the target text as they do in the original one? And, when a proper name serves any specific purpose in the original, has this been maintained in the target text?

The general aim of this paper is to analyze the translation of proper names in Roald Dahl's children's books and set out the variety of strategies and mechanisms used in the translation of these elements. The essence of this paper is to determine what the patterns are when translating proper names in Dahl's books.

### 1. A definition of proper names

Before analyzing the translation of proper names in children's books, we feel that the term 'proper name' itself should be defined due to the fact that at first sight it seems quite easy to determine if a word is a 'proper name' or not, but on the contrary, the fact that many scholars have been trying to find an acceptable definition, reflects just how difficult this task actually is.

The Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary and the Collins Cobuild Dictionary coincide to a certain extent as to what the definition of a *proper noun* is:

A noun that designates a particular being or place, does not take a limiting modifier, and is usually capitalized in English (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary).

In grammar, a proper noun is a noun which is the name of a person, place or institution. Proper names are often spelled with a capital letter at the beginning (Collins Cobuild)

As we can see, the basic function of a proper name is the identification and/or designation of a certain being, object, place, etc. Thus it differentiates it from others in the same group, sort, species, and so on. That is, it draws a line between "the group" and the "individual", distinguishing one from the others, a factor which can clearly be interpreted as a 'referential' function. If we are referring to a group of human beings, such as children, by naming one as *Peter*, we can identify *Peter* from *John*, *Hugh*, and all the others belonging to the same group.

Besides this, many people's names usually convey information about the person themselves. For instance, somebody named *Arturo* allows us to deduce that

he is male and that maybe he comes from Spain or South America – contrary to some of the information which the name *Arthur* would depict. This is an important function of proper names in fiction, to which Christiane Nord referred to by stating that it “is to indicate in which culture the plot is” (2003: 182). What’s more, when a character such as *Peter Rabbit* (Beatrix Potter, 1902) appears in the story for example, it can be assumed that the character is male and a rabbit. This means that a proper name carries out not only a ‘referential’ function, but also an ‘informative’ one; in other words, information derived from the proper name tells us: where somebody comes from, their sex, their social class and even their age, etc. Besides this, when a name appears in a text, it isn’t just mentioned only once, but continually reoccurs throughout the story, thus reminding the child-reader of the information about the character on each of the following occasions.

When we refer to the translation of proper names in children’s fiction, beforehand, we must mention the proper names which appear in this text genre. In relation to the act of *baptizing* characters’ names in fictional texts, two things can happen: the author either “chooses” a name, which is used subjectively depending on tastes and fashions, or he merely “conceives” a new one. In this creative process, the presence of some meaning is quite common; subsequently, both approaches must be taken into account when translating children’s literature. As Nord stated, “there is no name in fiction without some kind of auctorial intention behind it, although, of course, this intention may be more obvious to the readers in one case than in another” (2003: 183).

When talking about proper names in books for children, we will analyze the following types:

a) Common proper names. Many proper names appearing in books for children are known or familiar to the reader, for instance, *Alice, Peter, Harry, Julia, John*, etc. for an English reader, or *Alicia, Pedro, Alberto, Juan*, etc. in Spanish. It is very easy to find such names in children’s books for characters or places in realistic settings or those belonging to the world of fantasy. The fact that proper names are usually cultural references must also be taken into account, and as such, must be treated as cultural elements. This means to say that they are produced by or form part of a specific culture and therefore differ from other cultures in languages, customs, traditions, food, dress, ideologies, religion, ways of thinking and reacting.

When cultural references emerge in a text, they point to and underline a particular culture.

There are certain tendencies when translating cultural references. In relation to this subject, we would distinguish the following translation strategies:

1. **Foreignization.** A cultural reference belonging to a particular culture, that is, in the original cultural itself, in the translation remains as it does in the original, therefore becoming a foreign culture reference for the target reader.
2. **Domestication.** With the domestication of a cultural reference, the original culture reference is modified in the translation, being substituted by another belonging to the target culture. In this way, the cultural reference will be seen by the target reader as a natural element belonging to his own culture.
3. **Neutralization.** With this translation mechanism the cultural reference loses its cultural charge for both the original and target cultures.
4. **Biculturalism.** With this mechanism, a cultural reference in the original culture becomes a cultural reference in the target culture, but at the same time, remains a cultural reference in the original one.
5. **Invented proper names.** In many fantastic children’s books it is very common to find names invented by authors either for common human characters, for animals (with human or non-human type behaviour) or fantastic characters or places. This is all plays a part of the creativity of any author of fiction.

