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## AN ANALYSIS OF DUBBESSE IN THE POLISH RENDITION OF *THE QUEEN'S CORGIE* (2019), THE ANIMATED MOVIE, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON ANALYSABILITY/ COMPOSITIONALITY PARAMETER OF WORDPLAY

### ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to survey the Polish translation of *The Queen's Corgie* (2019), the animated movie, in terms of the dubbese employed therein. Apart from the standard features such as slang, jargon, rhyming, and intertextual references, we focus on the use inventive language pertaining to the domain of dogs, which could be accounted for by means of the analysability/compositionality parameter as proposed by Langacker in lockstep with the blending theory as developed by Fauconnier and Turner.

KEYWORDS: audiovisual translation, wordplay, analysability/compositionality, *The Queen's Corgie*

### STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł jest krytycznym przeglądem polskojęzycznego tłumaczenia list dialogowych użytych w animowanym filmie *The Queen's Corgie* (2019). Autor wykazuje, że oprócz standardowych i oczekiwanych cech tzw. *języka dubbese*, takich jak slang, rymy, czy odniesienia intertekstualne, scenariusz cechuje szereg gier słownych związanych tematycznie ze światem psów. Język ten można eksplikować za pomocą pojęć takich jak analizowalność i kompozycyjność czy teoria integracji pojęciowej.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: tłumaczenie audiowizualne, gra słów, analizowalność, kompozycyjność, *The Queen's Corgie/Corgi*, *Psiak Królowej*

## INTRODUCTION

Audiovisual translation (AVT) has been attracting an ever-growing academic interest, evidenced in a recent surge of publications pertaining to the field (e.g. Bogucki 2004; Garcarz 2006, 2007; Chaume 2012, 2013, 2019; Lozano 2017; Parini 2019; Minutella 2021; Huber, Kairis 2021, among others). While AVT encompasses “dubbing, subtitling, surtitling, respeaking, audiosubtitling, voice-over, simultaneous interpreting at film festivals, free-commentary and goblin translation, subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing, audiodescription, fansubbing and

fandubbing” (Chaume 2013: 105), the pervading types of AVT are subtitling, voice-over, and dubbing, the latter being commonplace practice in the translation of animated films targeted mostly at children. As Lozano (2017) asserts, in the case of dubbing, there are three main synchronies that should be regarded in unison: lip-synchrony (related to the enunciation of particular phrases by the on-screen characters), kinetic synchrony (correspondence between characters’ gestures and actions and their utterances), and isochrony (aiming at the length-wise harmonization of the source text utterances in the target text). As each of these synchronies is accompanied with certain challenges imposed on the translator, it is only to be expected that audiovisual translators must perform in accordance with a set of adequate, workable strategies (Bogucki 2004: 133–156; Chesterman 1997: 94–107); Garcarz 2004: 97–105; Hansen 2002: 20–22; Lomheim 1999: 204–205; Newmark 1995: 40–87). The following translation techniques have been distinguished in the context of AVT for children (Barambones 2012), falling into two categories: lexical (adaptation, description, equivalent, generalisation, omission, particularisation, loan) and syntactic (enlargement, compensation, compression, discursive creation, modulation, reduction, substitution, literal translation, transposition, variation). Such a multitude of strategies must be a fair reflection of the characteristics of the language employed by animated movies, which encompasses colloquial expressions (slang, jargon, neologisms), children’s (simplified) language, figurative language, verbal puns, use of dialects, cultural and intertextual references, educational content, and songs (Barambones 2012; Ariza 2014; Lozano 2017). This classification is by no means intended to be exhaustive<sup>1</sup>; on the contrary, it is meant to be open-ended to potentially incorporate more distinctive elements of animated films. Generally, what emerges from a detailed synthesis of the available literature on AVT is a language variety labelled *dubbese*, representing the kind of language that the target audience is supposed to encounter (Von Flotow 2009: 91) in animated movies.

