

## **Saving the BFG: A Relevance-Theoretic Approach to Pun Translation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Despite their ubiquity, puns are used purposefully in children's literature. To manifest the author's punning intention, puns should be rendered as puns in the target language. However, due to linguistic and cultural differences, puns are frequently lost in translation. With reference to *The BFG*, a famous children's book by Roald Dahl, this article explored the challenge of pun translation from English into Thai from the perspective of relevance theory. A case study approach was employed to provide insight into the translation strategies for puns from English into Thai. Moreover, quantitative data were used to support the results. The comparative analysis of the source language puns and their translations revealed that the translator tended to resort to literal translation, resulting in the loss of punning effects in the translations. Accordingly, the readers of the target language do not gain similar effects as the source language readers. Based on the relevance-theoretic approach, this article suggests recreating a target language pun or adjusting the target language contexts in order to achieve interpretive resemblance and save the punning effects intended by the author.

*Keywords:* English-Thai translation, puns, relevance theory, Roald Dahl, the BFG, translation strategy

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### INTRODUCTION

Used for a humorous effect and beyond, puns can be found in all forms of communication, for instance, daily conversation, comedy and jokes, news reports, advertisements, and literature. Puns are a rhetorical device, which has long been employed by great writers, such as William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Mark Twain (Wu & Pan, 2012). In the 19th century, wordplay

received great attention and became one of the attractions of children's literature after Lewis Carroll questioned the dominance of didacticism with his *Alice in Wonderland* (Tabbert, 2002). Dacheux and Lia (2010) indicated that puns had long been the hallmark of winning children's literature. Prominent modern day children's authors such as Roald Dahl, J.K. Rowling, and Daniel Handler also use puns in their stories.

Children's authors are fond of puns and wordplay, and they use them as a didactic implement to teach children the use of language, i.e., to accentuate that words have different meanings and that language has certain grammar rules and syntax (Nikolajeva, 2005). Roald Dahl himself argued that: "...a good children's book does more than entertain. It teaches children the use of words, the joy of playing with language" (West, 1990). Children benefit from pun play by learning the different meanings of the same words, and they can develop a greater command of language and vocabulary with the practice of commonly used puns (Zuzie, 2008). Crapo (2018) asserted that wordplay could be used to elicit laughs from children as it did not require a great deal of social norms or background knowledge.

Nonetheless, puns pose a great challenge to translators due to the fact that dual meanings of puns are always the combined effect of phonological and semantic features, which is hard to preserve when translating into another language (Backfish, 2018; Jing, 2010; Masakhwe, 2014; Zhang, 2017). Delabastita (2004) maintained that

typological dissimilarity and linguistic incompatibility between the source and target languages increased untranslatability of puns. Some scholars even consider puns 'untranslatable'. Catford (1965), for example, stated that untranslatability was provoked by the impossibility of finding an equivalent collocation in the target language. Linguistic untranslatability occurs when the target language has no formally corresponding feature. This type of untranslatability "occurs typically in cases where ambiguity peculiar to the SL (Source Language) text is a functionally relevant feature, e.g. in SL puns" (Catford, 1965). Mainly intralinguistic and pragmatic, puns and other forms of wordplay also pose culture-specific translation problems (Al-Rikaby et al., 2018).

Due to different language structures, when translating puns, translators are faced with a dilemma as to choose between being 'faithful' to the verbal playfulness of the original text or 'unfaithful' to vocabulary and grammar in the source text (Delabastita, 1996). Cocargeanu (2015) argued that when translating double meanings of puns, translators must decide where to strike the balance between preserving one or both meanings of the originals and possibly their humorous effects.

Lathey (2006) posited that although "critical interest in translation of children's literature has developed at an accelerating pace over the last thirty years", little had been studied on the translation of puns in children's literature. O'Sullivan proposed that the 'playful use of language' was one

of the aspects worth studying in translated children's books (Tabbert, 2002). Epstein (2012) classified puns under 'expressive language' and considered translating those in children's literature as a fascinating and difficult task. She further emphasized that translators had to find a way to approach and handle expressive language if used by the author.

