

FROM/TOWARDS A MULTIPLE SIGN SYSTEM: NEURODIVERSITY NOVELIZED AND RETOLD IN INTERLINGUAL AND INTERSEMIOTIC CONTEXTS

Burcu Nur Bayram¹ & Didem Tuna²

¹ Özyeğin University, Turkey

² Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, Turkey



Abstract

The focus of this study is to analyse selected signs of neurodiversity in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon and its interlingual and intersemiotic translations to examine readers' as well as translators' (as readers) role in the formation of the meaning, along with literature's contribution to neuro-inclusiveness. Taking the prevalent assumptions that the main character has autism as a reference point, despite the author's statement that he did not base his work on a specific syndrome, some brief information about autism spectrum disorder is provided, and the protagonist Christopher's autistic-like characteristics are reviewed with reference to the common features of the disorder. The target texts in Turkish, Azerbaijani, and French are defined as interlingual translations, and the stage performance in Türkiye is defined as intersemiotic translation. The target texts are compared to the source text using Öztürk Kasar's "Systematics of Designification in Translation" to discuss the extent to which signs featuring autism are transferred in the target texts and to highlight the contribution of the source and target texts to the acknowledgement and appreciation of differences.

Keywords: interlingual translation, intersemiotic translation, typology of intersemiotic translation, semiotics of translation, systematics of designification in translation, autism as neurodiversity, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

Article history:

Received: 15 February 2023

Reviewed: 16 March 2023

Accepted: 20 May 2023

Published: 20 June 2023

Contributor roles:

Conceptualization: B.N.B, D.T. (equal); Data curation: B.N.B, D.T. (equal); Investigation: B.N.B (lead), D.T. (supporting);

Methodology: D.T. (lead) B.N.B. (supporting); Writing – original draft: B.N.B (lead); Writing – review and editing: D.T. (lead)

Copyright © 2023 Burcu Nur Bayram & Didem Tuna



This open access article is published and distributed under a [CC BY-NC 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) which permits non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at burcunur.bayram@ozyegin.edu.tr. If you want to use the work commercially, you must first get the authors' permission.

Citation: Bayram, B. N. & Tuna, D. (2023). From / Towards a Multiple Sign System: Autism Novelized and Retold in Interlingual and Intersemiotic Contexts. *English Studies at NBU*, 9(1), 59-80.
<https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.23.1.4>

Burcu Nur Bayram is an instructor at Özyeğin University, School of Languages. She earned her bachelor's degree in the Department of Translation and Interpreting from Dokuz Eylül University and her master's degree in English Language and Literature Program from İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University. She is a candidate for a doctoral degree in Interlingual and Intercultural Translation Studies PhD Program at Yıldız Technical University. Her research interests include literary translation, semiotics of translation, gender studies and feminist translation.

E-mail: burcunur.bayram@ozyegin.edu.tr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8932-7955>

Dr. Didem Tuna is Associate Professor at İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, Faculty of Sciences and Literature, Department of English Translation and Interpreting, and has a PhD in Interlingual and Intercultural Translation Studies. Her research interests include literary translation, semiotics of translation, gender studies, and translator and interpreter training. She is the co-author of a book on semiotics of translation and the co-editor of books including academic studies on language, literature, and translation studies.

E-mail: didem.tuna@yeniyuzyil.edu.tr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1566-9503>

Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* has been translated into forty-four languages and set sales milestones in both adult and children's categories. In the novel, events are described from the perspective of Christopher, who, although not explicitly stated, is inferred to have Asperger's syndrome, a previously defined condition that is now considered a subset of autism spectrum disorder. Christopher is a 15-year-old adolescent with special needs and talents, residing in Swindon with his father, Ed, his mother Judy having passed away two years ago. The novel starts with Christopher finding his neighbour Ms. Shears' dog, Wellington, killed with a garden fork. Christopher resolves to track down the perpetrator, and after questioning neighbours about the night of the murder, Mr. Shears, Ms. Shears' ex-husband, becomes his prime suspect, since he deduces that the murderer must be someone who dislikes Ms. Shears or Wellington. Ed asserts that Mr. Shears is evil and urges Christopher to stop playing detective.

Christopher learns during a conversation with his neighbour Ms. Alexander that his mother had an affair with Mr. Shears. When Ed reads Christopher's book containing this information about his mother, he gets irrational and discards the book. The following day, Christopher finds the book in Ed's room, along with unopened letters from his mother describing her new life and why she abandoned them. Ed admits to lying and also killing Wellington. Shocked and terrified, Christopher believes that if Ed killed Wellington, he could kill him too. He resolves to flee and travel to London to find his mother. After a challenging journey, he locates his mother's home and moves in, causing friction between his mother and Mr. Shears. His mother ends her relationship with Mr. Shears and returns to Swindon with Christopher in order for him to take his A-level Maths exam. Ed regains Christopher's confidence, and Christopher receives an A on the exam.

On the back cover of the book, published by Vintage in 2004, Christopher is described as the detective and narrator with Asperger's syndrome. On the back cover of the Turkish translation, the work is praised by Barış Korkmaz, a professor of neurology specializing in autism, as a book that will be of great benefit to families faced with autism in better understanding their children¹ (Haddon, 2019). According to Simon Baron-Cohen (2004), based on his experience of having met many people with this condition as

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are our own.

a clinical psychologist, "Haddon has a rare gift of imagining and communicating what it must be like to have Asperger syndrome and [...] he is remarkably accurate in his portrait" (p. 450). According to neurologist Oliver Sacks "Haddon shows great insight into the autistic mind", as mentioned in the back dust jacket of the book. Although Haddon (2009) states that he did not base his work on a specific syndrome, the novel came to be considered as "one of the most recognised and widely-read depictions of autism" (Dent, 2007) and Christopher as one of the "characters with explicit autism in fiction" (Bates, 2010), with the publishing houses making mention of autism or Asperger's, leading many readers to presuppose that the novel is penned from the perspective of an individual with autism - a premise that can be assumed to be relevant upon analysis of the neurodiversity signs in the source and target texts.

