

Frame Semantics and the (Un)translatability of Paronomasia

In this article, it is argued firstly, that paronomasia is translatable and secondly, that the theorist can offer some useful hints and guidelines to the practising translator. A critical view is taken of Levý's (1969) classic semiotic analysis, which fails to distinguish varying degrees of quality in paronomastic translation. For this purpose, Fillmore's (1976) concept of Frame Semantics proves to be a more effective analytical tool. A limited variety of examples of translations involving humour and wordplay are taken from the works of Lewis Carroll, J. K. Rowling and Christian Morgenstern, which act as counter-examples to the 'untranslatability school'.

1 Arguments for the supposed untranslatability of paronomasia¹

1.1 Early defenders of the untranslatability school

The 'untranslatable camp' has many eminent defenders. In 1711 the English essayist Addison used the notion of the (supposed) untranslatability of puns as an acid test for their definition because Addison took it for granted that all puns "vanish" in translation:

But to return to Punning. Having pursued the History of a Punn, from its Original to its Downfall, I shall here define it to be a Conceit arising from the use of two Words that agree in the Sound, but differ in the Sense. The only way therefore to try a Piece of Wit, is to translate it into a different language: If it bears the Test you may pronounce it true; but if it vanishes in the Experiment you may conclude it to have been a Punn. (Addison 1965: 262)

Similarly, Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) regarded all forms of paronomasia to be untranslatable:

¹ *Paronomasia* is the technical term for punning and wordplay derivable from the Greek preposition *para* (beside) and the Greek verb *onomazein* (to name) and this term includes wordplay based on either homophony or polysemy.

[. . .] - paronomasia reigns over poetic art, and whether its rule is absolute or limited, poetry by definition is untranslatable. *Only creative transposition is possible.* [. . .] (Jakobson 2000: 118. My emphasis)

Jakobson (2000) finished the article by quoting the famous Italian formulation *traduttore, traditore* to the effect that all translation is treason owing to what he perceived to be the impossibility of the whole translation enterprise.

1.2 Contemporary defenders of the untranslatability school

When dealing with paronomasia in general and poetry in particular, House (1997) together with Hatim and Mason (1998) reflect Jakobson's pessimistic view. House's argument seems at first sight to be watertight:

In a poetic-aesthetic work of art, the usual distinctions between form and content (or meaning) no longer hold. In poetry, the form of a linguistic unit cannot be changed without a corresponding change in (semantic, pragmatic and textual) meaning. And since the form cannot be detached from its meaning, this meaning cannot be expressed in any other way, i.e. through paraphrase, explanation or commentary, borrowing of new words etc. (House 1997: 48)

Under closer examination, however, it is clear that her argument rests on the inviolability of the principle of identity as in Bishop Butler's famous dictum, "Everything is what it is, and not another thing," and thus House's argument is a good example of the *petitio principii*² fallacy.

In a similar vein, Hatim and Mason take up Jakobson's phrase 'creative transposition':

In recent times, Roman Jakobson (1959: 238) is one of those who, from a linguistic perspective, adopts a pessimistic view [with regard to translatability]. In poetry, 'phonemic similarity is sensed as semantic relationship'; formal aspects of the linguistic code become part

² This fallacy is also known as a *circular argument*, in which the conclusion restates the premise.

of the meaning so that *translation proper is impossible; only creative transposition is possible*. In fact, the point is applicable, well beyond poetry, to all discourse in which properties of the form of the language code are brought to the fore and made to bear particular significance. Advertising and political slogans rely on alliteration and rhyme ('Let the train take the strain': British Rail; 'the workers not the shirkers': Margaret Thatcher, *circa* 1980). Puns also rely on coincidental similarities of form which are rarely replicated in other languages. (Hatim and Mason 1998: 13. My italics and square brackets.)

2 Arguments for the translatability of paranomasia supported by examples in the appendix

Yet, as Anne-Marie Laurian rightly asserts:

L'humour est souvent considéré comme intraduisible, mais on le traduit. Parfois, il est très aisé à traduire, parfois, il est très difficile. (Laurian1989: 6)

(Humour is often regarded to be untranslatable, yet people actually still do translate humour. Sometimes humour is very easy to translate and sometimes, very difficult. (My translation))

As implied by Laurian, people do translate humorous works for a living, sometimes successfully and sometimes less so. In this context, it is relevant to refer to Appendix 1 which cites a highly complex case of paranomasia effectively translated by Fritz (2000) from J.K. Rowling's (2000) book *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Thus it will be argued in this paper that strategies are available for the translation of paranomasia and that the theorist can be of help to the practising translator.

