

The Fuss about the Pooh On Two Polish Translations of a Story about a Little Bear

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Abstract: *Winnie-the-Pooh*, a literary work published by Alan Alexander Milne in 1926, has been appreciated by readers worldwide for nearly a century. The story about a little bear and his companions, it originally conquered the hearts of readers in the book version, then became one of Disney's best adaptations, one that has never been forgotten by its audience. Thanks to its many translations, *Winnie-the-Pooh* has become known all around the world. The story is rather difficult to translate, for Milne demonstrated great creativity in naming his characters and various places. The text contains many ambiguous expressions, and the majority of the dialogues are characterized by the presence of many intentional language errors made with the aim of amusing the reader. Various neologisms, metaplasms and onomatopoeias serve as names of characters. The name of the eponymous bear, "Winnie-the-Pooh," serves as a good example of the difficulty of translation, for *Winnie*, a diminutive form of *Winifred*, is a female name, whereas the bear is male. The *Pooh* part has also caused many problems for numerous translators. There are two Polish translations of the story. In 1938 Irena Tuwim published a translation entitled *Kubuś Puchatek* that Polish readers immediately fell in love with. In 1986 Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska published her translation of the story, *Fredzia Phi-Phi*. The second translation attracted many negative comments and contemptuous reactions. Many readers disliked *Fredzia Phi-Phi*, as it was seen as a crime against the excellent first translation – which, however, happened to contain many mistakes and strayed far from the original text. This article deals with an analysis of both Polish translations of selected names and words from *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

Keywords: translation, translation techniques, equivalency, adaptation, Winnie-the-Pooh, retranslation.

The story about a little bear and his friends, brought to life by Alan Alexander Milne in 1926, is a book for children and their parents that achieved great success and has been translated into many languages, including Latin and Esperanto. *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and its sequel *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928) have been enjoyed by children for nearly a century. In 1960s the Walt Disney Company obtained all rights to the stories written by Milne. From that point on, the little bear in a red shirt, carrying a jar of honey, acquired a symbolic status; his image is often used in the manufacture of various items for children such as games, toys, clothes, school supplies, cosmetics, and even food. In other words, Pooh is everywhere, but it is worth emphasizing that this is not exactly the same bear created by Milne as the book's protagonist. His companions have also undergone some changes at Disney's hands. Many young readers do not realize that Pooh did not use to wear a red shirt, as he existed only in black and white drawings.

For Polish readers, *Winnie-the-Pooh* achieved notable success shortly after its publication. It was due to Tuwim's excellent Polish translation that Pooh became one of the favourite characters of children in Poland. Tuwim, in her translation entitled *Kubuś Puchatek* (1938), had a fairly determined goal: *Winnie-the-Pooh* was to be domesticated and assimilated as much as possible into the Polish language and culture for the benefit of young readers. Following her initial conception, Tuwim implemented many effective measures that resulted in the creation of a favourable translation. Some characters were given new names, varying from their original counterparts. The language became oversimplified; some fragments from the text were omitted and new fragments added.

Nevertheless, the resulting translation was assimilated into Polish culture to such an extent that when another Polish translation appeared, one much closer to the original, Polish readers were unable to accept it. In 1986 Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska published the second Polish translation of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, entitled *Fredzia Phi-Phi*. This translation was the antithesis of Tuwim's, but at the same time much more faithful to the original. The publication of Adamczyk-Garbowska's translation provoked a variety of reactions among Polish readers as well as theorists of translation (see Lem, 1992; Stiller, 1991). It was wondered how the adorable name *Kubuś Puchatek*, so perfectly suited to the little bear, could have been transformed into the awkward and strange-sounding *Fredzia Phi-Phi*. It seemed that *Fredzia Phi-Phi* and his creator Adamczyk-Garbowska would have to fight for the understanding and approval of readers. Adamczyk-Garbowska was often severely criticised. Stanisław Lem (1992, pp. 11–14) made some controversial comments about her work; as Lem claimed, Tuwim's elegant and easy-to-read text had been "castrated" by Adamczyk-Garbowska. Further on, Lem (*ibid.*) indicated that cases in which a translation can be considered superior to the original are extremely rare, with Tuwim's *Kubuś Puchatek* serving as a great example. Lem (*ibid.*) expressed his disapproval of Adamczyk-Garbowska's work in unusually harsh terms: "(...) I would murder this lady who transformed the name Kubuś Puchatek into Fredzia Phi-Phi with a dull knife for what she has done with this book (...)." Robert Stiller (199, pp. 134–160) also commented contemptuously on the second Polish translation: according to him, Adamczyk-Garbowska "(...) made a fool of herself (...)" when she decided to publish her version. Adamczyk-Garbowska supplied the translation with a preface in which she explained the reasons she decided to take the risk of publishing her work. She expressed her attitude in the very first sentence of the preface ([1986] 1990, p. 5): "I am extremely nervous about giving *Fredzia Phi-Phi* to readers." Adamczyk-Garbowska knew that *Fredzia Phi-Phi* would spark a great deal of controversy, which nevertheless did not prevent her from showing the book to the public. Adamczyk-Garbowska (*ibid.*) indicated:

(...) *Kubuś Puchatek* substantially differs from its English precursor. Irena Tuwim wanted to make the original text familiar to the reader, so she transformed it so as to suit it to the Polish canon of children's literature. The style

of the text was changed. In the Polish text there are many hypocorisms and diminutives not present in the original text. The characters speak childish language; some fragments were omitted and new ones added. Many ambiguous elements became unambiguous. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* is a book addressed not only to children but also to adults. *Kubuś Puchatek* should be considered as an adaptation, not a translation in the full sense of the word (...).

Adamczyk-Garbowska decided to share her interpretation of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, because in her opinion Tuwim's *Kubuś Puchatek* differed greatly from the original. In fact, Adamczyk-Garbowska, who was to become the target of many unpleasant comments and was misunderstood by the great majority of readers, was the first to carefully analyse Tuwim's translation (Woźniak, 2012, pp. 115–134). Her analysis proved that *Kubuś Puchatek* contained many mistakes and oversimplifications: "(...) this best-known and beloved translation by Irena Tuwim is at the same time full of mistakes that mainly result from insufficient knowledge of the English language (...)" (*ibid.*). Tuwim worked with the intention of producing a good translation, introducing many changes that, in the final evaluation, paid off. Translation is a process characterized by considerable uncertainty. There are no given guidelines on how to translate or on how to evaluate the results. These two versions of *Winnie-the-Pooh* represent opposing approaches to translation. It is worth analyzing what translation techniques were applied by the translators, both of whom worked with definite goals.

In *Winnie-the-Pooh*, some of the characters have interesting names, as in the case of the main character, Pooh. Names are often difficult to translate if they have no equivalents in the target language. It was no challenge to translate the name *Rabbit*, which has its recognized equivalent in Polish, *Królik*; the name appeared in both Polish translations in this form. The following table presents certain selected names of characters and places from the book *Winnie-the-Pooh* and their counterparts in both Polish translations.

Alan Alexander Milne <i>Winnie-the-Pooh</i> ([1926] 2005)	<i>Kubuś Puchatek</i> ([1938] 2006) Translation: Irena Tuwim	<i>Fredzia Phi-Phi</i> ([1986] 1990) Translation: Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska
Christopher Robin	<i>Krzyś</i>	<i>Krzysztof Robin</i>
The swan Pooh	<i>Puchatek</i>	<i>Łabędź Phi</i>
Winnie-the-	<i>Kubuś Puchatek</i>	<i>Fredzia Phi-Phi</i>

Pooh		
Piglet	<i>Prosiaczek</i>	<i>Prosiaczek</i>
Rabbit	<i>Królik</i>	<i>Królik</i>
Heffalump	<i>Słoń</i>	<i>Soń</i>
woozle	<i>łasica</i>	<i>łysica</i>
wizzle	<i>lis</i>	<i>lesica</i>
Eeyore	<i>Klapouchy</i>	<i>Ijja</i>
The Hundred Acre Wood	<i>Stumilowy Las</i>	<i>Stuakrowy Las</i>
Kanga	<i>Mama Kangurzyca</i>	<i>Mama Kanga</i>
Baby Roo	<i>Małeństwo</i>	<i>Mały Gurek</i>

Table 1.