This difference between the author's perspective and the reader's perception can be explained through the role of the receiver of discourse in the production of the meaning, based on the idea that for a better understanding, the reader should cease to be a mere bystander and interact with the text (Öztürk Kasar, 2009, p. 171). According to the Theory of Instances of Enunciation by Jean-Claude Coquet, (1997, 2007) every discourse has a producer and a receiver, whose roles are interchangeable. When the producer finishes speaking, they begin to listen, assuming the role of the receiver, and vice versa. Discourse is moulded through this interaction, with the contribution of not only what is articulated by the initial producer, but also through the receiver's perception and response. When Coquet's theory is elaborated from the point of view of the semiotics of translation (Öztürk Kasar, 2017, p. 196), the translator is at the outset the receiver of the source text as its reader, soon thereafter becoming the producer through the creation of the target text, in the process of transfer from one language/mode to another. Occasionally, however, some of the signs constituting the universe of the target text may not match the source text, as an outcome of the role of the translator as the receiver of the source text and the producer of the target text. Intentional or unintentional, these meaning transformations may result in varying degrees of manipulation in the potential readings of the target texts.

The corpus of this study comprises the source text by Haddon (2012), and the target texts in Turkish by Övgü Doğantürk (Haddon, 2019), in Azerbaijani by Svetlana Turan (Hedn, 2018), and in French by Odile Demange (Haddon, 2015) as interlingual

translations, and the stage performance of the play translated into Turkish and directed by Nedim Saban (2019). At this point, our aim is not to carry out an evaluation of the theatrical adaptation of the work based on adaptation theories, but rather to consider it as an intersemiotic translation product, in line with Roman Jakobson's translation classification (1959). The signs of neurodiversity in the source text are compared to those in the target texts based on "Systematics of Designification in Translation" developed by Sündüz Öztürk Kasar (2020, p. 160, Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172) to discuss the extent to which they are transformed in the target texts, along with the likely consequences on the production of potential meanings. With these analytical comparisons, the contribution of the source and target texts and the stage performance to social awareness of the autism spectrum disorder is discussed.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

The term "intersemiotic translation" was coined by Roman Jakobson in his essay titled "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation", where he defines three types of translation:

- Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language.
- Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of another language.
- Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems (Jakobson, 1959, p. 233).

In this sense, the Turkish, Azerbaijani and French target texts in the corpus are interlingual translations and the performance of the stage adaptation is an intersemiotic translation. Many scholars from different disciplines have interpreted the concept of intersemiotic translation from various perspectives, propounding new terms and diverse typologies. A recent typology was presented by Sündüz Öztürk Kasar (2021, pp. 124-125), defining two sign systems, verbal and nonverbal, distinguished in the proposed typology. The nonverbal sign system has two subcategories; the singular sign system and multiple sign system, and for both, different subtypes of transference are envisaged. In addition, there are mixed-featured systems containing both verbal and nonverbal signs. In this sense, the concept of intersemiotic translation consists of five different categories, and each is considered a transference:

- Transference of what is said to another singular substance. Verbal signs (poem, novel, story, essay, etc.) transformed into nonverbal singular signs (painting, sculpture, melody, etc.).
- Transference of what is seen or heard to what is said. Transformations of visible (painting, sculpture, real landscape, etc.) or audible (melody, creak, tramp, wash, woodnote, etc.) nonverbal signs into verbal signs (poem, novel, story, essay, etc.).
- Transference from a natural language into a multiple sign system. A movie adaptation of a novel is mixed featured as it consists of both verbal and nonverbal signs. A novel, however, includes verbal signs.
- Transference from a multiple sign system into a natural language. Transformation of an advertising copy consisting of both visual and verbal signs into a text that interprets it.
- Nonverbal inter-artistic translation. Painting, sculpture, instrumental music, pantomime, can be a source of inspiration for another branch of art, thus transforming into a new product by being translated.

Inspired by this typology, we would like to suggest adding the sixth category:

- Transference from a multiple sign system into a multiple sign system.

Multimodal fiction works that incorporate both verbal and nonverbal signs can be included in this category to deal with the transference from a multiple sign system into a multiple sign system. Multimodal novels "feature a multitude of semiotic modes in the communication and progression of their narratives" (Gibbons, 2012, p. 420, as cited in Mussetta, 2014, p. 100). Multimodal texts are also called visual texts and they deliberately "subvert graphic and typological conventions" by incorporating diverse semiotic devices that belong to the verbal, non-verbal, or mixed modalities of verbal and non-verbal (Gibbons, 2012, p. 420, as cited in Mussetta, 2014, p. 100). Combining semiotic resources like diagrams, maps, and images with the text, *The Curious Incident* displays a highly multimodal nature.

To evaluate how autism constructed in the source text is transferred to the target text, the basis for comparison of autism signs will be "Systematics of Designification" by

Öztürk Kasar (2020, p. 160, Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172), a classification of nine levels of meaning transformation that may occur in translation, which are also referred to as a translator's tendencies to transform the meaning:

- Over-interpretation of the meaning, resulting in excessive meaning in the target text
- Darkening of the meaning, resulting in diminished clarity and ambiguity in the target text
- Under-interpretation of the meaning, resulting in inadequate meaning in the target text
- Sliding of the meaning, resulting in another potential meaning in the target text
- Alteration of the meaning, resulting in a false – albeit not totally irrelevant meaning in the target text
- Opposition of the meaning, resulting in contrary meaning in the target text
- Perversion of the meaning, resulting in totally irrelevant meaning in the target text
- Destruction of the meaning, resulting in meaninglessness in the target text.
- Wiping out of the meaning, resulting in absence of signs in the target text.

