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Yazarlar Dergide Yayımlanan Çalışmalarının

Telif Hakkına Sahiptirler

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Creativity and Style in Children's Literature Translation: Human, Neural Machine, and Artificial Intelligence Modalities of Re-Creation

Çocuk Edebiyatı Çevirisinde Yaratıcılık ve Üslup: İnsan, Makine
Çevirisi ve Yapay Zekâ Temelli Yeniden Yaratım Biçimleri

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Abstract

Authors of children's literature push the boundaries of imagination, thus creating distinctive narrative styles. Such imaginative and stylistically rich works inevitably raise questions about how creativity travels across languages and translation modalities. This study questions the act of recreation not only through human translators but also through contemporary translation technologies. Rather than assuming particular outcomes, it critically examines to what extent neural machine translation renders stylistics in children's literature and whether large language models occupy an intermediary position, potentially operating both as a mediating system and as a prompt generated creative agent. The recreative act idea of the study derives from Oittinen's dialogic approach to translating for children and combines this with Skopos theory, which views translation as a purposeful act through a functional perspective (Oittinen, 2000; Vermeer, 1989). Based on this child-centred nature of translation, it explores how literary translators, neural machine translation, and artificial intelligence transfer the distinctive style of Roald Dahl into Turkish. The corpus consists of

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The Giraffe and The Pelly and Me (1985) alongside its human, machine, and AI-assisted translations. The parallel corpus includes rhyme, rhythm and song-like structures, neologisms, onomatopoeic items, and wordplays as the most striking stylistic features of the text. Focusing on stylistic representation, creative recreation, child-centredness, and functional adequacy, the comparative qualitative analysis investigates how each modality recreates Dahl's authorial voice and oral narrative quality. Findings showed distinct differences among the three translation modalities in re-creating Dahl's style. The human translation achieves the highest creative and functional success, preserving rhyme, rhythm, and humour in line with the child-centred aim. The NMT output remained literal and rhythmically mechanical, while the AI translation, though occasionally inventive, lacked consistency. Overall, the human translator acted as a co-creator, whereas machine systems still fell short of retaining imaginative and dialogic style.

Keywords: Children's Literature Translation, Translator Creativity, Neural Machine Translation, AI-Assisted Translation, Stylistic Analysis

Öz

Çocuk edebiyatı yazarları, hayal gücünün sınırlarını zorlayarak kendilerine özgü anlatı üslupları oluştururlar. Bu yüksek hayal gücü ve zengin üslup özellikleri ile oluşturdukları eserlerde ortaya koydukları yaratıcılık, farklı dillere aktarıldıklarında yeniden yaratım biçimlerine dönüşür. Bu çalışma, yeniden yaratma eylemini yalnızca insan çevirmenler üzerinden değil, aynı zamanda güncel çeviri teknolojileri bağlamında da tartışmaktadır. Nöral makine çevirisinin çocuk edebiyatına özgü üslup unsurlarını ne ölçüde aktarabildiğini ve büyük dil modellerinin hem aracı bir sistem hem de yönlendirmeye yaratıcı çıktılar üreten 'yaratıcı özne' konumunda olup olamayacağını sorgulayan eleştirel bir yaklaşım benimsemektedir. Çalışmanın yeniden yaratım çerçevesini, Oittinen'in çocuk edebiyatı çevirisine yönelik diyalojik bakış açısı oluşturmakta ve bu bakış açısını çeviriyi erek odaklı ve amaçlı bir eylem olarak tanımlayan Skopos kuramı ile bir araya getirmektedir (Oittinen, 2000; Vermeer, 1989). Bu çocuk merkezli bakış açısı doğrultusunda, çalışma, Roald Dahl'ın özgün üslubunun Türkçeye aktarımında insan çevirmen, nöral makine çevirisi ve yapay zekânın nasıl konumlandığını incelemektedir. İncelenen metinler, *The Giraffe and The Pelly and Me* (1985) adlı çocuk hikayesi ile onun insan, makine ve yapay zekâ destekli çevirilerinden oluşmaktadır. Dahl'ın üslubunu belirgin kılan uyak, ritim ve melodik yapılar ile yeni sözcük türetimleri, yansıma sözcükler ve sözcük oyunları paralel olarak incelenmiştir. Çalışma üslup aktarımı, yaratıcı yeniden üretim, çocuk odaklılık ve işlevsel yeterlik ölçütlerini temel alarak her çeviri türünün Dahl'ın anlatıcı sesini ve sözlü/anlatısal tonunu nasıl yeniden kurduğunu nitel karşılaştırmalı analiz yöntemiyle araştırmaktadır. Bulgular, üç çeviri türü arasında belirgin farklar olduğunu göstermektedir. İnsan çevirmenin, uyak, ritim ve mizahı çocuk merkezli amaçla uyumlu biçimde koruyarak hem yaratıcı hem de işlevsel açıdan oldukça uygun bir hedef metin oluşturmuştur. Nöral makine çevirisi daha çok sözcük düzeyinde ve ritim açısından mekanik

kalırken, yapay zekâ çevirisi zaman zaman yaratıcı örnekler sunsa da tutarlılık açısından eksik göstermiştir. Genel olarak, insan çevirmen hedef metnin yaratıcısı olarak öne çıkarken, makine temelli sistemler hayal gücü ve diyalojik anlatımı tam anlamıyla yeniden kurmakta henüz yetersiz kalmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Çocuk Edebiyatı Çevirisi, Çevirmen Yaratıcılığı, Nöral Makine Çevirisi, Yapay Zekâ Destekli Çeviri, Üslup Analizi

Introduction

Today, a growing global consensus recognises that artificial intelligence technologies are rapidly reshaping practices and paradigms across numerous fields. Translation Studies has been among these fields most directly affected by the advancement of neural machine translation (NMT) systems and AI-based large language models (LLMs) and this encounter, while not entirely new, has brought new questions about creativity and the role of human translators, especially in terms of literary translations. These systems such as *Google Translate*, *Microsoft Translator* or *DeepL* can now produce grammatically accurate and relatively fluent outputs, but it remains widely discussed and criticised that they fail to capture and transfer the stylistic and/or cultural features of literary texts (Toral & Way, 2018). Further, the developments in generative AI models such as *ChatGPT*, *Gemini*, and *DeepSeek* have notably made this picture more complex: Given appropriate prompts, they can potentially offer more contextual and stylistically creative translations. Yet, their capacity for autonomous creativity remains limited to function in children's literature translation where the various stylistic features stand as the evidence of challenges in the translation process.

