Phraseology in children's literature: a contrastive analysis

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3 CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

In the following chapter, various aspects of Children's Literature will be discussed. The first paragraph (§3.1.) will focus on what Children's Literature is exactly, and how it has been treated in research. We will then examine some peculiarities of (translated) CL, from the asymmetrical relationship between child addressee and the producers, intermediaries and buyers, i.e. author, translator, publisher, editor, critic, bookseller, parent, guardian, educator and librarian (§3.2.), to some key issues a translator encounters when translating CL (§3.3.), and its importance and use in language learning and teaching (§3.4.). In the last paragraph (§3.5.) we will give an overview of some important aspects of phraseology in Children's Literature.

3.1. What is Children's Literature?

Children's Literature is set apart from other literature by means of age limits: if the intended reader is up to twelve years old, we speak of CL, between twelve and eighteen years old of "Young Adult Literature" and above this age range of (adult) literature. From an abstract, theoretical point of view, these limits make our job much easier. In practice, however, these categories are not so clearly set out and most importantly, they should not limit children and adolescents in reading books they take an interest in. In fact, defining "Children's

Literature" is a highly problematic task. Lesnik-Oberstein (1996: 17) approaches the issue of definition as follows:

> But is a children's book a book written by children, or for children? And, crucially: what does it mean to write a book 'for' children? If it is a book written 'for' children, is it then still a children's book if it is (only) read by adults? What of 'adult' books read also by children – are they 'children's literature'?

The author meticulously points out which issues arise in defining CL, and consequently in defining both 'child' and 'childhood'. It goes beyond the aim of this dissertation to address these issues in detail. The texts that constitute the corpus can be seen as prototypical children's books. In this dissertation we can adopt the following as a working definition: Children's Literature (CL) is the whole of written texts primarily intended for children and for their amusement – as opposed to primarily didactic purposes – that may be accompanied by illustrations.

In the Netherlands and in Flanders children's books are categorised in two ways: based on their technical reading difficulty (e.g. word and sentence length) and based on themes. The first categorisation employs the so-called AVI[42] levels, which are primarily used in Dutch and Flemish elementary schools. Technical reading concerns being able to read words aloud correctly and fluently. Although this cannot be considered a specific goal, it is seen as a conditional activity for reading comprehension, i.e. being able to understand what is written (van Til et al. 2018: 9). The second categorisation, based on the themes that the book discusses and the social-emotional development of children within a certain age group, is used in libraries[43]. In Dutch libraries, for instance, books labelled

[42] "Analyse Van Individualiseringsvormen" ('Analysis Of Individualization forms'), but only the abbreviation is used.

[43] An interesting resource is the "Centraal Bestand Kinderboeken" ('Central Database of Children's books'), managed by the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* in The Hague. It brings together

"AB", "AP" or "AK" are picture books for different age groups of very young children. Books labelled "E" are the first books primarily intended for reading by children up to seven years, and are usually also categorised with an AVI level. The other categories are "A" (seven or eight years old), "B" (nine to twelve years old), "C" (thirteen to fifteen years old) and "D" (fifteen years and older). Informational, non-fiction books are labelled AJ (four to eight years old) and J (nine years and older) (*Indeling kinderboeken* accessed 14-01-2023). Flemish libraries have slightly different age groups: while "A" books are still intended for seven or eight year olds, for "B" books the range is nine to eleven and for "C" books twelve to fourteen; "D" is labelled as "Young Adult" reading, intended for fifteen years and older (*Leesniveau* accessed 14-01-2023[44]).

Children's literature in Italy does not seem to follow a consistent categorisation. Libraries tend to have their own system to catalogue children's books, but there seems to be a general (partial) reliance on the Dewey Decimal Classification. For instance, Turin libraries divide books into two general age categories: 0-7 years old (further divided by genre) and 8-15 years old (divided by genre or topic, following the Dewey system) (*I Libri per Bambini e Ragazzi Come Sono Disposti Sugli Scaffali?* accessed 14-01-2023). The libraries in the province of Varese use the same classification system they use for adult books, but add an indication of the general theme (*Generi Letterari per Bambini e Ragazzi* accessed 14-01-2023). A library in Imperia, with a large section of children's and youth books, uses a combination of the Dewey system, genre, and four different age groups: "PL" (*Primi Libri*; 0-4 years), "NP" (*Narrativa Piccoli*; 5-7 years), "NB" (*Narrativa Bambini*; 8-12 years), and "NG" (*Narrativa Giovani adulti*; 13-16 years) (*Biblioteca dei Bambini e dei Ragazzi* accessed 14-01-2023). The most detailed classification we

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the most important collections of children's books in the Netherlands and in Flanders and has circa 345.000 descriptions of children's books (mostly written in Dutch) from the sixteenth century onwards (*Centraal Bestand Kinderboeken (CBK)* accessed 14-01-2023).