The aim of this article is to survey the Polish translation of *The Queen’s Corgie* (2019), the animated movie, in terms of the *dubbese* employed therein. Apart from the standard features such as slang, jargon, rhyming, and intertextual references, we will focus specifically on the use of innovative and inventive language pertaining to the domain of dogs, which could be accounted for by means of analysability/compositionality parameter as proposed by Langacker (1987, 1991, 2000, 2008) combined with the blending theory developed by Fauconnier, Turner (2002).

<sup>1</sup> For instance, Barambones (2012) puts forward another list of distinctive elements related to the linguistic code of animated pictures: exclamations and interjections, proper nouns, rhymes, etc.

## CORGIE: SPECIFICITY OF ITS AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

Since any cinematographic product ought to adapt, or address, its content to a specific audience (Bell 1984: 159), it is only to be expected that its language comes with an assortment of specific characteristics set by the medium-related demands to a particular audience. The dialogue list employed in *The Queen's Corgie* seems to rightly fit the characteristics of the language adapted to the youngest viewers, centralising on features such as informal language, rhyming, intertextual references, etc. Consider the use of selected colloquial expressions applied in the Polish text:

Table 1. Translation of colloquial expressions in *The Queen's Corgie* (2019) into Polish

1. See you.	1. To nara!
2. Tell me, Mr. President, what do you think of our English food? (Donald Trump): It is fantastic.	2. Panie Prezydencie, jak znajduje Pan naszą angielską kuchnię? (Donald Trump): Kurcze, rewelaja.
3. I ruined everything.	3. Ale ja wszystko spaprałem.
4. We're going to get caught.	4. Złapią nas i będzie dym.
5. Oh yeah?	5. Poważka?
6. Awful, just awful.	6. Masakra, koszmar przepotworny.
7. Know what I mean?	7. Czaisz bazę?
8. Know what I mean?	8. Wiesz o co kaman?
9. Here we go.	9. No to jazda.
10. I'm an easy going dog.	10. Jestem mega dobrze ułożony.
11. I can't believe it.	11. Dałem ciała.
12. Hi there, big boy.	12. Siemanko, misiaczku.
13. Want my advice, forget about her.	13. Daj se z nią siana.
14. Fantastic performance.	14. Doskonały wykon.

While the source text is contingent on arguably standard expressions in terms of the register, the target text clearly leans towards the informal register, offering a wide range of slang-based vernacular (*nara*; *rewelaja*; *spaprałem*; *będzie dym*; *poważka*; *przepotworny*; *czaisz bazę*; *o co kaman*; *no to jazda*; *mega dobrze*; *dałem ciała*; *siemanko*; *daj se siana*; *wykon*).

These target text choices could be accounted for by the translator potentially adopting the strategy of adjusting the text to the linguistic norms and expectations of the target audience, i.e. the youth. Such a translatory procedure could be embraced by the umbrella term of the Skopos theory, emphasizing that "(...) every text has a given goal, function or intention, and also an assumed set of addressees (...)" (Vermeer 2004: 233). This code-switching observed across the source and target text comes into a particularly sharp focus in the case of rhymed expressions delivered in the target text by Karolina Anna Kowalska, the translator of the *The Queen's Corgie* movie into Polish:

Table 2. The use of rhymed expressions as a translation strategy employed in *The Queen's Corgie* (2019)

1. What a fluffy tummy!	1. Jaki słodki brzuszek pluszek.
2. When you're the top dog, you know you're wanted!	2. Arcypies wyczesany, wszędzie mile widziany.
3. Okay, I must be going. See you later.	3. Dobra, muszę lecieć. Na razie głazie!
4. I'm not afraid of a little cold.	4. Lepiej w chłodzie niż w tym smrodzie.
5. The kind of dog, a girl would stray for.	5. Za takim wilczurem, to suczki sznurem.
6. United we stand, divided we fall.	6. W kupie radę damy a nie się czołgamy.
7. Come on big guy, let's see what you got, now!	7. Dawaj kolosie, masz ty moc w ciosie.
8. I know there was a hole in this wall, right here!	8. Tutaj była dziura. W murze dziura, by dać nura.
9. Let a woman show you how it's done.	9. Gdzie chłop ma blokadę, babeczka da radę.
10. That's what you get when you're top dog!	10. Cóż, nie łatwe jest życie na szczycie.

