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# Translating humour: degrees of equivalence in two versions of Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky & Co.*

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*The present paper analyses degrees of equivalence in the translation of verbally expressed humour. Contrary to the traditional belief that it is dynamic equivalence which is more effective in translating humour, the paper attempts to demonstrate that formal correspondence might be as effective in certain cases.*

Key-words*: verbally expressed humour, incongruity, formal correspondence, dynamic equivalence, domestication, foreignization*

## 1. Introduction

The present paper aims at analyzing the effectiveness with which humour has been translated in two versions of Rudyard Kipling's 1899 *Stalky & Co.* The two versions in question are years apart: the first was made in 1932 by Viorel and Radu and was in fact the second translation of a Kipling text ever made into Romanian. The second version belongs to N. Steinhardt and was published in 1977.

## 2. Humour and dynamic equivalence

The first question that springs to mind regards the choice of the source text. I chose Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* as my basis of analysis because of the contrast it presents: the book is made up of two parts, the first dealing with the life of three school boys at the end of the 19th century in a military college, the second focusing on later years in the life of the characters who have become brave commanders in the British army. The contrast consists in the light-hearted tone of the first part of the book which presents funny events in the life of the three schoolboys and the serious tone of the second part, presenting some heroic events in the army years of some of these characters. In the second part of the book, the non-conformism of the former schoolboy combines with legendary heroism and transforms Stalky in a sort of legendary figure for his brothers in arms. The contrast between the tones used in the

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text has the effect of emphasizing the humour that is pervasive in the first part of this book.

This contrast was duly noted by a group of 50 young readers (my 'literary translation' students) who worked as respondents for an experiment[2] I conducted. The students were given the two Romanian versions of Kipling's text (TT1 and TT2) to read and were told to read these versions by paying attention to the humour in the text. The students were not conversant with the Source Text. Most of the students (44 out of 50) specified that they found the book funny, but only the first part. Some of them admitted to not completing the reading after the 'funny part' ended. The results of this experiment are presented below:

| QUESTIONS ASKED | ANSWERS (44) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | TT1 | TT2 | THEY WERE BOTH EQUALLY FUNNY | I DON'T KNOW |
| Which version was funnier? | 5 | 33 | 3 | 3 |

When asked to motivate their answers, most of the students discussed the "distinctive style" of the second target text and came up with various instances of linguistic humour they remembered from the second target text (nicknames of teachers, "funny" phrases, etc.). The next step[3] was to provide this group with the source text. After reading "the humorous part", the students were asked to answer a new set of questions. Here are the results of their second set of answers:

| QUESTIONS ASKED | ANSWERS (44) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ST | TT1 | TT2 | EQUALLY FUNNY | I DON'T KNOW |
| Which version was funnier? | 17 | 1 | 22 | 1 | 3 |

The results of this rather informal experiment indicate that the group of students responded very well to the second target text; in fact, as shown above, an impressive number (almost half of the initial number) considered the second target text as being the funniest, choosing it over the source text. These findings were the trigger for the question that occasioned my analysis: what makes TT2 so successful[4] in recapturing the intention of the humorous source text? I will therefore closely look at excerpts from the first story of Kipling's book (the story called *In Ambush*)

[2] The students chosen for this 'experiment' had a relatively similar level of English. None of them was familiar with any of the texts.

[3] I tried to retrace the "natural" process: the average target reader will first read the target text and will only subsequently wish to consult the source text if s/he has access to it.

[4] Success is defined here in direct relation to the question of the translatability of humour. It overlooks questions such as: Does the fact that TT2 is more humorous than the ST go against the author's original intention? Should the book be remembered just for its humour? etc.

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in an attempt to identify mechanisms and strategies in translation that preserve or, even more interesting, **enhance** the humour of the original text.

The framework adopted heavily relies on the *incongruity theory*[5] (Attardo & Raskin, 1991), according to which humour is created through an incongruity of scripts, a state of conflict between what is expected and what really occurs in the respective piece of text. In this case, I have identified two types of incongruities, which in fact correspond to two traditional types of humour (long ago established by Cicero): a macro-level (the incongruity between the expected image teacher-student and the unexpected, irreverent image portrayed in the book) and a micro-level (contrasts at the paragraph level, such as, for instance, the name of a teacher and its nickname, a high-register turn of phrase in the mouth of a grubby school boy, etc.). These in fact correspond to the opposition long established in the literature between referential and linguistic humour.