Scholars have long been concerned with the translation of children's literature and most of them have noted that it is not a purely linguistic task but an act of *mediation*, *recreation* and even *transmediation* (Oittinen, 2000; Shavit, 1986; Puurtinen, 1995). Children's literature is characterized by simplicity in language, moral and didactic lessons, and imaginative storytelling. In addition to these commonly noted features, the inherent ambivalence of children's literature, addressing both child and adult readers, has also been emphasized in the field, adding another layer to the translator's responsibility (Oittinen, 2000). It presents some developmental stages of the child reader such as cognitive,

emotional and linguistic issues that are expected to meet these needs of the child reader as well as the creative and imaginative qualities of the text. Therefore, a translator of children's literature must keep the playfulness, consider the cultural items or references, and simplify the complex ideas of the source text. In her child-centred approach, Riitta Oittinen frames translation as a dialogic relationship between the author, the translator and the reader, including the illustrator and the publisher (Oittinen, 2000, p. 3). This dialogic approach places the translator in the role of an active contributor to the child's reading experience and thus the translator functions not only as a mediator but as a co-creator. When viewed from a functionalist approach, this shows that the decisions of the translator should be guided by the skopos of the translation (Vermeer, 1989). Accordingly, the purpose of the translation here must be to place the child reader into the center and to present a creative, accessible and culturally mediated reading experience. Roald Dahl's children's books offer an ideal research ground to examine the child readers enjoyable reading experience. His distinct writing style includes a wide range of playful and inventive stylistic features such as rhyme, rhythm, wordplay, neologisms, humour and exaggeration. All these stylistic features pose challenges for translation that foster creative problem-solving in order to conserve Dahl's characteristic voice. Taking *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* as its primary corpus, this study compares the target text (translated into Turkish by Can Sözer) with the NMT and AI outputs of the same text in order to see how each modality represents the author's style within the frame of child-centred approach. Therefore, it aims to analyse how human, machine and AI translations represent the style of Dahl in Turkish and to explore whether these translations function to communicate with the child-reader. In line with this aim, the study seeks answers to the following questions: 1) How do the human translator, neural machine translation (NMT) and AI translations conserve the stylistic features of Roald Dahl's writing, such as rhyme, rhythm, neologisms, wordplay or humour? 2) Considering accessibility, playfulness and imagination, to what extent do these translations reflect a child-centred, dialogic approach as defined by Oittinen? 3) Do the translations present functional adequacy and

communicate with the child reader in terms of Skopos theory? By addressing these questions, the study intends to contribute to these emerging discussions of the NMT and AI assisted translation of children's literature and to see how Dahl's stylistic features are reflected in the target texts. In this way, the recreation extent of the human translator within the scope of dialogic perspective to the child reader will reveal the tendencies towards source or target orientation, as well

1. Review of The Literature

Over the past decade, artificial intelligence (AI) has impacted and transformed the field of translation studies initiating the discussions on the new tools that challenge the conventional perspectives on translatorial concepts. Neural machine translation (NMT) has emerged as one of the dominant technologies within these innovations and has replaced earlier rule-governed and statistical models. Based on deep learning architectures to process language comprehensively, now NMT systems are able to produce translations that are more fluent and coherent than the earlier models. Their products are now regarded as fluent and contextually accurate translations. However, their ability to reproduce the stylistic features of an author's voice or creative intent in children's literature raise important questions and discussions within literary translation studies. Moreover, the development of large language models (LLMs) has further complicated the views on translation. LLMs differ in their train on massive multilingual datasets and thus their ability to produce translations as part of broader language-generation tasks. Therefore, their multiplicity also raises new discussions on how they capture and produce the translations of children's literature.

Reviewing the translation studies literature, it is observed that numerous studies analyse the relation between NMT, LLM, and human translations as it is a current and widely discussed topic. These studies vary in terms of language pairs, methodologies, or the text types. For the literature review conducted in this study, particular focus was placed on comparison studies exploring the relationship between children's literature translation and translation technologies. This limitation in the scope of the review

was intended to refine the broader field of literary translation and obtain more specific findings.

Recent studies examine and compare authorial stylistics and translator creativity in human versus NMT of children's literature and they show significant differences between modalities. For example, in their stylometric analysis, Kong & Macken (2025) present a stylometric and machine learning analysis of human, neural machine translation (NMT), and large language model (LLM) translations of '*Peter Pan*' into Chinese and focus on generic linguistic and creative-text features. The authors conclude that LLMs show potential for children's literature translation but still fall short of human creativity, emphasizing the need for multimodal evaluation that integrates qualitative analysis. The study advances quantitative stylistic assessment of literary MT yet is limited by its single-text corpus and lack of interpretive depth. As another example, in their study Aşkın & Balkul (2022) compare human and NMT translations and make a descriptive evaluation of linguistic transfer, context, and the translation quality. The children's story '*Bu Kış Kimse Üşümeyecek*' analysed in their study employs a simple and direct style, unlike the linguistic density of poetry or period fiction. Findings show that *Google Translate* can produce grammatically acceptable outputs for simple and child-oriented texts but struggles with idiomatic expressions, stylistic nuances, and internal lexical consistency. Unlike the human translator, NMT fails to consider the target reader's age, narrative tone, and cultural context, often defaulting to literal and gendered renderings of characters. Despite these shortcomings, the authors argue that NMT tools may become increasingly feasible for children's literature with further system training and human post-editing. On the other hand, researches comparing human and AI translations of children's literature reveals substantial differences in the handling of creative linguistic elements. AI systems continue to struggle with humour, wordplay, and stylistic features that are central to the genre's appeal. Doan (2025) compares human and AI literary translations of David Walliams's *Awful Auntie* into Vietnamese, focusing on stylistic fidelity through the principle of elegance. The study evaluates Gemini 2.0 Flash's performance

against professional translator in rendering assonance, consonance, neologisms, and idiomatic expressions, key stylistic devices in children's humorous literature. Using qualitative comparative analysis, findings reveal that while Gemini achieves literal accuracy, it fails to reproduce phonological playfulness, idiomatic naturalness, and cultural resonance. AI translations often sound mechanical or contextually inconsistent, lacking rhythm and humour. In contrast, the human translator demonstrates creativity and cultural adaptation, coining Vietnamese neologisms and idiomatic expressions that maintain humour and rhythm. The study concludes that AI lacks interpretive and stylistic depth for literary translation and should remain a complementary tool rather than a replacement for human translators. Similarly, Chen (2024) explores the use of deep learning for translating children's picture books, combining neural machine translation (NMT) with image recognition to integrate visual and textual elements. Using an attention-based model and user surveys with teachers, parents, and children, the study finds that deep learning improves translation efficiency and fluency but still struggles to preserve the imaginative tone, emotional nuance, and child-oriented style of the originals. While most participants expressed moderate satisfaction with the results, human translations remained superior in creativity and contextual adaptation. Chen (2024) concludes that combining AI translation with human post-editing and focusing on reader-oriented quality can improve future applications.

While existing studies agree that human translators surpass NMT or AI models in stylistic creativity, they differ in evaluating how closely LLMs approximate human sensibility, highlighting the need for comparative analyses that unite dialogic and functional perspectives.

2. Theoretical Framework

Children's literature translation has long been recognised as a distinct and evolving field within Translation Studies. Over the years, various perspectives have emerged in the field and scholars like Göte Klingberg (1986), Zohar Shavit (1986), and Tiina Puurtinen (1995) have led the discussions focusing on the sensitivity to the child reader's cultural and cognitive world.

Klingberg's concept of the degree of adaptation suggests that translators should adjust linguistic and cultural references to align with children's experiential and interpretive abilities (Klingberg, 1986, pp.17-18). Shavit's polysystemic view situates children's literature within broader literary and social norms, highlighting how translators operate under cultural expectations of what is regarded as suitable for young audiences (Shavit, 1986). Puurtinen, on the other hand, draws attention to readability which involves the rhythmic and syntactic fluency that reinforces a child's interaction and enjoyment (1995).