[44] This also reflect in the search options of the general website of public libraries in Flanders: *Bibliotheek.be* (accessed 14-01-2023).

have found is that of some libraries in the area of Brescia and Cremona. The protocol states that books should be divided into three age groups (0-5, 6-10, 11-15 years old) mostly based on their complexity, and are subsequently subdivided. In some cases only an alphabetic code is used to indicate the type of content (e.g. "illustrated stories", "theatre", "poetry"), in others only the Dewey system is used, or a combination of both (*Pubblicazioni per bambini e ragazzi* accessed 14-01-2023).

Over the years, there has been a surge of scientific interest for CL, even though CL and Children's Literature Studies are often still regarded as inferior to and less important than, respectively, Adult Literature and Literary and/or Translation Studies (cf. Shavit 1986). Besides specific monographs, special issues, articles and conference papers, there are some general or periodical publications on the subject. The journal *Children's Literature* (1972–), for instance, is published annually by the Children's Literature Association (ChLA) and the Modern Language Association Division on Children's Literature. The articles and essays it includes are theoretically-based. The quarterly journal *Children's Literature in Education* (1970–) focusses on educational aspects of Children's Literature, both theoretical and practical. Ewers et al. (1994) have edited a volume on general and comparative Children's Literature Studies. The articles are divided into four sections: in the first part the focus lies on theoretical issues, in the second on genealogical and typological relationships in a broad sense, in the third on translation and adaption, while in the last recent trends in research are discussed. Hunt (1996) edited a companion of CL with over eighty essays, structured in five sections: theory and critical approaches; types and genres; the context of CL; applications of CL; the world of CL. Van Coillie & McMartin (2020) focus on translation, providing an overview of the interaction between text and context in translated CL through numerous contributions by different authors. Among the issues addressed in the volume we find the production and reception of CL and adaptation to the target culture.

Also worth mentioning are Nikolajeva (1996), O'Sullivan (2005), and Alvstad (2010). Nikolajeva (1996) analyses various aspects of CL, among which: world literature for children (touching on subjects like folktales, the "classics", national CL, cultural context and translatability), CL as a canonical art form, the history of CL from a semiotic perspective, chronotopes, intertextuality, and metafiction. O'Sullivan (2005) traces the history of comparative Children's Literature Studies. The author outlines the areas that constitute the field of CL, including contact and transfer studies, intertextuality studies, intermediality studies and image studies, providing the first comprehensive overview and discussing the substantial shifts caused by commercialisation and globalisation. Alvstad (2010) discusses the most commonly studied features of CL: 1) cultural context adaptation; 2) ideological manipulation; 3) dual readership (targeted audience includes both children and adults); 4) features of orality; and 5) the relationship between text and image.

The need for stories and oral story-telling is a universal phenomenon. Worldwide, from the end of the twentieth century, literacy is believed to be essential, and reading practice is seen as the best way to acquire it fluently. Therefore, children's books are a worldwide practical necessity (Ray 1996: 653). Although CL developed in a similar way around the globe, every country has had different timing and breakthroughs. Hunt (1996), in a section of his edited volume on "The World of Children's Literature", covers thirty three different countries and (macro-)regions. De Vries (1996) gives an overview on Children's Literature in The Netherlands starting at the end of the eighteenth century. De Vries (1996: 710) notes that Heimeriks & van Toorn (1989) have published a history of children's books in The Netherlands and Flanders "from the Middle Ages until now", but that the authors neither give any examples of children's books from the Middle Ages, nor mention didactic literature from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Kreyder (1996) covers the chapter on CL in Italy. It is noteworthy that Finocchi & Marchetti (2004) have approached CL from a

publishing point of view, discussing the relationship between publishers and young readers between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Italy.

3.2. Children's books industry

Children's Literature plays an important role in society. Since children are supposed to learn from what they read, the content of children's books is supposed to reflect the norms, values, and the view on childhood of the culture in which these books are sold and read (Alvstad 2010: 26). Furthermore, it transcends the present child reader: "The values and ideas of children's books are of huge cultural relevance precisely because children's books are read by and for children, and such values and ideas are often passed on to future generations." (Alvstad 2010: 25–26). A massive amount of Children's Literature is translated, while the children's book industry is greatly influenced by globalisation and commercialisation. The problems this creates for the translations of CL are discussed later in this paragraph.

The primary readership of CL – children – cannot give any input on the content. Adults do all the decision-making, either as 'producers' (authors, translators, publishers and editors) or as 'intermediaries' or 'buyers' (critics, booksellers, parents or guardians, family and friends, educators and librarians). Children's Literature is thus characterised by asymmetrical power relationships:

> […] adults (including translators) assess what children are able to comprehend, including the degree of 'foreignness' that children may be able to cope with, and what is valuable in a children's book (e.g. identification of the child reader with the text, fostered by the familiarity of its content, or the introduction of the child to places and cultures other than her or his own). (Kruger 2011: 122)

Adults base their decision on what they assume children could, should and might want to read. This means that books with certain content and layout

are made available to children, while others are not – or, in the case of translations, a text might only be accessible to the child reader in a (heavily) adapted form.