One of the important premises I start from has to do with the "untranslatability"[6] of humour. As shown in the literature, "verbally expressed humour travels badly" (Chiaro 2008, 569). This is because, just like in the case of poetry, humour is more often than not based on a flouting of linguistic rules (by deviation, innovation) and in that it is *language-specific* (Chiaro, 2008). But, more than poetry, humour is also *culture-specific*. These kinds of specificity make the translation of humour a rather onerous task for the average translator. Employing Nida & Taber's (1969) terminology, Chiaro (2008) draws attention to the fact that the translation of humour is mainly a question of dynamic equivalence rather than one of formal correspondence[7]. She goes on to comment on the relativity of these

[5] Although three theories of humour are discussed in the literature (Ross, 2005), out of the three (the incongruity theory, the superiority theory, the psychic release theory) I opted for the incongruity theory since, to my mind, it remains one of the best documented ones in the literature. A second reason for my choice has to do with the notion of 'expectation', which fits nicely in the 'expectation' twist that Boase-Beier (2010) adds to Venuti's (1995, 2008) theory of domestication and foreignization.

[6] Leibold (1989: 109) showed quite early that humour is very much translatable through equivalence: "The translation of humour is a stimulating challenge. It requires the accurate decoding of humorous speech in its original context, the transfer of that speech in a different and often disparate linguistic and cultural environment and its reformulation in a new utterance which successfully recaptures **the intention of the original humorous message** and evokes in the target audience an equivalent pleasurable and playful response." [emphasis mine]

[7] "although what results in the TL is a poem on the same topic as the SL poem, it is likely to share few physical and consequently poetic similarities to the ST. Verbally expressed humour (VEH) in translation suffers a similar fate to poetry in translation. However, whereas in conventional poetry the translator attempts to emulate the SL unyielding patterns of stanza, rhythm and rhyme, in the case of humour s/he has to deal with **anarchic breaking of such patterns**.. […] Thus, as with poetry, generally speaking, as far as the translation of VEH is concerned, **formal equivalence is sacrificed for the sake of dynamic equivalence**. In other words, as long as the TT serves the same function as the ST, it is of little importance if the TT has to depart in somewhat formal terms from the original." (Chiaro, 2008: 571) [emphasis mine]

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categories and concludes that the wise thing to do when looking at humour in translation is to pay attention to *degrees of equivalence*.

- VERBALLY EXPRESSED HUMOUR FARES BETTER WHEN DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE IS EMPLOYED
- THERE ARE NOT ABSOLUTES, BUT ONLY **DEGREES** OF EQUIVALENCE

**Figure 1**. *Chiaro's Approach to Translating Humour* (2008)

Venuti (2008) enlarges upon Nida & Taber's (1969) opposition. While in Nida & Faber's original text formal correspondence was more or less the equivalent of 'translationese', something to avoid at all costs and a rather impossible endeavor, in Venuti's (2008) book, the term is refashioned into "foreignization", a strategy of adhering to the source text by innovation[8] in the target language, without, however, impairing upon the fluency of the resulting target text. Conversely, dynamic equivalence, the preferred strategy in Nida & Taber (1969), is seen as a form of "domestication", a way of translating by which the translator absorbs the source text into the target culture and makes it "familiar" and transparent to the target readers.

Consider the table below:

| **Dynamic equivalence** (translation as communication) (Nida & Taber, 1969)<br>**Domestication** (Venuti 1995, 2008) | **Formal correspondence**<br>(Nida & Taber, 1969)<br>**Foreignization** (Venuti 1995, 2008) |
|---|---|
| HEGEMONY of target culture | ETHNOCENTRICITY of source culture |
| TRANSPARENCY of TT | OPACITY of TT |
| FLUENCY of TT | REINVENTED FLUENCY of TT |
| FOCUS ON THE CONCEPTUAL SIGNIFIED | FOCUS ON THE PLAY OF SIGNIFIERS |
| APPROPRIATION (by obliterating cultural and linguistic differences perceived as obstacles between the SL and the TL) | RESISTANCY (to the linguistic and cultural patterns of the TL) |
| FIDELITY to ST | "ABUSIVE"[9] FIDELITY to ST |

[8] Foreignizing "goes beyond literalism to advocate… experimentalism: innovative translating that samples the dialects, registers and styles already available in the translating language" (Venuti, 2000: 341, quoted by Boase-Beier, 2010)

[9] a "translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own" (Lewis 1985: 41 quoted by Venuti, 2008)

