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ROALD DAHL'S WORK THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS[1]

Abstract: The paper aims to provide an overview of the different types of linguistic analyses of the work of the celebrated British children's author, Roald Dahl, who continues to be one of the most beloved writers despite having passed away more than three decades ago. This critical survey will examine the various facets of Dahl's work that have been analyzed to date, including nonce words, the use of figurative language, the challenges encountered when translating specific lexis, as well as his discourse. Our analysis will show what approaches and methods the scientists relied on, but also what the possible pedagogical implications of their results are.

Keywords: children's literature, Roald Dahl, linguistic analysis, teaching, English.

> "Paradoxically, despite enjoying
> enormous commercial success and popularity,
> Dahl is still very little known."
> (Viñas Valle)

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INTRODUCTION

Roald Dahl (1916–1990), a British poet and novelist, is arguably one of the best-selling authors of juvenile literature. His literary career began in the 1940s, following his involvement in WWII as an RAF fighter pilot, with three collections of short stories. What brought him worldwide recognition and lasting fame, though, were darkly comic, grotesque novels aimed at a young audience, such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), *George's Marvellous Medicine* (1981), *The BFG* (1982), *The Witches* (1983) or *Matilda* (1988), some of which have been successfully adapted into movies or plays. His works frequently feature exaggerated violence, cruelty, death and revenge, with malevolent adults acting as villains and noble, kind, or talented children acting as heroes. As Zipes et al. (2005: 359) put it, "Dahl insisted that children are cruel and have a vulgar sense of humor, and he believed that they respond to forthright portrayals of their lives exaggerated through fantasy". This can be illustrated with several excerpts. In *George's Marvellous Medicine* (1981: 10), Grandma is portrayed as a 'horrid old witchy woman' whereas George is a 'brave little boy':

> George sat himself down at the table in the kitchen. He was shaking a little. Oh, how he hated Grandma! He really *hated* that horrid old witchy woman. And all of a sudden he had a tremendous urge to *do something* about her. Something whopping. Something *absolutely terrific*. A *real shocker*. A sort of explosion. He wanted to blow away the witchy smell that hung about her in the next room. He may have been only eight years old, but he was a brave little boy. He was ready to take this old woman on.

Similarly, Matilda is 'extraordinary, sensitive, brilliant' and 'quick to learn' while her parents are 'gormless', 'wrapped up in their own silly little lives' (*Matilda*, 1988: 6):

> It is bad enough when parents treat *ordinary* children as though they were scabs and bunions, but it becomes somehow a lot worse when the child in question is *extra*-ordinary, and by that I mean sensitive and brilliant. Matilda was both of these things, but above all she was brilliant. Her mind was so nimble and she was so quick to learn that her ability should have been obvious even to the most half-witted of parents. But Mr and Mrs Wormwood were both so gormless and so wrapped up in their own silly little lives that they failed to notice anything unusual about their daughter. To tell the truth, I doubt they would have noticed had she crawled into the house with a broken leg.

Besides his memorable and colorful characters, Roald Dahl's ingenuity and witticism is also reflected in the lexical innovations that describe their vivid worlds. Perhaps the most distinctive, in this respect, is the novel *The BFG* in which the friendly giant uses a language of his own (e.g. *scrumdiddlyumptious*, *babblement, dumbsilly*). Dahl's playful nonce words are so numerous that they inspired the creation of a dictionary, the *Oxford Roald Dahl Dictionary* (Rennie, 2016), that was released in honor of his 100th birthday. A cursory look at it reveals that Dahl's lexis encompasses spoonerisms, misspellings, and malapropisms, but also unique coinages whose phonology resembles that of the existing words. His lexis has, with considerable accuracy, even been compared in terms of style to Carroll's *Jabberwocky*. The topic of his nonce lexis will be elaborated on further in the following section, prior to us examining other aspects of Dahl's work that have to date attracted linguistic attention. Finally, we will conclude our survey by proposing possible pedagogical uses of Dahl's work in the EFL context.

CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH ON DAHL'S WORK: LEXIS, WORD-FORMATION AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE USE

Before presenting relevant research on Dahl's lexis, it is worth mentioning that lexical creativity does not feature prominently in all children's books produced by the celebrated writer. As Cheetham (2016) noted, books rooted in reality (e.g. *Matilda*, *Danny the Champion of the World*, *Fantastic Mr Fox*) contain a negligible number of newly coined words. On the other hand, books rooted in fantasy (e.g. *The BFG*, *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*, *James and the Giant Peach*) hold significantly more nonce words, with semantic opacity matching the content or atmosphere of the text (Ibid.: 97).