Authors, as well as translators, need to appeal not only to children, but also to adults; if not, they risk rejection. Sometimes this leads to the author trying to overcome this dual constraint, either by ignoring the adult audience completely, or by appealing primarily to an adult audience, whereby the child, instead of being the real addressee, becomes an excuse (Shavit 1986: 63). However, children's books are mostly characterised by a dual readership, i.e. the targeted audience includes both children and adults. Therefore, both authors and translators[45] need to take into account not only the assumed values and tastes of children, but also what adults consider to be adequate and appropriate in a certain (target) culture (Alvstad 2010: 24–26). Shavit (1986: 63–71) highlights how dual readership constrains authors to produce ambivalent texts to respond to contradictory demands.

To better understand the asymmetrical power relationships that are involved in the process of making CL and getting it to the child reader, it is useful to investigate the roles adults can play in it. We will follow the process, from the producers – authors, translators, publishers and editors – to the intermediaries and buyers – critics, booksellers; private and public buyers (respectively, parents, guardians, family or friends; teachers and librarians).

Authors of Children's Literature have a responsibility to their primary audience. Often they can influence the child reader, and the story reflects some of their own assumptions about childhood. The author must make their work readable for a child, which entails that both the treated themes and the language

[45] Sometimes this dual target audience is so complex, that it is a difficult aspect to reproduce in translations (as in the case of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Winnie-the-Pooh and Pinocchio; Alvstad 2010: 24). According to Alvstad (*ibid.*), some scholars argue that the translator should make a choice concerning the target reader – either child or adult.

need to be accessible enough, but still appealing. At the same time, their work needs to correspond to what other adults assume children can and should read, and to their norms, values, and childhood views.

As mentioned above, and as will be discussed in more detail below, translation plays a paramount role in the children's books industry. Translators usually share the difficulties: they need to stay true to the child reader, but also need to keep the publisher, critic, and other adults in mind when making decisions – from theoretical principles, to translation strategies, to specific lexical (and phraseological) choices. There are two main strategies that can be implemented when translating for children: a domesticating one (target culture orientation) and a foreignizing one (source culture orientation). Many scholars believe that in the case of CL, a domesticating strategy is to be preferred, although some think it prevents children from exploring other cultures. Oittinen (2000) advocates a reader-orientation. This implies that translators should not only be loyal to their target audience, but also to their own experience as readers. It is unavoidable for translators as well to start from their own childhood image, and to bear a specific kind of childhood and children in mind. Reiß (1982: 12) sees translators as secondary authors, as they mostly act without consulting the original author(s). In §3.3. these strategies and other aspects of translating CL will be further discussed.

Publishers' primary goal is to make as much profit as possible from the books (both originals and translations) they invest in. This means that books from renowned authors tend to be published more easily than those of non-established authors, because in the latter situation the risk of not selling enough is higher. Furthermore, the authors and books are selected according to what is perceived as on-trend and thus likely to sell. Publishing houses also tend to avoid any authors or themes that could lead to criticism from intermediary adults, i.e. critics, booksellers, and the adults who actually buy the product.

Editors will evaluate the submitted translations, and suggest (or directly make) changes to fit both society's and, to some extent, their own values and views on childhood. Furthermore, they have the power to take decisions on the layout, including illustrations that may or may not be taken over from the source text, and if not, may be assigned to an artist that better fits the target culture. In some cases, pages need to be limited for budgetary reasons.

Critics have the possibility to influence the public, by recommending children's books that are appropriate and adequate in their own view. Books marked as "suitable for children" will be preferred by schools, libraries, and other intermediary adults, to books that are not explicitly marked as appropriate. Booksellers have a somewhat similar role as intermediaries, by selecting which books to include in their catalogue and, potentially, by giving them a more or less prominent place in their (online) stores.

Private buyers are mostly parents or guardians, but also family or friends who give children's books as a present. Public buyers are schools and libraries. All buyers will select books according to what appeals most to them and their assumptions of what a child would find appealing. It is often deemed important that books have a moral or some educational value. For the Italian market, Grilli (2012) strives to offer a reference point in the world of publishers for children and young adults, and to help the reader with finding criteria in order to select valid new children's books.

Librarians have had significant influence on the world of children's books. In the first half of the twentieth century, children's librarians where the experts on CL, and were valued greatly by publishers and booksellers alike, and later on also by parents and teachers. Librarians could influence and encourage the publication of certain types of books (e.g. for young adults, or readers with special needs[46]) because of their great economic power – about 90% of hardback

[46] For a discussion on publishing for special needs, see Mathias (1996).

children's books were bought for libraries during the 1960s and 1970s (Lonsdale & Ray 1996: 617–618).