As can be seen from the above quotations, it is a truism to assert that a one-to-one translation of a pun based either on homophony or polysemy will rarely work in another language³. If the translation is literal, the humour will be lost as in Remané's (1981) translation of the following extract taken from chapter IX in *Alice in Wonderland*:

3 A famous exception to this generalisation is Pope St Gregory the Great's play on *Angli* and *angeli*, when he compared Anglo-Saxon slaves in the Roman forum to angels in the well-known formulation – *non Angli, sed angeli*. This translates almost perfectly into English and German: *not Angles, but angels* or *Es sind keine Angeln, sondern Engel*.

‘Only mustard isn’t a bird’ Alice remarked.

‘Right, as usual,’ said the Duchess: ‘what a clear way you have of putting things!’

‘It’s a mineral, I *think*’ said Alice.

‘Of course it is,’ said the Duchess, who seemed ready to agree to everything that Alice said; ‘there’s a large mustard-*mine* near here. And the moral of that is—“The more there is of *mine*, the less there is of yours.”’ (Carroll 1992:136-137) (My italics)

Within the context of nonsense, there is a certain lateral logic to the Duchess’s argument which depends on the pun ‘mine’. If the pun is missed, as in the Remané version (1981), the whole passage falls flat and becomes virtually meaningless (despite a weak hint of wordplay by the repetition of *gross* in *grösser*):

„Nur dass der Senf kein Vogel ist“ bemerkte Alice.

„Wahr wie immer“, bestätigte die Herzogin. „Wie klar du die Dinge zu bezeichnen weißt!“

„Er ist eine Gesteinart, glaube ich“, sagte Alice nachdenklich.

„Allerdings!“ bestätigte die Herzogin. Sie war offenbar gewillt, Alice stets und ständig zuzustimmen. „Hier in der Nähe liegen grosse Senfbergwerke. Und die Moral davon ist: Je grösser der Besitz, um so kleiner der deine.“ (Remané, L. & Remané, M. 1981: 84)

However, the counsel is not despair as strategies are possible as evidenced by Raykowski’s (1992) ingenious solution to this case of antanaclasis:

Nur dass der Senf kein Vogel ist“ bemerkte Alice.

„Richtig wie immer“, sagte die Herzogin. „Wie klar du dich ausdrücken kannst!“

„Sondern ein Bodenschatz – glaube ich“, sagte „“, sagte Alice.

„Aber natürlich“, sagte die Herzogin, die bereit schien, Alice in allem, was sie sagte, zuzustimmen. „Hier in der Nähe gibt es eine grosse Senfgrube. Und daraus ziehen wir die Lehre: - Wer andern eine *Grube* gräbt, fällt selbst hinein.- (Raykowski 1992: 136-137) (My italics)

Raykowski maintains the logic of the passage by substituting a different saying to make a moral point, which the Duchess tends to do after every conversation, but this version is one which fits in to the context and maintains the

humorous tone. There is also antanaclasis with regard to the ambiguity of *Grube* (mine/ditch).

3 Application of Jakobson's term *Creative Transposition* as a useful translation strategy for paronomasia

The untranslatability school may argue that this is not a case of translation but rather 'creative transposition'. The professional translator, particularly if (s)he is involved in an area such as marketing, often has recourse to this strategy. The wordplay is 'creatively' transposed into another language. Further counter-examples to the untranslatability school taken from *Alice in Wonderland* are listed in Appendix 2. The italicised words and phrases words and bracketed phonemic transcriptions indicate the key areas involving paronomasia. The quality of the solutions varies considerably, but it can be seen that all the creative transpositions fulfil the criterion of *adequacy* - i.e. the 'logic' and coherence of the discourse is maintained. The 'untranslatability' school presupposes a narrow definition of translation, which has been identified as *academic translation*:

This approach [*academic translation*] can be roughly defined as the conventional approach which tries to balance fidelity to the source text whilst at the same aiming at being readable and fluent in the target language. In other words, it is what many people usually understand by the word *translation*, indeed, so much so that it will be seen that there are many linguists who would assert that any thing else is not translation, but another activity. (Gledhill 2003: 3-4) (My brackets)

Academic translation is a very useful method for certain specific purposes, but it is only one strategy amongst many. Wilss (1977) lists seven translation strategies which can be subsumed under the umbrella word *translation*. His term 'Umdichtung' is relevant in this context and may roughly be translated by using Jakobson's term 'creative transposition'. Thus a dismissive description (shown by the adverbial qualifier "only") is now metamorphosing into an acceptable strategy for the literary translator.

