

Overcoming challenges posed by intertextuality: Translation strategies employed in Polish and German translations of Agatha Christie's novel titles



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Abstract

The article investigates problems associated with the translation of selected Agatha Christie's novel titles containing intertextual references to various literary works including but not limited to Shakespeare's plays (*By the Pricking of My Thumbs*) and English nursery rhymes (*A Pocket Full of Rye*). Original English title versions with their respective Polish and German counterparts (with their English back translations) are compared and analysed (*Hickory Dickory Dock* – *Entliczek pentliczek* – *Die Kleptomanin*). Translation challenges involved in rendering titles encompassing intertextual elements are identified and deliberated on in more detail. Strategies employed by translators to render the titles are established (equivalence, literal translation, adaptation). The study shows that the strategy of adaptation is applied when it is not possible to replicate intertextuality in translation. Title versions rendered with the use of adaptation allude to other significant elements in the plot to maintain the title-novel interface.

Key words

title translation, multiple titling, intertextuality, literary references, translation strategies, retranslation hypothesis, intralingual translation

1. Introduction

Agatha Christie can be regarded as one of the most prolific crime writers of all time. She has written 66 novels in total. While the translation of the novels constitutes a challenging task, rendering their titles may be viewed as a formidable task as well. The aim of the paper is to identify the challenges associated with the translation of Agatha Christie's intertextual novel titles. Specifically, it will be explored how these challenges are addressed with respect to translation strategies employed. It will be investigated whether intertextuality is maintained in translation and what solutions

are implemented to maintain the link between the title and the novel when it is not possible to retain the intertextual reference from the original title.

2. Intertextuality

Intertextuality is by no means an easy notion to define. Various scholars have proposed different definitions of the term. The most straightforward definition limits intertextuality to “the actual presence of one text within another” (Genette 1997, 2). This definition explicitly points to the embeddedness of one text within another. Kristeva (1980, 66) defines this phenomenon in a broader sense, i.e. “the absorption and transformation” of one text by another and the “transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another” (Kristeva 1984, 59-60). According to text linguistics intertextuality is related to “the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts” (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981, 10). This definition is significant within the framework of analysis conducted in this paper. The knowledge of a particular intertextual reference enables one to predict the plot of Agatha Christie’s novels based on their intertextual titles. In this paper, intertextuality is understood as a reference to other literary works. It consists in employing quotations, character names or motifs from other literary works as novel titles.

Intertextuality has been frequently examined in relation to translation. Sakellariou (2019) discerns two approaches to intertextuality in connection with translation studies. The first approach consists in employing a specific concept of intertextuality in order to respond to translation problems. The latter approach, conversely, revolves around altering the notion of translation in intertextual terms. The first approach portrays intertextuality as background knowledge of text users as well as textual conventions which are linked to aspects such as rhetoric and style. In light of this approach, intertextuality may be analysed from a text-linguistic perspective. This was done by Neubert (1981, 143) who claims that “the key notion of translatability is in fact synonymous with intertextuality”. He perceives intertextuality as “a phenomenon that a communicatively equivalent translation or interpretation shares with its source” (Neubert 1981, 143). In a similar vein, Hatim and Mason (1990, 132-137) analysed the phenomenon in question drawing primarily on text linguistics. This gave rise to a framework involving the recognition of intertextual signals. The translator is therefore, in this sense, an individual able to process intertextual references and, as a result, a mediator. Federici (2007) suggests that a literary translator performs not only the role of a mediator, but also of a rewriter, and interpreter between different linguistic and cultural worlds. This approach is also inextricably linked to the necessity or attempt to recreate intertextual facets of the original in translation. It has to be acknowledged that certain allusions “may not ‘function’ in another culture”, e.g., Macbeth does not have

the same impact for German, French, or Spanish readers Nord (2019, 340). This is tightly associated with intercultural intertextuality which is tantamount to “intertextual references to texts that originate in different languages and cultures” (Schäffner 2012, 347). Research on intertextuality in relation to translation encompasses a wide array of topics such as the English translations of ancient Greek drama (Roberts 2010), rendering elements referring to tradition in classic plays (Komalesha 2014) and poetry translation (Canani 2014).