A detailed analysis of Dahl's various linguistic innovations was provided by Rudd (2012). In a chapter entitled 'Don't gobblefunk around with words', in one of the very first collections of academic essays devoted exclusively to Dahl, Rudd (Ibid.: 56) highlighted the lexical uniqueness of *The BFG* by stating that it is "'langwitch' [...] stretched and reshaped in a number of ways". He found many of Dahl's lexical items to be malapropisms (e.g. *human beans*), compounds (e.g. *whizzpopper*), blends (e.g. *delumptious* < delicious + scrumptious), or derivatives (e.g. *sickable*). He also noted that Dahl had a tendency to replace words with existing words of similar phonological and/or semantic connotations in idiomatic expressions, such as *keep your skirt on* or *once in a blue baboon*, that rely on rhyme

and alliteration. Moreover, Rudd found semantic dimensions to be successfully exploited in spoonerisms as well, e.g. *Dahl's Chickens* (Charles Dickens) or *every crook and nanny* (every nook and cranny).

Dahl's nonce formations were later linguistically analyzed by Jesenská (2017) too. She extracted 533 items from the *Oxford Roald Dahl Dictionary* (Rennie, 2016) and performed a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the collected data. The results showed that her corpus contained 143 proper nouns. Many of these were endocentric compounds of the noun + noun/verb + -er structure, e.g. the *Bloodbottler*, the *Childchewer*, the *Manhugger*, the *Fleshlumpeater*, the *Maidmasher*. These longish names, all of which appear in the novel *The BFG*, describe strong, vicious, and cruel man eaters. From a morphological standpoint, the author noted, like Rudd (2012), that the collected data were, for the most part, derivatives (e.g. *Spittler*, *murderful*, *disgusterous*), compounds (e.g. *natterbox*, *mudburger*), and blends (*plexicated* < perplexed + complicated, *mushious* < mushy + delicious). In keeping with Rudd's observations (Ibid.), Jesenská (2017) also commented on Dahl's propensity to use malapropisms and spoonerisms (*mideous harshland* < hideous marshland, *catasterous disastrophe* < disastrous catastrophe), but also to coin unique lexical items that are impossible to comprehend (e.g. *bibble*, *gliss*, *sprunge*), as a marker of his distinct style.

It is also worth noting that Munat (2007) carried out a contrastive study on lexical creativity in science fiction and children's literature by examining nonce formations in Philip Dick's *The Simulacra* and Roald Dahl's *The BFG*. Having expanded her original corpus with other examples from SF texts and juvenile literature, she arrived at the following conclusions regarding Dahl's work: most nonce words seemed to be phonologically motivated; compounds were typically formed through a combination of a free root and a nonsense word or a semantically unrelated word; the language was quasi-familiar, with many derivational affixes attached to unfamiliar or unlikely bases; the majority of lexical creations were 'ear-catching' or 'phonologically funny', aimed at an ideal reader "who will presumably respond not only to the story, but to the individual sounds and word associations which aim to amuse" (Ibid.: 177).

Tanto (2020) chose to investigate figurative language use (e.g. metaphors, similes, personification) in Dahl's works. He did so by collecting data from three novels: *The BFG*, *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* (1972) and *The Witches*. The qualitative description of the corpus material showed that Dahl invented unusual similes (e.g. *helpless as horsefeathers*, *deaf as a dumpling*, *dotty as a dingbat*, *safe as sausages*, *still as a starfish*) whose distinguishing feature is alliteration. In addition to these witty, amusing, ear-pleasing expressions, Dahl made use of

exaggeration and hyperbole to create vivid descriptions that would engage children's imagination (e.g. teeth: *like huge slices of white bread*; ears: *as big as the wheel of a truck*).

Previously, Rudd (2012) had also found figurative language to be a distinct feature of Dahl's style. He even stated that Dahl's work was an illustration of "words creating their own reality" (Ibid.: 61) as is often the case in nonce literature (determining, for instance, our point of view in the narration itself, as in *Fantastic Mr. Fox*). It has been noted that Dahl never wished to stray far from the original meaning of the words themselves, which led to his overall preference for similes and puns over metaphor. Thus, his work referenced both the "original" and the so-called "transgression". This feature considerably contributed to Dahl's nonce lexis being understandable through a certain dose of familiarity (cf. Munat, 2007). Rudd (2012: 60) even pointed out that Dahl did not deviate from the prescribed word order in the English language, having even the giants from *The BFG* conform to this rule despite their language being *squiggly*, which also contributed to this sense of familiarity.