Apart from Lewis Carroll's *Alice Adventures in Wonderland*, which has been extensively studied, the children's books ideal for a study of the translation of puns are those by Roald Dahl since they "abound with funny and witty puns" (Schober, 2009). Laura (2004) noted that Dahl had a prominent style of playing with language in all the three aspects of words: sound, meaning and form. In his books, he employed nonsense, puns, wordplay, alliteration, onomatopoeia and hyperbole.

Regarded as one of the greatest children's authors of the twentieth century, Dahl is renowned for extraordinary and imaginative use of language, amusingly offbeat characters, inventive plots, and tender messages (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). In numerous surveys into children's reading habits, his titles top the polls as the best-loved and most widely read stories (Faundez, 2000; Hinders, n. d.). His books have been published in 49 languages and have sold more than 100 million copies around the world (de Castella, 2011).

Dahl's extraordinary language presents quite a challenge to the translator (Koskinen, 1998). Failure to render his ingenious use of puns certainly devalues his work.

While there has been some research on the translation of puns in Dahl's children's books (e.g. Epstein, 2012; Koskinen, 1998), none has been conducted on the translation of puns in Dahl's books into Thai. A considerable number of translation studies have been conducted to propose strategies for translating puns, yet most of the strategies are product-based, not process-oriented.

Gutt (1991, 2000) proposed that the relevance theory developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986) provided translators with the best framework for understanding and practicing translation. According to relevance theory, translation is an interpretive use of language because it is restating the utterance in one language into another language (Gutt, 1998). Gutt (1991) posited that the interpretation of a translation should resemble that of the original closely enough in relevant respects. Therefore, the translator must consider the contextual implications thoroughly to make his/her translation optimally relevant to the target language readers. Smith (2000) clarified Gutt's advocacy of a relevance-theoretic approach to translation that instead of providing ready-made guidelines for handling various translation problems, Gutt had armed translators with the ability to predict the conditions for effective communication in translation. Gutt showed that translation, which was a form of secondary communication, could be accounted for within the relevance theory. The theory assists translators with the understanding of the conditions of

communicative success in different kinds of translation situations. Martínez (1998) also affirmed that the relevance-theoretic perspective on translation offered translators important keys to understanding some of the cognitive processes employed to transfer meanings, as well as intentions, from one language into another.

Previous research conducted by scholars examining the translation of puns has been concerned mostly with the translation strategies with special emphasis on the translation as the end-product (Delabastita, 1993; Khiawmanee Wong, 2010; Vid, 2008). Few (e.g. Pérez, 2014; Jing, 2010; Yus, 2012) have explored what happens during the course of the translation of puns based on the relevance-theoretic framework. In addition, previous studies (e.g. Alrasheedi, 2014; Gan, 2015; Solska, 2012) have shown that relevance theory assists readers in comprehending the puns intended by the author and deriving cognitive effects.

Despite the ubiquity of puns in literature, research on the translation of puns is still scarce, and in Thailand, no attempt has been made to study pun translation within the framework of relevance theory. Hence, this article aims to present an application of relevance theory, which is a cognitive-pragmatic approach to the translation of puns in *The BFG*, one of the most popular children's books by Roald Dahl. This article helps determine how relevance theory can assist the translator in overcoming the challenge in translating puns in children's literature from English into Thai.

## THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

### Definition of Pun

A pun is a rhetorical device often categorized as a form of wordplay, primarily aimed for humorous effect. Dynel (2009) categorized a pun as a humorous verbalization that had two interpretations couched in purposeful ambiguity of a word or a string of words, dubbed the punning element, manifesting itself in one form or two very similar ones while conveying two different meanings.

Some scholars use the words “pun and wordplay” to mean the same phenomenon, for example Delabastita (1996), Laviosa (2005), and Epstein (2012). According to Delabastita (1996), pun or wordplay includes “various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings.” Laviosa (2005) defined wordplay or pun as “a rhetorical device that often relies on the different meanings of a polysemic word, the literal and non-literal meaning of an idiom or on bringing two homonyms together in the same utterance to produce a witticism.” Epstein (2012) also adopted Delabastita's (1996) definition of pun. In this article, the words “pun” and “wordplay” refer to the linguistic phenomena mentioned earlier by Delabastita (1996).

