Children's response to humor in translated poetry

Morta, A.R.

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Contents

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On the photo-sharing platform Instagram, close to 252,000 posts are tagged with #middlegradebooks, 108,000 posts with #middlegradefiction and 57,500 posts with #middlegradereads. We can safely assume that many of these posts were created by adults, given that Instagram requires a person to be at least 13 years old (even older in some jurisdictions) to be able to open an account. Middle-grade books are written for an audience of 8 to 12 years old, but the great number of reviews of middle-grade books posted by adults on their accounts and the considerable number of "likes" and comments they amass demonstrate that despite the age-based categorization, adults enjoy reading these books as well. Although some of the reviewers, or "bookstagrammers" as they are called, are librarians, teachers or parents who are reading the books together with children, many of them are adults who are simply discovering children's titles, new and old, and recommending them to other adult readers for them or their children to read. The reading challenge Middle Grade March, a play on the title of George Eliot's Victorian novel *Middlemarch* (1871), is also hosted on social media to set apart the month of March for reading middle grade books. Organizers provide prompts readers can follow (e.g., a book with a silhouette on the cover) and adults can participate in the challenge to read books for or with children (for example, their children or younger siblings) or for themselves. These show that children's literature appeals to members of two literary systems often at opposing ends – the adult's and the children's (O'Sullivan 1993: 111).

Such a duality of readership is exclusive to children's literature. What makes children's literature unique is that it is written for two audiences: the adults who select them and the children who read them. Even its production depends on

adults who serve as authors, editors, publishers and translators, creating texts for children based on their memory of their early years and their understanding of childhood. Lists of notable children's books are also determined mainly by adults such as critics, teachers, librarians and booksellers who appraise their quality and literary merit according to what they believe children should read which in turn is based on their own adult conceptions of a book's worth. This very nature of children's literature then raises the question to what degree the interests, needs and preferences of children in terms of what they want to read are taken into consideration in children's literature production and recognition. For instance, in 2022, the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) created a new set of awards, the shadowers' choice awards, judged by 2,000 children around the country. The children used the same criteria as the adult judges but did not know the choices made by the adults. The result was two completely different sets of winners, demonstrating that the books adults select for children to read are not always what children themselves want to read. Only the winning and honors authors, illustrators and publishers chosen by the adult judges are featured on CBCA's website.

Because it has become the norm for adults to speak for children in a genre that is primarily meant for children, this study has intended, from the beginning, to examine children's literature from the standpoint of children themselves. Children's views and perspectives are not considered enough in many aspects of children's literature production. However, children's perspective is not to be confused with a child perspective. Children's perspective refers to "children's own experiences and utterances" (Sommer, Samuelsson and Hundeide 2010: ix). On the other hand, a child perspective refers to the "adult's realistic effort and success in understanding a child's world" (Sommer, Samuelsson and Hundeide 2010: ix). Children's literature is often created and appraised from a child perspective in which adults are considered experts who give insights into children's lives. But as Hughes (1988) noted (Gollop 2000: 18 quoted in Peters and Kelly 2011: 14), it is only by talking to a child that one gains an authentic view of his or her life: "The most obvious advantage of interviewing a child is that the child is the expert (the only expert) on his [*sic*] feelings, perceptions and thoughts.... If an adult wants to know what or how the child is feeling or thinks, the adult must ask the child." This practice is a pragmatic approach to understanding and exploring children's perspectives but one that seems difficult to implement at a symbolic level and a practical level. At the symbolic level, adults feel that they know enough about children and childhood to write about young readers' needs and wants – the child perspective. In Chapter 2, role dualism is introduced to gain a better understanding of what drives adults to draw this conclusion. At the practical level, the added layer of involving children in production toward an inclusive and participatory practice demands time and resources. However, the symbolic reasoning makes for a stronger case between the two, as the experience and skill that go into creating a book, coupled with "wisdom" gained with age, legitimize the adults' authoritative role in children's publishing.

1.1 Scope and focus

Children's literature is a rich and broad genre that encompasses different topics and a wide range of works. The decision to focus on children's humor in the study is informed by the fact that humor is a constant feature in much of children's literature. Children's author Victoria Mackinlay, who served as the child judges' facilitator for the CBCA awards, noted that while children's preferences in literature can be quite varied and unexpected, their liking for humor remains the same: "What [children] liked and didn't like was sometimes surprising, but humour in the stories was a big winner" (Blake 2022: n.p.). Because humor impacts on children, in keeping them engaged in reading and in encouraging them to read more and regularly, learning more about humor and how children perceive it will benefit several young readers. By understanding how children are as readers, creators of children's literature, which include writers, editors, translators and publishers, can better bring into the text children's tastes and interests and make it more relatable to a wide range of children. Knowing children's preferences has implications not only for improving children's reading habits but also for enhancing literacy: the present study explores, among other things, whether humorous texts can facilitate language learning and strengthen the motivation to read in a less dominant (or less used) language.

1.1.1 Focus on children's poems

This study, in particular, focuses on humor in children's poems. Although poetry and prose share some similarities (for instance, poems like prose can have characters), poems were chosen over prose as materials for this study for three reasons. The first reason is purely pragmatic: poems were selected for their brevity. The study employed poetry reading sessions with Grade 3 pupils to understand how they perceive humorous children's poems. The materials for discussion must be short because the poetry reading sessions were designed to be short (suitable for 45 minutes) to take into account children's short attention span. During the poetry reading sessions, videos of the poems being read aloud were presented to the participants. The videos used were all under two minutes, giving more time for children to respond to questions and interact.

The second reason has to do with how content and form work together in poetry. The content (what the poet says) is supported by the physical structure (how the poet says it), and vice versa. The best example of this is the shape poem, also called a concrete poem, in which the words are arranged in such a way that they form an image. The visual presentation enhances the effect of the poem and adds another layer of interpretation of its meaning. Rhyme, rhythm and alliteration – all elements of form – are likewise closely connected to the meaning of the poem especially children's poems. For example, Rio Alma's Filipino poem for children, Zigzag, cleverly employs anagrams and consonance (the repetition of "s" sounds) to create a sort of tongue-twister and the screeching sound of tires and uses typography to visualize movement:

Zig, zag. Zag, zig.
Giyagis
Ang sigasig
Ng sagisag
Ng gasgas na ugat ng palad
At de-kahong
Mga senyas
O ng parikala sa landas
Ng ginigisa
Sa sariling gasolina.
Zig, zig.
Zag, zag.

The children's poems used in the study were translated from English into Filipino to determine whether Filipino children would perceive the humor in the poems differently when presented in Filipino, their national language. The translation of humorous poems is an exciting area to study given the interconnection between form and content and how there will always be some conflict between the two in poetry translation. In most cases, the content will have priority over style. However, a great majority of children's poems, especially those with a humorous narrative, rely on style, that is, the use of rhyme and repeated sounds. As will be shown in Chapter 4, the translator has to choose which to prioritize between the two in the event of a conflict, that is, when it becomes impossible to be faithful to both form and content, as is often the case. This shows that translation is a balancing act, requiring a delicate equilibrium between what could be lost and what could be gained in the process and product of translation. In *Notes on Translation Technique*, Procházka, for example, explains why he retained the stylistic structures of the original German work in his Czech translation: "... this complexity, baroqueness, almost lack of clarity, belongs to the basic structure and therefore must be preserved (...) the Czech reader gathers a similar impression from the translation to that of the German reader from the original." The aim of the study is to examine whether a poem, when relieved of the symbiotic nature of the relationship between form and content in the translation, still has a "similar impression" to the target reader. This is in support of Foster's assertion (in Nida 1964) that a good translation is "one that fulfills the same purpose in the new language as the original did in the language in which it was written." Children's poems are particularly interesting to examine in this regard. Shultz and Robillard (in McGhee and Chapman 1980) contend that if either the "tendentious content" or the "poetic form" is removed from a children's poem, the resulting version is less funny than the original. Thus, the translations produced for the study focused on form and content separately to determine which of the two carries more significant humorous impact.

The third reason for selecting poetry has an outreach component to it. Most of the time, children struggle with poetry, finding it confusing or incomprehensi-

ble. Furthermore, as will be shown in Chapter 9, more children like prose better than poetry for reasons such as a preference for exciting plots and developing a relationship with the characters in the stories. This prejudice against poetry exists even though many children are exposed to nursery rhymes in the early stages of developing language and creative expression. However, as they get older, they learn to associate poetry with serious reading: schools frequently include in their curricula only poems from the so-called canon of children's verse which Styles (1996: 190) describes as "never intended for the young at all, but was verse which adults thought *suitable for children. The gatekeepers of the canon are the anthologists* [italics in the original]." Styles adds: "Poems by Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Tennyson, who never wrote for children, have been collected more frequently in prestigious anthologies of the last hundred years than work by Stevenson, Lear or Rossetti." The present study is a chance for children to experience poetry written specifically for children and become aware that poems, similar to stories, can also be engaging and pleasurable. If the results of the poetry sessions are any indication of how children, in general, can get engaged in poetry using humor, then poetry reading sessions can be effective in transforming children's mindset toward greater poetry understanding and appreciation. When children learn to read poetry for pleasure, humor is reconciled with the serious intent of poetry: to encourage readers to think about the wider world and how they are connected to it. As Styles (2011: n.p.) puts it: "The best children's poetry is profound though the voice in the poem may be superficially light-hearted – and fun and laughter have always been and will, I trust, always be an important part of any healthy diet of poetry."

1.1.2 Focus on Filipino

It is not only poetry that is competing with other forms of children's literature. The national language of the Philippines, Filipino, has been competing with English in the area of teaching and learning. For instance, Filipino subjects are no longer required in college[1]. Daisy Jane Cunanan-Calado, a Filipino language advocate, expresses her frustration over this "lack of... love for [the] language" (Pabalate 2022: n.p.). She says that although there is "nothing wrong with prioritizing English over Filipino, which modern parents are doing", [Filipino parents] "must not give less value to Filipino" (Pabalate 2022: n.p.). Calado is concerned about "how to give equal footing to the national language" and "promote Filipino and emphasize its value beyond a mere school requirement" in elementary and high school (Pabalate 2022: n.p.). She adds that teaching Filipino should be "experiential, functional, conversational, and not too academic or grammar-based": "[Parents] should develop a fond experience in learning and using our language, so [children] would find it interesting" (Pabalate 2022: n.p.).

[1]Meanwhile, some universities in the United States, including major ones, are offering Filipino language classes (Parba 2018) which affirms the "desire for Filipino to be taught [to] and learned [by] to encourage readers to think about the wider world and how they are connected to it" (Axel 2014: 305 in Parba 2018: 4).

A good measure of this is when children also choose to read leisurely on their own in Filipino and not just in English.

Studies have shown that humor is effective in stimulating interest in reading among children. For example, a study of elementary children from Spain, the UK, Iceland and Turkey shows that most children (between 57% and 69%) like to read books that make them laugh (Adalsteindottir 2011 in Orekoya, Chik and Chan 2014: 62). What is lacking in the literature, however, is evidence that humor also stimulates a child's enthusiasm in reading in a less dominant language. This study aims to address this gap. In this study, the less dominant (or less used) language appears to be Filipino, which seems consistent with general trends. According to Pabalate (2022: n.p.), "since most subjects in school are taught in English and the Philippines have become increasingly globally competitive, more and more parents are choosing English as their child's first language." Parba (2018: 15) also observed that some Filipinos identified English as their first language. This is particularly true among families belonging to the middle and upper classes. With the lower socio-economic classes especially in Metro Manila who do not use English at home, there is some evidence that children are enthusiastic about learning in Filipino. A school official in a public school believes that using the native language as the medium of instruction "erases the notion that being good at English makes you brilliant": if the child speaks English well, then he or she must do better in his or her own language[2] (Granali 2013). Thus, while this study only involves children from middle-class families and whether humor can motivate them to read more in Filipino outside the classroom, the results can also be applied to children from lower-income groups who may be more proficient in Filipino but who may need the motivation to read in Filipino outside of school. But as Chapter 3 will show, this begs the question of whether there are enough materials for children wanting to read more in Filipino. As Calado notes, the biggest problem with reading literature in Filipino is that sometimes, it is not accessible and most of the time, it is only meant for lower levels (Pabalate 2022: n.p.).

1.1.3 Focus on translation

Children's response to humor in literature has received little attention (Zbaracki 2003: 30), and even far less when it comes to humor in poetry for children. To begin with, the critical study of translating poems for children remains "rare across popular and academic literatures", unlike translating poems for adults which is "common worldwide" (Withrow 2015: 51). Most studies done in the area of humorous children's literature involved jokes, riddles or cartoons (Shannon 1999: 122) as well as fiction, may they be entire books or excerpts such as a chapter. But as Mallan (1993: 37) points out, "poetry has the potential to capture comic effects in memorable form." It is a known fact that, for some children, the initial encounter with literature was through poetry in the form of

[2]Own language can also refer to other Philippine languages.

nursery rhymes and nonsense verses, which "serve as a spring board for diving into real poetry" (Huck 1979: 308). Exposure to nursery rhymes is perhaps the reason that though much has changed in terms of poetry's subject matter as well as language and format (Mallan 1993: 37), children still prefer narrative rhyme and humorous verse (Huck et al. 1987: 414 in Mallan 1993: 37). Huck (1979: 325) adds that "all children enjoy humorous poetry, whether it is gay nonsense or an amusing story." Translated texts compose a significant amount of literature created for children, so much so that their role is seen as more important in children's literature than adults (Bamberger 1979 in Lathey 2016: 9). It is not surprising then that in the last three decades, there has been a marked increase in scholarly writing dealing with the translation of texts for children, with studies covering aspects such as translation approaches and the function of translated children's text in the literary polysystem. More recent research has also been decisively motivated by certain traits of children's literature. It has looked into ideological manipulation, dual readership, features of orality and the relationship between text and image (Alvastad 2010: 24).

Although children read translations, there is little evidence, however, of their responses to the content and context of translated texts (Lathey 2016: 10). Children's response to translation composes a neglected area even if the few studies conducted on the effects of translation on young readers reveal important findings. For instance, Henriques (2013) found that although foreignizing strategies could raise the readers' awareness of the foreignness of short fiction (55), they did not make the text more challenging to read or less pleasant for children (53). The understanding of the characters and reactions to the plot events was virtually the same between the foreignized and naturalized version of the children's story (53). Another example is the work of Sung et al. (2015) which examined the impact of name translation on Korean children's understanding of picture book stories. Two picture books were read to the children, one with character names in Korean and the other with transliteration of Japanese names. The results indicated that children did not find the picture book with Japanese names harder to understand than the one with Korean names (226). There was no difference in their judgment of the stories or characters, which suggests that Japanese names did not hinder the participants' identification with the story characters (227). These findings have implications, for instance, in cultural context adaptation, which is widely studied in the translation of children's literature.

That it is culturally bound and dependent on personal factors then makes humor a major challenge for translators. For Raphaelson-West (1989: 128), humor can only be translated with the goal of cultural education, "using explanation and/or awkward language that sacrifices the dramatic effect." Raphaelson-West divides jokes into three groups: (1) linguistic such as puns, (2) cultural such as ethnic jokes, and (3) universal such as the unexpected (130), with the jokes progressively becoming easier to translate as one moves from (1) to (3). She adds that it is possible to translate humor if one bears in mind that "the translation will not always be as humorous as the original" (140). This is sup-

ported by Zabalbeascoa (2005: 187) who stresses that assuming that "humor will necessarily be equally important in both the translated version and its source text" or that "the nature of the humor must be the same in both source text and its translation" is a "dangerous simplification." Furthermore, he emphasizes that the translator must know "where humor stands as a priority and what restrictions stand in the way of fulfilling the intended goals" (Zabalbeascoa 1996 in Zabalbeascoa 2005: 201). Scholars and critics should be aware that there are times when translators do not aim for sameness in aspects they have no intention of preserving since they work based on a different set of criteria (Zabalbeascoa 2005: 203). The lack of "serious work" on humor translation in translation studies suggests, according to Vandaele (2002: 150), that "humour translation is qualitatively different from 'other types' of translation and, consequently, one cannot write about humour translation in the same way one writes about other types of translation."

1.2 Research/literature gaps

This study examines children's humor and the translation of humorous children's poems. Although children's humor has been widely studied by scholars such as McGhee who wrote in-depth about the stages of development of children's humor and even by Freud (1905) who was interested in the three stages of humor among children, not much attention has been given to other factors that could affect children's humor such as gender, language preferences and culture. With the first, gendered responses to humor in literature are not well discussed; by and large, humor in children is generalized only by age group. For instance, Mckenzie (2005) asserts that picture books with scatological humor are popular with younger children without making a distinction in how they are received by boys and girls. However, there are differences not only in the type of humor that appeal to girls and boys but also in how they express themselves creatively, often with the use of humor. In her study of primary pupils, O'kane Boal (2021) found that boys are more likely than girls to dive in and start to tell a story when asked. Similarly, when formulating stories, girls were more likely to refer to girls in their stories while boys only referred to boys. Language can likewise be a factor in children's appreciation of humor. It makes sense to assume that difficulty in understanding words leads to less cognitive involvement by readers. It also impinges on the reception of humor. Finally, with culture, what is "tendentious content", to borrow the term of Shultz and Robillard, or controversial or challenging is first and foremost culturally situated, as shown in Chapter 5. Differences in how humor is produced and received culturally have been studied with adult subjects, frequently focused on the Western and Eastern contrast, but minimal comparison, if any, has been made with children from different cultures. This study contributes to the literature by providing an account of how culture can influence children's response to humor in literary texts.

As mentioned earlier, humor plays a huge part in determining content for children's books. Besides suspense and adventure, humor motivates children to actively read books (Orekoya, Chik and Chan 2014: 62). In a study by Zbaracki (2003: iii), it was found that children were highly engaged in reading when the material was a humorous children's book. Humorous stories quickly become favorites among children (Shannon 1999: 119) although examples of such humorous stories have not been given. Humor is also a constant in children's verbal lore (Factor 1989: 162) such as chants, jingles and rhymes. Previous studies have pointed out what kind of humor appeals to children the most. For example, the study by Shannon (1999: 119) showed that children appreciated humor related to (1) superiority or sense of accomplishment, (2) physical events and appearances, (3) the scatological and gross, and (4) language and wordplay. As for humor in children's poetry, Huck (1979: 336-338) considers animal poems as humorous poems and says that humor in this subgenre focuses on the description of funny, eccentric characters with delightful-sounding names as well as ludicrous situations and funny stories. Furthermore, she says that "much of what children consider funny is really sadistic and even ghoulish" and that "much of what adults would call pure nonsense delights children."

But humor preferences are culturally dependent. They vary not only from one culture to another (Niedzielski 2008: 140) but also from one individual to another (Shannon 1999: 121). They change as society changes and as individuals get older (Mallan 1993: 8). What is lacking in the literature is the study of primary school children's response to humor from a cultural lens. The present study hopes to offer some insights into this. Other factors that influence appreciation of humor are sex, personality and intelligence (Kappas 1967: 70; for sex differences in children, see also McGhee 1979: 209-210). As regards the last factor, Vandaele (2002: 157) says that the ability to understand humor is "commonly accepted as an important index of intelligence" although for Chik (2001: xii), children's intellectual ability is unrelated to humor appreciation. Children's appreciation of the humor in the books also related to their sensitivity to style and tone (Shannon 1999: 142). With regard to gender, Honig (1988: 65-66) reviewed some earlier studies pointing to gender differences in humor. Among the results cited are the following:

- Boys 6 to 11 years old scored higher than girls in frequency of laughter, behavioral and verbal initiations of humor and amount of hostile humor (McGhee 1976).
- Boys were more likely than girls to choose aggressive cartoons rather than nonsensical cartoons by age 4 and 5 (King and King 1973).
- Seven-year-old girls smiled more and 7-year-old boys laughed more when with friends. Girls were more likely to laugh when with a boy than with another girl (Chapman 1983).

Other studies on gender in humor show that boys are more inclined to initiate humor more than girls and girls laugh more but initiate less (Canzler

1980 and Franzini 2002 in Dowling 2014: 123) and girls laugh more frequently about "the esthetical form, expression of humor and playing practical jokes" while boys laugh more frequently about "the mishaps of others" (Neu 2006 in Dowling 2014: 123). While previous studies looked at how children make and perceive jokes and how they appreciate humor in prose stories and visual materials, the present study aims to contribute to the discussion by uncovering whether there are differences in gender when children read humorous poems, an area that has not been explored.

1.3 Research questions

This thesis examines children's response to humor in translated texts which Verster (2019) considers an underexamined area. In particular, it explores the unexplored area of children's response to translations of humorous children's poems. The research question which hopes to address the knowledge gap in children's literature and translation studies is: How do children respond to humor in translated poems? The study hopes to identify children's experiences with translated poems, whether they respond similarly to different humorous poems and whether they identify with the characters and situations in the poems. The descriptions of their experiences are valuable for gaining insight into children's humor appreciation especially as it relates to factors such as comprehension, which is only part of the psychological response to humor (Purser, Herwegen and Thomas 2020)[3] as well as language dominance and preferred mode of input and reading environment. In particular, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Does exposure to humorous poems motivate children to read more poems?
2. Do children who read more in Filipino than in English (the two official languages in the Philippines) perceive the humor in the translated poems in Filipino more positively?
3. What is the relationship between text comprehension and humor appreciation? Are good comprehenders likely to find the poems funny, and conversely, are poor comprehenders likely to find the poems less funny?
4. Do children find a humorous poem funnier when it is read to them or when they read it individually?
5. Do children find a humorous poem funnier when they read it alone or when they read it with other people?

[3]They observed a "reliable relationship between humor comprehension and smiling/laughter" only with children 8 years or older, suggesting that laughter does not automatically result from explicit understanding. Furthermore, they found that vocabulary competence is linked to comprehension but only among older children which "demonstrates a separable role of language proficiency in humor comprehension."

6. Which elements make a humorous poem funny for children?

7. Are there gender differences in appreciating the humor in children's poems?

What sets the present study apart from other investigations is that it looks at self-reported comprehension rather than gauges the reader's comprehension through a task or question (as seen, for instance, in McGhee 1971). The relationship of the mode of input (participants reading the text individually versus listening to it read to them) and reading environment (participants reading alone or with other people) to humor appreciation have also not been investigated by other researchers which adds to the usefulness of the present study. Consistency in the participants' responses should make evident whether humorous poems elicit the same reaction regardless of differences in the type of poem (in this case, fantastical versus realistic).

In addition to these questions that directly address humor appreciation, the study also aims to answer these questions:

8. Do children themselves regard children's poems as having a dual readership (i.e., one that has both children and adults as the intended readers and not only as mediators in the case of adults)?

9. Can children better relate to a poem when it is translated into their national language?

The first question should bring light to what children perceive as suitable literature for children against one that is made for adults and whether children's ideas of what is "good" and "appropriate" for them are congruent with adult views. In particular, the question should uncover children's perspectives on children's humor versus adult humor. The participants' views on the relatability of characters and situations in the translated poems not only direct to a greater understanding of children's humor, specifically what kind of humor appeals to them the most, but also of the cross-cultural effectiveness of the translation, bearing in mind that translation is "the communication of stories between two cultures" (Barslund (2011: 139)[4]. In other words, this shows whether the translator has successfully negotiated the transfer of foreign cultures across the language gap.

Finally, the study aims to answer these questions:

10. Is form or content more influential in producing humor in children's poems? Does the presence of rhyme and rhythm make a poem funny or is the humorous content of the poem, without the support of structural elements, sufficient to make it funny?

[4]Although this applies to prose stories, this can also apply to narrative poems that tell a story.

To determine this, two Filipino translations – one focused on form and another on content – were written and presented to the children during the poetry reading sessions.

1.4 Limitations

1.4.1 Language

One limitation of the study is that it assumes that the participants' major languages are Filipino and English, disregarding the possibility that they could be more versed in other Philippine languages as the first language spoken at home. The Philippines is an archipelagic state with 186 recognized languages. It has two official languages, Filipino and English, with the former mainly based on Tagalog, a regional language spoken in the island of Luzon. Although some subjects at the elementary level, particularly in Grades 1 to 3, are taught using the students' mother tongue, English remains the primary medium of instruction from preschool to university. Kilates (2005: 13) expresses: "since [the] culture [in the Philippines] is made up of many regional and ethnic cultures with their own 'national' languages (not a unique situation in the world), English has provided... some sort of common medium of communication." Thus, it would be interesting to know how primary students, who are more exposed to English in school, respond to humor expressed in Filipino. Ezrina and Valian (2022: 2) believe that "lower proficiency in a language could either slow humor processing in that language, or cause failure to understand the joke, or both." Other scholars also found that humor processing is slower in the less dominant language (Aycicegi-Dinn et al. 2018; Ozdemir and Uysal 2016 in Ezrina and Valian 2022: 2). Ezrina and Valian (2022) add that even when there are two equally dominant languages, processing, albeit successful, is slowed by the mapping of semantic representations and access of meanings. The study did not ask for the language background or profile of the participants and only inquired about fluency in Filipino or English. However, the participants came from the University of the Philippines (UP) Integrated School which has a strong bilingual background (Filipino and English), especially since 1989 when UP adopted a language policy that emphasized the use of Filipino and then English.

1.4.2 Age

The other limitation of the study is that it looked at only one particular age group of children. Thus, whether the present study's findings can apply to a wider age range or whether there are age-related differences cannot be concluded from this study alone. The decision to involve Grade 3 pupils is influenced by the researcher's enjoyment of middle-grade literature or those texts intended for 8- to 12-year-old children. The youngest children in this age group have been selected since their cognitive skills allow them to understand linguis-

tic incongruities. However, these are not sophisticated enough and they cannot fully explain humorous events: for instance, it has been found by Zimmermann (2014) that children from 6 to 9 years of age can understand riddles but cannot say why a riddle is funny (this is further discussed in section 5.5.1.2). Thus, it would be interesting to see how younger children respond to questions on the comprehensibility and relatability of the poem's subject matter. The other reason for selecting children in third grade is that by 8 years of age, children can "decenter, take the point of view of another, and is more likely to refrain from laughing while an unfortunate person is present" (Honig 1988: 64). The poems selected for the poetry reading sessions deal with unfortunate (but humorous) events which can test whether children at this age can empathize with fictional characters, giving further insight into children's appreciation of humor. Results show not only the influence of gender but also of culture and the growth of moral development (Honig 1988: 64). The third reason for choosing younger pupils is that it can provide a benchmark for future studies on humor reception across different age groups. One such example was the study of Fabrizi and Pollio (1987) who compared the frequency and nature of classroom events that evoked laughing or smiling in a 3rd, 7th and 11th grade classroom.[5] The fourth reason for studying children at this age is that third grade is the last stage before pupils move to the intermediate phase (Grades 4 to 6). By the time they reach Grade 4, they will read different formats and genres. Thus, Grade 3 is an excellent period to encourage poetry reading, especially of humorous poems, not only for pleasure but also to enhance learning. Hayati and Shoostari (2011 in Zabidin et al. 2020: 129) observe that using humor in the classroom had an impact on students' comprehension and retention skills while Zabidin (2015 in Zabidin et al. 2020: 129) notes that the results of vocabulary tests were better when students were given humorous texts. The final reason is that third graders are seldom studied in terms of appreciating humor in literature. For example, Shannon (1999: 125) and Zbaracki (2003: 43) who came up with categories of materials that children find funny in literature, conducted their field study (or part of it in the case of Zbaracki) in Grade 4/5 classrooms.

1.5 Overall structure

Chapters 2 to 5 provide the theoretical framework. Chapter 2 demonstrates that the definitions of children's literature vary but, in general, exclude children's perspectives as they are based solely on what adults think about children's literature. Thus, how children perceive texts primarily meant for them is examined in this study. Chapter 3 shows that it is not only children's literature that is peripherally situated but, quite often, so too is translated literature.

[5] They found that humorous events became less frequent as the grade level increased. Students in the seventh and 11th grades also tended to produce disruptive behaviors which was not observed with the third graders. Differences between boys and girls were "small and infrequent."

A historical take on the translation of children's literature in the Philippines provides insight into the evolving functions of translation in a former colony. To compare early and current functions, the chapter also discusses present directions in translated children's literature in the Philippines. In Chapter 4, it is shown that most of the time, the translator cannot be faithful to both form and content of the poem and must choose which to prioritize between the two. Thus, in this study, two translations of the poems have been used to understand how children respond to humor: one based on form and another based on content. Chapter 5 shows how humor, similar to children's literature, is difficult to define. Three theories of humor are studied. The chapter also looks at humor from developmental and cultural angles.

Chapter 6 zooms in on the methodology employed in the study, from data collection to data analysis. It discusses how the research adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic, which situates the study in an extraordinary time with a new set of norms. A considerable part of the chapter discusses how the materials for the poetry reading sessions have been prepared.

Chapters 7 to 9 present the results and discussion. Chapter 7 includes the results of the poetry reading sessions with children. Feedback from the participants and their parents are included to show how poetry reading sessions, despite the online setup as the "new normal", can inspire poetry appreciation among young readers. Chapter 8 presents an interpretation of the study's results. The participants' responses to the translated poems are explained from a cultural lens. The effect of reading funny poems on social relationships, reading widely and creativity is also discussed. It is shown how a text's complexity has implications for humor competence. Finally, the chapter makes a case for the preference for free verse. Chapter 9 contains the conclusions of the study. These include the role of culture and gender in poetry appreciation, which type of "relatability" is more influential when reading a translation, whether it is content or form that determines humor in poetry, and the use of group interviews to study children's humor. The chapter ends with some recommended topics for further study.

CHAPTER 2

Children's literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses why children's literature is hard to define, despite being familiar to many and being largely "self-explanatory." The limitations of arriving at one definition are examined with respect to textual features, intended audience, content and industry practice. The discussion then shows that children's literature is sensitive to the concept of childhood, shifting in focus and form as our views of and beliefs about childhood change over time. The historical account ends with an examination of these shifting conventions with regard to culture. Finally, a new concept called "role dualism" is proposed as an explanation of what validates the "duty" of adults as "gatekeepers" who make choices on what children can and should read. Aside from a literature review, this chapter also presents the responses gathered from interviews conducted with children's publishers in the Philippines.

