Lexical creativity and humor in translation: On Rabelais' linguistic genius and the difficulties in translating his works

Adrienn Gulyás

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/lexis/5143>

DOI: 10.4000/lexis.5143

ISSN: 1951-6215

Publisher

Université Jean Moulin - Lyon 3

Electronic reference

Adrienn Gulyás, "Lexical creativity and humor in translation: On Rabelais' linguistic genius and the difficulties in translating his works", *Lexis* [Online], 17 | 2021, Online since 15 August 2021, connection on 20 August 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/lexis/5143> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/lexis.5143>

This text was automatically generated on 20 August 2021.

Lexis is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Lexical creativity and humor in translation: On Rabelais' linguistic genius and the difficulties in translating his works

Adrienn Gulyás

Introduction

- 1 Translating humor deriving from lexical creativity, often bound to the form of the source text, is an imposing challenge for literary translators. The main concern of this article is to observe lexical creativity at work in François Rabelais' *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* and the translators' solutions to render it in English and Hungarian. First, the theoretical background of the notion of "lexical creativity" will be explored, and a theoretical framework adopted from translation theory for the discussion of examples. In the analysis, a systematic contrastive approach will be applied to compare Screech's English [2006] and my own Hungarian translations [*Pantagruel* 2010; *Gargantua* 2015].
- 2 Translators of Rabelais face a wide range of challenges partly related to the encyclopedic knowledge his texts comprise, partly to the creativity with which Rabelais handled language as a writer. His texts are a repository of examples of linguistic creativity and show how form, meaning and context together can create a humorous, playful effect. Various word formation processes, such as suffixation, compounding or blending are used, along with alliteration, rhyming and puns to amuse readers. When it comes to transposing humor that is at the same time phonologically, morphologically, semantically and contextually motivated into another language, translators are inevitably confronted with the inherent shortcomings of their trade, originating from the linguistic and cultural differences of the source and the target languages. When humor is as intricately constructed as in Rabelais' texts, translators usually have to compromise: they might choose to slightly alter meaning and recreate the phonological

motivation for a word play, or they might choose to translate the meaning of the original precisely while compromising on the humor arising from the form. Furthermore, depending on the morphological potentialities of the target language, a derivate might be translated as a compound or *vice versa*. As the detailed analysis of the English and Hungarian translations will show, translators can adopt different means of rendering humor based on lexical creativity in the target text, with various compromises involved depending on the approach.

1. Theoretical background

- 3 Before taking a closer look at examples of Rabelais' lexical creations and their translations, let me clarify what I mean here by "lexical creativity" and argue for the use of "lexical creation" to designate its results, instead of using the terms "poetic occasionalism" or "nonce word". Then, I will choose a model from translation theory that seems best suited for the purposes of the analysis.

1.1. Lexical creativity: definitions

- 4 When one explores the literature on lexical creativity, it soon becomes obvious that the issue of defining creativity in lexical creations or linguistic creativity goes straight to the heart of a long-standing debate in morphology to distinguish productivity and creativity (for a short, but excellent, summary of the debate, see Munat [2016: 93-95]). Some linguists, such as Ronneberger-Sibold [2010: 203], give lexical creations an extragrammatical status and distinguish them from new lexemes emerging from regular word formation:

Creative techniques are defined as morphological operations which are different from the regular rules or models of word formation, and which are deliberately used by language users with a fully developed linguistic competence for the creation of words characterized by a specific sound shape and/or a specific degree of transparency.

- 5 In Ronneberger-Sibold's definition, I would highlight the idea that lexical creations are intentional, brought into existence for a particular communicative purpose, and produced by expert language users. Ronneberger-Sibold [2010: 206] also notes that literary texts are the most common context in which lexical creativity takes place, more specifically "literature for children, but also humorous (especially satirical) texts for adults", which "aim to amuse or impress their listeners or readers by giving them a 'riddle' to solve" (for instance, chapter 7 of *Pantagruel* with its humorous listing of titles of "the fine books in the Library of Saint Victor", see Rabelais [2006: 37]).
- 6 Baldi and Dawar [2000: 963] also try to differentiate lexical creations (affixed constructions, coinages) from lexemes resulting from regular word formation processes by claiming that lexical creations belong to the area of expressive morphology, mostly because they "convey a special pragmatic effect". When defining expressive morphology, they quote Zwicky & Pullum [1987: 335]:

Expressive morphology is associated with an expressive, playful, poetic, or simply ostentatious effect of some kind [...] and carry an effect lacking in plain morphology.

- 7 Baldi & Dawar [2000: 967-968] also mention that these unconventional, “eye-catching” and “ear-catching” constructions
do not seem to be within the production capability of the average speaker of the language, but are rather the special work of skilled language users [...]. Such language users may have exceptional linguistic control and active awareness of word-formation possibilities.
- 8 Baldi & Dawar name journalists and media specialists as examples of self-aware, skilled language users, but their definition could easily be applied to literary authors. Note that the definition of lexical creations reaches once again beyond the boundaries of morphology, referring to pragmatics and to the speaker's linguistic proficiency.
- 9 Even though Ronneberger-Sibold's and Baldi & Dawar's understandings of lexical creativity appear to have important, recurring components, the definition that seems the most comprehensive and best suited for my analysis is that of Munat [2016: 95]:
[...] creative lexical inventions are those new words produced intentionally by speakers, generally formed analogically on the models of other words in the lexicon. These may be productively formed, serving an impelling communicative need of the moment and never intended to fill any real or permanent naming need in the wider community of speakers. [...] Finally, like regularly formed words, the semantic content of creative lexical items may not be recoverable without the support of context to aid in decoding.
- 10 Munat's definition reconciles the seeming opposition of creativity and productivity by making lexical creations and their interpretation dependent on their immediate context. At the same time, she allows creative word formation to stay within the boundaries of morphology, by claiming that morphological processes that are at work in the creation of nonce words are the same as in any other new lexeme produced by compounding, derivation, blending, backformation, etc. Indeed, the examples from Rabelais' work discussed below show that word formation processes at work in lexical creativity are all productive processes (suffixation, compounding, blending). As Munat [2016: 95] claims, creativity consists of combining building blocks of language in a novel way:
[...] linguistic creativity means creation from something; it is an ongoing process in which the writer or speaker draws from a finite number of existing items in order to create an infinite number of fresh or imaginative solutions. These previously existing items, whether phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, or phrasal units, are manipulated, combined, or recombined, to form new creations.
- 11 As will be demonstrated through the study of Rabelais' examples, the different levels of linguistic analysis are intricately linked in lexical creations and sometimes do not respect lexemic boundaries. For example, spoonerisms (*contrepèteries*, in French), involve both the phonemic and semantic levels, and reach beyond lexemic boundaries. However, this creative interlinking of signifiers and signified is difficult to typologize. According to Bagasheva & Stamenov [2013: 80], quoted by Munat [2016: 101], another element that is deemed “coterminous” with lexical creativity is humor or ludicity:
[For them] a lexical item is, by default, ludic on its initial launching in a communicative exchange. In their view, ludicity is a property of all new word formations. It is an important meta-communicative strategy and the degree of ludicity is directly dependent on the communicative goal and context, not on the type of word formation or on the playful modification of the rules.