The selection of books to be published in original or in translation, is heavily influenced by trends. Globalisation and commercialisation greatly influence the children's books industry (O'Sullivan 2005: 56–63, 2011), involving especially the publishers, but indirectly also the other adult roles. This is most notable where translations are concerned:

> […] there is no equal exchange of texts between all countries; rather, the border-crossing process is extremely imbalanced. Its direction is determined by political and economic factors as well as by the international status of the source language and culture. (O'Sullivan 2005: 56)

The percentage of translated CL on the whole of available CL in a country, varies enormously. For instance, O'Sullivan (2005: 58) reports that it is estimated that in the USA the proportion of translations is between one and two percent, while it is between two and a half and four percent in Great Britain. At the same time, in the Netherlands and in Italy it is above forty percent, around thirty in Germany, and much more in the Scandinavian countries, with Finland peaking at eighty percent. Well over eighty percent of all translations in the above countries originate from English[47]. The USA and UK, the countries that export

[47] These percentages are the ones reported by O'Sullivan in 2005 and might not reflect the current situation. UNESCO's *Index Translationum* (accessed 03-05-2022) is an international bibliography of translations, originally created in 1932. The online database contains bibliographic information on books translated and published between 1979 and 2009, in about one hundred UNESCO member states. However, the database mostly depends on what data is provided. The last data received for the Netherlands dates back to 2006; for Belgium to 2010, but the last four years are still being processed. The United Kingdom has data up until 2013 (last five years in processing), the USA up until 2010 (last two years in processing). The data currently available for Italy goes up to 2007, with 2009 and 2010 in processing. It is important to bear in mind that the *Index Translationum* is not complete and above all, concerns translations in general, not translations of Children's Literature.

the most, import the least. This lack of access to other cultures is not beneficial for children:

> Most cultural commentators agree that the kind of cultural narrow-mindedness which leads to the exclusion of works translated from other languages in Britain and the USA 'is a form of cultural poverty and testifies to a lack of imagination in an information-rich world' (Stahl 1992: 19). (O'Sullivan 2005: 58)

According to O'Sullivan (2005: 58–59), one of the factors that can explain the high percentage of translations in certain target cultures, is the state of development of CL in that culture: if the literary tradition is still being established, there will be more translations to fill the gaps. The author notes, however, that although this may be a significant factor, some cultures that do have a rich and established tradition, like the Swedish, may still receive relatively many translations. Other factors that influence if and how many translations are welcomed in a target culture, could be the scarcity of local specimens (as happened for instance in post-war Germany) and general marketing factors (can we easily make revenue from this book?).

If we switch our point of view to the source language and culture, we might reflect on why some languages are, and some languages are not translated into a specific target language. O'Sullivan (2005: 59–60) lists the following influential factors:

If we take a quick look at the languages involved in this study, we see that almost 65,7% of all translations into Dutch has English as a source language. The next most frequent source languages for Dutch translations are German (13,5%), French (10,4%) and Italian (1,6%). The most frequent source languages for translations into English are French (19,5%) and German (19,3%), followed by Russian (8,1%), Spanish (6,0%) and Italian (4,1%). Dutch accounts for 2,0%. English is also the most frequent source language for Italian translations with 50,2%, followed by French (18,4%), German (13,0%), Spanish (4,4%) and Russian (2,4%). Italian translations of Dutch source texts are not so frequent (0,4%).

- Knowledge of the *source language* among culturally creative figures in the target culture (translators, editors), and the presence and commitment of *scouts*, whose part as intermediaries cannot be overestimated. […]
- *International relations* and *membership of political blocs*. Until recently these played a decisive part in exchange between the Socialist and non-Socialist states of Europe, for two reasons. Ideologically, Socialist children's literature was intended to serve the further development of society in the spirit of Socialist realism; suitable models could therefore come mainly from politically allied states. The other reason was economic: the Socialist states of Eastern Europe, as trading partners, engaged in an exchange of children's literature. Books from countries in the same bloc were more affordable than books from the capitalist countries, for which hard currency had to be paid. […]
- *Confessional aspects*, which in Europe now tend to be of solely historical significance. The historic opposition between Catholic and Protestant countries and cultures was reflected not only in the different treatment of religious material ([…]), but also in the different moral concepts and ideas of individual responsibility. In line with this, confessional aspects played a part in decisions on what should or should not be translated: […].
- The *relationships between countries*. The influence of such connections is evident in the transfer of literature from Germany to Israel. Scarcely anything was translated from German into Hebrew in the four decades after the Holocaust […]. […]
- And not least there is the *subsidizing of translations*, including translations of children's literature, for instance by cultural funds in Belgium, the Netherlands and Israel, which promote translation from their own languages.