2.2 The problem of defining children's literature

Since the study of children's literature became an academic field in its own right in the 1970s, much debate has revolved around the definition and scope of children's literature. According to Sale (1979: 1):

> Everyone knows children's literature until asked to define it. Is it literature read by or to people younger than some age? ... Is it literature intended for children? ... Our best definition is going to be

> very loose and unhelpful, or else cumbersomely long and unhelpful; we are better off saying we all have a pretty good idea of what children's literature includes and letting the matter rest there.

Nicholas Tucker (1990: 8) shares a similar view saying that "although most people would agree that there are obvious differences between adult and children's literature, when pressed they may find it quite difficult to establish what exactly such differences really amount to." The task can be so challenging that some scholars and critics have resigned themselves to the impossibility of reaching a definition – the "antidefiners", as Gubar calls them. An early proponent of antidefinition is John Rowe Townsend who suggested that children's literature cannot be defined because the term and the concept themselves are problematic (in Gubar 2011: 210). He comments that there is "no such thing as children's literature, there is just literature" because children's books are no different from other books in the same way that children are no different from other people (Townsend 1980: 196-197). Townsend's view acknowledges that children's literature is not subordinate – and inferior – to adult literature per se.

2.2.1 Definition according to characteristics

To abandon the act of defining children's literature is to disregard the fact that it does display characteristics that are more common to it than to other genres. For instance, Thompson and Sealey (2007) found that children's texts have different linguistic properties than those of adults. Based on three corpora – 30 texts of imaginative fiction written for a child, 317 texts of imaginative fiction written for an adult, and 114 newspaper texts – sampled from the British National Corpus, they found that in terms of the frequency of parts of speech, there were slightly more proper nouns and pronouns in children's fiction, which suggests a higher degree of reference to people. Their analysis of frequent lexical verb forms showed that the word "said" is proportionately more common in children's fiction than in adult fiction and indicated that direct speech is more prevalent in the former. This is confirmed by the high frequency of beginning and end quote marks in their corpus. As for the frequency of nouns, the word "thing" frequently appears in children's fiction but not in adult fiction which could suggest the predominance of simple and colloquial words in fiction intended for young people.

By comparing different semantic categories, Thompson and Sealey (2007) likewise identified the typical features of the world and perspectives on the world that are presented in English literature written for children. They conclude that what distinguishes children's literature from literature for an adult audience is the importance it gives to animals, food and plants, as well as to movement and speed. It is a "world of objects, and a world in which sight and size are emphasized." On the other hand, adult fiction "is distinguished by intimacy and sexuality, and is a world in which beliefs and broad questions about

life predominate, and is a world of social laws" (Thompson and Sealey 2007: 15).

These observations align with what Mcdowell (1973: 51) identified as unique characteristics of children's literature. He notes: "Children's books are generally shorter; they tend to favour an active rather than a passive treatment, with dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection; child protagonists are the rule; conventions are much used; the story develops within a clear-cut moral schematism which much adult fiction ignores; children's books tend to be optimistic rather than depressive; language is child-oriented; plots are of a distinctive order, probability is often disregarded; and one could go on endlessly talking of magic, and fantasy, and simplicity, and adventure." While most of these observations are still valid, there are also developments in children's publishing such as moving away from merely simple and fantastical themes toward exploring hard subjects and real-world issues. There are books now that help children understand and process sensitive topics such as immigration, war and discrimination. Some examples are the Newberry Honor book *The War That Saved My Life* (2015), the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature recipient *Front Desk* (2018), the Edgar Award nominee *From The Desk of Zoe Washington* (2020) and the New York Times bestseller, Newberry Honor book and winner of the National Book Award *Inside Out and Back Again* (2011).

Other authors have made observations similar to the ones given by McDowell. For Judith Hillman, children's literature exhibits typical childhood experiences written from a child's perspective, children or childlike characters, simple and direct plots that focus on action, a feeling of optimism and innocence (e.g., happy endings are the norm), and a tendency toward combining reality and fantasy (in Nodelman 2008: 189). For Temple, Martinez and Yokota (2014: 9), a children's book usually has three qualities: a child protagonist and an issue that concerns children, a straightforward storyline with a linear and limited sequence in a confined setting, and language that is concrete and vivid and not overly complex. But Gubar (2011: 212) objects to the generalizations expressed by other scholars in differentiating children's literature from the rest, saying that a common, universal trait cannot possibly be shared by all children's texts and that they can only exhibit a "family resemblance", a term she borrows from Wittgenstein. This is based on her study of Anglo-American children's theater in which she did not discover "a single characteristic shared by all professional children's plays that decisively differentiates them from dramas aimed at adults" (Gubar 2011: 214). Similar to children's stories, many of which came from originally adult stories such as folk tales and fairy tales, children's theater evolved from theater in general to entertain and educate children.

2.2.2 Definition according to audience

Children's literature can also be defined by authorial intent. However, this also poses problems. For instance, Maurice Sendak (2011), best known for the picture book *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), once said in an interview that

"I do not believe that I have ever written a children's book. I do not know how to write a children's book... I didn't set out to write a children's book."

Children are not the only intended readers of children's literature. It has a dual audience, a characteristic feature even of what are considered children's classics. Wall (1991) was the first to introduce the three types of audiences of children's literature: single audience, dual audience and double audience. When the child is consistently the implied reader, the text is considered as having a single address as can be seen, according to Wall, in the works of Beatrix Potter. But when the implied reader is a child and adult at different levels, the text is said to have a double address. Such readership was typically found in texts written in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when "authors had not yet found an appropriate voice to address children" (Semizu 2013: 4). Double address "exhibited a strong consciousness of the presence of adult readers" (Wall 1991: 9 in Gannon 1994: 190). A fusion of these two is the dual address, introduced in the 20th century by writers (Birketveit 2020): when the implied reader is simultaneously a child and an adult. More specifically, the narrator "addresses adults without excluding children" (Semizu 2013: 4). The Harry Potter books seem to be an excellent example of texts with a dual address that speak to adults and children on the same level. What is helpful in her analysis is the assertion that the "voice" or "tone" used toward a child is discernible "in speech as in narration through inflection and style" (Lesnik-Oberstein 1992: 252). However, it is also criticized for the lack of distinction between narrator and author, and narratee and reader (Semizu 2013: 4) and for arguing based solely on "*her* knowledge of the 'real' child" [italics in the original] which makes her assertion only one of the many opinions on the subject (Lesnik-Oberstein 1992: 252-253).

For Wall (1991: 2), it is easier to define a children's book than children's literature. She clarifies: "If a story is written *to* children, then it is *for* children, even though it may also be for adults. If a story is not written *to* children, then it does not form part of the genre writing for children even if the author or the publisher hopes it will appeal to children" [italics in the original]. She explains that it is not the content but how it is transmitted and to whom it is said that distinguishes a book for children; in fiction, adults speak differently when addressing children (Wall 1991: 2-3). Wall's take then differs from the traditional definition of children's book based on subject and readability. In narratives for children, the narrator is often presented as an authorial persona and the narratee, though not directly addressed, and his or her characteristics are constantly being defined in the text (Wall 1991: 5). She argues that today, most children's literature published has a narrator that uses a single address: the narrator talks exclusively to a child audience. But even this is debatable as seen in many examples of crossover literature.

For instance, Sale (1979: 1) observed that children's literature includes many books that older people enjoy even when they are not reading them with or for children. Thus, to define children's literature as works made only for children – a standard definition of the genre – already poses limitations. Peter Hunt,

for example, believes that children's literature consists of only texts that were "written expressly for children who are recognizably children, with a childhood recognizable today" (Grenby 2014: 3). However, C. S. Lewis (1982), who read and enjoyed *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) in his late twenties, believes that "a children's story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's story" because "the good ones last", meaning that for him, children's books that also appeal to adults are certainly part of children's literature.

Adding to the complexity of arriving at one working definition of children's literature are books initially intended for adults but became popular with children (and vice versa, as in the case of *The Hobbit*). Peter Pan, for example, first appeared in a novel for adults, in J. M. Barrie's *The Little White Bird* published in 1902, and became suitable for children only after it was transformed into a play in 1904 (Rose 1984: 61). The same is true for fairy tales. While many have been (re-)written or adapted for children, fairy tales — myths and legends that evolved into folktales — had adults as their primary audience. In Tolkien's words, they echo the "dark beliefs and practices of the past" and present unpleasant subjects such as child abuse, incest and murder. According to Tolkien (1947), why children are associated with fairy tales is "an accident of our domestic history", such stories having been downgraded to the nursery when they have gone out of fashion for adults. Thus, from the beginning, children's literature has been identified as a lower genre, as explained in Section 2.4.

2.2.3 Definition according to content

During his time, Henry James proposed that children be excluded when writers discuss formerly prohibited topics so that writers could talk freely about their art (in Hughes 1978: 548) without consideration of the delicate nature of children. Nevertheless, this view has evolved. As children's book writer and illustrator Natalie Babbitt (1970) points out, there is little difference between new books for children and those written for adults in this respect: "war, disability, poverty, cruelty, all the harshest aspects of life are present in children's literature." She adds that the only books created to be "gentle and sweet" are those "written by people who have been deluded by isolation or a faulty memory into thinking that children themselves are gentle and sweet." For instance, Evasco (2011: 129-130) describes the period 1990 to 1999 of children's book production in the Philippines as stagnant, during which children's books are too safe and "wholesome", avoiding mature and serious themes.

In recent years, however, local publishers have released books on social realism, exploring a more comprehensive range of themes such as gender and child abuse. For instance, publishers in the Philippines are now able to publish about a broad range of topics especially now that there is more focus on inclusivity; there is an effort to make books for all types of children. A few years ago, Tahanan Books produced its first LGBTQ book for children called *Dalawa ang Daddy ni Billy* (Billy Has Two Dads, 2018) to promote understanding and

acceptance. Tahanan Books believes that just because something is new or different, it cannot be for children; labeling books as "wholesome" comes from an assumption of what is appropriate for children. According to the publisher: "A book about two fathers is not necessarily unwholesome. It is how you write about it that makes it appropriate for children." In Sweden, by the 1960s, fairy tales became outdated as they were believed to draw children away from real problems and children's books started to tackle the "misery, loneliness and anguish" of everyday life (Nikolajeva 1996: 68). Goldstone (1986: 791) posits that these developments happened not because child readers have become more sophisticated in decoding and comprehension but because sociocultural changes are driving publishers to select more mature books for children.

However, not all countries are receptive to such a shift. In Hungary, for instance, some bookstores placed signage at their entrances in July 2021 to inform customers that they sell "non-traditional content." The act was in response to a new law that prohibited "depicting or promoting" homosexuality and gender transitions in materials accessible to children (Washington Post, 16 July 2021). A month later, the government ordered bookstores to seal and wrap children's books containing LGBTQ themes and not to sell books or media content that depict homosexuality or gender change, whether intended for children or adults, within 200 meters of a school or church (Washington Post, 2 August 2021; Reuters, 13 August 2021). According to book publishers, the law's immediate effect is "self-censorship" as they cannot produce books for a much smaller market.

2.2.4 Definition according to industry actors

Some scholars have noted how the literary system as a whole defines children's literature. According to Townsend (1971: 10 in Nodelman 2008: 144), "the only practical definition of a children's book — absurd as it sounds — is a book which appears on a children's list by a publisher." Lesnik-Oberstein (1994: 4-5) says that the definition of a children's book is still "variously based on publishers' and editors' decisions, general trends of style and illustration, supposed or claimed readership, and theories of the creative processes which produce a book." Adarna House, the first children's publishing house in the Philippines, limits children's books to children's stories and poems, young adult novels and graphic literature and stresses that people generally know children's literature as printed books.

However, it is not only the publishers who decide what children's books should be. Other elements that make up the literary system, including award-giving bodies, do so as well. The National Children's Book Awards (NCBA) of the Philippines, for instance, defines a children's book as "a printed and bound volume that explicitly states it is for children and/or young people, hereby understood to refer to those falling within the ages 0-19 years" (Gagatiga 2011). This is an excellent example of the arbitrariness of definition ascribed to children's literature. Although the NCBA still considers those above 18 as children,

in the Philippines, legislation identifies children as persons below 18 years of age, and those over 18 years old are considered children only when "they are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination because of physical, mental disability or conditions" (Saplala 2007: 88). In the United States, the Newbery Medal and Honor are awarded to books for which children are an intended potential audience, with children defined as persons of ages up to and including 14. Clearly, the criteria vary from one geographical location to another.

One study reveals that adult judgment of books, as manifested in children's lists, does not always agree with that of children. Munde (1997) found that out of the 168 unique titles from the 1995 Children's Choices List as well as the combined 1995 Notable Books for Children and the 1995 Teachers' Choices List by the American Library Association, only six were identified as favorite books by both adults and children. Furthermore, Munde found that selections for humorous books varied greatly between children and adults. For instance, for the ages 8 to 10, children selected books that included shorter fiction and riddles while adults chose poetry, folktales and longer fiction. Aside from being shorter, children's choices were also less "literary" and relied more on plot action than memorable prose (Munde 1997: 225). This supports what Lehman (1991 in Stoodt et al. 1996: 67) generalized, upon analyzing books that appeared on the Children's Choices List: children prefer predictable qualities, optimistic tone and a lively pace; children prefer action-oriented structures and complete plot resolutions; and children do not choose books with unresolved endings, tragic tones, or slow-paced introspective plots. In her study, Munde also drew attention to the fact that adults chose a book of short poems with puns and wordplay while children chose fewer books of verbal humor which included, as Munde described, what adults would consider "the worst puns and word plays imaginable" (Munde 1997: 225).

2.2.5 Summary

Although children's literature is generally accepted as composed of texts specifically written with the needs and interests of children in mind, such needs and interests are understood differently by scholars which leads to differing opinions of children's literature. Regarding characteristics, there seems to be some common ground: it has been observed that children's literature is written from a child's perspective and tends to be shorter, rich in dialogue and has a simple, action-oriented plot. But a complication arises when target audience is considered. The presence of a dual address, a term first introduced by Wall, makes the common definition of children's literature as intended for children debatable since adults can also read and enjoy it. In addition, there are books originally written for adults but now considered to be children's texts. There is also no agreement when it comes to what children's literature should contain, and although there have been developments in this aspect, what is appropriate content is still primarily dictated by culture. Finally, industry actors shape how

children's literature is defined by creating children's lists. All these definitions are influenced by the concepts of "child" and "childhood" and as the next sections will show, just as these concepts have changed over time, so too have definitions of children's literature.

2.3 Evolution of the concept of childhood and its influence on children's literature

2.3.1 The medieval period in Europe

Aside from discrepancies in the age of the intended audience of children's literature, there are also problems arising from the absence of a universal concept of child and childhood. The concept of childhood evolved through time along with major historical and social conditions and brought with it cultural transformations that have lasting effects on modern society. Before the seventeenth century, society did not recognize children as different from adults with special needs, which was why there were no educational systems and books for children. Ariès (1960: 128) mentions that in medieval times "children were neglected, forsaken or despised" and that the awareness of "that particular nature which distinguishes the child from the adult" was lacking. Back then, children were considered no different from adults and were regarded as "miniature adults." As such, they were depicted in medieval painting and art with adult proportions, stern countenances and formal postures (Goldstone 1986: 792). The stage of childhood was disregarded; it was a "fragile period" that had to be left in advance because of high child mortality due to diseases. Owing to the short life span characteristic of the period, children entered adulthood early and became an integral part of adult society, sharing adult dress, work, and leisure (Shavit 1986: 6). However, some held opposing views from Ariès. For example, Shahar believes that in the Middle Ages, childhood was recognized as a distinct stage in the life cycle, which means that there was a conception of childhood and children were not merely miniature adults (in Nodelman and Reimer 2003: 82).

2.3.2 The seventeenth century

The seventeenth century was a period of new social conditions — the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of the bourgeois class (Shavit 1986: 6) — that led to a new concept of childhood.

First, children were now recognized as innocent, sweet and angelic. Ariès credits this view to a new tendency in religious devotion and iconography in which the Infant Jesus was represented by himself in religious painting, engraving and structure. In other words, children were no longer just small adults (6). With this new understanding of childhood, children and childhood became a constant source of amusement (7). Ariès mentions how M. d'Argonne, in his

treatise on education *L'Education de Monsieur de Moncade* (1690), complained that many parents took an interest in their children for the sheer pleasure and entertainment they derive from their "caresses" and "antics" (Ariès 1964: 131). Other moralists and pedagogues disdained such coddling, such as Montaigne (in Ariès 1964: 130) who rejected valuing children only for "amusement, like monkeys."

Second, childhood was associated with the spiritual well-being of the child. It was believed that they should be educated and disciplined by adults. This focused on the serious psychological interest in the child (Shavit 1986: 7). Such a massive shift in the understanding of childhood brought about two new institutions: a new system of education – the school system – and a new readership that produced an unprecedented market for children's books (4). Education and books were seen as pedagogic tools that could reform children who were "delicate creatures" (7) and "must be protected, educated and molded in accordance with the current educational beliefs and goals" (Shavit 1989: 136). Shavit notes that this second notion of childhood served as the framework for canonized children's literature. Because texts, too, must respond to children's capacities to comprehend and their educational needs (Shavit 1986: 7), they varied from period to period, with the changing understanding of children's needs and capacities. For instance, Nodelman and Reimer (2003: 83) mention how children's literature in the seventeenth century was very different from what it is today, composed of texts that were "excessively preachy and unnecessarily depressing" and are related to faith and salvation and directing children to the right path. These first texts for children were developed by the Puritans who believed that children were "as prone to sin and in need of salvation as adults were" (Nodelman and Reimer 2003: 83).

2.3.3 The eighteenth century

The assertion of John Locke (1689: Sec. 2) in the eighteenth century that humans are born with a blank state of mind, a "white paper, void of all characters", which is gradually filled up by knowledge gained from perception or experience, had profound effects on education theory. Daniel (1982: 157) described Locke's conception of the child's mind as like wax, soft and capable of any impression which is given to it, meaning that the child is also a product of external factors such as experience and learning (that is, the nurture side of the nature-versus-nurture debate). Before Locke, many educators believed that children were born with innate ideas and certain knowledge. Because children are born *tabula rasa*, it is up to the adults to guide and teach them since "their want of judgment makes them stand in need of restraint and discipline" (Locke 1693, Sec. 40.). Locke believes that learning might be made "a play and recreation to children" (Sec. 148) and that entertainment can be a source of learning.

Locke's essay influenced British publisher John Newbery (1713-1767) to produce books that children should enjoy reading. Historians of children's literature often regard Newberry's *A Little Pretty Pocketbook: Intended for the*

Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly, published in 1744, as the first real children's book. Its creation signaled the shift from purely didactic literature that infuses moral, spiritual and ethical values in children to one that amuses and educates. Below each illustration of activity and verse is a moral lesson (or "rule of life") as well as a rule on children's behavior. Locke's influence on Newbery is evident in the book's introduction where Newbery called him "the great Mr. Locke" and his beliefs on nurturing children echoed Locke's attitudes and sentiments. The book contains games and activities, such as fishing and baseball, possibly inspired by Locke's saying that "children may be cozen'd into a knowledge of the letters; be taught to read, without perceiving it to be anything but a sport" (Locke 1693, Sec. 149). New editions of fables cropped up as Locke encouraged the use of fables to teach kindness (Butler 1982: 96), introduce children to moral principles (Daniel 1982: 153) and improve general reading and stylistic ability in students, seeing them as practice tools for translation (153). Locke himself published his Latin-English translation of fables in 1703. The mid-18th century then saw the return of the fable to its more traditional form of children's literature concerned mainly with imparting maxims and socially acceptable behavior; in the late seventeenth century, fables were used mainly for pedagogic purposes such as to teach Latin to children (152-153).

2.3.4 The nineteenth century

In the nineteenth century, childhood was reconceptualized as a process of development toward adulthood. It was thought that the early years of children would significantly impact on their adult years. Parents invested in children's formation – "categorizing, managing, and disciplining them" to guarantee their future success (Pugliese, no date). Thus, by the nineteenth century, when the whole industry of children's books flourished, children's literature was still very much linked to the field of education. *Early Lessons* (1809), the book in which Maria Edgeworth's "The Purple Jar" first appeared, clearly identifies its provenance as well as its audience: young children in need of education (Nodelman 2008: 2). One of the earliest bibliographies of Anglo-North American children's literature in the nineteenth century is *The Guardian of Education* by Sarah Kirby Trimmer. In the five volumes published from 1802 to 1806, Trimmer reviewed books for children and young people, printed relevant extracts from other writers, and discussed educational practices (Marks 2014: 314). Her main interest was religion and this reflected on how she reviewed children's books. She criticized books that portrayed death, insanity and sexuality and books that could be frightening for children (Grenby 2002: xxxv).

Reynolds (2014: n.p.) also states how the nineteenth century saw the development of what is called the Cult of Childhood, "with adults exultantly celebrating childhood in texts and images" instead of only a "state to be hurried through" toward adulthood. This belief showed in written works during the "Golden Age" of children's literature such as, according to Reynolds, *The*

Water-Babies (1863).

2.3.5 Modern concepts of childhood

Some scholars argue that the "child" in "children's literature" does not exist at all and is merely constructed by society, in the same way that childhood itself is a socially contrived state of being (Goldstone 1986: 792). The "child" is invented, described in different, often clashing, terms (Lesnik-Oberstein 1994: 8) and set in place by the category, the one which it needs to believe is there for its own purposes (Rose 1984: 65). For Rose, children's fiction rests on the idea that there is a child to be addressed. To assume that there is only one kind of child being addressed, that is, the book can only speak to one group of children and disregard others, is also unacceptable for her. There is no generalized concept of the child as there are divisions – of class, culture and literacy – and this is something that the children's book market faces. For Nodelman (2008: 5), writers produce books based on the assumptions of the adults who purchase them and the child readers are whoever the writers imagine and imply in their works, whether or not they are what adults think about them. He adds: "the childhood imagined by children's books might be the means by which actual children learn how to be suitably childlike" and "the version of childhood presented by children's literature may be accurate as a self-fulfilling prophesy" (Nodelman 2008: 190). Children's fiction has also been described as "a chase or even a seduction": it does not reflect children's desires, interests or characteristics, but adult fantasies about childhood, ideals which child readers are meant to identify with and emulate (Rose 1984: 2).

Darton defines children's books as works seemingly produced "to give children spontaneous pleasure, and not primarily to teach them" (in Nodelman and Reimer 2003: 81), works which did not become widespread until about the middle of the eighteenth century. Even those that take a religious-moral-social tract are made to be entertaining to enhance their appeal (Pellowski 1980: 15). At the same time, those that entertain must also be informative. In a developing country like the Philippines, for instance, it is a luxury to buy books that are not educational (i.e., not used in school) and so publishers give children's books instructional features (Evasco 2011: 129). For Grenby (2014: 2), children's literature covers many forms which have been intended to entertain children at least as much as to instruct them. That children's literature must be both amusing and instructional is grounded on views of education.

2.3.6 Cultural differences in the evolution of the concept of childhood

It must be noted that the notion of childhood did not evolve in other parts of the world in the same way as in the Western world. This strengthens the belief that childhood is socially constructed. For example, according to Evasco (2011: 117), the representation of the child as a "miniature adult" is a contemporary

concept in the Philippines, with the preponderance of modern-day problems such as child labor and child prostitution. While Evasco does not discuss how this influenced the production of children's literature in the Philippines, there are children's books published in recent years that acknowledge and respond to these societal issues such as the bilingual *Karapat-Dapat: Bata, alamin ang iyong mga karapatan!* (Child, Know Your Rights! 2018) which tackles the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child using child-friendly language.

Another reason why such conceptual development of childhood as a framework for understanding the evolution of children's literature should be treated with caution is that, in contrast to what Ariès and Shavit identified in the Western tradition, the delineation of concepts is not clear-cut in other cultures, particularly in colonized nations. The view of childhood can be a blend of multiple beliefs. For example, during the period of Spanish colonization in the Philippines, which began in the 16th century and lasted until the late 19th century, the Filipino child was represented not only as a "holy child, pure and innocent in the mold of the cherubim and the Holy Infant Jesus" but also an "evangelical child" who needs the guidance of the Catholic Church as seen in *Ang Bagong Robinson* (The New Robinson, 1879), one of the first Filipino books for children (Evasco 2011: 117). Likewise, the child is a Europeanized/urbanized indio (native indigenous Filipino) as in *Urbana at Felisa* (1864) (117).

According to Evasco, the notion of the evangelical child and the Europeanized/urbanized indio child continue to exist. The interpretation of the child as an evangelical one affects how children are disciplined and treated as "unfinished adult(s)" (117). On the other hand, the Europeanized/urbanized indio child is conditioned by the education system and the mass media. As a result, most Filipino children possess a colonial mentality and taste (118), for instance, in how they regard skin color as a measure of beauty (e.g., a child with darker skin can face insults from other children). Furthermore, the representation of the child during the American colonization period until the present day is a project of the public school system, a "little brown American" influenced by Americanization and the miseducation of the child (117). The effects of such Americanization are felt to this day. In the Philippines, both Filipino and English enjoy official status as languages but English continues to carry more prestige, used in formal environments as the medium of instruction in schools and for economic and political activity. This could explain why bilingual children's books are popular in the country. For instance, while Tahanan Books targets Filipino children in the diaspora for its bilingual books, Adarna House releases bilingual editions mainly to reach Filipino children from the demographic class A (upper to upper middle classes), composed of families with higher educational attainment and greater access to English language usage.

2.4 The status of children's books

2.4.1 General views

As a category, children's books generally occupy a lower status. Such a negative attitude towards children's literature was already present as early as the late nineteenth century when Henry James published *The Future of the Novel* (1900). Remarking on the commercial success of writing for children as a sign of declining standards, he writes that one can make a great fortune and reputation from writing for "schoolboys" and the "published statistics are extraordinary." However, the taste shown in these publications is "but an obscure, confused, immediate instinct" (in Hughes 1978: 546). Children's books were excluded from "serious literature", those that were based on realism, and were classified under popular literature, an "arbitrary categorization" (Hughes 1978: 550). The belief that children cannot read serious novel became widespread among writers and critics and implied that children needed unique books. Fantasy, characterized by one or more imaginary elements such as a make-believe world, characters with magic powers, or imaginary events (Stoodt, Amspaugh and Hunt 1996: 20), became a trademark of English children's literature. Hughes (1978: 553-555) explains the widespread prejudice against fantasy disseminated by E.M. Forster's 1927 lectures:

> A consequence of the prejudice that fantasy is childish has been that the writer of fantasy has been directed into writing for children no matter how good he or she might be while the realistic writer has had a choice and been encouraged to regard writing for adults as more satisfying ... The fantasist has no option but to write for children since "real" realism was impossible in a children's book. Thus, fantasy came to be understood as the opposite of seriousness, and meant trivial or frivolous.

Editor Reka Simonsen states in an interview with the online magazine Publishers Weekly that "there's still a lot of condescension toward children's books from the world at large and even from within the book industry"; there are people "who don't take [this] entire category of books seriously" enough to be bothered to know the difference between young adult and middle grade (Maughan 2018). Nikolajeva (1996: 64-65) says that for many years, children's literature has been treated as non-culture – "the other" – similar to the criminal novel, romance and other "paraliterature." This could be attributed to the fact that children's literature started to emerge after adult literature had been well established. It was only in the mid-18th century when children's books became a distinct and independent "but subordinate branch of English literature" and only in the second half of the nineteenth century when children's book production grew (Shavit 1986: 3). Before this time, there were stories about what children should read, or did read, stories that emerged from twin

roots – comments on education from classical antiquity, and the Christian educational practices of the church in the Middle Ages (Lesnik-Oberstein 1994: 37) – but not in their current form. Thus, although long considered worthy of critical inquiry – for instance, with the signing of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989, children's books became a legitimate and recognized form in the academia in the Philippines (Evasco 2011: 114) – children's literature has not been given the same level of attention among scholars as adult literature (Mattson 2015: 4). Scholars of the novel "regard the category as part of lower culture and reference it only to disparage the non-literary in this way casually disregard children's literature's equivalent capacity to adult literature for linguistic complexity, aesthetic sophistication, and thematic radicalism"[6] (Mattson 2015: 5). This again points to the lower status of children's literature in the literary system.

2.4.2 Views of Philippine publishers

Personal interviews with local children's publishers show that how one looks at the status of children's literature also tends to be subjective. For example, publishers believe that there have been improvements in how children's literature is viewed and accepted by society, boosting the genre's image. Adarna House, a leading children's publisher in the Philippines, acknowledges that "there used to be a stigma" (Garcia 2020, personal communication), especially with children's books being compared to comics in the early 2000. But children's literature in the Philippines is now better represented by institutions such as the Philippine Board on Books for Young People and the National Book Development Board which help put children's literature in the mainstream by recognizing achievements in the genre. Similarly, there is healthy competition between children's book publishers "so the status is better than other forms of literature" (Garcia 2020, personal communication). Tahanan Books, another leading children's publisher in the Philippines, admits that it is not aware of any negative impression or attitude toward children's literature because it has always received good reviews and "that is all the validation that [it has] ever needed" (Ong 2020, personal communication). In addition, children's literature is a growing industry – one of the steadiest in book sales – as there will always be children who need these books. In the end, it feels that how one looks at the status of children's literature "depends on the criteria one values." The status that Tahanan Books ascribes to children's literature is influenced by its belief that children's literature is equally important as other genres. Ong explains: "Who

[6] De Mulder et. al. (2022) found that children who spend more time reading books also report being more inclined to understand other people's mental states (mentalizing) and "take other people's perspectives in their daily lives" (253). They also found that there is no difference between eudaimonic ("sad, moving and beautiful") and hedonic ("exciting, scary, funny, happy and romantic") books in their correlation to mentalizing (254). This suggests that written narrative fiction for children can have significant effects on children in the way they navigate the world which makes it just as important as narrative fiction for adults.

will read adult fiction if they didn't start reading as children? Children's literature can provide the foundation for readers to read older and more complex texts." This healthy self-image of local children's publishers, which translates to a good conception of children's literature in the Philippines, also reflects how local children's writers see themselves. According to Tahanan Books: "There is this impression that children's writers are failed writers for adults. But it's a very different skill set. It's not like if you write for adults, you can write for children. It's very difficult to switch mindset" (Ong 2020, personal communication). There is some indication then that children's literature in the Philippines does not occupy a lower status than other genres from the perspective of local publishers. Children's publishers take pride in their achievements in producing literature for young readers, particularly with today's writers, researchers and illustrators having a number of advantages over the writers, researchers and illustrators of the past. Interviews with more publishers can validate whether this holds for the greater part of the industry.