Riitta Oittinen (2000) further approaches to translation of children's literature and sees children and their reading experience as above everything else. Thus, she distinguishes between *translating for children* and translating children's literature, the former also being the title of her book. She argues that children's literature translation cannot be an isolated act, and she claims that translators 'enter into a dialogic relationship that ultimately involves readers, the author, the illustrator, the translator and the publisher' (Oittinen, 2000, p. 3). In this dialogic view, the translator becomes a co-creator who participates in shaping the text for a new audience. As she notes, translation is always based on the translator's reading experience and on a dialogic *transaction* between the reader and the book;

"In a dialogic situation, a translator reads and writes her/his reading in another language for her/his future audience in another culture. Translation is always based on the translator's reading experience, on the dialogic transaction between the reader and the (author of the) book."
(Oittinen, 2000, p.25)

According to Oittinen (2000), translation must be aligned with some of the developmental issues such as linguistic, cognitive and emotional stages of children. She argues that the children's literature is designed to be read aloud, performed and shared. These features lead translators to consider stylistic effects in the target language, such as rhythm, rhyme, repetition, chants, or playful nonsense words. Children react to humour through laughter or by recognising sound play. The recreative act of translators therefore entails anticipating potential child-reader

reactions and maintaining an imagined dialogic engagement with the child throughout the translation process.

While Oittinen's dialogism explores how translators interact with their audience, Hans J. Vermeer's (1989) Skopos theory addresses why translators make particular creative choices. According to this theory, the widely accepted argument is that every translation is guided by its purpose (skopos) within the target culture. In the context of children's literature, this purpose is to entertain, educate, and emotionally engage young readers while remaining faithful to the author's communicative intent. In this sense, Skopos theory focuses on functional adequacy which can be regarded as the successful fulfilment of the translation's communicative aim while Oittinen's dialogism highlights the relational and co-creative processes through which this aim is achieved. Together, dialogism and Skopos theory align on a shared view of translation as a purposeful, creative, and relational act. In children's literature, such acts preserve the emotional power and rhythmic texture of the original. In this study, the combined framework of child-centred dialogism and functional adequacy provides the conceptual foundation for analysing how different translation modalities (human, neural machine, and artificial intelligence) recreate the stylistic essence of Roald Dahl. This theoretical orientation positions creativity not merely as an evaluative criterion but as a key indicator of dialogic interaction and functional success in transferring Dahl's imaginative voice into Turkish for young audiences.

2.1. Roald Dahl and His Distinctive Authorial Stylistic

Roald Dahl (1916-1990) is a British author mostly known for his short stories of children's literature along with his other writings for adults. He still holds a notable place in the field because of his imaginative storylines and his distinctive authorial style as well. In his works, he mostly employs various stylistic features such as linguistic invention, rhythmic prose, neologisms and humour all of which compose his linguistic playfulness. For example, in order to interact his child reader, he coined some words such as 'snozzcumbers', 'whizzpopping' and 'frobscottle' in *The BFG* (1982) which are humorous and sensory. According to O'Sullivan (2013),

such invented vocabulary directs children to interact and participate in a 'linguistic playground' and thus they learn meanings from rhythm, sound, and imagination rather than formal definitions of dictionaries. Similarly, in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), combining everyday words with playful exaggerations, Dahl invents another language with different vocabulary such as 'Everlasting Gobstoppers' or 'Hair Toffee' and in this way creates humour and curiosity.

The use of rhyme, rhythm and song-like structures is another characteristics of his style. In his prose narrative, he combines oral storytelling traditions with playful poetic passages. For example, in *James and the Giant Peach* (1961), the insect characters begin to sing in rhyme, in this way, the tone and atmosphere change and it deepens the sense of wonder. Along with these characteristics, Dahl's use of humour and exaggeration dominates the stylistic features of his writings as well. In order to criticize authority figures or cruel adults, he employs hyperbole and comic violence. The character Miss Trunchbull in *Matilda* (1988) is a notable example to see this stylistic tendency. Dahl creates this female character with exaggerated physical strength and cruelty who throws children across the playground by their hair. It is also likely to observe the example of many similar characters in his other stories. Moreover, Dahl's distinctive style appears to combine the ordinary and the extraordinary in order to make the child reader wonder and think, hence, he situates fantastical events into ordinary settings (e.g. a giant peach floating across the ocean, a young girl discovering telekinetic power or a chocolate factory hidden in a city.)

Dahl's *The Giraffe, the Pelly and Me* blends fantasy, adventure, and musical playfulness within a child-centred imaginative world. The narrative revolves around a boy's encounter with a fantastical trio of animal window cleaners, where friendship, curiosity, and wish-fulfilment form the recurring thematic isotopy, reinforced through rhythmic language, humorous exaggeration, and inventive sound play.

Stylistically, *The Giraffe, the Pelly and Me* exemplifies Dahl's distinctive narrative voice through its rhythmic flow, playful

rhymes, and song-like passages rooted in oral storytelling traditions. The alternation between prose and verse provides a lively tempo that invites child readers' participation and enhances the sense of play. Dahl's linguistic inventiveness emerges through neologisms, phonetic play, and onomatopoeic expressions that fills the text with musicality and humour. His use of exaggeration, vivid description, and direct dialogue establishes an intimate, conversational tone that draws children into a shared imaginative experience. These stylistic features make the story a particularly rich text for examining creativity, rhythm, and performative language in translation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, comparative research design to investigate how stylistic creativity in children's literature is re-created across human translation, neural machine translation (NMT), and large language model (LLM) output. The design prioritises interpretive depth and functional understanding rather than quantitative measurement, treating translation as a creative and purposeful act shaped by narrative style, reader engagement, and communicative intent.

Guided by Oittinen's (2000) child-centred dialogic approach and Vermeer's (1989) Skopos theory, the research conceptualises translation as an interactional and goal-oriented process. Creativity is understood as the translator's ability to sustain playful, rhythmic, and imaginative language while addressing the child reader. Accordingly, the study focuses on stylistic features such as rhyme, rhythm, neologisms, sound play, humour, and exaggeration that characterise Dahl's narrative voice and appeal to child audiences. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select stylistically marked units from Dahl's *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* and its Turkish translation. Rather than sampling fixed portions of text, excerpts were selected based on stylistic integrity, ensuring that each represents a complete creative unit (e.g., rhymed stanza, interactive dialogue, lexical invention). This approach supports systematic comparison while maintaining fidelity to the text's stylistic design.

The design integrates two complementary analytical layers: (1) category-building to identify salient stylistic features, and (2) comparative stylistic evaluation to observe how these features are re-articulated across the three translation modalities. This structure aligns with qualitative content analysis principles while extending them to literary translation and creativity research. Through this approach, the study seeks to reveal how human and AI-based systems differently negotiate poetic playfulness, reader interaction, and purpose-driven stylistic choices in children's literature translation.

3.2. Data Collection

The study followed a qualitative purposive sampling strategy aimed at identifying passages that could most clearly exemplify Dahl's stylistic creativity. The length of each excerpt varied according to the integrity of the stylistic unit; it depended on whether the text featured a rhymed stanza, a dialogue exchange, or a descriptive passage. A delimited and balanced set of stylistically significant excerpts was selected, representing rhyme, rhythm, and song-like structures as well as neologisms, onomatopoeic items, and wordplays. Selection was based on the inclusion rule that each excerpt must display at least one stylistic marker (e.g., rhyme, repetition, invented word, or humorous exaggeration) forming a complete stylistic unit. Excerpts that lacked these features or depended on illustration-based context were excluded to ensure textual integrity and analytic consistency.

This flexible yet systematic approach enabled meaningful cross-modal comparison while ensuring that every selected instance contributed functionally to the narrative's stylistic and imaginative design. In the study, creativity functioned as the mediating force to observe how each modality recreated or sustained the author's playfulness. The decisions of the human translator were described as acts of creative adaptation and co-authorship, whereas NMT and LLM outputs were examined in relation to their ability to reproduce that creative re-creation.