Research which fits into the second tendency aims to redefine translation rather than address translation hindrances. In order to do so, the relationship between the source and the target text plays a pivotal role in these kinds of deliberations. This tendency acknowledges the interconnectedness of all texts where it is impossible to consider any text an original while at the same time it tends to be a challenge to pinpoint the exact sources a given text was influenced by (Farahzad 2008, 126). It is therefore apparent that this tendency gives rise to the perception of the distinction between translation and the original that is vague (Littau 2010). Subsequently, yet “another intratextual context and another network of intertextual and interdiscursive relations” is created (Venuti 2009, 162). It can be viewed in a twofold manner both as “a formal and semantic loss” but also “an exorbitant gain” for the source text (Venuti 2009, 162). This approach does not envisage the existence of a definitive translation. On the contrary, it fosters the practice of retranslation. As can be inferred from the analysis, translations of Agatha Christie's novel titles are a combination of these two approaches. It is evident that in certain cases translators strived to maintain or replicate intertextuality. That being said, the existence of several title versions points to the second tendency as it involves the practice of retranslation.

3. Translation strategies

There are a plethora of various terms used to describe a particular course of action undertaken by a translator to overcome translation challenges. The *modus operandi* in question may be referred to as a strategy, a method or a procedure. Lörscher (1991, 76) provides a general description implying that “a translation strategy is a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language into another”. Chesterman (1997, 86) presents strategies as “ways in which translators seek to react to norms: primarily, but not necessarily always, to try to conform to them”. Newmark (1988) differentiated between translation methods and translation procedures. Whilst translation methods are phenomena related to whole texts, translation procedures are pertinent to sentences and smaller units of language (Newmark, 1988). Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) referred to the course of action undertaken by the

translator to solve a particular problem as a 'procedure'. They identified 7 procedures divided into 2 groups, namely direct (or literal translation methods) and oblique translation methods. As far as direct translation methods are concerned, 3 procedures can be taken into account, i.e., borrowing, calque and literal translation, whereas in terms of oblique translation methods, 4 procedures can be enumerated, namely transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation. For the purpose of this study, the term "strategy" is applied. Analysed titles are classified according to a simple typology encompassing three strategies, namely literal translation, equivalence and adaptation. In this study, literal translation denotes a word-for-word translation, equivalence encompasses translation involving retention or replication of the metaphor or concept present in the source language in the target language. It may also involve alluding to the form of the original title (e.g., replacing one rhyme with another one that has a similar form, despite their different meaning). Last but not least, adaptation consists in replacing the original title with a completely new one by completely disregarding the meaning and form of the source text title.

4. Title translation

Titles are frequently regarded as paratexts. In most general terms, paratexts could be referred to as the additional textual matter of the book such as "titles and subtitles (of chapters, sections, and volumes as well as the whole work), epigraphs, dedications, prefaces, afterwords, running heads, the copyright page, and all jacket copy" (Gorman 2005, 419). Some researchers point out that a paratext ultimately allows a text to be transformed into a book (Genette 1997, Alvstad 2003). Batchelor (2018, 142) highlights that a paratext "is a consciously crafted threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way(s) in which the text is received".

Newmark (1988, 56) suggests that a "title should sound attractive, allusive, suggestive, even if it is a proper name, and should usually bear some relation to the original if only for identification". However, Hejwowski (2004) believes that translated book titles usually do not bear enough resemblance to the original title to render them identifiable with the original as a more faithful translation could possibly make the book less marketable. Title translation is challenging due to the fact that the author usually creates the title before or after the work has been finished whereas a translator is usually faced with the challenge of creating a translated title once the book has been finished (Genette and Crampé, 1988). Genette and Crampé (1988) do not deny notwithstanding, that the involvement of editors, publishers and social norms should not be overlooked when pondering upon what factors might have influenced the final wording of the title. This may be even the case within the same language, e.g., the British title *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was rendered into *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the USA (Balińska 2020, 150). Boyko (2011) even dubs the phenomenon of alternative titling in arts a 'disease'

which stems from back-translating from another language where the title has already been rendered instead of translating directly based on the original title of the work.

In the spirit of the functionalist approach to translation, Nord (1995) states that title translation should start with the analysis of the translating instructions or *skopos* (purpose) provided by the commissioner either in an implicit or explicit manner. The translator's creativity takes form based on the framework provided by the (intended) function (or set of functions) of the target title. Nevertheless, she stresses that the requirements posed by the *skopos* should not interfere with the principle of loyalty. Grivel (1973) discerns three title functions: 1) identifying the work 2) designating its content and 3) highlighting it. Nord (1995) distinguishes six functions of titles altogether, namely distinctive, phatic and metatextual which pertain to each title (essential functions) as well as referential, expressive and appellative which refer only to some titles (optional functions).