2.5 Proposing a new concept: role dualism

It is almost always the case that adults decide on the books that children read. Such "duty", if it might be called that, is validated by what can be termed as "role dualism", where a fusion of two roles occurs: that of the adult and the child. First, adults believe that they can make choices on what children should and could read because as adults, they know better than the "children [who] are still in the process of learning how to become members of the adult community they have been born into" (Nodelman and Reimer 2003: 97). Adult involvement, in this case, is both a moral obligation and a social responsibility and, in the case of educators and librarians, even a professional duty. The moral duty of adults toward children is to help and encourage them to develop as rational and autonomous adults who can act in their best interests (Bailey 2010: 33). Adults are also expected by some social standard (e.g., law) to provide a supportive environment so that children can become responsible and productive members of society. For instance, in Chapter 3 (Effect of Parental Authority Upon the Persons of the Children), Article 220, number 4 of the Family Code of the Philippines, it states that parents must provide their children with "good and wholesome educational materials" and "supervise their activities, recreation and association with others." In the 2017 National Book Development Board Reading Survey, children identified parents as the main influence on their reading behavior (National Book Development Board 2018: 3).

At the same time, adults believe that they can judge what children would like to read as they were once children themselves, and thus believe they can assume the role of children. Indeed, when the managing editor of Tahanan Books was asked by the author of this thesis how they ensure that the reading interests of children are respected when they select stories to publish, she

said that they "pretty much rely on their memories of how they were when they were children" (Ong 2020, personal communication). The same is true for many children's writers, says writer and illustrator Jean Gralley: "Many writers write out of sentiment and nostalgia for childhood, a sanitized memory of what it was like" (Haertsch 2019). Rose asserts that adults are frightened by the real nature of childhood so to protect themselves, they construct images of childhood that omit everything threatening (in Nodelman and Reimer 2003: 96). According to Adarna House, its bestselling books remain to be the classics such as *Ang Kamatis ni Peles* (The Tomatoes of Peles 1985), one of its first books to be published in the 1980s, since adults choose the books that they enjoyed as children and pass them on to their children or students. Award-winning Filipino-American children's author Erin Entrada Kelly shares in an interview that the main character in her book *Maybe, Maybe, Marisol Rainey* (2021) is "basically [her] as a child" and that "a lot of her thoughts were [hers] at that age" (Kelly 2020). In writing her books, she explains that she thinks about the audience – a "very delicate age" for which one has to write in a "responsible way" – and admits that she often thinks about herself and what she needed when she was young, what she needed to hear or see, without being didactic or patronizing.

Memory research explains how adults, by relying on memory or "the attentive use of prior experience to guide current thought and behaviour" (Moyal-Sharrock 2009: 226), can connect to this state of childhood, particularly to the act of reading as a child. The concept of an episodic feeling of knowing, or a recollection of a personal experience at a particular time and place, is close to the concept of autonoetic (self-knowing) consciousness first proposed by Tulving (1985). He defines it as "the kind of consciousness that mediates an individual's awareness of his or her existence and identity in subjective time extending from the personal past through the present to the personal future" (Tulving 1985: 1). In other words, it refers to the consciousness of the self in subjective time—which can be roughly described as a feeling of mentally traveling through time to reexperience an event—that is characteristic of episodic memory. Waller (2017: 137) calls these concepts "re-memory work" and "re-memorying" which can be applied to how we respond to texts. According to Waller, these are vital elements of "an interpretative phenomenological method of enquiry that acknowledges the lived experience of childhood reading as a continuum, not ending with an initial encounter but enduring as the reader ages" (in Deszcz-Tryhubczak et al. 2019: 4). Waller argues that even if we do not reread a particular text as adults, we continue to respond to it for a long time and as a result, "the full reading act is a diachronic process unbounded by a single moment in time or even a single period of life" (in Deszcz-Tryhubczak et al. 2019: 4). Waller also concludes that our childhood interactions with texts become available as a result of "[t]he reconstructive power of memories of the past", wherein remembering is a creative act rather than a cognitive skill only (in Deszcz-Tryhubczak et al. 2019: 4).

As mentioned, the adults' role as gatekeeper to what children can and should

read is justified by having experienced childhood themselves, a state which they can access when needed. But Nikolajeva (2019), using cognitive poetics and neuroscience, takes a different side and contends that "signs of childness"[7] are lost in adults. This is because as we grow up, the left hemisphere of the brain which is more rational, abstract, detailed and categorizing catches up with the right hemisphere which is emotional, general and exploring and is more dominant in infancy and childhood. Thus, adults and children have different ideas of the world. Imagination is lost as one reaches adolescence to give way to other cognitive activities such as prediction and decision-making (Nikolajeva 2019: 27). (However, what the research fails to explain is how "creatives" such as authors and illustrators can still retain their imagination and create worlds of their own.) She claims that adults will never be able to perceive the world as they did when they were children because the brain keeps no memory of such perception (Nikolajeva 2019: 29). Furthermore, she says that based on memory research, "the romanticised view of so-called authentic childhood memories, whether idyllic or traumatic, becomes highly contestable", that these memories "are not genuine recollections, but confabulations" and "to maintain that children's literature utilises a memory-based child perspective is an illusion" (Nikolajeva 2019: 33). This section, which provides views on how adults hold ideas of childhood, links to the argument made in Chapter 1 on whether adults can truly give an authentic voice to children and their situations in children's literature.

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter shows that any attempt to produce an all-encompassing definition of children's literature leads to a debate spanning educational theory, book and literary history, cultural studies, philosophy and even psychology. Although there are scholars who are up to the task of defining children's literature, this chapter conveys that there are limitations in the present definitions when characteristics, intended audience and content as well as the perspective of industry actors are taken into account. The indicators used to define children's literature are also not stable. For example, while children's texts are generally more straightforward than those meant for adults, children's books today offer readers resources to explore challenging subjects that were thought to be inappropriate for children in the past. Other evidence of this lack of consistency is provided by the age limit for children's literature which differs depending on the publisher and award-giving body, thus raising the question of when childhood begins and when it ends. This chapter mainly aims to demonstrate the lack of children's voice in a genre that is chiefly intended for them. From the medieval period up until modern times, the concept of childhood and its impact on texts intended for children have been shaped mainly by adult

[7] Childness for Hollindale (1997), as cited by Nikolajeva (2019: 24), includes "the child's awareness of being a child."

judgment. From conception to production and critique to recognition, it is almost always only the adults that are involved. Thus, this thesis aims to bring to the fore the voices of children[8] : what they like to read, how they want to read, and how they regard children's texts and their intended audience. This chapter is particularly essential to the last question as it provides a point of comparison between adults' perception of children's literature and what children actually think of it. Tracing the evolution of the concept of childhood provides a basis for analyzing whether these changing conceptions affect how children perceive humorous materials. The discussion on cultural variation reveals that the cultural factor is indispensable in analyzing literature and how readers respond to it, as will be seen in the examination of the data in this study. Moreover, although children's literature occupies a lower status in many Western cultures, this does not seem to be the case in the Philippines from the local publishers' perspective. They possess a healthy self-image which influences how they view children's literature alongside other genres. Finally, a new concept formulated by the researcher, "role dualism", is offered to explain why adults get involved in what children can and should read. This concept, which posits a fusion of two roles, that of the adult and the child, can help account for why adults think they must serve as gatekeepers[9] of children's literature. They believe that they know better as adults which makes it their legal and moral obligation to guide children in what they read. At the same time, having been children once, they believe that they understand childhood and what children want.

[8]With regard to bringing the views of children into the discussion, there are favorable developments in the Philippines that must be mentioned. Publishers employ different ways to reach children directly, whether in the middle of the production process or at the end. Adarna House consults children via "kid testing" during which the stories are read to them in schools and the children share their opinions not only on the stories but also on the studies of the illustrations. According to the publisher, this works because children notice details that adults normally do not see. This is perhaps what Maurice Sendak calls the uniqueness of childhood – "the uniqueness that makes us see what other people don't see" (Sendak 2011: n.p.). Tahanan Books joined book festivals where a book that was not selling well in bookstores because "parents did not know what to make of it" was snatched by mobs of young boys – they knew exactly what it was. The publisher described the moment as "the book finding its market." A recent development in the Philippines in 2021 was the publication of the first children's book series published by Good Neighbors Philippines which was written and illustrated by and for children and youngsters. Children: Our Voices and Innovators of Development (or COVID Book, 2020) is a collection of 10 children's books based on personal experiences, creative imaginations, and observations during the height of quarantine.

[9]According to Zafra (2023, personal communication), the adults' role as gatekeepers of children's literature can also be explained culturally particularly in terms of tradition. For example, during the Spanish colonial period, one of the most popular literary genres was the manual de urbanidad or book of manners. The best example of this is the 19th-century book *Urbana at Felisa* which specified what parents, especially mothers, ought to teach their children. The book was very influential and prescribed by the Department of Education until the mid-20th century.

CHAPTER 3

Translation of children's literature in the Philippines

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the beginnings of children's literature translation in the Philippines vis-à-vis the changing roles of translation in the country's history. These changes relate to the location of translation in the literary polysystem; translation can occupy either a central or peripheral position. The chapter then situates Even-Zohar's polysystem theory within an exploration of current directions and trends in children's book publishing in the Philippines. Specifically, the chapter illustrates how translated foreign children's books are positioned in a multilingual country. The gaps and opportunities identified in the chapter are further validated by the responses given in the poetry reading sessions which are presented in Chapter 7 on results.

3.2 Translated literature according to Even-Zohar's polysystem theory

According to Even-Zohar (2012: 162), it is imperative to study translated literature for two reasons. First, we are unaware of the "function of translated literature for a literature as a whole or of its position within that literature." He mentions, for instance, how translated literature being imported to a country can influence the writings produced there. Second, we are unaware of the "possible existence of translated literature as a particular literary system" (162). Translated literature, he posits, "may possess a repertoire of its own", which

could even be exclusive to it (163).

To explain translated literature's function and influence, Even-Zohar turns to the idea of a polysystem. The concept of a system was first defined by Tynyanov (1929 in Saldanha and Baker 2009: 197) as a "multi-layered structure of elements which relate to and interact with each other." A polysystem then is "a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent" (Even-Zohar 2005: 3). Even-Zohar considers translated literature as part of the polysystem of a given literature. Under the lens of the polysystem theory, the literary system is studied as part of a more extensive system that includes social, cultural and historical systems, all with definite boundaries yet interrelated and interdependent of each other such that changes in one system may impact on one or more systems. This contradicts the prevailing idea during Even-Zohar's time that translation is not a system but merely a collection of individual works, "an arbitrary group of translated texts" that can be studied in isolation and not part of a system.

Translated literature exists as part of the polysystem of a given national literature, because translation is not only a phenomenon with boundaries but an activity that relates to cultural system (Even-Zohar 1990 in Shuttleworth 2000: 178). What is revolutionary in Even-Zohar's theory is its assertion that the literary polysystem is characterized by tension between the center and periphery as different genres struggle to be in the center. In other words, even translated texts affect or depend on each other. They correlate in the way by which the target literature chooses works for translation which is connected with the "home co-systems" of the target literature and prestige and dominance are important elements in this process (Even-Zohar in Aveling 2005: 11). For Even-Zohar then, translated literature is not only a system but an integral and active system within any literary polysystem.

3.2.1 Translated literature in the central position

According to the polysystem theory, translated literature can occupy either a central or a peripheral position. It occupies a central or primary position when it is very influential in shaping the center of the polysystem, which includes literary and non-literary systems. That is, translated works are largely part of the innovatory forces and likely to be identified with major events in literary history (Even-Zohar 2012: 163). There is no clear-cut distinction between original and translated writings (163) and the leading writers often produce the most popular translations. In this case, foreign works may also lead to new models of reality, new poetic language or compositional patterns and techniques in the home literature (163). For instance, translated crime fiction was used to draw Catalans away from the dominant Spanish (Castillian) literary polysystem (King 2017). King observes: "In making foreign crime fiction "theirs," Catalan translators were able to forge a literary language, which initially seemed artifi-

cial, but which was later used by the writers to write their own fictions. Then the translations became models for new writers whose original work began to fill this "literary vacuum" in Catalan literature."

What translated genres are normally part of the core can vary depending on a particular time period. For example, according to Galileo S. Zafra (2023, personal communication), the polysystem theory can be applied to how long narrative poems called awit and korido[10] arrived in the Philippines and proliferated in the 19th century. These can be considered translations in the form of adaptations. Zafra explains that the awit and korido became prevalent when the middle class in the Philippines sought a new literary experience and the number of private printing presses in the country grew. Before the 19th century and the spread of the awit and korido, only religious literature existed with the printing presses controlled by the church. For Zafra, this information can be viewed using the polysytem theory particularly in how the literary system is affected by the political, economic and cultural systems. Zafra states that the high status of the awit and korido influenced the succeeding literary production, such as in the way the nation was portrayed. This is evident, for example, in *Florante at Laura* (1838) and *Orosman at Zafira* (1857-1860). Before the awit and korido became dominant written texts, only events with a spiritual dimension were depicted in literature. Zafra adds that the predominance of the awit and korido strengthened the tradition of narrative poetry in the Philippines, although this is also seen in the pasyon as well as in the epics which are transmitted through oral tradition and not through writing.

Some scholars have looked at "canonical" Philippine literature which forms the core texts. For example, during the American colonial regime in the 1900s which followed the Spanish occupation that lasted over three centuries, the English literature and humanities was largely Anglo-American, even with the Filipinos' low proficiency in English during the early years (Reyes 2014: 20). This changed by the third decade of the American occupation when Filipinos started to attend the university in the Philippines and abroad, thus developing their competence in English. As a result, "writers and critics who had been trained formally in the Anglo-American literary and critical modes" were produced. According to Reyes (2014: 20), this generation of "modernist" writers would later constitute the canon of Philippine Literature. Reyes (2014: 31) adds that in terms of craftmanship, there was the "shift from medieval metrical romances in drama and the novel that had dominated under the Spanish colonial era to the "realism" and experimentation of the modern genres, or the shift from the conventions of rhyme and meter of Balagtasismo to the free verse of Alejandro G. Abadilla." Meanwhile, Ortuño Casanova (2014) offers an insight into "canonical" Philippine Literature in Spanish. She identifies two generations of Filipino writers in Spanish, forming the canon: one born during the Spanish period and the other born during the American occupation, which is why

[10]The awit and korido are Philippine metrical romances. The awit is set in dodecasyllabic quatrains while the korido is in octosyllabic quatrains (eight syllables called hakira). These secular poetries started during the Spanish period.

"parts of their works tackle different topics." With the first, writing in Spanish had a "revolutionary intention" while with the latter, it was "characterized by a patriotic conservatism and nostalgia for the past" (70). She adds that the current literary canon is determined more by "political and patriotic prestige" than literary prestige (58). Furthermore, she says that no peripheral groups put pressure on the central system, resulting in a "fossilized" Philippine literary system. She attributes the absence of peripheral groups to the gradual replacement of Spanish by the native languages and English which "heavily impeded the cultural progress in Spanish" (74).

3.2.2 Translated literature in the peripheral position

Translated literature occupies a peripheral position when it does not influence major processes and "is modelled according to norms already conventionally established by an already dominant type in the target literature" (Even-Zohar 2012: 165). Translated literature then becomes "a major factor of conservatism" which does not maintain "positive correlations with original writing" (165). According to Even-Zohar, this is the normal position assumed by translated literature although he stresses that it is not static. For example, in the Philippines, the novel was peripheral to the short story in the first decade of the 20th century (Zafra 2023, personal communication). Zafra attributes this to the fact that with the short story, one writes with brevity in mind and hence it can be written quickly. Furthermore, it gave Filipinos a quick and easy read that they liked. However, what is in the periphery at a particular time can change along with changes in social, economic and literary activities. For example, although the first decade of the 20th century was dominated by the short story, the novel became more popular in the succeeding decades in the Philippines, particularly in serial form. According to Zafra (2023, personal communication), this is connected to the spread of commercial printing presses and the popularity of commercial magazines. Readers were also excited to follow the story that was delivered in installments. Novels became even more influential in the following decades as they were adapted into films.

3.3 The beginnings of translated children's literature in the Philippines [11]

In the precolonial Philippines, translation mainly served an economic purpose: translation happened in trade sites via the interaction between the natives and foreign merchants and was used to carry out trade between or among different speech communities. At this time, children already enjoyed listening to folk tales, myths and legends. Epics that are sung as well as folk songs, one of the

[11] Main source: Almario 2010. The historical background of translation was also based on a lecture by Dr. Corazon Villareal of the University of the Philippines given in June 2017.

earliest forms of Philippine literature, entertained both adults and children. There was no distinction then between the story for the child and the story for the adult (Paterno 1984: 10).

During the first part of the Spanish colonial period in the Philippines which began in 1521, literature was mainly in translation and came in the form of novels, manuals of conduct and hymns that were used to convert the natives of the archipelago to the Catholic Christian faith. The Spanish brought these religious texts to the Philippines from Mexico through the galleon trade. In 1603, the king of Spain issued a decree requiring every missionary in the Philippines to have the "necessary competency, and know the language of the indios whom he should instruct" (Rafael 1992: 19). By learning the vernacular languages (Rodríguez 2013) and translating religious instructional materials from Spanish (i.e., Castilian) into Tagalog, the most widely studied language in the Philippines (Rafael 1992: 26), the missionaries ensured that the natives could be kept under Spanish control. Thus, translated literature was in the periphery.

During the second part of Spanish colonial rule in the 18th century, translators became agents of new systems and innovations toward emerging nationalist aspirations. Translated literature entered a new phase and became innovative, releasing Filipinos from mere imitation to artistic creativity. This period also saw the rise in original writing by Filipinos who wrote mainly in Spanish about the colonial Philippines – its social, cultural and economic conditions – and Tagalog. The translation of nationalistic works grew in the 1800s together with increasing discontent with the Spanish rule (Cultural Center of the Philippines 1994). Hence, translated literature moved toward a more central position.

It was during this period that children's literature in the Philippines was formalized, that is to say, its existence was recognized. José Rizal, who would later become the national hero of the Philippines, wrote a retelling of "The Monkey and the Turtle" and illustrated it while in Paris sometime in 1885. He titled it "Carole Tagalog: Le singe et la tortue." "The Monkey and the Turtle" is considered the first Filipino folktale for children although its original author is unknown. In 1889, Rizal published "Two Eastern Fables", an article written in English, in *Trubner's Oriental Record* (a journal devoted to the literature of the East) in London. In the article, Rizal compared the "The Monkey and the Turtle" with "The Battle of the Monkey and the Crab" (Limos 2020), a fable from Japan. He argued that both tales were likely to have originated from Sumatra (Indonesia) or Mindanao (Philippines). This was the first time that a children's story from the Philippines had been published.

Rizal played a vital role in the history of translated children's literature in the Philippines. Three years before he published "Two Eastern Fables", he translated five fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen from German into Tagalog while he was in Germany in 1886. He sent these as a Christmas present to his niece and nephews in the Philippines that year. Until this time, and despite the massive translations undertaken during the Spanish period, no translation of children's literature into Tagalog had been recorded (Almario 2010: 211). The short compilation of fairy tales was called *Limang Salita na Ysinalin sa*

Tagalog (Five Words Translated into Tagalog). It included five stories accompanied by illustrations: "The Fir Tree" (Ang Punu ng Pino), "Thumbelina" (Si Gahinlalaki), "The Ugly Duckling" (Ang Pangit na Sisiu ng Pato), "The Angel" (Ang Sugu) and "The Little Matchgirl" (Ang Batang Babaing Mai Dalang Sakafuego). Rizal hoped that the stories in "our sweet language" could aid in the "enrichment" ("ang ikagagaling ninio") of his niece and nephews whom he considers "in need of suitable readings" (Alamario 2010: 78). Rizal also hoped that the children could memorize these so that they "have something to narrate to [their] fellow children" ("mai maisasalita kayo sa iniong mga kaibigang kapua bata"). This had implications on what was considered "suitable reading material" for children at that time. According to Almario, Rizal lamented on other occasions how Filipino children's reading practices were limited to what was available, namely metrical romance and prayerbooks, which led to "public addiction" to religiosity and old tradition. It is also important to note that three of the five tales "have sad endings, one even alluding to death and the promise of an afterlife" (Ocampo 2018: 61). According to Ocampo (2018: 63), "Rizal's views on children are not well known, and has not been studied fully." But the Andersen stories he chose to translate make it clear that he viewed children not as delicate beings who cannot understand difficult situations such as death but as individuals who are ready for a discussion of complex themes.

Rizal's translation of the five children's tales opened up a new direction: translating a foreign text into Filipino that was not used for Christian indoctrination (Almario 2010: 211). His aim was the exact opposite of the goals of translation during the Spanish period. He wanted his nephews and niece to be able to read what children in Europe knew ("upan ding mabasa ang mga natatalos ng ibang manga bata sa Europa"). Almario observes that Rizal's translation was exceptionally faithful to the original, finding strict equivalence, even with culture-specific terms, between the source and target languages (39). Rizal's translation of Andersen also reveals his vision for Filipino childhood. According to Gutierrez (2018: 38), "... through translation, Rizal expresses a desire to "write" the Filipino child; that is, for textual representations of childhood mirror children's minds and spirits in one of the languages of the motherland." But Rizal's aim for the translation of children's stories into Filipino toward the end of the 19th century went beyond his deep concern about the accessibility of good reading materials for Filipino children. It was also "an exercise toward the improvement of Tagalog orthography, or the standard spelling system of the language" (27). He desired to simplify Tagalog to make reading easier for children to read and understand. Rizal made sure that even sound effects and animal noises could be understood by Filipino children by using, for example, "kuirrebirrebit" for "tweet tweet" and "aapp rapp" for "quack quack" (39). Gutierrez (2018) writes: "Rizal's choice to remain close to the personal style of Andersen (albeit as it was presented in the German version) involves his own experimentation with Tagalog..." Rizal may be known for his writings that awakened Philippine nationalism but one of his more important legacies is his contribution to the way Filipinos write and read Filipino words.

3.4 Modern trends in translated children's literature in the Philippines

3.4.1 English-language books as more dominant

The aims of translating children's literature in the Philippines have changed tremendously since Rizal first translated Andersen's stories for children in the 19th century. In a multilingual nation such as the Philippines, where many children are at least bilingual (knowing Filipino as well as English, with the Philippines having been colonized by the United States for nearly 50 years), imported books in English occupy a dominant position in the system of children's literature. Many parents, especially the educated ones, are victims of "miseducation" as Renato Constantino describes it, and part of the Americans' colonial legacy is the intense love for English (Almario 2010: 42) which influences what books parents choose for their children or what they encourage them to read. In a 2017 survey, roughly 72% of the children identified their parents as influential to their reading, with teachers as most influential to only 24% (National Book Development Board 2018: 52). In fact, in the October 2021 bestsellers list for children's literature of local bookseller National Book Store, all of the ranked books were in English, among them: *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (2009), *The Little Prince* (originally published in French in 1943), *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962), *A Girl Named Helen* (2018), *Charlotte's Web* (1952), *Frindle* (1996), and *Number the Stars* (1989). Unlike adult literature, for which the bookstore had a separate list of bestselling adult fiction in English and another list of bestselling "Philippine publications" (referring to Filipino-authored books in either English or Filipino), the sales of Filipino-language books for children had not been enough to merit their own list.

3.4.2 English-language books translated into Filipino

Of course, it could be the case that Filipino translations of popular children's titles are rare in bookstores. It is also likely that they are no longer in circulation. A good illustration here is the Filipino edition of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (originally published in English in 1997), which bears the same English title and was released by Lampara Books in 2013 at the Manila International Book Fair. From the initial printing of 3,000 copies, 500 copies were immediately sold during the two days it was available at the fair (De Vera 2013). However, three years ago, copies of the Filipino edition could no longer be found at National Book Store as they had been phased out, according to the sales staff. Neither could it be searched for and purchased on the website of its publisher, Lampara Books, nor from other online sites such as Amazon. That the Filipino edition was not reprinted could point to a lack of interest in

the translated version[12] . The original Harry Potter books in English, however, remain accessible in print format from local bookstores. The same is true for *Charlotte's Web* which has a Filipino edition published by Lampara Books in 2014. This version is also not available anymore in bookstores unlike the English edition. Interestingly, the Filipino edition has the title "Charlotte's Web" in large, boldface letters on the cover with the Filipino translation "Sapot ni Charlotte" underneath it in tiny, thin letters that can easily be missed. *Ang Higanteng Maramot* (The Selfish Giant), Anvil Publishing's Filipino edition of *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (published in 1888) by Oscar Wilde, is still in stock on the publisher's website but not in the online stores of local bookstores.

While children's publishers in other countries such as the UK also complain that translations do not sell well (Lathey 2020: 46), the position of translated Filipino children's literature in the Philippines presents a fascinating case following the polysystem framework. Although Filipino is the national language, it competes with the more prominent and prestigious language English in the system when it comes to children's books. The competition is a product of the positioning of English as the language of education (i.e., taught at a very young age in schools), political discourse and scientific research in the country, which gives it a tremendous amount of prestige. In the 2017 Readership Survey commissioned by the National Book Development Board, it was found that 79.2% of Filipino children and young readers read books authored by Filipinos and by foreigners. Only 16.2% reported reading only Filipino-authored books while 4.6% said they read only foreign-authored books. Although this appears promising insofar as strengthening the position of Filipino as the national language, it is unclear from the data whether the Filipino-authored books referred to by the respondents are in Filipino, as many Filipino writers also publish in English. What is clear, however, is that foreign children's literature translated into Filipino occupies a secondary position, not because English-language books are better but perhaps mainly because there is little need to translate into Filipino what children could already understand in a foreign language, namely English.[13] As Van Coillie (2020: 143) writes: "Rita Ghesquiere discovered that school libraries in the Philippines are brimming with American and British books, including authors like Dixon and Blyton, and the *Nancy Drew*

[12]Future studies can also explore whether the cost of translation rights is likewise a factor for the non-reprinting of Filipino translations of foreign titles (Zafra 2023, personal communication).

[13]Despite the minority of Filipino-translated children's books in the Philippines, a healthy community of publishers producing children's literature in Filipino exists. In 2020 alone, the international organization Room to Read which promotes reading among young children partnered with four major Philippine publishing houses – Adarna House, Anvil Publishing, Lampara Books and OMF-Hiyas Publishing – to release 20 Filipino books by Filipino children's writers and illustrators. According to Room to Read's CEO Geetha Murali, "Children's love of books develops faster when they can read in their local language and see characters they can relate to. That's why it's critical that we forge and strengthen local children's book publishing industries and demonstrate their sustainability. Without them we cannot spread the joy of reading and learning." (Villano 2020: n.p.)

series. Teachers had difficulty naming Filipino young adult authors."

3.4.3 Priority given to translating local texts

The translation of children's literature in the Philippines also appears to have gone in a different direction. It seems that the translation of foreign works into Filipino has been overtaken by more local texts being translated. Filipino writers are producing original writings in Filipino or English which are then translated into English or Filipino, respectively. Of course, some children's publishing houses still release bilingual books from stories written by foreign authors. For instance, Tahanan Books recently acquired the Filipino rights to what was titled in Filipino as *Keyk Paakyat ng Langit* (A Cake Reaching to the Sky, 2017), a delightful yet bittersweet book by a Japanese illustrator about a boy who follows his grandmother into heaven. Tahanan Books is also known for its Greek mythology series retold in English and translated into Filipino. Adarna House's Aklat ng Salin (Book of Translation) features books chosen from international book fairs such as the Bologna Book Fair and Frankfurt Book Fair which have been translated into Filipino. Adarna House buys the rights to stories that have not been read by Filipino children but that it feels are important for Filipino children to read because they speak of their own experiences. An example of a book published under Aklat ng Salin is *Si Agni at ang Ulan* (2019, originally published in Spanish as *Agni Y La Lluvia* in 2017) about a child in Mumbai who works as a laundry girl but who has a deep desire to go to school amid extreme poverty. This story hits some Filipino children close to home since the cost of education prevents some children from going to school[14] . But most of Adarna House's books are stories translated from Filipino into English. It gives preference to submissions in Filipino that promote Filipino culture[15]. The same is true for Tahanan Books whose bilingual titles are by and large original stories by Filipino authors and illustrators and whose Filipino-authored bilingual books are mostly translations from English into Filipino. Although it is open to acquiring more foreign titles, it focuses more on developing local writers and artists. This will always be their main drive, to work with local talent and create world-class publications that "shine a lantern on Philippine culture and heritage"[16]. CANVAS (Center for Art, New Ventures and Sustainable Development), an organization that promotes children's literacy, also publishes bilingual picture books written by Filipino authors and these

[14]According to 2017 Philippine Statistics Authority data, 83.1% of Filipinos were out of school of which 5.7% were 6 to 11 years old. The most common reasons for not attending school were marriage or family matters, lack of personal interest and high cost of education or financial concerns.

[15]While the greater majority of its books are translated from Filipino into English as it looks "by default" for Filipino submissions, it is also open to English submissions.

[16]To address cultural inclusivity, Tahanan Books produced a series of picture books on folktales from underrepresented cultural groups in the Philippines. The result was a set of books with what they describe as "well-researched culturally sensitive drawings and storylines that celebrate a particular culture in a respectful, thoughtful way."

are free to download from its website. In the case of CANVAS, there seems to be an equal push to publish translations in English and Filipino: of the 17 bilingual titles currently available from its website, nine have been translated from Filipino into English while eight have been translated from English into Filipino.

3.4.4 More local bilingual books

Bilingual picture books then have become the most conspicuous pieces of translated children's literature in the Philippines. This trend started in 1995 when Adarna House, the first Philippine children's book publisher, pioneered the production of bilingual (Filipino-English) books for Filipino children. They saw the need for high-income families who are English speakers to appreciate children's literature written by Filipinos for Filipinos. Thus, three of the first six bilingual books they published were based on Philippine myths. For Adarna House, by default, if there is enough space in a picture book, then the story will be translated. Although Adarna House sells its bilingual books mainly within the Philippines (they have no overseas distribution networks), its experience trying to enter the international market for Filipino-Americans a few years ago indicates that parents see the value of their children reading books in Filipino.