To enhance methodological transparency, a coding protocol was developed before analysis. Each excerpt was first annotated manually in a separate Excel sheet containing the following

metadata: page number, stylistic features, narrative function, and excerpt type (dialogue, stanza, description). A separate column listed the three translations (HT, NMT, and LLM) for parallel comparison. Accordingly, *DeepL* was used to represent the NMT modality as it is among the most advanced and publicly available systems, and *ChatGPT (GPT-5)* was used to represent AI-based LLM translation. All translations were generated without post-editing to preserve authenticity, and excerpts were stored and labelled using identifiers such as R-series (rhythmic group) and N-series (neologism group) for traceability and consistency.

The AI translations were produced through a creative and theory-informed prompt designed to familiarise the model with Oittinen's child-centred, dialogic approach and Vermeer's Skopos theory. Before the translation process began, the model was introduced to the specific context of translating for children and to the distinctive stylistic features of Dahl's writing, such as his playful tone, rhythmic phrasing, and imaginative narration. To ensure that the model's engagement relied on contextual reconstruction rather than direct retrieval, it was asked whether it had prior access to the text. This procedure served as a theoretical reminder and directed the model's translation process toward child-oriented and functionally aware decisions. Following this stage, *ChatGPT* translated the selected excerpts according to Oittinen's dialogic and child-centred principles, while *DeepL* translated the entire text automatically, from which the same excerpts were extracted. All NMT and AI outputs were collected without post-editing to preserve the authenticity of each system's generative performance.

3.3. Data Analysis

The dataset comprised the selected excerpts that include rhyme, rhythm, neologisms, wordplay, sound play, onomatopoeia, and moments of humour or exaggeration. The analysis centred on stylistic representation, creative re-creation, child-centredness, and functional adequacy within the dialogic and functional frameworks. The analytical procedure consisted of two stages. First, a qualitative category-building phase was conducted to identify and label stylistic patterns such as rhyme, repetition, neologism, and onomatopoeia. The identification of neologisms

and onomatopoeic forms followed linguistic criteria grounded in lexical innovation and sound symbolism studies. Items were cross-checked against monolingual dictionaries (OED / TDK) to verify their non-existence in standard lexicons and confirm their status as creative coinages or sound-imitative expressions. This stage focused on determining what stylistic elements appear in the source text. In the second stage, a comparative stylistic analysis was carried out to examine how these patterns were rendered across the three modalities (HT, NMT, and LLM), evaluating the extent to which each modality recreated them functionally and creatively. Each excerpt and its corresponding translations were coded according to stylistic descriptors such as rhythmic equivalence, lexical inventiveness, and humorous tone, and then compared across modalities.

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In the coding stage, each excerpt and its translations were analysed with reference to five main stylistic descriptors. *Rhythmic equivalence* referred to the reproduction of sound, rhyme, or rhythm in the target language, typically evidenced through repetition, metrical patterns, or line segmentation. *Lexical inventiveness* captured instances of creative coinage, including neologisms, playful compounds, and sound-based word formations, as seen in examples such as 'Nefislefis' or 'Çiğnembükler'. *Humorous tone* denoted exaggerated, playful, or ironic expressions designed to amuse the child reader, which often appeared in forms such as wordplay, misinterpretation, or comedic interjections. *Functional adequacy* assessed whether the translation maintained the communicative purpose of the source text (particularly child-centred humour, rhythmic quality, and readability) through accessible syntax and dialogic cues. Finally, *child-centredness* focused on the translator's ability to address and engage the child reader, preserving playfulness, empathy, and interactive linguistic elements such as questions, imperatives, and direct reader address.

To enhance reliability, two independent coders reviewed a subset of the data for consistency, and minor disagreements were resolved through discussion. While formal inter-rater reliability statistics were not computed due to the small corpus size,

theoretical validation was ensured by cross-checking examples against the theoretical frameworks proposed by Oittinen (2000) and Vermeer (1989). Elements beyond the textual level, such as illustrations or publisher policy, were excluded from the study's scope. Translation was thus conceptualised not as linguistic substitution but as a creative, purpose-driven act grounded in theoretical and functional awareness. This clarified distinction between category-based coding and comparative stylistic analysis reinforces methodological coherence and addresses the limitations identified in the review.

4. Findings

The findings are organised under two analytical categories that highlight the key stylistic features of Roald Dahl's *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*: (1) rhyme, rhythm and song-like structures, and (2) neologisms, onomatopoeic items and wordplays. These categories represent the main dimensions of Dahl's creative language: his humour, rhythm, and playfulness. The modalities focused here are examined comparatively to show how each interprets and recreates the author's imaginative and child-centred style.

Since the analysis includes excerpt-based stylistic discussion, a brief overview of the plot is provided here for contextual clarity. Combining fantasy, adventure, and musical playfulness within an imaginative setting, the story *The Giraffe, the Pelly and Me* is narrated by Billy, a curious and warm-hearted boy who dreams of owning a sweet shop. One day, he discovers that the abandoned building he has long admired has been transformed into the 'Ladderless Window-Cleaning Company'. Surprisingly, the employees of the company are not humans but three extraordinary animals. One of them is a giraffe whose telescopic neck reaches the highest windows, the other is a pelican whose elastic beak serves as a bucket, and the last one a monkey who energetically scrubs the glass. These characters soon befriend Billy, and they are invited to clean the windows of the Duke of Hampshire's mansion. During this visit, they unexpectedly prevent a burglary when the pelican captures the burglar in his beak. As a reward for their bravery, the Duke realises Billy's lifelong dream by purchasing the old building

and turning it into an excellent sweet shop. The story concludes with a joyful sense of completion, celebrating friendship, imagination, and the realisation of childhood wishes.

4.1. Rhyme, Rhythm and Song-Like Structures

Rhyme, rhythm and song-like structures can be considered as one of the most outstanding stylistic features in the story *The Giraffe, The Pelly and Me*. Dahl creates these structures to amuse children as well as to encourage their participation and memory. Preserving these structures in the target texts thus holds a great importance in the translation process. In this story, these rhythmic and melodic patterns form the very foundation of Dahl's creative expression, turning simple narration into playful performance. Their successful recreation in translation therefore becomes a measure of creativity to demonstrate how each translator reimagines Dahl's distinctive child-centred voice.

The reader encounters the following song early in the story. Billy, the child narrator of the story, stands outside the old Grubber building when the hungry Pelican looks down at him and sings about his desire for food.

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ST	<i>Oh, how I wish / For a big fat fish! / I'm as hungry as ever could be! / A dish of fish is my only wish! / How far are we from the sea?</i> (Dahl, 1985, p.15):
HT	<i>Ah, ne kadar isterim / Büyük yağlı bir balık! / Açım hiç olmadığım kadar! / Bir tabak balık bütün istediğim! / Deniz uzağımızda mı bizim?</i> (Dahl, 1985/2025, p.19)
NMT	<i>Ah, keşke / Fov kocaman bir balık! / Açlıktan ölüyorum! Tek istediğim / bir tabak balık! Denizden ne / kadar uzağız?</i>
LLM	<i>Ah, keşke şimdi bir balığım olsa, / Kocaman, tombul bir balık olsa! / Karnım zil çalıyor, duydun mu sen de? / Tek dileğim bir tabak balık işte! / Deniz nerede, çok mu uzakta?</i>