Dahl's reference to the original meaning of words in similes can be evidenced in the aforementioned example, where the giant in question is first described as having *ears as big as the wheel of a truck*, only later to be referred to as having *truck wheel ears*. When it comes to puns, they can be exemplified through the use of names. According to the BFG himself: *Greeks from Greece is all tasting greasy*, or *Human beans from Chile is very chilly*. Further examples include the names of other characters, such as Miss Honey who is sweet, or Charlie Bucket who is, initially, a "vessel to be filled" or molded in Willy Wonka's fashion (Ibid.).

CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH ON DAHL'S WORK: INTERPRETING THE MEANING OF NONCE LEXIS AND HOW TO TRANSLATE IT

The very creativity of the language used in Dahl's work, i.e. in his specific brand of language known as *Gobblefunk*, presents a special kind of challenge for the translator. Translating his work is a particular 'act of creativity', pushing the boundaries of what translators can, or feel they are allowed to do. Epstein (2019) analyzed the process of translating Dahl's neologisms into Swedish, both explaining what has already been done by translators, and giving suggestions on how the process could further unfold. The paper includes an analysis of 160 neologisms, both in the original, and their Swedish equivalents.

Neologisms in particular require a multi-fold approach: sufficient attention needs to be paid to the word-formation processes involved in their creation (e.g. borrowing, combining, shortening, blending, and shifting), with due consideration being given to whether it should or could be replicated in the target language, along with paying attention to what the function of the neologism in the text is. For instance, as can be seen in the work of Munat (2007), Rudd (2012), Jesenská (2017), and Tanto (2020), Dahl's neologisms are instrumental for the characterization process, where both the visual image created by the neologism and its phonological motivation play a crucial role. In *The BFG*, they help to create a general impression of the giant himself, who is presented as uneducated, if not somewhat oafish (1982: 53):

> "Words", he said, "is oh such a twitch-tickling problem to me all my life. So you must simply try to be patient and stop squibbling. As I am telling you before, I know exactly what words I am wanting to say, but somehow or other they is always getting squiff-squiddled around."
> "That happens to everyone", Sophie said.
> "Not like it happens to me", the BFG said. "I is speaking the most terrible wigglish."

One of the findings outlined by Epstein (2012) is that neologisms tend to be cut from the end product, i.e. the translated text, which in turns has an effect on the characterization, leading to the characters being "flattened" in the target language. To avoid this effect, Epstein proposes several possible options, with replacement seemingly being the most frequently used (with the difference between a replacement with a neologism or a non-neologism being less than 1%). This comes as no surprise considering the multiple functions that neologisms had at the same time. Epstein (Ibid.: 20–21) provided a rudimentary list of the uses of such coinages:

> [t]o parody, to entertain, [...] to explain difficult things in a simpler way, to reflect a character/setting, [...] to teach, to subtly refer to taboo/impolite/sensitive issues, to give a text energy, to make readers pay more attention to the text and its message, [...] as rituals or insults, [...] to be funny, [...] to reveal the power of language or the limits of language.

That translating Dahl's work is an 'act of creation' was also pointed out by Zorgati (2021). This time, the corpus for analysis was the translation of *The BFG* into French. Dahl's 'lexical manipulations' are often referred to as nonce words, which however playful and creative, are still heavily dependent on the context for interpretation. This would mean that despite the rich word-formation processes

that Dahl relied on, it would be insufficient to rely on morphology alone to interpret and/or translate his coinages, and necessary to rely on discourse analysis as well, not to mention the intentions of the author himself in making these lexical choices. Zorgati (Ibid.) listed the following effect of Dahl's language manipulation: raising language awareness among children, including awareness of the double meaning of certain words; creating impressions of the world at large (cf. Rudd, 2012); and creating that humorous effect that Dahl is so famous for to this very day.