The transference of autism signs is of particular importance because it may influence the texts' potential readings in relation to autism, thereby potentially altering the perception of the target audiences regarding the spectrum.

Limitations in the analysis of the signs constituting neurodiversity

Numerous literary texts, plays and films have featured neurodiverse protagonists or antagonists with special needs, assets, and challenges. Representations of neurodiversity in literature or performing arts is crucial in that it frequently entails being noticed and is essential for enhancing public awareness and visibility. However, representation may sometimes turn out to be underrepresentation or misrepresentation due to the use of stereotypes or inaccurate labelling. This is significant in that while disorders are diagnosed by doctors, they are also defined by society, because society is the determinant of what constitutes unusual or undesirable behaviour (Shemilt, 2022).

Crucially, with autism, since affected individuals often do not speak up for themselves, they may be like a tabula rasa onto which the author can inscribe virtually

anything – projecting autism as a gift, as a curse, as super intelligence, as mental retardation, as mystical, as repellent, as morally edifying, as a parent's worst nightmare – which is caused by neurotypical interpretations constantly attributing false motives and feelings onto others' actions (Myung-Ok Lee, 2019). Since every individual on the spectrum is unique, specific categorizations in the plot may result in overgeneralizations and oversimplified opinions about the disorder. However, despite their uniqueness, affected individuals share some commonalities, such as persistent deficits in social communication and social interactions, in addition to restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities (DSM-5, 2013, p. 50), which are discussed in this study for the case of Christopher, the main character in *The Curious Incident*.

Autism as implicitly explicit in the literary text

Christopher seems to have been constructed in accordance with the core behavioural characteristics of autism, without naming his condition in the novel. To begin with, Christopher's utterance "I can't do chatting" (Haddon, 2012, p. 70) demonstrates his difficulty with regular back-and-forth conversation. During his inquiry about Wellington's murder, for instance, he cannot initiate and pursue a conversation as a neurotypical individual would. When Ms. Alexander says, "I see you every day going to school" (Haddon, 2012, p. 51), he does not respond since he does not understand that he is expected to do so. On his way to London, he repeatedly declines opportunities to contact people and tries to scare them away with his knife, which could be explained by his uneasiness caused by the unfamiliar environment, crowd, and the variety of stimuli. On the other hand, even when Christopher wants to make contact, he cannot readily start a conversation with people he does not know because he waits until he thinks they are safe. Moreover, he asks some out-of-the-ordinary questions that a neurotypical person would not, such as drawing a plan of their house (Haddon, 2012, p. 46).

Another characteristic of the affected individuals is interpreting words literally. They also either do not understand jokes based on the polysemy of words or understand them only to a limited extent (Wing, 2005, p. 39). Christopher cannot tell jokes since he does not comprehend them (Haddon, 2012, p. 10). Some idioms are easier to understand because their meaning can be deduced from the words, yet they also perplex Christopher. When he goes to the restroom on the train, the police officer says, "I'll be keeping an eye

on you, understand?" (Haddon, 2012, p. 200), which is actually a rhetorical question. Christopher responds "no" because he believes the officer cannot watch him in the restroom.

In high-functioning individuals, meticulously recurring activities often take the form of showing intense interest in some particular topic, such as railway charts, astronomy, sci-fi characters. The type of attention is mostly about collecting information on these topics, memorizing, and talking about the data collected (Wing, 2005, p. 45). Christopher's interests include the Milky Way and galaxies, and he aspires to become an astronaut regardless of the likelihood of its happening. As long as he is alone, he does not feel claustrophobic in confined spaces, so he would not feel uncomfortable in a spacecraft. Because he does not miss anyone, he would not be homesick either (Haddon, 2012, p. 65). Christopher knows that he has a variety of attributes required to become an astronaut. Therefore, his encyclopaedic knowledge is not entirely aimless or merely memorized information.

An element of systemization or repetition, such as customary routines, the same chain of events and actions repeated every day, is conspicuous in the behaviour of individuals with Asperger's (Korkmaz, 2003, p. 86). Also, "[a]ny disruption of routine causes a panic attack, anxiety, or a flight response, unless the person is taught what to do when something goes wrong" (Grandin, 2006, p. 36). When Christopher learns he cannot take the A level maths exam, he has a meltdown, and says: "I don't like it when I put things in my timetable, and I have to take them out again because when I do that, it makes me feel sick" (Haddon, 2012, p. 257). Similarly, he does not have a good time in France because on holiday, people do not have timetables showing "when everything is going to happen" (Haddon, 2012, p. 192). Christopher often insists on eating the same things, just as he does not eat in unfamiliar places. Also, he dislikes being surprised, probably because surprises are unpredictable.

As seen from the above examples, Christopher has various difficulties affecting his social and communicative functions. Such challenges are collected under ten headings by Howlin et al. as "[i]nsensitivity to other people's feelings", "[i]nability to detect a speaker's intended meaning", "[i]nability to understand misunderstandings", "[i]nability to understand the reasons behind people's actions", "[i]nability to understand 'unwritten