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Employing Chiaro's (2008) framework and that of Venuti (2008), I intend to look at the two Romanian versions of Kipling's text from the perspective of translational stylistics (Malmkjær, 2004, Boase-Beier, 2010). In this enriched framework, literary translation (the TT) appears as a text with its own stylistic characteristics, which are to be constantly evaluated and reevaluated in relation with those of the ST. The target text is characterized by plurivocity as it combines the voice of the author with that of the translator. A foreignizing translated text "proclaims itself a translation by its unfamiliar use of language" (Boase-Beier 2010, 78) and "taxes" the reader by making him/her "work" for the target text. On the other hand, a domesticating translation's aim will be not to tax the reader by its outlandishness, by its unfamiliarity, and will require minimal processing on the part of the reader. Boase-Beier's (2010) interpretation of Venuti's categories is made from the perspective of one who is aware of the translator's fulfilling a threefold role: that of a Reader, a Translator and an Author. Consider the figure below in this respect:

| Author1 > ST … >> Reader 1/Translator/Author 2 > TT…. >> Reader 2 |
|---|

**Figure 2**. *Boase-Beier's Approach* (2010)

Consider also the twist Boase-Beier (2010) provides to the domestication-foreignization pair:

| **Domestication** | **Foreignization** |
|---|---|
| Fits target expectations | Violates target expectations |
| Minimum effort for reader | Maximum effort for reader |

**Figure 3.** *Boase-Beier (2010) on Foreignization*

Contrary to the traditional belief that verbally expressed humour fares better when "domesticated" in translation, my experiment, informal as it may be, demonstrates that, in the case of Kipling's text, humour has fared better when "foreignized". In other words, the incongruity theory (conflict between what is expected and what occurs) fits nicely in the "foreignizing" pattern (violation of target expectations). What better way to translate humour but by translating the unexpected through the unexpected? As will be shown in the second part of this paper, the more successful translation also turns out to be the more "foreignizing" one of the two.

## 3. The Analysis

Consider the following excerpt which is the very beginning of the book. The source text is paralleled by TT1 (the 1932 version) and TT2 (the 1977 version):

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(1)

| SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 1 | TARGET TEXT 2 |
|---|---|---|
| In summer all **right-minded boys** built huts in the furze-hill behind the College - little lairs **whittled** out of the heart of the prickly bushes, full of stumps, odd root-ends, and spikes, but, *since they were strictly forbidden*, palaces of delight. | Dealurile din dosul liceului erau acoperite cu un desiş de grozamă. Vara, **băieţii** pătrunzând în desimea stufişurilor ghimpate şi tăind crăcile împrejur, **făceau** un fel de goluri ce le serveau de loc de retragere. În imaginaţia lor, aceste ascunzători aşternute cu frunze uscate, vârfuri de rădăcini şi aşchii căpătau importanţa unor palate de feerie, *tocmai pentru că le era strict interzis să şi le clădească şi să le ocupe*. | Pe dealul cu drobiţe din spatele şcolii, vara toţi **holteii mai de ispravă** îşi **scorneau** colibe – mici bârloguri, **adică**, boltite în desişul tufelor mărăcinoase: nişte vizuini doldora de cioturi, de fel de fel de rădăcini şi de ghimpi, dar – *de vreme ce încropirea unor atari culcuşuri era cu totul neîngăduită* – micile lor înjghebări păreau adevărate palate ale încântării. |

Below I offer the back translation for the target texts under scrutiny:

(2)

| SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 1 | BACK TRANSLATION 1 |
|---|---|---|
| In summer all **right-minded boys** built huts in the furze-hill behind the College - little lairs **whittled** out of the heart of the prickly bushes, full of stumps, odd root-ends, and spikes, but, *since they were strictly forbidden*, palaces of delight. | Dealurile din dosul liceului erau acoperite cu un desiş de grozamă. Vara, **băieţii** pătrunzând în desimea stufişurilor ghimpate şi tăind crăcile împrejur, **făceau** un fel de goluri ce le serveau de loc de retragere. În imaginaţia lor, aceste ascunzători aşternute cu frunze uscate, vârfuri de rădăcini şi aşchii căpătau importanţa unor palate de feerie, *tocmai pentru că le era strict interzis să şi le clădească şi să le ocupe*. | The hills behind the College were covered in a thicket of furze. In summer, the boys, entering the thick prickly bushes and cutting down the branches all around, cleared some spaces which served as retreats. In their imagination, these hiding places, strewn with dry leaves, odd root-ends and spikes, acquired the significance of some palaces of fancy, *exactly because they were strictly forbidden to build them and to occupy them*. |