To illustrate the strategies involved with creative transposition, it is now appropriate to examine Levý's (1969) classic semiotic analysis of Max Knight's translations of some of Morgenstern's 'nonsense' poetry in which Levý selects a sentence set out as a three-line verse as rhyme-based language game:

Ein Wiesel
saß auf einem Kiesel
inmitten Bachgeriesel. (Levý 1969: 103)

Levý's analysis treats this verse in isolation (which will be seen at the end of this paper to have been misguided) and then goes on to compare five translations of the same lines as 'composed' by Max Knight:

A weasel
perched on an easel
within a patch of teasel.

Or
A ferret
nibbling a carrot
in a garret.

Or
A mink
sipping a drink
in a kitchen sink.

Or
A hyena
playing a concertina
in an arena.

Or
A lizard
shaking its gizzard
in a blizzard.

(Levý 1969: 104)

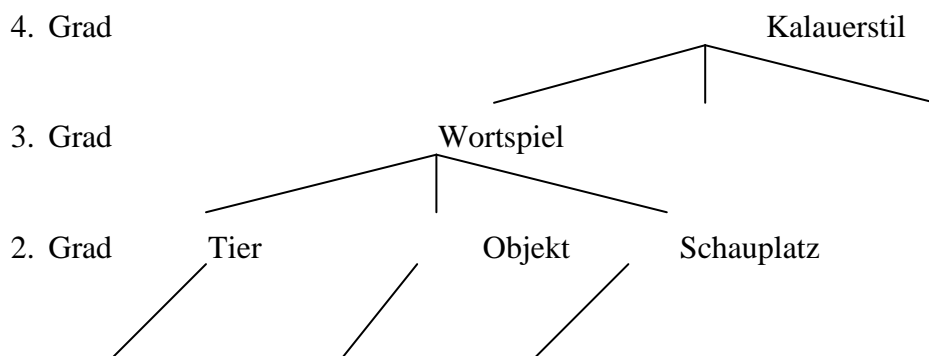
4 Strengths and limitations of Levý's semiotic analysis

Levý regards the five versions to be successful both as poems and as translations. The fact that there is a wide semantic deviation is deemed secondary. Indeed, to apply the *academic translation* strategy to poetry would count as a total failure as evidenced by Levý's own illustration of the same line as an example of failed translation:

A weasel
 sat on a pebble
 in the midst of a ripple of a brook.* (Translation from Levý 1967)

The wordplay and humour are lost and that is the whole point of the rhyme. Clearly, the main point is certainly not to inform the reader as to the temporary location of a fictitious wild rodent. Levý's offers a semiotic approach to identify the factors involved in the translation this three-lined verse. Such an approach necessarily has a subjective element, but Levý tries to objectify the argument as far as possible by producing a diagram which prioritises the essential features of the verse as below:

Die Varianten der Übersetzungen von Morgensterns Wortspielen drängen uns die Frage auf, was alle diese Substitutionen eigentlich bewahren, welche Invariante ihnen allen mit dem Original gemeinsam ist. Wenn wir die allen Lösungen gemeinsamen Zügen abstrahieren, können wir folgendes sagen: allen Übersetzungen bleibt gemeinsam die Konfrontation der Reimübereinstimmung von 1. Dem Namen des Tieres, 2. Dem Objekt, zu dem seine Tätigkeit hinstrebt, 3. Dem Schauplatz. In allen fünf Übersetzungen sind gerade nur diese abstrakten Funktionen der drei einzelnen Verse in der Gesamtheit des Wortspiels erhalten und keineswegs die konkreten Bedeutungen der einzelnen Wörter. Anders ausgedrückt haben einige Wörter in Morgensterns Text zwei semantische Funktionen: 1. Eine denotative eigene Bedeutung, 2. Die Funktion in einer Struktur höherer Ordnung (eben diese blieb in den Übersetzungen gewahrt):



1. Grad

Ein Wiesel saß auf einem Kiesel inmitten Bachgeriesel (Levý 1969: 104)

The strength of Levý's semiotic⁴ analysis is that it offers a hierarchy of translational aims to produce an adequate translation i.e. one which fulfils the stated aims. *Adequacy* is a very important concept for the practical translator as has been seen in the *Alice* examples at the beginning of this article. Even if the translator's pun is relatively weak compared with that of Lewis Carroll, for example, the general argument is nevertheless sustained and coherence is maintained (although coherence in this case takes place within a framework which may outwardly seem to be the very opposite a coherent text).