While none of the English expressions is rhymed, the Polish text hinges on verbal puns (*brzuszek-pluszek*; *wyczesany-widziany*; *razie-głazie*; *chłodzie-smrodzie*; *wilczurem-sznurem*; *damy-czołgamy*; *kolosie-ciosie*; *dziura-nura*; *życie-szczy-cie*). Such an explicitly creative approach, shaping the communicative conditions in which the text is interpreted (Lewicki 2000: 21), is evidently an outstanding example of the strategy of functional adaptation.

Another feature of the dubbese is a commonplace reliance on cultural and intertextual references, confirmed in the following passages:

Table 3. Reliance on intertextual references in the Polish translation of *The Queen's Corgie* (2019)

1. Pick your opening and strike like a coiled cobra!	1. Walić nader celnie i śmigłym być jak rydz!
2. I do like a great love scene. That's what I call a real class act.	2. A jednak komedia romantyczna. Ja bym powiedział "Kuweta singli".
3. Oh, hush Rex. Stop acting like an immature puppy.	3. Nie histeryzuj. Brutalem trzeba być, nie miętким pudlem.
4. I am not cut out to be top dog.	4. Jak żyć!

The message of the translated fragments acquires an extra-meaning value accessible only for those versant with the broadly understood Polish culture. Hence, *śmigłym być jak rydz* constitutes an intricate allusion to Edward Rydz-Śmigły, a Polish politician, statesman, Marshal of Poland and Commander-in-Chief of Poland's armed forces, an exceptionally admired public figure in Poland, regarded as a hero for his exemplary record as an army commander in the Polish Legions of World War I and the ensuing Polish–Soviet War in 1920. Then, the phrase *kuweta singli* (literally: "singles' litter box") refers to the Polish romantic comedy directed by Mitja Okorn in 2016, under the title *Planeta singli* (English: Planet Single) and

simultaneously sparks mental associations with the realm of dogs/cats. By analogy, *brutalem trzeba być, nie miętym* makes a reference to another widely recognizable Polish movie, *Kiler* (English: *The Hitman*), a 1997 comedy by Juliusz Machulski, starring, among others, Cezary Pazura, Jerzy Stuhr, Janusz Rewiński, Jan Englert, Katarzyna Figura, and Małgorzata Kożuchowska. The movie is known to be a repository of comical lines, cultural memes of sorts, which managed to make their way to the standard Polish, *trzeba być twardym a nie miętym* being one of those. Finally, the origin of the phrase *jak żyć* can be traced back to Stanisław Kowalczyk, a Polish born and bred farmer of pepper, the author of the question *Jak żyć?* (How to live?) addressed to the then Prime Minister Donald Tusk, implying that Polish farmers' families eke out an existence near poverty.

While the abovementioned characteristics fit the frame of the dubbesse typically employed in animated movies, we champion the claim that another feature of translation, as evidenced in *The Queen's Corgie*, is the use of novel wordplay expressions valid in the context of the movie's main theme, i.e. the domain of dogs. Consider the following examples:

Table 4. Dog-related creative expressions used in the Polish translation of *The Queen's Corgie* (2019)

1. Oh Rex, you are incorrigible!	1. Och, Rex, ale z Ciebie korginał.
2. Wish I could but she's caught me hook, line and sinker.	2. Awykonalne. Już za nią tęskni mój cały korgi korganizm.
3. I can't see a thing.	3. Kundle blade, nic nie widzę.
4. Your Highness.	4. Wasza Psiskość.
5. Care to dance, my Lady?	5. Można prosić do psioloneza?

We claim that these innovative linguistic means merit a more detailed description than the perhaps too capacious and superficial category of adaptation strategy or verbal puns, and, for that reason, they can be subject to a fine-grained analysis in the subsequent section, being accounted for in terms of analysability/compositionality parameter as proposed by Langacker (1987, 1991, 2000, 2008).