In way or another, a proper name always carries out some sort of text function and this is determined by the author, so without any doubt plays an important role in the translation process. To try to show this theory, we will analyze the translation of proper names in books by Roald Dahl because of the exceptional way he made use of them and the way he chose or created them

The translation of proper names in general is not an easy task, and their translation in children’s literature is no exception. Very often it has been stated that

“proper names should not be translated or are untranslatable”. I believe that, when a text is being translated, every element should be translated and, of course, this includes proper names too. The point here is that proper names are often rendered into the other languages without any change by using a loan, for instance, *Matilda* (*Matilda*, Roald Dahl, 1988) which appears in Spanish as *Matilda*, when the Spanish spelling for this name in this language is *Matilde*.

As Nord has already stated, there are no rules for the translation of proper names, but to certain extent, depending on what sort of proper name the translator is dealing with. Instead of discussing this question, we will start by considering the fact that proper names are always translated in any intercultural and interlinguistic context, even if they appear in the target text with the same form as in the original.

We shall also start with the hypothesis that translating is re-creating in another language, and that the ‘name-creation’ process differs from one language to another. So, a name with a certain effect or nuance in English, for instance, may not produce the same effect, let’s say, in German, Spanish or French. Therefore, the translator should pay special attention to this question, trying to identify the effect emerging in the source context and duplicating a similar effect in the target context. Do not forget that a proper name in any literary text has the power to make the reader create an image of the character in his or her mind. Every child, including older readers and adults, will create a particular image and voice for a certain character, above all when the text is illustrated with very few pictures or none at all. So the proper name helps to depict this characterization in the child’s mind. What usually happens is that when an author *plays* with proper names, giving some sort of information or describing a character, this extra information is not explained or described explicitly; translators, however, sometimes do not realize that the author is adding some kind of information via the proper names in the plot, as was the case in the translation of the first of the Harry Potter series.

Besides, these semantically loaded proper names do not always transmit their meaning clearly by using, for instance, Latin or Greek words; once again a clear example of this were the great many names created in *Harry Potter* (*Black Sirius*, *Draco Malfoy*, etc.). It is a bit like a riddle and probably not every child reader is able to guess the hidden meaning unless there is an acceptable translation. Hence, the role of the translator here is very important. Firstly, because he or she must grasp

the meaning which the author has inserted. Secondly, he should try to render it into the other language, endeavouring to achieve that the proper name sounds and works well; moreover, it is important to recall that proper names are those elements of the text which children will mostly remember.

To illustrate this question we offer the following example extracted from *Matilda* (1988):

“Mr and Mrs Wormwood were two such parents. They had a son called Michael and a daughter called Matilda, and the parents looked upon Matilda in particular as nothing more than a scab” (*Matilda*, p. 4)

“El señor y la señora Wormwood eran de esos. Tenían un hijo llamado Michael y una hija llamada Matilda, a la que los padres consideraban poco más que como una postilla” (*Matilda*, p. 13).

In this case it is quite clear that a proper name like *Wormwood* transmits a meaning about an insect, so by translating this proper name using only a loan, the target reader won’t have any idea of the meaning behind the name and will not be able to create any image in his or her mind of the character in the story.

When talking about translating proper names, the following mechanisms should be considered:

1. **Loan or repetition.** By translating a proper name using a loan, there is no change in the proper name from the source language to the target language, but it is a type of translation because the act of deciding how to transfer a particular proper name into another language is a mental procedure that implies a decision, and translation is exactly that: a mental procedure. For instance, in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) the name of *Mr Willy Wonka*, appears in the Spanish version as *señor Willy Wonka*.
2. **Orthographic change.** In other cases, translations of proper names just present some orthographic changes as for instance *Sophie* (*The BFG*, Dahl, 1982), which turns into *Sofía* in Spanish and *Sophiechen* into German, which is a diminutive form.
3. **Equivalence.** In many cases, proper names are or have been substituted with an equivalent or similar proper names in the target language, as for

instance *England* turns obviously into *Inglaterra* in Spanish or *Angleterre* in French because of the long tradition of many proper names, or with names such as *Michael and Jane Goochey*, which turn into *Miguel y Juanita Goochey* into Spanish<sup>2</sup>.