So how then does one go about translating this *Gobblefunk*? The answer is to find translational coinages that have the same 'familiar effect' or 'familiar feel' that Dahl's nonce words do. Sometimes this is achieved through the 'morphological motivation' of nonce words, as in *frightsome*, *disgusterous*, *darksome*, *I mispise it*, *glamourly*, *um-possible*, all of which can be found in *The BFG*. As Zorgati puts it, it is precisely this incongruity that leads to the recognizable humorous effect of Dahl's words. This incongruity can be found between a base and the affix that is attached to it, as well as in the compounding process: *strawbunkles* (strawberry + bunkles), *natterboxes* (to natter + boxes), *horsefeathers* (horse + feathers).

At other times this same familiarity is born of 'phonological motivation', as evidenced in instances of the use of the now frequently cited pun *human beans* to refer to human beings by the giant himself or frequent and deliberate misspellings, such as *teecher*. Other examples include: *Eeeeeowtch!* [...] *Ughbwelch! Ieeeech!*, *You is a squinky little squiddler!*, *The rotten old rotrasper!*, *Now, this is wizzpopping*, *A tiny little buzzing-humming noise*. To this we add unusual collocations which also bring forth a humorous effect: *Oh save our solos!* [...] *Deliver us from weasels!*, *I always gets as jumpsy as a joghopper*, and *You is deaf as a dumpling*.

A similar study which also focused on translating *Gobblefunk* was carried out by Gottschalk (1996), but in this instance the target language was German. In this account, specific emphasis was placed on the 'mixed-up morphology' and 'perplexing denotation' of the aforementioned incongruity. For the aforementioned example of *human beans*, the author offers up the explanation that both the humorous effect and the challenge for translators originate from the same "conundrum", i.e. conflicting features of [+HUMAN] and [+VEGETABLE]. Further challenges include minimal pairs that pose both a collocational and phonological challenge, as in *sound the crumpets*.

CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH ON DAHL'S WORK: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Much like Epstein (2012, 2019), Kerford (2015) also focused on Dahl's particular brand of lexis as an important part of his characterization process. She relied on Critical Discourse Analysis as her method of choice for analyzing how adult characters are represented in seven of Dahl's works, focusing on verbs of speech and the way they are used to create either a positive or negative impression of the characters.

What the analysis seemed to imply is that there are more "masculine" and more "feminine" verbs of speech, so to speak, or that this is the effect achieved in Dahl's work. This idea is based on the premise that gender can be gleaned from the language one uses, i.e. that some words are more 'semantically male' and 'semantically female' (Motschenbacher, 2009, as cited in Kerford, 2015: 9). Furthermore, such an analysis was rendered possible due to the relation of power also being conveyed through language (Van Dijk, 1993, as cited in Kerford, 2015: 26). To illustrate this, the author included the language of close family members such as mothers, fathers, aunts, grandmothers, and grandfathers in her analysis. The findings confirmed other conclusions already drawn regarding children's fiction, such as the central role of the family, and of female characters being portrayed as villains more frequently than male (in this corpus, it was consistently the aunts).

Kerford's (2015) findings agree with certain conclusions previously put forth regarding the 'phonological motivation' behind Dahl's language. She concluded that the author focused on what are referred to as prosodic descriptive verbs whose main features are volume, pitch, and emotion. The higher the pitch and the volume of the verbs, the more hysterical the character is perceived to be, and less nurturing at the same time. Which is why the use of these verbs was mostly noted among the female characters.

Her other findings were that: mothers are the most frequently occurring characters, yet peripheral to the story, who *wail* and *shriek*, may be considered neurotic or hysterical, and are less nurturing; fathers are the second most frequently occurring characters, who mostly *say*, *snap*, *yell*, *shout*, expressing anger or excitement; grandmothers, who are frequently central to the story, *yell*, *scream*, *wail*, and *snap*, expressing excitement and their grievances if something does not go well for them; grandfathers, who are infrequently mentioned, speak less than the other characters, *shout* when they do so, but might be considered 'inept'; and aunts who are the least frequent characters but are still described in

most detail, who are negative characters that tend to *bark*, *snap*, *yell*, differing from the other female characters and aligning with the males.