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| (3) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 2 | BACK TRANSLATION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | In summer all **right-minded boys** built huts in the furze-hill behind the College - little lairs **whittled** out of the heart of the prickly bushes, **full** of stumps, odd root-ends, and spikes, but, *since they were strictly forbidden*, palaces of delight. | Pe dealul cu drobiţe din spatele şcolii, vara toţi **holteii mai de ispravă** îşi **scorneau** colibe – mici bârloguri, **adică**, boltite în desişul tufelor mărăcinoase: nişte vizuini **doldora** de cioturi, de fel de fel de rădăcini şi de ghimpi, dar – *de vreme ce încropirea unor atari culcuşuri era cu totul neîngăduită* – micile lor înjghebări păreau adevărate palate ale încântării. | On the furze-hill behind their school, in summer, the worthiest bachelors conjured themselves huts – little lairs, **that is**, **nestled** in the heart of the prickly bushes: some dens **brimming** with stumps, all sorts of root-ends and spikes, but – *since putting together such digs was strictly forbidden* – their little shacks seemed true palaces of delight. |

If one looks closely at the target texts and their back translations, a few distinctions become apparent:

TT1 makes use of rationalization, expansion and clarification[10] (I use the terms in Berman's (1984) acceptation). The first sentence of the story is split into three separate units, reformulated. While the ST creates the setting for the story (summer, college, furze-hill) and states the premise of the story (forbidden lair-building) in the same sentence, the translator builds three separate units of information, in an obvious attempt of being over-explanatory: unit 1 (the furze-hill), unit 2 (summer, retreat places), unit 3 (fancy palaces because they were forbidden). The process of 'lair-whittling' is over-explained. While TT2 has some expansionist tendencies (see, for instance the resuming of the anaphoric pronoun *they* by *încropirea unor atari culcuşuri – putting together such digs*), no syntactic reordering is permitted. TT2 obviously strives for a higher degree of formal correspondence.

Although expansionist, TT1 is guilty of omissions: *right-minded boys* becomes *băieţii* ('boys'). On the other hand, TT2 tries to "boost" the text: *right-minded boys* is translated through *holteii mai de ispravă* ('worthiest bachelors'). The effect is quite humorous in Romanian (an incongruity is created between the expectations of the reader with respect to the mention of the word *school* (hence *school-boys*) and the reality of the replacement word *bachelors*) but the humour of TT2 is much more blatant than the subtle irony of the ST (the incongruity effect was

[10] With rationalization, the translator recomposes the syntactic order of the text. With expansion, the translator overtranslates. With clarification (or explicitation) he makes the text explicit, opts for one semantic direction to the exclusion of other shades of meaning, in an attempt to do away with ambiguity.

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created in the ST through contrast between *boys* and *right-minded*). It appears therefore that TT1 does away with incongruity, while TT2 makes a transfer.

The most interesting distinction lies in the range of synonyms the translators employ for the lairs and their making. While the ST makes use of three noun phrases (*huts – little lairs – palaces of delight*), TT1 opts for four, as underlined in the text (*goluri – loc de retragere – ascunzători – palate de feerie* 'empty spaces – place of retreat – hiding places – palaces of fancy') and TT2 comes up with no less than six of them (*colibe – mici bârloguri – vizuini – culcuşuri – micile lor înjghebări – palate ale încântării*). If we were to make use of Berman's labels, this mechanism would be the reverse of qualitative impoverishment[11]: this would be an instance of "qualitative enrichment". Both translators attempt to "enrich" the ST, by using extra-synonyms. However, TT1 opts for "bland" synonyms, part of the standard vocabulary, while TT2 enhances the tone of the ST by coming up with a wide range of synonyms, some of them familiar (*culcuşuri* 'rest places'*),* others quite poetic (*micile lor înjghebări* 'their little shacks'). The original intention is preserved through the maintaining of metaphoric words (*lairs – bârloguri – vizuini* 'lairs – dens', *palaces of delight* - *palate ale încântării* 'palaces of delight'). With TT2, there is a definite attempt for formal correspondence, but the equivalents are always 'topped up', enhanced, enriched, or to use Berman's term, 'ennobled'.

TT2 is intent on making the voice of the translator present: this is apparent in the insertion of the word *adică* 'that is', not necessarily meant to explain as much as to remind the reader that there is a strong auctorial voice.