Research related to title translation helps shed light on the specific challenges ingrained in the translation of the paratext. Viezzi (2013) showcases an overview of various novel and film title translations, thereby highlighting the relationship between the title and the reader's perception of the work. He also mentions that Christie's novel originally titled *Murder on the Orient Express* was published as *Murder on the Calais Coach* in the US in order to avoid confusion with Graham Greene's novel *Orient Express* published several years earlier. In another paper, Viezzi (2015) explores the phenomenon of multiple titling in Italian with respect to Agatha Christie's novel titles. He states that the role of multiple titling is to increase the novel's marketability and to find a new way to promote older work. Percec and Pungă (2019) show that intertextuality, which can be found in original Agatha Christie's titles, is frequently lost in Romanian translations. Literal translation was frequently applied as a strategy and it also contributed to the loss of intertextuality. Additionally, Romanian translators did not attempt to apply the strategy of adaptation to create new titles in order to make up for intertextuality loss. The authors point out that this could have resulted in an apparent incongruity between the adapted version of the title and the unchanged content of the book.

The challenging nature of title translation has been underscored by miscellaneous scholars. Bobadilla-Pérez (2007, 17) aptly encapsulates the crux of the issue by claiming that "titles are the most imprecise, capricious and subjective component of the whole narrative". Eco (2004, 6) stresses the great potential of reinventing and reimagining the work anew when approaching translation. However, in terms of title translation, the freedom is certainly constrained. Bantaş (1994, 81) puts forward an interesting statement which conveys the essence of title translation: "To push the metaphor further, translators should pack coffee without decaffeinating it and also preserve its full flavour". Hence, title translation should

yield the same effect in the target culture and in the source culture by striking the balance between remaining loyal to the original essence of the title while at the same time bringing the realities of the fictional universe from another culture to the reader.

5. Method

Intertextual British English titles (15) have been selected out of all Agatha Christie's novels that have Polish and German translations (66). Polish and German were selected as representatives of two different language families, with Polish being a Slavic language and German being a Germanic language like English. Juxtaposing these languages will enable one to assess whether there is any relationship between the translation strategy employed and the language family. American titles were also provided to show that different titles were created to cater to the American market. Upon deeper analysis, it transpired that there is a need for distinction between a title and a title entry in the corpus. One title entry corresponds to one work of the author. Yet each title entry may include several titles. The phenomenon of multiple titling accounts for this distinction. Therefore, these intertextual title entries give rise to 66 titles (23 British and American English titles, 21 Polish titles and 22 German titles). The study involves both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. First, the frequency of intertextual British English titles is calculated. Secondly, intertextual British English titles are grouped according to the intertextual reference. One can discern 5 groups of the references in question, namely nursery rhymes, Shakespeare's works, religious texts, British literary works other than Shakespeare's and Greek mythology. The distribution of these titles across the categories is calculated. Last but not least, titles encompassing intertextual references and their Polish and German translations are analysed in terms of translation challenges involved and translation strategies applied. English back translations of Polish and German titles are provided in order to facilitate comparing and contrasting the title versions in question. Thus, the main research questions that are addressed in the study are as follows:

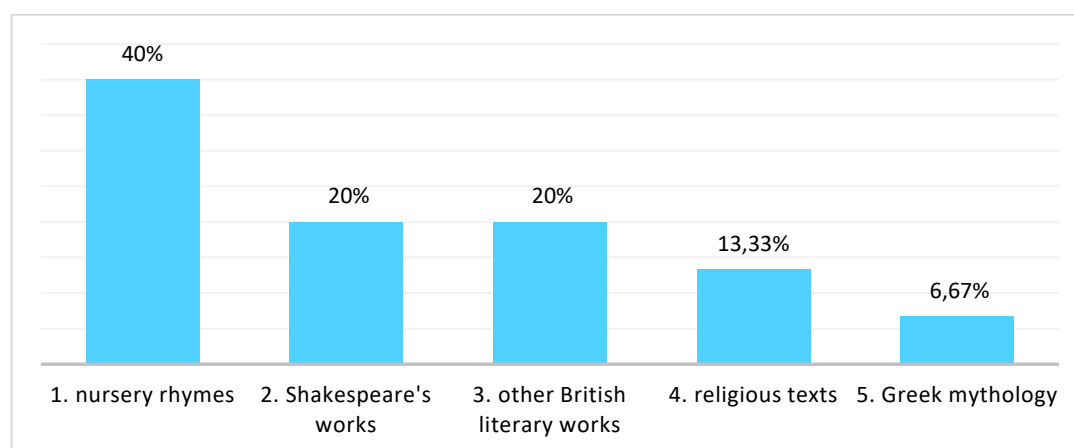
- What translation strategies are applied to render intertextual titles of Agatha Christie's novels?
- What is the relationship between the original intertextual title of the novel and its plot?
- Is this unique relationship between the title and the novel maintained in translation?