- 12 To analyze Rabelais' work, I will adopt Bagasheva & Stamenov's approach [2013] and consider all lexical creations humorous when the larger context (dialog, paragraph, chapter) is meant to provoke laughter.
- 13 Lexical creations as defined by Munat [2016] are mostly to be found in humorous chapters of both *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*. They often characterize humorous characters, prone to punning, such as *Panurge* or *Frère Jean* (see Bonhomme [2018: 55]) or the narrator himself, rather than serious characters, like *Grandgousier*, *Epistemon* or the grown-up *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*. Humorous lexical creations consistently appear in places where the plot and the writer's intention to satirize require and justify their presence. For example, chapters 11 and 12 of *Pantagruel* mock the workings of jurisdiction and legal jargon that no one understands: the chapters are complete gobbledygook using complex syntax and eloquent transitions. Rabelais gives satirical names to the pleader and the defender: *Baisecul* and *Humevesne*. These lexical creations fit the broader context of the chapters and serve both the needs of the plot and the author's intent to question the seriousness of their characters and the importance of their court case.
- 14 A number of morphological studies narrow their focus onto literary texts only, and call lexical creations "nonce formations" (Bauer [2004: 78]), "occasionalisms" [Poix: 2018], or "poetic occasionalisms" [Dressler & Tumfart: 2017]. Dressler & Tumfart [2017: 156] define an occasionalism as "a new word created for a poetic function at a specific place in a literary text, and which has little chance to be accepted by the language community as a neologism". The reason why this article prefers to keep the more generic term of "lexical creation" for Rabelais' literary coinages is because some of them, first attested in his texts, indeed became neologisms and are now integral parts of the French lexicon (for a list of such words collected from, among other dictionaries, the *Petit Robert* or the *Trésor de la langue française*, see Hernández [2004: 147]). This article focuses more on the translation of such literary coinages, and does not investigate the question of whether they remained nonce words or occasionalisms or whether they became widely accepted and used in French. That said, one might wonder whether the terms "nonce" or "occasionalism" are the most appropriate to refer to lexical creations in literary works that have been extensively read and studied in French culture over almost five centuries, and are most likely familiar parts of the lexicon of educated French speakers. For these reasons, even though the examples discussed might indeed be occasionalisms, I would rather keep the more general term "lexical creations" to designate Rabelais' literary coinages, some of which have officially entered the French lexicon through his work, such as "*un gargantua*" (a glutton), "*pantagruélique*" (enormous), "*substantifique*" (the best, most precious), "*émoustiller*" (to excite), and "*chienlit*" (havoc), to mention but a few examples.

1.2. Equivalence in translation: theory and practice

- 15 If defining lexical creativity is a challenge for linguists, so is its rendering in the target language for translators. Translating lexical creativity also leads to a long-standing debate in translation theory: the debate on equivalence or, more precisely, the impossibility of perfect equivalence between the source and the target texts. The concept of "equivalence" appeared in the 1950s, generated a heated debate, and has received abundant criticism ever since (for a summary of the evolution of the term see

- Munday [2016: 58-84], for a summary of the debate on equivalence see Leal [2012: 39-46]). It is now judged as a somewhat outdated “blanket concept” that is hard to grasp in a purely theoretical, linguistic or philosophical framework, but a concept “to which translators have grown accustomed” (Leal [2012: 44]), for it attempts to evaluate how close the target text lies to the source text in its meaning and form.
- 16 In order to be able to produce target texts, a pragmatic goal indeed, translators need to believe in the possibility of some kind of equivalence and, during their work, strive to maximize equivalence between source text and target text, in both content and form. The fact that different levels of linguistic analysis are intricately interwoven in lexical creations in literary texts and have a specific communicative goal might sound evident to translators. However, when it comes to reproducing a specific lexical creation in the target language and culture, translators are often faced with tough choices: if they go for equivalent content, they might not be able to respect formal equivalence (they lose the humor that arises from rhyming or alliteration, as in example (24) below), or if they recreate the same connotative effect or play with repetitive sound shapes, they might have to change the meaning in the target text compared to the source text, for instance, in puns or spoonerisms (as in examples (1) to (3) below).
  - 17 Just as Baker [2018: 5], adopts equivalence as the central concept of her book entitled *In Other Words* “for the sake of convenience” and investigates how equivalence works at word, grammatical, textual, pragmatic and semiotic levels, I will use Koller’s [1989: 99-104] typology of equivalence relations for a more nuanced but systematic description of the dilemmas translators deal with. Koller distinguishes five equivalence types, namely denotative, connotative, text-normative, pragmatic and formal equivalences. Denotative and connotative equivalences are both related to the signified: the first concerns “the *extra-linguistic circumstances* conveyed by the text” (Koller [1995: 197]), while the second is about finding a term in the target language that would have connotations similar to the term used in the source text. The following two types seem less important for the needs of my analysis since text-normative equivalence is about formal requirements of text-types, in Koller’s terms, “*text and language norms* (usage norms) which apply to parallel texts in the target language” [1995: 197, emphasis in the original], and pragmatic equivalence is about how the requirements of a particular readership can prevail over other types of equivalence. The fifth type, formal or aesthetic equivalence, is, however, crucial for literary translation in general and the translation of Rabelais’ work in particular because it is related to the equivalence of the signifiers (rhymes, metaphors, puns) between the source and the target texts. These equivalences feed and bleed one another in the translation process, depending on the translators’ strategies, individual choices, and the possibilities that the target language offers. With the help of Koller’s differentiation of the comprehensive term “equivalence”, it is easier to show how translators struggle to find the right balance between form and content.
  - 18 As will become apparent from the examples below, translators can adopt different approaches to solve equivalence dilemmas and, as a result of their individual choices and the diverse trends of literary translation in their respective cultures, they will come up with solutions that make their work more or less visible. The opposing strategies of creating a fluent, easily accessible text for the reader or a text that is estranging and foreign-sounding are called “domestication” and “foreignization”. According to Schleiermacher [2012: 49], the translator either “leaves the writer in

peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him, or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the author towards him”, producing a foreignizing or a domesticating translation, respectively. The Western European tradition has favored foreignization (see Venuti [1998] and [2008]). Literary translation in 20th century Hungary, however, advocated domestication, taking this trend to its extreme by translating some authors' names into Hungarian up to the 1950s (*Jules Verne* was known to Hungarian readers as *Verne Gyula*, for instance). Translation trends are now changing, allowing for more foreignization, probably under Western influence. For example, retranslations in prose of Dante or Milton are unusual and somewhat shocking for the Hungarian public, used to verse translated into verse, showing respect for the form of the original. Retranslators defend their choice to compromise on form by claiming faithfulness to meaning; in other words, they opt for denotative equivalence over connotative and formal types. They also evoke the Western, mostly English and French, tradition of translating verse into prose. However, formal and connotative equivalence are still considered crucial, and domesticating strategies still prevail in Hungarian literary translation practice.

2. Method

- 19 In the body of my article, I will look at examples of lexical creativity in Rabelais' *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* and their translations into English and Hungarian. For the English version of these texts, I will use Michael Screech's [2006] renowned translation, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Even though Screech translated first editions and I used the 1542 Juste edition, in which Rabelais himself reviewed and proofed both texts, the English and the Hungarian versions remain comparable because both Screech and I have consistently included translations of other text variants in footnotes.
- 20 A systematic contrastive approach allows me to highlight different translation strategies used to render lexical creations, and to emphasize how the translators' choices affect equivalence relations of the source and the target texts. For instance, one translation strategy might favor denotative equivalence over formal equivalence, whereas another one would center attention on connotative effect over content. For lexical creations, these strategies might have consequences on how humor is finally perceived by the reader.
- 21 As shown above, the definition of lexical creativity is a rather complex issue, but so is the categorization of lexical creations. Trying to establish a typology on which to present my examples was the most challenging part of the writing process, as there seem to be no clear-cut boundaries between linguistic levels involved in lexical creativity. Instead, different levels of linguistic analysis, phonetics-phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and, sometimes, lexicology are involved to support narration. Indeed, Rabelais' linguistic creativity and ludicity are intricately linked to his ethos and esthetics as a writer (Bonhomme [2018: 67]). Rabelais' proclaimed goal is to provoke laughter; fundamentally human and also liberating, laughter helps him to convey sharp criticism of decaying medieval institutions and dogmatic thinking, as well as a gentler criticism of human nature in general – all in an irreverent but light-hearted manner. Through his satires, Rabelais also establishes a radical contrast between what he criticizes and the humanist values he truly believes in. Notice that humanism and evangelical doctrine are never made fun of (for instance, *Gargantua's*

sophist tutor's name, *Thubal Holoferne*, is satirical with Biblical connotations of chaos and alcoholism (Rabelais [1996: 142]), while his humanist tutor's name, *Ponocrates*, is serious and derives from the Greek for "work/effort" and "stamina" (Rabelais [1996: 148])). Finally, liberating laughter combined with linguistic creativity is the perfect demonstration of the Gargantuan creative potential of the human mind, a literary feat that makes Rabelais' work timeless.