According to O'Sullivan (2011: 189), another factor that leads to the globalisation and commercialisation of the children's book industry is that of the hegemony of just a few large media conglomerates in the leading market, that of the USA, that do not have a focus on CL. According to Hade (2002: 511), this leads to children's books becoming entertainment for mass appeal, and less of a cultural and intellectual object.

Clark (1996) and Epstein (1996) discuss the publication of children's books in Britain and in the USA, respectively. Kruger (2011) adopts the polysystem theory as a starting point for an investigation into the complex relationships that underlie the production of children's books in various languages in South Africa, and the role that translation plays in that process. Lathey (2015) also addresses the role of translation for children within the global publishing and translation industries. West (1996) discusses censorship.

3.3. Translation of Children's Literature: difficulties and strategies

There are quite a few studies on translating CL and translating for children (which, according to Oittinen 2000, are not the same). Tabbert (2002) reviews critical approaches to the translation of CL since the 1960s, listing many studies on specific books and/or authors. He states (2002: 303) that CL was traditionally the domain of teachers and librarians, but that since it became a subject of academic research, the translation of CL has gained attention because of four important factors:

> (1) the assumption that translated children's books build bridges between different cultures, (2) text-specific challenges to the translator, (3) the polysystem theory which classifies children's

> literature as a subsystem of minor prestige within literature[48], and (4) the age-specific addressees either as implied or as real readers.

Jobe (1996) gives a brief overview of translation of CL, discussing the translation process, the history of translation, and issues in translating for children. García de Toro (2020) also presents an introduction to the field of translating CL, addressing the concepts and topics that are preferred by scholars and reviewing key works. Nikolajeva (1996) dedicates a section of her book to cultural context and translatability, Ewers et al. (1994) to translation and adaptation. Oittinen (2003) edited a double issue of *Meta*, with the title *Traduction pour les enfants / Translation for children*. It contains twenty five articles covering various topics, including theoretic issues and analyses of individual authors.

A number of scholars have approached specific texts, authors or languages. Toury (1980a), for instance, analyses the German children's book *Max und Moritz* and its translation into Hebrew. Du-Nour (1995) compares translations and re-translations of children's books in Hebrew with the aim of finding out how linguistic and translational norms have changed in a time span of seventy years. According to her research, readability has become a central issue. Durão & Kloeppel (2018) propose a hybrid model to evaluate language complexity of source and target texts written in English and Portuguese, in order to analyse to what extent language complexity has been transferred from ST to TT.

Van Coillie & Verschueren (2006) explore the various challenges posed by the translation of CL and highlight some of the strategies that translators can follow when facing these challenges. Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, Toury's concept of norms, Chesterman's prototypical approach, and Venuti's views on foreignizing and domesticating translations and on the translator's (in)visibility are addressed. Especially in CL, the choice between foreignizing and

[48] See Shavit (1981, 1986) on this subject.

domesticating approaches, or source-text orientation and target-text orientation, is a difficult one. The asymmetrical power relationships previously discussed, are the main reason: it is up to adults to evaluate to what degree a child may be able to manage 'foreignness', and thus if it would be more 'appropriate' or 'adequate' to have a familiar context (a domesticating approach), or if he or she can be introduced to new worlds, new cultures, 'new' language (a foreignizing approach) (Kruger 2011: 122).

Klingberg (1986), for example, supports the view that the original CL text should remain as intact as possible in the translation. The translator should preserve the "degree of adaptation" adopted by the author of the source text. Since the author presumably has adapted the text to the readers of the ST and their assumed interests and reading abilities, and to the norms of the source system of CL, Klingberg argues that the translator should not go through this process again and respect the intentions of the author. However, as Puurtinen (1994: 84–85) points out, not taking into consideration the norms and expectations of the target system, may result in a translation that is not very readable for children and that parents or other intermediaries ultimately decide not to buy – resulting in failure for both the publishing house and the translator. Stylistic norms are subject to great variability: in some language and CL systems it may be common to write in a more literary form as a way to enrich children's vocabulary, while in others the main goal is to propose accessible texts that use an easy and everyday language. Hence, transferring stylistic and linguistic norms from source to target text could result in a clash[49].

The adaption to stylistic norms is one of the five ways in which CL might be manipulated in translation, according to Tabbert (2002: 315). The other four are: affiliation to successful models in the target system, disrespect for the text's integrality, reduction of complexity, and ideological adaptation.

[49] Puurtinen (1994) examines the effect of static vs. dynamic style on acceptability of two Finnish translations of The Wizard of Oz.