Here in the excerpt above, in order to create playful and musical rhythm and to attract the child reader, Dahl uses sound and repetition presented in rhymed verse. This humorous and exaggerated expression of hunger turns a simple need into a funny moment. The lines form the a-a-b-a-b pattern with the words *wish-fish-be-wish-sea* that make the verse ideal for reading aloud and oral performance. Also, repetition of *wish-fish-dish-fish-wish*

sequence also present a kind of musical effect. Examining the translations, it is clear that human translator leaves the rhyme although he tries to keep the rhythmic pacing and line segmentation to mimic the original verse form. The lexical choice as 'Büyük yağlı bir balık' shows that human translator intends to transfer a culturally familiar word. Also, the exclamation 'Ah' adds an oral complaint of a child and gives a child-centred tone. On the other hand, it is very clear that NMT fails in stylistic recreation with an output of broken rhythm and rhyme. Also, "Fov kocaman" shows a misreading or tokenization error. It seems that "Açlıktan ölüyorum" loses child-centredness and shifts to adult colloquialism. It mostly preserves literal meanings but loses the dialogic and playful intent. As for LLM output, it is seen that it does not strictly use the rhyme, but adapts a strong rhythmic balance. This makes the read aloud natural. In order to recreate the childlike and storytelling voice, it transfers the lines as some interactive questions like 'karnım zil çalıyor, duydun mu sen de?' or 'Deniz nerede, çok mu uzakta?' This usage functionally aligns with the dialogic perspective addressing directly to the child for active participation and recreates the author's performative, playful and child-centred interaction. To conclude, it is observed that human translator conserves the functional adequacy and loses rhythmic play to hold the semantic meaning. The NMT output, however, illustrates mechanic, limited and form-based processing. In this case, in terms of recreation LLM seems to imitate very close creativity to human translator, though still it is differing the poetic structure of the source text.

As stated earlier, the recurrent use of rhyme-schemed poems is one of the most distinctive stylistic features in the narration. Another notable example of this can be seen in the scene when Billy, the Giraffe, the Pelican and the Monkey introduce their *Ladderless Window-Cleaning Company*. The Monkey and the others cheerfully and proudly sing about their work and promise to clean windows perfectly. Here, as an example, is the first six-line stanza of this song composed of totally three sestets that create a musical performance with rhythm, humour and childlike energy:

ST	<i>We will polish your glass / Till it's shining like brass / And it sparkles like sun on the sea! / We are quick and polite, / We will come day or night, / The Giraffe and the Pelly and me! (Dahl, 1985, p. 18)</i>
HT	<i>Camınızı parlatırız, / Sonunda pirinç gibi ışıldar / Ve denize vuran güneş gibi parıldar! / Hızlı ve kibarız, / Geliriz gündüz de gece de, / Zürafa, Pelly ve Ben! (Dahl, 1985/2025, p. 22)</i>
NMT	<i>Camınızı parlatacağız ta ki / pirinç gibi parlayana kadar / ve denizdeki güneş ışığı gibi parıldayana kadar! / Hızlı ve kibarız, gece gündüz fark etmez, / Zürafa, Pelly ve ben!</i>
LLM	<i>Camların parlсын, / Güneş gibi yansısın, / Deniz üstü ışıklar gibi! / Hızlıyız, güler yüzlüyüz, / İstersen gece de geliriz, / Ben, Pelikan ve Zürafa — hadi!</i>

The poem's rhythmic tone shows its suitability for reading aloud or oral performance. The use of a playful a-a-b-c-c-b rhyme pattern gives a musical and song-like quality. Repetition of patterns like 'We will' and the use of figurative elements like simile ('like sun on the sea' or 'like brass') reinforce the playful tone. The stanza also includes sound play through alliteration (e.g., 'sun on the sea' with the /s/ repetition, 'polish your glass / Till it's shining like brass' with repeated /sh/ and /s/ sounds) and assonance (e.g., the repetition of the /i:/ sound in 'sea / me'), which contributes to musicality and oral performance. The stanza also introduces the three characters as workers eager to advertise their window-cleaning service.

Examining the human translation, it loosely keeps rhythm but loses rhyme structure. The translations 'Pirinç gibi ışıldar' and 'Denize vuran güneş gibi' naturalizes the simile and thus reflects the feelings and visual sense of the scene. The translator keeps the *we-you* relationship with the child reader, but the use of politeness e.g. 'Camınızı parlatırız' slightly seems to distance the child reader from playful and charming tone. Still, human translator transfers the poem mostly with its functional equivalence and keeps dialogic child-centred tone and rhythm. As for NMT output, losing the rhyme and rhythm, it interrupts the musical structure and readability in the narration. For example, the long clause 'ta ki ... kadar' causes a pulse in reading. Its literal translation of 'till untill' lacks rhythmic tone, resulting in a formal tone rather than a performative, interactive and emotional goals of the source text.

Finally, the examination of LLM output shows that it transfers with imperative mood such as ‘Camların parlasın’ and ‘Güneş gibi yansısın’ and ‘Hadi!’ in order to address directly to the child reader and invite them to participate although it causes an interruption in the rhythm and rhyme. It still represents the performative function and dialogic communication of the source text by using child-appropriate register and musical tone.

The following excerpt is one of the most rhythmic and performative scenes in the story *The Giraffe and The Pelly and Me*. It depicts the lament of Henrietta, the Duchess of Hampshire, when her diamonds are stolen. Here, Roald Dahl parodies the Scottish folk song called ‘*My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean*’ that remains to be a popular nursery rhyme in Western culture. All the characters, except for the Pelican who is carrying the burglar at that moment, join the woman’s song in the chorus. The author turns it into a humorous lament song and exaggerates the sorrow of the Duchess. The scene is described in a comic and musical sense with oral rhythm. Thus, it is expected to be read aloud, sung and also felt with participation of the child reader.

	<i>My diamonds are over the ocean, / My diamonds are over the sea, / My diamonds were pinched from my bedroom, / Oh, bring back my diamonds to me.</i>
ST	<i>Bring back, bring back, / Oh, bring back my diamonds to me, to me. / Bring back, bring back, / Oh, bring back my diamonds to me!</i> (Dahl, 1985, p. 50)
	<i>Elmaslarım okyanusu aştı, / Elmaslarım denizi aştı / Elmaslarım yatak odamdan yürütüldü, / Ah, geri getirin elmaslarımı bana.</i>
HT	<i>Geri getirin, geri getirin, / Ah, geri getirin elmaslarımı bana, bana. / Geri getirin, geri getirin, / Ah, geri getirin elmaslarımı bana!</i> (Dahl, 1985/2025, p.54-55)
	<i>Elmaslarım okyanusun ötesinde, / elmaslarım denizin ötesinde, / elmaslarım yatak odamdan çalındı, / oh, elmaslarımı bana geri verin.</i>
NMT	<i>Geri verin, geri verin, / oh, elmaslarımı bana geri verin, bana. / Geri verin, geri verin, / oh, elmaslarımı bana geri verin!</i>
	<i>Elmaslarım deniz ötesinde, / Dalgalarla dans eder hepsi! / Yatak odamdan uçup gitmişler, / Getirin, getiriini bana geri!</i>
LLM	

Geri verin, geri verin, / Ah, elmaslarım gelsin geri! / Geri verin, geri verin, / Ne olur gelsin bana geri!

In this excerpt, human translator preserves the humour and narrative scene by adding some expressions like 'Elmaslarım okyanusu aştı' and 'yatak odamdan yürütüldü'. Especially the colloquial irony 'yürütüldü' depicts the exaggerated despair of the Duchess and thus makes the translation more creative and dialogic. However, the rhythm remains repetitive and the translation 'Ah, geri getirin elmaslarımı bana!' keeps the orality of the source text. The NMT output, on the other hand, again seems literal and lacks the playful performativity of the author. 'Elmasların okyanusun ötesinde' or 'Elmaslarım denizen ötesinde' sound formulaic and limited and cannot dialogically communicate with the child reader. That is, it functionally gives appropriate translation but stylistically fails to transfer the scene. By contrast, the LLM seems to give more creative and functional output. It constructs a new rhyme and reshapes the stanza into a new chant-like poem with 'Dalgalarla dans eder hepsi! / Getirin, getiriiin bana geri'. Also, by using interjections and imperatives such as 'Ne olur' or 'Ah', it reflects the dialogic translation that children can easily interact with the scene.