- 22 To categorize lexical creations, I used Bonhomme's [2018] relevant article on linguistic creativity and its functions in Rabelais' works as a starting point for my reflection. Following the Saussurean dichotomy, Bonhomme divides Rabelais' lexical creations into two basic categories depending on whether the sound shape (signifier) or the meaning (signified) is being manipulated in order to create a humorous effect. The author distinguishes lexical creations involving the signifier into three subtypes, including sound arabesques (sound effects with obscure meaning: "frr, frrr, frrr, bou, bou, bou [...] traccc, trac, trr, trr, trr" (Bonhomme [2018: 48]), homophony (see example (22) below) and tongue-twisters (example (25)). He calls all kinds of ludic creations involving the signified "pun" or "wordplay" (*calembour* or *équivoque*), a trending genre in the 16th century, but does not go into any further subcategorization (Bonhomme, [2018: 54-56]). Within the territory of the signified, Bonhomme further differentiates ludic neologisms (*morquaquoquassé* or *magistrostralement* [2018: 57]), verbal fantasies (ludic portmanteau words and monstrous compounds, as in 3.3. below), playful satirical names, and play on jargons or languages (dog-Latin, nonsense, imaginary languages, etc.).
- 23 On the one hand, Bonhomme's typology is very useful since it identifies a plethora of lexical creations occurring in Rabelais' work. On the other hand, in the interpretation of literary works, and translation can be perceived as such, it is counterproductive to separate form and content because, even in prose, the artistic value of the text emerges from the masterful combination of the two. Instead of separating the signifier from the signified, I will propose to discuss examples of lexical creativity based on levels of linguistic analysis involved in their production. In a spoonerism, for example, both phonology and morphology are involved. In a pun based on double entendre, phonetics (homophony) and semantics play a role. While I will try to discuss my examples in a systematic way, reflecting on the linguistic and translation theories outlined above, a thorough, comprehensive discussion of Rabelais' each and every pun, lexical creation and linguistic innovation would exceed the scope of a single article. Chapters that could be seen as one giant macrolinguistic play will not be discussed here either. Examples of such chapters in *Pantagruel* are chapter 6, written in dog-Latin, Panurge's glossolalia in chapter 9, chapters 11 and 12, written in nonsense language satirizing court cases, or chapter 19 transliterating sign language, designed to parody a complicated scholarly debate. Examples for macrolinguistic play in *Gargantua* would be the non-sensical enigmas of chapters 2 and 58, or chapter 11, which comprises a series of sometimes distorted idiomatic expressions.

3. Analysis

3.1. Lexical creativity on the interface of phonetics-phonology and morphology

- 24 In this section, I will discuss examples of lexical creativity in which no new lexemes are created, so neither the lexicon nor word formation processes are involved. The ludic effect is instead achieved with the help of the signifier, by interchanging phonemes in minimal pairs or changing meaning by changing one phoneme in a sequence, or changing the segmentation of a lexeme based on phonetic resemblance (for instance, to create fake etymologies), or simply by creating a sound effect through the repetition of the same phonemic string in subsequent words. For the translation of these ludic effects, formal and connotative equivalence should be in the forefront of the translator's attention.

3.1.1. Interchanging phonemes in minimal pairs

- 25 Consider the following two examples of spoonerisms from chapters 16 and 30 of *Pantagruel* and their English and Hungarian translations:¹

- (1) *femme folle à la messe, femme molle à la fesse* (Rabelais [1996: 194])
- (2) Woman *mucking* about in the *fane*, woman *fucking* about in the *main...*
(Rabelais [2006: 88-89])
- (3) *unalmas a papi sima ima, ha nincs napi rima pina* (Rabelais [2010: 119])
[boring is the plain priestly prayer, if there is no daily slut cunt]

- 26 Regarding example (2), Screech [2006] adds a footnote saying the jest was transposed and gives the original spoonerism with its own English translation. Although he compromises on denotative equivalence, he renders both the spoonerism and its connotations faithfully. The Hungarian translation in example (3) is not a spoonerism. There is clearly a ludic sound effect in it, but I compromised both on the formal and the denotative equivalences. The connotations, i.e. the church setting and sexuality, follow the source text and suit the context. The paragraph is about how Panurge, an amateur of women, would make ladies squirm and wriggle during Mass with his burning-glasses. The ludic effect in the form was kept, but not as a spoonerism. As the following example illustrates, it is next to impossible to find minimal pairs in the target language that would also ensure denotative equivalence:

- (4) *coupe testee* (Rabelais [1996: 304])
- (5) had his *coddle nut off* (Rabelais [2006: 145])
- (6) *tejefarolta* [his milk backed off] (Rabelais [2010: 196])

- 27 In example (4), the context ties the translator's hand; in chapter 30, Epistemon's sliced-off head is miraculously glued back in place by Panurge, with the help of some good white wine. The interchanging of phonemes in the spoonerism here needs to provide the meaning "his head cut off". Solutions in both English and Hungarian give nonsense words or phrases, so translators feel compelled to provide explanatory notes. In example (5), Screech explains that there is a spoonerism involved, in which "his coddle nut off" actually means "noddle cut off" (Rabelais [2006: 145]). I also inserted a footnote, defining the concept of spoonerism, giving Rabelais' spoonerism in the

original with its literal translation, and explaining that nonsensical *tejefarolta* (his-milk-backed-off) turns into *fejetarolta* (his-head-slain) by switching *t* and *f* (example (6)). In this case, context and meaning force a compromise on the translator, but humor that needs to be explained in a footnote definitely lacks the spontaneity of the original. During the translation process, I was desperately trying to avoid situations where I had to explain punchlines even if it meant compromising on denotative or formal equivalences.

3.1.2. Changing one phoneme for a ludic effect

- 28 The following example is one where Rabelais changes one vowel in a phrase and alters its meaning in a satirical way: the “masters in Arts” become “masters inerts”. The term describes university fellows from the Sorbonne, accompanying Janotus de Bragmardo to get the bells of *Notre-Dame de Paris* back from Gargantua:

- (7) *maistres inertes* (Rabelais [1996: 160])
- (8) *Masters Inerts* (Rabelais [2006: 261])
- (9) *egyetemi impotentátot* (Rabelais [2015: 85])
[university impotentate+ACCUSATIVE]

- 29 Here again, no new lexemes are created, but the pun is an excellent illustration of context-driven and context-dependent lexical creativity. The pun lends itself for translation into English perfectly (example (8)): Screech does a word-for-word translation, and the outcome is funny and seems like a natural, effortless solution, not requiring any footnotes. It is interesting to note that Demerson's Modern French translation had to change the pun because switching the vowels from *a* to *e* would have not made sense any more in French: Demerson renders the pun by switching the preposition *ès* (in) to *sans* (without): *maîtres sans-art* “masters without Arts” (Rabelais [1996: 161]). The translation into Hungarian (example (9)) was not easy either: switching only one phoneme and altering the meaning the way it is suggested by the original context was not possible. So I had to compromise on formal equivalence, for the sake of denotative and connotative equivalences. Masters coming from the Sorbonne are supposed to represent authority, but Rabelais describes them as utterly ridiculous, filthy-dirty, crazy figures from a farce. To render this contrast, I used blending and created a nonce word, *impotentát* (impotentate), mixing the already existing Hungarian noun *potentát* (potentate) and adjective *impotens* (impotent) to create a new lexeme that expresses the same contradiction of power and impotency. The example of the “Masters Inerts” shows how translation cannot always follow the source text to the letter because the target language will not yield the same possibilities for the same transformations as the source language. Since humor is central to Rabelais' writing, the translator cannot compromise on linguistic creativity for creating a humorous effect, but might have to use a different strategy to achieve it, as was shown through the Modern French and the Hungarian translations.