The information presented so far might make it seem like Dahl relied solely on what his characters said and how they spoke their words to convey certain relevant features by means of which they were to be recognized, creating a meronymous effect which can be either positive or negative. However, it is not just the direct speech that 'helps build character', but the descriptions as well, which are also revealing of the relationships between the characters. Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996) illustrated the impact of descriptions in the speech of Danny from *Danny the Champion of the World* (1987), who provides them in the form of illocutionary acts, many of which focus specifically on facial features. In the case of his dad, it is the eyes and the mouth that convey kindness and vivacity (1987: 12–13):

> He was actually a wildly funny person. What made him appear so serious was that he never smiled with his mouth. He did it all with his eyes. He had brilliant blue eyes and when he thought of something funny, his eyes would flash and if you looked carefully, you could actually see a tiny little golden spark dancing in the middle of each eye. But the mouth never moved.

and in the case of Mr. Hazell, the face itself indicates a corrupt nature (Ibid.: 42):

> He was a brewer of beer and he owned a huge brewery. He was rich beyond words… Mr. Victor Hazell was a roaring snob and he tried desperately to get in with what he believed were the right kind of people… As he flashed by we would sometimes catch a glimpse of the great glistening beery face above the wheel, pink as a ham, all soft and inflamed from drinking too much beer.

As Knowles and Malmkjaer (1996) put it, the reference to the 'size, shape, and color' of the characters is a recognizable feature of Dahl's work. For example, the description of Miss Trunchbull in *Matilda* exemplifies this: her body is described as having a bull neck, big shoulders, thick arms, sinewy wrists, and her face as having an obstinate chin, cruel mouth, small arrogant eyes. This invokes lexical sets pertaining to size (*bull*, *big*, *small*), strength (*thick*, *sinewy*, *powerful*), and personality (*obstinate*, *cruel*, *arrogant*) making these descriptions more revealing than they seem on the surface (Ibid.: 138).

In addition to the presence of particular descriptors, Dahl's descriptions included references to animals to further help with the characterization process (cf. Rudd, 2012). For example, in *Matilda* we find the following rat and rhino metaphors, respectively (1988: 23, 67):

Mr. Wormwood was a small ratty-looking man whose front teeth stuck out underneath a thin ratty moustache. He liked to wear jackets with large brightly-coloured checks and he wore ties that were usually yellow or pale green.

When she marched – Miss Trunchbull never walked, she always marched like a stormtrooper with long strides and arms aswinging – when she marched along a corridor you could actually hear her snorting as she went, and if a group of children happened to be in her path, she ploughed right on through them like a tank, with small people bouncing off her to left and right.

CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Due to his unusual portrayals of family members, the descriptions that some people claimed were very close to caricatures, and even the representations of violence that was not just physical but verbal as well, some adults are still skeptical about Dahl's work in general. They saw him as a sort of 'anarchist' (Knowles and Malmkjaer, 1996). But it is precisely the exaggerations in both his language use and his portrayal of characters that make Dahl's work so appealing to younger audiences, who readily engage in humorous verbal play from the early stages of development (cf. Crystal, 1998).

Considering its appeal to these audiences, it stands to reason that this material could be used in the EFL teaching context. If a text is deemed too lexically challenging for EFL learners, a teacher can modify its content by using an online simplification program, such as Rewordify.[2] This software program enables learners to enjoy the originality and humor of the works in question without unfamiliar words or structures that would hamper their understanding. In addition, it offers a number of possibilities for independent lexical development (e.g. tracking progress, solving quizzes, etc.).
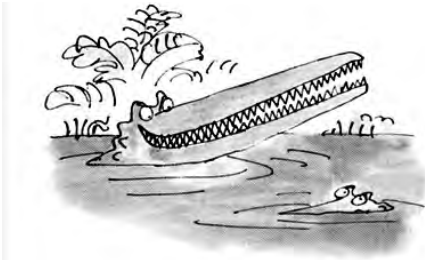
Furthermore, Dahl's text could be used to bolster the learners' use of descriptive language, of specific modifiers, to not only describe physical appearance of family and friends, but relational aspects as well. Here is an excerpt from *The Enormous Crocodile* (1998: 5–6) which illustrates this point: it contains numerous adjectives (e.g. *enormous*, *ugly*, *fat*, *juicy*, *terrible*, *clever*, *secret*, *gigantic*, *slimy*), including the comparative and superlative forms (e.g. *cleverest*, *stupidest*), that can implicitly be introduced and practiced through storytelling or role play.

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[2] Rewordify.com.

"Ah, but today when I go, they won't see me at all," said the Enormous Crocodile.

"Of course they'll see you," the Notsobig One said. "You're so enormous and ugly, they'll see you from miles away."