According to Reiß (1982: 7–8) translations of Children's and Youth Literature require to be treated apart from Adult Literature translations. The three factors she identifies as the underlying reasons for deviations from the source text in translated children's books are the following:

1) Adults write and translate for recipients whose linguistic competence is imperfect;
2) Translators operate only indirectly for the actual recipient: adults directly or indirectly put pressure on translators to keep taboos and educational principals in the target culture intact;
3) The knowledge of the world and life experience of children is still very much limited – the translator is thus required to adapt and explain more specific elements of the source text than they would when translating for adults.

Tabbert (2002: 314) adds the publisher's commercial interest as a fourth "and perhaps domineering factor".

While Reiß mostly attributes deviations from the ST to the child's stage of development, Shavit (1981, 1986) sees them as symptomatic of the culturally inferior status of CL in general, placing CL between the literary and the educational polysystems (Tabbert 2002: 314–315). Shavit (1986: 112–113) favours a target-text orientation:

> Unlike contemporary translators of adult books, the translator of children's literature can permit himself great liberties regarding the text, as a result of the peripheral position of children's literature within the literary polysystem. That is, the translator is permitted to manipulate the text in various ways by changing, enlarging, or abridging it or by deleting or adding to it. Nevertheless, all these translational procedures are permitted only if conditioned by the translator's adherence to the following two principles on which translation for children is based: an adjustment of the text to make it

> appropriate and useful to the child, in accordance with what society regards (at a certain point in time) as educationally "good for the child"; and an adjustment of plot, characterization, and language to prevailing society's perceptions of the child's ability to read and comprehend.

Oittinen (2000, 2006) does not take an overt position on the issue of foreignizing and domesticating approaches. In *Translating for Children* (2000), she gives an overview of what is involved when translating for children, with a focus on human action in translation. She argues (2000: 3) that the translation in its (culture- and language-specific) context "takes precedence over any efforts to discover and reproduce the original author's intentions as a given". Her focus does not lie on respect for the intentions of the author, but on the intentions of the translator and the readers of the translation. Oittinen (2000: 3) states that:

> [s]ituation and purpose are an intrinsic part of all translation. Translators never translate words in isolation, but whole situations. They bring to the translation their cultural heritage, their reading experience, and, in the case of children's books, their image of childhood and their own child image. In so doing, they enter into a dialogic relationship that ultimately involves readers, the author, the illustrator, the translator, and the publisher.

According to Oittinen (2000: 5) the translator enters into a dialogue with the future readers of the translation, who do not exist yet, and thus live in the imagination of the translator as projections of themselves and their reading experience. This reading experience is a real one, during which the translator forms their own ideas and interpretations about the source text, that will serve as the basis for the translation process. Oittinen (2006) argues that every translation for children is to a certain extent guilty of domestication, because it is influenced

by the norms and values of the target culture, and by the norms and values that the translator (unknowingly) carries inside their child and childhood image.

Several publications analyse the specific challenges translators are confronted with when translating CL. For instance, Tabbert (2002: 317–323) discusses the difficulties posed by the presence of pictures and words (illustrations should be seen as an integral part of translating CL), playful use of language (wordplay, e.g. taking idioms literally) and culture-specific phenomena. Cultural references in the source text as a challenge for translators are discussed and catalogued by Klingberg 1986, who refers to the phenomenon as "local context adaptation". Lathey (2015) also focuses on the translation of cultural markers for young readers, and highlights further problematic aspects such as: the narrative style and the challenges of translating the child's voice, translation of the modern picture book, dialogue, dialect and street language in modern Children's Literature, read-aloud qualities, wordplay, onomatopoeia, and the translation of children's poetry. Kurultay (1994) discusses problems and strategies in the translation of Children's Literature in the branch of intercultural communication.

In fact, the abovementioned challenges or problems often require the use of translation strategies, and lead to discrepancies between the source and target text (e.g. omissions, additions for various reasons, mistranslations). House (2004) focusses on linguistic aspects of the translation of CL and analyses these translation strategies and discrepancies offering an array of examples. Kaniklidou & House (2018) examine how the ideological manipulation of source texts leads to changes and shifts in translations. In a comparative study of English CL translated into German and Greek (with some reference also to Korean, Spanish and Arabic), the authors investigate the liberties translators have taken in their covert translations. The preliminary findings of the authors (2018: 232) "reveal shifts that highlight a) underlying cross-cultural discourse preferences reflected in the translations through massive 'cultural filtering', b) ideological leanings of

translators who tacitly guide reader assumptions, and c) educational adjustments to stock societal assumptions and 'official' ideas". Reiß (1982: 12) addresses adaptation in translation, and even goes as far as claiming that in the translation of CL the translator becomes a secondary author, who has to be independent in their decisions from the original author in view of the target readers.