3.1.3. Morphological resegmentation based on phonetic resemblance

- 30 Bonhomme [2018: 61] mentions that legitimizing proper names by linking them to their source or filiation was common practice in Renaissance times. Rabelais parodies this practice by providing some proper names and toponyms with an obviously invented, false etymology. The etymology is based on phonetic resemblance with the etymon,

which is a similar-sounding, resegmented version of the proper noun in question. The comic effect arises from the playful interlinking of the meaning and the character it describes or the context in which it is applied. Translators need to muster their talent again: the proper noun and its etymon need to sound similar (formal equivalence), but at the same time, the meaning of the etymon needs to suit both the character and the diegesis (denotative-connotative equivalence), while providing a comic effect. Consider the etymology of the name “Gargantua”:

(10) Que grand tu as ! (Rabelais [1996: 92])

(11) ‘Que grant-tu-as!’ (‘How great hast thou!’) (Rabelais [2006: 228])

(12) Ez aztán a garathuzat! (Rabelais [2015: 41])

[What a gullet draft!]

- 31 Screech left the source text in the target text and inserted an archaizing translation of it in parentheses (example (11)). Screech occasionally leaves bits of the source text in the English translation, a practice encountered in Patrick Modiano’s English translations as well (see Jordan Stump’s translation of *Du plus loin de l’oubli*, titled *Out of the Dark*, University of Nebraska Press, 1998). It is a foreignizing solution, giving the target text a French *couleur locale*, solving the dilemma of formal equivalence between a source-text word and a similar-sounding target text sequence that also fits the context. Denotative equivalence is perfectly achieved, but the translator compromises on formal equivalence. Hungarian translators do not use the practice just described, so I did not consider leaving the French false etymology in the text a viable option. The meaning of the nonce compound *garathuzat* (*garat* meaning gullet/larynx, *huzat* draft) refers to Gargantua’s ability to drink, and implies he has a good swig (example (12)). The Hungarian “etymon” keeps the same number of syllables and same vowel sequence as the French original, and preserves the first syllable *Gar-*. The Hungarian translation slightly compromises on both denotative and formal equivalence even though the connotation (heavy drinker) is rendered.
- 32 The next example is the ludic etymology of the toponym Beauce in chapter 16 of *Gargantua*. Gargantua’s mare is attacked by hornets in a forest, and she beats back the assault with her tail, destroying the hornets and the forest at the same time. Looking at the bare land and proud of his mare’s work, Gargantua says:

(13) « Je trouve beau ce. », dont fut depuis appelé ce pays la Beauce... (Rabelais [1996: 152])

(14) ‘Beautiful, that!’ (Beau ce!) And Beauce has been the name ever since. (Rabelais [2006: 256])

(15) „Hát ez *boszorkányos!*”, azóta hívják Beauce-nak ezt a vidéket. (Rabelais [2015: 78-79])

‘This is witch-like!’ since then this land is called Beauce.

- 33 Screech opts for the same foreignizing solution as before, giving both the source text and its literal translation in English (example (14)). In Hungarian (example (15)), in order to achieve some kind of formal equivalence, the meaning is changed to “witch-like” or “magical” (from Hungarian *boszorkány* (witch)) and refers to the mare’s fending off the hornets and creating a flat land. *Bosz-* is italicized in the translation, as if the beginning of the word had been given special emphasis (the accent falls on the first syllable in Hungarian anyway), and attracts the reader’s attention to the similarity

between *bosz-* and *Beauce*. Italicizing was the editor's idea to give an extra hint to readers in case they were not sure about the pronunciation of the French word *Beauce*.

- 34 The previous two examples showed how context limits the translator's options for coming up with creative solutions to preserve formal equivalence. The next example will illustrate how the author can increase the challenge for the translator by using the same false etymology, but by changing its immediate context. Chapter 17 of *Gargantua* narrates how Parisians reacted to Gargantua's arrival and satirizes them as being too curious, arrogant and talkative. To get rid of the pushy crowd, Gargantua pisses on them *par rys* (for a laugh). This is where the name of the city of Paris is derived from. The pun appears more than once in the chapter in different contexts, and Rabelais also plays with Greek *parrhesia* (boldness and freedom of speech) to filiate the name of the city: *...Parrhesiens en Grecisme, c'est à dire fiers en parler* (Rabelais [1996: 156]). Here is the first sentence where the pun appears:

(16) Je croy que ces marrouffles veulent que je leurs paye ici ma bien venue et mon *proficiat*. C'est raison. Je leur voys donner le vin. Mais ce ne sera que par rys. (Rabelais [1996: 154])

(17) I do believe these scoundrels expect me to pay for my own reception and supply my own welcome-gift. That's only right! I shall tip them with some wine! But they shall only have it *per ris*.

(18) Ezek a bitangok velem akarják kifizettetni a fogadtatásomat [...], talán ajándékot is vegyek magamnak? Ingyenbort akartok? Legyen. Megitatlak benneteket, de aztán *pariban leszünk*. (Rabelais [2015: 80])

[These scoundrels want me to pay for my own welcome [...], shall I buy myself a present too? You want free wine? Let it be. I'm going to make you drink, but after that, *we'll be quits*.]²

- 35 Morphological resegmentation of the word Paris into two meaningful morphemes in English or Hungarian seems extremely difficult. Screech chooses to insert a note at the beginning of chapter 16, informing the reader that in the French Renaissance, “[s]erious and comic etymologies of the name of Paris were current” (Rabelais [2006: 256]). After explaining that *per ris* or *par ris* in Middle French meant “for a laugh”, Screech uses *per ris* in the translation (example (17) or (20)). In Hungarian, the name of the city is *Párizs*. Even though it can be segmented into two meaningful words, *pá*, an outdated and childish version of “bye”, and *rizs*, (rice), this resegmentation does not fit any of the contexts *per ris* is used in. The solution that occurred to me was to keep *Paris* in italics in the Hungarian text and play with the word *pari* (quits) when the pun first appears (examples (16) and (18)). *Pariban lenni* [*pari*+INESSIVE to be] means “to be quits”, so the sequence offers a double entendre with “to be in Paris”. The meaning “be quits” fits the context: Gargantua provides “free wine” for the crowd, but in exchange, Parisians need to stop staring at him and following him everywhere.
- 36 The second occurrence of the pun is when Parisians start swearing at Gargantua after he offers them his “welcome-gift”:

(19) [ils] commencerent à renier et jurer, les ungs en cholere, les aultres par rys : Carymary, carymara ! Par sainte Mamye, nous son baignez par rys ! Dont fut depuis la ville nommée Paris... (Rabelais [1996: 154-155])

(20) they began to curse and swear, *some in anger, some per ris: Abracadabra*. – By our Lady, woe is me: *Per ris* we're all awash in pee. And that is why that town is now called *Paree*. (Rabelais [2006: 258])

(21) rákezdték a fohászzkodást, szedteveteteremtettézt, ki mérgében, ki *per risum*, a tréfa kedvéért: “A jó édesanyja picspariját ennek az átkozott hugyorihugykónak! [...]” Egyszóval *per risum* lett *Paris* a város neve. (Rabelais [2015: 81-82])

[they began swearing, Gadsbodikinsing, some in anger, some *per risum*, for a laugh: “The pussparis of the good mother of this damned pissy one! [...] In brief, the city was named *Paris per risum*.]