The weakness of Levý's analysis, however, is that it only goes as far as *adequacy*. To Levý, all Knight's solutions are adequate and equally satisfactory:

[. . .] und [Max Knight] fügt im Vorwort *richtig* hinzu, daß anderslautende Übersetzungen *ebenso möglich* wären. (Levý 1969: 104. My emphasis and square brackets)

Thus, Levý's analysis fails to identify the enormous qualitative differences in the five versions. It can also be argued that a different analytical method can impose stricter criteria, yet in a more open-ended way.

5 Fillmore's Frame Semantics applied as a qualitative analytical tool

4 There are many definitions for this term, but Levý quotes and translates Klemensiewicz's (1955) definition of the semiotic approach to be used for the purpose of Levý's analysis:

Das Original sollte als ein System und nicht als eine Summe von Elementen betrachtet werden, als organische Ganzheit und nicht als eine mechanische Ansammlung von Elementen. Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers besteht weder darin zu reproduzieren, noch darin, die Elemente und Strukturen des Originals umzuformen, sondern darin, *ihre Funktion zu erfassen und solche Elemente der eigenen Sprache anzuwenden*, die, soweit wie möglich, deren Ersatz und Gegenwert mit der gleichen funktionalen Eignung und Wirksamkeit sein könnten. (Levý 1969: 21-22. My emphasis.)

For this purpose, Fillmore's (1976) Frame Semantic approach provides an important analytical tool for the translation of humour. Indeed, at least one article has already been written on this subject: *Frame Semantics and the Translation of Humour* (Lopez: 2002). Lopez rightly claims that the concepts within Frame Semantics are very useful for dealing with this subject:

This cognitive perspective is based on the concepts of 'context', 'prototype' and 'frame' (Fillmore 1976) and proves especially relevant for the study of humour as a complex cultural phenomenon. (Lopez 2002: 35)

Lopez uses Frame Semantic theory in her article to contrast English and Spanish cultural expectations in the context of transposing David Lodge's humour into Spanish. Here, however, the expectations are aesthetic since they are based on humorous and felicitous use of rhyme. It will be seen that Fillmore's (1976: 27) categorisation of three features of any word within Frame Semantics can be applied to the analysis of Max Knight's five versions:

In general, a word can be linked to its meaning in any of three ways, and we can refer to these as *functional*, *criterial* and *associational*. Identifying "breakfast" with one in a structured pattern of meals is functional; identifying it with a particular collection of foods is associational. (Fillmore: 1976: 27)

Fillmore goes on to show that criterial links are concerned with perceived essential features such as the physical qualities of a ball or with qualities perceived to be more elusive or abstract such as the causes and effects (i.e. symptoms) of a disease. The 'essential' features would differ according to differing societies. A society which believed that all diseases were caused by evil spirits would be working within a different 'frame' from one which believed the causes could be explained by modern science.

5.1 Application of Frame Semantic Analysis to the Morgenstern Text

The functional frame for this particular analysis is quite clear if the whole poem is quoted as the point is contained in the last verse:

Ein Wiesel
saß auf einem Kiesel
inmitten Bachgeriesel
Wißt Ihr
Weshalb?

Das Mondkalb
Verriet es mir
im Stillen:
Das raffinier-
te Tier
tats um des Reimes willen.

(Morgenstern/Knight 1990: 7-8)

To create an aesthetic effect by a clever use of rhyme is the function of the verse and the criterial expectation of almost any of the *Galgenlieder* is that they should be both humorous and felicitous. Both these frames take precedence over the semantic content as has already been recognised in the Levý analysis. The opening lines quoted by Levý, “Ein Wiesel/sass auf einem Kiesel/inmitten Bachgeriesel”, are aesthetically pleasing on at least two counts: firstly, the economy of the perfect rhyme (*Wiesel, Kiesel, -riesel*) and secondly, on the naturalness of the scene: a weasel sitting on a pebble in a brook.