6. Quantitative analysis

Out of 66 title entries, 15 are intertextual. Hence, the percentage of intertextual British English title entries is (22.73%) which constitutes approximately one fifth of all title

entries. The majority of intertextual titles are those which are excerpts from English nursery rhymes (40.00%). These rhymes were written by various mostly unknown authors, yet their authorship is assigned to an imaginary figure referred to as Mother Goose (Opie and Opie, 1997). The second most frequent group of intertextual references are Shakespeare's works such as *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar* (20.00%). The frequency is identical to references to British literary works other than Shakespeare's such as Fitzgerald, Flecker etc. (20.00%). This group is followed by references to religious texts, i.e. the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer (13.33%). The least frequent title reference is the Greek mythology with only one instance in the corpus (6.67%).

Figure 1. Frequency of intertextual references in British English titles of Agatha Christie's novels



7. Qualitative analysis

7.1. Translation of titles derived from nursery rhymes

Title entry 1

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Ten Little Niggers (1939) UK	Dziesięciu Murzynków (1960) [Ten Little Niggers]	Letztes Weekend (1944) [Last Weekend]
Ten Little Indians (1964) US	I nie było już nikogo (2004) [And Then There Were None]	Zehn kleine Negerlein (1982) [Ten Little Niggers]
And Then There Were None (1940) US		Und dann gabs keines mehr (2003) [And Then There Were None]

This title has been retranslated multiple times on account of the original title's racist connotations. *Ten Little Niggers* was a song at blackface minstrel shows in the second half of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The first English version saw the change from niggers to Indians until it was finally replaced by a line from the rhyme referring to the fact that all the characters died (*And Then There Were None*). Guests on the island die according to the order and manner described in the very nursery rhyme. The new version of the rhyme from the edition published in 2003 under the title *And then there were none* treats of "ten little soldier boys". Polish and German translations followed suit with regard to politically correct title versions. The translated version of the rhyme in the Polish novel refers to ten little soldier boys as well. The first German title completely discarded the reference to the rhyme as *Last weekend* completely removes the intertextual quality. All the presented translations of the title are a result of applying literal translation except for German *Last weekend* that constitutes an instance of adaptation.

Title entry 2

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
One, Two, Buckle My Shoe (1940) UK	Pierwsze, drugie, ...zapnij mi obuwie (1992)	Das Geheimnis der Schnallenschuhe (1951)
The Patriotic Murders (1941) US	[First, Second,...Buckle My Shoes]	[The Secret of Buckle Shoes]
An Overdose of Death (1953) US		

The title *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe* was rendered as *The Patriotic Murders* and *An Overdose of Death* in order to appeal to the American audience. *Overdose of Death* alludes to the way the Greek character Amberiotis died due to the overdose of an anaesthetic. In comparison to the British version, these titles explicitly indicate the subject matter of the novel, i.e., murder and death. Despite the attempt to recreate the original title by means of literal translation, the Polish title does not yield the same effect as *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe*. The nursery rhyme in question is not popular in Poland. In order to overcome this hindrance, namely the lack of popularity of the rhyme in Germany as well, the German title was translated by means of equivalence. The title still contains the reference to the shoes present in the rhyme and also in the plot where they play a pivotal role in solving the mystery.

Title entry 3

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Five Little Pigs (1942/1943) UK Murder in Retrospect (1942) US	Pięć małych świnek (1957) [Five Little Pigs]	Das unvollendete Bildnis (1957) [The Unfinished Painting]

The American title yet again directly indicates the genre of the novel by referring to murder in addition to identifying the way it was analysed in the novel, namely in retrospect or in hindsight (sixteen years after the murder had been actually committed). This title entry aptly encapsulates challenges which may be encountered by translators when similar versions of fairy tales and rhymes exist in various countries, albeit with slight modifications. Polish children are familiar with a story about three, not five little pigs. The similarity notwithstanding, the stories diverge significantly. In order not to refer to the Polish story, Polish title was rendered with the use of literal translation. In the Polish version of the novel, the rhyme is rendered literally so that readers know that the title is derived from the rhyme. The detective in the novel, Hercule Poirot, attempts to solve a murder mystery from the past. The people who were at home when the murder was committed and whom Poirot wants to interrogate are referred to as five little pigs. Each line of the poem refers to the characteristics of a particular suspect. German translator opted for a reference to a painting playing a significant role in the storyline as an artist dies during the creation of the painting. This title diverges from the original to a large extent as it was rendered via adaptation.