- 37 In example (20), Screech expertly renders the following rhymes: *ris/me/ris/pee/Paree*. He attracts the reader's attention to homophony by italicizing “*per ris*” and “*Paree*”. Note that to make the pun unmistakably clear, Screech also changes the spelling of *Paris* to *Paree*. Screech manages to keep formal equivalence, although he needs to keep the French original in English and add a note that helps interpretation. The Hungarian text (example (21)) opts for translating the pun and repeating it in the swearing: “*picspari*” is a nonce compound of “*picsa*” (cunt) and “*pari*” (par/quits), as a playful euphemism for a swearword. To introduce the source text meaning “*par ris*”, I latinized the expression and inserted its Hungarian translation in the text (“*a tréfa kedvéért*”) on its first mention. The insertion of Latin seemed more natural than that of French since the scientific *lingua franca* of Rabelais' time appears on more than one occasion in the book, and also because Greek “*parrhesia*” follows shortly after this sentence. Screech's solution seems cleaner than mine, but he did not translate the pun. It is a question whether equivalence theories apply to cases when the source text is quoted in the target text instead of being translated. I chose to translate the pun, but had to compromise on both formal and denotative equivalences. As a result, both the English and the Hungarian texts lack the spontaneity of the source text; they feel slightly forced or artificial and probably give away to the expert eye the translator's hardships.

3.1.4. Repetition of the same phonemic sequence

- 38 Another instance of linguistic creativity is enumerating words that start or end in the same phoneme or phonemic sequence. In example (22), Rabelais lists four monosyllabic adjectives starting in *gr-* and three disyllabic adjectives ending in *-i* to describe the booklet containing the “*Fanfreluches antidotées*” (Antidoted Bubbles):

(22) gros, gras, grand, gris, joly, petit, moisy livret (Rabelais, *Gargantua* [1996: 56])

(23) great, grand, gross, grey, pretty little mouldy booklet (Rabelais [2006: 210])

(24) vaskos, pecsétes, zsírfoltos, poros, dohos, kicsi, de annál nagyszerűbb [...] könyvecskét (Rabelais [2015: 17])

[gross, stained, greasy, dusty, mouldy, small but all the greater booklet+ACCUSATIVE]

- 39 The English translation (example (23)) renders denotative equivalence perfectly and formal equivalence, with the exception of the adjective “little”, almost perfectly. Screech manages to preserve both the sequence *gr-* at the beginning and the ending *-y* in the adjectives as well as their mono- or disyllabic nature. English has an obvious advantage in this respect over Hungarian because a large part of its vocabulary derives from Latin and Old/Norman French. Hungarian as a non-Indo-European language has no chance to have this kind of morpho-phonemic correspondence between a series of adjectives. Moreover, since denotative equivalence with the source text cannot be fully

ignored, Hungarian adjectives synonymous with those of the original are all disyllabic if not trisyllabic. I was not able to reproduce formal equivalence with Rabelais' list of adjectives (example 24). Instead, I tried to signal the creativity of the original by choosing some adjectives with similar endings (-os being a denominal suffix in adjectives), and listing adjectives containing the same vowel sequence (o-o).

3.2. Creativity at the interface of phonology, morphology and the lexicon

- 40 The examples to be discussed here differ from those of the previous section in that they involve the creative use of productive word formation processes, often resulting in the creation of new lexemes. These lexemes are, however, nonce words: their creation is justified by and their meaning can be derived from their immediate context. The comic effect will partly be due to the repetition of the same root morpheme with different suffixes. Phonology is involved because, as the examples will show, the same sound sequence or morpheme is repeated in an enumeration. The ludicity of Rabelais' writing often comes from this kind of cumulative effect. Bonhomme refers to the first two examples as *virelangue* (tongue-twisters). The first one is a famous *virelangue* from chapter 19 of *Gargantua*, Janotus de Bragmardo's utmost, and otherwise entirely nonsensical argument to get the bells of *Notre-Dame* back from *Gargantua*:

(25) Omnis clocha clochabilis in clocherio clochando clochans clochativo clochare facit clochabiliter clochantes. (Rabelais, *Gargantua* [1996: 164])

(26) Every clochable clocha by cloching in a belfry – cloching in the clochative – makes the clochas clochably to cloche. (Rabelais [2006: 263])

(27) Omnia colompa in colomparium colompans colompant colompabiliter ex colompo quid facit colompare colompativos et archicolompatores in colompitis. (Rabelais [2015: 87])

- 41 To make fun of Bragmardo's dog-Latin, Rabelais takes the French root “*cloche*” (bell) and adds Latin endings to it, turning it into nouns, verbs, adverbs, participles (example (25)). The word formation process at work here is derivation through suffixation. He also adds three Latin words to the sentence (*omnis*, *in*, *facit*). Screech's strategy is the reverse as example (26) shows: he keeps the French root morpheme *cloth-* as the foreignizing/latinizing element and domesticates the endings, by using English bound morphemes of all kinds. He also mixes in a few, mostly grammatical, English words (*every*, *by*, *in*, *a*, *the*, *to*). In the Hungarian translation (example (27)), the root morpheme is the domesticated element with a slightly changed, latinized spelling, “*kolomp*”, meaning “cowbell”, phonetically reminiscent of “*cloche*”, is spelled *colomp*. The word endings are in Latin, as well as a few other words (*omnia*, *in*, *ex*, *quid*, *facit*, *et*). “*Archicolompator*”, a literal, dog-Latin translation of Hungarian “*főkolompos*”, “the leader of a secret, malevolent association or gang”, and “*colompitis*”, an invented disease, are my lexical creations. Given the larger context, the word “*cowbell*”, referring to the bells of the *Notre-Dame* (that *Gargantua* puts in the neck of his mare) and the insertion of “*archicolompator*”, referring to Bragmardo and other leaders of the Sorbonne, add to the irony of the situation and underline what Rabelais tries to ridicule in chapter 19. Comparing translators' strategies allows me to state that denotative equivalence is secondary, given the nonsensical nature of the argument. Both translators insisted on

formal and connotative equivalences, but they used different strategies for latinizing the sentence.

- 42 The next *virelangue* is part of Jean des Entommeures, the Monk's description in chapter 27 of *Gargantua*:

- (28) [...] depuis que le monde moynant moyna de moynerie. (Rabelais, *Gargantua* [1996: 222])
 (29) [...] since the [monking] world first monk-ed-about [with monkery...] (Rabelais [2006: 293])
 (30) [...] amióta a világon bizonyos szerzetek szerzetesnek mentek, és szerzetesrendekben szerzeteskednek (Rabelais [2015: 127])
 [...] [since in the world certain creatures became monks, and are now monking in monkeries]

- 43 Example (28) illustrates how lexical creativity is not a simple question of word formation. Rabelais uses the noun *moyne* (monk) as the root morpheme to create a nonce verb and its present participle, using a productive word formation process, suffixation. The humor of his lexical creativity arises, however, from his insertion of the nonce creations into an alliterative sequence of four lexemes. Three lexemes out of the four share the same root, *moyne*. The English translation (example (29)) does not reproduce the alliteration and the cumulative effect coming from the repetition of the same morpheme, but it recreates the nonce verb *to monk* and its participle *monking* in the target text. Hungarian being an agglutinative language, word formation is relatively easy and definitely a useful item in the translator's creative tool box. In example (30), the cumulative sound effect is further exaggerated by the fact that all derivatives of trisyllabic *szerzetes* have the *e* sound in their endings due to vowel harmony rules. Looking at my solution overflowing with *e*-s, I would probably simplify the sequence to "*amióta a világon szerzetesek szerzetesrendekben szerzeteskednek*", were there a new Hungarian edition of *Gargantua*. Nevertheless, the Hungarian translation follows the source text both for alliteration and word formation. Although the English and the Hungarian translations differ in their strategies for rendering formal equivalence, both respect denotative equivalence with the original.
- 44 Example (31) illustrates nonce words mocking people of the Sorbonne in chapter 18 of *Pantagruel*. Rabelais uses scholarly derivation to create the series, and in the last three derivatives, he also mixes up the letters of "Sorbonne". As Screech notes, "*Niborcisans*" and "*Saniborsins*" imply that theologians of the Sorbonne have no *bourses*, i.e. they do not have scholarships and/or scrotums (Rabelais [2006: 103]).