The associative frame with regard to the noun *Wiesel* would for most Western European readers include at least some of the following areas: rodents, furry animals, small mammals. Fillmore’s (1976: 24) example of a child perceiving a squirrel as a “funny looking kitty” is highly relevant for this particular analysis as the Morgenstern poems are intended to appeal to children or at least to the child in us.⁵ In Fillmore’s example, a ‘kitty’ is a prototype for squirrel. With regard to the creative transposition of the original poem, it is thus of secondary importance whether the rodent in question be a weasel or any other kind of small mammal. However, the limit or scope of the paradigm is roughly bound by the category small furry mammal. Evidently, if the weasel were to be replaced by a crocodile, for example, (a huge scaly reptile), then several frame shifts have clearly taken place (size, texture, genus).

5 It is noteworthy in this context that the 1958 edition of *Alle Galgenlieder* is dedicated to the child in us. As this forms the basic framework for poem in question, it worth quoting Morgenstern’s dedication in full:

In jedem Menschen ist ein Kind verborgen, das heißt Bildnerbetrieb und will als liebstes Spiel- und Ernst-Zeug nicht das bis auf den letzten Rest nachgearbeitete Miniatur-Schiff, sondern die Walnußschale mit der Vogelfeder als Segelmast und dem Kieselstein als Kapitän. Das will auch in der Kunst mit-spielen, mit-schaffen dürfen und nicht so sehr bloß bewundernder Zuschauer sein. Denn dieses „Kind im Menschen“ ist der unsterbliche Schöpfer in ihm . . . (Morgenstern 1958: Dedication)

5.2 The application of the three frames to Max Knight's five versions of the same Morgenstern verse

The analysis can now be applied to Max Knight's five versions to identify the qualitative differences which were missed in Levý's analysis. In the first version, "A weasel/perched on an easel/within a patch of teasel", the translator allowed himself to be 'blinded' by a strict notion of semantic content. In pedantically sticking rigidly to the species *weasel* (a low priority both in Levý's and this Frame Semantic hierarchy), the poet is reduced to find the very few words in the English language which rhyme with weasel. The word *teasel* destroys any pleasing aesthetic effect on account of its extreme obscurity in referring to a little known plant formerly used as a tool in wool production. The incongruity of finding an artist's easel with a weasel perched on top within a patch of teasel is more baffling than humorous. Even though these lines of verse function adequately according to Levý's semiotic analysis, they fail to pass the quality test based on Frame Semantics. This version is adequate, but poor. (As with all poetry and literary criticism, there is bound to be a subjective element. These examples have been discussed with a certain number of people and there has been a high level of consensus. A statistical survey, however, would not be appropriate in an essay that is essentially a form of literary criticism.⁶)

The second example, "A ferret/nibbling a carrot/in a garret," drastically fails to meet criteria of the functional frame as the rhyme 'ferret, 'kæret, 'gæret, \$[Ipa-sams Uclphon1 SIL SophiaL] highlighted by the underlining is doubly impure. Thus, the aesthetic effect of the original is lost for which it has already been argued that perfect rhyme is of paramount importance.

The third example, "A mink/sipping a drink/in a kitchen sink", succeeds admirably. It has already been shown that the species within the associative frame of furry mammals is of secondary importance so that, in this context, the species *mink* is adequate. The incongruity of the refined activity of *sipping* a drink

⁶ At this point, it is necessary to depart from Levý's allegedly 'scientific' approach. Levý had a horror of what he referred to as 'chatty essays'. The present article is also a 'chatty essay' and does not apologise for the fact, but a phrase such as 'intersubjective discourse' would be preferred to the dismissive adjective 'chatty'. Despite a certain scientific overlay, Levý's analysis could also be said (using Levý's own terminology) to be an example of a 'chatty essay'.

contrasting with the banality of *kitchen sink* strikes a humorous note which compensates for the lack of unity in the original German version where a full natural picture is conveyed, as if in three brush strokes, by the three very short lines. If this ‘mink’ version were to be further ‘translated’ into a picture⁷, an amusing scene could be provided by the illustrator such as a very refined mink sipping perhaps from a champagne or cocktail glass in a very sordid kitchen sink.