Title entry 4

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Crooked House (1949)	Dom przestpców (1992) [The House of Criminals] Dom zbrodni (2001) [The House of Crime]	Das krumme Haus (1951) [The Crooked House]

This title constitutes an example where solely a collocation (crooked house) was drawn from a rhyme of the same title. Hence, it is challenging to decode this intertextual reference at first glance. Apart from being a part of the rhyme, the adjective crooked is polysemous in English. It may both pertain to the house being tilted but also to the moral corruption of the family residing in it. Since this double meaning was challenging to convey in Polish, the titles *Dom zbrodni* and *Dom przestpców* solely refer to the latter meaning invoked above. In the Polish translation of the rhyme, the word crooked is rendered as *krzywy* (tilted), therefore referring to the former meaning of the adjective. Polish titles were rendered through equivalence. Due to the similarity between German and English, the German word *krumm* has the double meaning as well and the same message can be conveyed in German simply by applying literal translation.

Title entry 5

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
A Pocket Full of Rye (1953)	Kieszka pełna żyta (1968) [A Pocket Full of Rye]	Das Geheimnis der Goldmine (1956) [The Mystery of the Gold Mine] Das Geheimnis der Amseln (2002) [The Secret of Blackbirds]

A Pocket Full of Rye is drawn from a rhyme *Sing a song of sixpence*. The murders taking place in the novel parallel particular elements of the rhyme, namely Rex passed away at his office with rye in his pocket. His wife died in the parlour of the house drinking tea. With a clothespin acting as a bird and pecking at her nose, Gladys passed away in the garden amidst the laundry. Polish translator rendered the title literally. The older German version employs adaptation as a strategy as it refers to the gold mine that is associated with the culprit in the plot. The newer German version encompasses blackbirds in view of the fact that they are also mentioned in the rhyme. Hence, it can be inferred that the translator strived for equivalence by referring to the element from the rhyme.

Title entry 6

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Hickory Dickory Dock (1955) UK	Entliczek pentliczek (1991) [-]	Die Kleptomanin (1958) [The Female Kleptomaniac]
Hickory Dickory Death (1955) US		

The British title alludes to the nursery rhyme with the same title. It also refers to Hickory Road i.e., the street name where a student hostel is located and where the story takes place. The American title is slightly modified in comparison to the British one. Since it contains the word “death” it explicitly indicates the subject matter of the book. In order to replicate the intertextual quality of the original, Polish translator opted for equivalence and used a Polish rhyme *Entliczek pentliczek* by Jan Brzechwa as a title. Even though the storyline of the Polish rhyme is vastly different from the English *Hickory Dickory Dock*, it yields a similar effect as it is also a nursery rhyme and has a similar form. *Die Kleptomanin* is the result of applying adaptation which consists in referring to the protagonist who has a propensity to steal certain objects. The German suffix *-in* indicates the female gender of the kleptomaniac and partially reveals the identity of the person. Thus, the German version utilises adaptation to refer to a different significant element in the storyline, i.e., one of the characters.

7.2. Titles alluding to Shakespeare's works

Title entry 7

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Sad Cypress (1940)	Zerwane zaręczyny (1966) [A Broken Engagement]	Morphium (1943) [Morphine]

Sad Cypress comes from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and it simultaneously constitutes the epigraph of the novel. The intertextual aspect is lost in both translations. The Polish title does not allude to the cypress from the translated version of *Twelfth Night*. Instead, it provides a succinct preview of the event taking place in the fictional universe and is an adaptation of the original. It draws on the fact that Roddy falls in love with Mary Gerrard and breaks his engagement to Elinor. The German title rendered through adaptation, on the other hand, involves the name of a poison which points to the genre of the novel and makes for an appealing title. Specifically, it aims to mislead the reader by drawing their attention to a substance which was not the actual cause of Mary's death. As it is discovered later on, it was apomorphine that killed Mary.

Title entry 8

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
By the Pricking of My Thumbs (1968)	Dom nad kanałem (1968) [Canal House]	Lauter reizende alte Damen (1970) [Just Charming Old Ladies]

The title of the book comes from Act IV, Scene 1 of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. It is derived from an utterance of one of the witches: "By the pricking of my thumbs, /Something wicked this way comes" (Shakespeare 1623). The title foreshadows the discovery of very grim murders of several children. Polish and German titles are descriptive, with the former marking a location and the latter presenting characters mentioned in the novel. The Polish title refers to a mysterious canal house first seen on a painting where later on the murderer is found. They are both adaptations. This could be due to the fact that Shakespeare's works are not as well-known in Poland and in Germany as they are in the United Kingdom.