Tahanan Books, also a major player in the production of books in bilingual format, considers it a commitment to publish bilingual books that celebrate Filipino culture. Similar to Adarna House, every book they take on automatically goes through what they call the bilingual litmus test. When accepting a manuscript, they first ask themselves how the story can work well bilingually. But it does not have to be only Filipino and English; Tahanan Books likewise published children's books on Cebuano, Ifugao and Maguindanaon folk songs with English and other Philippine languages appearing side by side. *Bahay Kubo* (Nipa Hut, 1993) is one of their most successful books and has been translated into several regional languages. But unlike Adarna House, its products are marketed in the United States to an affluent niche of Filipino-American and Filipino-Canadian parents who grew up not knowing Filipino but who now want to teach their young children the language they "lost" and the heritage they realize is worth keeping.

The contributions of Lampara Books to this thriving community are also worth mentioning. Although known for some 50 books of Filipino-English retellings of classic and modern Philippine legends and the tales of the Philippine folklore character Juan Tamad, it is also the publisher of original writings for children, among which are the Lampara Prize for Children's Literature stories (18 books in all), the six-book *Carancal: Ang Bayaning Isang Dangkal* (2002) series about the adventures of a Filipino hero who is "as tall as the span of a hand" and the didactic-oriented *Mga Kwento ni Lolo Uban* (Grandfather Uban's Stories, 2019) series, all published in two languages – Filipino and English – to "reach a greater number of readers in the Philippines and other parts of the world." It appears that Lampara Books created Lolo Uban

("uban" means "silver hair") to stand as the male counterpart of Lola Basyang, the Philippines' version of Mother Goose and the eponymous character of the widely-known anthology of short stories *Mga Kuwento ni Lola Basyang* (Grandmother Basyang's Stories, originally published in 1925 and published by Tahanan Books in 2013). Each night after supper, Lola Basyang tells stories to her grandchildren, "the archetypal grandmother storyteller who weaves threads of ethnic and Western narratives into a tapestry that reveals the Filipino human experience"[17] (Gutierrez 2009: 165). Tahanan Books published the best stories from the collection of over 400 stories as picture books in original English in 1998. Much later, in 2017, Anvil Publishing released 12 of these containing parallel Filipino and English texts for young readers. Another publisher of bilingual picture books in the Philippines is HIYAS, OMFI Literature's imprint for children's books. Its products include the 22-book series *Mga Kwento ni Tito Dok* (Uncle Doc's Stories, 2001-2018) in English with parallel Filipino text and the 14-book *Oh Mateo!* series (2016) with English text and Filipino translation. The accessibility of bilingual books for children is one way of promoting literacy in the Philippines as a multilingual nation. In India, another multilingual country, publishers of bilingual books remain few (Kulkarni 2021). However, English book publishing is a booming trade in India because English is the largest of more than a dozen publishing languages there.

Nevertheless, one major limitation in the system is that by the age of 9, Filipino children do not have the same degree of exposure to local children's literature in bilingual format since most local books in circulation are picture books that target children in the 3-8 age range. That is not to say that there are no books for older children; local publishers have released various longer works of fiction and story compilations for more fluent readers. For example, Lampara Books' Moymoy Lulumboy series (from 2014) and Adarna House's National Book Award and National Children's Book Award winner Janus Silang series (from 2014) are said to be the Philippines' answer to Harry Potter; Anvil Publishing has novellas for children with English and Filipino editions; and Tahanan Books' award-winning Great Lives Series (2020) on the life histories of Philippine heroes are for readers aged 8 and up. Tahanan Books also says that it is open to the possibility of developing young adult novels and chapter books but "it is just a matter of finding the right manuscript" (Ong 2020, personal communication). Still, there are more bilingual picture books in circulation than books for older children in two languages perhaps because longer works require more time to create, from conceptualization to writing and from translating and editing to actual publication.[18]

[17]Severino Reyes, the father of Philippine fairy tales and creator of Lola Basyang, "appropriated Western fairy tale story motifs and things and recreated them by grounding them on Philippine names, places and traditions" (Gutierrez 2009: 161).

[18]Based on the results of the poetry reading sessions, there is a market for bilingual books for children older than 8 years as some of the participants brought up the difficulty of finding Filipino books for their age. Bilingual books in English and Filipino are excellent materials for children who would want to read in Filipino but are more fluent in English.

3.5 The role of publishers

3.5.1 Translation as a promotor of native culture

It can be seen then that in the Philippines, local children's publishers play a principal mediating role in producing of translated children's literature. That is to say, they primarily decide what stories will be translated and which stories will not be translated.[19] As "cultural producers", borrowing Bourdieu's term, their chief drive is a strong Filipino spirit: bilingual books are published with Filipino children in mind, what would help them form their identity and deal with extraordinary and everyday situations in childhood. The production of bilingual editions in the Philippines, therefore, balances out the high circulation of English-language books written by foreign authors about foreign cultures (even fantasy-rich worlds are based on some elements of past and present cultures). Moreover, as producers of original and translated texts in English that highlight local culture, the "very young but robust" (Gutierrez 2017) children's publishing industry in the Philippines can reach non-Filipino readers toward a more multicultural and inclusive children's book landscape where Filipino children and their culture are visible. These bilingual books reflect cultural values thus providing readers, whether children or adults, with a deeper cultural understanding. According to Daly, dual language books, which include bilingual picture books, help readers learn a language and about a language (Short and Daly 2020) without losing their cultural and language identities (in Ramos 2020). In their study, they found that the order of the reading languages is significant (Short and Daly 2020). Some participants in their study wondered "how speakers with English not as their first language would feel when reading bilingual books that seem to prioritize English" while others noted that if one is reading an English text first and English is his or her first language, then the tendency is for the reader to "gravitate towards that and may not read all of the [non-English] text." Bilingual books from the Philippines are translated from English into Filipino and from Filipino into English and these language presentations provide choices for readers and reduce the likelihood of one language being set aside.

3.5.2 Positioning in the publishing industry

Furthermore, what gets translated and what does not is an indication of positionality. According to Bourdieu, cultural production is a question of position-taking and dispositions – "one is inevitably disposed... towards some cultural forms and practices and not others" (Gelder 2004: 19). Such position-taking is influenced by what cultural producers can accumulate in the cultural field.

[19] This practice is also evident in other countries. In Poland, for example, small independent publishing houses collectively referred to as "Lilliputians" choose the most exciting titles for Polish readers from the artistic point of view than the literary one. This determines the East Asian translations of children's books in Poland (Paprocka and Biernacka-Licznar 2020).

Bourdieu enumerates three kinds of capital that they could gain: economic capital (money), symbolic capital (peer recognition and prestige) and cultural capital ("the accumulation of cultural knowledge, the amount of knowledge one has about an aspect of the cultural field") (Gelder 2004: 91). Tahanan Books expresses that "most of the time, the rewards you get from writing and publishing children's books are more spiritual or psychological, the feeling that you've given back." Nevertheless, although symbolic capital and cultural capital are great motivators, children's publishers sustain their production with economic capital first and foremost. For instance, when asked why it was not translating poetry, Adarna House said that "it was a marketing decision." It has done so for *Paano Kumain ng Kulay* (How to Eat Colors, 2018), a verse picture book that teaches children to eat vegetables, but all in all the output has been "thin" because "the market has no appreciation yet for poetry." Despite this, it released the novel verse picture book *May Darating na Trak Bukas* (A Truck Will Come Tomorrow) in Filipino in 2013 which became a finalist in the 2014 Philippine National Children's Book Awards (Kids' Choice) – an example of symbolic capital gained. It could translate its children's poetry collection *Buwan, Buwang Bulawan* (Moon, Mad, Gold, 2009), it says, but there are page limitations and "the reality is that it is not sellable." This is an important consideration these days when print books compete with non-reading sources of information and entertainment offered by increasing technology solutions (Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines 2020: n.p.). As a result, sales of print books and return on investment are relatively slow (Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines 2020, n.p.). In terms of positioning strategy, Adarna House targets readers from middle-income families since "foreign titles are marketed to readers from high-income families." Even-Zohar (1978: 19) posits that the price of literature is "a symptom of status", that is to say, the more expensive it is, the more central its position in the polysystem. This seems to be valid for foreign children's books which are generally more durable in format and priced higher, in other words, more "valued" than local children's books. But pricing could also be linked to marketing decisions – what paper and cover to use, for example – as in the case of Adarna House which offers "one of the cheapest picture books at 99 pesos" (roughly 1.75 euros) to be competitive. Tahanan Books' publishing decisions are primarily market-driven, too, stating that "now the market is for bilingual books because there is an equal stress on learning English but not letting go of Filipino." It adds: "But translating our books into other Philippine languages is rare. It's only when there's a special order that we can do that." Tahanan Books describes the financial risk in children's book production:

> Producing the books is not difficult because we have many talented authors, translators, artists and book designers in the Philippines. But publishing is a gamble and we can't tell which books will sell well and which would end up languishing in our warehouse. Good books are costly and time-consuming to produce. These books took almost a year to develop, just getting the illustrations and doing

> the research right, going back and forth with cultural consultants. Because we spend so much time developing each book, we have to be very selective about what we pick. That's a particular challenge here. It's a matter of resources.

Segundo Matias Jr., the founder of Lampara Books, admits that the decision to translate is "a thoroughly commercial concern." He adds: "For me to consider translating a book, it must have sold well and made money. Otherwise, why do it?" (De Vera 2014: n.p.). Lampara Books published the Filipino translation of *Charlotte's Web*, which made it to the final round in the translation category of the 2015 Philippine National Book Awards. This exhibits that economic capital and symbolic capital are not mutually exclusive.

Positioning is likewise evident in how publishers negotiate the translation of works with foreign publishers – who is in charge of it and how far the translation can go. Adarna House, for example, says that "it is in the rules of the [foreign] publisher whether you can contextualize [the story] in Filipino" but its approach is always to retain the foreignness because "Filipino children can grasp foreign concepts" such as snow. Illustrations can also change in the process of buying rights and translation. There was one occasion when Adarna House had to request the publisher to redraw the pictures in the book for aesthetic or artistic value (from only black and white to colored ones that make for "a more cheerful artwork") as well as for cultural value. In the original illustrations, the child protagonist was shown as having European features and although Adarna House did not intend to depict the child in the story as Filipino, they wanted the child to look more or less Asian in the translated edition. Tahanan Books experienced being on the other side in the international sale of rights. It explains: "We try not to be restrictive to what the publisher can and cannot do. When they buy the rights, they have the right to adapt the book to suit their market. If they change the names, that's okay. If there are certain cultural differences that their readership will not understand, they can also change that. If we are informed of the changes, that would be nice." But it also understands that publishers produce for their own readership and they know what is best for the children for whom they publish.

3.6 Shavit's two principles in the translation of children's literature

Zohar Shavit, who was among the first to apply the polysystem theory to children's literature (Van Coillie and McMartin 2020: 17), asserts that children's literature occupies a peripheral position in the polysystem (Shavit 1981: 171). This observation is particularly evident in the way children's literature is greatly manipulated and adapted when translated to fit the children's literary system, specifically with "texts which [have been] transformed from adult to children's literature or with texts which belong both to the adult and children's system

at the same time" (Shavit 1981: 171). According to Shavit, such liberties are dictated by two principles: the translator "(1) adjusts the text in order to make it appropriate and useful for the child, in accordance with what society thinks is "good for the child" or (2) adjusts the plot, characterization and language to the child's level of comprehension and his reading abilities" (172). Shavit notes that although there is still a widespread tendency to translate based on the first principle (thereby producing didactic children's literature), the second principle has become more dominant. For instance, the need to simplify the text can be seen in the translations of Alice in Wonderland. While Carroll intended to blur the lines between reality and imagination in the original, the translations gravitate towards a clear distinction between "reality" and "fantasy" as "such a presentation of reality did not exist in children's literature (it only became fashionable in adult literature with the anti-naturalist schools at the end of the 19th century)" (176). Francisca Folch (2020) also notes how the homoeroticism in Wilde's *The Happy Prince* (1888) was lost in translation for the Latin American readers particularly children and questions whether the erasure of queerness is a conscious decision or "just plain ignorance."

3.6.1 Translator's decisions

In the case of Filipino translations of popular foreign English-language children's books, the second principle applies but has a different meaning. The language, which becomes the foremost consideration in the translation, is handled in a way that makes the text easily understandable for Filipino children. The process entails retaining the original foreign words, not because of the lack of equivalence but because the Filipino equivalents would not do the original story justice. The considerations and decisions of Becky Bravo, Adarna House and Eugene Evasco in translating children's books will be given as examples.

With the Harry Potter Filipino edition, the translator, Becky Bravo, opted to retain "the names of characters, names of spells and quite a number of English terms used in the original" (De Vera 2013: n.p.). Bravo (in De Vera 2013: n.p.) clarifies: "It would never do to refer to Harry and Ron as 'mangkukulam' [wizard] or to Hermione as a 'bruha' [witch] (brackets mine)." For this reason, "witch" and "wizard" were kept in the translation. Her decision was possible because the concepts and terms exist in the receiving literary system. Even the title of the book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, was left unchanged because Bravo "did not want either "Si Harry Potter at ang Sorcerer's Stone" or "Si Harry Potter at ang Bato ng Mangkukulam." However, Harry as "the boy who lived" was called "ang batang nabuhay" and "He-Who-Must-Not-Be Named" became "Alam-Mo-Na-Kung-Sino" (You-Know-Who) instead of the literal "Ang-Di-Dapat-Pangalanan." It is evident how much power lies in the hands of the translator who determines what works and what does not in the target text. But editors can be just as influential in deciding the output of the translation process. For Bravo (in De Vera 2013, n.p.), it was important not to change the tone of Rowling's original text. "If Rowling could write in

Filipino, how would she translate her own words in 'Sorcerer's Stone?'" she asks. Tone can be challenging, as Adarna House experienced in translating a Spanish children's book. Because it aims to get as close as possible to a literal translation, the result of translating from Spanish, which is formal in tone, into Filipino is a text that is too formal to be authentic, unused in ordinary settings and unrelatable for children. (For Adarna House, literal translation and faithfulness to the original text and form are of utmost importance.) It is a "conscious decision" then to "contextualize" the source language's formality in line with the target reader.

Eugene Evasco, a prolific and award-winning Filipino author and translator who translated *Charlotte's Web* from English into Filipino, goes by three principles in translating literary texts for children. He stresses:

> First and foremost, I must produce a text that will not sound like a translation. I have to make the translation of an English text "originally written" in Filipino. Secondly, though I have to respect the original intent of the author, I must assert my own voice and style in the translation. My style in translation is trying to write the text like my own work. Thirdly, and most importantly, after translating the text, I have to make sure that the product is child-friendly or readable. (in Gagatiga 2017)

Evasco laments the invisibility of translators of children's books in the Philippines. They are "marginalized" as some are "not acknowledged properly in the book production" and "not even considered... co-creators of the book." Another challenge that he sees in children's literature translation in the country has to do with language. He maintains: "Translation is supposed to be a process to make the text accessible to Filipino readers. But in my experience, there are cases that some readers, young and old, are struggling to understand the Filipino language" (Gagatiga 2017).

Although all three translators made different decisions in translating, one common requirement among them appears to be the naturalness of expression in the target language. The case of Bravo and Evasco also shows that even though translators mainly aim to carry over the ideas and structural features of the original in the translator, they can also abide by their own set of criteria which reflects their own style.

3.6.2 Publisher's decisions

Tahanan Books depends significantly on the expertise of translators when translating the stories into one of the regional languages (i.e., non-Filipino languages). But remaining true to Shavit's observation that in translation, elements of a book are "adjusted" to the child's level of reading comprehension, Tahanan Books always instructs its translators to "try to keep [the translations] as light, as conversational as possible, not too formal" (Ong 2020, personal communication). After all, "it is still a book for children" so translators should use

language that children naturally use. Differences in vision or style between the translator and editor often arise from the translation not being "child-friendly enough", which is easily resolved since the publishing house chooses explicitly children's writers as translators. Tahanan Books articulates its preference for children's writers to translate its books as follows: "Sometimes when you're used to writing for adults, there are ways of speaking that you take for granted, that don't sound natural yet to children. It's not appealing, it's too long, too complicated. A person who translates books for children must also have an ear for children's literature" (Ong 2020, personal communication). For Tahanan Books, that is "pretty much the guideline." They add:

> When we get it and lay it out, then we'll find out if the translation is too long. In our experience, the Filipino translation takes up twice as much space as the English text because our words are naturally longer. We go back to the translator to find a shorter, simpler, cleaner way of saying it. Funnily enough, when we asked them to do that, it has actually improved the manuscript because they're forced to really think about the clearest, most efficient way to say something. We came out with Filipino editions of our folktale books and we had the same problem. Filipino was twice as long. [We] gave it back. The translator seemed very pleased and said that it sounded better after going through it another time. (Ong 2020, personal communication)

Adarna House shares how it encounters issues with general translators who, though seasoned writers, are not children's writers and thus find it difficult to translate a text specifically for children. In these instances, editors work hand in hand with the translators until they arrive at a satisfying translation ready for publication.

3.7 Conclusions

Taking the polysystem theory as a framework, it can be said that foreign children's literature translated into Filipino occupies a peripheral position in the literary system. This can be attributed to a large number of English-language books for children and the ability of many Filipino children to understand these in the original language. It is also in a secondary position when original literature for children in Filipino is considered. While the historical background of children's literature in the Philippines has been extensively studied[20], the history of children's literature in translation remains an area that has not yet received sufficient research attention. The aim of this chapter is not to fulfill

[20]See, for example, Maria Elena Paterno's "A History of Children's Literature in the Philippines" and Marcy Dans Lee's "A Brief Review of the Development of Children's Book Illustration in the Philippines."

this need but to communicate the current orientation of translated children's literature in the Philippines.

First, there are significantly more English-language foreign books for children in circulation than foreign children's books translated into Filipino. While this could indicate a general preference for reading foreign books in the original language rather than in translation, interestingly, data also reveals that given more choices in book language, children have nearly the same propensity to read in English and in Filipino. In 2017, 46.2% of children who were surveyed said that they read English non-schoolbooks while 46.1% said that they read Tagalog or Filipino for recreational reading (National Book Development Board 2018: 55). Though not mentioned in the data, it is reasonable to assume that Filipino translations of foreign children's books form a significantly small percentage, if any at all, of the Filipino books pertained to in the survey because of the minimal selection of foreign children's books translated into Filipino.

Second, publishers for children are translating more original works by Filipino authors (from English into Filipino and from Filipino into English) than foreign-authored works – a strong indication of healthy children's book publishing. Tahanan Books alone publishes three to five new titles during a lean year and as many as seven or eight in a good year. However, the competition with foreign titles remains stiff, which Adarna House ascribes to retail issues. There is a lack of push from local bookstores to make local titles more visible, it asserts, as evidenced by window displays that feature mostly foreign titles. Tahanan Books, which operates its own US website and sells its books on Amazon, also moans the weak link in the entire chain from publishers to readers in the Philippines. It says: "Our distribution channels in the Philippines are not very strong yet compared to the US where there is a strong retail network and school network. Retail stores are stocking fewer local books and institutional markets like schools and NGOs can be very difficult to approach and penetrate" (Ong 2020, personal communication). Because the original texts in English (Filipino) and their translations in Filipino (English) are released as bilingual books, publishers can also position themselves for transnational circulation for non-Filipino audiences especially with the accessibility of the English language and the growing demand for more culturally diverse books for children in different parts of the world. However, the circulation of printed books depends not only on distribution networks but also on vision. For local publishers, the goal for now is to make high-quality children's books that celebrate Philippine culture available to Filipino children including those in the diaspora.

Third, local children's publishers mainly control the production of translated children's literature by determining which books get translated and which do not. In addition, they decide on the nature of translation by giving specific guidelines to translators. Primarily, these guidelines aim to make the translation "child-friendly" and so how publishers understand childhood becomes the basis of what are "suitable" for children to read.

Fourth, the publication of translated children's books in the Philippines de-

pends not only on attaining prestige and recognition (as in the form of awards) but, quite understandably, also on market-based economic capital. Publishing, after all, is first and foremost a business.

Shavit's observation in the 1980s that the translator enjoys a high degree of freedom when translating children's literature, such as adjusting language to fit the child's reading ability, still applies to current translation practices in the Philippines. However, it must be stressed that these days, such liberties do not reside solely in the translator but are shared with the publishers and editors who, in case of differences with translators, can exert greater influence on what is ultimately printed.

On a practical note, this chapter aims to illustrate that there are significantly fewer Filipino translations of literature targeted to children aged 8 to 9 years old, the age group of the participants in the study, than those for much younger readers. While this is true for fiction, it is particularly evident with poetry which, to begin with, occupies a peripheral position in the literary system. As will be shown in Chapter 7, there are not enough Filipino books for children in this age range which makes it difficult for parents to train their children to read in Filipino. This noticeable gap in availability opens up opportunities for translators to translate more poetry and make it available to school-aged children. Although translators in the Philippines can enjoy sufficient freedom in translation, interviews with local children's publishers indicate that, for the most part, it is the publishers who play a pivotal role in the production of translated books. In other words, publishers are highly influential in developing children's reading interests and preferences. Children's publishers can expand their reach through a more diverse offering of titles in terms of genre (i.e., longer fiction and poetry) and age group. As demonstrated, however, this is primarily a marketing decision driven by consumer demand, which suggests marketing better to parents who mainly encourage reading in children and whose attitudes impact on book selection.

CHAPTER 4

Translating poems: Form versus content

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theories and concepts related to the translation of poems. Translating poetry differs from translating prose in that the translator must decide whether to give more weight to the form or content of the text. First, this chapter will address some form-related considerations in poetry translation particularly as they relate to retaining humor. Then it will discuss some factors in translating a poem according to content. Particular emphasis is given to narrative poems, the type of poems used in the current study. The discussion then touches on how proper names can be translated. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings that are relevant to the translation of humorous children's poetry.

4.2 Uniqueness of translating poetry

Translating poetry is different from translating prose. Before the translator of poetry can begin the task of translating, he or she must first decide whether to be faithful to the poem's form or its content. Naturally, in the hands of an expert translator who has access to several available options owing, for instance, to high proficiency in the source language and target language and broad knowledge of their poetic traditions, it may be possible to transfer both form and content in the target text. Nida (2012) advises the translator to aim for both in order to avoid producing a mediocre translation. But most of the time, the poem's meaning and aesthetic effects cannot be rendered with equal

fidelity and there will always be tension between the two (Matthews 1959, Nida 2012). The content may be accurate but at the cost of lyricism, or rhyme and other stylistic elements may be retained at the cost of meaning. At best, the translator can only compensate for what is lost from the original poem, for instance, by employing alliteration in place of end rhyme to approximate the original form when meaning takes priority over form in the exercise. It is not unusual for the form of the original poem to be unfamiliar to the target culture, in which case, the translator may need to create a new form to accommodate the structural characteristics of the original text.[21,22] Similarly, portions of the poem can take on a new meaning in the translation as the translator navigates across cultural and linguistic boundaries (Hatim and Mason 1997: 1). There is no consensus among scholars on which side to support in case of tension between form and content. For example, Nida (1984: 83) advocates for the precedence of meaning over manner while Jakobson (1959: 238) places greater importance on form as "phonemic similarity is sensed as semantic relationship", that is, the meaning relies on sound. What many scholars agree on is that the translation should have the equivalent result on the reader – an effect (Newmark 1988: 48; Souter 1920: 7; Knox 1957: 5), feel (Edwards 1957), response (Nida 2012: 146) or resultant impression (Procházka 1946: 104 in Gardin 1955) similar to what that the original gave or possessed. However, no studies point to the response of readers to poetry that has been translated according to only form or content and not both. That is to say, in a situation where only the form or content of the original is conveyed in the translation, is a "similar effect" achieved when form is prioritized over the content or is content more functional than form

[21]In 17th-century colonial Philippines, poetry was gradually shaped by rhyme patterns and meter with European influence. The Spanish friars brought to the Philippines the Spanish forms such as romance, quintilla, terceto, among others. According to Almario (1985: 180), the tension between the traditional and Western influences and how the poet balances these influences were evident during this period. For instance, the poem below, cited by Almario, used the cuarteto rhyme scheme – a form that easily became popular because it resembles the traditional stanzaic division – and the octosilabo syllable count from Spain.

> Salamat nang ualang hoyang
> Sa iyo Dios cong maalam
> Nitong iyong auang mahal
> Sa aming catagalogan.
>
> Ang ito ngang librong mahal
> Na ang lamai,i, iyong ara.
> Iyong tambing tinulutan
> Ilimbag at nang marangal.

The most popular borrowed form, according to Almario (1985: 28) is the sonnet. In borrowing the form, the Filipino poet no longer pays attention to the original meter. Instead, the focus is on the rhyme scheme that conforms to the European model, such as the Italian sonnet and Spenserian sonnet.

[22]For instance, traditional Filipino poetry also has short forms similar to the Japanese haiku. One is the tanaga composed of four lines with seven syllables each line. Traditionally, it forms an AAAA rhyme pattern but modern versions can have other rhyme schemes such as AABB. Another example is the diona composed of three lines with eight syllables each and a monorhyme.

in bringing off the intended response? This is one question the current study hopes to answer. In this study, the effect under investigation is humor.

4.3 Translating for form

4.3.1 The role of rhyme in children's poetry

Rhyme in children's poems, particularly perfect rhyme, not only gives the poem a musical quality and helps children understand, memorize and recite a verse but it also acts as a device for humor. Similar to how jokes operate where the setup builds expectation and the punchline functions to surprise, rhyme creates predictability and regularity which enhance the impact of introducing something unpredicted. It forms a relationship between words, leaving the reader to anticipate the possible rhyming words that may occur. When these expectations are not met, surprise is generated – an essential element of humor. For instance, if the poet were to write "The moon hangs in the sky like a ," the first word that would come to the mind of the reader to fill in the blank is perhaps "balloon" because this is how one would typically think of a round object that floats and the sound of "moon" hints that the association is indeed correct. But what if the poet writes "fat prune" instead? At the minimum, the unexpected connection would bring a smile to the reader. The lines from "Welcome to Duloc", a song from the animated film Shrek, work differently: "Keep your feet off the grass / Shine your shoes, wipe your... face." Listeners would expect the word "ass" to complete the rhyme but instead are offered the good wholesome alternative "face" which of course destroys the rhyme but still, this shows how rhyme can build the anticipation needed for a whole comic effect. Wrenched rhyme twists words to create humor, just as Ogden Nash (in Turco 1986: 42) did in the prose poem "Kindly Unhitch That Star, Buddy": "Some people think they will eventually wear diamonds instead of rhinestones / Only by everlastingly keeping their noses to their grhinestones..." Here, the reader conditions himself or herself for a true word that rhymes with "rhinestones" only to be cheated by the poet, which is actually funny. Thus, in poetry, rhyme supports the use of incongruity to create humor: rhyme provides acoustic or phonetic cues that condition predictions and expectancies based on one's view of a well-ordered world and humor happens when an idea that contradicts such expectations follows. This is possible because our brain responds well to poetic features. Turner and Pöppel (1983: 72-73) offer further insight into this. First, human information processing, they write, is "determinative", insisting upon certainty. Second, it is "habituative", that it "tends to ignore repeated and expected stimuli and responds more eagerly to the new and unexpected." Third, it is "predictive: the patterns it extrapolates or invents are patterns that involve specific immediate expectations and, in the more distant future, expectations which await satisfaction and are tested by the senses." Turner and Pöppel cite these with particular emphasis to metered poetry but their ideas can also apply

to other rules that govern poetic texts such as rhyme.

4.3.2 Holmes and the four forms of poetry translation

Holmes (1971) argues that poetry translation is a more complex kind of translation as the product itself results from different tensions that are more or less absent in other kinds of translation. He calls the translated poem a "metapoem" that connects complex relationships coming from two directions: "from the original poem, in its language, and linked in a very specific way to the poetic tradition of that language; and from the poetic tradition of the target language, with its more or less stringent expectations regarding poetry which the metapoem, if it is to be successful as poetry, must in some measure meet" (93).

According to Holmes, there are four forms used in poetry translation: the mimetic, the analogical, the organic and the deviant form. The mimetic and analogical forms are both form-derivative while the organic form is content-derivative. The deviant form, sometimes called extraneous form, is neither form nor content derivative. Form, Holmes clarifies, is used not to refer to the "deep" form which reflects the "entire essential structure" of the poem (in other words, the meaning) but instead to the external surface or shape of this "deep" form which includes, among others, rhyme, meter, verse length, and stanzaic patterning and division (103).

Form-derivative approaches aim to find an equivalent in the target language for the "outward form" of the original poem (96). With the mimetic form, the translator considers only the form of the original poem and not of the forms in the native tradition of the target language, thereby "re-emphasizing" to the target language readers the "strangeness" of the original text and demanding them to be open to views beyond what is normally accepted in their own literary tradition. Holmes gives the example of the translator constructing German hexameters for Greek or English terza rima for Italian.

The translator using the analogical form places importance on the function of the original poem's form within its poetic tradition to find within the poetic tradition of the target language a function that is "parallel" to it. Holmes cites the epic Iliad as an example and says that when translated using the analogical form into English, it is expected to be in a verse form that is suitable for an epic and that can either be the blank verse or the heroic couplet (97). Thus, the analogical form "bring[s] the original poem within the native tradition, to 'naturalize' it."

When using the organic approach, the translator disregards the form of the original poem (or fitting the content into a mimetic or analogical form) as the starting point and begins instead with the semantic material, letting a distinct "poetic shape" materialize in the process of translation (96). Here, the translator considers only the "meaning" or literal understanding of the original poem. This is the case when a translation is in blank free verse, based only on the original poem's meaning but does not follow its structure.