"I'm the cleverest croc in the whole river," the Enormous Crocodile answered. "For my lunch today I shall feast upon a fat juicy little child while you lie here in the river feeling hungry. Goodbye."

The Enormous Crocodile grinned again, and his terrible sharp teeth sparkled like knives in the sun. "Nobody will see me," he said, "because this time I've thought up secret plans and clever tricks."

"Clever tricks?" cried the Notsobig One. "You've never done anything clever in your life! You're the stupidest croc in the whole river!"

The Enormous Crocodile swam to the side of the river, and crawled out of the water.

A gigantic creature was standing in the slimy oozy mud on the riverbank. It was Humpy-Rumpy the Hippopotamus.

Another aspect of EFL teaching where Dahl's work could find application can be traced back to Nagy's (2007) metalinguistic hypothesis. Its main components include phonological or phonemic awareness, syntactic awareness, semantic awareness, and morphological awareness; links between all these types of awareness can be made to Dahl's work. For instance, when it comes to phonological awareness, it would be a good reminder to look back on the importance of the phonological aspect of his work, as previously mentioned. Dahl wrote his works with reading out loud in mind, and his preference for spoonerisms, misspellings and alliteration in many of his works is a testament to this. Reading an excerpt from *Matilda* (1988: 142)

> "You ignorant little slug!" the Trunchbull bellowed. "You witless weed! You
>   empty-headed hamster! You stupid glob of glue!"

thus provides learners with an opportunity to enjoy playful linguistic creations. Moreover, this feature of Dahl's work could further be exploited in class, with learners inventing their own colorful combinations of words and experimenting with figurative language, metaphor in particular.

When it comes to syntactic awareness, the primary focus is on Dahl's use of collocations, which on the surface may seem to be incongruent but are still understandable. To that we can add his use of verbs of speech which can play a role in (in)direct speech instruction, to help EFL learners focus not just on the content

but on how it is being conveyed. In the case of semantic awareness, we need not go any further than the study of the neologisms or descriptors in his work to understand just how big of a role the semantic component plays in his work. And when it comes to morphological awareness, any of the word-formation processes of *Gobblefunk* can be used to analyze their compatibility and congruence. Such an approach could enable EFL learners not only to explore the creative side of the language coin, but also to better understand the word-formation processes whose presence in course books leaves much to be desired (cf. Myyry, 2016).

On a similar note, Sinar (2018) wrote about the importance of a related concept, metacognition or heightened awareness to a particularly important aspect of language learning, and that is reading comprehension and how Dahl's work could be used here as well. Metacognition is also relevant for other aspects, such as word formation, language in use, and even creative writing. When it comes to reading comprehension, Dahl's particular type of language use requires the learner to first focus on that small element of language use and structure, the morpheme, and consider its particular meaning in the word it was used, both in terms of the part of speech, as well as the semantic component linked to it. That requires that the learners ask themselves questions about whether or not they understand the author's intentions and whether their inferences are correct. However, the process does not end there, as it is possible to arrive at conclusions pertaining to connotations, and even ponder the potential figurative use of language. Sinar's (2018) attempt at including *Gobblefunk* in the language classroom was met with considerable success in terms of raising the participants' awareness of the language they were presented with, along with them being able to reuse certain methods they relied on in decoding his neologisms (such as identifying parts of speech, separating familiar from unfamiliar morphemes, identifying structures of predication, relying on context, relying on visual stimuli in the surroundings, etc.).

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РАД РОАЛДА ДАЛА КРОЗ ПРИЗМУ ЛИНГВИСТИЧКИХ АНАЛИЗА: УВИДИ И ИМПЛИКАЦИЈЕ

Резиме: Овај рад има за циљ да представи различите лингвистичке анализе спроведене на делима прослављеног британског дечјег писца Роалда Дала, који је и дан-данас један од најомиљених писаца иако је преминуо пре више од тридесет година. Овај критички приказ испитује различите аспекте Далових дела који су се нашли у фокусу лингвистичких истраживања, укључујући оказионализме, употребу фигуративног језика, потешкоће које се јављају при превођењу специфичне лексике, као и његов дискурс. Анализа је показала који приступи и методе су до сада коришћени, али и какве импликације добијени резултати имају за наставу енглеског као страног језика.

Кључне речи: дечија књижевност, Роалд Дал, лингвистичка анализа, настава, енглески језик.