rules' or conventions", "[i]nability to take into account what other people know", "[i]nability to deceive or understand deception", "[i]nability to anticipate what other's might think of one's actions", "[i]nability to negotiate friendships by reading and responding to intentions", "[i]nability to read the listener's level of interest in one's speech" (1999, pp. 9-11). These headings and core characteristics of the condition are formed around negativities such as "inability" and "deficit." However, some individuals with autism can have exceptional strengths and be referred to as little professors due to their extensive knowledge of a few topics (Korkmaz, 2003, p. 59), and Christopher is one of them since he provides detailed information on different topics throughout the novel. For instance, he delivers a lot of information about types of heart attack, relating the details while searching for a rational explanation for his mother's death (Haddon, 2012, p. 36). Similarly, he demonstrates his superior eidetic memory by providing encyclopaedic information about Malaysia after viewing an advertisement brochure (Haddon, 2012, p. 218). This ingenuity is readily apparent in the book since there are a lot of images, charts, graphics, diagrams, and maps drawn by him, which makes his novel a multimodal one. Instead of verbally defining objects or locations, Christopher uses illustrations, which can be explained by his thinking in diagrams or pictures. Christopher's memory skills are also significant; he vividly recalls a day spent in a rural region many years ago and explains that he sees everything at once, comparing what neurotypical people see to his own perception. Since he is good with numbers, these specifics are coded in his memory numerically; he can notice "19 cows in the field, 15 of which are black and white and 4 of which are brown and white" (Haddon, 2012, p. 175).

Some individuals with autism also have strengths and talents that may lead to expertise and specialized knowledge. These abilities characterizing Asperger's syndrome, such as having in-depth knowledge in a narrow area of interest and having some special abilities in certain areas, are called savant skills, and the term is currently utilized for exceptional gifts at a significant level of working, far above that which would be normal based on an individual's IQ (Gillberg, 2002, pp. 65-66). Savant skills are commonly limited to specific areas of exceptional aptitude such as calendar calculating, music, art, mathematical and number skills, and mechanical and special skills (Treffert, 2012, p. 84). Christopher is well-versed in mathematics, as evidenced by his A score in the A level Maths exam. Regarding savant skills in maths, Treffert (2012) says: "[t]ypically this includes lightning calculating - rapid solution of complex multiplication or division problems"

(p. 88). When Rhodri asks Christopher what 251 times 864 equals, he responds 216,864 and this is an easy sum because "you just multiply 864 x 1,000 which is 864,000. Then you divide it by 4 which is 216,000 and that's 250 x 864. Then you just add another 864 on to it to get 251 x 864. And that's 216,864" (Haddon, 2012, pp. 83-84). In activities that attract the individual's attention, a long attention span is a typical feature of autism (Wing, 2005, p. 50). These activities for Christopher are "practicing maths, reading a book about the Apollo mission or Great White sharks" (Haddon, 2012, p. 92). Regarding this turning into an advantage, Christopher says: "[t]his is why I am very good at playing chess, because I detach my mind at will and concentrate on the board and after a while the person I am playing [...] will make a mistake and I will win" (Haddon, 2012, p. 92).

In brief, the novel depicts autism from several perspectives, highlighting both the obstacles it may cause as well as the unique strengths of some of those affected by it. Although the word autism is not mentioned in the text, its characteristics are implied by related examples. In this way, it is possible to conclude that autism is "implicitly explicit" in the novel.

Evaluation of the Autism Signs in Interlingual and Intersemiotic Translations

The particularities of autism as a lifelong condition are embedded in the source text through the use of clear and plain language, which facilitates the perception of autism by the readers, assumed to be neurotypical. In this part of the study, through the chosen examples, the focus will be:

- transformations in the autism signs
- transformations in the neurotypical characters' interactions with the neurodivergent character

in the target texts, to spot the role of the translators as receivers and reproducers of discourse, along with the possible consequences of meaning transformations on the reception of autism by the target text readers.

Example 1

The brain processes a massive amount of data collected by sensory organs, and their input is organized and encoded within the brain. When there is a problem in the process of identifying the sensation, deciding whether to attend it or not, storing it, or sharing it with other senses, it is called Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD). Suffering

from oversensitivity to touch, sound, smell, and taste is common for individuals on the spectrum (Garland, 2016, pp. 38-43), and like many others, Christopher is hypersensitive to noise and touch, which profoundly affects his behavior.

Table 1: *hyperreactivity to sensory input (DSM-5, Criterion A-4, 2013: 50)*²

ST	She was shouting, 'What in fuck's name have you done to my dog?' I do not like people shouting at me. It makes me scared that they are going to hit me or touch me [...] I put my hands over my ears and closed my eyes and rolled forward till I was hunched up with my forehead pressed onto the grass ³ (p. 4).
TT1	Bağırıyordu: “Köpeğime ne yaptın Allah’ın belası!” İnsanların bana bağrılamalarından hoşlanmam. Bana vuracak ya da dokunacak olmalarından korkarım [...] Kulaklarımı ellerimle kapatıp gözlerimi yumdum ve kamburumu çıkarıp alnım çimenlere değene dek yere eğildim (p. 12). [BT: until my forehead touched the grass]
TT2	Missis Şirz üstümə çemkirdi: 'Lənətə gələsən, mənim itimin başına nə oyun açmısan?' Kiminsə üstümə qışqırmağı xoşuma gəlmir. Belə olduqda onların məni ya vuracağından, ya da mənə toxunacağından ehliyat edib qorxuya düşürəm [...] Qulaqlarımı əllərimlə qapadım, gözlərimi yumdum və özümü yərə atıb ta alnım ota yapışana qədər diyirləndim (p. 11-12). [BT: until my forehead stucked to the grass]
TT3	Elle criait : "Putain de merde, qu'est-ce que tu as fait à mon chien? Je n'aime pas qu'on crie contre moi. J'ai toujours peur qu'on me frappe ou qu'on me touche [...] Je me suis bouché les oreilles, j'ai fermé les yeux et je me suis laissé tomber en avant, roulé en boule, le front dans l'herbe (p. 14-15). [BT: the forehead in the grass]
PS	Bayan Shears: Dokunma köpeğime [...] Uzak dur köpeğimden! [...] Uzak dur köpeğimden! [...] (Christopher elleriyle kulaklarını kapatır. Gözlerini yumar. Çayıra doğru eğilir) (p. 2) [BT: he leans towards the meadow]
SP	00.01.34. – 00.02.57

² ST denotes source text (Haddon, 2012), TT1 - target text in Turkish (Haddon, 2019), TT2 - target text in Azerbaijani (Hedn, 2018), TT3 - target text in French (Haddon, 2015), PS denotes play script in Turkish (Stephens, 2018), SP denotes stage performance in Turkish (Saban, 2019), BT denotes back translation.