## ANALYSABILITY/COMPOSITIONALITY PAREMETERS OF AUDIOVISUAL WORDPLAY

The notions of *analysability* and *compositionality*, as proposed by Langacker (1987, 1991, 2000, 2008) are based on the assumption that meanings of lexical items can be dissected, at least to a certain degree, to incorporate smaller semantic units. Thus, analysability is viewed as the extent to which a composite, bigger structure is construed as a function of its components. For instance, *builder* ([*build*]-[*er*]) is

a lexeme that is highly analysable, as the morpheme *-er* typically provides information about the agentive role of the word<sup>2</sup> (*builder* as ‘someone who builds’). In contrast, the lexeme *father* ([*father*]) is non-analysable (it is not ‘someone who faths’) since it is a one-morpheme word<sup>3</sup>. Compositionality, on the other hand, is defined as the “the degree to which composite structures can be thought of as being assembled from their components in accordance with regular compositional principles” (Langacker 1991: 546). It is important to note that compositionality constitutes “an essential feature of language, enabling us to create and understand an endless supply of new expressions” (Langacker 2008: 167–168)<sup>4</sup>. It must be remembered that the semantic value of some components involved in the construction of whole lexical units forms a specific continuum, ranging from full clarity to stark obscurity:

Most speakers will agree that *English* and *horn* are components of *English horn*, and that *eaves* and *drop* are components of *eavesdrop*; that is, the participation of these words in the construction is clear even though the nature of their participation is not. In other cases, the participation itself is not clear: for instance, few speakers think of *halter* as saliently composed of *halt* and *-er*, and fewer still would recognize the morphemes *rue* and *-th* in the *ruth* of *ruthless* (Tuggy 2007: 115).

In addition to the complex and wide-ranging semantic relationship holding between the components in a given construction, it may be also possible to “decompose” non-compositional units, i.e. to render non-composite structures semantically valid. Consequently, these can be viewed, for all sorts of purposes<sup>5</sup>, as assembled in line with regular compositional principles (Langacker 1991: 546):

Far-fetched as this analysis may seem at first glance, the composite reading of *history* to yield *herstory* is a well-known attested example, as is the analysis of *peddler* in terms of a composite, which, in turn, is the #pre-condition of the reading of *to peddle* as a back-formation involving the deletion of a presumed component (...) (Lampert, Lampert 2010: 36).

According to Langacker (1987: 71), expressions such as *herstory* can be accounted for in terms of linguistic creativity, which amounts to the computation of a novel, transitory linguistic standard, on the basis of which the target can be categorised. Consider the following example offered by Chiaro (1996: 37), discussed by Żyśko (2017):

Seagoon: A penguin please.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly, *swimmer*, *baker*, *actor* suggest a strong awareness of the constituents (they are highly analysable), whereas the analysability of *computer*, *propeller* and *ruler* is somewhere lower on the scale.

<sup>3</sup> However, Langacker (2000) claims that *-er* in *father* can be treated as a quasi-morpheme that indicates a kinship term, and hence places it among other kinship terms such as *mother*, *sister*, *brother*.

<sup>4</sup> This view is shared by Pelletier (2004: 142), claiming that if compositionality was not a characteristic feature of language, it would make it unlearnable.

<sup>5</sup> Such an approach can be adopted in the comprehension of wordplay. See: Żyśko (2017).

Sellers: Certainly, I'll look in the catalogue.

Seagoon: But I don't want a cat, I want a penguin.

Sellers: Then I'll look in the penguin-logue.

The wordplay under discussion emerges since the word “catalogue” is rendered falsely compositional<sup>6</sup> to fulfill the demands of the verbal context of the joke, thus activating the domain of ANIMALS (“cat”).<sup>7</sup> Once the distinct components of the composite structure are identified, the compositional schema (ANIMAL+logue) is established, and the rule of *emergentness* (Talmy 2007) allows for alternative composite propositions to be potentially employed, such as “penguin-logue”, “zebra-logue”, “monkey-logue”, etc. In other words, once the rules of compositionality are revisited, the compositional schema of lexical units is to be re-conceptualized in line with the following pattern:

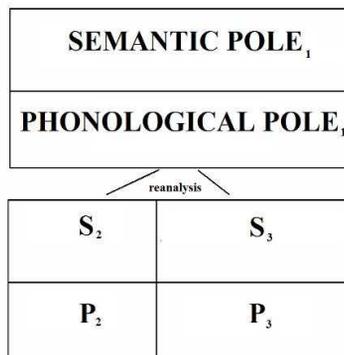


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the re-conceptualisation of a compositional schema

While the phonological pole (P) remains constant, it is the well-entrenched, conventionalized semantic pole (S) that is decomposed into two separate segments, and hence new compositional schemas.

## SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF DOG-RELATED WORDPLAY

We assume that a full comprehension of the translated wordplay involving dog-related concepts in the Polish translation of *Corgi* engages something that Fauconnier, Turner (2002) call an ability to combine various concepts in such

<sup>6</sup> The item “catalogue”, derived from the Greek *katalogos* (“a list”, “register”, “enrollment”), can be viewed as compositional only through a historical analysis of its Greek origins (*kata* “down”; *legein* “to say”, “count”).

<sup>7</sup> This kind of compositionality is in line with the idea of *recombination*, as proposed by Talmy (2007). Recombinance, a transient mechanism of a dynamic character, is defined as the assembling of discrete units into a new higher-level unit with its own identity.

a way that its final product, a conceptual blend, is a new concept, rich in emergent characteristics. The procedure of blending is underpinned by three basic cognitive processes: *identity*, concerning our ability to recognize similarities and differences between entities; *integration*, enabling us to combine the final product out of the previously identified parts; and finally *imagination*, allowing us to make use of the processes of identity and integration. It should be stressed out that a conceptual blend would emerge as an extra result of the combination of two or more input spaces constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action (Fauconnier 1994: 16–22). Thus, a schematic conceptual blending network proposed by Fauconnier, Turner (2002) can be represented as:

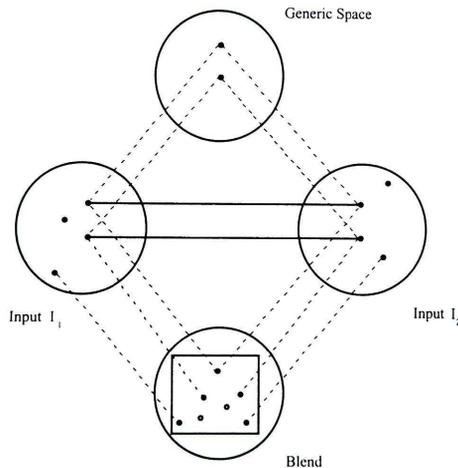


Figure 2. A schematic conceptual blend network as proposed by Fauconnier, Turner (2002)

Such a pattern of interpretation proves to be prevalent in the case of the wordplay examples incorporating a dog component, listed in Figure 3. An even fuller-scale attempt to account for such a complex semantic operation is made by Langacker's notion of Current Discourse Space (CDS), which is made up of "everything presumed to be shared by the speaker and hearer as the basis for communication at a given moment" (Langacker 2008: 466). Ultimately, the formation and interpretation of the novel linguistic units in the CDS incorporating the linguistic context of the macro-text (film script), between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H), with a conventional combination of semantic and phonological poles being parsed and reanalysed via the process of conceptual blending resulting in a novel semantic value of a given expression. This could be graphically represented as follows:

Let us now analyse the provided examples in detail, offering an in-depth analysis of their composite structures, starting with the example: *Och, Rex, ale z Ciebie korginal*. In practice, *korginal* is a non-existing word in the Polish language and, therefore, the audience needs to find a novel interpretation for the word, which