3.4. Importance and use of Children's Literature in language acquisition and language learning

The large number of publications on the acquisition of particular parts of language (not specifically on the role CL could play in it) comes as no surprise. For instance, He & Wittenberg (2020) discuss the challenges involved in the acquisition of event nominals and light verb constructions. Wijnen & Verrips (1997) analyse the syntactic development of Dutch children, and van Hout (2013) focusses on Dutch verbs and verb frame alternations in relation to their acquisition by children.

However, CL provides for a great opportunity. On the back cover of their edited volume, Fischer & Wirf-Naro (2012) state that "[l]iterary and multimodal texts for children and young people play an important role in their acquisition of language and literacy". The editors present a collection of twenty one papers on translation of feigned orality in Children's and Youth Literature. Although some of these address educational aspects, none specifically adopt a (glotto)didactic point of view. The quarterly journal *Children's Literature in Education*, though, has proposed articles and interviews since 1970 on different aspects of Children's Literature with a strong educational orientation. The journal tackles theoretical and methodological issues, but also presents discussions on how to use CL in teaching, taking into consideration not only different types of children's books, but also other media such as film, TV, and computer games.

For many children, the first encounter with literature (both at home and at school) is through an adult reading stories aloud, not through written text (Fox

1996: 598). Teachers are extremely interested in what texts children should or can be introduced to, what their educational value is, and what effect they have on their students (Fox 1996: 601). This has not always been the case. There has been a shift during the 1980s and 1990s in the texts used for reading development, from materials written on purpose such as reading schemes and comprehension exercises, to actual Children's Literature (Williams 1996: 573–574). Before that shift occurred, scarce academic attention was directed at the effects texts have on children learning to read (Meek 1988). Reading of literary texts is nowadays seen as "a necessary requirement for the development of literary readers" (Williams 1996: 576).

According to Webb & Macalister (2013, 2019; Macalister & Webb 2019) children's books do not necessarily use easy vocabulary. In the first study (2013) the authors compared words of English CL texts with graded readers (specially written texts for learners of English as a L2 with a controlled vocabulary) and literature for adult native speakers of English. They found that English children's books have a much lower percentage of higher frequency words than graded readers, and a similar percentage of lower frequency words to texts written for older readers. These findings made the authors argue that neither texts written for children nor for adults are suitable for L2 extensive reading programs, which benefit would more from graded readers. Webb & Macalister (2019: 305–306) give three reasons why L2 learners of English could find the understanding of CL challenging, notwithstanding the assumption that texts written for children would be easy to comprehend:

1) Native children have greater vocabulary knowledge than L2 learners of English;
2) Children tend to accept they have a limited or imprecise comprehension, because their acquisition of the L1 is still at an early stage. This might be why children are still able to engage with and enjoy the input although they lack a full comprehension. It is not clear, however, if adult L2

learners are able to do the same. The authors suggest that adults might prefer to use graded readers that they are able to comprehend, instead of texts written for children with limited understanding;

3) L2 learners might not be willing to read a children's text multiple times, whereas repeated reading and listening is common in childhood, allowing L1 learners to gradually increase their comprehension of certain input.

Many scholars, however, are in favour of using CL in L2 teaching. Cheetham (2015) argues that extensive reading of CL is a powerful strategy to acquire a large working vocabulary not only for first-language but also for second-language learners, and that CL should be considered an equally suitable if not superior choice as extended reading material for L2 learners. Moeller & Meyer (1995) discuss the use of children's books in the L2 classroom and how they can help to build L2 proficiency. The authors argue that Children's Literature supports language learning because of the increased interest of the students towards the text. The stories have a familiar context and are relatively short, but allow for interpretation on multiple levels that can stimulate conversations in the classroom. Burwitz-Melzer & O'Sullivan (2016) in *Einfachheit in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur: ein Gewinn für den Fremdsprachenunterricht* have collected contributions that discuss the use of CL and Young Adult Literature in L2 teaching, and how it can be implemented. Bland & Lütge (2013) focus on the use of CL in second language teaching for children and young adults. English (2000), on the other hand, focusses on adult language education specifically, arguing that CL should be taken seriously because adults can directly connect to these stories, as they will have had similar life experiences. In a three-year study on adult learners of English from China, Ho (2000) investigated the role CL could play in adult language education. While the author states that Children's Literature has some limitations, she concludes that it works well with adult students because it is both stimulating and rewarding, and can help students

to increase there linguistic and literary competence and move on to Adult Literature. Leal (2015) has studied the use of CL in an adult university L2 classroom focussed on reading and writing. Her findings suggest that CL has a positive impact and can be used to engage and motivate students, and enhance their linguistic, cognitive and socio-emotional skills.

While there is no consensus on whether Children's Literature actually provides the best texts to use in L2 teaching and learning, there is no doubt about the fact that it is frequently used – at schools, universities, in adult second-language classrooms, and in unguided learning.

3.5. Phraseology in Children's Literature

Although phraseology in Children's Literature as a subject has seen an increase in scholarly interest, is still a largely unexplored field. In the last part of this chapter, we will shed light on some of the few specific studies concerning the use of phraseology in Children's Literature.