### Relevance Theory

Regarded as one of the most influential

pragmatic theories, relevance theory has been applied to various areas and there has been an increasing amount of research adopting relevance theory as a framework (Wałaszewska et al., 2010). Recent research adopting the relevance-theoretic framework are, for example, Mazzarella (2015), Hussein and Abdullah (2016), Clark (2016), and Sasamoto and Jackson (2016). Built on H. P. Grice's definition of relevance, relevance theory is considered a cognitive-pragmatic theory which focuses on human communication and cognition. Wilson and Sperber (2004) posited that the search for relevance was a basic feature of human cognition, depending upon neither a Cooperative Principle and maxims nor specific communicative conventions. Relevance theory claims that "the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning" (Wilson & Sperber, 2004).

According to relevance theory, an utterance is relevant to the hearer when it yields positive cognitive/contextual effects. As noted by Wilson and Sperber (2004), the greater the positive cognitive effects, the greater the relevance of an utterance. In other words, the greater the processing effort required to achieve the cognitive effects, the less relevant the utterance will be. A positive cognitive effect must be a true conclusion, the genuinely-relevant information, because false conclusions are not worthwhile (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

The two basic principles of relevance are the Cognitive Principle and the

Communicative Principle. The Cognitive Principle of Relevance says that humans have a universal tendency to maximize relevance owing to the way their cognitive system has evolved. The maximization of relevance helps predict other people's cognitive processes, namely the inputs to which they pay attention and the way they process them.

In general communication, a speaker intentionally produces a stimulus to attract his audience's attention. This stimulus is called an ostensive stimulus. The Communicative Principle of Relevance states that "every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). In an ostensive-inferential communication, the speaker encourages the audience to presume that his ostensive stimulus is relevant enough to be worth processing, and accordingly the audience will pay attention to a relevant stimulus. Additionally, the ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

To give in-depth analysis of the translation of puns in children's literature from English into Thai, this present research employed a case study approach. A quantitative investigation of the original texts and translations was combined with a qualitative analysis, in which translation strategies were interpreted within the framework of relevance theory. The results gained from this research, though they might not be

generalizable, can be applied to similar cases.

A corpus of puns used in this study was drawn from *The BFG* and ยักษ์ใจดี, the Thai translation. The book was selected for it contains a considerable number of puns of various categories. The collection of puns in the source text was done by reading the whole book to search for instances of puns using the criteria for identifying and processing puns based on relevance theory proposed by Solska (2012). After the identification of puns was done, it was found that the book contained 27 pun instances.

From the analysis, the English puns in the corpus (Table 1) could be classified into three categories: homonymic/polysemic puns (40.74%), paronymic puns (37.04%), and homophonic puns (22.22%).

According to Solska's (2012) relevance-based model of context, concepts encoded by words and expressions give the reader access to three types of information, stored in the three entries of each concept: (i) the information about the phonetic and grammatical properties of the word or expression realizing the concept (which is accessed via the concept's *lexical entry*), (ii) the information about the concept's logical

properties amounting to its proper definition (which is accessed via the concept's *logical entry*), and (iii) the encyclopedic knowledge about the extension and/or denotation of the concept (accessed via its *encyclopedic entry*), which also includes folk and specialist assumptions, cultural beliefs and personal experiences. The accurate processing of these entries is necessary in translating puns because puns are highly context-dependent.

A comparative analysis between the original puns and their translated version was carried out to identify the strategies which the translators employed in rendering puns. Based on the relevance-theoretic framework, the strategies employed by the Thai translator were discussed and effective strategies were suggested.

Illustrated in the following are some examples of the puns presented in the form of diagrams based on Solska's (2012) relevance-based model of context in processing puns.