Finally, the translator uses the deviant or extraneous form when he or she

creates a metapoem in a form that is not suggested in any way in either the form or the content of the original (97). This approach arises from the inseparability of form and content which makes it "impossible to find any predetermined extrinsic form into which a poem can be poured in translation [thus] the only solution is to allow a new intrinsic form to develop from the inward workings of the text itself" (98). Escudero (2021), upon studying a corpus of Spanish translations of Shakespeare's sonnets, found that this is the least used form in the corpus and possibly for poetic translation into Spanish in general. She gives one example, however, which is A. Ehrenhaus' translations that render sonnets as haikus.

Although it is clear that the Filipino translation for form used in this study (see Appendix E) is derivative, it is difficult to identify under which of the four kinds it falls. On the one hand, it has the features of the original in terms of rhyme scheme which makes it mimetic in that sense. On the other hand, the rules of rhyme kept to the poetic tradition of Filipino, making it analogical in form. It is therefore a more experimental, "hybrid" form – combining conventions from both the source language and the target language to determine the form of the translation that works best in terms of function and effect. As Holmes says, "there is an extremely close relationship between the kind of verse form a translator chooses and the kind of total effect his translation achieves" (101). By not adopting the monorhyme customary in the poetic tradition of the target language, the poem is given a more dynamic and lively sound suitable for humorous children's poems. Almario (1991: 25) mentions that some traditional Filipino poets resort to a dual rhyming scheme (tugmang dalawahan) in a stanza with four lines or more to circumvent the monotony of the monorhyme (AAAA); some examples of commonly used schemes for such purpose are coupled rhyme, alternate rhyme (ABAB) and enclosed rhyme (ABBA). Experimentation is not unusual in translation: the translator is "free to be a fully autonomous, rational, creative, human being" as there are no final answers, "only attempts at solutions" (Aveling 2002).

4.3.3 Kochol and the three ways of translating poetic rhythm

Kochol (1971) identifies three ways of translating a verse rhythm: (1) identity or adopting a "rhythmic copy of the original", (2) substitution or pursuing "adequate rhythmic substitution", and (3) inadequacy or using an inadequate rhythmic substitution. The rhythmic substitution is adequate when the translator "preserves the essential rhythmic factors and disturbs those that are subsidiary" and is inadequate when he or she "adheres to the subsidiary elements and leaves the rhythmic essentials of the original out of account" (106). Kochol mentions a fourth method which occurs when "verse is translated by prose and the verse rhythm is replaced by a non-metrical linguistic rhythm (not form-bound)" although he adds that this can be regarded as an "extreme case of inadequate substitution" (107). He asserts that identity or the "scrupu-

lous respect for the verse form of the original as the supreme idea of the verse translation" is not dependent on subjective translation ability but rather on objective language factors. This is because there are "languages that are rhythmically identical, languages that are rhythmically related, and languages that are rhythmically remote" (107); there are languages that are "genetically cognate but rhythmically diverse, while on the other hand rhythmic cognation and even identity may be found between languages that are genetically unrelated" (108). In the case of Filipino, while it is closer to English, which is stress-timed in the "Euclidean-distance sense", it has in fact the same rhythm as Japanese which is syllable-timed (Santos and Guevarra 2011: 456).

In the Filipino translation for form used in this study, as seen in Appendix E, the rhythmic substitution can be considered inadequate but not for reasons brought about by translation skills or linguistic differences. The rhythmic change is necessitated by the pressure of form, as defined by Holmes, in the native tradition of the target language. The meter of the Dahl and Silverstein poems is iambic, characteristic of traditional English poetry. While stress is a distinctive feature of Filipino, the iambic meter does not exist in the poetic tradition of the target language and therefore cannot be considered essential to the translation. Going back to the earlier assertion that the resulting Filipino translation for form is a "hybrid", the translation does borrow some standards from the poetic tradition in English but does not include the iambic quality of poems in that language.

4.3.4 Tsur and cognitive poetics

Another concept that guided the translation of form in the present study is Reuven Tsur's cognitive poetics. Referring to the Gestalt theory, Tsur (1996) argues that the rhyme pattern of a poem also affects its tone. Gestalt psychologists believe that individuals think in structured wholes rather than in separate components. This is because when points share one or more characteristics, people group and perceive them as a "new, larger visual object, a gestalt" (Desolneux et al. 2008). To illustrate his point, Tsur refers to the first stanza of Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard" in the original rhyme pattern ABAB (1) below and with the quatrain distorted to produce an AABB rhyme pattern (2).

(1) The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

(2) The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Although the two have almost the same meaning, he explains that there is a difference in tone. Using the adjective pair emotional-witty, he says that the first version can be described as "emotional" and the second can be evaluated as "witty." He uses the term "witty" to mean something characterized by "sharpness usually associated with cleverness and quickness of apprehension" (Tsur 1996: 66). Such quality is, by and large, associated with humor. Dictionaries such as the Cambridge English Thesaurus and the Oxford American Writer's Thesaurus even list "witty" as synonymous with "funny."

The second version's wittiness has something to do with its simplicity and straightforward tone, according to Tsur. He goes on to argue that although the ABAB rhyme pattern from the original version is simple compared to other rhyme patterns, the AABB pattern of the second version is even simpler. Tsur turns to the Gestalt principles of proximity and similarity to define "good" organization. In his example above, the similar endings in (1) are closer to each other than those in (2), which allow a "better psychological organization of the stimulus pattern" (66). In quatrain (2), each couplet is immediately completed while in quatrain (1), it takes some time for the rhyme pair to materialize. For Tsur, the first version requires longer and more complex processing before a complete whole can be achieved, resulting in a more emotional text. On the other hand, the simplicity and proximity of the rhyme pair in the second version are greater than those in the first version which makes it easier for the reader to complete a whole and perceive it as a wittier text. Based on Tsur's analysis, the second rhyme pattern is more appropriate for a humorous verse. It should be noted that the AABB rhyme pattern is not common in Filipino nursery rhymes. The most common rhyme patterns are AAAA BBBB... or AAA BBB.[23] However, by preserving the AABB rhyme pattern of the Dahl and Silverstein poems in the Filipino translation used in the poetry reading sessions, the study will be able to determine if indeed such a rhyme scheme contributes to the wittiness or funniness of the translated poems.

4.4 Translating for content

According to Gadamer (1992), in translating the meaning of the source text, the translator must ensure that it is understood in the context in which the recipient lives. However, the translator is not "at liberty to falsify the meaning"

[23]For example, the first two stanzas in Sitsiritsit Alibangbang are as follows:

Sitsiritsit, alibangbang
Salaginto at salagubang
Ang babae sa lansangan
Kung gumiri'y parang tandang.

Santo Niño sa Pandacan
Puto seko sa tindahan
Kung ayaw mong magpautang
Uubusin ka ng langgam.

(386). He emphasizes that "the meaning must be preserved, but since it must be understood within a new language world, it must establish its validity within it in a new way." Thus, for Gadamer, every translation is an interpretation.

When translated, a poem is particularly in danger of losing its meaning as the interpretation of a poem is more complex than any other text. This is because unlike prose, its meaning is coded and compressed in a few words. It is also made more complex by the presence of metaphors as well as formal structures that may add meaning to the text. Kenesei (2010) states that readers reread poems five to eight times before understanding them. Gadamer's claim that every translation is also an interpretation seems to apply not only to complex literature meant for adult readers but also to writing aimed at children. Even if many children's literary texts, prose and poetry alike, are simple, clear and straightforward in their meaning, they can also be sophisticated and have multilayered meanings that require critical literacies from children especially when more complex language, characters and themes are introduced. Humorous verses for children may contain some form of wordplay such as puns or double entendres which can change the meaning of the text and make translation into another language extra challenging. The punchline of Kenn Nesbitt's funny poem for children "My Left Left", for instance, relies heavily on wordplay: the child wakes up with the left side of his or her body missing but assures readers that he or she is "all right." This is also the case for idioms, used by many children's writers to exaggerate humor. Idioms are culturally determined and often have no corresponding expression in the target cultural system (cf. Baker 1992: 68). Wang (2017) cites some English idioms that have roots from the historical development of Britain. For example, the English idioms "when in Rome, do as the Romans do", "Rome was not built in a day" and "all roads lead to Rome" originated from the experience of Britain being conquered by the Roman empire. Wang also shows how some English idioms reflect Britain's custom and habits, and sports and entertainment. A good example in children's poetry is another Silverstein short poem, "Losing Pieces." It is made up of American English idioms (for example, "cried my eyes out") that have no equivalent expressions in Filipino. Cases such as this demand that the translator possesses literary proficiency not only in the target language but also in the source language to succeed in translating the original text and to make the resulting text meaningful for the reader (Nida 2012). Thus, even if the product itself is determined by some concept of equivalence, translators still make "interpretive moves" that "vary the source text according to a complex set of factors that include knowledge of the source language and culture but also values, beliefs and representations that circulate in the translating language and culture during a particular period" (Venuti 2011).

4.4.1 Translation as interpretation

A poem is the poet's interpretation of the world. The writer may be the world's interpreter in a text but so is the reader. In the hands of the reader, the rep-

resentation created by the author is not only validated, modified or refuted based on the reader's own defined logical space; correspondingly it also leads the reader to create meaning out of this interpretation. The translator is not only a reader but he or she must be a good reader (Almario et al. 2003: 103). That is to say, the translator, as a reader, must understand what the text means and interpret it before transferring it from one language to another. Sarma (2008: 74) posits that because any translation of a given text is "essentially a reading and a rewriting, the very process of translation involves some kind of conscious or unconscious intervention on the part of the translator." However, because the poet encapsulates his or her interpretation of the world in symbolic or metaphorical ways, a poem allows for multiple interpretations, making the translator's task particularly difficult. Kenesei (2010: 42) suggests calling a poem one "macrometaphor": what the poet does is use figurative language that "transcends the semantic limitations of language, that is, the greatest challenge in translation lies in the seizure and transmittance of the micro- as well as the macrometaphorically expressed content." Thus, what one reads in a translation of a poem is in fact an interpretation that is not free from the translator's linguistic, literary and cultural background. Badiou (2005: 46) however, believes that it is not impossible to achieve a common interpretation for there exists "the universality of great poems, even when they are represented in the almost invariably disastrous approximation that translation represents" and it is "comparison [that] can serve as a sort of experimental verification of this universality."

Holmes (1988) considers the translation a translator's commentary on the original poem – a "metapoem" as previously mentioned. If abilities permit, a reader of a translation can read both the translation and the original text to compare where they converge and diverge, their similarities and the contrasts. Translation, after all, is inherently comparative. As Longxi (2013: 24) asserts, "Translation is all about comparison, about finding comparable or equivalent expressions in one language for those in another and in recent theoretical reflections, translation is often taken to be a model for comparative literature." But not everyone possesses the skill to read and comprehend both the original text and the translated version. It is this linguistic challenge that calls for translation in the first place. Often, readers must content themselves with only one text – the translation – and read it as if it were the original (Holland 1976 in Kenesei 2010: 42). Filipino poet and translator Marne Kilates (in Alma 2005: 14) says that there is still joy to be had when one does not know the original language from which the target text is translated: "that of discovery... of how perhaps another world, unknown through one's language, looks, feels, and sounds." Even some translators are limited by language skills, translating in many cases from the English translation of the text instead of the original language in which it was written. For Almario (2010), the fact that many of the literary gems are already in English is an opportunity that Filipino translators, who have a good command of English, must use to good advantage instead of waiting for the time when the texts could be translated directly from

non-English languages.

4.4.2 Nonsense poems

Many contemporary children's poets write in a humorous vein (Styles 1998), from the "rather obvious to the nicely flippant", as award-winning writer Penelope Lively (2019: n.p.) aptly expresses. For instance, nonsense verse that features absurd content consisting of neologism, impossible logic and absence of meaning (i.e., one simply does not "get it") appears in many children's anthologies. Among the most popular ones are those written by Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll. The irony in this literary form is that although a nonsense verse seems chaotic and random, it is well-thought out and deliberate, following some form of logic. To borrow Goldwaithe's description of Carroll's "Jabberwocky": "it is a puzzle to understand because [the writer] designed it to be so; the outward form is a deception" (Styles 1998: 146). In other words, the nonsense verse's detachment from meaning is in fact produced by a rational mind that is fully aware of conceptions of reality and intentionally distorts these to create new "representations." This leads to another irony in nonsense verse: despite the meaninglessness of the text, the reader is still forced to create order and make meaning out of it, in other words, to render an interpretation. Even if the words in the text do not exist and therefore have no meaning, they can have meaning "in contexts" (i.e., how they are used in the sentence or line), "get accepted by the language-oriented mind and take on an approximate meaning" (Brandt 2019: 97). Everything can be made understood in an existing language; in case of a deficiency, "terminology may be qualified and amplified by loanwords or loan-translations, neologisms or semantic shifts, and finally, by circumlocutions" (Jakobson 1959: 234). Thus, although nonsense verse can be very challenging for a translator – textual analysis, in this case, will require a great deal of imagination and creativity – it is not untranslatable.

4.4.3 Narrative poems

Contemporary children's poets also write funny poems that are linear and narrative and devoid of symbolisms, which are easier for children to read and understand. Narrative poems tell a story. They can be lengthy works of poetry such as epics or the awit and korido of traditional Filipino poetry. But in shorter forms, they can be suitable for young readers. The poems of Dahl and Silverstein used in this study fall under such a category. Concise yet compelling storytelling is essential in comic narrative poems for children. Former Children's Poet Laureate Kenn Nesbitt maintains an online repository of funny poems that he writes for children of different ages and these are excellent modern-day examples of how a straightforward tale in rhyming stanzas can be humorous. His poem "AstroCow" introduces the readers in three stanzas to a cow who became an astronaut and all the amazing things he did in space and then in the final stanza, it is revealed that he used to live on Earth but searched

"for somewhere new; / somewhere they don't serve barbecue." Unlike nonsense verse, narrative poems are less challenging to translate (Almario et al. 2003: 82) for content because the meaning is not hidden in complex linguistic and figurative expressions.

There is another feature of humorous narrative poems that is particularly important in the production, processing and appreciation of humor in this format: that of the suspension of disbelief. The term was coined by poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817) as a guide to how "the supernatural" in poetry should be read: with "... that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (Roberts 2014: 208). The reader allows the writer the freedom to build a world (composed of characters, locations and events) that is otherwise impossible in reality, trusts that such a product of imagination is real and worth believing, and delays critical judgment until he or she has reached the end of the narrative, the goal of which is to maximize the literary experience. Funny narrative poems for children, which are built around ridiculous characters and illogical or implausible situations with the final lines providing the point, function the same way. To enjoy the intended humor, the reader must go along with the absurdity, trusting that there is a "reward" at the end of it – the twist. Thus, the structure of humorous narrative poems is very similar to jokes in that the beginning lines or stanzas present the set-up, which engages the reader or listener in a willing suspension of disbelief, and the final stanzas or lines deliver the punchline. In Silverstein's poem "Sick", which was used in the study, the child insisted that she could not go to school for exaggerated, unbelievable health complaints but in the end, when told that it was a Saturday, immediately went out to play. Schramm (1971), who is considered the founder of the field of Communication Studies, believes that the suspension of disbelief is needed in all forms of entertainment where "instead of... remaining skeptical of anything that checks poorly with their picture of reality, the entertainment-merit audience must be willing to let down their defenses, go along with a story or a spoof or a good joke."

Suspended disbelief has implications for translating humorous narrative poems governed by content, a task in which the translator has more freedom with the product. Because the reader must accept this "matter of make-belief" (de Graef 2014: 356) as nothing less than reality, the translator must be mindful that he or she does not disrupt the convincing power present in the original text and detach the reader from this "reality." Rearranging, inserting or removing lines can reduce or take away the impact of the sequence of words that is part of the buildup before the punchline. Similarly, when the line lengths are disproportionate or variable and especially where children are the intended audience, overly long lines can make the reader, seeking immediate gratification that is expected of poetry particularly of a humorous one, lose interest and resolve to abandon his or her participation in the made-up world. Lively (2019: n.p.) makes this case about children's poetry: it is "in any case more immediate, more concise, than prose—not that that makes it any easier for the writer to find that essential combination of language and content which will

engage the reader within a few lines." Concerning the poetic line, scholars have argued about the ideal length of a verse line, for instance, how this should fit into the working memory capacity such as Tsur's (1998) assertion on poetic rhythm based on the "7 plus or minus 2" units (words but can also be syllables) capacity proposed by Miller (1956) or the three-second upper limit by Turner and Pöppel (1983). But Fabb (2013) counters this by showing that "there is no evidence that lines of verse are constrained by a time-limited psychological capacity." The problem, however, is that these claims apply to metrical poetry and other kinds of regular poetic form – rhyme, alliteration and parallelism (Fabb 2017) – and there is no empirical guide on how long a line of an unmetered verse without thought to sonic features should be. Baddeley's (2012: 15) suggestion of the 15-word upper limit can be adopted for this purpose: "memory span for unrelated words is around 5, increasing to 15 when the words make up a sentence ." In the Filipino translation of Dahl's "The Dentist and the Crocodile" used in this study, the longest line has 14 words while in the translation of Silverstein's "Sick", the maximum number of words in a line is 9. This seems to be a reasonable limit for children as none of the participants in the study pertained to line lengths as reasons for failing to understand the poems correctly.

4.5 Translating proper names

The two poems in the study contain proper nouns or proper names. "In The Dentist and the Crocodile", Dahl used three: "Crocodile", a common noun but designated in this case as the animal's proper name, and the nicknames "Crocky" and "Croc" formed from the informal variants of the word "crocodile." In "Sick", Silverstein called the child in the poem "Peggy Ann McKay", a generic American name of English origin.

4.5.1 Problems with translating proper names

The translation of proper names into another language is not as simple as it seems. First of all, as a rule, proper names are missing in ordinary dictionaries (Van Langendonck 2008: 3) which complicates the task of finding referential meanings or dictionary meanings (Nida 1964: 70) and equivalents. Secondly, as Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2003) explains, one reason behind such complexity is the lack of a "specific theory" that addresses the translation of names and the inconsistency that marks existing proposed theories that offer a range of translation options. Different strategies, for example, put forward that proper names can be used in their original form (Newmark 1988, Moya 2002, Hervey and Higgins 1992, Hermans 1988, Pym 2004, Davies 2003) or be transliterated (Hervey and Higgins 1992, Hermans 1988), omitted (Hermans 1988, Fernandes 2006, Davies 2003), adapted (Moya 2002, Hervey and Higgins 1992, Newmark 1988, Hermans 1988), supplemented (Davies 2003), replaced entirely by a new name

(Fernandes 2006, Davies 2003) or replaced phonologically (Fernandes 2006). In addition, there are other techniques proffered, some with shared desired results and differentiated only by terminology. For instance, when the proper name is copied directly from the source text to the target text without any changes, Moya (2000 in Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2003) refers to this technique as "transfer" while Davies (2003) calls it "preservation."

4.5.2 Meanings of proper names

The decision to use a particular translation strategy also depends on whether the proper name is meaningful and here the views vary once more. While often seen as trivial, proper names can carry critical meaning (Vermes 2003) with connections to culture and ideology (Newmark 1991: 31). For example, biblical characters bear names that have special meanings in Hebrew. In children's literature, the tale of Cinderella provides an excellent example. In the first European version (1634) written by Giambattista Basile in the Italian, the protagonist is called *Cenerentola* from the Italian word "cenere" which means "ash" or "cinder", suggesting the ash that servants come in contact with while cleaning or keeping themselves warm by the fireplace. The story was retold by Charles Perrault in French in 1697 as *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* and by the Grimm Brothers in German in the 19th century as *Aschenputtel*. While the two versions differ significantly in plot and characters, both retained the significance of ash or cinder to the main character's name. According to Newmark (1981: 71), when surnames have "deliberate connotations through sound and meaning", the names should remain unchanged. Klingberg (1986) recommends that "personal names... without any special meanings... should not be altered..." (43 in Cámara-Aguilera 2009) as removing the "peculiarities of the foreign culture or chang[ing the] cultural elements... will not further the readers' knowledge of and interest in the foreign culture" (9-10 in Cámara-Aguilera 2009).

Writers of literary texts purposely select names for their characters (Nyangeri and Wangari 2019) and so translators cannot simply ignore the artistic and linguistic creativity behind proper names (Al Rabaldi 2012: 44 in Nyangeri and Wangari 2019). Writers can use existing names but put them together in a new way or create new names specifically for the work to reveal attributes or traits or sum up significant events. For example, in the children's book series The Legends of Eerie-on-Sea, the monsters are named "Malamander" and "Gargantis", portmanteau words that combine respectively the Spanish "mal" which means "bad" and the English "salamander", and the words "gargantuan" and "mantis." In the children's book *The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle* (2018), the protagonist and eponymous character struggles with weight and dyslexia and is bullied for these, making the surname "Buttle", from the word "butt" which means "the person or thing at which criticism or humor, typically unkind, is directed" (New Oxford American Dictionary) appropriate. He becomes good friends with Calvin Chumsky and "chum" in an informal sense means "good

friend."

Fernandes (2006) mentions three ways proper names in children's literature become meaningful. First, he says, they have a semantic meaning in that they "describe a certain quality of a particular narrative element and/or create some comic effects". For example, one of the characters in *The Mysterious Benedict Society*series is nicknamed "Sticky" because he remembers everything that he reads and sees – the information just "sticks." Second, they can have a semiotic meaning and "act as signs, generating ancient or more recent historical associations (e.g., Ptolemy), indicating gender, class, nationality, religious identity (e.g., Gabriel), intertextuality (e.g., Sherlock Holmes), mythology (e.g., Banshee) and so on" (all examples taken from Fernandes 2006: 46-47). Because of their semiotic significance, names are often attached to a particular culture (Tymoczko 1999: 224, Aixelá 1996 in Fernandes 2006). Third, he states that names can have sound symbolic meanings and quotes Matthews (1997: 347) to explain sound symbolism as "the use of specific sounds or features of sounds in a partly systematic relation to meanings or categories of meaning." This can feature onomatopoeia where the names imitate certain sounds or have a phonestheme – a sound or sound sequence that can be interpretated as meaningful. He illustrates the latter using the initial cluster /sl/ which he says is found in words that suggest "unpleasantness" such as "slime, slug, slithery, slobbery and slog" as well as in the name "Salazar Slytherin", founder of the infamous Slytherin House of Hogwarts in the widely translated Harry Potter series. All of these indicate the importance of determining first of all whether or not the proper name in a work has been selected from meanings associated with the entity being named. To do this, sufficient knowledge of the source language and culture is necessary. With the poems used in this study, the proper names were translated from English into Filipino but the considerations and strategies for translating them differed from one name to another. One name did not have any special meaning attached to it which allowed for more freedom in its translation while the other names represented the owner's category and characteristics which had to be carried over in their translation. The considerations are discussed in detail in section 6.4.3.

4.5.3 Translating names from Philippine folklore: An example

The close adherence to original names to preserve the foreignness of the source text seems to have guided the Filipino-English children's bilingual book *Ang Hukuman ni Sinukuan* (2005), a story about a goddess in Philippine legends. In the English translation, the name of the main character Mariang Sinukuan became "Maria Sinukuan", almost a direct copy from the original Filipino. The common nouns that were also used as the animals' proper names in Filipino were carried over into the English translation: Kabayo (Horse), Lamok (Mosquito) and Palaka (Frog), to name a few. Because the book was published primarily for bilingual Filipino children who speak English and Filipino, it was

easy to adopt the Filipino proper names in the English translation. Most of the time, however, proper names are changed when translated. For instance, while Newmark (1981) advocates using proper names in their original form, he does note that the translation of "proper names in fairy stories, folk tales and children's literature" is common since "children and fairies are the same the world over."

4.6 Conclusions

This chapter shows that translating a poem in a way that retains both form and content with equal weight is difficult to achieve as faithfulness to one is often done at the expense of the other. As such, translators of poems frequently face the problem of whether to prioritize form or content in the translation to convey the spirit of the original. This study seeks to determine which of the two is more influential in producing humor in poems by translating two versions: one that retains the form as much as possible and another, the content. The findings, which are found in Chapter 7, contradict popular ideas.

Translation for form prioritizes structural elements such as line length and rhyme. Orr (1988: 4) considers the structure, or the "satisfaction of measurable patterns", as comparable to "higher math, geometry, theoretical physics – the beauty and balance of equations." It is the "conscious pattern-making intention of the poet" (8). Such pattern-making is seen in rhyme, which reinforces the delivery of humor in children's poems. Rhyme gives acoustic or phonetic cues that build expectations and when a different idea follows, humor is generated. The ubiquity of rhyme does not seem to be true for all cultures, however. For example, according to Reynolds (2021), although rhyme is widely used in English, it is "very rarely employed" in Japanese even if the concept exists. The Japanese expression "in o fumu" (to rhyme) is unknown to most young Japanese. He adds that alliteration, which is common in English, is hardly ever used in Japanese.

In translating for content, the goal is to be as faithful as possible to the meaning of the poem. Humorous narrative poems for children often rely on the concept of suspension of disbelief – to enjoy the poem, the reader must be willing to delay judgment on the absurd. Translators must recognize the importance of suspended disbelief in humor and ensure that the reader is not detached from the "reality" that the original text created.

In children's literature, writers may use proper names to convey meaning about their characters and situations but they may also choose names for their aesthetic worth. The latter is also evident in poetry where words are valued for the way they serve the formal requirements in measure and sound. There is a range of strategies from which translators can choose in transferring proper names into the target language. Some countries such as Lithuania (Jaleniauskienė and Čičelytė 2009: 34) enforce rules on how to translate proper names in literary texts. For most, however, there are no state-determined prin-

ciples that limit what translators can and cannot do and often they decide based on preference as well as purpose, whether that of the translator or the translation.

CHAPTER 5

Humor

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for understanding what individuals in general, and children in particular, find funny. It begins with a discussion of why humor is hard to define, something humor and children's literature have in common. Three theories that explain why people laugh at certain things are then explored. These are the incongruity theory, the relief theory and the superiority theory. These explanatory theories are particularly critical in the analysis of the responses of children to humorous texts. The chapter then takes a closer look at the influence of culture on humor which signals the importance of looking at the collected data through a cultural lens. This is followed by an examination of children's humor from a developmental perspective, particularly among primary school-aged children and children's humor preferences in literary texts, including fiction but especially poetry. This chapter also offers some new concepts that arose from the limitations of existing concepts and theories in explaining humor. For example, it introduces the concept of joyful laughter, a type of laughter that comes from the pleasure derived from generating creative ideas. It also proposes two approaches to explaining humor: humor creation and resolution as a power-balancing act and humor as a form of negotiation in which the recipient can either be a collaborator or an unwilling or hesitant party. Although the design of the present study did not make it possible to investigate these ideas in detail, other researchers may find these concepts useful in their studies of humor.

5.2 Defining humor

Humor is such an essential part of several domains of human life that a world without it is simply unimaginable. Humor, in its many forms, is a universal human trait that is present across cultures. People always find and create something to laugh about and for a multitude of reasons: a funny anecdote in a political speech, children's rhymes that poke fun at adults, shop names made hilarious thanks to puns (there is a bakery in Cebu City, Philippines named Bread Pitt and another in Amsterdam, the Netherlands called Life of Pie). Nevertheless, while laughter is a universal form of human expression, people from different cultures and different backgrounds have different opinions on what is witty, amusing or comical. The funniness of a joke or a gesture also changes over time; we have seen how what is considered taboo has evolved and how what was once considered funny can now cause raised eyebrows instead of bursts of laughter, and vice versa. For example, in India, more female comedians are using curse words and sexual content in their acts which used to be reserved for male comedians. There is still gender bias in what females cannot do or say and even women listeners themselves get offended when such boundaries are crossed. However, the situation appears to be improving for female comedians. Sumukhi Suresh shares in an interview (Sinha 2020) that when she started, there would be 70% men and 30% women in the audience but when she toured in 2019, her audience was 80% women. As Sinha (2020) finds, "female comedians are aggressively pushing the boundaries, challenging biases, breaking the stereotypes and successfully fighting refrains that 'women aren't funny.'" So humor, much like human society, is a complex phenomenon. Everybody laughs but there is no single account of what makes people laugh, or why they even do so. Many philosophers and scholars from a range of disciplines have endeavored to explain the intricacies of humor and its production, perception and types, the main takeaway being that there is no single formula when it comes to humor. Indeed, the study of humor is no laughing matter.

5.2.1 Problems with defining humor

The ability to appreciate humor may be universal (Raskin 1985: 2) and present in all human groups yet it possesses no generic definition. This is a characteristic that humor shares with children's literature. It is easily recognizable (Berlyne 1972 in Ford et al. 2016: 1) and can be identified intuitively yet remains difficult to define (McGhee 1979 in Ford et al. 2016: 1, Davis 2013: 2). In the preceding paragraph, what is humorous, particularly that which elicits laughter, was held to be synonymous with being witty, amusing or comical. Still, there are scholars who have made distinctions between these expressions, viewing wit and humor as just two of eight comic styles (Ruch et al.: 2018) or examining humor and wit separately (Long and Graesser 1988). The question why it is challenging to produce a comprehensive definition that covers all aspects also brings up the issue of how researchers from different fields delineate

the scope of humor investigation. For example, the folklorist or the literary critic looks at "genres" such as the joke, the humorous anecdote and the tall tale while psychologists subcategorize humor based on subject matter such as scatological, aggressive and sexual (Attardo 1994: 4-5). In addition, researchers look at different aspects: comprehension, appreciation, and production (Ruch and Heintz 2019: 2). As such, similar to children's literature, a single definition of humor that is acceptable to all humor scholars has become impossible to reach (Ruch 1998 in Ford et al. 2016: 1).

5.2.1.1 Defining humor according to a physical response

One of the difficulties underlying this task of defining humor has to do with biology. Often, humor is taken as anything that evokes laughter, smiling (Thompson 2014: 683), giggling or mirth. But smiling and spontaneous laughter do not always signal humor appreciation (Szameitat et al. 2009, Chiaro 2012: 17). People laugh for different reasons. They can use laughter as a coping mechanism – to release tension or nervous energy in unpleasant situations. People smile to taunt or hide shame. Smiling and laughter can also accompany a state of surprise, fear or aggression. A study made by Provine (2000) sheds light on what triggers laughter. His findings indicate that, contrary to popular belief, the presence of another person and not the joke serves as the stimulus for laughter, "a social vocalization that binds people together." This is evident with laughter that commonly proceeds statements, rather than jokes, that are hardly funny (e.g., "Where have you been?" or "It was nice meeting you, too"). Joint to the prevalence of non-humorous laughter in human activity is the fact that humor does not always make us laugh. This occurs in cases where someone is the target of the joke, particularly an offensive one, or where a joke or event does amuse – it prompts the reader or hearer to say "That is funny" – but fails to provoke laughter. Likewise, laughter is an unreliable measure of amusement. People may laugh after a joke without grasping the humor to conform to social expectations, maintain interpersonal relationships or avoid embarrassment. For this reason, some theorists have acknowledged that humor may not be followed by smiling or laughter (Pien and Rothbart 1980: 2).