Similar to linguistic competence in general, authors (and we might add: translators) adjust the use of phraseology in children's books to what they assume to be the still limited phraseological competence of their readership (Burger 1997: 233). This means that authors will try to insert phraseological units into the text in a peculiar manner, through "Einführung, Einbettung, Erläuterung" (Burger 1998/2010: 173). Clark (1995: 409) states that "frequency of exposure to idioms appears to have little effect on acquisition. But exposure to idioms in rich contexts – stories that offer multiple clues to the meaning of an idiom – facilitate idiom comprehension at all ages." These rich contexts might be created through strategies like phraseological accumulation, paraphrasing or modification. Finkbeiner (2011: 60) uses this as the basis of her research, and puts forth three hypotheses:

1) The phraseological types used in children's books are semantically and pragmatically rather 'easy' compared to those in books for young adults;

2) The number of phraseological units accompanied by procedures aimed at enhancing comprehensibility is higher in children's books than in books for young adults;
3) The type of enhancement procedures used in children's books is different from the type of enhancement procedures used in books for young adults[50].

Finkbeiner tests these hypotheses in a quantitative manner in a comparative case study of Preussler's *Die kleine Hexe* and *Krabat*. Her findings tend to confirm the first two hypotheses, namely that the phraseological units in children's books seem simpler than those used in books for young adults, and that they are embedded in the text with strategies to enhance their comprehensibility more often in the first than in the second category. Although the third hypothesis could not be clearly confirmed, the empirical data did show that the need for enhancement procedures is higher in children's books.

Pickert (1978) analyses repetitive sentence patterns in children's books, that may or may not be phraseological, and illustrates patterns in which 1) repetitions of sentences are used to support a plot where events or scenes occur more than once and 2) repetition and expansion of sentences in a cumulative plot are used to review succeeding events. Schellheimer (2012) specifically focusses on phraseological expressions in fictional dialogue for children. She shows that certain PU types have been associated with spoken language and could thus be seen as characteristic of fictional dialogue, designed to evoke orality in written texts. Hayran (2017) examines to what extent proverbs and idioms are included in children's books used in elementary first-language education.

Empirical studies often involve the German language. Otfried Preussler and Erich Käster in particular have provided interesting material for the study of phraseology. Finkbeiner (2011) analysed Preussler's *Die kleine Hexe* and *Krabat*,

[50] As adolescents gain phraseological competence, the use of phraseology in books for young adults differs from that in children's books (Finkbeiner 2011: 47–48).

whereas Kelíšková (2006; unpublished BA thesis supervised by Jiřina Malá, who works on German and Czech phraseology) examined *Die kleine Hexe* and Kästner's *Pünktchen und Anton*. Ślawski (2015) concentrates on the problematic translation of collocations by means of examples from Kästner's *Emil und die Detektive* and its four Polish translations. Ślawski concludes that problems arise due to the abundance of collocations in everyday language and to Kästner's modification of them, and to the accumulation of multiple collocations in a few lines. In the target text this often led to zero equivalency counterparts, because they are conditioned by external factors such as culture, history and folk customs.

Häußinger (2017) also adopts a contrastive approach and analyses the phraseology in Rodari's *Le avventure di Cipollino* and its German translation. After an introduction to some key aspects of children's acquisition of phraseology, the first part of the study is dedicated to the use of phraseology in the original (including what functions it has and how it is embedded in the text), while the second part discusses the rendering of phraseological units in German.

As can be deduced from this brief (non-exhaustive) overview of literature on phraseology in Children's Literature, the field is still awaiting further investigation. One of our aims in this dissertation is to contribute to this area of research by analysing Dutch phraseology in CL – something which, to our knowledge, has not been done yet – in a contrastive comparison with Italian.

KEY POINTS FOR THIS RESEARCH

In this dissertation with Children's Literature we refer to the whole of written texts primarily intended for children up to twelve years old and for their amusement, that may be accompanied by illustrations.

Asymmetrical power relationships characterise Children's Literature, both regarding the source text and the target text. Translation is a vital part of the children's books industry, but also in this case, the exchange of CL

between cultures is imbalanced: globalisation and commercialisation heavily influence the industry, and both political and economical factors, and the status of the source language and culture play a big role. The asymmetrical power relationships and the importance of CL (texts should reflect the norms, values, and the view on childhood of the reader culture) lead to a tension between the source and target texts, calling for specific translation strategies.

These peculiarities of (translated) Children's Literature make it an extremely interesting corpus for different research purposes, because there is quite some possible textual and extratextual influences to take into account. But it is also a promising corpus for the scopes of this dissertation, because both the author and the translator base their texts and phraseological choices on the linguistic and cultural knowledge they assume their readers have.