Figure 1 illustrates a horizontal pun based on homonymy playing with proper names. Despite their phonetic similarity, the homonyms 'Turkey' and 'turkey' in this example bear completely different concepts:

Table 1

*Distribution of pun categories in the source text*

Category	Number	Percentage
Homonymic/Polysemic pun	11	40.74
Paronymic pun	10	37.04
Homophonic pun	6	22.22
Total	27	100.00

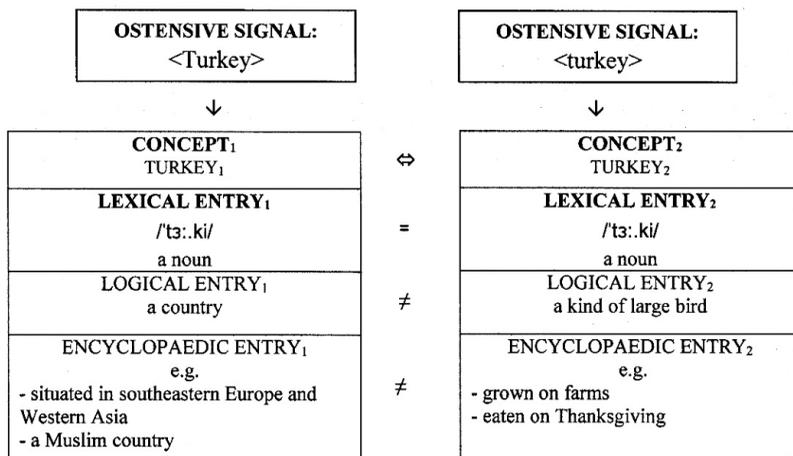


Figure 1. The pairing concepts of a horizontal homonymic pun “Turkey and turkey”

‘Turkey’ (a country) and ‘turkey’ (a kind of large bird). These types of words are also called ‘capitonyms’—words with identical spellings except for a difference in the capitalization, but with different meanings.

Figure 2 illustrates a homophonic pun. In these kinds of puns, only the phonetic forms of their linguistic counterparts are similar, whereas their spellings are different. Given that they are two different words, their logical and encyclopedic entries are also different. In a horizontal homophonic pun, the reader will see both forms of identical sound. In contrast, when the reader reads a vertical homophonic pun, she sees only one form, while its counterpart is not linguistically represented in the source text. This is also a good example of how the author was aware of the importance of encyclopedic knowledge. The addition of encyclopedic knowledge makes it easier for young readers to understand the puns. For example, “...human beans from Wales

is tasting very whooshey of fish. There is something very fishy about Wales.”

Figure 3 below illustrates a vertical paronymic pun, which has been used throughout *The BFG*. In the book, the Big Friendly Giant or the BFG uses the word ‘human beans’ to mean ‘human beings’. The pronunciations of these two words are quite similar.

## RESULTS

This section presents the results of the analysis of the translation strategies employed in translating the English puns in *The BFG*, a children’s book by Roald Dahl, into Thai. The strategies were also discussed within the relevance-theoretic framework.

A comparative analysis of the 27 source language puns and their target language versions was conducted to identify the translation strategies employed by a professional Thai translator in translating the puns in *The BFG* into Thai. In the analysis,