Consider also the second sentence of the story, where more of the same distinctions are apparent:

| (4) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 1 | TARGET TEXT 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | And for the fifth summer in succession, Stalky, M'Turk, and Beetle (this was before they reached the dignity of a study**) had built**, ***like*** beavers, a place of retreat and meditation, where they smoked. | Se împlineau acum cinci veri de-a rândul de când Stalky, M'Turk şi Beetle (aceasta se întâmpla înainte ca ei să fi căpătat privilegiul unei săli de meditaţie pe seama lor) **îşi construiau**, ***întocmai*** unor castori, un loc de retragere unde să poată fi liniştiţi, să mediteze şi, câteodată, să şi fumeze. | Şi **iată că**, tot vara, pentru a cincea oară la rând, Stalky, M'Turk şi Beetle (asta se petrecea mai înainte ca ei să se fi învrednicit a-şi avea o sală de studii a lor) **îşi meşteriseră**, ***aidoma*** unor castori, un loc de refugiu şi de tihnă, unde **se dedau fumatului**. |

[11] With qualitative impoverishment, the translator does not manage to preserve expressivity by maintaining the same range of synonyms. This happens frequently due to the fact that the target language might not possess the same wide range of synonyms.

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| (5) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 1 | BACK TRANSLATION 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | And for the fifth summer in succession, Stalky, M'Turk, and Beetle (this was before they reached the dignity of a study**) had built**, ***like*** beavers, a place of retreat and meditation, where they smoked. | Se împlineau acum cinci veri de-a rândul de când Stalky, M'Turk şi Beetle (aceasta se întâmpla înainte ca ei să fi căpătat privilegiul unei săli de meditaţie pe seama lor) **îşi construiau**, ***întocmai*** unor castori, un loc de retragere unde să poată fi liniştiţi, să mediteze şi, câteodată, să şi fumeze. | It was now five consecutive summers since Stalky, M'Turk and Beetle (this happened before they acquired the privilege of a study room for themselves) had been building, ***just like*** beavers, a place of retreat where they could relax, meditate and, sometimes, even smoke. |

| (6) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 2 | BACK TRANSLATION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | And for the fifth summer in succession, Stalky, M'Turk, and Beetle (this was before they reached the dignity of a study**) had built**, ***like*** beavers, a place of retreat and meditation, where they smoked. | Şi iată că, tot vara, pentru a cincea oară la rând, Stalky, M'Turk şi Beetle (asta se petrecea mai înainte ca ei să se fi învrednicit a-şi avea o sală de studii a lor) **îşi meşteriseră**, aidoma unor castori, un loc de refugiu şi de tihnă, unde se dedau fumatului. | And it so happens that this very summer, for the fifth time in succession, Stalky, M'Turk and Beetle (this occurred before they had become worthy of a study room of their own) had **carved** themselves, ***in the same manner as*** beavers, a place of retreat and rest, where they **indulged** in smoking. |

TT1 goes on with syntactic reordering: the noun phrase *meditation* is repositioned inside the relative clause *where they smoked*. Due to this reordering, the contrast and incongruity between *a place of retreat and meditation* and *smoked* is lost and so is humour. More than that, the translator mentions smoking only as a random activity, assuming an avuncular tone towards this habit of schoolboys. The original text however emphasizes that smoking was one of the main reasons the huts were built. This is captured by TT2, but again, the effect is enhanced. Compare *where they smoked* to *unde se dedau fumatului* 'where they indulged in smoking'.

TT1 chooses to create emphasis for the comparative *like beavers* - *întocmai unor castori* 'just like beavers' by using an intensifying preposition, which overdoes the effect of the suggestive comparison. TT2 employs a rather poetic preposition *aidoma* ' in the manner of', which also creates overemphasis.

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The range of synonyms employed for verbs of building (*whittle – build*) is rendered by TT1 in the same bland fashion (*făceau – construiau* 'made – built') and overemphasized in TT2 (*scorneau – meşteriseră* 'conjured – carved/concocted'). The contrast in the ST springs from the uneven pair of synonyms*:* while the first synonym *whittle* is quite rare and part of a more technical jargon, the second is the generic term (*build*). This contrast is lost in both translations; it might be said that TT1 qualitatively impoverishes the original, while TT2 qualitatively enriches it – neither of which manages to nail down the intention of the ST.

The auctorial voice of the translator is again quite strong with TT2, due to the presence of *iată* 'it so happens'.