³ The target text parts with meaning transformations concerning autism signs are highlighted in bold and their back translations are provided in square brackets. For the parts without meaning transformations, the source text should be referred to.

In the stage performance, the objects in the background are designed to be unusual; the leaves of trees, for instance, consist of numbers, alluding to Christopher's fondness for them. Christopher is kneeling alongside the dead dog while the walk-ons rush around them. Christopher gets irritated and covers his ears with his hands. The walk-ons yell in unison at Christopher. Further agitated, Christopher hides his face. The play's narrator is Siobhan, who reads aloud Christopher's book. Ms. Shears' voice is heard, yelling at Christopher. The walk-ons also shout back what she says. The scene may provide neurotypicals with insight into how individuals with autism feel in such situations. Christopher's closing of his eyes and ears is an effort to minimize the stimuli. Furthermore, the walk-ons can be considered metaphors for his mind under pressure since Christopher's anxiety increases as the walk-ons rush around.

Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements are thought to reduce anxiety (Korkmaz, 2003, p. 59), and the pressing of the forehead is a stereotyped motor movement repeated as a coping strategy, especially in times of stress. As described by individuals with autism, this pressure-touch can reduce overall arousal. (Hatch-Rasmussen, 2023). Christopher's pressing of his forehead is therefore a sign of autism emerging because of excessive sensory input. This detail is not transferred to the stage performance, which can be considered as "wiping out of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172); yet it is reflected with Christopher's nonverbal expressions showing how he feels as well as through the acting of the walk-ons. The effect of pressure-touch is reflected in the Azerbaijani translation through the use of the verb "stick" [yapışmak], which can be considered as "alteration of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172) since the idea conveyed is substantially relevant. In the Turkish translation, the sign is under-interpreted (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172) with the use of the verb "touch" [değmek], which is insufficient to reflect the effect of "pressing". In the French translation, "wiping out of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172) is the case because the idea of pressure is totally eliminated as a result of the neglecting of this autism sign.

In addition, Ms Shears' sharp utterance while inquiring about what happened to Wellington ends with a question mark in the source text. In the Turkish Translation, the shouting is further accentuated with an exclamation mark. With this change in punctuation, the scolding tone is intensified, causing "over-interpretation of the

meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172). While Ms Shears' reaction to the murder may be understandable, she probably would not be able to blame a neurotypical individual so directly. In the stage performance, an imperative is used instead of a question form and is repeated three times, which can also be considered as "over-interpretation" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172) since it provides further emphasis. However, the derogatory utterance (what in fucks' name) in the source text is eliminated in the stage performance, causing "wiping out of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172) and making Ms Shears' discourse sound less aggressive than it is. This is also important in that with the translator's interference, the effect of the contemptuous tone is lessened; by avoiding the reconstruction of brutal treatment towards the neurodivergent character.

Example 2

According to Attwood, Frith, and Hermelin (1988), besides speaking, people naturally communicate in many ways, with gestures, facial expressions, and movements of the body accompanying speech. Individuals with autism, however, have trouble using and understanding these alternative communication methods. Christopher also has difficulties with this. In addition, he has trouble comprehending abstract concepts and deciphering intangible signs.

Table 2. *Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction and in understanding gestures (DSM-5, 2013: 50), eidetic memory.*

ST	Siobhan says that if you raise one eyebrow it can mean lots of different things. It can mean 'I want to do sex with you' and it can also mean 'I think that what you just said was very stupid (p. 19).
PS	Siobhan: [...] Ve öğretmenim, der ki: insanın tek kaşını kaldırmasının bile bir anlamı olabilir der. İnsanın tek kaşını kaldırması, seninle sevişmek istiyorum anlamına gelebilir der [...] Ben böyle bir şey demedim. [BT: I did not say such a thing] Christopher: Dediniz [BT: You did] Siobhan: Demiş olamam [BT: I couldn't have said that] Christopher: Geçen yıl 13 Eylül'de demiş oldunuz [BT: You happen to have said it on September 13 last year] Siobhan: 13 Eylül'de mi? [BT: On September 13?] Christopher: Sadece 13 Eylül'de değil. Aynı zamanda 13 Eylül'deki ilk tenefüste demiş oldunuz (p. 4) [BT: Not just on September 13. At the same time, you happen to have said at the first break on September 13].
SP	00.05.11 – 00.05.46

Onstage, Christopher is with his teacher Siobhan and six walk-ons in a classroom. On the wall is a moving face that looks like the faces Siobhan draws to teach Christopher how to show different feelings. Autism signs regarding Christopher's difficulty in interpreting facial expressions and nonverbal communication are effectively conveyed in the intersemiotic translation. Moreover, the dialogue is extended to highlight Christopher's retentive memory, another autism sign, which appears frequently in the source text as remembering everything in perfect detail. This part, which does not exist in the source text, can be considered as "over-interpretation of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172) with the inclusion of another autism sign, further contributing to the reception of autism by neurotypical individuals.

Example 3

Social communicative skills are not necessarily taught to typically developing children; they acquire these skills naturally in the right environments. On the other hand, these skills are known to be among the most fundamental deficits in autism. Therefore, the most critical part of any education program for individuals on the spectrum is to improve their social and communication skills (Korkmaz, 2003, p. 128).