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Based on these examples, it is seen that the rhyme and rhythm in the story *The Giraffe, The Pelly and Me* serve the function of performative devices that visualize the text and invite the child reader to listen, sing and imagine as well. While each translation deals with the balance between semantic accuracy and musicality differently, the findings vary showing that the translation of these patterns depends on translator's creativity. Human and AI translations exhibit a stronger awareness of the oral dimension that shape Dahl's playful narrative, whereas neural machine translation stays predominantly limited to literal rendering. This interaction between performance, sound and meaning highlights the significance of stylistic recreation as an act of re-authoring. In order to better understand how Dahl's stylistic is seen in translations, the study further explores Dahl's delight in newly coined expressions, sound-mimicking words and wordplays that refine the imaginative and participatory nature of his storytelling.

4.2. Neologisms, Onomatopoeic Items and Wordplays

Newmark simply defines neologisms as ‘newly coined lexical units or existing lexical units that acquire a new sense’ and he states that translators should aim to re-create any neologisms ‘on the basis of source language neologism’ in a literary text (Newmark, 1988, pp.140-149). Examining Dahl’s creation of neologisms, it is observed that he primarily invents playful new words to evoke humour and childlike wonder, often compounding familiar morphemes with sound symbolism and rhythmic patterns. Dahl invites the child reader into an imaginative world where they can amuse and play even with the language. In the *The Giraffe and The Pelly and Me*, the author uses neologisms such as *scrumptious-galumptious* or *flavory-savory* which involve sound repetition and sensory connection. The following excerpt is from a dialogue among the Giraffe, the Pelican and the Monkey when they speak about their favourite foods:

ST	<i>‘And I dream about wallnuts’ shouted the Monkey. A walnut fresh from the tree is scrumptious-galumptious, so flavory-savory, so sweet to eat that it makes me all wobbly just thinking about it!’</i> (Dahl, 1985, p. 23)
HT	<i>‘Ben de cevizleri düşlerim’ diye bağırdı Maymun. ‘Ağaçtan yeni koparılmış bir ceviz ağızda lezzetli mi lezzetli, tatlı mı tatlı öyle bir tat bırakır ki düşüncesi bile beni yerimde hoplatıyor.’</i> (Dahl, 1985/2025, p. 27)
NMT	<i>‘Ve ben cevizleri hayal ediyorum’ diye bağırdı Maymun. ‘Ağaçtan yeni koparılmış bir ceviz o kadar lezzetli, o kadar tatlı ki, düşünmek bile beni heyecanlandırıyor!’</i>
LLM	<i>‘Ben ceviz rüyaları görüyorum!’ diye cıvıladı Maymun. Ağaçtan taze kopmuş bir ceviz var ya... mmm, nefislefiş, Mis kokulu, çıtır çıtır, öyle tatlı ki, düşünürken bile dizlerim zangır zangır titriyor heyecandan!’</i>

It is another playful scene ornamented with compounded neologisms ‘scrumptious-galumptious’ and ‘flavory-savory’ that involve childlike enthusiasm and oral quality. It also presents a sensory layer and physical reaction with the word ‘wobbly’. The rhythm of the whole creates a kind of linguistic play and encourages the child reader to participate and to imagine this performative act within the narrative. Examining the translation of human translator, it is seen that the translator employs repetitions

'lezzetli mi lezzetli' and 'tatlı mı tatlı' to recreate these neologisms' playful tone. Although Dahl's inventive forms are lost, these repetitions achieve a similar rhythmic, humorous, and performative effect that enables the child reader to visualise the Monkey's energetic enthusiasm. The NMT transfers the source text in a more literal and descriptive way. It fails to reproduce rhythm, rhyme or wordplay and the output shows only semantic translation with the only words 'lezzetli' and 'tatlı' for both of the neologisms; thus, it loses the oral and musical effect for the child reader. When it comes to LLM output, it is clearly seen that it creates (or invents) 'nefislefiş' as a Turkish neologism and it rhythmically mirrors the sound play of 'scrumptious-galumptious' in the source text. It also enhances the sensory texture by adding some onomatopoeic and sensory expressions such as 'mmm', 'mis kokulu' and 'çıtır çıtır' for 'flavory-savory'. Thus, the LLM tends to transfer functionally, and it recreates the dialogic tone to engage the child reader.

In addition to the neologisms which he creates from scratch, Dahl uses compounding technique as well. These compounded words mostly consist of a familiar base and sound-imitating suffixes in order to evoke taste, motion and also rhythm. He gives priority to phonetic pleasure and sensory association rather than their direct meaning. The sweet names exemplify Dahl's invention of neologisms: At the end of the story *The Giraffe, The Pelly and Me*, the young boy Billy finally has a sweet-shop he has always dreamed of. The characters complete the preparations with excitement before opening the sweet-shop and the child narrator begins to describe the sweets that have playful names and rhythmic sound patterns. Thus, these sweet names help children to visualize the playful marketing of sweets in child reader's imagination.

Then the sweets and chocs and toffees and fudges and nougats began pouring in to fill the shelves. They came by aeroplane from every country in the world, the most wild and wondrous things you could ever imagine.

ST *There were Gumtwizzlers and Fizzwinkles from China, Frothblowers and Spitsizzlers from Africa, Tummyticklers and Gobwangles from the Fiji Islands and Liplickers and Plushnuggets from the Land of the Midnight Sun. (Dahl, 1985, pp. 68-69)*

HT *Çinden Esnetensakızlar ve Fışırdayansalyangozlar, Afrika'dan Köpüküfleyenler ve Tükürük kızartanlar, Fiji Adaları'ndan*

Karınıdıklayanlar ve Denizcikandıranlar, Geceyarısı Güneş'in batmadığı Ülke'den Dudakyalayanlar ve Kadifekülçeler.

(Dahl, 1985/2025, p. 72)

NMT *Çin'den Gumtwizzlers ve Fizzwinkles, Afrika'dan Frothblowers ve Spitsizzlers, Fiji Adaları'ndan Tummyticklers ve Gobwangles...*

LLM *Çin'den Çiğnembükler, Fıssırfıssırlar, Afrika'dan Köpükpüskürtenler, Tıksırtıkırdarlar, Fiji'den Gıdıklıklar, Yutkukluklar, Bir de Geceyarısı Güneşi Ülkesi'nden — Dudakyalpuflar, Pofidikloklar, şapır şupur tatlar!*

Here, all the compounded neologisms involve sound symbolism, rhythmic humour and imagined taste sensations reflecting musical, joyful and comic tone: 'Gumtwizzlers', 'Fizzwinkles', 'Frothblowers', 'Spitsizzlers', 'Tummuyticklers', 'Gobwangles', 'Liplickers' and 'Plushnuggets'. They are composed of real and nonsense morphemes such as 'Tummy' + 'ticklers' and they sound like a nursery rhyme or tongue twister when read aloud. Examining the translations each modality, it is noticeably seen that the human translator decides to transfer these invented names by creating their semantically meaningful compounds such as 'Esnetensakızlar', 'Karınıdıklayanlar' and 'Kadifekülçeler'. Although most of the translations show high creativity, Gobwangles is transferred as 'Denizcikandıranlar' by the human translator, which seems a kind of semantic inconsistency. However, this choice of 'Denizci' (Sailor or sea-related) may be because of the tropical setting of the Fiji Islands. So, this choice reflects a functional equivalence rather than a literal one and highlights sound, rhythm and humorous effect as well. Examining the translation of NMT, the modal recognizes them as unknown tokens and repeats the neologisms leaving them untranslated. This foreignization of the neologisms removes all stylistic effect. Lastly, it is clear that the LLM shows morphological creativity and produces new compound words such as 'Çiğnembükler', 'Tıksırtıkırdarlar', 'Gıdıklıklar', and 'Pofidikloklar'. By combining familiar words with playful suffixes, these formations mimic and repeat onomatopoeic sounds, rhythm, musicality, and humour. However, they mostly weaken the sensory association of taste, texture, sound or motion which serve for Dahl's style and child-centred comprehensibility as well.