The distinctive strategies employed by the two versions are apparent also in the following excerpt, in which the three characters discuss the possibility of being caught by teachers in their forbidden hiding place:

| (7) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 2 | Target TEXT 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Then, and not till then, did Stalky seek Beetle and M'Turk in their house *form-room*. They were *stowing away* books for a quiet afternoon **in the furze**, which they called **the 'wuzzy.**' 'All up,' **said** Stalky serenely. 'I spotted **Heffy**'s *fairy feet* round our hut after dinner. 'Blessing they're so big.' '*Con-found*! Did you hide our pipes?' **said** Beetle. | Atunci şi numai atunci se duse Stalky să găsească pe Beetle şi pe M'Turk, în *sala de meditaţie*. Amândoi *îşi strângeau* cărţile ca să plece să petreacă *după-amiaza* în **desişul**, numit de ei **Jungla.** „Ne-am ars," **zise** Stalky cu seninătate. „Am descoperit acum, după-masă, *urmele* lui **Labă de Urs** împrejurul adăpostului nostru. Tot e bine că sunt aşa de mari." *„Of, bată-l să-l bată!* Ai ascuns pipele?" **întrebă** Beetle. | Abia după aceea, şi nicidecum mai înainte, merse Stalky în căutarea lui Beetle şi a lui M'Turk prin *sala de studii a secţiei lor*. Băieţii tocmai *îşi strângeau nişte cărţi pe care ar fi dorit să le ia cu ei*, în vederea *unei după-amieze de tihnă şi răgaz* acolo, **pe dealul cu drobiţe, c**ăruia îi ziceau **„machi**".<br>- Ne-am ars, **rosti** Stalky cu seninătate. Azi după prânz am dat în jurul colibei noastre de *urma gingaşilor paşi* ai lui **Carcopită.** Noroc de noi, că are nişte labe cât toate zilele!<br>- *Văleu!* Ai apucat barem să ascunzi pipele? **vru să ştie** Beetle. |

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| (8) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 2 | BACK TRANSLATION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Then, and not till then, did Stalky seek Beetle and M'Turk in their *house form-room*. They were *stowing away* books for a quiet afternoon **in the furze**, which they called **the 'wuzzy.**' 'All up,' **said** Stalky serenely. 'I spotted **Heffy**'s *fairy feet* round our hut after dinner. 'Blessing they're so big.' '*Con-found*! Did you hide our pipes?' **said** Beetle. | Atunci şi numai atunci se duse Stalky să găsească pe Beetle şi pe M'Turk, în *sala de meditaţie*. Amândoi *îşi strângeau* cărţile ca să plece să petreacă după-amiaza în **desişul**, numit de ei **Jungla.** „Ne-am ars," **zise** Stalky cu seninătate. „Am descoperit acum, după-masă, *urmele* lui **Labă de Urs** împrejurul adă-postului nostru. Tot e bine că sunt aşa de mari." „*Of, bată-l să-l bată!* Ai ascuns pipele?" **întrebă** Beetle. | Then and only then did Stalky go to find Beetle and M'Turk in their *study room*. They were *gathering* their books in order to leave to spend their afternoon **in the furze**, called by them '**the Jungle**'. "All up," **said** Stalky serenely. "I spotted **Bear Paw**'s *traces* round our shelter around dinner. At least it's a good thing they're so big." "*Bless his soul!* Have you hidden the pipes?" **asked** Beetle. |

| (9) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 2 | BACK TRANSLATION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Then, and not till then, did Stalky seek Beetle and M'Turk in their *house form-room*. They were *stowing away* books for a *quiet afternoon* **in the furze**, which they called **the 'wuzzy**.' 'All up,' **said** Stalky serenely. 'I spotted **Heffy**'s *fairy feet* round our hut after dinner. 'Blessing they're so big.' 'Con-found! Did you hide our pipes?' **said** Beetle. | Abia după aceea, şi nicidecum mai înainte, merse Stalky în căutarea lui Beetle şi a lui M'Turk prin *sala de studii a secţiei lor*. Băieţii tocmai *îşi strângeau nişte cărţi pe care ar fi dorit să le ia cu ei*, în vederea unei *după-amieze de tihnă şi răgaz* acolo, pe **dealul cu drobiţe**, căruia îi ziceau **„machi".**<br>- Ne-am ars, **rosti** Stalky cu seninătate. Azi după prânz am dat în jurul colibei noastre de urma *gingaşilor paşi* ai lui **Carcopită**. Noroc de noi, că are nişte labe cât toate zilele!<br>- *Văleu!* Ai apucat barem să ascunzi pipele? **vru să ştie** Beetle. | Only then, and not at all till then, did Stalky got to look for Beetle and M'Turk in *the study room of their house*. The boys were just gathering some books they would have liked to carry along, in view of an *afternoon of peace and quiet* there, on the **furze-hill**, which they called "**machi"**.<br><br>"All up," **uttered** Stalky serenely. Today, after lunch, I spotted around our hut the trace of Heffy's *fairy feet*. Lucky us, for his paws are as big as a house!"<br>"*Oh, my God!* At least did you get to hide our pipes?" **inquired** Beetle. |