- (31) Sorbillans, Sorbonagres, Sorbonigènes, Sorbonicoles, Sorboniformes, Sorbonisecques, Niborcisans, Borsonisans, Saniborsans (Rabelais, *Pantagruel* [1996: 220])
 (32) Sorbillans, Sorbonagres, Sorbonigenes, Sorbonicoles, Sorboniseques, Niborcisans, Saniborsans (Rabelais [2006: 102-103])
 (33) szorbilánsoknak, szorbonacchusoknak, szorboniparusoknak, szorbonikulusoknak, szorboniformusoknak, szorboniszektaristáknak, noborszizánsoknak, boszornizánsoknak, szarbonizánsoknak (Rabelais [2010: 137])

- 45 Screech's translation (example (32)) keeps the original and, as mentioned above, completes it with a short explanatory note. He can probably do so as scientific jargon is very similar in English and French. The Hungarian text (example (33)) transliterates

the *s* in “Sorbonne” to *sz* [s], so it is easier for the reader to understand that the author is playing with the order of the letters in the last three derivatives. “*Boszornizáns*” is reminiscent of Hungarian “*boszorkány*” (witch), and “*szarbonizáns*”, a slightly altered version of “*szorbonizáns*”, includes the word “*szar*” (shit). Given the rather stormy relationship of Rabelais and the Sorbonne, these pejorative associations are perhaps not too excessive or far-fetched. The ambiguity of “*bourse*” (scholarship/scrotum), however, is lost in translation, since letters of the word Sorbonne had to be kept throughout the enumeration.

3.3. Morphology and the lexicon

- 46 Satirical names, monstrous compounds and other derivatives may be used to illustrate lexical creativity in which morphological processes such as compounding or derivation are at work to create new lexemes. Unlike the examples in the previous section, there is no special sound effect resulting from the repetition of the same base morpheme or alliterating sounds. Examples discussed in this section are hapax legomena, or as Munat [2016: 95] puts it, “[are] serving an impelling communicative need of the moment”. Their meanings are usually self-explanatory; if not, they can easily be recovered from the context. For all hapaxes, it could be claimed that their meanings and contexts mutually support one another.
- 47 Satirical proper names like “*Baisecul*” and “*Humevesne*” in chapters 11-13 of *Pantagruel* are examples of compounding. Screech translates them as “Bumkiss” and “Slurp-ffart”. I named them “*Fartapol*” [*far*+ACCUSATIVE+*apol* (behind+ ACCUSATIVE+[he] kisses)] and “*Phingorontau*” [*fing*+*orrontó* (fart+smeller)], using the rare and slightly outdated verbs *apol* and *orront*. When translating satirical proper names, I also tried to spell them consistently as if they were French, but when pronounced following French pronunciation rules, they give meaningful words in Hungarian. They function as riddles for the reader since they foreignize the form but domesticate the meaning.
- 48 Monstrous compounds like the imaginary book title from the Library of Saint Victor, *Antipericatametanaaparbeugedamphicribrationes merdicantium* (Rabelais, *Pantagruel* [1996: 108]) stretch word formation rules to their limits. Screech chooses to split the compound up and make it less opaque in meaning: *Discussion of Messers and Vexers: Anti, Peri, Kata, Meta, Ana, Para, Moo and Amphi* (Rabelais [2006: 42]). The Hungarian translation keeps both the Latin and the monstrosity of the original compound, but differs on the meaning, although keeping the reference to “excrements”: *A Sacroexcrementum-rendi barátok peripatologicanismergalicocantatoriuma* (Rabelais [2010: 58]), literally: The peripatologicanismergalicocantatorium of Monks of the Order of Sacroexcrementum. The English translation here favors denotative equivalence and tones down the source text by omitting the excremental connotation. The Hungarian translation emphasizes formal and connotative equivalences, and focuses less on denotative equivalence.
- 49 The last example concerning the interaction of morphology and the lexicon is a derivative noun, one of Rabelais' lexical creations, “*aubeliere*”. The child Gargantua outwits the majordomo and the lodgings-steward of a lord visiting Grandgousier's castle. Instead of showing them his father's stables, he leads them to his own room to show them his hobby-horses made out of large beams. As the embarrassed adults are leaving his room, he asks them:

- (34) Voulez vous une aubeliere ?
 – Qu'est-ce ? disent ilz.
 – Ce sont (respondit il) cinq estronciz pour vous faire une museliere.
 (Rabelais, *Gargantua* [1996: 128, 130])

50 *Aubeliere* in example (34) is derived from *aube* (bottom, anus) on the analogy of *museliere* from *museau* (snout), meaning “muzzle” (see Burrell [1974: 146]). The example clearly shows how a lexical creation emerges from “an impelling communicative need of the moment”, not intending “to fill any real or permanent naming need in the wider community of speakers” [Munat 2016: 95], and its meaning would “not be recoverable without the support of context” (Munat [2016: 95]).

- (35) ‘Would you like to have a poogumajig?’
 ‘What is that, then?’ they replied.
 ‘Five turds,’ he said, ‘to make a face-mask.’
 (36) – Adhatok még egy szép barna turhatokot? – szólt utánuk Gargantua.
 – Mi az? – kérdezték.
 – Olyan, mint a gatyapőc, csak szarból pödörintik, és az orrukon kell viselni.
 (Rabelais [2015: 64])
 [– Can I give you a nice brown spitcase? – Gargantua called after them.
 – What is that? – they asked.
 – It’s like a codpiece, but it’s twirled out of shit, and you need to wear it on your nose.]

51 The English translation (example (35)) comes up with the nonce compound *poogumajig* on the analogy of *thingamajig*. The Hungarian translation (example (36)) is also a compound, not a derivative as in the source text, made up of two nouns, *turha* (spit) and *tok* (case). *Tok* is used in other compounds as well, such as *szemüvegtok* (glasses case) or *ütőtök* (racket case). The connotation of excrement is signaled by the insertion of the adjective *barna* (brown) before *turhatok*, so it is not included in the lexical creation itself. The new lexeme acquires its meaning with Gargantua’s next line. Both translations favored connotative and formal equivalences – although choosing compounding instead of derivation – over a strict rendering of denotative equivalence.

3.4. Semantics and creativity

- 52 Another instance of lexical creativity that is very difficult, or I should say, next to impossible to render in another language is playing with polysemous words. Rabelais especially liked to use words with double meaning as a source of humor. However, the chances that a word or a phrase has the same double entendre in another language are almost nil. According to the online edition of the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, double entendre is “a word or an expression capable of two interpretations with one usually *risqué*”. Moreover, in most cases, the meaning that is called for by the context will largely reduce the translator’s options to render ambiguity, or ambiguity that is funny at the same time.
- 53 Screech’s note [2006: 103] for “*Niborsisans*” and “*Saniborsans*” in examples (31) and (32) implies that Sorbonne’s theologians lack *bourses*, i.e. scholarships and scrotums. The polysemy of “*bourse*” is impossible to render unless the target language has a similar sounding word with the exact same double entendre. Formal equivalence needs to be

kept because “*Niborsisans*” and “*Saniborsans*” appear in a list of derivatives from the word “*Sorbonne*”.