**4. Substitution of another proper name.** In many cases the names had no special meaning and are substituted in the translations by others which are more familiar to target readers.

**5. Literal translation.** Translation approaches of proper names in children's literature have shown for centuries the preference for literal translation. In fact, very often in fairy tales the names of the characters had a precise meaning that obliged the translator to translate the proper names literally. For instance, the famous *Schneeweißchen* by the Grimm brothers which was translated into *Snow White* in English and *Blancanieves* in the case of Spanish, the references to 'white' and to 'snow' are preserved in both translations.

Taking into account all the above considerations concerning the translation of proper names, we will analyze the translation of proper names in Roald Dahl's books, because, in his books, names and surnames constitute a very important semantic code and thus an essential element in Dahl's books (Fernández Martín, 1998).

## 2. The author: Roald Dahl

Roald Dahl is one of the most famous British writers of children's books. He was born in Llandaff, Wales, in 1916 of Norwegian parents. At the age of 13 he went to a public school named Repton. The years he spent at public schools in Wales and England, Dahl later described without nostalgia: "I was appalled by the fact that masters and senior boys were allowed literally to wound other boys, and sometimes quite severely. I couldn't get over it. I never got over it..." ("Boy: Tales of Childhood", 1984).

<sup>2</sup> In many cases, the limits between "orthographic changes" and "substitution by an equivalent proper name", could also be discussed but I will consider the first as a case of changing just a few letters, and the latter when changing a proper name renders a similarity, but there is more to it than changing just a few letters.

As an adult he worked as a representative for the Shell Oil Company in East Africa, was an RAF fighter pilot in the Second World War and an air attaché, after which, he returned to England and started writing stories for his own children. His first book for children was "The Gremlins" (1943), a story about mischievous creatures written for Walt Disney. His child experiences were marked by the way he had been treated by adults and saw parents and teachers as enemies, something that he reflected in his books. "These experiences later inspired him to write stories in which children fight against cruel adults and authorities" (...). "The adult is the enemy of the child because of the awful process of civilizing this thing that when it is born, it is an animal with no manners, no moral sense at all." (<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/rdahl.htm>). This explains many aspects of Dahl's writing. He tries to put himself in the child's position and presents atypical themes and in an unusual way to children. He also wrote books for adults such as "Someone like you" (1953), for which he gained fame all over the world.

I have chosen Roald Dahl's books for the analysis of the translation of proper names, mainly because his books are a very good example of how a writer can deliberately 'baptize' the characters of a book to carry out a distinct function or effect. Furthermore, as Dahl is a very well known author of children's books, which have been translated into several languages, the analysis of different translations into different languages will provide us with further conclusions about the tendency on the translation of proper names.

A trait of Dahl's writing is his irony, 'black humour', the "unexpected" or strange endings in his books, where the plot is told from a child's point of view. For instance, in *THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT* the main character is *the BFG*, a kind giant who kidnaps *Sophie*, a little orphan girl, and they become very good friends. The giant's name describes clearly that this is not the evil giant you would expect to find, but a kind one, unlike the *Flechlumpeating Giant* or *Bonecruncher*, who are not so kind.

This way of choosing proper names is really funny and interesting, but it is also very important for the reader-writer relationship because it is the writer's way of getting closer to the child, playing with a name which clearly transmits some sort of information.

Very often, these proper names clearly have meaningful content that define a slice of the character carrying that proper name; it could also be wordplay or

something simply precocious, just to name some of the cases that reflect the possible intentions of an author. It could also be interpreted as a hint from Dahl to the child reader, as he used to do in many of his books.

## 2.1. Proper names in Dahl's books

### a) Neutral proper names

Very often we find in children's books names which only carry out the referential function and only specify the member belonging to a particular group. These names do not express any special meaning or intention about the person or place being named—except for gender or nationality, or even maybe the age.