5.2.1.2 Defining humor according to intent

How intent is perceived to factor in the production of humor also divides scholars. There are theorists such as Attardo (1994) and Attardo and his colleagues (2013) whose standard definition of humor calls for a clear intention to elicit amusement, laughter or exhilaration. Such humorous intent can either be successful (there is a humorous effect) or unsuccessful (there is no humorous effect; also called unachieved humor by Vandaele 2002). The intent can be signaled at the beginning, for example, by a change in tone or facial expression in the case of verbal humor. Most of the time, however, it involves a suspension of judgment on the part of the listener, reader or viewer, meaning the intent is

recognizable only after the message has been sent or the action done. But to say that there can be no humor without intent suggests three things. First, this overlooks situations where the intent is missing but has a humorous effect. For other scholars such as Vandaele (2002), this is still a humorous situation even with the absence of intent. Episodes in which humor occurs unexpectedly, that is, when humor is accidental on the part of the producer and only constructed by the recipient (Brock 2016) are in fact quite prevalent; consider, as an illustration, hearing a mispronounced word. Second, in the presence of a clear intent, humor becomes a negotiation. Humor happens when there is an identification of the intent of the producer, which is up to the recipient to accept or reject, and an understanding of the message, which may or may not be interpreted correctly and appreciated depending on individual taste, state of mind, communication skills, level of comprehension along with what is socially and culturally acceptable. The negotiation has a temporal aspect to it and what people find humorous at a particular time can change at another time. When the intent is accepted, the recipient can be considered a collaborator – he or she helped fulfill the intent. When the humorous intent has been evaluated but not accepted, the recipient can either be an unwilling or a hesitant party: the former can be said of someone fully against the intent as in the case of racist jokes while the latter could be someone delaying judgment due to lack of proficiency in the language in which the humorous intent was expressed or to humor that is not safe, the response of other people to which is not yet known. Third, in the case where there is no intention to amuse but a response of amusement is still provoked, humor can be classified as a departure where there is no negotiation between the producer and receiver, and the outcome is determined solely by the receiver as an independent agent.

5.2.1.3 Defining humor according to cognitive processes

Similar to intention, theorists understand mental processes at work in detecting and appreciating humor differently (Pien and Rothbart 1980: 2). Humor comprehension is a high-level cognitive activity (Tian et al. 2017, Kipman et al. 2012) that activates the same areas of the brain used in gaining new insight. It is a problem-solving task (Suls 1972 in Tian et al. 2017) whose primary goal is to reconcile an apparent deviation or unforeseen cause of an irregularity (Kipman et al. 2012). A great deal of work in this area focuses on how the cognitive processing necessary for a humorous experience to happen involves an awareness of incongruities, which results in pleasure similar to what one experiences upon working out a problem or decoding a puzzle (Zigler et al. 1966).

This approach to humor posits that humor results from unmet expectations and mental patterns – a joke is only funny if the predicted outcome does not happen. There is a sudden shift in frame as the recipient not only moves from a serious form of activity to a playful one but also changes mental models to analyze and grasp the humor, particularly the incongruity. Scholars have written about incongruity in humor as early as the 18th century, albeit with seemingly

contradictory stances. For literary critic William Hazlitt, only incongruity is needed to produce humor but for others such as philosopher James Beattie and author Arthur Koestler, the relationship is far more complex (Suls 1983: 40).

For most advocates of the incongruity theory, humor hinges on two conflicting and unexpected ideas that are juxtaposed; however, for Koestler with his theory of bisociation, these ideas must be combined and not merely juxtaposed to create a new product (Suls 1983: 40). Whichever the case, looking at humor perception as a high-intensity mental activity makes the producer of humor an agent of power. This should not be confused with superiority in humor or instances of "put-down" or aggressive humor where the producer sees himself or herself better than others and intends to denigrate the target (a point that will be expounded in the next section). This does not refer either to hierarchical relationships, as in the case of a manager (high position) and an intern (low position). Instead, this refers to a space where by "testing" the cognitive abilities of the viewer, hearer or reader in resolving humor, the producer creates power relations. Failure to comprehend the humor maintains this power status while understanding what is funny equalizes the power status between producer and recipient. Thus, the whole process of humor creation and resolution is a power balancing act.

5.2.2 Defining humor for the study

Considering these varying views and approaches, humor in this research will be defined as a variety of comical phenomena, with or without the intention to amuse, that elicit amusement and that may or may not be followed by smiling or laughter. When it intends to amuse, humor becomes a negotiation between the producer of humor and the receiver; the latter may or may not cooperate to fulfill the intention. In the case of accidental humor, it is an instance of departure where only the receiver, an independent agent, determines the outcome.

5.3 Theories of humor

There are many different explanations about why people laugh at certain things. Humor arises when there are incompatible ideas placed side by side, when negative energy is released or when people feel superior to others. These accounts for the major theories of humor and are referred to in different parts of this chapter. Various scholars relate these concepts to children's humor. McGhee (1979) explains how mental development prepares children for humorous incongruities; Landsberg (1992) points out that in humor, children are able to release their anxieties; and Kappas (1967) and Shannon (1999) identify ridicule and perceived advantages over adults and other children as features of humorous children's literature.

Theories of humor are traditionally classified into three groups: the incon-

gruity theory, the relief or release theory and the superiority theory. Lintott (2016: 347) notes that the incongruity theory focuses on cognitive aspects, the relief theory on physical aspects of comic amusement and the superiority theory on the emotive. Thus, it can be said that they are not direct competitors of each other in explaining humor since they look at different aspects and dimensions.

5.3.1 Incongruity theory

The incongruity theory is the most cited explanation of humor. For McGhee (1979) and Schultz (1976), incongruity-based humor is one of the earliest forms of humor in young children (in Pien and Rothbart 1980: 2). It posits that humor occurs with the unexpected and the incongruous, that people are amused by conflicting and illogical ideas that are put together or when they experience something that goes against how they would typically understand and explain actions or situations. In other words, a situation is humorous because it counters previous experiences and usual cognitive frameworks and earlier expectations (Perks 2012). Immanuel Kant supports this "frustrated expectation" argument and says that laughter comes from the "sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing" (1951: 54). Consider jokes as an example. The setup establishes an expectation and the punchline serves to surprise, creating humor. In some cases, incongruity has been deemed a deviation from the normal. Ancheta (2017: xxiii), in studying Filipino humor, emphasizes that the Filipino humor known to many is mainly incongruity-based, "functioning as an apprehension of abnormality, in the subjects as well as in the milieu in which we find them, as departure from normalcy, and as valorization of flaw. . . "

The incongruity theory then implies a well-ordered world, that the world works according to specific schemes and patterns, and violating this order results in humor. But how one views order is unique to every person, influenced by many factors such as social status and culture, to name a few. Furthermore, because our concept of order is subjective, so too is what we perceive as incongruous. Thus, what may be incongruous for one person may not be for another, as when one finds a joke predictable and therefore not funny.

Additionally, this implies that incongruity is pleasurable, although the theory does not explain why it is so. This is perhaps one limitation of the incongruity theory. It makes sense why the resolution or understanding of two contradictory concepts should elicit pleasure – it provides new insight or makes us feel clever. But why something that we did not anticipate or goes against our mental patterns can be humorous is unclear. It does not answer why thwarted expectations in the case of humor do not cause disappointment or sadness when this is the usual response to unmet expectations.

Other philosophers and theorists argue that an incongruity by itself does not lead to pleasure. Barber's (2015: 48-49) account is simple: aside from thwarted intentionality, the "upset intentionality" must be found "enjoyable, amusing or evoking laughter" and not sad or unpleasant. Nevertheless, this is not a persuasive argument. What Barber is saying is that humor is produced when the

upset intentionality is humorous and thus begs the question of what constitutes humor. One of the most common arguments against the theory (Marra 2019: 39) is that if what is funny is the unexpected, then why do people still laugh at a joke they heard the second time? The incongruity theory reasons that the punchline of the joke still violates expectations and norms, no matter how many times it has been heard. This is why for Morreall (2009), it is not enough to take incongruity as something unexpected; it must also contradict systems of thought that guide us in evaluating expectations about the consequences of our actions. Still, the theory remains open to criticism and questions. Slapstick humor, in which outcomes are expected (such as someone slipping on a banana peel) is still funny but the incongruity theory fails to address why it is so.

5.3.2 Relief theory

The second theory that explains humor is the relief theory. It takes the view that people experience humor and laugh when positive emotions release pent-up emotions. Laughter relieves mental, nervous or psychic energy, producing homeostasis after tension or strain (Raskin 1985: 38 in Perks 2012: 120). In other words, humor results from the reduction of stress and anxiety.

In *The Physiology of Laughter*, Herbert Spencer, one of the two most prominent relief theorists, claims that this nervous energy "must... discharge itself in some other direction" (1860: 400) and laughter serves to release excessive energy. For Sigmund Freud, another influential relief theorist, such nervous energy is released when tension in events that cause sexual or aggressive energy is suddenly and surprisingly thwarted; what follows is relief in the form of humor (in Hurley et al. 2011). When the person anticipates a situation to be unpleasant but it turns out to be benign, the negative feelings are released (Morreall 2009). Freud claims that there are mental censors that repress certain thoughts and emotions but jokes deceive these censors and allow repressed energy to be released (in Hurley et al. 2011).

In more contemporary work, Morreall (2009: 15-18 in Barber 2015: 47) argues that repressed feelings of hostility flow through laughter when a joke expressing hostility toward another group "overrides" these inner censors. Shurcliff (1968) supports the relief theory using the results of his experiment. He hypothesized that if humor results from reduced strong affect or arousal, then humor should increase with higher arousal prior to relief. He found that not only is judged humor greater with greater subject's anxiety but that humor increases in proportion to surprisingness. This supports Freud's claim on the importance of surprise in thwarting a tension-causing situation to relieve excessive nervous arousal. However, there are some questions that the theory cannot address. Hurley et al. (2011) note how the theory is applicable to humor about "emotionally charged topics" but not to other kinds of humor such as logical humor. How is nervous energy released in the case of puns which do not involve aggressive or sexual tension? In essence, the relief theory suggests that all humor begins with tension. But this cannot be true. Similar to Hurley's example

of puns, how would the theory explain the funniness of someone falling off a chair? This does not involve negative emotions such as anxiety or stress, and this type of humor presents itself to us on numerous occasions.

Second, the theory suggests that all laughter result from the release of negative energy. But there is also a kind of laughter that arises from positive emotions derived, for instance, from a creative act. Pleasure derived from writing a poem or completing a painting or a musical piece can also result in an excitable state or a sense of accomplishment that can be expressed in open laughter. This type of laughter can be called joyful laughter to distinguish it from humorous laughter. It comes from pleasure given by generating creative ideas where such pleasure gradually builds up in the process until it reaches its peak and is released through laughter. This suggests that pleasure in a creative thinking task, where the goal is to produce original ideas, can be cumulative. Although one may face obstacles in the creative process, causing displeasure, these do not cancel out or override the pleasure that had been experienced, with such pleasure increasing as one nears the end of the task.

5.3.3 Superiority theory

Superiority theory, the third commonly used theory to explain humor, puts mockery, ridicule and laughter at the ridiculous actions of others at the center of humor experience (Keith-Spiegel 1972: 6 in Perks 2012: 120). What people find funny is a situation where they can look down on others and regard themselves as superior. Aristotle and Hobbes espoused the superiority theory to explain humorous laughter.

Plato calls this malice – laughing at the self-ignorance of other people – and says that seeing their misfortune causes pleasure and pain (in the soul). Hobbes, like Plato, believes that we laugh at situations where there is an absence of wit. Hobbes (1839) views laughter as caused by "sudden glory" at a pleasing act or by "apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves" (in Lintott 2016: 355). But as a supporter of incongruity theory, he believes that perceived superiority is not enough and novelty is needed to summon laughter – "it must be new and expected."

In his bisociation theory, Koestler (1964: 52) also embraces a form of superiority theory but asserts that this is a "detached malice" that he calls aggressive-defensive or self-asserting tendency, a requirement for humor. He stresses that this "impulse of aggression or apprehension" is "indispensable" and manifested "in the guise of malice, derision, the veiled cruelty of condescension, or merely as an absence of sympathy with the victim of the joke."

In other words, the superiority theory believes that it is only by comparing ourselves to others that we find humor. Critics of the superiority theory would of course argue that such a comparison does not always underpin humor – there are many counterexamples. This theory likewise suggests another contradiction in humor much like Plato's assertion of humor as causing both pleasure and pain: that while humor facilitates social connectedness when people collec-

tively agree on what is ridiculous, humor in fact capitalizes on breaking down social cohesion, used to assert differences and how one individual or group is distinguished from another.

5.4 The influence of culture on humor

In the previous sections, it was already mentioned that people from different cultures hold different views toward humor. First, culture determines the norms and expectations that influence what is considered to be incongruous (incongruity theory). Second, it defines power relationships, hierarchies and views on equality that affect how humor targets specific individuals or groups (superiority theory). Cultural differences thus have a direct bearing on humor production and reception. To illustrate, Americans are likely to use self-denigrating humor while the Spanish prefer teasing and ironic upgrades (Mir and Cots 2019: 393). The latter part of this chapter will touch on how the appreciation of a humorous verse for children can be culture-specific since exposure to nursery rhymes varies across cultures.

5.4.1 Culture and appropriate humor

According to Kant and Norman (2019), humor differs from culture to culture because culture determines the "absolute level" of what can be considered benign and malign by a particular group. They contend that this is not only evident on an intercountry level but also within the country where subcultures and different groups vary in how they perceive and use humor. Such variations also include differences in norms for expressing amusement, that is, there are distinctions in what are held to be appropriate responses to humor. Wang et al. (2019) mention that culture impinges on humor tolerance or how one allows taboo and controversial topics to be the object of humor. Referring to Maggie and Smith's (2013) elaborations, Kant and Norman (2019) add that cultural values influence power differences which in turn affect views on humor between the joke-teller and the joke-listener. Culture influences people's perspective of appropriate behavior for high-power individuals and the extent to which power differences are disregarded. This acts on how "socially distant" or "socially close" the joke-teller and joke-listener are to each other. Because this research involves two cultures – Western and Eastern – a few examples of studies illustrating humor differences between the two will be discussed.

5.4.2 Western versus Eastern views on humor

Jiang et al. (2019 in Kant and Norman 2019) argue that Easterners do not hold as much positive attitude toward humor unlike Westerners. Thus, Easterners are less likely to use humor as a coping strategy than Westerners (Jiang et al. 2019: 123). It has been found that the four styles of humor proposed by Martin

et al. 2003 – self-enhancing, affiliative, self-defeating, and aggressive humor – are used by people in different countries but how they are employed in the country or region varies (Jiang et al. 2019: 3). Findings show that Easterners are inclined to use more adaptive humor in contrast to Westerners who are prone to using more maladaptive humor.

Other studies highlight differences between Westerners' and Easterners' use of humor. For example, in the US, people use humor widely even in the classroom. But Tsukawaki et al. (2019) mention how Japan is still "cautious" about introducing humor within the school. Citing Yajima (2013), they reason that this has to do with the perception of parents and teachers that humor, including playful humor as well as puns and wordplay, encourages "boisterousness and frivolity."

It seems, however, that such observations of Easterners cannot be generalized for all cultures in a particular geographical region. In the Philippines, Ancheta (2017) finds the use of self-disparaging or maladaptive humor evident in comic personas in popular cultural forms. This way of using humor is similar to how Westerners (mainly Americans) employ self-denigrating humor, as Mir and Cots (2019: 393) observed. For instance, Erap (from the Filipino slang "pare" which means "dude" and spelled in reverse) jokes make fun of former Philippine President Joseph "Erap" Estrada's low IQ (Ancheta 2017: 191) or his "woeful inadequacy in the English language which proved to the upper class how much of a buffoon he was" (Reyes 2005: 267 in Ancheta 2017: 191). Erap himself encouraged the publication of a joke book *Eraptions* (Maceda 2008: 99 in Ancheta 2017: 191) to boost his popularity with the masses during the campaign period in 1998. Ancheta (2017) points out that Erap jokes capitalize on linguistic incongruities to create humor. Self-deprecating humor could have been handed down by the Americans when they colonized the Philippines for 50 years or it could have been transplanted to Filipino culture with the Filipinos' substantial exposure to American culture through films, TV shows, books and comics.

Thus, although incongruity characterizes much Filipino humor, Ancheta (2017) notes the "prevalence of the humor of superiority, or tendentious humor" in Philippine popular cultural forms. Ancheta (2017), for example, looks at how self-deprecating humor in Philippine creative nonfiction has its roots in the observational humor found in American stand-up comedy and thus largely Western in orientation (Ancheta 2017: 233). However, what makes these texts of observational humor now Filipino "despite their narrative and historical provenance" is that "the everyday lives spoken of, and personas that speak about these, are Filipino." As to the question "Why does the Filipino laugh?", Ancheta (2017: xxv-xxvi) asserts that laughter is a form of survival in the Philippines that shows "the strengths of the Filipino character" using laughter to "palliate many of the conflicts in which Filipinos continually find themselves embroiled." Leon Ma. Guerrero (1990: 315-16 in Ancheta 2017: xxvi) describes Filipinos as saved by "a lively sense of the ridiculous [that] has helped to keep alive our sense of proportion", being "the only nationalists in Asia who do not take ourselves

too seriously, which explains why we strike white men as being friendly and good-natured. . . " Ancheta (2017: xxvii) argues against this "oversimplification of this 'friendliness' or 'good-naturedness'" by saying that "while Filipinos use laughter to cope with perennial national misfortunes and invite others to share this apparent self-deprecation, the appreciation of the ridiculous also keeps on redounding to tactics of resurrection and comeuppance to the maintenance of scripts of national virtue, and defenses of community and communal power" (xxvii). In other words, humor is an essential part of how Filipinos live and thrive.

5.4.3 National humor

There is also the so-called "national humor." In defining American humor, Walter Blair does not generalize it to mean all humor produced in America or to a kind that cannot be found in another country. Rather, he defines national humor as humor with "an emphatic 'native quality'" (Blair 1988: 91-92 in Ancheta 2017: xx). Blair quotes from *The London and Westminster Review*:

> Humour [sic] is national when it is impregnated with the convictions, customs, and associations of a nation ... National ... humour must be all this transferred into shapes which produce laughter. The humour of a people is their institutions, laws, customs, manners, habits, characters, convictions–their scenery whether of the sea, the city, or the hills–expressed in the language of the ludicrous. . . " (in Blair 1988: 9 in Ancheta 2017: xxi)

Ancheta (2017: xxii) comments that identifying national humor entails a "specific reading of values, experiences, beliefs and traditions that intersect and are woven within a particular cultural matrix." To define Filipino culture then, she articulates, is to claim that humor can powerfully present "Filipino-ness" and how Filipinos negotiate frames of experiences at the local and national scale (2017: xxii). Alba-Juez (2016 in Mir and Cots 2019: 393-394) states that experiences exert influence on humor, thereby revealing cultural and social identity not only of individuals but also of groups. Touching on Filipino humor as well, Abad (2017: vii) expresses that while Filipino humor is often regarded as entertainment or the laughter of the "masses" or common people, it also displays the "national psyche" including institutions, laws, customs and habits. Thus, it forms part of the Filipino identity.

One of the interesting areas for investigation with respect to this is comparing differences in societal values and views of humor over time. As Jiang et al. (2019) point out, culture is not a fixed construct, citing how globalization has caused tremendous shifts in people's psychology and culture. Changes in what is acceptable or not – as well as what is normal or not – influence humor usage and perception. This is an understudied domain in humor research which this thesis hopes to address.

5.5 Children's humor

5.5.1 Development of children's humor

McGhee first introduced in 1979 the idea that humor understanding and appreciation are directly related to cognitive development. According to him, children go through four stages of humor development that correspond to the stages of cognitive development proposed by Piaget. The stages put forward by McGhee are: incongruous actions towards objects, incongruous labeling of objects and events, conceptual incongruity, and multiple meanings or the first step toward adult humor. Cognitive shifts affect the way children create and perceive humor. With new cognitive skills come new ways of interpreting humor. As cognitive skills become more complex, so do humor production and comprehension.

5.5.1.1 Humor in young children

In the first stage, children at 18 to 20 months old find humor in objects that do not belong to a schema (Zimmerman 2014). In other words, children laugh at objects that deviate from their normal uses (Southam 2009). In the second stage, by around two years old, children are able to use language playfully, finding enjoyment in renaming objects to create humor. For example, calling an apple a banana (McGhee 2015) and creating silly rhymes such as "drink bilk" for "drink milk" where only the sound and not the meaning matters are funny for them. Children acquire more cognitive skills by the third stage which starts at about three years. They learn to recognize the characteristics of objects and their associated words together with similarities between objects and events and thus find humor when these similarities are violated (Southam 2009). McGhee (2015) gives as examples a cow on roller skates and a bicycle with square wheels. Children at this stage can appreciate jokes especially when they rhyme: "What do you call a rabbit that tells jokes? A funny bunny" (Southam 2009).

5.5.1.2 Humor in primary school children

Because this research involved children from 8 to 9 years old, it is essential to look more closely at how this group views humor.

In the final stage, children shift from non-linguistic to linguistic humor (Zimmermann 2014: 126). At around 7 years old, children can appreciate puns since they can already detect linguistic ambiguity. A child can understand when a word with double meaning creates an incongruity, resulting in a humorous event (McGhee 1979: 76). McGhee (2015) cites an example: "What's gray, has four legs and a trunk? A mouse on vacation." The child can also understand other forms of abstract humor (McGhee 1979: 77). During this period, humor is generated more from abstract qualities of behavior and thought rather than by perception (141). This is because by this stage, children have acquired cogni-

tive abilities which Piaget calls concrete operational thinking. Such skills allow them to see relationships between events rather than just outcomes of events (78). For example, a dog that meows is hilarious for them. Concrete operational thinking also affects the way children respond to a situation and how funny a joke is perceived. As McGhee illustrates, the difference between a Stage 3 child and a Stage 4 child is that for the Stage 4 child, an event that involves damage to property or personal harm is amusing only if it is perceived to be accidental or unintentional; however, to a Stage 3 child, it does not matter what the intent is (78). Even though by 6 to 9 years of age, children can already understand linguistic incongruities in ambiguous words or structures, it will only be by 9 to 12 years that children can fully comprehend more sophisticated humorous manifestations such as irony and sarcasm (Zimmermann 2014: 123-124). Children from 6 to 9 years of age can understand riddles but cannot say why a riddle is funny (Zimmermann 2014). By 9 or 10, children can pinpoint why a riddle is funny based on context. They also find humor in ambiguous meanings, as in McGhee's example: "Order! Order in the court! Ham and cheese on rye, your Honor" (McGhee 1979: 76). Moreover, during the early school years, children can understand social models of their culture, logical incongruities and violations of social norms enough to joke about the world and peers and adults to "obtain control and advantages" over them (Zimmerman 2014: 126). At 9 to 10 years of age, children start to enjoy teasing and ridiculing others (126), delight in the misfortunes of others (Kappas 1967: 72) and use humor for their own ends (74). McGhee (1986: 30) points out that, as evidenced by their experiments, humor involving adults as targets rather than humor with children as victims appeals more to children because people are inclined to be more favorable toward their own age group than other age groups. (The next section, however, mentions that children find amusement when they feel superior over other children as well.) That children enjoy having an advantage over authority figures supports the superiority theory. McGhee's findings of humor in childhood development further demonstrate two things. First, no one theory fully explains humor. Second, the appreciation of humorous elements as explained by both the incongruity theory and superiority theory emerges in childhood. Similarly, because humor development is progressive, children are still drawn to what they find humorous at an earlier age but the appreciation becomes more sophisticated with the addition of new skills. Children at age 8, for example, will still laugh at the image of a hotdog wearing a pair of shorts and a hat (visual humor that will make younger children chuckle) but will now be amused if the hotdog says it is "playing ketchup with summer."

While McGhee does not elaborate on exactly why children find ridiculing others humorous (i.e., if the motivations are the same as those with adults based on the superiority theory), he provides support for the incongruity theory. This is not surprising since he views humor mainly as a cognitive act. Humor is a mental play which requires the right amount of difficulty: how a child finds humor in incongruous representations of objects and events depends on how easy or difficult it is to make sense of the incongruity (McGhee 1979: 38).

Jokes that are too simple and obvious are not funny as are those that are too intellectually demanding. As McGhee (1979: 39) contends, "humor appreciation is greatest ... when we do not immediately see the point, and yet are not required to think laboriously about it."

5.5.2 Humor in children's literature

Humor plays a huge part in determining content for children's books. Apart from suspense and adventure, humor motivates children to read books actively (Orekoya et al. 2014: 62). A study by Zbaracki (2003: iii) describes how children were highly engaged in reading when the material was a humorous one. Humorous stories easily become favorites among children (Shannon 1999: 119). Humor is also a constant in children's verbal lore (Factor 1989: 162) such as rhymes. For example, the Filipino nursery rhyme Pen Pen De Sarapen makes use of silly words that do not make sense but which makes it fun for children to sing. Even children's books labeled as fantasy or science fiction would always have an element of humor in the form of witty dialogues and silly circumstances. Humor can likewise be found in children's books that deal with serious subjects such as death as in the middle grade book *Ms. Bixby's Last Day* (2016). What sets children apart from adults in their humor style is the former's fascination for bathroom humor; the book *Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder* (2007) is one such example. This has been found by researchers such as Styles (1998: 108) who says that children possess "a great appetite for vulgarity." She adds that much of what children find funny is "really sadistic and even ghoulish" and that what is pure nonsense to adults amuses children. But humor in children's literature comes in various forms and section 5.5.2.1 will present what these are.

In Vandaele's (2002: 168) belief, the schemes of normality to be transgressed in humor vary according to genre. Children's literature as a genre has its own conventions. For one, children are primarily the protagonists in this genre, taking over what would generally be adult spaces to solve a mystery and save a community from a disaster, among others. For example, in the *Lockwood & Co.* series (2013-2017), only children have the ability to fight the supernatural and they lose this skill as soon as they enter adulthood while in *The Vanderbeekers* series (2017-2022), young siblings join forces to help adults solve their problems. Such centrality of children characters defines the type of humor in many children's books: superiority (Shannon 1999), ridicule and defiance (Kappas 1967) and poking fun at authority (Mallan 1993; Zbaracki 2003). Similarly, literature intended for young children is "often, by its nature, a conservative genre that reinforces the status quo to assure children that their worlds are safe" (Trites 2006). Transgressing this to create humor would mean introducing elements such as violence (Kappas 1967), comedy of chaos (Mallan 1993) or other physical events (Shannon 1999) usually directed at villains or adults such as parents, teachers or other figures of authority.

5.5.2.1 Categories of humor in children's fiction

In an earlier study, Kappas (1967: 68) identifies 10 categories of humor in juvenile literature. These are: (1) exaggeration, (2) incongruity, (3) surprise, (4) slapstick, (5) the absurd, (6) human predicaments, (7) ridicule, (8) defiance, (9) violence, and (10) verbal humor. Relating this to humor development in childhood, she mentions how humorous behavior shifts from being group-oriented to individual-centered as children grow older – there is less homogeneity in what children find humorous as they enter adolescence. She concludes that cognitive abilities influence humor appreciation alongside factors such as sex, intelligence, cultural background and personality. Knowledge of the development framework of humor, she says, can be used to critically evaluate children's literature to determine whether the behavior of the humorous characters suits the interests and experiences of a child at a certain age.

Unlike Kappas, Mallan (1993: 15-18) believes that children's humor in literature can be categorized into only three types, although these also include some form of ridicule, defiance, verbal humor and incongruity which have been identified by Kappas. The first consists of humorous characters created by exaggerating "human traits and foibles." This type includes poking fun at authority figures as well as having innocent characters (children, animals, toys and even adults) who are funny but on whom people can take pity. The second comprises humorous situations or incongruities that result from injecting absurdity into everyday events such as an ant carrying a wheel of cheese. Nonsense, transformation (such as having the power to turn people into animals) and comedy of chaos (where things get out of control) create funny situations. The third type is humorous discourse. According to Mallan, this can be appreciated by older children since incongruities in discourse require refinement and literary experience; as children grow older, they search for linguistic challenges. Spoonerisms or metathesis (e.g., the title of Shel Silverstein's book *Runny Babbit: A Billy Sook*, 2005), name-calling, puns, slang and parody contribute to humorous discourse. Mallan concludes that humorous literature makes readers more linguistically sophisticated because it invites readers to play with language. They are also exposed to incongruities – what is expected is different from what is real – and departures from normal social behavior. Thus, for Mallan, humorous literature demands "critical readers who do not passively accept what they read."

Studying children's reception of humor in children's fiction, Shannon (1999) gives four categories of children's humor. These are similar to the ones identified by Kappas and Mallan in that they take into account instances of superiority and verbal humor but introduces two new categories: toilet humor and physical descriptions. Thus, for Shannon, the four categories of humor in children's fiction are: (1) superiority or sense of accomplishment, (2) physical events and appearances, (3) the scatological and gross, and (4) language and wordplay. Shannon found that appreciation of humor is connected to (1) comprehension of certain aspects of the texts and (2) sensitivity to style and tone (140). That

the reading of the books was done in a social setting greatly affected humor reception. Children were able to share humorous books with one another and talk about humorous incidents in the books. They could detect more subtle forms of humor when the books were read aloud by a skilled reader. What this suggests is that in investigating humor reception among children, there would likely be differences when the humorous material is read by or to children in a group setting than when it is read alone.