Although he prefers not to use so many onomatopoeic items in the story *The Giraffe, The Pelly and Me*, the onomatopoeia shapes

the overall writing style of Dahl. Onomatopoeia is referred as the formation or use of words which imitate the natural sounds of things. Therefore, translating these items is also essential to imitate and reflect the real effects of the onomatopoeic words or items. Following is one of the scenes from the story to see how the modalities handle the item:

	The chauffeur touched his cap and got back into the Rolls-Royce.
ST	'Whoopee!' shouted the Monkey. 'Fantastic!' cried the Pelican. 'That must be the best window-cleaning job in the world!' (Dahl, 1985, p. 26)
HT	<i>Şoför şapkasına dokundu ve ve Rolls-Royce'a geri döndü.</i> 'Yaşasın!' diye bağırdı Maymun. 'Harika!' diye seslendi Pelikan. 'Bu dünyadaki en iyi pencere temizleme işi olmalı' (Dahl, 1985/2025, p. 30)
NMT	<i>Şoför şapkasını dokundu ve Rolls-Royce'a geri bindi.</i> "Yaşasın!" diye bağırdı Maymun. "Harika!" diye bağırdı Pelikan. "Bu, dünyadaki en iyi pencere temizleme işi olmalı!"
LLM	<i>Şoför şapkasını kaldırıp gülümsedi, sonra Rolls-Royce'a bindi. "Yuppi! Yaşasın!" diye cıvıladı Maymun, hoplayarak! "Harikaaa!" diye kanat çırpıttı Pelikan. "Bu dünyadaki en süper cam silme işi olmalı!"</i>

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The scene takes place when the characters react to their first invitation to deliver service for their window-cleaning company. Immediately after the Duke's chauffeur arrives, he reads aloud the letter from the Duke of Hampshire that invites them to his mansion called 'Hemshire House'. They get very excited when they hear the house has 'six-hundred and seventy-seven windows', a massive job. Here, the word 'whoopee!' as the onomatopoeic exclamation of Monkey turns the calm narrative into a playful and energetic motion, inviting the child reader into participation and requiring a creative translation that gives this rhythmic and participatory tone. Human translator directly transfers the exclamation as 'Yaşasın!' that can effectively communicate the joy and fun. Although it is weak in terms of sound-based engagement, the child reader encounters the happy tone with a culturally familiar expression. Retaining the onomatopoeic item, the NMT literally produces the onomatopoeic word 'Yaşasın!' that functions adequately but losing imagination, rhythm and sound effect. The LLM uses two different

onomatopoeic items to reshape Dahl's rhythm. The word 'Yuppi' is the phonologic and orthographic adaptation derived from English 'whoopee' and thus naturalizes the word into target language. In this way, it appeals directly to a child's sense and invites them to laugh and join in the characters, recreating the playful tone of the story.

Another onomatopoeic item is seen when a loud explosion occurs in the story. The characters see a burglar in the room of Duchess and the Pelican catches the burglar. Suddenly, this explosion happens while Pelly is holding the burglar in his beak. Dahl's 'ear-splitting BANG' creates a physical reaction functioning as a dramatic and auditory scene. The translation must give the same effect of this sound-based quality in the target text to allow the child reader to hear and feel the moment.

ST	<i>Suddenly there was an ear-splitting BANG and the Pelican leaped twenty feet into the air. (Dahl, 1985, p. 48)</i>
HT	<i>Aniden kulakları sağır eden bir PATLAMA sesi duyuldu ve Pelikan altı metre havaya sıçradı. (Dahl, 1985/2025, p. 54)</i>
NMT	<i>Aniden kulakları sağır eden bir ses duyuldu ve Pelikan yirmi fit yükseğe sıçradı.</i>
LLM	<i>Bir anda — PAT! KÜT! — öyle bir gürültü koptu ki, Pelikan "Aaaah!" diye bağırıp hop diye havaya fırladı!</i>

Dahl gives the shock of the event with the onomatopoeic word 'BANG' that mimics the sound of explosion with rhythmic sentence. The human translator transfers the word as 'PATLAMA sesi'. Thus, he conveys the meaning and visually amplifies the sound with capitalization. Still, the tone remains both descriptive and performative letting the children to feel shock effect and sound-based humour. Besides, the translator adapts 'twenty feet' into 'altı metre' by domesticating the conversation to make the child reader feel how far the leap goes. The NMT model turns the onomatopoeic word 'BANG' into a generic description as 'bir ses duyuldu' and creates grammatically correct but neutralized translation. This reveals that the system cannot exhibit sensitivity to sound-symbolic and language. The LLM translation, on the other hand, fails to transfer the sound sense because 'KÜT!' is not a suitable onomatopoeic word here, suggesting a blunt impact or thud. In

order to keep a sense of chaos, the model uses 'öyle bir gürültü koptu ki' and this slightly strengthens the tone.

Last but not least, wordplay occupies a key role in Dahl's style. Most of the above excerpts correspond also to the wordplay examples of Dahl's creative language, transforming expressions into humour and surprise. In this way, he manages to encourage child readers to participate actively in the story. Operating both semantic and phonetic levels, Dahl produces effects that are both auditory and cognitive. The following exemplifies the translation of wordplay although there are many others observed in the narration.

ST	<i>'A fish what?' / 'A fishmonger.' / 'Are these mongers good to eat?'</i> (Dahl, 1985, p. 16)
HT	<i>'Bir balık nesi?' / 'Bir balık satıcısı.' / 'Bu satıcılar yenebiliyor mu?'</i> (Dahl, 1985/2025, p. 20)
NMT	<i>'Ne balığı?' / 'Balıkçı.' / 'Bu balıkçılar yenilebilir mi?'</i>
LLM	<i>'Balık neee?' / 'Balıkçı işte!' / 'Yani o 'çılar' yeniyor mu, ha? Tatlı mıdır onlar da?'</i>

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The Pelican misunderstands the word 'fishmonger' making it a humorous dialogue. Instead of understanding it as 'seller', it takes the word 'monger' as another thing. This lexical confusion and sound-based curiosity composes the humour reflecting the children that they can also sometimes interpret language literally. Inviting laughter, this playful confusion encourages the child reader to laugh and have fun. Human translator transfers the phrase 'A fish what?' as 'Bir balık nesi?' giving the similar effect of the confused situation. Also, it is seen that the tone and rhythm is clear and natural when the other parts of the dialogue are examined. It fits the target reader's logic and functionally communicates the effect of the wordplay. On the other hand, the NMT outputs show weak humour because the question 'Ne balığı?' asks about 'the 'What kind of fish?' and it does not stand for the misunderstanding. Thus, the tone is literal and straightforward and sounds like an ordinary speech, not a playful confusion. Lastly, the LLM output as 'Balık neee?' clearly and creatively retains the oral rhythm and childlike tone. Also, it catches the natural flow of the dialogue with 'Balıkçı işte!'. However, Pelly's question 'Are these

monger good to eat?’ is transferred as ‘Yani, o ‘çılar’ yeniyor mu, ha?’. It is seen that the LLM uses the occupational suffix and plural form as ‘çılar’ and also adds the question tag ‘ha?’ and ‘tatlı mıdır onlar da?’ to build an oral, dialogic rhythm. These translations seem to transfer the dialogue with oral exaggeration and humorous misunderstanding, but it weakens the functionality of the question and makes this misunderstanding more complex and inconvenient for the child reader’s understanding.