- 54 The same applies to the word “*estroncz*” in example (34). “*Estronc*” in Middle French meant both “log (of wood)” and “turd”. Given that Gargantua’s hobby-horses are made out of large beams and logs, the use of the ambiguous “*estroncz*” in his replica to the majordomo and the lodgings-steward is not innocent. The double entendre could not be rendered by either the English or the Hungarian translations (examples (35) and (36)).
- 55 One last example illustrating the loss of ambiguity in translation is the name of *Janotus de Bragmardo*, derived from “*braquemart*”, meaning “a short, thick, double-edged sword” and “penis”. Bragmardo’s character appears in chapters 18-20 of *Gargantua*; he is a somewhat demented, half-retired theologian of the Sorbonne, who is charged with getting the bells of *Notre-Dame* back from Gargantua. He makes a fool out of himself in public with his ridiculous speech interspersed with pitiful dog-Latin. His name is ambiguous because it suggests at the same time a potent warrior, representing the authority of the Sorbonne, and what English slang would simply call a “dick”. Screech does not translate his name into English, nor does he comment on its meanings. In the Hungarian translation, I opted for the meaning “male genitals” instead of “sword” and called him *Gianni de Phascalapus*, a hybrid, Latin-Italian-sounding name, in which “*Phascalapus*” hides the Hungarian word “*faszkalap*” made from *fasz* (dick)” and *kalap* (hat)), meaning “dickhead, asshole”. Even though this meaning fits the context and describes the character more accurately than “sword”, the polysemy of the original and the humor arising from the incongruity of the polysemous name and Bragmardo’s persona could not be rendered in Hungarian.

Conclusion

- 56 Before I draw any conclusions, it needs to be mentioned again that my typology and list of Rabelais’ lexical creations are not exhaustive. An all-encompassing discussion of Rabelais’ lexical creativity and its translation into Hungarian only would most likely provide enough material for a monograph. However, despite the limited number of lexical creations evoked, their analysis has provided enough evidence for some general conclusions to be drawn, at least for Rabelais’ work, a great many of which support Munat’s definition of and research on lexical creativity [2016: 95].
- 57 Although lexical creations always “stand out” of the text and function as ear-catching, eye-catching “attention seeking devices” [Lipka 2002: 189], it can be stated, in agreement with Munat [2007: 179], that they also carry a range of “stylistic or textual functions that go well beyond attention-seeking”: they help in “the construction of textual worlds”, characterization (as with Rabelais’ satirical proper names), or they also have “a purely ludic function”, such as playing with phonemes or sound sequences “for purposes of amusement”.
- 58 The ludic effect of lexical creations often comes from their interaction with their immediate or broader context, so another important outcome of the present analysis is that lexical creativity cannot be limited to word level. Dressler & Tumfart [2017: 161] came to a similar conclusion analyzing poetic occasionalisms on large electronic corpora: occasionalisms are motivated by both the immediate cotext and the broader

context, and “the distance between the motivating context and the occasionalism is usually very small”.

- 59 Context provides both the textual and the semantic opportunity for lexical creations to emerge, so the approach to their interpretation should be global and the scope of the analysis not restricted to one linguistic subfield, for instance, morphology. Context might also explain their function and specific location in the text, especially when the lexeme itself is not a lexical creation *per se*. Indeed, the comic effect might result from the accumulation of similar-sounding and similar-looking lexemes (as in example (22)). Thus, lexical creations gain full meaning and achieve their pragmatic and stylistic goal when perceived and interpreted together within their context. Context might mean interaction with surrounding lexemes or interaction with larger units of the text (sentence, paragraph, chapter or even the author's general message).
- 60 It is also clear from the examples that there are no instances of lexical creativity where only one level of linguistic analysis is involved. Pragmatics, more specifically, the pragmatic motivation of a lexical creation and its role in the textual hierarchy, can be considered as a given. But, pragmatics set aside, examples showed how phonology and morphology, or morphology and semantics, were simultaneously active in lexical creativity. This is also the reason why my typology of lexical creations, imperfect as it is, does not follow Bonhomme's separation of the signifier and the signified; literature is the consummate example of how form and meaning can work together to create something that exceeds both of them, that is, art.
- 61 Surprisingly enough, a great number of Rabelais' puns were phonologically motivated. Poix [2018: 13] comes to a similar conclusion concerning juvenile literature. Interverting phonemes across word boundaries, changing the order of syllables within lexemes (verlanization) or creating special sonorice effects through accumulation of similar-sounding words contribute a great deal to lexical creativity in Rabelais' works. These phonologically motivated ludic effects usually take place on the phonology-morphology interface and exceed word boundaries (see 3.1.1.-3.1.4.). They include spoonerisms (examples (1-3)), changing the meaning of a phrase by changing one phoneme in its phonemic sequence (examples (7-9)), ludic fake etymologies based on the morphological resegmentation of a lexeme (examples (10-18)), or the repetition of the same sound sequence to create a ludic effect (examples (22-24)).
- 62 As for word formation processes, examples of both derivation and compounding were found. Similarly to Munat's conclusion on lexical creativity in a corpus of science fiction and juvenile literature, novel formations using classic word formation processes such as derivation and compounding are “mostly rule-governed, giving no evidence of a net demarcation between productivity and creativity” [Munat 2007: 180]. As Munat claims for her corpus of science fiction, “the recombination or manipulation of existing morphemes and/or lexical units [...] constitutes the most frequent ‘creative’ patterns”, i.e. “the juxtaposition of existing words to form new compounds” or a combination of “unfamiliar bases combined with familiar affixes” [Munat 2007: 179], or a familiar base with unfamiliar affixes as shown in example (25). Derivation was used by Rabelais in two *virelangues*: the first one combining a French root with Latin suffixes and endings (examples (25-57)), the second deriving new lexemes from an existing French noun (examples (28-30)). The ludic effect was due not to the novelty of the word formation technique in itself but to the incongruity of the French root and the foreign endings in the first case, and to a cumulative sound effect and the novelty of derivatives never

seen before, in the second. Another interesting example of derivation was illustrated in examples (31-33), where verlanized versions of the word “*Sorbonne*” were given pejorative and/or scholarly suffixes. Compounding was used in a unique way in monstrous compounds (3.3.) where the limits of compounding are pushed to extremes, providing a humorous effect along with the semantism of the compounded morphemes.