Some individuals with autism do not like being touched, even if the touch is gentle and loving, and they make it clear (Wing, 2005, p. 49). "Not liking being touched" (Haddon, 2012, p. 59) is clear on Christopher's behavioural problem list, and he has sudden reactions like screaming, pushing, and hitting. He admits that if someone he does not know touches him, he will hit them, and he even hits a police officer when he grabs his arm. His extreme reactions cause him to be misunderstood from time to time since neurotypical people do not understand the underlying causes of such behaviour.

Table 3 *Abnormal social approach, deficits in understanding relationships, difficulties in adjusting behavior to suit various social contexts, failure of normal back-and-forth conversation, hyperreactivity to sensory input (DSM-5, 2013: 50), inability to lie.*

ST	He said, 'Did you mean to hit the policeman?' I said, 'Yes.' He squeezed his face and said, 'But you didn't mean to hurt the policeman?' I thought about this and said, 'No I didn't mean to hurt the policeman. I just wanted him to stop touching me' [...] [h]e asked, 'Did you kill the dog, Christopher?' I said, 'I didn't kill the dog.' [...] He said, 'Are you telling the truth?' I said, 'Yes. I always tell the truth' (pp. 22-23).
----	---

TT2	<p>"Sən polis zabiti vurmaq istəmişdin?" -o məndən soruşdu. "Bəli" -ona dedim. Müstəntiq üz-gözünü büzüşdü və soruşdu: "Lakin sen polis zabitinə zərər toxundurmaq istəməmişdin, elə deyilmi?" [BT: But you didn't mean to hurt the policeman, did you?] Bu barədə bir qədər düşünüb cavab verdim: "Xeyr, mən polis zabitinə zərər toxundurmaq istəməmişdim. Sadəcə istəyirdim ki, polis mənə bir daha toxunmasın [...] müstəntiq soruşdu: 'İti sən öldürməsən, Kristofer?' "İti mən öldürməmişəm" [...] Sən sözün düzünü deyirsən?" -o soruşdu. "Bəli. Mən həmişə sözün düzünü deyirəm," ona söylədim (p. 35-36).</p>
PS	<p>KOMİSER: Polise vurmaq gibi bir kastın yoktu değil mi? [BT: You didn't mean to hit the policeman, did you?] Christopher: Polise vurmaq gibi bir kastım vardı [BT: I meant to hit the policeman] Ed: Zarar vermek istemedi anlamında [BT: He means he didn't want to hurt him] Komiser: Ama polise zarar vermek gibi bir kastın yoktu, değil mi? [BT: But you didn't mean to hurt the policeman, did you?] Christopher: Polise zarar vermek gibi bir kastım yoktu. Sadece polise vurmaq gibi bir kastım vardı BT: [I didn't mean to hurt the policeman I only meant to hit the policeman.] Christopher: Yabancıların bana dokunmasını istemem [BT: I don't want strangers touching me] Ed: Temas anlamında söylüyor [BT: He means physical contact] Komiser: Köpeği sen mi öldürdün? Köpeği sen mi öldürdün? BT: [Did you kill the dog? Did you kill the dog?] Christopher: Köpeği ben öldürmedim. Ben öldürmedim çünkü ben köpekleri severim [BT: I didn't kill the dog. I didn't kill because I like dogs] Komiser: Doğruyu söylediğinden nasıl emin olabilirim? [BT: How can I be sure you are telling the truth?] Christopher: Ben yalan söyleyemem. Annem yalan söylemediğim için iyi bir insan olduğumu söylüyor. Ben yalan söylemem (p. 7). [BT: I can't lie. My mother says I'm a good person because I don't lie. I don't lie]</p>
SP	00.11.44 – 00.12.46

In this part, Christopher is being interviewed at the police station for hitting the policeman (Haddon, 2012, p. 22-23). The inspector tries to help him, but this is made more obvious in the target texts. In the source text, Christopher is asked whether he hit the policeman. In the Azerbaijani translation, a question tag is added to the discourse of the inspector who wants to elicit the desired answer from Christopher; in the stage performance, the question is likewise reinforced with a question tag, both of which can be considered as "over-interpretation of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017,

p. 172). Christopher insists that he meant to hit him because he can only tell the truth and does not understand the real purpose of the question. This implies that Christopher has deficits in theory of mind, which can be defined as "being able to infer the full range of mental states (beliefs, desires, intentions, imagination, emotions, etc.) [and] reflect on the contents of one's own and other's minds" (Baron-Cohen, 2001, p. 174). In the stage performance, this is further emphasized through additional and repeated discourses, which can be considered as "over-interpretation of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172), contributing to the better conveyance of the related characteristics of autism, and also portraying the neurotypical character's approach as more tolerant and receptive.

Example 4

Anomaly in establishing eye contact is another distinctive feature of the spectrum. Christopher asserts that when people converse, they glance at one another's faces to determine what they are thinking. It also helps them to realize whether or not others are lying, but this does not apply to Christopher. As a neurotypical person, Ed instinctively does not look at Christopher when he lies about his mother leaving them. While prohibiting Christopher from playing detective, on the other hand, Ed wants to make eye contact to convey his determination (Haddon, 2012, p. 63), which is difficult for Christopher to understand.