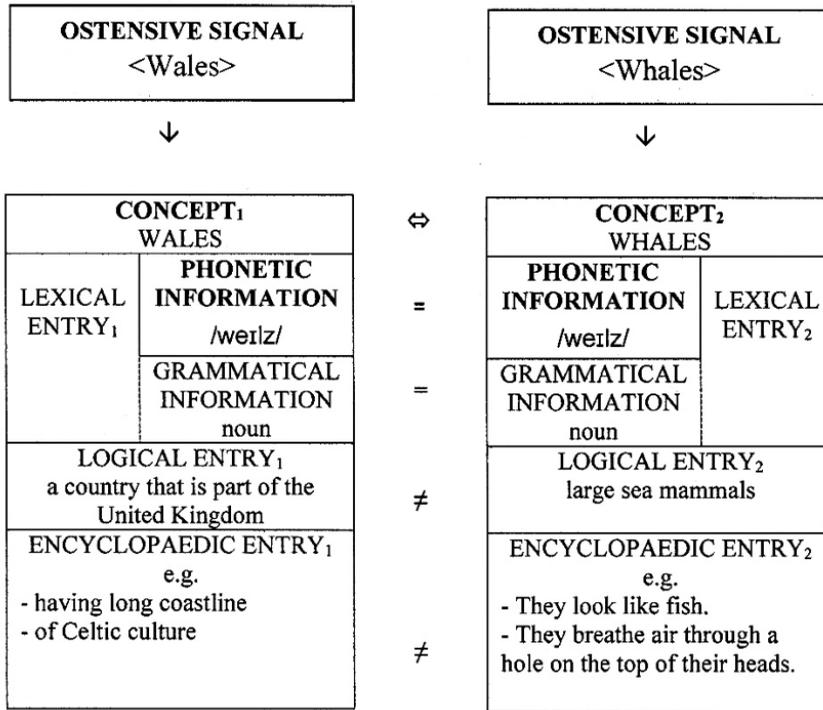


Figure 2. The pairing concepts of a horizontal homophonic pun “Wales and whales”

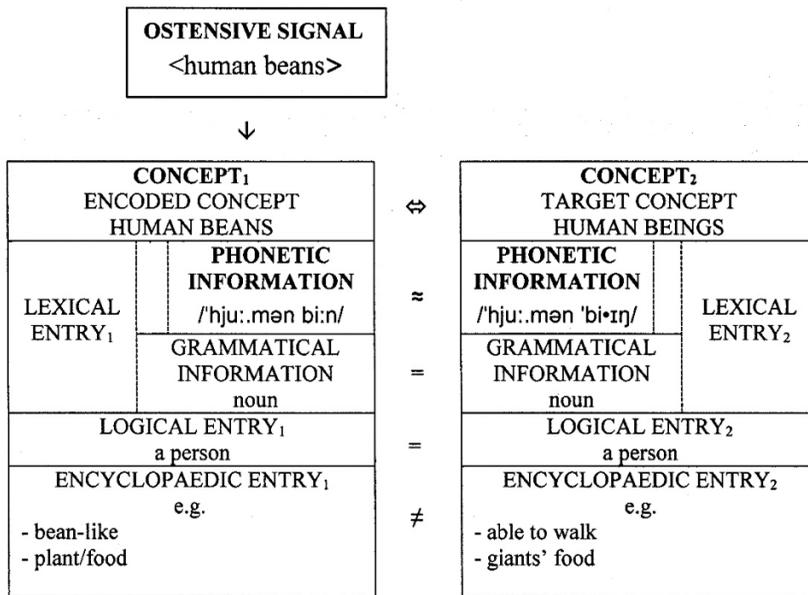


Figure 3. The pairing concepts of a vertical paronymic pun “human beans”

translations were used as “evidence of a transaction, a means of retracing the pathways of the translator’s decision-making procedures” (Hatim & Mason, 1990).

The results revealed that in translating the English puns into Thai, the translator resorted to three strategies. As shown in Table 2, the translation strategies adopted rendered the SL pun as non-pun (PUN → NON-PUN, 62.96%), reproduction of the SL pun (PUN ST = PUN TT, 25.93%), or substitution of the related rhetorical device for the SL pun (PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE (11.11%).

The findings indicate that the translator was aware of the puns in the SL text. Where possible, she attempted to preserve them with the strategy of PUN ST = PUN TT, namely, she reproduced the SL pun through transliteration (7 instances). Occasionally, the translator compensated for the loss of puns by employing “punoids” (3 instances), which is the term coined by Delabastita (1993) referring to wordplay-related rhetorical devices used to recreate

textual effect such as repetition, assonance, alliteration, rhyme, irony and allusion. This suggests that the translator realized the importance of the SL puns, but presumably, she was ruled by the code model of translation, as she tended to preserve the equivalence at the lexico-syntactic level, which resulted in the loss of punning effect. It was found that out of 27 instances, 17 instances or over half of the corpus were translated as a non-pun text. This finding reveals that the translator failed to observe the principle of relevance. Thus, most of the translation cannot capture the distinctive use of the original puns.