It is quite common in Dahl's books to find characters with very everyday human names such as *Sophie*, *Michael* and *Jane* (*Goochey*), *Amelia* (*Upscotch*), *Henry* (from *The BFG*), *Granpa Joe*, *Grandma Josephine*, *Granpa George*, *Grandma Georgina*, *Charlie* (*Bucket*), *Augustus* (*Gloop*), *Charlotte* (*Russe*), *Miss Violet* (*Beauregarde*), *Miss Cornelia* (*Prinzmetel*), *Mike Teavee* (from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*) and so on. But here it is necessary to distinguish between first names and surnames in Dahl's books. It is characteristic for this author to use real English first names (*Sophie*, *Michael*, *Jane*, etc), but in combination with semantically loaded surnames:

<i>Charlie and the Chocolate factory</i>			
English	German	Spanish	French
<i>Grandma Josephine</i>	<i>Großmutter Josefina</i>	<i>abuela Josephine</i>	<i>grand-maman Joséphine</i>
<i>Granpa George</i>	<i>Großvater Georg</i>	<i>abuelo George</i>	<i>grand-papa Georges</i>
<i>Grandma Georgina</i>	<i>Großmutter Georgine</i>	<i>abuela Georgina</i>	<i>grand-maman Georgina</i>
<i>Charlotte Russe</i>	<i>Charlotte Russe</i>	<i>Carlota Rusa</i>	<i>Charlotte Russe</i>
<i>Miss Violet Beauregarde</i>	<i>Violetta Wiederkäu</i>	<i>señorita Violet Beauregarde</i>	<i>demoiselle Violette Beauregard</i>

The most commonly used mechanism to translate these names is by using orthographic changes in first names as the table above, with examples from Dahl's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), shows. In the table we can see the

translation of some of the proper names into German, Spanish and French. In the translations into German and French, the tendency is the use of orthographic changes with first names: *Josefine*, *Georg*, *Georgine* and *Violetta* (German) and *Joséphine*, *Georges*, *Violette* (French). While in the Spanish translation, the tendency is the use of loans: *Josephine*, *George*, *Georgina* and *Violet*, even when in this language, the pronunciation will change with the spelling. The same happens with the Spanish translation of *Matilda* (1988), where proper first names are maintained without any change. But this is not always so because in other books translated into Spanish, the first names are translated by using orthographic changes, as is the case with *Sophie* in *The BFG*, which turns into the Spanish *Sofía*. But, in general, there are several examples which show the tendency to maintain the foreign names as they appear in the originals, that is, the strategy used is foreignization.

Another example is extracted from Dahl's Book, *The BFG*, in which the names *Michael* and *Jane Goochey* are found. With them we can clearly see a substitution with equivalent forms from the other languages, which turn into *Miguel y Juanita Goochey* in Spanish, and *Michael und Anne Gantig* in German, so the strategy preferred in both languages is domestication.

Sometimes, these "common" first names are substituted with different ones, for instance with *Henry* in *The BFG*, which in German turns into *Willi*, a name without any similarity to the first one. Thus I can say that with neutral proper names the tendency in German and French is the use of orthographic changes to translate proper names appearing in the books analyzed to make them sound more "national", that is, the names are "domesticated" in order to adapt a cultural reference from a source culture to a target one.

But in the Spanish translations, the tendency is foreignization, that is, a translation strategy used to preserve the cultural content of any reference to the source culture in the target language. By using pure loans with proper names, this cultural content is maintained in the target context, despite the fact that the pronunciation of those names changes in Spanish.

### b) Semantically loaded proper names

One of Roald Dahl's stronger characteristics when writing was that he liked to create proper names with some sort of meaning, what we call "semantically loaded

proper names". Under this category we find names with a peculiar meaning or function, despite the referential element, such as describing somehow the characters' personality, his appearance, job, hobby, amongst others, for instance, *Mr and Mrs Twit* (*The Twits*, Dahl, 1980), whose surname clearly describes how unpleasant this couple is, or *the Big Friendly Giant* (*The BFG*, Dahl, 1982), a name which clearly states the gentle personality of this giant, just to name a few examples.