Title entry 9

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Taken at the Flood (1948) (UK) There is a Tide (1948) (US)	Pora przyływu (1963) [High Tide]	Der Todeswirbel (1950) [The Vortex of Death]

Both *Taken at the Flood* and *There is a Tide* are a reference to a line in a speech by Brutus in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (Act IV): "There is a tide in the affairs of men,

which taken at the flood leads on to fortune . . .” (Shakespeare, 1623). The quotation is given in full as the epigraph to the novel. Staying close to the concept of a tide, was achieved in Polish owing to the use of equivalence. *Pora przyływu* is derived from the Polish translation of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar. Der Todeswirbel*, translated with the use of adaptation, explicitly introduces the notion of death which points to the fact that the novel is a crime story.

7.3. Titles referring to religious works

Title entry 10

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Evil Under the Sun (1941)	Hotel na wybrzeżu (1947) [A Hotel On the Coast]	Rätsel um Arlena (1945) [The Riddle of Arlena]
	Zło czai się wszędzie (1971) [Evil Lurks Everywhere]	Das Böse unter der Sonne (1982) [The Evil Under the Sun]
	Zło, które żyje pod słońcem (1993) [The Evil that Lives Under the Sun]	

The title *Evil Under the Sun* refers to Ecclesiastes 6:1, namely “There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy upon humankind” (*New Revised Standard Version of the Bible Updated Edition 2021*, Ecclesiastes, 6:1). *Hotel na wybrzeżu* provides one with a description comprising a type of a building (a hotel) and where it is situated (on the coast). The strategy of adaptation was applied to render this title. *Rätsel um Arlena*, rendered via adaptation, fits into a popular title format of crime stories, i.e. the mystery/riddle of + the character’s name. Intertextuality is sacrificed and compensated for the sake of providing a brief summary of the plot. The newer German title (1982) and two newest Polish titles (1971, 1993) are closer to the original in that they make use of the biblical reference which is comprehensible in both Polish and German target cultures. This biblical context is even brought up in the dialogues in the novel. Equivalence was applied in the translation of two newest Polish titles (1971, 1993) as they draw on the concept of evil from the original. *Das Böse unter der Sonne* is a literal translation of the original title.

Title entry 11

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
N or M? (1941)	Piąta Kolumna działa (1947) [The Fifth Column Works]	Das Haus der Mrs. Perenna (1946) [Mrs Perenna’s House]
	N czy M? (2008) [N or M?]	Rotkäppchen und der böse Wolf (1960) [Little Red Riding-Hood and the Bad Wolf]
		N oder M? (2019) [N or M?]

The title is derived from the catechism in the *Book of Common Prayer* which asks, "What is your Christian name? Answer n or nn". The n or nn stands for the Latin, *nomen vel nomina*, denoting name or names. Not only is this title intertextual but also one of the characters in the book utters their last words on the deathbed: "N or M. Song Susie". However, due to the fact that two lowercase letters n might resemble an m this utterance was misconstrued as n or m. *Piąta Kolumna działa*, rendered through adaptation, makes use of the term fifth column which denotes a "clandestine group or faction of subversive agents who attempt to undermine a nation's solidarity by any means at their disposal" (Britannica, n.d.). Adaptation was employed in the translation of the first German title, *Das Haus der Mrs. Perenna*, which reveals the location where detective Tommy stayed to solve the mystery. What is particularly striking is that the second German version employs an intertextual reference of a completely different nature than the English one. The English original refers to the *Book of Common Prayer* while the German version alludes to the *Little Red Riding Hood*. This example shows the use of adaptation. Hence, this could be referred to as intertextuality shift, i.e. one intertextual reference is replaced with another one. The newest German and Polish titles were rendered literally.

7.4. Titles referring to British literary works other than Shakespeare's

Title entry 12

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side (1962) UK	Zwierciadło pęka w odłamków stos (1994)	Dummheit ist gefährlich (1964) [Stupidity is Dangerous]
The Mirror Crack'd (1963) US	[The Mirror Cracks into a Pile of Shards]	Mord im Spiegel oder Dummheit ist gefährlich (1980) [Murder in the Mirror or Stupidity is Dangerous]

The title comes from the poem *The Lady of Shalott* by Alfred Tennyson. Since this very part of the poem constitutes a motto of the novel which has been rendered into Polish, Polish readers have access to it and are cognisant of the fact where the title comes from. Polish title is equivalent to the source text in that it revolves around the concept of a mirror and so is the second German title. However, the first German title is devoid of any reference to the mirror as it was rendered through adaptation.