The fourth example, “A hyena/playing a concertina/in an arena”, makes such a huge semantic leap from the small furry mammal world to large vicious mammals more associated with the African savannah rather than the European landscape that an associative frame shift has taken place and thus this version ceases to be either translation or even a creative transposition. Even within the functional frame, this example fails the quality test. Although a humorous picture is portrayed in the first two lines, this is spoiled by the bathos of the third line, *in an arena*.

Similarly, the final example, “A lizard/shaking its gizzard/in a blizzard”, makes untoward semantic leaps and frame shifts by abandoning the domain of furry mammals altogether for the associative frame of scaly reptiles (as already argued with the *huge crocodile* example). As in the first example with regard to abstruse noun *teasel*, the noun *gizzard* is too obscure for the world of children and thus humour is lost.

5.3 Alternative version which is adequate within frame-semantic analysis

The number of variations possible to transpose this kind of wordplay tend towards infinity because of the number of combination that are possible even within strictly limited parameters or frames as suggested in this analysis. The present author requested two published poets to produce alternatives to the Max Knight versions. Interestingly, one poet refused to remain within the strictures and produced free long-lined creations that had little to do with the original text or the priorities outlined in Levý’s hierarchical analysis whereas the other poet (who is also a translator) produced the following example amongst many:

A stoat

⁷ In footnote 4, Morgenstern uses the term *Bildnerbetrieb*, and this concept is reflected in the highly pictographic aspects of most of his poems.

Almost afloat
In a castle moat.

This version also fulfils Levý's criteria of functional equivalence whilst supplying an element of humour with the qualifier *almost*, which could imply that the poor rodent is having trouble keeping its head above water. With regard to the associative frames linked to *Wiesel*, the translation is an almost exact translation as German dictionaries such as the *Pons Globalwörterbuch* give the noun *Wiesel* as the translation of *stoat*. (The main difference between the two rodents concerns their mating habits and life-span rather than their outward appearance.) However, there is the loss of the natural surroundings which is only partially compensated by the relatively exotic medieval background. As the struggling rodent in question would be more concerned with saving its life, the ending would have probably to be changed to keep the coherence. The following example is a possible solution:

A close shave
Just in time
To save
its little life
and this little rhyme.

5.4 Caution with regard to creative transposition applied to commercial translations

It must, however, be conceded to the untranslatability school that there can be difficulties with creative transpositions if they are to be published as translations alongside the original texts. This was actually the case with Max Knight's translation. In the published version, Max Knight (1990) actually chose the lame *weasel*, *easel*, *teasel* option. However, no personal criticism is implied as the constraints of a parallel text are greater on the translator than those of a freer version such as, for example, a book of poems closely based on Morgenstern. This latter possibility with an explanatory preface as to the strategies used would be preferable for this kind of translation activity. If the translations of the three-lined verse are judged within the context as given by Levý, then the argument in this paper still holds. It is a pity that Levý argues, as it were, within a vacuum whereas in the real world there are a great variety of possibilities and constraints depending

on publishers and the target culture's polysystem⁸. It can be seen from this paper that if the translator is given the task to translate paranomasia or any form of original needing creative transposition, then the translator should argue for a wider brief and, as in this paper, a wider definition of translation.

6 Conclusion: Brief analysis of a successful translation of paranomasia as a counter-example to the untranslatability school

However, on a more positive note, it is interesting to show in a final example that close creative transposition can also at times fulfil the demands of close translation with the following translation taken from the same Morgenstern/Knight volume and shows Max Knight at his best. If the original is quoted first, this poem would seem to be an extreme example of untranslatability:

Gespräch einer Hausschnecke mit sich selbst

Soll i aus meim Hause raus?

Soll i aus meim Hause nit raus?

Einen Schritt raus?

Lieber nit raus?

Hausenitraus

Hauseraus

Hausenitraus

Hausenaus

Rauserauserause . . . (Morgenstern/Knight 1990: 14)

⁸ This is a term which was first formulated by Itamar Even-Zohar (1978) and later developed by Gideon Toury (1985). It is concerned with the translation's role in the target culture, which is seen as a complex network of interlocking cultural systems. For example, the Bible and Grimm's fairy tales are not generally consciously perceived as translations in English-speaking cultures. The title *Little Red Riding Hood* is a very literal translation of *Rotkäppchen*, whereas *Sleeping Beauty* is a very creative rendering for *Dornröschen*, but if a translator retitled them in reverse with regard to a free and literal translation with a result such as *The Disobedient Girl and the Wolf* and *Little Thorn Rose*, (s)he would have enormous problems in having them accepted as the original translated titles are deeply embedded in the polysystem of most English-speaking cultures. The same principle applies even more so to Bible translations.