Under this category we will also find proper names with a diffuse or insinuating meaning, as J.K. Rowling conceived in her Harry Potter books, with characters such as *Sirius Black*, whose name refers to his black hair and robes, his obscure past and personality, or *Draco Malfoy*, where Draco means "dragon" and reflects the wickedness of the boy. By choosing or creating such proper names, the author wants to transmit some information to young readers about the characters. Of course, there are different degrees and mechanisms in the transmission of this information. Some examples of these names in Dahl's books are the following:

Charlie and the chocolate factory			
English	German	French	Spanish
<i>Fickelgruber's factory</i> (24)	<i>die anderen Schokoladenfabrik</i> (18)	<i>la chocolaterie Fickelgruber</i> (32)	<i>la fábrica Fickelgruber</i> (29)
<i>Mr Prodnose's factory</i> (24)	<i>die anderen Schokoladenfabrik</i> (18)	<i>la chocolaterie Prodnose</i> (32)	<i>la fábrica del señor Prodnose</i> (29)
<i>Mr Slugworth's factory</i> (24)	<i>die anderen Schokoladenfabrik</i> (18)	<i>la chocolaterie Slugworth</i> (32)	<i>la fábrica de Slugworth</i> (29)
<i>Professor Foulbody</i> (30)	<i>Professor Faul</i> (25)	<i>professor Foulbody</i> (40)	<i>Profesor Foulbody</i> (37)

As we can see from the examples above, it is very obvious for an English reader to perceive specifically, amusing meanings from the names presented in the table: *Fickelgruber*, *Prodnose*, *Slugworth* or *Foulbody*.

The translation of these names is a great challenge for the translator who firstly, must detect the meaning and the author's intention and secondly opt for the right name, thus allowing the target reader to get the original meaning or at least one similar to the original, otherwise, the author's intention, which comes up repeatedly throughout the story plot each time that name is presented, would be lost.

As we can see from the examples of translation, the French and the Spanish made use of pure loans, so the meanings of the proper names cannot be perceived by the target readers. In the case of the German translation, probably the translator understood the meanings, but neutralized them in the case of the factory names and rendered not the meaning, but looked for a name with a meaning in German (*Faul*) which means 'idle' and not "filthy" or "vile" as in the original text.

More proper names extracted from the books *The Twits* (1980) and *Matilda* (1988), illustrate this question and semantically loaded surnames are found: *Twit*, *Wormwood*, *Trunchbull*, and so on:

<i>The Twits</i>			
English	Spanish	French	German
Mr Twit	<i>señor Cretino</i>	<i>Compère Gredin</i>	<i>Herr Zwick</i>
Mrs Twit	<i>señora Cretino</i>	<i>Commère Gredin</i>	<i>Frau Zwick</i>

*Twit* is the surname of an appallingly unpleasant couple, and this fact was taken into account in the translations into Spanish, French and German. So, *Mr and Mrs Twit*, turned into *señor y señora Cretino*, *Compère Gredin* and *Commère Gredin*, *Herr und Frau Zwick*, names which express in each language how awful these characters are.

Nevertheless, in other cases the translators do not take the function these proper names carry out into account, as in the following examples in which the meanings of the names are translated into German and French, but not into Spanish:

<i>Matilda</i> (1988)			
English	Spanish	French	German
<i>Miss Honey</i>	<i>Señorita Honey</i>	<i>Mlle. Candy</i>	<i>Fräulein Honig</i>
<i>Mr and Mrs Wormwood</i>	<i>Señor y señora Wormwood</i>	<i>Monsieur et Madame Verdebois</i>	<i>Herr und Frau Wurmwald</i>
<i>Miss Trunchbull</i>	<i>Señorita Trunchbull</i>	<i>Mlle. Legourdin</i>	<i>Frau Knüppelkub</i>

*Miss Honey*, as her names states, is a very sweet and beautiful teacher who helps Matilda, unlike the strict school headmistress, *Miss Trunchbull*, or Matilda's

stupid parents, *Mr and Mrs Wormwood*. The names chosen by Dahl reflect positive or negative aspects of the characters. The sweetness of Miss Honey is rendered in French and in German through words which reflect sweetness: *Candy* (French) and *Honig* (German) But in Spanish, the name appears as in English, *Honey*, which not all Spanish children will understand as something "sweet". Similar examples are *Trunchbull* or *Wormwood*, names constructed using animal and insect names: *bull* and *worm* express something unpleasant. In these two cases, the French and German translations rendered similar meanings: *Verdebois*, *Wurmwald*, *Legourdin*, *Knüppelkub*. But in the Spanish version again a pure loan was used and so the Spanish reader will not spot the author's underlying hint.