A comparison of two Polish translations (names)

Krzyś is a diminutive of Polish *Krzysztof*, a recognised equivalent of *Christopher*. The technique of using a recognised equivalent is one of the most basic and most favoured translation techniques, often mentioned by various theorists (see Newmark 1988; Hejwowski [2004] 2009). Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 6), in her translation, omitted the second part of the name of the character, *Robin*. Krzysztof Hejwowski ([2004] 2009, pp. 76–83) enumerates omission as a translation technique, but, according to him, it is a rather unacceptable solution. Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p. 10) translated the name much more accurately: *Christopher* appeared as *Krzysztof*, an application of a recognised equivalent without any further changes. *Robin*, the second segment of the name, is transferred into Polish. Transference is a translation technique classified by Peter Newmark (1988: 81–90) and also mentioned by Hejwowski ([2004] 2009, pp. 76–83) in his set of translation techniques under the name of *reproduction*. The swan *Pooh* appears in the introduction to *Winnie-the-Pooh*, in which Milne explains to the readers the origins of the name given to the eponymous bear: “(...) you may remember that Christopher Robin once had a swan (...) and that he used to call this swan Pooh (...)” (Milne [1926] 2005). Thus the bear received its name from a previous friend of Christopher Robin. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 6) translated the name of the swan as *Puchatek*, omitting the first part. Interestingly, Tuwim (*ibid.*) added her own bit of information to the preface to *Kubuś Puchatek*: she indicated that the swan was named Pooh because it was covered with down. The Polish equivalent of *down*, i.e. the soft feathers of birds, is *puch*. By adding this information to the preface, Tuwim most likely

wanted to give readers a clue why the eponymous bear from the Polish translation has the name *Puchatek*. In the original text, the situation is utterly different; *Pooh* has nothing to do with avian down. It seems that Tuwim successfully managed the situation, but the question is whether a translator has the right to change the author's vision. Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p. 10) translated *Swan Pooh* as *Łabędź Phi*. *Łabędź* is a recognised equivalent of *swan*; the change of *Pooh* into *Phi* may be considered to be reproduction. Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p. 6), in her translator's preface, comments that in translating *Pooh* she chose the most approximate equivalent in terms of meaning and sound. At this point the meaning of the name *Pooh* is worth analysing. In her preface, Adamczyk-Garbowska (*ibid.*) informed the reader that *Pooh* in the original text stands for the sound one makes when an animal, such as a swan, does not react to one's call. In other words, *Pooh* stands for a human expression of irritation. From this perspective, *Phi* may be said to be a recognised equivalent of *Pooh*. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 6) did not translate the name of the swan *Pooh*; instead, she created a new name, utterly different from the original. The name *Winnie-the-Pooh* has already been partly explained with regard to Adamczyk-Garbowska's translation. The part requiring explanation is *Winnie*, that is, a diminutive form of the feminine name *Winifred*. The name has a Polish equivalent, *Wenefryda*, and *Fredzia* is its diminutive. In translating the name, Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p. 10) used two recognized equivalents. The problematic issue consists in the fact that, although these segments are appropriately translated, they are not euphonious in Polish, especially to the ears of very young readers.

Another obstacle to Polish readers accepting *Fredzia Phi-Phi* is the existence of the adorable name *Kubuś Puchatek*. The bear, although male – for Milne always uses the male pronoun *he* when referring to it – has a female name. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 6), in her translation, changed the female name *Winnie* into the male name *Kubuś*. *Kubuś* is a diminutive of *Jakub*, a name whose English equivalent is *James*. Such a radical change of names does not qualify as equivalency, but can be described as adaptation. By changing the names, Tuwim deprived her Polish text of the ambiguity that is considered by readers from all over the world to be a major asset of Milne's story. At the same time, she gave the bear a name that the majority of Polish readers fell in love with. *Piglet* and *Rabbit* (Milne [1926] 2005: 20) are simple names that were replaced with their equivalents in both translations: *Prosiaczek* (Tuwim [1938] 2006, p. 7, Adamczyk-Garbowska [1986] 1990: 11) and *Królik* (Tuwim [1938] 2006, p. 16, Adamczyk-Garbowska [1986] 1990: 17), respectively. *Heffalump* (Milne [1926] 2005, p. 20) is a neologism that serves as a name for a creature physically reminiscent of an elephant. The name was probably created so as to suggest a word produced by little children when trying to pronounce the word *elephant*. Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p. 23) recreated this game of letters in Polish, creating the name *Soń*, whereas the correct word is *słoń*. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 22) made no attempt to follow Milne's vision, translating the name as *Słoń*, a major simplification. The names *woozle* and *wizzle* (Milne [1926] 2005, pp. 34, 40) are metaplasms of the name *weasel*. Adamczyk-