Knight's solution is to reverse the perspective i. e. starting off from the point of view of staying in rather than coming out and adjusting the problem to become – to shell or not to shell the shell (The word *shell* can also used as the verb *to shell* i.e. to be rid of the shell). This enables Knight to produce the felicitous rhyme with *dwell* and *shell* followed by the equally clever and confusing wordplay with *shell* and *shall*. Despite a certain slight awkwardness compared with the original, this translation is a brilliant proof that paronomasia is translatable (in the right hands!):

The Snail's Monologue

Shall I dwell in my shell?
Shall I not dwell in my shell?
Rather not dwell?
Shall I not dwell,
Shall I dwell,
dwell in a shell
shall I shell,
shallIshellIshallIshellIshallI . . . ?

(Morgenstern/Knight 1990: 14)

http://www.christian-morgenstern.de/dcma/index.php?title=Das_Simmaleins

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Appendix 1: Translation of Paronomasia taken from an Extract in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

In the context of Laurian's (1989) comment that people actually do have to translate, it is interesting to compare the paronomastic passages in the 'Harry Potter' books with their translations. These books have, of course, been translated into many languages. Here, it will suffice to compare a poem taken from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* with the German translation. In addition to the difficulty involved in reproducing a poem with a certain metre, rhythm and rhyme,

the translator has to form a word from at least three cryptic clues hidden in the rhyme. For the plot, that word has to be *spider* – quite different, of course, in many languages such as the French word for spider *araignée* – a seemingly impossible task and yet all the translators have to accomplish this task, often under enormous time pressure. An interesting but separate study would be to compare various translations of wordplay in *Harry Potter*. Despite some obvious shortcomings in his translation, it will be seen how ingeniously Fritz (2000) accomplishes the task of producing the word *Spinne* from very similar cryptic verses:

Rowling:

The sphinx sat down on her hind legs, in the very centre of the path, and recited:

First think of the person who lives in disguise,
Who deals in secrets and tells naught but lies.
Next, tell me what's always the last thing to mend,
The middle of the middle and end of the end?
And finally give me the sound often heard
During the search for a hard-to-find word.
Now string them together, and answer me this,
Which creature would you be unwilling to kiss?

[...] 'Spy ... spy.... er', said Harry, pacing up and down himself. 'A creature I wouldn't want to kiss ... a spider!' (Rowling 2000: 546-547)

Fritz:

Die Sphinx ließ sich mitten auf dem Weg auf die Hinterbeine nieder und sprach:

Erst denk an den Menschen, der immer lügt,
der Geheimnisse sucht und damit betrügt.
Doch um das Ganze nicht zu verwässern,
nimm von dem Wort nur die ersten drei Lettern.

Nun denk an das Doppelte des Gewinns,
den Anfang von nichts und die Mitte des Sinns.

Und schließlich ein Laut, ein Wörtchen nicht ganz,
das du auch jetzt von dir selbst hören kannst.

Nun fügt sie zusammen, denn dann wirst du wissen,
welches Geschöpf du niemals willst küssen.

[...] „Spi ... ähm ... ne“, sagte Harry, den Weg auf und ab schreitend.
„Ein Geschöpf, das ich nicht küssen möchte ... eine Spinne!“ (Fritz 2000: 657-659)

Appendix 2: Translation of Paronomasia taken from Two Extracts in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*

Extract 1: Carroll:

When we were little,’ the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, ‘we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle – we used to call him *Tortoise* - [‘tɔ:təs] □ ‘Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?’ Alice asked.

‘We called him *Tortoise* because he *taught us*,’ [‘tɔ:təs] said the Mock Turtle angrily.

‘Really you are very dull!’

‘You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question,’ added the Gryphon; and then they both sat silent and looked at poor Alice, who felt ready to sink into the earth. (Carroll 1986: 125-126). (My square brackets and italics)

Translation 1 (a): Raykowski:

Als wir klein waren” fuhr die Suppenschildkröte schließlich ruhiger, aber immer noch hin und wieder schluchzend fort, “gingen wir im Meer zur Schule. Unser Lehrer war eine alte Landschildkröte - wir nannten ihn den *Barsch* . . . ”

“Warum denn Barsch, wenn er doch keiner war?” fragte Alice.