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I have underlined those phrases where translations differ. Many of them reiterate the techniques I have already discussed (see, for instance the translation of *hut* by the bland synonym *adăpost* 'shelter' as opposed to the more accurate *colibă* 'hut'; notice also the omission of the adjective *fairy* in the translation of *fairy feet* in TT1).

Let us also consider the translation of the nickname *wuzzy*, which is a creation of Kipling's (he had already mentioned the term *fuzzy wuzzy*[12] in 1892 in his *Barrack Room Ballads*, which he used as a heroic nickname for the formidable Beja warriors). Here, Kipling makes use of the word *wuzzy* as a reduplication for the base noun phrase *furze* (< *furzey wuzzy*), which makes this nickname an English pun (the military allusion behind it has to do with the fact that the schoolboys in the story are future soldiers themselves). As you can see, none of the translators has much luck with the rendition of this reduplicative in Romanian and the effect of the pun is completely lost in the first version. TT2 might be more successful in that it manages to replace the pun with an original invention (the noun *machi* does not appear[13] recorded in any of the Romanian dictionaries I consulted).

Of equal import are the teachers' nicknames used in the ST. This particular story contains three such nicknames, with a multitude of variations (especially for Hoof): *Fox* or *Foxy* (for the sergeant of the school), *Heffy* or *Hoofer, Heffles, Hoophats, Hefflelinga* (for the form teacher, Mr. Hoof), *Hartoffles* (for the biology professor, Mr. Hartopp). TT1 chooses a rather bland and conventional way of translating these nicknames (see, for instance, *Labă de urs* 'paw of bear'), which subsequently disallows it from further playing with the respective nicknames. Much more creative, TT2, employs a wider range of variations than even the ST: consider the terms I have identified for *Hoof*: *Carcopită, Copitiţică, Copită-taică, Copitiţel, Copitoancă,Vel-copită, Prea-copită, Zor-copită*. All of these terms are puns in Romanian, and quite humorous. TT1 either chooses to translate by the uninspired *Labă de urs*, or reverts to the original names (quite unhumorously). Consider, for instance, the sentence *"I soothed the* ***Hartoffles****, and we're Bug-hunters now.'* which Stalky tells his friends. The first version uses *Dl Hartopp* 'Mr Hartopp' for this nickname which also contains a definite article, indicative of a recategorization from proper into common noun in English. The second version is "*l-am dus cu zăhărelul pe Hârtoapă şi iată-ne primiţi în rândul Vânătorilor de Ploşniţe"*. As you can see, in this case the humorous effect of the recategorization is preserved

[12] "The term "Fuzzy Wuzzy" originated in the 1800s. British Soldiers gave the nickname, "fuzzy wuzzy" to the Hadendoa warriors that were a nomadic tribe along the Red Sea in Sudan. The Hadendoa were a formidable fighting force that gained the respect of the better trained British forces. The Hadendoa warriors wore their hair matted which gave a "fuzzy" appearance. The British were eventually victorious over the Fuzzy Wuzzies but with a greater fight than other enemies." (http://www.poetpatriot.com/poems-rhyfuzzywuzzy.htm)

[13] There is only a verb, *a se machi* 'to get tipsy', which has nothing to do with what happens in the lair (the story states clearly that drinking was not a habit the schoolboys indulged in while they were in the wuzzy).

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through an identification of the English signifier with a Romanian signifier (the translator successfully draws upon the phonological similarities between the two nouns) and the humorous effect is recreated.