Garbowska ([1986] 1990, pp. 33, 37) faithfully recreated the metaplasms, using the names *hysica* and *lesica*, whereas the correct Polish equivalent is *lasica*. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, pp. 33, 37) replaced the first metaplasm with the correct Polish equivalent *lasica*, the second as *lis*, which is Polish for *fox*. Repeatedly, Tuwim simplified the changes Milne had introduced for a certain purpose. *Eeyore* (Milne [1926] 2005, p. 44) is the name of the ever-sorrowful donkey; the name Milne created is an onomatopoeia, representing the sound donkeys make. Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p. 41) created an equivalent onomatopoeia in Polish: *Iijaa*. Tuwim's ([1938] 2006, p. 41) name for the donkey was most probably based on the illustrations by Ernest H. Shepard that adorn the original text. Tuwim's *Kłapouchy* – a literal English translation would be *with ears drooping* – is an excellent solution that must be regarded as an adaptation. *The Hundred Acre Wood* (Milne [1926] 2005, p. 48) is the name of the forest where all the characters live. Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p. 44) translated it accurately from the original; Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 43) changed *acres* into *miles*. Nevertheless, the two translations are very similar. *Kanga* (Milne [1926] 2005, p. 90) is a name for a female kangaroo, one of the main characters of the story, who comes to the forest with her child *Baby Roo*. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 79) transformed *Kanga* into *Mama Kangurzyca*, where the word *mama* stands for *a mother* and *kangurzyca* is the counterpart of a female kangaroo. Tuwim added the first part of the name, *mama*, which is absent from the original name. *Kanga* is an Austrian word for *kangaroo* and *Kangurzyca* may be said to be more or less equivalent. Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990: 79) transferred the name *Kanga* into Polish, but also added the *mama* part, creating the name *Mama Kanga*. In the name *Baby Roo* (Milne [1926] 2005, p. 90) the second segment *roo* is the third syllable of the word *kangaroo*. Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p.79) followed the author's vision and created the name *Maly Gurek*, in which *Gurek* derives from the Polish word *kangurek*, which stands for a small kangaroo. Adamczyk-Garbowska (*ibid.*) transformed the first part, *baby*, into the adjective *maly*, which in English means *small*. Her translation of the name may be said to be based not only on equivalency but also on synonymy, a translation technique first classified by Peter Newmark (1988, pp. 81–90). Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 79), in her translation, again demonstrated her creativity in coining names: *Baby Roo* was transformed into the adorable-sounding *Maleństwo*, which in English means *a little something*. Even though the Polish counterpart may be considered very creative and successful, it must be regarded as an example of adaptation.

The following table compares the translations of selected items from *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

Alan Alexander Milne <i>Winnie-the-Pooh</i> ([1926] 2005)	<i>Kubuś Puchatek</i> ([1938] 2006) Translation: Irena Tuwim	<i>Fredzia Phi-Phi</i> ([1986] 1990) Translation: Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska
a gun	<i>fuzja</i>	<i>strzelba</i>
condensed milk	<i>marmolada/słodka śmietanka</i>	<i>mleko skondensowane</i>
measles and buttered toast	<i>obwarzanek lub jakkolwiek bądz</i>	<i>różczyka czy grzanki z masłem</i>
bath	<i>cebrek</i>	<i>kąpiel</i>
medicine	<i>tran</i>	<i>lekarstwo</i>

Table 2.

A comparison of two Polish translations (selected items)

A *gun* (Milne [1926] 2005, p. 14) is a firearm; the Polish word *strzelba* used in Adamczyk-Garbowska's ([1986] 1990, p. 18) translation is its recognized equivalent. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 17) used the word *fuzja*, which is not often used in present-day Polish, but colloquially also means *a gun*. *Condensed milk* (Milne [1926] 2005, pp. 26, 51) and *mleko skondensowane* are equivalents and have exactly the same meaning. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, pp. 27, 47) translated the term interchangeably as *marmolada* and *słodka śmietanka*. *Marmolada* stands for English *marmalade* and *słodka śmietanka* is equivalent to *sweet cream*. It is not clear why Tuwim decided to change these terms in her translation. Presumably, in her view condensed milk was unknown to young Polish readers; marmalade and sweet cream were more familiar. From this point of view, it may be assumed that Tuwim applied the technique of using functional equivalents. The concept of functional equivalency was introduced by Eugene Nida and Charles Taber in 1969, and was later repeated and further developed by other translation theorists (see Newmark 1988 and Hejwowski [2004] 2009). The combination of the words *measles and buttered toast* is used in the text in a specific situation: "(...) for Owl, wise though he was in many ways, able to read and write and spell his own name (...) yet somehow went all to pieces over delicate words like measles and buttered toast (...)" (Milne, [1926] 2005, p. 48). The combination *measles and buttered toast* was given by Milne (*ibid.*) as an example of difficult words to spell and pronounce. In her translation, Adamczyk-Garbowska ([1986] 1990, p. 44) changed