- 63 As for the translation of lexical creations in English and Hungarian, one general conclusion is that context can set the interpretative baseline for the translator. Translators can then decide which kind of equivalence – denotative, connotative or formal – they want or are able to emphasize and which one(s) they need to compromise on. Their raw material, i.e. the target language, will also restrict their choices. Formal equivalence in general is one of the hardest to achieve.
- 64 Genetic or evolutionary similarities between French and English sometimes facilitated the English translation and helped Screech preserve formal equivalence with the original. But more often, Screech opted for foreignization and inserted French into the English text, completing it with a translation in parentheses or a note preceding the chapter. I tried to domesticate my translation as well as I could, partly in response to an interiorized pressure coming from Hungarian translation practice and tradition, which resulted in a great number of compromises regarding all three kinds of equivalences.
- 65 Screech's foreignizing solutions seem simpler and cleaner than mine. The foreignizing elements, such as the inclusion of French in the English text, “make the translator ‘visible’” and “make the readers realize they are reading a translation of a work from a foreign culture” [Munday 2016: 226]. However, one might wonder how readers perceive humor that is explained in a footnote or humor that comes through a foreign language. With this Achilles heel in mind, I would defend the domestication of lexical creations, even if it involves a series of compromises and changing the procedure used in the source text to recreate the pun in the target text (changing a spoonerism into a rhyming, alliterating sequence, for example). The primacy of connotation over meaning seems corroborated by Poix's conclusion concerning occasionalisms in children's literature. Indeed, Poix [2018: 19] claims the effect of literary lexical creations is more important than “a clear referent to the signifier” so the reader can “be surprised” or “amused”. Humor should feel natural and spontaneous and should be relatively easily perceived and decoded by the reader.
- 66 With context setting the baseline for translation, polysemous words tend to lose their ambiguity because the translator will adopt a meaning that suits the context, and it is very rare that a target-text word has the same polysemy as its source-text equivalent. As far as denotative equivalence is concerned, ambiguity and humor conveyed by polysemy is one of the imperceptible losses of translations, as shown with examples in 3.4.).
- 67 François Rabelais' work in general is a cornucopia of humorous lexical creations. Playing with language is central to his style as a writer, he uses language as a raw material, manipulating it in unexpected ways, inventing new forms to provoke laughter. Lexical creations are an integral part of his humanist vision of the world, a joyful celebration of knowledge, science and the creative potential and freedom of the mind. The freedom and erudition with which Rabelais handles language is a most liberating and inspiring experience for the translator as well. The way Rabelais stretches the limits of language also puts his translators' professional limits to the test,

pressing them to engage with their native language in new ways and from new perspectives.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

RABELAIS François, 1996 (1973), *Pantagruel. Texte original et translation en français moderne*, translated from the Middle French by DEMERSON Guy, Paris: Seuil.

RABELAIS François, 1996 (1973), *Gargantua. Texte original et translation en français moderne*, translated from the Middle French by DEMERSON Guy, Paris: Seuil.

RABELAIS François, 2006, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, translated from the French by SCREECH Michael Andrew, London: Penguin Classics.

RABELAIS François, 2010, *Pantagruel*, translated from the French by GULYÁS Adrienn, Budapest: Osiris Kiadó.

RABELAIS François, 2015, *Gargantua*, translated from the French by GULYÁS Adrienn, Budapest: Osiris Kiadó.

Secondary sources

BAUER Laurie, 2004, *A Glossary of Morphology*, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

BAGASHEVA Alexandra & STAMENOV Christo, 2013, "The Ludic Aspect of Lexical Inventiveness", *Quaderns de Filologia: Estudis Lingüístics*, vol. 18, 71-82.

BAKER Mona, 2018 (1992), *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, 3rd ed., London/New York: Routledge.

BALDI Philip & DAWAR Chantal, 2000, "Creative Processes", in BOOIJ Geert, LEHMANN Christian & MUGDAN Joachim in collaboration with KESSELHEIM Wolfgang & SKOPETAS Stavros (Eds.), *Morphologie/Morphology. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Flexion und Wortbildung/An International Handbook on Inflection and Word-Formation*, vol. 1, Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 963-972.

BONHOMME Marc, 2018, "Entre créativité et motivation. Les jeux de mots chez Rabelais", in FULL Bettina & LECOLLE Michelle (Eds.), *Jeux de mots et créativité : Langue(s), discours et littérature*, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 43-68.

BURRELL Paul, 1974, "Aubeliere: A Note on Rabelais's Vocabulary", *Études Rabelaisiennes*, XI, Geneva: Droz, 145-146.

DRESSLER Wolfgang U. & TUMFART Barbara, 2017, "New Corpus-Linguistic Approaches to the Investigation of Poetic Occasionalisms: The Case of Johann Nepomuk Nestroy", *Yearbook of the Poznan Linguistic Meeting*, 3(1), De Gruyter Open, 155-166.

HERNÁNDEZ Nahir Y., 2004, *L'héritage de Rabelais dans le vocabulaire du français actuel à la lumière de Gargantua et de Pantagruel*, mémoire de maîtrise, Linguistique, Chicoutimi: Université du Québec.

- KOLLER Werner, 1989, "Equivalence in Translation Theory", translated from the German by CHESTERMAN Andrew, in CHESTERMAN Andrew (Ed.), *Readings in Translation Theory*, Helsinki: Finn Lectura, 99-104.
- KOLLER Werner, 1995, "The Concept of Equivalence and the Object of Translation Studies", *Target*, 7:2, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 191-222.
- LEAL Alice, 2012, "Equivalence", in GAMBIER Yves & van DOORSLAER Luc (Eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, vol. 3, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 39-46.
- LIPKA Leonhard, 2002, *English Lexicology: Lexical Structure, Word Semantics and Word Formation*, Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- MUNAT Judith, 2007, "Lexical Creativity as a Marker of Style in Science Fiction and Children's Literature", in MUNAT Judith (Ed.), *Lexical Creativity, Texts and Contexts*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 163-182.
- MUNAT Judith, 2016, "Lexical Creativity", in JONES Rodney H. (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Creativity*, London/New York: Routledge, 92-106.
- MUNDAY Jeremy, 2016 (2001), *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Applications*, 4th ed., London/New York: Routledge.
- RONNEBERGER-SIBOLD Elke, 2010, "Word Creation. Definition – Function – Typology", in RAINER Franz, DRESSLER Wolfgang U., KASTOVSKY Dieter & LUSCHÜTZKY Hans Christian (Eds.), *Variation and Change in Morphology, Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, vol. 310, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 201-216, <https://benjamins.com/catalog/cilt.310.11ron>
- POIX Cécile, 2018, "Neology in Children's Literature: A typology of Occasionalisms", *Lexis* 12: *Lexical and Semantic Neology in English*.
- SCHLEIERMACHER Friedrich, 1813/2012, "On the Different Methods of Translating", in VENUTI Lawrence (Ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., London/New York: Routledge, 43-63.
- VENUTI Lawrence, 1998, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*, London/New York: Routledge.
- VENUTI Lawrence, 2008 (1995), *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2nd ed., London/New York: Routledge.
- ZWICKY Arnold M. & PULLUM Geoffrey K., 1987, "Plain Morphology and Expressive Morphology", in ASKE Jon, BEERY Natasha, MICHAELIS Laura & FILIP Hana (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society; General Session and Parasession on Grammar and Cognition*, Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society, 330-340.

NOTES

1. Italics mine.
2. Italics mine in 18.

ABSTRACTS

This article focuses on lexical creativity and humor in François Rabelais' *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* and their translations into English and Hungarian. The theoretical section explores and defines the linguistic concept of "lexical creativity" and Koller's notion of "equivalence" in translation theory. In the analysis, lexical creations are categorized according to levels of linguistic analysis involved in their production. A systematic contrastive approach is then applied to their translations in order to evaluate the translators' strategies to render creativity and humor in their respective target languages.

Cet article traite de la créativité lexicale dans *Pantagruel* et *Gargantua* de François Rabelais et des possibilités de la traduire en anglais et en hongrois. Dans la partie théorique, nous explorons et nous définissons le concept linguistique de « création lexicale » et la notion traductologique d'« équivalence » de Koller. Dans la partie consacrée à l'analyse, les créations lexicales sont regroupées selon les niveaux de l'analyse linguistique impliqués dans leur production. Une approche contrastive nous permettra d'évaluer la stratégie du traducteur anglais et de la traductrice hongroise pour rendre la créativité et l'humour du texte-source dans les textes-cibles respectifs.

INDEX

Keywords: lexical creativity, typology, equivalence, literary translation, Rabelais, humor

Mots-clés: créativité lexicale, typologie, équivalence, traduction littéraire, Rabelais, humour

AUTHOR

ADRIENN GULYÁS

Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Hungary
gulyas.adrienn@kre.hu