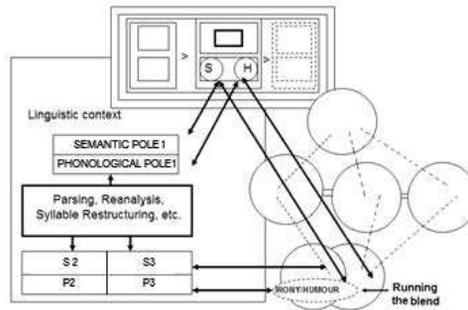


Figure 3. Schematic representation of the interpretation of dog-related wordplay used in the Polish translation of *Corgi* (adapted from Żyśko 2017)

can be achieved by the disintegration of the unit (i.e. its semantic and phonological poles) performed by means of an online running of a specific blend. In other words, what needs to be assumed is the presence of the two compositional schemas (novel, creative phonological and semantic poles), i.e. *korgi* and *oryginal*, blended together so that their semantic value goes beyond the one of the default lexical unit (*oryginal*, i.e. something/someone original, unique). Once the default composite structure is re-analysed, *korginal* yields the meaning of “an original, unique corgi dog”, with the effect of humour/surprise emerging as an extra-quality of the blend<sup>8</sup>.

Similarly, *korganizm* employed in *Już za nią tęskni mój cały korgi korganizm* offers a composite structure which could be broken into two distinct forms, *korgi* and *organism*. Once the unit is conceptually disintegrated, restructured and re-analysed, the reader can unearth its semantic potential denoting a corgi’s organism. Analogously, *psiolonez* used in *Można prosić do psioloneza?* requires from the reader to assess the contribution of each of the component elements (*pies* and *polonez*) to the overall meaning of the word (analysability) and to semantically interpret it in the light of the whole composite structure (compositionality), i.e. *psiolonez* (English: dog’s polonaise dance).

Moreover, it appears that the notion of analysability/compositionality can be also applied to idiomatic language (Gibbs 2010). Thus, *Kundle blade* and *Wasza Psiskość* will be contextually decoded as alluding to the idiomatic Polish exclamation *Kurcze blade* (English: blimey!) and the honorific term *Wasza Wysokość* (English: Your Highness), with their subparts replaced by the dog-related lexemes such as *kundle* (mongrels) and *Psiskość* (literally: Dogness). As evidenced upon a contrastive analysis between the source text and target text variants, the Polish rendition offers an adaptation of the original propositions since none of the source text examples make use of dog-related linguistic forms, be it standard or

<sup>8</sup> Kardela (2012: 102–103) contends that “this additional “humorous” effect emerges from sources other than their literal meaning, i.e. from the speaker-hearer discourse transactions operating in a specific context.

novel. It should be thus concluded that the Polish translation pivots on a creative, dogged approach, underlined with idiomatically-rooted adaptations, which could be further evidenced throughout the dialogue list by examples such as *Takie są szczenięce sny* (How a young heart really feels); *Pogoda jakby pod pssem* (It's a bit nippy out here); *Ogony do góry, zaczynamy show* (Public visit. Show your best); *I nigdy wam nie nasikam na parkieciak, psie słowo honoru* (I will never pee, on the settee, that's my guarantee); *Psia noga, nie będzie co zbierać* (This is not going to work), etc.

## CONCLUSIONS

An in-depth insight into the Polish translation of *The Queen's Corgie*, the animated movie, reveals that, apart from the predictable linguistic features such as slang, jargon, and rhyming, the target text makes a relatively considerable use of the inventive expressions pertaining to the leitmotif of the movie (domain of dogs). We espouse the view that these creative expressions can be accounted for by means of analysability/compositionality parameter as proposed by Langacker (1987, 1991, 2000, 2008) jointly with the blending theory developed by Fauconnier, Turner (2002). The recurring pattern of interpretation behind creative lexemes adopted in the translation entails conventional semantic and phonological poles being disintegrated, parsed and reanalysed via the process of conceptual blending producing a novel semantic value of a given expression. Such a view of neologisms appears to be escaping the frame of glib generalisations (aka adaptation strategies) and instead attempts to thoroughly explicate the unconventional formation of the discussed instances of creative language.

We do not claim, however, that a competent translator ought to be familiar with the methodology of conceptual blending and be able to approach the translation along the lines of analysability/compositionality parameters. Still, these theoretical notions can shed valuable light on the intricate process of translation of animated movies that potentially breaks the mould of the acclaimed procedures so widely discussed by translation scholars.

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