Title entry 13

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Postern of Fate (1973)	Tajemnica Wawrzynów (1997) [The Mystery of the Laurels]	Alter schützt vor Scharfsinn nicht (1978) [Old Age Doesn't Protect from Sharp Wit]

The English title *Postern of Fate* comes from the poem *Gates of Damascus* by James Elroy Flecker. The Polish title is a reference to the name of a new residence bought by the detectives in the novel, its name being the *Laurels* (*wawrzyny* in Polish). The German title alludes to the fact that the detectives are in their seventies. In spite of their age, they have managed to maintain an astute mind and are still capable of solving intricate mysteries. Both translations were rendered through adaptation.

Title entry 14

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
The Moving Finger (1942)	Zatrute pióro (1956) [The Poisonous Pen]	Die Schattenhand (1944) [The Shadow Hand]

The title is derived from an excerpt of Edward FitzGerald's translation of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. This very poem pertains to Belshazzar's feast presented in the Book of Daniel and so does the German version. During the feast, the writing appears on the wall. It is determined in Christie's novel that envelopes were all typed by someone using one finger. Both translations revolve around the concept of writing in some respect. The German version, however, shifts the focus towards the hand and the Polish version focuses on the tool that one holds in the hand, which is a pen. English and German titles retain the intertextual quality of the original. Equivalence was used as a strategy with respect to both translations.

7.5. Title referring to Greek mythology

Title entry 15

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Nemesis (1971)	Przeznaczenie (1992) [Destiny] Nemesis (1997) [Nemesis]	Das Schicksal in Person (1972) [The Fate in Person]

Miss Marple dubs herself as Nemesis in Agatha Christie's novel *A Caribbean Mystery*. This pseudonym, in turn, becomes the leitmotif of the novel *Nemesis*. Miss Marple is supposed to take on the role of the Greek goddess of revenge. The Polish title *Przeznaczenie* triggers numerous associations and is somewhat mysterious. However, it does not explicitly refer to Greek mythology. Adaptation was used in the translation of the title. The newer Polish title (1997) is a literal translation of the original. The German title employs a metaphor which is of a slightly more descriptive nature, namely *The Fate in Person*. It was translated via adaptation.

7.6. Introducing intertextuality in translation

Title entry 16

ENGLISH TITLE	POLISH TITLE	GERMAN TITLE
Hallowe'en Party (1969)	Wigilia Wszystkich Świętych (1993) [All Saints' Eve]	Die Schneewitchen-Party (1971) [The Snow White Party] Die Halloween-Party (2018) [The Hallowe'en Party]

It is a peculiar example where intertextuality is introduced in the German translation even though it did not exist in the original. Halloween was not widely celebrated in Poland and in Germany when older translations were created (1993, 1971). Hence, the Polish title employs metonymy to refer to Halloween in a descriptive manner as a day before the All Saints Day, a religious holiday celebrated in Poland. Polish translator employed equivalence to render the title. An intertextual reference to *Snow White* can be identified in the older German title most likely due to the same reason. This reference is tied to the plot where children play the game of fishing apples and one girl is killed in an apple-bobbing bucket. The German version most likely alludes to *Snow White*, who ate a poisonous apple, to maintain the reference to apple-bobbing at the Halloween Party and the name of the house in the novel referred to as Apple Trees. The strategy of adaptation can be identified in this example. The newer German title, however, is a literal translation of the English original.

8. Discussion

The corpus enables one to conduct a diachronic analysis. On the whole, newer title translations were predominantly rendered with the use of literal translation. First title translations were mainly rendered through adaptation. The findings seem to corroborate the retranslation hypothesis (Berman 1990; Chesterman 2000) that indicates that older translations are more target text-oriented, while newer translations tend to be more source text-oriented. Globalisation may perpetuate making the titles more alike by the more frequent use of literal translation over time in the corpus. The practice of retranslation might be motivated by striving to look for a better translation aptly encapsulating the essence of the original.