Presented in the following are the illustrations of some examples of the strategies employed by the Thai translator from the perspective of relevance theory.

#### Pun → Non-Pun

It is important to note that ‘translation’, from the perspective of relevance theory, is a secondary communication across languages, where the ‘direct translation’ of linguistic and semantic representations do not necessarily yield the stylistic effects

Table 2

*Distribution of translation strategies employed by the Thai professional translator in rendering the English puns into Thai*

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
PUN → NON-PUN	17	62.96
PUN ST = PUN TT	7	25.93
PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE	3	11.11
TOTAL	27	100

of the original literary text. In addition, translations which are faithful to the original text in terms of form and content do not always preserve the original distinguishing features. When considering the case of *The BFG*, it is apparent that puns are employed intentionally, and they make a distinguishing element in the book. This is the relevant aspect translators should preserve in order to achieve ‘interpretive resemblance’. Nonetheless, the analysis reveals that the translator tended to opt for the strategy of PUN → NON-PUN, rendering the SL pun as non-pun text as seen by 17 out of 27 instances being translated as non-pun text.

Figure 4 shows the translations of a homonymic pun ‘Turkey’ as ‘ตุรกี’ /turakii/, a country, and ‘turkey’ as ‘ไก่งวง’ /kàynuan/. Thus, in the translated text, the play with similar sounds and spellings of two different concepts is missing. Consequently, the reader will not receive the punning effect intended by the author.

In Thai, ‘ตุรกี’ /turakii/ is not a homonym; however, in this context, the

name of the country should be preserved because throughout Chapter 5 of *The BFG*, the giant and Sophie are talking about the tastes of human beings in different parts of the world.

To keep the country name while preserving the punning effect, a translator may resort to another punning mechanism. The suggested translation shows how the punning effect can be saved by adding the onomatopoeia ‘กะเตี๊ยกกะต๋าก’, which creates a horizontal homophonic pun ‘เติร์ก’ /tǔək/ (Turk) and ‘เตี๊ยก’ /tǔək/ (onomatopoeia). The clucking sound ‘กะเตี๊ยกกะต๋าก’ /kətǔəkkatáak/ not only enhances the playful mood of the character but also suits young readers.

#### Pun → Related Rhetorical Device

By employing this compensatory strategy, translators may replace the source text (ST) pun with other rhetorical devices such as alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, etc. to reproduce the effect of the ST pun. The excerpt from *The BFG*

Source Text	(‘Bonecrunching Giant says Turks is tasting oh ever so much juicier and more scrumdiddlyumptious! Bonecruncher says Turkish human beans has a glamourly flavour.) He says Turks from <b>Turkey</b> is tasting of <b>turkey</b> .’
Target Text	“ชาวเติร์กจากตุรกีอร่อยเหมือนไก่งวง” /chaaw tǔək cà:k turakii aaròoj mǎ:n kàynuan/ (Back translation: The Turks from Turkey are as delicious as turkeys.)
Suggested Translation	“ชาวเติร์กจากตุรกีอร่อยเหมือนไก่งวงกะเตี๊ยกกะต๋าก” /chaaw tǔək cà:k turakii aaròoj mǎ:n kàynuankətǔəkkatáak/ (Back translation: The Turks from Turkey are as delicious as clucking turkeys.)

Figure 4. the translations of a homonymic pun ‘Turkey’ as ‘ตุรกี’ /turakii/, a country, and ‘turkey’ as ‘ไก่งวง’ /kàynuan/.

(p. 38) below illustrates a homophonic pun playing with the English morphological structure.

“You is making me sad,” the BFG said, rubbing his eyes.

“Don’t be sad,” Sophie said. “No one is going to be worrying too much about me. That place you took me from was the village orphanage. We are all orphans in there.”

“You is a **norphan**?”

“Yes.”