Table 4: *Abnormalities in eye contact (DSM-5, 2013: 50)*

ST	OK, Christopher. I am going to say this for the last and final time. I will not tell you again. Look at me when I'm talking to you, for God's sake. Look at me (p. 63)
TT2	Yaxşı, Kristofer, bunu sana sonuncu dəfə deyirəm. Bir daha təkrar etməyəcəyəm. Tanrı xatirinə sənənlə danışdıqda gözlərimə bax! Gözlərimə bax! (p. 90-91)
TT3	Écoute-moi bien, Christopher. C'est la dernière fois que je te le dis et je ne le répéterai pas. Regarde-moi quand je te parle, tu veux? (p. 90) [BT: Look at me when I'm talking to you, will you?]
PS	Ed: Beni dinle oğlum. Dinlerken gözümün içine bak! Biliyorum insanlarla göz teması kurman kolay değil (p. 18) [BT: Listen to me, son [...] I know it's not easy for you to make eye contact with people]
SP	00.40.15 – 00.40.24

In the stage performance, Ed warns Christopher to cease his search for Wellington's murderer. He wants Christopher to look at him while talking to him but Christopher constantly turns his back on him. In the source text, Ed sounds rather anxious and impatient and is almost pleading, which is accurately depicted in the interlingual translations. In the intersemiotic translation, on the other hand, the addition of the discourse talking about the difficulty of making eye contact for Christopher and the effect of the added word "son" make Ed sound compassionate, also eliminating the warning tone in the source text, which can be considered as "over-interpretation of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172). The change in the neurotypical father's attitude towards his neurodivergent son transforms the reading of the text by producing a more positive effect, also reminding the readers that such deficits are unintentional and deserve to be treated empathetically.

In the French translation and the stage performance, the exclamation "for God's sake" is eliminated. As this exclamation is used to add force to the request, its absence results in a lack of emphasis and leads to "under-interpretation of the meaning" (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172) since the sense of impatience and annoyance is not adequately conveyed. Finally, in the French translation, a question tag is added to Ed's request, which renders the discourse less imperative. In the Azerbaijani translation, on the other hand, two exclamation marks are added to Ed's discourse, reinforcing the imperative form and thus causing Ed to sound bossy towards his neurodivergent son.

Conclusion

As a result of the increasing prevalence of autism worldwide and the accordingly growing interest in the disorder, representations of autism have taken their place in world literature and performing arts. Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident* has been one of the most widely recognized literary depictions of autism, in spite of the author's disapproval of the labelling. The first focus of this study was to analyse selected signs of neurodiversity in *The Curious Incident* to trace their possible connections with autism. In this vein, the disparity between the author's position and the reader's consideration was explained as the consequence of the reader's active contribution to the formation of meaning as the receiver of discourse. Within the same framework, the role of the translators as readers and receivers, as well as reproducers of discourse, was discussed,

based on the meaning transformations in the target texts, along with their possible consequences on the reception of autism by the target text readers.

The comparison of the target texts to the source text shows that the autism signs are substantially transmitted into the target texts without major transformations of the meaning, which may be the result of the simplicity and clarity of the childish discourse in the source text. In the four examples studied within this framework, the meaning transformations encountered in the interlingual translations are over-interpretation, under-interpretation, alteration, and wiping out of the meaning (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172). Meaning transformations found in the intersemiotic translation, on the other hand, are over-interpretation and wiping out of the meaning (Öztürk Kasar & Tuna, 2017, p. 172). While the cases of under-interpretation, alteration, and wiping out of the meaning may have ensued from neglecting seemingly inconsequential signs, over-interpretations seem to be additions with an impact on the understanding of the autism by the presumably neurotypical readers.

In the first example, under-interpretation, alteration, and wiping out of the meaning as transformations of different degrees in the transmission of the pressure-touch may be due to this neurodiversity sign not being perceived and identified as such. In the second example, the over-interpretation in the intersemiotic translation, ensuing from the extension of the discourse to highlight Christopher's retentive memory as another autism sign, seems to contribute to the understanding of autism by neurotypical individuals. In the third and fourth examples, the addition of question tags can be considered as over-interpretations, making the speakers sound more helpful and positive than they are in the source text. In the third example, Christopher's difficulties concerning theory of mind, further emphasized in the intersemiotic translation through additional and repeated discourses, can also be considered as over-interpretation. A similar effect is the case in the fourth example, through another over-interpretation through which Ed is made to sound more empathetic in the intersemiotic translation, thereby also normalizing a more constructive treatment of neurodivergent individuals. Finally, the under-interpretation caused by the elimination of an exclamation and the over-interpretation produced by the use of additional exclamation marks change the tone of the discourse by transforming the emphasis, which shows that besides the wording, the punctuation is also a determining factor in the reproduction of the meaning in translation.

Literary works featuring characters with special needs are crucial not only in bringing attention to these conditions but also in (re)shaping societal attitudes towards difference; therefore, translators need to be particularly careful in dealing with such works and if possible, seek consultation as part of the research, for effective analysis.

On the whole, the book, with its interlingual translations, comprises a crucial public service in terms of its contribution to autism awareness, even if such a purpose may not have been initially pursued. On the other hand, the intersemiotic translation, staged by Tiyatrokare as a social awareness project in cooperation with the Tohum Autism Foundation, provides significant social benefits, such as facilitating the understanding of the inner dynamics of autism by drawing further attention to neurodiverse perceptions and judgments with the help of visual and auditory tools. As the number of individuals with autism continues to rise, it becomes increasingly vital to raise awareness about coexistence in society. The establishment of the idea that differences exist and are valuable also contributes to the development of this awareness by providing neurotypical individuals with the opportunity to gain insight into the perspective of neurodivergent individuals and think beyond the abled/disabled dichotomy.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). American Psychiatric Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>
- Attwood, A., Frith, U., Hermelin, B. (1988). The understanding and use of intrapersonal gestures by autistic and Down's syndrome children. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 18(2), 241-257. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02211950>
- Baron-Cohen, S. (2004). Book review: The curious incident of the dog in the night-time. *Autism*, 8(4), 449-450. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361304047227>
- Baron-Cohen, S. (2001). Theory of mind in normal development and autism. *Prisme*, 34, 174-183.
- Bates, G. (2010). Autism in fiction and autobiography. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 16(1), 47-52. <https://doi.org/10.1192/APT.BP.108.005660>
- Coquet, J.-C. (1997). *La quête du sens. Le langage en question [The quest of meaning. The language in question]*. Presses universitaires de France.