It is interesting that multiple titling pertains to English versions as well. This could be perceived as an instance of intralingual translation. It clearly shows that even in two English speaking countries expectations of the market and the understanding of intertextuality are divergent. Frequent replacement of nursery rhymes in American titles suggests their lack of legibility for the general public. Intertextuality was lost more frequently in German titles compared to their Polish

counterparts. It constitutes an interesting finding. It would appear that literal translation would be more common in the English-German language pair due to them belonging to the same language family. On the contrary, Polish titles have been rendered with the use of word-for-word translation more frequently. German titles diverge from the original to a greater extent both semantically and structurally. It seems that whenever intertextuality was not replicated in translation, translator opted for adaptation that highlighted a significant element in the plot, e.g., a character, an object or a place. As a title is meant to be a business card of a book, it is a suitable way of introducing other salient elements from the plot when intertextuality would have caused misunderstandings in the target culture. It appears that the intertextuality of the original titles serves as a plot scaffolding, especially in the novels where the characters are killed according to the sequence and manner depicted in the rhyme. Percec and Pungă (2019) stress that there might be a potential clash between the adapted title and the book's content. The present study shows that the adapted titles were linked to significant elements from the storyline, therefore this kind of incongruity was avoided.

Considerable differences can be identified between Polish and German translations. Overall, Polish titles are predominantly translated with the use of equivalence, while German titles via adaptation. Retention of intertextuality can be identified in a greater number of Polish than German titles. Literal translation does not always foster maintaining intertextuality in translation. No correlation between the use of strategy and retention of intertextuality could be established. The possibility of intertextuality retention does not hinge solely on the strategy applied; rather it is the result of the interplay of the type of intercultural reference and strategy applied. Literal translation is conducive to intertextuality retention only when the reference is familiar to the target culture readers. Otherwise, the translation only becomes understandable after having read the book. However, it should evoke some associations already upon seeing the title as it certainly does for native speakers. Adaptation mostly leads to the loss of intertextuality. It is used as a compensatory strategy when it is impossible to replicate a literary reference. Therefore, in order to make the title more comprehensible and appealing at the same time translators utilise the strategy of adaptation. Equivalence frequently leads to the loss of intertextuality. Still, titles translated with the use of this strategy usually revolve around a similar concept as the original. It has to be borne in mind that the final choice of title translation may not be solely the translator's decision but the result of collaboration with the publishing house. The main goal of publishing houses is to boost the title's marketability even if it may result in a translation that is more detached from the original title's meaning.

It is also noteworthy to mention specific challenges ingrained in rendering intertextuality. Differences between languages play a pivotal role in this realm. This issue can be exemplified by the title *Crooked House* which makes use of a polysemous

term *crooked* in English which has no one-to-one equivalent in Polish. Another challenge is references to British literary works which are not as popular in Poland and Germany. This leads to the frequent use of adaptation which is meant to provide a completely new title and make it appealing. The issue of a superficially similar story as in the case of *Five little pigs* and a Polish story involving three pigs poses a challenge as the translation has to clearly refer to the source language story. There are three different scenarios related to the translation of intertextuality:

1. Retention of the same intertextual reference as it is likely to be understood by the target audience
2. Replacement of the reference with another reference from the target culture (intertextuality shift)
3. Removing the reference and replacing it with a salient element from the plot

The title entry related to the novel *Hallowe'en Party* shows that it is also possible to make a title translation intertextual even though it was not the case in the original. This phenomenon could be referred to as intertextualisation as it consists in introducing intertextuality in translation even though there was no intertextual reference in the original.

9. Conclusions

The most important finding to emerge from the study is that whenever it is not possible to retain intertextuality in translation, translators opt for the strategy of adaptation. This results in the creation of a new title that draws the reader's attention to another significant element in the plot, e.g., important characters, poisons, names of places, objects or events. Such elements 'pave the way' to the text so that there is a throughline between the novel and the title despite intertextuality loss. The study also shows that retranslation hypothesis pertains to the translation of intertextual titles. Older Polish and German titles used to be predominantly rendered with the use of adaptation. The newer ones, however, liken the English ones both in terms of form and meaning. It is important to note that certain translation choices may be due to varying titling conventions in languages subject to analysis. This could also indicate a shift in titling conventions which consists in making the wording of titles more similar to the original. In certain cases, the use of literal translation enables one to retain the intertextual reference. In others, this translation strategy leads to the utter loss of title intertextuality. Therefore, each title has to be approached separately with consideration to the intricate web of connotations that its intertextuality is inextricably linked to. It is apparent that the translator has to decide whether the reference will have the same or at least similar impact on the target culture reader. It can be established that maintaining the link between the title and the plot remains a priority when it is not possible to convey intertextuality in translation. Further

research pertaining to other novel title translations could be conducted to assess the magnitude of changes which have occurred over time in the realm of title translation in other literary genres than crime stories.

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