Taken all these examples together, it is clear that while the human translator attaches importance to cultural and functional equivalence, machine translation limits the transfer just to surface meaning and fails to transfer the musical and performative quality of Dahl’s writing. As for the LLM output, it notably shows creativity but fails to transfer the whole effect of the features.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal distinct differences in how the human translator, neural machine translation (NMT), and artificial-intelligence-assisted translation recreate the stylistic features of Roald Dahl’s *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* and reflect a child-centred, functional approach. In line with previous research (Aşkın & Balkul, 2022; Doan, 2025; Kong & Macken, 2025; Chen, 2024), the findings indicate that while NMT produces grammatically fluent and semantically accurate outputs, it remains inadequate in reproducing the creative rhythm, humour, and imaginative tone that characterize Dahl’s writing. The literal renderings in rhyme and rhythmic passages confirm the system’s limited sensitivity to sound patterns, exaggeration, and narrative playfulness, producing translations that are fluent but stylistically monotonous. These findings echo Aşkın and Balkul’s (2022) observation that NMT models often miss contextual, affective, and reader-oriented dimensions crucial for children’s literature. In contrast, the human translation demonstrates the strongest creative intervention, particularly in reproducing rhythm, humour, and lexical play. The translator’s use of repetition, exclamatory structures, and culturally resonant coinages such as ‘Büyük yağlı bir balık!’ and ‘lezzetli mi lezzetli’ shows active engagement with Dahl’s oral and interactive tone. Such choices foreground the translator’s role as

co-author, aligning with Oittinen's (2000) view of children's translation as a dialogic and participatory process. These findings also parallel Chen (2024), who notes that creative human adaptation sustains both stylistic liveliness and child-oriented readability. The ability to balance imaginative narration with child-appropriate clarity confirms that human translators operate with interpretive judgement and emotional sensitivity, not merely linguistic skill.

The AI-generated translations occupy an intermediate position between the human and neural outputs. As observed by Doan (2025) and Kong and Macken (2025), the large language model (LLM) shows emerging creativity, producing playful compounds and rhythmic variation such as 'Nefislefis' or 'Çiğnembükler', which reflect Dahl's neologistic and humorous style. However, this creativity remains inconsistent and depends on context. While the model occasionally generates child-like rhythm and dialogic cues ('Hadi!'; 'duydu mu sen de?'), these features do not persist throughout the text, revealing that AI creativity tends to be reactive and imitative rather than grounded in interpretive awareness. This reinforces the argument that LLM creativity tends to be reactive and imitative rather than grounded in interpretive judgement. In this sense, the LLM exhibits surface-level creativity: it can approximate playful style but does not sustain purposeful, reader-centred narration.

When evaluated through Vermeer's (1989) Skopos framework, functional adequacy is achieved only when the translation achieves its communicative purpose, here, to entertain, amuse, and interact the target child reader. The human translation meets this aim most effectively, reconfiguring form to preserve function and sustaining both rhythm and humour. The AI translation occasionally attains functional adequacy when its generated creativity aligns with the story's tone, but such moments are occasional and unpredictable. The NMT output, though semantically accurate, fails to achieve functional resonance, confirming that accuracy alone cannot sustain communicative intent or emotional accessibility. These findings therefore strengthen the argument that creativity is the mediating factor that connects stylistic fidelity, dialogic

engagement, and functional purpose. The human translator embodies creativity as an interpretive and relational act, the AI model approximates it reactively, and the neural system remains restricted to mechanical reproduction. Collectively, these findings extend prior studies by illustrating that stylistic and functional success in children's literature translation depends not only on linguistic competence but also on the translator's creative and empathic agency. They also suggest that while LLMs show potential as creative support tools, they currently serve more effectively as assistive mediators rather than autonomous literary translators, highlighting the continuing centrality of human creativity and intuitive judgement in the translation of imaginative children's literature.

6. Conclusion and suggestions

This study demonstrates that human creativity continues to play a defining role in translating children's literature, particularly in works that depend on rhythm, sound play, and humour to engage young readers. Among the three modalities examined, the human translator shows the highest level of stylistic re-creation and functional adequacy, preserving the playful tone and dialogic interaction that characterize Dahl's writing. The NMT outputs, while fluent, lack narrative warmth and imaginative depth, and the AI translations reveal partial creativity that relies on prompting rather than conserved interpretive awareness. These findings affirm that, in Dahl's case, translation remains a co-creative process rather than a mechanical act of transfer, one that requires human sensitivity to rhythm, humour, and reader engagement. In this respect, the study confirms that creative agency is not only a linguistic operation but also an affective and interpretive act grounded in the translator's imaginative participation in the child's world. The findings also contribute to the theoretical dialogue between Oittinen's (2000) child-centred approach and Vermeer's (1989) Skopos theory. When the communicative function, to entertain and interact with the child in this case, is achieved, form becomes flexible and open to creative reinterpretation. In this sense, functional adequacy is not achieved through literal transformation but through stylistic adaptation guided by

empathy, imagination, and playfulness. The findings therefore reinforce the shared foundations of dialogism and functionalism in children's literature translation, illustrating that creative decision-making and reader-oriented sensitivity remain fundamental in mediating literary voice and imaginative tone.

This research contributes to Translation Studies in three key ways. First, it offers an empirically grounded model for analysing stylistic creativity in human and AI-mediated translation, integrating qualitative coding with functional-dialogic theory. Second, it illuminates the emerging behaviour of LLMs in literary contexts, demonstrating where artificial creativity aligns with, and diverges from, human interpretive agency. Third, it positions children's literature translation as a productive testing ground for examining creativity, multimodality, and reader-oriented decision-making in hybrid human–AI translation futures.

By highlighting the comparative roles of human, neural, and AI translation, this research adds to current debates on the boundaries between technological fluency and human creativity in literary translation. The study, however, has certain limitations. It focuses on a single author, text, and language pair, limiting the generalisability of its conclusions. Its qualitative design captures stylistic nuance but excludes quantitative or reception-based data that could provide further insight into reader response and stylistic perception. Future research could address these methodological and thematic gaps by expanding the corpus to include multiple authors, genres, and languages; integrating computational stylistic tools or reader-based evaluations, and examining multimodal features such as illustrations or paratextual items. In particular, future studies might explore comparative post-editing of NMT/LLM outputs, translator-AI collaboration patterns, or the pedagogical implications of training student translators in child-centred creativity alongside AI literacy. Long-term and interdisciplinary studies exploring the evolving capabilities of large language models could also clarify how translator roles, creativity, and functional goals transform in hybrid human–AI translation environments. Furthermore, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural reception studies involving child readers, parents, and educators

could illuminate how stylistic and emotional nuances are perceived across audiences. Addressing these gaps would deepen understanding of how stylistic re-creation and child-centred communication evolve in the age of artificial intelligence.

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