Another thing worth looking at is the *verba dicendi* employed in the ST and the strategies the two versions evince for them. This is another case where TT2 tries to "boost" the humour of the original text, by making use of a number of synonyms that are marked and therefore very distinct from the generic terms used in the original. Compare, for instance, the translation of *said* with *întrebă* 'asked' as opposed to *vru să ştie* 'wanted to know'. Consider also the following pairs: *said* – *zise* (TT1) 'said' – *rosti* (TT2) 'uttered', *grăi* (TT2), a literary, obsolete term for 'said', *oftă* (TT2)'sighed', *arătă* (TT2) 'showed', *luă aminte* (TT2) 'took notice', etc. One of the most astonishing synonyms offered by TT2 for the verb *said* is *dumiri,* an obsolete term for 'explain', used intransitively here (although Romanian records it as transitive or as reflexive).

Many of the strategies employed by TT2 are identifiable as "foreignizing", in an attempt to make the text more humorous, but less friendly to the reader. In this case, the reader has to "work" for the understanding of the text. There is a huge number of words that are not part of the core vocabulary (consider, for instance, the oudlandish *şurlicari*, a dialectal word for 'prey bird', for the translation of the generic term *boys,* or the invention *machi*, for that matter). The voice of the translator makes itself known through such techniques, coupled with a number of translator's footnotes (TT2 abounds in footnotes, while TT1 does not have any). Last, but not least, code-switching, employed by Kipling as a humorous variant of pig Latin, or schoolboy speak, is almost always obliterated in TT1, while scrupulously preserved in TT2. Consider the fourth, and last, excerpt in this respect:

| (10) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 2 | TARGET TEXT 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 'Of course, but I'm not smokin' *aujourd'hui. Parceque je* jolly well pense that we'll be *suivi*. We'll go along the cliffs, slow, an' give Foxy lots of time to parallel us up above.' | „Desigur; dar astăzi nu fumez. Mă cam bate gândul că o să fim urmăriți. Noi vom merge de-a lungul stâncilor încet şi îi vom da lui Vulpe timp ca să ne ajungă pe sus." | -Desigur, numai că n-am să fumez *aujourd'hui (1). Parceque je (2)* pun rămăşag că vom fi *suivis* (3). O lăm pe faleză şi mergem tot aşa încetişor, dându-i Vulpoiului răgaz berechet, ca să ne repereze de sus.<br>1.astăzi (fr.)<br>2. deoarece (fr.)<br>3. urmăriți (fr.) |

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| (11) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 2 | BACK TRANSLATION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 'Of course, but I'm not smokin' *aujourd'hui. Parceque je* jolly well pense that we'll be *suivi*. We'll go along the cliffs, slow, an' give Foxy lots of time to parallel us up above.' | „Desigur; dar astăzi nu fumez. Mă cam bate gândul că o să fim urmăriți. Noi vom merge de-a lungul stâncilor încet şi îi vom da lui Vulpe timp ca să ne ajungă pe sus." | "Of course; but I am not smoking today. I rather think that we are going to be followed. We'll go along the cliffs slowly and give Fox time to parallel us up above." |

| (12) | SOURCE TEXT | TARGET TEXT 2 | BACK TRANSLATION 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 'Of course, but I'm not smokin' *aujourd'hui. Parceque je* jolly well *pense* that we'll be *suivi*. We'll go along the cliffs, slow, an' give Foxy lots of time to parallel us up above.' | -Desigur, numai că n-am să fumez *aujourd'hui (1). Parceque je (2)* pun rămăşag că vom fi *suivis* (3). O luăm pe faleză şi mergem tot aşa încetişor, dându-i Vulpoiului răgaz berechet, ca să ne repereze de sus.<br>1.astăzi (fr.)<br>2. deoarece (fr.)<br>3. urmăriți (fr.) | „Of course; but I'm not smoking *aujourd'hui (1). Parceque je (2)* bet we will be *suivis* (3). We'll go allong the cliffs and continue slowly, giving Foxy lots of time to spot us from above.<br><br>1.today (Fr.)<br>2. because (Fr.)<br>3. followed (Fr.) |

## 4. Conclusions

It appears that TT1 is more inclined to "domesticate" the original, to make it fluent and anchored into the target language and culture. The voice of the translator is effaced, no footnotes are employed, stress is laid on the referential humour that characterizes the original. With TT2, "foreignizing" strategies are employed: footnotes, translator's insertions, presence of translator's voice, "boosting" techniques meant to enhance the linguistic humour of the original. It might be that an evaluative analysis would have revealed more shortcomings of TT1, but my intention was not to evaluate the two versions, rather to look at strategies of translating humour and their effectiveness. To my mind, this analysis has shown that a higher degree of "foreignization" did not come amiss in this case.

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