“Wir nannten ihn *Barsch*, weil er *barsch* war.”, sagte die Suppenschildkröte ungehalten.

“Du bist wirklich sehr dumm!”

“Du sollst dich schämen, so dumme Fragen zu stellen” ergänzte der Greif, und dann saßen beide da und musterten stumm die arme Alice, die am liebsten im Erdboden versunken wäre. (Raykowski 1992: 144) (My italics)

Translation 1 (b): Von Herwarth:

Warum habt ihr *Weichtier* genannt, wenn sie [die alte Schildkröte] keine war?” fragte Alice sie.

“Weil vor einem *Weichtier* ein Schüler niemals *weicht hier*”, antwortete die Falsche Schildkröte. (Von Herwarth 1984: 119) (My square brackets and italics)

Translation 1 (c): Remané & Remané:

“Unser Lehrer war ein alter Schildkrötenmann, den wir immer ‚*Herzog*‘ nannten . . . ”

“Warum nanntet ihr ihn, *Herzog*‘ wenn er keiner war?” fiel Alice ihr ins Wort.

“Wir nannten ihn ‚*Herzog*‘, weil er uns ‚*erzog*‘ ”, versetzte die Falsche Suppenschildkröte ärgerlich. (Remané, L. & Remané, M. 1981: 118) (My italics)

Extract 2: Carroll:

Alice sighed wearily. ‘I think you might find something better with the time,’ she said, ‘than in wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers.’

‘If you knew Time as well as I do,’ said the Hatter, ‘you wouldn’t talk about wasting it. It’s him.’

‘I don’t know what you mean,’ said Alice.

‘Of course you don’t!’ the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. ‘I dare say you

never even spoke to Time!’

‘Perhaps not,’ Alice cautiously replied; ‘but I know I have *to beat Time* when I learn music.’

‘Ah! That accounts for it,’ said the Hatter, ‘He won’t stand *beating*. . . .’ (Carroll 1986: 103-104)
(My italics)

Translation 2 (a): Raykowski:

Alice seufzte. „ich finde, ihr könntet mit eurer Zeit etwas Besseres anfangen, als sie auf Rätsel zu verschwenden, für die es keine Lösung gibt.“

„Wenn du über Zeit so viel wüsstest wie ich“ sagte der Hutmacher, „würdest du nicht sagen, dass wir „sie“ verschwenden. Es muss „ihn“ heißen.“

„Das verstehe ich nicht,“ sagte Alice.

„Natürlich nicht!“ sagte der Hutmacher und warf hochmütig den Kopf zurück.

„Wahrscheinlich hast du auch noch nie ein Gespräch mit Zeit geführt.“

„Mag sein“ erwiderte Alice vorsichtig. „Aber wenn ich Klavierspielen übe, benutze ich einen *Zeitmesser*.“

„Siehst du, da haben wir’s!“ rief der Hutmacher. „Mit *Messern* darf man ihm nicht kommen.“ (Raykowski 1992: 105) (My italics)

Translation 2 (b): Remané & Remané:

Alice seufzte. „ihr solltet die Zeit wahrhaftig besser nützen und sie mit Rätselraten vergeuden, wobei es keine Lösung gibt.“

„Wenn du Frau Zeit so gut kennen würdest wie ich, würdest du nicht von Vergeudung reden“ tadelte der Hutmacher, „Sie ist nämlich eine mächtige Zauberin.“

„Ich weiß nicht, von wem du redest“, sagte Alice.

„Natürlich weiß du das nicht!“ Der Hutmacher warf verächtlich den Kopf zurück. „Ich wage sogar zu behaupten, dass du noch niemals mit Frau Zeit gesprochen hast.“

„Wohl noch nicht“ pflichtete Alice ihm unsicher bei. „Aber im Musikunterricht habe ich mit ihr zu tun, da muss ich Takt schlagen, um die Zeit richtig *einzuhalten*.“

„Aha, daran liegt es!“ stellte der Hutmacher fest. „Frau Zeit hat nämlich was dagegen, geschlagen oder *gehalten* zu werden.“ (Remané, L. & Remané, M. 1981: 65-66) (My italics)