Shannon's findings also reinforce the view that laughter, though it can be experienced by a solitary individual as posited in joyful laughter, is mainly a social phenomenon. Children smile and laugh more when in the presence of others and conversely, smile and laugh less when reading alone (Chapman and Chapman 1974). Children are also more responsive to humor when their companions laugh. This also suggests that interaction, such as when a book is read aloud by a teacher, aids in a better understanding of a humorous material. Changes in pace or tone, body movements and facial expressions all serve as funniness cues. Individual differences also affect understanding and appreciation of humor, according to Shannon. First is the extent or degree of background knowledge. In her study, some children could not get the references to certain characters or aphorisms which lessened the funniness of the texts. Second is the child's reading ability. Titles that were easier to read were said to be more humorous. Furthermore, children who could read better understood the humor in the more difficult-to-read books. That children are influenced by the presence of other people when reading and responding to a humorous text is explored in the poetry reading sessions. Self-reported comprehensibility, as a measure of the actual ease with which a text can be read, is also investigated in this study against the funniness of the text.

Zbaracki (2003: 21) synthesizes the findings in available research and identifies five common factors that inject humor into a literary text: (1) humorous characters, (2) poking fun at authority, (3) physical humor, (4) nonsense, and (5) humorous discourse or language play. Humorous characters are created when there are incongruities within the character or between characters. Poking fun at authority is depicted when children traditionally outsmart adults; children delight in overcoming difficult situations and the authority that controls them. Physical humor includes exaggerated physical features and comical acts and gross humor. Nonsense pertains to fabricated words as well as characters with unusual names and outrageous behavior such as those that appear in the Dr. Seuss books (Shaeffer and Hopkins 1988 in Zbaracki 2003: 27). Finally, humorous discourse covers puns and wordplay found in the titles and character names that children find funny and challenging simultaneously. In the *Winterhouse* series (2018-2019), for example, the main characters, both children, often exchange palindromes and anagrams with humorous results.

5.5.2.2 Application of humor theories and developmental theories to humor in children's literature

The findings about what children find funny in literature reveal three things. First, they further indicate that the conventional theories of humor, although broadly examined in the context of adult humor and in spite of adverse criticism, also provide answers to what children find amusing in literature. The relief theory, which asserts that humor relieves tension including fear, nervous energy and inhibition, can also be used to explain children's fascination with humor found in literature. Landsberg (1992 in Munde 1997: 221) argues that "children, like all the powerless, find their best release and choicest weapon in humor." She adds: "When you stop to analyze why a funny book provokes laughter from many children of very different tastes, you almost always find that there's an unstated theme in the book that is common to the deepest experience of childhood . . . anxiety." She contends that anxiety features in much, if not all, of children's humor (Munde 1997: 230). Interestingly, the findings point to the equal prominence of feelings of superiority and incongruity production in creating humor for children.

Second, that verbal humor or the twisting of language to create funny names, puns and wordplay is a central ingredient in literature for schoolchildren substantiates McGhee's account that there is a shift from non-linguistic to linguistic humor in the final stage of children's humor development. Third, while these studies look at humor in children's fiction, studies on humorous children's poetry for children 8 to 9 years remain lacking. Kyte (1947) shows that poems that were sources of significant appeal to children include humor. However, he does not say why this is so and what kind of humor is attractive to them. The current research addresses this gap for a particular subgenre of children's literature – humorous poetry – for a particular age group (8 to 9 years old). The following section will provide some background of the subgenre as well as examples.

5.5.2.3 Humor in children's poetry

Language-specific humor that is contingent on violations of phonological rules is typical in children's humor. Children deliberately mispronounce words with humorous consequences when talking to each other or adults. These violations include distorted articulations, immature articulation (e.g., Tweety Bird's "I tought I taw a putty tat") and tongue twisters (Shultz and Robillard in McGhee and Chapman 1980: 69-70). But humorous children's verses do not rely on phonological rule violation; on the contrary, like serious poetry, it makes phonology explicit (Shultz and Robillard in McGhee and Chapman 1980). A great majority of children's poems, including those with a humorous narrative, rely on rhyme and repeated sounds. These devices not only produce rhythm which adds to children's enjoyment but also help make the poems easier to remember. In preference studies, children liked narrative rhymes better (Huck,

Hepler and Hickman 1987 in Mallan 1993).

Studies have demonstrated that with poetry, children prefer humorous poems over descriptive, sentimental and didactic ones (Nelson 1966, Pittman 1966 and Bradshaw 1937 in Robinson and Weintraub 1973, and Huck, Hepler and Hickman 1987 in Mallan 1993). One characteristic of humorous children's poems is their use of incongruity. Shultz and Robillard (in McGhee and Chapman 1980: 72) give the following example of a verse which hinges on incongruity to create humor:

> Roses are red,
> Violets are blue,
> I copied your paper
> And I flunked too.

Shultz and Robillard remark that what makes the poem funny is that it is expressed in standard poetic format with the phonological devices of alliteration and rhyme. It is also written in trochaic (an unstressed syllable follows a strong stressed syllable) tetrameter (four strong stresses per line). Trochaic tetrameter is common to nursery rhymes and other humorous and non-humorous rhymes of children. According to them, the humor in a humorous verse comes from "an incongruous fusion of tendentious content and poetic form" which dignifies "a crude, silly, or naughty idea" (in McGhee and Chapman 1980: 72). They argue that if either the tendentious content or the poetic form is deleted, children would find less humor in the altered version than the original. It must be said as well, that the appreciation of the humor in this poem depends on the reader's background knowledge and understanding of another text: to be able to grasp the incongruity and resolve it, the reader must be able first to make the connection with the famous nursery rhyme that contains a different third and last line. In some sense then, this can be considered culture-specific humor as exposure to nursery rhymes varies from one culture to another.

Styles (1998) argues that children's poetry has always been connected with the desire to make children laugh. She adds that there is not much difference between a humorous verse for adults and that for children except that the latter does not contain elements that children would not understand such as sexual explicitness. She also observes that certain forms are less appropriate for children such as the satirical verse as it requires a certain level of "sophistication of reading and life" (1998: 108) which children do not have.

Similar to fiction, humor in children's poetry features playful language (puns, nonsense words), incongruities and surprises, comic people and situations, flouting conventions, confusions (upside-downness), exaggeration, oddity (the reversal of the expected), absurd premises combined with logical conclusions; burlesque and slapstick, and parody (Styles 1998: 109). It involves funny, eccentric characters with delightful-sounding names as well as ludicrous situations and funny stories (Huck 1979: 336-338) such as those found in animal poems. The level of humor in humorous poetry varies; some are funny throughout while others have only a bit of humor in them (Styles 1998: 108-109). Sloan

(2001: 53) argues that "most poetry is written for children, for they respond well to rhymes and obvious rhythms, free verse being an acquired taste for them." For instance, the good-natured absurdities in limericks and other nonsense verse delight children. Referring to the findings of Opie and Opie (1955), she comments that riddles, "both ridiculous and delicious, old", are also pleasurable (53).

A perfect example of punning in a poem is Tom Tigercat by J. Patrick Lewis.

> Tom Tigercat is noted
> for his manners and his wit.
> He wouldn't think of lion,
> No, he doesn't cheetah bit.
>
> Tom never pretended
> to be something that he's not.
> I guess that's why we like him
> and why he likes ocelot.

In Eletelephony, Laura Elizabeth Richards resorts to the use of nonsense words to generate humor.

> Once there was an elephant,
> Who tried to use the telephant—
> No! No! I mean an elephone
> Who tried to use the telephone—
> (Dear me! I am not certain quite
> That even now I've got it right.)
> Howe'er it was, he got his trunk
> Entangled in the telephunk;
> The more he tried to get it free,
> The louder buzzed the telephee—
> (I fear I'd better drop the song
> Of elephop and telephong!)

Finding the appropriate material for the target group is fundamental in a humor reception study. As intimated in earlier sections, children are attracted to a certain kind of humor as they enter a particular stage of intellectual development. That their humor styles vary depending on age is exhibited by the study of Kyte (1947) involving schoolchildren from Grades 4 through 8. A poem that made a distinct appeal to most children was described as "too silly" or "too childish" and "not interesting" by older pupils. Rhythm that contributed to the liking of a poem by many children was also unpleasant for upper-grade participants who particularly disliked the repetition of a phrase in a poem.

5.6 Conclusions

This chapter shows that no single comprehensive definition can be ascribed to humor, a feature it has in common with children's literature, and so in a humor reception study, the researcher must first resolve what definition to use. This chapter also introduces humor as either a negotiation or a departure, and as a power balancing act. There are three popular theories of humor that though commonly looked at in terms of adult humor are likewise applicable to children's humor and therefore relevant to this study. McGhee's model illustrates how humor as explained by the incongruity theory and superiority theory emerges in childhood while the relief theory finds evidence in children's literature based on Landsberg's argument. The fundamental ideas behind each theory are culture-sensitive and there are notable differences between Eastern and Western cultures in humor production and perception. However, readers must exercise caution in interpreting the findings of culture-based studies on humor. As shown, cultural differences are present not only in regional groupings ("Westerners" versus "Easterners") but also across individual countries, differences that may not necessarily be consistent with the conclusions made for geographic regions. While other studies have looked into cultural differences in humor of adults, the role of culture in influencing humor perception among children, particularly those in the primary school, is neglected in literature.

Humor in children develops in stages alongside cognitive skills and linguistic competence that are needed to comprehend incongruities. In a humor reception study such as the present study, knowledge of the stages of humor development is crucial to ensure that suitable materials are selected for a particular age group. As regards children's literature, children like different types of humor but verbal humor, incongruities, nonsense, exaggeration and humorous characters and situations appeal to them the most in both fiction and poetry. It was therefore of the utmost importance to determine the participating children's preferences on what they consider as funny to ensure that the right materials were selected for the participants of the current study.

A humor reception study involving children points to the influence of background knowledge and reading ability on the understanding and appreciation of humor particularly in fiction. Sex, intelligence, cultural background and personality are also significant factors. This study looked at sex and gender as determinants of humor preferences. Humor reception studies conducted among other age groups can also serve as valuable guides. For instance, El Refaie (2011) mentions the artificiality that came about in interviewing participants about the humor of newspaper cartoons which are normally encountered privately. Thus, though many of the young adult participants found them funny, their responses could have been influenced by social pressure to conform or to hide prejudices. Such "artificiality" was not examined in this study but the influence of having an authority figure in the form of the researcher-facilitator was considered in interpreting the results. Because there is a dearth of studies

on the reception of written humor, this study should contribute to a better understanding of the perception of humor especially in children's literature.

CHAPTER 6

Methodology

6.1 Introduction

This chapter opens with a section on the interviews conducted with children's publishers in the Philippines. It is followed by an overview of the design of the group discussions that formed the basis for the discussion in Chapter 7 as well as the relevant pre-discussion (e.g., participant recruitment and ethical considerations) and post-discussion (e.g., transcription of video files) activities undertaken for the poetry reading sessions. Some comments on using group interviews in general and online group discussions in particular for data collection have been included to guide other researchers planning on doing similar work. A significant portion of this chapter has been devoted to the process involved in the translation of the poems used in the poetry reading sessions with the children. This is because the researcher would like to introduce the reader to Filipino and Philippine literary heritage, with emphasis on the demands of traditional Filipino poetry that impacted on the translation decisions. The rules for creating rhyme, for one, are different for traditional Filipino poems and the researcher, who was also the translator for the materials used in the poetry reading sessions, was determined to follow them as much as possible. Balancing conformity to the poetic tradition of the target language with faithfulness to the effect of the original text posed its own set of challenges and it was up to the translator to decide on the "best fit" considering other factors such as aesthetics.

6.2 Interviews with local publishers

Face-to-face interviews with local publishers were conducted in January 2020, ahead of the poetry reading sessions with children. The responses to the interviews do not form part of the results. Instead, they were used to illustrate the points raised and explored in the literature review (especially section 2.4 in Chapter 2 and sections 3.4 to 3.6 in Chapter 3). Five leading children's publishers in the Philippines that have the most significant number of translated children's books were invited for the interview. However, only two responded to the request: Adarna House, the pioneer in children's literature publication in the Philippines, and Tahanan Books, also a leading children's publisher. Kata Garcia, senior writer and researcher, represented Adarna House while Frances Ong, managing editor, represented Tahanan Books. Both publishing houses are located in Metro Manila, although Tahanan Books also has an office in Seattle, Washington. In addition, the chairperson of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People accepted the invitation for an interview but withdrew at the last minute. The interviews with the publishers aimed to investigate the status of and developments in children's literature production in the Philippines. A copy of the guide questions is attached as Appendix A.

6.3 Participants

6.3.1 Participant recruitment

After the interviews with the publishers had been conducted, the poetry reading sessions with children were arranged. The research participants were Grade 3 pupils (ages 8 and 9) at the University of the Philippines Integrated School (UPIS). UPIS was selected as the source of the participants for pragmatic reasons, namely the researcher's contacts with the school. UPIS serves as the laboratory school of the UP College of Education as well as the venue of research conducted by different institutions at UP to which the researcher is connected. The pupils were invited to participate with the permission of school officials and with the help of the Grade 3 advisers. The advisers disseminated the invitation letter and information sheet (attached as Appendix B) to the pupils and their parents by email. A total of 103 Grade 3 pupils for the first round and 99 pupils for the second round were invited. While UPIS was involved in participant recruitment, it was not in any way involved in data collection, the analysis or the publication of results. For the first round of reading sessions, the first invitation was sent in March 2021 and the sessions were held two months later. For the second round, pupils were invited in September 2021 and the sessions were conducted in October. The information document and informed consent forms were written in English, one of the two official languages in the Philippines, and in a manner well understandable for the parents or guardians. English is widely used in formal communication, for instance, in politics and scientific research.

It is also the language of education in the Philippines and is taught in schools as early as kindergarten or by age 4. In addition, the parents of most students at UPIS are professionals who are exceptionally proficient in English.

6.3.2 Ethical approval

The research received ethical approval from the Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee at Leiden University. To participate in the research, the pupils needed the consent of their parents or guardians. The consent form was sent with the information document; the latter provides a background of the study and its objectives. In addition, it contains how the information will be kept confidential and safeguarded, for instance, by assigning a code name to each child in the transcription. The form also asserts that there are no potential risks to the participants. Similarly, it states some of the benefits of participating in the study, among which is gaining a deeper appreciation for children's literature, particularly poetry (indeed this seemed to be the case, as will be shown in section 7.1.1). Finally, the information document provides some information about the researcher to introduce the researcher to the parents or guardians and children. The information document ends with the inspirational children's poem "Mr. Olifant", written by the researcher, to generate enthusiasm and encourage pupils to sign up for the study. Enclosed to the information document are two informed consent forms: a form stating voluntary consent for the child to participate in the study and a separate form to seek consent for the child to be video-recorded during the online group discussion. The first explicitly states, for one, that the parent has the right to withdraw the consent without giving a reason and that the child may stop participating in the study at any time. The latter states that ownership of the video recording resides in the research team (the PhD candidate, supervisor and co-supervisor) and that no one outside this research team can access or view the recording. The participants and their parents were given sufficient time to consider whether or not to take part in the study. (For a copy of the information document and informed consent forms, please see Appendices B and C.)

6.3.3 Problems with participant recruitment

While reaching target participants was relatively easy with the support of the UPIS officials and section advisers, getting students to participate in the study was not without difficulty. As mentioned, for the first round of sessions, the invitation was sent out in March 2021. But as the weeks passed, it became clear that the recruitment projection of 40 participants was impossible to achieve. This was the case despite having sent out the invitation thrice: one at the beginning of March, one in the last week of March before the Holy Week break and, as requested by the researcher, a final one in April. In the end, only 14 participants signed up for the first round (with 13 actually attending). Before the third invitation was sent out, the advisers discussed among themselves the

factors affecting low recruitment to "hopefully assist [the researcher and her supervisors] and give... a context of the current remote learning setup [at UPIS]." The coordinator gave the following reasons:

1. There are other research invites from other groups like the [UP] College of Education. Some students may have already indicated their participation in another study.

2. Many students have parents who work full-time with some of them front-line workers. Assisting their children with remote learning is already challenging for the parents since they are also adjusting to the online mode, while at the same time working from home or on-site. Some parents also have younger ones to care for in their homes aside from their Grade 3 children. This means some parents may have a hard time assisting their child for another online activity like participating in a research. Another factor would be budget constraints for internet/mobile data.

3. Covid-19 cases are still high in [the National Capital Region]. Some of the students may have families or relatives that have been affected by the virus or other sicknesses or are experiencing loss. Some parents may have opted not to allow their children to participate given that the family had to attend to other priorities at that time.

These points helped the author to understand the limited response to the call to participate in the study. For one, it was not anticipated that other researchers were inviting the same group of students. The initial projection also did not consider the difficulties parents faced, which impacted on children's participation in out-of-class activities. That parents were still adapting to the new normal and its demands, and were possibly coping with sickness or loss in the family, indeed has implications on what they deemed most important during a pandemic. Conducting research during the time of Covid was a big challenge, not only because of the many restrictions in place (the original plan was to have face-to-face reading sessions with the children) but also because, as pointed out, the crisis changed the priorities of many of the target participants. This input from the advisers resulted in a more realistic estimation of the recruitment rate for the second round of sessions. Thus, while getting 13 participants for the second round might seem unsuccessful against the initial target of 40, it was already considered adequate given said barriers to recruitment.

6.3.4 Profile of the participants

A total of 26 pupils participated in the poetry reading sessions. The group was composed of 13 males and 13 females. They were 8 and 9 years old and came from three sections[24] of Grade 3 at UPIS.

[24]The Grade 3 student population is divided into three groups called sections. Each section is supervised by a class adviser.

6.4 Materials

As discussed in the introduction chapter, one of the research goals is to determine whether it is form or content that is more crucial in preserving humor in a poem. Form pertains to formal elements such as rhyme, rhythm (e.g., alliteration and consonance) and meter while content concerns the meaning and message of the poem. The difficulty in retaining both form and content is a common issue in poetry translation. Regarding poems written for children, form (especially rhyme and rhythm) is often considered non-negotiable as it is believed to be instrumental in creating a humorous effect as discussed in section 4.3.1 (cf. Shultz and Robillard in McGhee and Chapman 1980, and Styles 1998). To examine this problem, two poems were translated prioritizing either form or content and used as materials in the reading session and discussion: "The Dentist and the Crocodile" by Roald Dahl and "Sick" by Shel Silverstein.

These two poems were selected for four reasons. First, both poems are widely recognized as funny. "The Dentist and the Crocodile" is from the book *Rhyme Stew* (1989) which is described as filled with Dahl's "hilarious verse" (Book Depository) while "Sick" is included in *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974), "a poetry collection that is outrageously funny" (Amazon). Second, both poems are appropriate for the study participants' 8-9 age group. According to the drama resources website Scripts and Sketches, "The Dentist and the Crocodile" is suitable for ages 5 to 10. Book Depository likewise lists *Rhyme Stew*, in which the poem appears, as appropriate for children ages 6 to 10. The poems in *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, including "Sick", are targeted for the 4-8 age range (inkbottlepress.com). Third, while these poems were mainly written for children (but not for the very young in the case of *Rhyme Stew* which comes with the warning: "Unsuitable for Small People"), they may appeal to all age groups, including adults. Dahl's *Rhyme Stew* is marketed as an "inventive and irreverent collection for older children and adults alike" (roalddahl.com) while *Where the Sidewalk Ends* is said to be "cherished by readers of all ages" as a "collection that belongs on everyone's bookshelf" (shelsilverstein.com). It is important to choose poems that the poets have written with both children and adults in mind as one of the objectives of the study is to gather children's perspectives on texts that seem to fall between children's literature and adult literature, on why a text mainly meant for young people may easily be enjoyed by older ones as well. Fourth, the poems center on subjects familiar to Filipino children – visiting the dentist and not wanting to go to school – so it is more likely that the participants would find their Filipino versions funny. By reducing the element of "strangeness", the children in the study will have more to say about the translations in terms of their humorous appeal.

6.4.1 Translating for form

In translating for form, the two main elements considered were line length/syllable count and rhyme. Dahl's "The Dentist and the Crocodile" has 14 syllables in

each line and Silverstein's "Sick" has eight syllables each. In the Filipino translations, the former was assigned 18 syllables per line and the latter has 12 syllables, in keeping with the most common syllable counts per line in Filipino poetry (See Appendix E). As regards rhythm, the caesura for the translation of the first poem occurs after every six syllables while for the second, it is after every four syllables. This follows the conventions of caesura placement in traditional Filipino poetry.

6.4.1.1 Rules of traditional Filipino poetry

In traditional Filipino poetry, rhyme pertains only to the end rhyme. This means that the endings of two or more lines have the same sound. There are two types of end rhyme in Filipino poetry: vowel rhyme (tugmang patinig) and consonant rhyme (tugmang katinig).

Although there are five vowels in the Filipino alphabet, only three are used for rhyme: *a*, *i* and *o*. Words that end in *e* are paired with those ending in *i* while words that end with *u* are paired with those ending in *o*. However, the accent of a word which refers to different degrees of stress is a major consideration in rhyme in Filipino poetry. There are four accents in Filipino: gentle or no diacritic (malumay), fast or acute accent (mabilis), grave accent (malumi) and circumflex accent (maragsa). Only words with no diacritic and acute accents can rhyme with each other while only those with grave and circumflex accents can rhyme with each other. For example, while káma (bed) and dilâ (tongue) both end in -*a*, they are not considered rhyming words since káma has a gentle accent while dilâ has a grave accent.

When it comes to consonant rhyme, there are two groups of rhyme: strong rhyme and weak rhyme. The consonants *b*, *k*, *d*, *g*, *p*, *s* and *t* at the end of the word fall under the first group while *l*, *m*, *n*, *ng*, *r*, *w* and *y* fall under the second. For example, limos (alms), surot (bug) and bukod (separate) possess a strong rhyme while tingin (look), lihim (secret) and kitil (nip) have a weak rhyme.

Traditionally, there are only two levels of rhyme in Filipino poetry: common rhyme (tugmang karaniwan) and marked rhyme (tugmang tudlikan). In the 20th century, another level was proposed by Filipino poet and novelist Iñigo Ed Regalado: the pure rhyme (tugmang dalisay). It is the highest level of rhyme in Filipino poetry. Another level has been recognized to sit between pure rhyme and marked rhyme and that is syllabary rhyme (tugmang pantigan).

Common rhyme is the lowest level and formed by pairing words that share the same sound, whether gentle, fast, grave or circumflex. This means that if the first line ends with -*a*, then the rest of the stanza should also end with -*a*. With marked rhyme, the accent is considered as well: gentle will only rhyme with gentle, fast with fast, grave with grave, and circumflex with circumflex. Only one type can be adopted throughout the poem, that is, if the writer decides to use gentle rhyme, each of the lines has to end with a gentle rhyme. With syllabary rhyme, the paired words should have the same end vowel-consonant or

consonant-vowel besides having the same accent. The highest level, pure rhyme, requires not only the same accent and end vowel-consonant or consonant-vowel but also the same vowel before the last syllable of the paired words. For the most part, traditional Filipino poetry observes a single rhyme or monorhyme scheme (tugmang isahan), one end sound for each stanza, represented by AAAA in a quatrain, or throughout the poem.

6.4.1.2 Retaining the rhyme scheme

To preserve the couplets in Dahl's and Silverstein's poems (after all, the couplet is one of the most widely used rhyme schemes in children's poetry in English), the translations for the study were created outside the constraints of these levels of rhyme. Instead of adopting a traditional rhyme scheme, an effort was made to ensure that the translations abided by the rules imposed on end rhyme in traditional Filipino poetry: matching gentle with fast, and grave with circumflex for vowel rhyme, and following the dictates of strong and weak rhyme for consonant rhyme. Matthews (1959: 67) believes that "to translate a poem whole is to compose another poem. A whole translation will be faithful to the *matter* [italics in the original] and it will *approximate* [own emphasis] the form of the original and it will have a life of its own which is the voice of the translator." By approximating the form, the translator has to "invent formal effects in his own language that give a sense of those produced by the original on its own" (67).[25]

There are two reasons behind the decision to keep the original rhyme scheme of continuing couplets in the translations used in the study. First, if it is assumed that a poem's given rhyme and rhythm of a poem contribute to its humorous appeal, then work must be put into not altering the sound of the original too much to retain the humor in the translation. This is particularly important if the goal is to isolate these formal elements as factors in humor in verse. Second, this exercise uses a form in the target language that tests the potential of adhering to traditional formal rules in the target language while favoring fidelity to a form in the source language that is unusual to tradition in the target language to bring across the humorous effects of the original.

Although traditional Filipino poets employ the rigid repetition of sounds in the traditional levels of rhyme, there are also examples in literature that reveal experimentation with other rhyme scheme patterns such as a dual rhyming

[25]Nevertheless, some translators may not even go in that direction, ignoring conventions in the target language and ensuring only the presence of lines and stanzas to signal that the text is a poem. This is true among some contemporary Filipino poets who translate into their own language. For instance, Poem 2 in the children's poetry collection *The Parlement of Giraffes* (1999) by renowned Filipino poet and National Artist for Literature José Garcia Villa was translated by Hilario "Larry" Francia as a free verse from its original rhyming couplets. Francia, however, kept the typography (i.e., how the lines form and break and how the words are situated) of all of the poems in Villa's book in his translation of the collection and did not need to resort to any sort of invention in form. In an article on Philippine Headline News Online, Villa was quoted to have said: "If I wrote in Tagalog, my poems would have appeared just as Larry has written them!"

scheme, which was influenced by the Spanish and English ways of poetry writing (Rivera 2004: 30). Among contemporary works, this is seen for instance in the children's poems of Philippine National Artist for Literature Virgilio Almario "Isang Linggo sa Sirko" (A Week at the Circus) and "Sa Kalendaryo Ko" (In My Calendar) both made up of rhyming couplets. It is likewise evident in his poem about youth "Kapag Panahon ng Kidlat at Kulog" (When in the Time of Lightning and Thunder) which uses alternate rhyme. It should be noted that rhyming couplets are also present in native Philippine poetry as bugtong (riddles) and salawikain (proverbs).

6.4.1.3 Retaining other sound elements

Specific acoustic techniques were taken into account in the translation of the Dahl and Silverstein poems. Consider these two examples of alliteration:

1. a.) ST: The dentist's face was turning white. He quivered, quaked and shook.
   b.) TT: Dentista'y namutla. Katawa'y nangatog, nanginig, nangatal.
   c.) Dentist is paled. Body is quivered, quaked, shook.
2. a.) ST: I'm sure that my left leg is broke—
   b.) TT: Binti'y bali sa kaliwa pihado 'to
   c.) Leg is broke in left sure this

Or of consonance:

3. a.) ST: I've counted sixteen chicken pox
   b.) TT: Ang bulutong binilang ko labing-anim
   c.) The chickenpox counted I sixteen

Where present, repetition was retained, as the following example shows:

4. a.) ST: "He's after me! He's after you! He's going to eat us all!"
   b.) TT: "Gusto niya ako! Gusto ka rin niya! Tayo'y sasak-malin!"
   c.) Wants it me! Wants you too it! We will be devoured!

6.4.1.4 Creative replacement

Despite the commitment to translate the content as faithfully as possible, form inevitably poses limitations in the end. Filipino words, whether nouns or verbs

particularly conjugated ones, tend to be long and multisyllabic, at times reduplicated. Blake (1917: 425) maintains that nowhere is this "linguistic principle more productive of results than in the Philippine languages, and here it probably finds its highest development in Tagalog." To preserve the sound, content has to be sacrificed in some instances. These include cases of word omission for economy, as seen in the first example below (Example 5), and replacement of one idea with another idea so that the words fit the meter. The latter procedure, which can be called "creative replacement", occurs when the translation solution deviates from the original text but remains comparable to the original and does not distort the message. The change does not arise, for instance, from cultural considerations or norms and conventions in a linguistic system but rather from factors related to form, i.e., its external structure. It does not entail only a reformulation or in Jakobson's term intralinguistic translation using paraphrasing, rephrasing or explanation but offers another idea that gives semantically analogous information to the original. Thus, in the second example below (Example 6), although the source text is easily translatable into the target language and the resulting utterance is, for instance, grammatically correct, the translator has no choice but to give in to the restrictions of the form to maintain the creative features in the translation. In Koller's five types of equivalence relations, this is a kind of formal or expressive equivalence that applies to form and aesthetics of the text, including style (Munday 2012: 74).

Creative replacement is situated between servitude and option, to borrow the terminology of Vinay and Darlbelnet (Munday 2012: 91). On one hand, the modulation of the message (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995) becomes obligatory due to form-related constraints. On the other hand, it is non-obligatory in that there is more than one way of expressing the original line in the target language in a manner that will conform to the external structure. This shows that although there is a difference between servitude and option, in the actual practice of translation, approaches are not always clear-cut and solutions are not definitive. As Mackenzie (1998: 201) brings to light, "many of the problems that face translators are of the open-ended kind, i.e. there is no pre-determined solution, they cannot be solved consciously under controlled conditions, and the solutions cannot be subjected to absolute verification." Moreover, in literary translation, option is more important as this will bring out the "beauty" of the text, a view that Vinay and Darbelnet themselves hold.

Below are two lines from the poems which employed creative replacement.

5. a.) ST: He said, "Right here and everywhere my teeth require repair."
   b.) TT: Bukang-bibig niya, "Ang mga ngipin ko'y dapat nang ipasta."
   c.) Back translation: He uttered, "My teeth need filling."

6. a.) ST: My hip hurts when I move my chin
   b.) TT: Pag ngumuya, kumikirot ang balakang
   c.) Back translation: When I chew, my hip hurts

6.4.1.5 Expected results

It can be said that, first, Matthews was right when he claimed that translating a form can only approximate the form of the original. In the translated poems of Dahl and Silverstein, it was possible to recreate the original rhyme scheme of continuing couplets since rhyme is also present in the traditional poetry of the target language. However, the rules for creating rhyme in the target language are different than in the source language. Furthermore, certain rules in the target language had to be sacrificed to keep the original rhyme scheme. Second, the two Filipino translations produced show that other sound elements such as alliteration can be preserved but at the expense of content. This is done, for example, for economy. The concept of "creative replacement" was introduced as a solution for changing the original text with a comparable idea that does not depart from the original message. In accordance with standard practices and widely-held beliefs, the expectation was that form would be more decisive than content in preserving humor in the translated forms and that the children would respond more favorably to the translations that prioritized form.