- Coquet, J.-C. (2007). *Phusis et logos. Une phénoménologie du langage* [Phusis and logos. A phenomenology of language]. Presses Universitaires de Vincennes.
- Dent, S. (2007, April 4). Don't 'diagnose' fictional characters. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2007/apr/04/dontdiagnosefictionalcharac>
- Garland, T. (2016). *Hands-on activities for children with autism & sensory disorders*. Pesi Publishing.
- Grandin, T. (2006). *Thinking in pictures: And other reports from my life with autism*. Vintage Books.
- Gillberg, C. (2002). *A guide to Asperger syndrome*. Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511543814>
- Haddon, M. (2009, July 16). *Asperger's & autism*.
<http://www.markhaddon.com/blog/aspergers-autism>
- Haddon, M. (2012). *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time*. Vintage.
<https://doi.org/10.5040/9781408173381.00000006>
- Haddon, M. (2015). *Le bizarre incident du chien pendant la nuit*. [The curious incident of the dog in the night-time] (O. Demange, Trans.). Nil éditions.
- Haddon, M. (2019). *Süper iyi günler, ya da Christopher Boone'un sıradışı hayatı* [The curious incident of the dog in the night-time]. (Ö. Doğançün, Trans.). İş Bankası Yayınları.
- Hatch-Rasmussen, C. (2023, June 1). *Sensory Integration in Autism Spectrum Disorders*. Autism Research Institute. <https://autism.org/sensory-integration>
- Hedn, M. (2018). *Gecə vaxtı itin müəmmalı ölümü* [The curious incident of the dog in the night-time] (S. Turan, Trans.). Parlaq İmzalar Naşriyyəti.
- Howlin, P., Baron-Cohen, S., & Hadwin, J. A. (1999). *Teaching children with autism to mind-read: A practical guide for teachers and parents*. Wiley & Sons.
- Jakobson, R. (1959). On linguistic aspects of translation. In R. A. Brower (Ed.), *On translation* (pp. 232-239). Harvard University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674731615.c18>
- Korkmaz, B. (2003). *Asperger sendromu* [Asperger's syndrome]. Adam Yayınları.
- Mussetta, M. (2014). Semiotic resources in the curious incident of the dog in the night-time: The narrative power of the visual in multimodal fiction. *MATLIT: Materialidades Da Literatura*, 2(1), 99-117. https://doi.org/10.14195/2182-8830_2-1_5

- Myung-Ok Lee, M. (2019, February 4). The trouble with autism in novels. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/04/books/review/autism-marie-myung-ok-lee.html>
- Öztürk Kasar, S. (2009). Pour une sémiotique de la traduction. In C. Laplace, M. Lederer & D. Gile (Eds.), *Champollion 12: La Traduction et Ses Métiers*. (pp. 163-175). Lettres Modernes Minard.
- Öztürk Kasar, S. (2017). Jean-Claude Coquet ve Söyleyenler kuramı [Jean-Claude Coquet and Theory of instances of enunciation]. *Prof. Dr. Ayşe Eziler Kıran'a Armağan [Tribute to Prof. Dr. Ayşe Eziler Kıran]*. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Basımevi.
- Öztürk Kasar, S., Tuna, D. (2017). Shakespeare in three languages: Reading and analyzing sonnet 130 and its translations in light of semiotics. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, 5(1), 170-181. <https://doi.org/10.18298/ijlet.1723>
- Öztürk Kasar, S. (2020). De la désignification en traduction littéraire: Les gens d'en face de Georges Simenon dans le contexte turc du point de vue de la sémiotique de la traduction. *Parallèles*, 32(1), 154-175. <https://doi.org/10.17462/para.2020.01.09>
- Öztürk Kasar, S. (2021) Honoré de Balzac'ın *Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* başlıklı öyküsünden Jacques Rivette'in *La belle noiseuse* adlı filmine: Göstergelerarası çeviride göstergelerin aktarımı ve dönüşümü [From Honoré de Balzac's story *Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* to Jacques Rivette's movie *La belle noiseuse*: Transference and transformation of signs in intersemiotic translation]. In S. Öztürk Kasar, B. Haleva, L. Arslan Özcan & P. Güzelyürek Çelik (Eds.), *Prof. Dr. Hasan Anamur'un anısına [In commemoration of Prof. Dr. Hasan Anamur]* (pp. 101-131). Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Saban, N. (Director). (2019). *Süper iyi günler [The curious incident of the dog in the night-time by Mark Haddon]* [Video]. Tiyatrokare.
- Shemilt, J. (2022, May 3). Tracing the portrayal of mental disorders in literature over time through five books. *Crimereads*. <https://crimereads.com/mental-disorders-in-literature/>
- Stephens, S. (Adapter). (2018). *Süper iyi günler [The curious incident of the dog in the night-time]* (N. Saban, Trans.). [Unpublished play-script]. Tiyatrokare.
- Treffert, D. A. (2012). *Islands of genius: The bountiful mind of the autistic, acquired, and sudden savant*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Wing, L. (2005). *Otizm el rehberi [The autistic spectrum]* (S. Kunt, Trans.). Tohum Türkiye Otizm Erken Tanı ve Eğitim Vakfı.

Reviewers:

1. Anonymous
2. Anonymous

Handling Editor:

Boris Naimushin, PhD,
New Bulgarian University

Notes:

¹This article has been expanded from the MA thesis titled “*Reading autism through literature: The curious incident of the dog in the night-time by Mark Haddon in interlingual and intersemiotic contexts*” (Bayram, 2021), under supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Didem Tuna, within the scope of Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University English Language and Literature MA Program.

²The analyses in this study are carried out within the scope of semiotics of translation and have no medical or diagnostic aspects.