In order to find an answer to this strategy in Spanish translations, we believe that translators and editors should try to apply foreignization for proper names as well as for other cultural references. Nevertheless, these proper names are not really cultural references, but creations of Roald Dahl, who played with meanings and words with no cultural content. So in these cases, I would recommend a semantic translation in order to obtain the same effect for the target reader.

## 2.2. Invented proper names or for fantastic characters

Under the category of semantically loaded proper names, we have mentioned examples from Dahl's book *The BFG*, where a few giants appear, whose names clearly transmit information about the preferences of each one:

TO: <i>The BFG</i>		
English	Spanish	German
<i>Bonecrunching Giant</i>	<i>Gigante Ronchahuesos</i>	<i>Knochenknacker</i>
THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT	EL GRAN GINGANTE BONACHÓN (28)	der GUTE RIESE.
BFG		<i>GuRie</i>
<i>Dream-Blowing Giant</i>	<i>Gigante Soplaseños</i>	<i>Traumfänger</i>
<i>The Bloodbottler</i>	<i>el gigante Sanguinario</i>	<i>Kotzgurke</i>
<i>Fleshlumpeating Giant</i>	<i>Tragacarnes</i>	<i>Fleischfetzenfresser</i>
<i>Manhugger</i>	<i>Quebrantahombres</i>	<i>Menschenpresser</i>

<i>Bonecruncher</i>	<i>Ronchahuesos</i>	<i>Kackepeter</i>
<i>Childchewer</i>	<i>Mascaniños</i>	<i>Klumpenwürger</i>
<i>Meatdripper</i>	<i>Escurrepicadillo</i>	<i>Blutschlucker</i>

As we can see, all the names describe the sort of giant they are: *Manhugger*, *Bonecruncher*, *The Big Friendly Giant*, etc. In these cases, the information that the author transmits to the child reader through the proper names is more than obvious and also very important. So it is important to recreate the names in the target languages. Just to analyze one of them, the *Dream-Blowing Giant*, the one that blows dreams, in Spanish is translated as *Soplaseños*, but in German it 'hunts' dreams. It isn't unusual to find these small differences of meaning because it is a question of playing with form and content of a word and this is a sort of acceptable solution. With the rest of the examples, the Spanish translators rendered the information directly from the original. In the German translations, however, the meanings of the original names differ from the original, but at least the German readers will appreciate certain meanings when naming these giants.

It must be said that in such cases, translators have to show a higher degree of creativity in order to transfer all or part of the meaning into another language and, at the same time, concerning proper names, will mean 'playing' with the form, and where a simple description would not be a good solution.

## Conclusions

The translation of proper names depends on the type of proper name which readers encounter, the reader's age, etc. In the case of Roald Dahl, it is quite obvious the way he created and used proper names, not just with a referential function, but also to describe the characters, which must be taken into account in the translation process. We must also remember that the intervention –and often the creativity– on the part of the translator are also fundamental.

When a translator comes across proper names in children's literature, it is necessary to recognize if a proper name is either culturally marked or if it is an author's creation – and if it is semantically loaded too. In each case, the translation strategy should vary: for cultural references, the translator or editor will decide if these will be maintained in the target context and culture by using foreignization; if they are



going to be substituted by others in the target culture by using domestication, or if they should be rendered in the other language by using neutralization.

In the cases in which proper names are not cultural references but newly-created words with a specific purpose or meaning, the translation strategy should be oriented towards its function or meaning in the source context and be rendered as similar as possible to the one in the new context.

In relation to tendencies in the translation of proper names in Dahl's books, we have observed the following:

- For cultural proper names, translations into German and French usually make changes in the orthography in order to adapt those proper names culturally to the target contexts. But the translations into Spanish have shown a clear tendency towards foreignization without any orthographic changes.
- For semantically loaded proper names, the tendency for German and French is to translate the meaning of the proper names as literally as possible; however, not in Spanish, whose readers often miss out on the wordplay created by Roald Dahl.

This analysis of the translation of proper names in children's texts reflects quite clearly that proper names are actually translated. Behind any proper name in a translated text, there will always be a decision to be made by the translator, a manipulation, a presence which will either bring the author and reader closer together or leave them further apart: this precisely, is the voice of the translator.

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