The ostensive signal and its pair concept have the same pronunciations. Since in Thai there is no equivalence, the translator compensated for this loss by playing with the vowel sound instead. ‘เด็กกำพร้า’ /dèkkamphráa/ (an orphan) was changed to ‘เด็กกำเพรี่ย’ /dèkkamphría/ (meaningless but guessable from context as ‘an orphan’) while with the same beginning consonant sound. Here, the change is acceptable given that BFG is a giant who always uses unusual language.

Pun ST = Pun TT

From the analysis, the translator resorted to the strategy of PUN ST = PUN TT for seven instances, all by means of transliteration. This is in accordance with Delabastita’s (1996) observation that interlingual borrowings common to both the target and source languages enhance the translatability of puns. Although English and Thai are not historically related, there are numerous English loan words in the Thai language. Therefore, translators can replace the English puns when there are loan words available. In addition, in the cases of the

SL puns that are proper names e.g., Dane, Jersey, and Panama, the translator chose to transfer them into Thai via transliteration.

From the relevance-theoretic point of view, the use of this strategy to render puns in Dahl’s writing style yields a high degree of interpretive resemblance and requires less processing effort on the reader’s side. However, translators may resort to editorial means by adding necessary cultural information to decrease the effort the readers have to expend. For instance, to help the readers, especially children, comprehend foreign, usually culture-bound, concepts, the translator clarified the borrowed words by adding explanation, either a generic word or short explanation. For instance, ‘Jersey’ was rendered as “เสื้อเจอร์ซีย์” /sǔa cǎosii/, where a generic word “เสื้อ” /sǔa/ (top) is added, and ‘Wellington’ was explained as “เกือกบูตยางที่เรียกว่า เกือกเวลลิงตัน” /kǎakbúutyaang thii riak waá kǎakwenliŋtân/, that is, rubber boots called “Wellington boots”. Again, adding extraneous information must be done with care or it will increase the readers’ effort in processing new information.

## DISCUSSION

From the relevance theoretic perspective, failure to observe the principle of relevance causes the loss of cognitive effects in the translation. Consequently, the reader will not obtain the expected effects. Furthermore, as the target text loses the playful flavor presented in the original text, the author’s intention and style are thus distorted. In many cases, the change in the author’s

intention possibly requires more unnecessary effort in interpretation, which is not in line with the aim for optimal relevance.

As previously illustrated, Roald Dahl's intention to use puns as language play is clearly reflected in *The BFG*. So as to make the communication between the author and target language readers successful, a translator must make the author's intention manifest to the target language readers through a careful and thoughtful translation. That is, she has to try her best to render those puns into the target text. Lefevere (1992) maintained that in the case that puns were the important stylistic feature of the source text, it was recommended that the translator kept the number of puns in the source text and translate them roughly the same.

Several studies (e.g., Huang, 2011; Korhonen, 2008; Yus, 2012; Zatlin, 2005) also suggested that puns must be rendered as puns in the target language. Considering the principle of relevance, an attempt to preserve a pun in the translation reveals that the translator is aware of the cognitive effects of the ST pun, and after cogitating that the linguistic alteration will offer satisfying effect and be worth the reader's processing effort, she expends her effort on recreating the ST pun. Because this strategy is in accordance with the principle of relevance, it is the most recommended strategy.

Translation is a form of human communication, which according to the Cognitive Principle is ruled by human cognition. As in the translation of puns, the ideal equivalence rarely exists due to

linguistic differences. Preserving both the original phonological and semantic features seems to be an impossible mission, except between the historically related languages. The translator inevitably has to decide which aspects to keep and which to discard. However, this problem can be overcome when the translator realizes that in the case of puns, it is the effect that is most important and thus cannot be lost. With this in mind, she will try to transfer the effect into the target text as intended in the source text. This is what is called 'interpretive resemblance' in the relevance-theoretic term. The strategy the translator chooses is the one that yields optimal relevance, namely, it requires the least effort from the target readers. By achieving 'interpretive resemblance', the translator has more freedom to recreate the puns in the target language and culture.