measles into a different disease, *German measles*, as the Polish equivalent of *measles* is *odra*, which, due to its simple spelling and pronunciation, would not suit the author's vision; however, *różyczka*, or German measles, perfectly suits his intention. Here, Adamczyk-Garbowska (*ibid.*) employed the concept of dynamic equivalency. As to the expression *buttered toast*, Adamczyk-Garbowska (*ibid.*) used the recognised equivalent *grzanki z masłem*. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 44) changed the order of the elements in the expression and translated the *buttered toast* as *obwarzanek*, which in English means *a kind of a bagel*. At this point Tuwim succeeded in staying close to the author's intentions, as the word *obwarzanek* may be said to be difficult to pronounce, especially for children. The way Tuwim (*ibid.*) decided to translate *measles* is rather unusual, as she used the expression *jakkolwiek bądź*, meaning approximately *one way or another* in English. Probably, Tuwim wanted to find an expression that would suit the situation, one that would be problematic in terms of spelling and pronunciation. To some extent she was successful, but she also introduced a major change. *Bath* (Milne [1926] 2005: 106) and *kąpiel* (Adamczyk-Garbowska [1986] 1990, p. 91) are one-to-one equivalents; hence Adamczyk-Garbowska faithfully translated *bath* as *kąpiel*. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 92) used the word *ceberek*, a diminutive form of the word *ceber*, which in English means a big bucket that may serve for washing. Here again, Tuwim based her translation on one of the illustrations from the original text, in which Baby Roo is standing next to a big bucket. The interesting issue here is why Tuwim decided not to use the word *kąpiel*, which would be completely unambiguous for young readers. *Medicine* (Milne [1926] 2005, p. 106) and *lekarstwo* (Adamczyk-Garbowska [1986] 1990: 91) are also exact equivalents. Tuwim ([1938] 2006, p. 93) replaced *medicine* with the word *tran*. *Tran* is fish oil, which, at the time *Winnie-the-Pooh* was published in Poland, was commonly given every morning to children in kindergartens. It can be assumed here that Tuwim applied a functional equivalent.

Following this brief evaluation of selected names and words and both of their Polish translations, certain conclusions may be reached. Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska expended a great deal of effort to stay faithful to Milne's vision of *Winnie-the-Pooh* and tried to avoid the mistakes committed by her predecessor, Irena Tuwim, who in order to create a pleasing translation for children oversimplified her text and changed many things. The translation techniques applied by Adamczyk-Garbowska were based mainly on recognised equivalency. Where it was possible, the translator replaced English words with exact equivalents, as in the case of such words as *bath*, *gun*, *medicine*, *condensed milk*, etc. In translating the names of characters and places, Adamczyk-Garbowska always attempted to recreate the processes followed by Milne in their creation (see *Winnie the Pooh*, *Heffalump*, *Eeyore*). Tuwim, by contrast, simply adopted the majority of the names or used functional equivalents. The question is which of the two translations is superior. This issue may be considered from a different perspective: the translation performed by Tuwim is pleasing, but Adamczyk-Garbowska's is the correct one. Tuwim's version of the story cannot be considered a translation in the full sense of this concept. *Kubus Puchatek* is an adaptation of *Winnie-*

the-Pooh, and it is worth emphasising that it is an excellent adaptation. Assuming that adaptation transcends translation, Adamczyk-Garbowska's version may be defined, strictly in terms of translation, as the obvious choice between the two. *Fredzia Phi-Phi* would probably enjoy more recognition if not for the earlier *Kubuś Puchatek*, which stole the hearts of its readers and has been enjoyed ever since its publication. As a translator, Adamczyk-Garbowska did not deserve the comments that she attracted, as her aim was to give Polish readers a more faithful version of Pooh. At the close of her translator's preface, Adamczyk-Garbowska (1988) stated:

(...) in conclusion, I want to underline that it is not my intention to question the undoubted advantages of *Kubuś Puchatek*. *Fredzia Phi-Phi* and *Kubuś Puchatek* are two different characters. Nobody knows who *Winnie-the-Pooh* would prefer to be. It is possible that he would like to be someone else entirely (...).

Adamczyk-Garbowska did not create *Fredzia Phi-Phi* to impose it on readers, her sole aim was to introduce a fairly new figure and to offer readers a chance of meeting the bear in the new, more close to the original, version. Yet, her intention was not understood and provoked more negative reactions than one would expect.

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