Preserving the punning effects in the target language rather than trying to decode and encode linguistic forms of the pun is encouraged. This is consistent with the suggestion of Nikolajeva (1996), an eminent children's literature translator and an expert in children's literature. She noted that a good translation should arouse in the readers of the target text the same feelings and associations experienced by the young readers of the source text. In this case, the translation is not expected to contain precise accuracy and closeness to the original. To make the translation appropriate and comprehensible for the child readers, the adjustment of language to their level of comprehension and reading ability

is encouraged (Shavit, 1981). Jakobson (1959/2004) also contended that when it came to the translation of puns, which were considered untranslatable, only creative transposition was possible. Masakhwe (2014) similarly suggested translators took advantage, where possible, to retain, maintain and compensate wordplay to avoid its loss and purpose in the original text in order to bring out the equivalence effect.

While the translation of puns can rarely be achieved with the literal translation, transformation is recommended as what to be transferred is not the words but the punning effect. Even though the original semantic meaning is lost, the punning effect can be recreated. Changes are acceptable provided the punning effects can be preserved. In some cases, recreation of a TL pun is more preferable to help the reader retrieve the punning effect with lesser effort. Sрниčková (2014) posited that when translating a nonsense literary text, where double meanings of a pun had its place and purpose, a translator should preserve both of these meanings, if not fully, then at least partially. The translator should not ignore the fact that there was a pun in the source text and translated literally. In this situation, alterations in the context might be necessary to preserve the pun.

Hence, in this article, i suggest that the translator choose the strategy based on interpretive resemblance by recreating or adjusting the TL contexts to preserve the cognitive effects intended by the author. Yus (2012) also advocated the recreation of a target language pun. According to

him, preservation of the cognitive effects is more important than being faithful to the SL content; therefore, alterations to the target text are acceptable. In translation, it is a common phenomenon that the codes and structures must be changed from SL to TL. The semantic content is inevitably changed accordingly.

The corpus used in this present study was taken from the work of only one author. Therefore, I recommend further studies on the translation of puns in children's literature based on the relevance-theoretic framework of a larger corpus of texts and between other languages to provide a broader picture of how pun translation is achieved in other children's literature and in different languages. Additionally, studies should be conducted on how child readers of the target language text perceive the translation and if they receive similar effects as the child readers of the source language text.

Furthermore, a review of the related literature shows that the translation of puns in Thailand has been understudied. Therefore, there are research questions that still need to be explored. For instance, more research should be conducted to examine the translation of puns in wider genres other than literary texts.

## CONCLUSION

Apparently, the findings indicate that relevance theory can efficiently assist translators throughout the process of pun translation, consistent with previous studies (e.g., Pérez, 2014, 2017; Jing, 2010; Khiawmanee Wong, 2010; Yus, 2012).

Again, in this present study, relevance theory has proven to be an effective approach to the translation of puns from English into Thai, as it practically guides translators through a translation process. However, it should be noted that in a communication, there is more than one party involved, and there are some uncontrollable factors influencing the translation of puns. Lathey (2016) affirmed that the translation of puns in children's literature "requires a high degree of linguistic creativity on the part of the translator." Time pressure may also affect the translator's eagerness to recreate the pun in the target language. In addition, translators working under particular publishers might be forced to follow certain translation policies.

Moreover, the target language readers' linguistic ability, encyclopedic knowledge, and familiarity with particular interpretations are also crucial factors influencing the derivation of the interpretations of the pun. Lukeš (2014) contended that recognition of puns requires a lot of effort from the reader, and "it is a matter of experience, knowledge of the given language and imagination to understand what message the author of a pun wanted to convey."

Despite all these uncontrollable factors, it can be concluded that the relevance-based approach efficiently accounts for the translation process of puns in children's literature from English to Thai. It enables translators to understand the source language pun and allows them to adjust the target language context in order to achieve interpretive resemblance. The approach

provides the translators with practical tools for dealing with pun translation.

## NOTE

This article is based on the conference paper entitled "A Relevance-theoretic Approach to the Translation of Puns in Roald Dahl's *The BFG*" presented at the 5th Asia-Pacific Forum on Translation and Intercultural Studies, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Center for Interpretation & Translation Studies, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, USA on October 29, 2016.

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