6.4.2 Translating for content

While the Filipino translation for form used in this study adhered mainly to strategies that recreate the original poems' acoustic properties, lexical correspondence was the dominant consideration in translating for content – the "meaning" of the text. The goal of translating for content in this study is to "remain true to the original words and their relations" (Paterson 2006 in Robinson 2010). For Paterson, this means glossing the original but not trying to replace it, the result of which is a translation and not a version. Paterson (2006 in Robinson 2010) describes the latter as follows: it uses the original as a "detailed ground-plan" but builds "a robust home in a new country, in its vernacular architecture, with local words for its brick and local music for its mortar." In other words, unlike a translation, a version's aim is to stand on its own as a poem that should not be compared to the original (Robinson 2010).

6.4.2.1 Free verse

Although the poems translated for content focus on meaning rather than form, the production is still intra-genre, meaning that poetry was translated as poetry, as signaled by the poetic line breaks and enjambment. In this aspect, the translation bears a structural resemblance to the source text. Be that as it may, the translation aimed at finding, in the words of Nida (2012), the "closest possible equivalent" in the target language, without paying attention to the poem's other formal characteristics such as similarity of sounds, pauses between words or the number of syllables per line. The result is a free verse, free from limitations of regular meter, rhythm and rhyme.

Free verse does not conform to a fixed pattern. Instead, it is designed around "sentence logic": each poetic line is based on the various ways by which con-

stituent units (phrases, clauses) are put together to make the sentence (Abad 2004: 161). Recall the assertion of Sloan (2001: 53) that, for children, free verse is an "acquired taste." Nevertheless, referring to children's writer Spike Milligan whom he considers lacking in "ear for rhythm", he also mentions how children do not see such "subtleties" and enjoy only the "inventiveness of [Milligan's] imagination and absurd language." As part of the methodology, a translation in free verse is produced to test its humorous appeal to children.

However, being "free" does not mean that there are no limits to the translator's moves. First, the translator still has to work within the linguistic rules of the target language, ensuring that the translation sounds natural, neither forced nor unsuitable, in the new language. Also, as there is no perfect correspondence between languages (Nida 2012), the translator will face decision points that may result in altering, omitting or adding to the content of the source text. In the example below, the word "poor" was omitted in the translation as the addition of its equivalent in Filipino ("kaawa-awa") would make the rendering sound awkward (i.e., line will be too long) and would make the line complex with the presence of two adjectives. Translation involves not only linguistic competence – the ability to create accurate sentences or how sentence is organized in terms of grammar – but also communicative competence – how sentence is used in communication, what utterances in the language are communicatively correct or appropriate for the context.

7. a.) ST: The poor old dentist wrung his hands and, weeping in despair,
   b.) TT: Pinilipit ng matandang dentista ang mga kamay at nangingiyak sa pangamba
   c.) Back translation: The old dentist wrung his hands and weeping in fear

Third, the translation is not a recreation of the source text in which the translator has taken too many liberties such that the target text is barely recognizable from the original. It is quite the opposite: sufficient respect has been given to the source text in the translation. This is guided by Newmark's (1988: 73) position on literal translation: "... the re-creative part of translation is often exaggerated, and the literal part underestimated, particularly in literary translation, but also in other types of texts which have nothing linguistically wrong with them, which are competently written."

Similarly, it can be noted above that "weeping in despair" became "crying in fear" in the Filipino translation. Had "despair" been retained in the translation, the Filipino equivalent would have been "kawalan ng pag-asa" which sounds more prosaic than lyrical. It also sounds too formal and the mental image that it gives is hugely lacking in humor. This is a possible risk that translators must be aware of when translating a poem for content without regard to form. On the one hand, the absence of form brings with it a degree of freedom by allowing the translator to broaden the range of word options that can fit the target text, which tests the translator's literary ability in both the source language and the

target language – a "craftsman-like effort" as Robinson (2010: 5) puts it. But on the other hand, the lack of a strict guide that limits solutions can make it very easy to make word choices that are more appropriate for prose than poetry, especially if the goal is to preserve only the meaning of the source text.

6.4.2.2 Expected results

The expectation was that the children in the reading sessions would find the translations prioritizing content either not as funny as the translations for form or not funny at all. Translating only for content does not mean completely disregarding the features that make poetry what it is. By maintaining the characteristics that signal the text as a verse, the translator still yields to the constraints of poetry even if the resulting product is a "free" verse. The translations of the poems of Dahl and Silverstein are not "recreations" that are hardly similar to the original because, borrowing Newmark's words, the original is already "competently written." However, for the current study, it was predicted that translating only for content would be secondary to translating for form when it comes to preserving humor in verse. This is because children are used to hearing rhyme and rhythm in children's poetry which, as other scholars have concluded (cf. Sloan 2001 and Fisher and Natarella 1982), are enjoyable for them.

6.4.3 Translating proper names

6.4.3.1 Stylistic and structural considerations

In translating proper names centered on form, certain stylistic and structural features must be considered. Although a proper name can have an overt or covert meaning, it may also have been picked out from many alternatives simply for its aesthetic value. This seems to be the case with the name "Peggy Ann McKay" in Silverstein's "Sick." Of course, even if the name is neither descriptive nor meaningful, it does not mean that it is not non-informative (Nord 2003: 183). We know from the name that the character in the poem is a girl and the fact that it is a typical American name gives away her geographical origin and cultural background. However, it appears that for the most part, it has been chosen for being a "nice name", a pleasing and satisfying option that meets the poem's stylistic and structural needs. It is a good rhyme for the couplet, fits the iambic requirements of the composition and falls within the syllable count for each line. More rules and restrictions than prose govern poetry as a literary expression– prose and poetry are two "different specimens of art," writes Scott (1904) – and these formal regularities determine the choices that the poet makes.

These rules also influenced the translation of the proper name in the poem "Sick" which places weight on form. Because there is no long /ā/ sound in Filipino, which can be heard in the American English pronunciation of "McKay",

retaining the American name in the target text will upset the end-rhyme *-aw* in the opening couplet of the translation. The name was substituted with "Ana Kalaw" to correspond to the four syllables needed after the last caesura: "Ana" as the Filipino variant of "Ann" (which also turns "Ann" into two syllables) and "Kalaw" to imitate the striking *k* in "McKay." Substitution replaces a name by another name from the target language (Van Coillie 2006: 123). Due to the syllable count, a choice had to be made between "Peggy" and "Ann"; the latter, having a Filipino equivalent, was deemed more desirable. The only way that "Peggy Ann" could be retained in the translation is by replacing "McKay" with a monosyllabic Chinese surname such as Lao, Cao or Hao, which are found in the Philippines, to maintain the *-aw* end rhyme as well as the four syllables dictated by form. But the rhyme will fail if the child misconstrues and misreads these surnames as disyllabic. In the end, "Ana Kalaw" was selected for its better acoustic properties derived from assonance (i.e., the repetition of the short /a/).

6.4.3.2 Equivalent effect

The name has been changed for the content-oriented target text as well to be consistent with the translation for form. For the content-focused translation, priority is given to equivalence in effect. Newmark (1988: 83) notes: "Normally a translator can treat cultural terms more freely than institutional terms" and as shown earlier, the American name carries some cultural information. The process of decision-making for this purpose is more complicated. It entails finding a Filipino name that has an equivalent effect, in the sense mentioned in Chapter 4. But what is the effect of the original American name in the first place? As it is, the name could give any number of impressions. However, by evaluating it against what the composition itself conveys, the reader will find that the name has a playful sound to it, perhaps somewhat mischievous and certainly not serious. The resulting translation is "Pilar Ana Macalalag" which approximates the effect of the original at the sonic and sensory levels. At the level of sound, the name in the target text begins with the letters *p*, *a* and *m* – extra effort was given to arrive at a Filipino surname that imitates the *Mc-* sound in the original – so that the names in the source text and target text have similar orthography and phonology (Fernandes 2006). Thus, the translation resorted to phonological replacement, a procedure in which "the target text name attempts to mimic phonological features of a source text name by replacing the latter with an existing name in the target language which somehow invokes the sound image of the source language being replaced" (Fernandes 2006: 54). Phonological replacement is particularly useful in poetry where sound profoundly affects the reader's response.

6.4.3.3 Equivalent terms

While the translations of the proper nouns in "Sick" entailed different considerations for the focus-centered and content-centered target texts, the translation of the proper names in "The Dentist and the Crocodile" relied on equivalent terms for both the focus-oriented and content-oriented translations because the names themselves have meaning. The translation of the proper names in "The Dentist and the Crocodile" is eased by the availability of a dictionary equivalent for "crocodile" in Filipino, "buwaya." Both common nouns have been used as proper names in the original poem and its Filipino translation. The proper name "Crocodile" is meaningful in that it represents the category of the creature and characteristics around which the narrative revolves so it must be carried over into the translation. The only challenge is finding a corresponding name for the contracted "Croc" and the diminutive "Crocky" because unlike in the source culture, the word "buwaya" is used only in this form in the target culture with no shortened variation. In the end, it was necessary to create a new name, "Buwi", in the translation that follows the hypocoristic form of the nicknames derived from the word "crocodile."

6.5 Design of the poetry reading sessions

A total of nine poetry reading sessions were conducted with the children. The target number of participants per session was three to four. However, the target number was not always reached: one pupil did not attend the first session in the first round while two pupils were absent from the first session of the second round. The children in the second round who did not make it on their assigned session date for various personal reasons were placed in other groups at the request of their parents. In the ideal set-up of the study, two sessions should have been devoted to discussing the poem translated into Filipino according to content and another two sessions to discussing the translation according to form. However, a fifth session was held to accommodate the children who missed their sessions in the second round. All sessions were conducted and recorded on Zoom, the video conferencing platform the children use for school. The children logged in with their school accounts but they did not change their screen names for pseudo-anonimization. The author of the thesis kept the name as identifying information during the reading sessions because experts (e.g., Russell 2014) advise calling someone by his/her name to build better connection and increase trust and positive communication. Nevertheless, instead of actual names, codes were used in the transcripts and this thesis.

During the reading sessions, videos of the translations in mp4 format were shown to the participants. The videos were made using MS PowerPoint. One video was made for Dahl's poem and another for Silverstein's poem. Each video had a voice recording of the poem being read by the author, accompanied by slides with the poem's text and original illustration/s taken from the books

The length of the videos was from 1:42 minutes to 1:58 minutes. The videos were played to the children using screenshare. While the aim was to finish each session in 45 minutes, the actual discussions ran from 36 minutes to 54 minutes. Studies show that group discussions with children under the age of 10 should not exceed 45 minutes (Vaughn et al. 1998 in Heary and Hennessy 2002) but they can run for up to 60-90 minutes with 8- to 12-year-old children (Heary and Hennessy 2002, Kennedy et al. 2001). The length of a typical class for Grade 3 pupils at UPIS is 50 minutes.

Table 1: Distribution of participants

Group	Focus of translation	No. of participants (Round 1)	No. of participants (Round 2)
1	Content	2 boys	1 girl
2	Content	3 girls	2 boys, 1 girl
3	Form	4 boys	3 girls
4	Form	4 girls	3 boys
5	Content		2 girls, 1 boy

6.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

The sessions were conducted as semi-structured group interviews. Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 37) clarify that "group interviews" or "group discussions" were the terms known in the field before the phrase "focus groups" became increasingly popular in social research. They used "focus groups" and "group discussions" interchangeably. They explain that while the former is now "the most widely recognized term", the latter "conveys better the idea of a group which may be more or less focused or structured depending on the requirements of the study, and in which data is generated and shaped through discussion" (37). For this reason, the preferred terms in this study are "group interviews" and "group discussions." In semi-structured interviews, the "interviewer asks key questions in the same way each time and does some probing for further information, but this probing is more limited than in unstructured, in-depth interviews" (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 111). The image below presents the predetermined questions asked during the sessions. It should be noted that the questions are a mix of open-ended, closed-ended and poll (multiple choice) questions. The variety was deliberate to minimize the participants' lack of enthusiasm and fatigue.

Although the questions were prepared in advance, the author allowed some degree of flexibility, for instance, in the order of the questions if it felt more natural in the conversation. Some questions were also rephrased, such as using "connect with" or "see yourself" in place of "relate" in the last two questions when the questions seemed to be daunting for the participants and did not obtain responses. Probing questions were aimed at inquiring into the reasons behind an answer specifically to a closed-ended question. Probing was also used

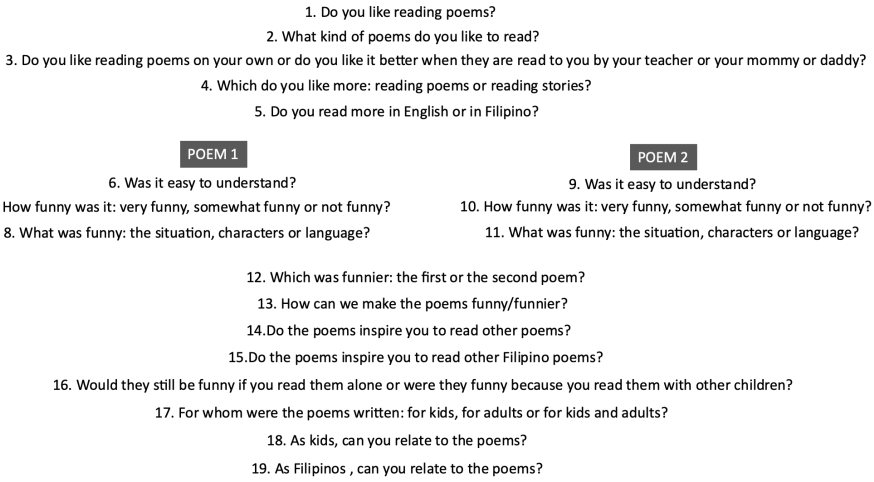


Figure 1: The interview questions translated into English. The questionnaire in Filipino is attached as Appendix F

for understanding responses that were vague or too general. For instance, if the participant found the poem difficult to understand, he or she was asked which of its aspects or parts were regarded as challenging.

6.5.2 Benefits of group interviews

Group interviews are ideal for eliciting children's views if the author creates a pleasant atmosphere in which children want to become involved in the discussion. Adler et al. (2019: 2) in particular note how focus groups "can be used to create a safe peer environment for children." Citing Shaw et al. (2011), they also report that focus groups can avoid some of the power imbalances that arise between an adult and a child in a one-on-one interview. But Adler et al. were right to emphasize that only some of such power imbalances can be avoided. In the reading sessions, the author would wait for an answer to be volunteered by the participants. Few participants responded without being called, particularly for closed-ended questions. For the most part, however, the children patiently waited to be called, possibly because this is how their typical class is set up. This can also be cultural: Filipino children are taught to respect adults and speaking only if directly addressed by an adult is a sign of respect. The children waited for their turn even if it was made clear that they could answer and react at any point in the discussion without raising their hands and being called. There were advantages to asking the pupils one by one though. The discussions were organized. There was equal participation among the children and the discussion was not limited to the more dominant or active individuals and their ideas. It encouraged the children to think and contribute to the discus-

sion and all of the participants answered each question. Asking the participants one at a time was particularly helpful in giving a chance to the shy or quieter members of the group to share their answers.

6.5.3 Drawbacks of group interviews

A downside of this method is that it makes the response less natural and spontaneous. Another disadvantage is the likely pressure put on children to respond, seeing that the other participants were able to answer. To counteract this possibility, the author was careful to avoid coercion. For instance, if the child did not know the answer to a question, saying either "I don't know" or nothing at all, the author tried to encourage the participant to respond by offering some answers from which he or she could choose or get ideas. If the participant still did not know the answer, the author accepted the response and moved forward with the discussion. The author also limited the probing questions to an initial response to one or two questions, even if the answer to the probing question could still be made clearer so that the children did not feel that they were being challenged.

Although the interaction was mainly between the author and the participants, there were also traces of interaction between the participants. These centered on sharing similar responses ("Same as the answer of [participant]"), supplementing responses, for instance, adding to the suggested alternative endings of the poems given by the other children, and acknowledging the presence of other participants ("For [participant], it's obviously going to be language" or "I will just let [participant] speak").

6.5.4 General evaluation of the sessions

Ennis and Chen (2012) suggest that in conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher should briefly summarize the initial response of a participant to show that it has been understood. A probing question can follow this if more specific information is needed. Other researchers likewise recommend this technique such as Nyumba et al. (2018: 29) who, citing Morgan et al. (1998) and Litosseliti (2004), list "good and active listening skills to... paraphras[e] or summaris[e] responses" as among the desirable skills of the facilitator of a focus group. In this study, the author not only repeated or summarized the response but also asked for the correctness of the summary using questions such as "Is that right?" (Tama ba?), "Is that what you mean?" ('Yun ba ang ibig mong sabihin?) or "Did I hear it correctly?" (Tama ba ang dinig ko?). Seeking confirmation from the participants on the accuracy of the summary was particularly helpful in virtual discussions where poor voice clarity (arising from problems with microphones and headphones or their placement, connection issues or even from loud background noise in the participant's home) can easily make it impossible for the author to understand responses. In addition, confirmatory questions give the participants the feeling that their ideas are not

only valid but also valued that the author would want to ensure that they were well understood.

Also important to the success of the group discussions was a relaxed and comfortable environment which the author created as best as she could. The children were eager to discuss their favorite books, authors or poems without being asked. They felt at ease in correcting the author when there were inaccuracies as illustrated by the following dialogue:

> Researcher: C4, do you like reading poetry?
> *C4 shakes her head.*
> Researcher: Why don't you like it?
> *C4 does not reply.*
> Researcher: Is it hard? Is it boring?
> C4: I don't know.
> Researcher: What was that again, C4?
> C4: I don't read that much.
> Researcher: Oh, you don't read that much poetry. You just don't like it.
> C4: I just don't read poetry. It's not that I don't like it. I just don't read it.

Similarly, they were open to sharing information about themselves, even information that could have backfired, such as admitting having faked sickness to avoid going to school – this reflects trust in the researcher. Many children spontaneously elaborated their answers to closed-ended questions. Even the more reserved, soft-spoken participants were confident in their responses. While attending an online discussion from the comfort of their own homes could have helped some children to relax, it also had its disadvantages, mainly that it divided the attention of some of them. There were participants who left the session to grab a snack or walked to another room of the house. Those who lacked a private space in which to participate in the discussion talked to the other people who were present with them. The majority of the participants, however, were able to resist distractions around them which the author of this thesis found impressive. The author also found that it helped to reiterate questions as she moved from one participant to the next. This technique added to the conversational quality of the discussion and eased the burden on the children, who have much shorter attention spans than adults[26], to remember the questions. In fact, a few children would ask for the question to be repeated even as they were in the middle of answering it. Reiterating questions kept the children engaged and helped them stay focused. For the author, this also presented opportunities to improve the questions. For example, if a question in its original wording was confusing or unclear for one participant, it was rephrased using simpler language or accompanied by a short explanation for the other participants.

[26]For an 8-year-old child, the average attention span is 16 to 24 minutes.

There are drawbacks to conducting group discussions virtually. Technical glitches resulting from poor internet connection not only affected children's participation in the discussion but also altered the overall flow of the discussion. Aside from causing a lag between the video and audio or causing the video to freeze, low internet bandwidth or poor connectivity also forced a few participants to turn their cameras off or to log in and out of the web conferencing application in the middle of the discussion. Some questions then had to be repeated and the recording of the poems had to be replayed for those who missed them which consumed extra time.

The benefits of the virtual setting, however, outweigh the drawbacks. First, the experience of spontaneity that one gets in a face-to-face setting was not entirely lost; children could still respond and react immediately and quickly. Second, it was convenient for the children to participate in the sessions. One pupil could join the session even while traveling in the car. Another participant who had mouth problems and could not speak was able to answer the questions using the chat feature of the web meeting software. Furthermore, instead of verbally interrupting the researcher or another participant, some children opted to use the chat box to respond to the question or react to what has been said. This prevented the participants from talking simultaneously which made for a clearer audio recording. To ensure that the other participants did not miss what has been said in the chat, the author of this thesis read the written responses or comments aloud to the group. Finally, the online discussions were easier to record, video and audio alike, compared to physical meetings that would have required more equipment and logistical preparations. Extra care is needed for recording online sessions though as the settings of the video conferencing application can change at any time. In this study, the second-round sessions had not been recorded in the preferred gallery view where all the participants could be seen at the same time. Instead, they were recorded in speaker view (i.e., only the person speaking was shown on the screen) because the developer changed the default setting and the author did not know this beforehand. As a result, the physiological responses (e.g., laughter or smiles) of most participants to the poems as they were read had not been captured on video. This shows that a test run is required prior to each reading session.

6.6 Effect of the pandemic on the research design

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on the research methodology, especially since the children who were the target participants in the study were severely affected by restrictive measures to contain the spread of the virus. When Covid-19 arrived in the Philippines, the national government imposed variations of lockdowns, ordered schools to close and prohibited children from going outside their residences even for exercise or play. As a result, learning from home with the help of a web conferencing platform, which in the past was mostly used by adults, became the alternative to face-to-face instruction for

many school children particularly in Metro Manila. These emergency actions changed the course of the research, with data gathering relying on remote group discussions instead of the planned in-person reading sessions. By the time the online discussions were conducted, the children had been attending real-time virtual classes for more than a year, had adapted to the switch to the online environment and were familiar with the technology. Thus, it was already natural for them to interact and participate in a discussion remotely and this showed in their performance, not only how they navigated the technology-based platform but also in how they contributed to the discussion. Ultimately, the shift in research design proved to be very favorable in terms of data collection as mentioned in the preceding section. The biggest impact of the pandemic on the research design was thus on recruitment as discussed in section 6.3.3 above.

6.7 Transcribing the group discussions

Saldanha and O'Brien (2014: 128) articulate that before transcribing, one has to first decide on the amount of verbal and non-verbal detail to include in the transcript and which conventions to use. They mention two kinds of transcription in this regard: denaturalized transcription and naturalized transcription. The first "attempts to retain features of the oral language" (e.g., prosody, false starts, filler words and pauses) while the second "omits the oral discoursal features" and "reads more like written language." Because the verbal data in this study will not be analyzed linguistically, it was practical to choose naturalized transcription over denaturalized transcription. However, audible pauses such as "ums" and non-verbal nuances including smiles and laughter were still captured in the transcription since they also supplement verbal response to humor, which is what the study aims to examine.

The sessions were transcribed manually by the author from video recordings. The original transcripts were in a mix of Filipino and English, the languages used in the group discussions, and subsequently translated entirely into English so that they could be understood by the non-Filipino speaking members of the research team. In the qualitative data analysis, however, the transcripts in the original languages were used. Nikander (2008: 229) considers transcription and translation as a process of "double rendering" which "adds... another layer of complication." Alyzood et al. (2019) point out the inconsistencies in the use of translation for pre- or post-analysis. They note:

> A number of papers argued the importan[ce] of analysing data in the participant's native language to ensure the meaning and context was truly represented and not lost in translation (Brooke et al. 2019, Mariani et al. 2016, Chen and Boore 2010). However, other studies have translated all data into English to support analysis by the full research team (Selman et al. 2017, Mariani et al. 2016). There is a clear need for evidence-based guidance on the reporting

> of translation, transcription and analysis of focus group data from countries with linguistic difficulties.

Although there was the option to use the automated transcription feature of the video conferencing application in the second round of discussions[27], the author still decided on manual transcription because its advantages, especially decoding important information and describing the occurrence of non-verbal or inaudible language, outweigh automatically-transcribed content, which must still be checked for accuracy. The researcher is the best person to judge what is or is not meaningful in the collected responses and to determine which parts to transcribe in detail, for instance, where pauses and laughter matter. This is why transcription entails a translation (Slembrouck 2007 and ten Have 2007 in Davidson 2009: 38). Transcription is a "selective" process "whereby certain phenomena or features of talk and interaction are transcribed" (Davidson 2009: 38). In other words, it is "based on a 'selective rendering of the data'"(Heritage and Atkinson, 1984: 12 in Nikander 2008: 226). In the example below, the participant hesitates in his initial response and the researcher writes "yes" precisely as spoken using word lengthening and a question mark to denote reluctance. A transcription software or program cannot record such expression of uncertainty. It is important to represent this in the transcription because when the researcher took notice of the hesitation, the participant was quick to give a more decisive answer, which suggests an interviewer's effect on a participant.

> Researcher: Okay. So, was the poem easy to understand?
> C24: Pardon?
> Researcher: Was the poem easy to understand?
> C24: Um yeees?
> Researcher: Yes. C24 doesn't seem sure.
> C24: It's easy to understand the poem.

Another significant advantage of having the researcher transcribe the discussions is that the researcher "gets to know the data thoroughly and helps to inform decisions that have to be taken regarding the subsequent coding of the data" (Saldanha and O'Brien 2014: 128). Some categories emerge during the transcription process (Davidson 2009). For instance, a few participants in this study mentioned pictures but the responses were not numerically significant to merit a separate category. In the end, the related responses were clustered with other codes. This is why the importance of the transcription process should not be "underestimated", according to Saldanha and O'Brien (2014: 128, citing Bucholtz 2000) because it already "imposes a layer of interpretation on the language used by participants." They add that "the more complex and rich verbal data that is obtained from interviews or focus groups is likely to trigger an analysis process at a very early stage" and "this is particularly the case in small scale projects where the interviewer/moderator and the researcher are the same

[27]This feature was not available when the first round of discussions was held.

person" (189). How much to transcribe depends on why one is transcribing and how much data one has (Hepburn and Bolden 2017: 14). In a conversation analytic study, for example, it is not enough to make simple transcripts using standard orthography as many aspects of the interaction might be missed. Hepburn and Bolden (2017: 14) add that there are "different levels of how much to capture from the sound or video files that form [the] data" and recommend that "when setting out, a standard orthographic [or verbatim] transcript may be enough to familiarize [the researcher] with [the] data." In producing a verbatim transcript, the researcher should not be "tempted to 'tidy up' the grammar, e.g. change words around and introduce words that aren't there." The following example has some grammatical lapses left unedited in the transcription.

> Researcher: C16, have you thought of how to make number 2 funny?
> C16: The mother will say "I thought you were sick." I mean, she will be given a lot of medicines a lot of times a day then she cannot resist she will say "Please no." The mother will say "You need to take it because you are sick" then she will say that she's not sick.
> Researcher: Ah, so she has to take medicine and C17 said she would be given "100 vegetable" a day.
> C15: Then the medicine a thousand, a thousand medicine a day. In all.
> Researcher: One thousand medicine. That's a lot. How can she take that?
> *C17 laughs.*

Needless to say, a significant drawback of manual transcription, aside from being slower, is that the audio is not always easy to understand, for instance, when two participants speak at the same time or when they talk very fast and their pronunciation is not clear. In some of these instances, the author asked the participants to repeat their response to improve the quality of verbal data for transcription. For instance, in the transcription of the last discussion in the second round, there were 10 responses in which a few words or the whole sentences were hard to comprehend. Five of the 10 responses were repeated by the participants upon the request of the author, leaving only five responses partially or entirely unclear.

It is worth mentioning as well that during the discussions, the author was careful to verbalize inaudible verbal responses (i.e. noes, yeses and okays uttered while the microphone was muted and any comment written in the chat box) and non-verbal language (e.g., nodding or shaking of the head or laughing while the microphone was turned off) in anticipation of the transcription process. Otherwise, these utterances and gestures, which can be substantial, are lost from the data because they cannot be picked up during audio transcription (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 182). This is particularly important in the second round of discussions when only the speaker is visible in the video recording.

6.8 Data analysis

The first step in the analysis process involved putting together all relevant responses for each participant in a session using MS Word. Each Word file representing one session was named "responses_Group [number]_[first/second] round." The second step was to import each MS Word file in Atlas.ti using the "Add document" feature. As a result, nine documents were created in the program representing the nine poetry reading sessions. Atlas.ti is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software that aids qualitative research. Based on the methods of grounded theory and content analysis, the software can be used to locate, code/tag, annotate and visualize data such as text. The third step entailed coding each quote in Atlas.ti. A total of 15 codes composed of 414 quotations were used for analysis. Atlas.ti was chosen as it was deemed suitable for the research goals. It is readily available (Leiden University has a multiple user license), user friendly, intuitive and easy to learn by a beginner to computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. Furthermore, the features of the software are sufficient to the degree of complexity of the research project, which only required organizing qualitative responses and assigning codes to them.

6.8.1 Coding responses

The codes were derived from the interview questions which in turn explored the research questions. For instance, the questions on what made the poem funny and how the poem could be made funnier aimed to examine the adequacy of existing theoretical and conceptual models in explaining what children find funny. These two questions were coded as "what is funny" and "ending", respectively. Deductive coding, also known as top-down coding or concept-driven coding, was chosen as method of analysis since the set of codes was already determined beforehand. Excerpts that fit the codes and are most representative of the findings were selected from the transcriptions. A predefined structure in the presentation of the findings, one that follows the natural, logical flow of the interview questions, was also a strong reason for using the deductive approach. For example, as seen in section 6.4.1, the questions moved chronologically from inquiring into the participants' understanding of the texts to their response to the poems' funniness. Thus, one clear advantage of the deductive method in this case is that it makes it easier to structure the data for analysis because it observes the sequence of the questions used in the reading sessions.

The codes with the number of responses for each code in parentheses are as follows:

- can relate as a child (26)
- can relate as a Filipino (25)
- easy to understand (44)

- ending (27)
- funnier poem (23)
- how funny (52)
- intended audience (26)
- language (26)
- poetry (38)
- reading alone versus read by others (17)
- reading alone versus reading with others (26)
- reading more in Filipino (15)
- reading more poems (23)
- story versus poem (15)
- what is funny (30)

6.8.2 Cross-tabulation analysis

Aside from analyzing the codes on their own, the responses were also interpreted using cross-tabulation analysis to identify data patterns and significant associations. Cross-tabulation was performed for each participant using MS Excel. The responses were tallied in MS Excel, with the results displayed in tables. Although Atlas.ti has a cross-tabulation analysis feature, the author did not have the know-how to perform it, hence, the decision to use MS Excel. The following were the cross-tabulated codes:

- language + read more in Filipino
- language + how funny
- easy to understand + what is funny
- easy to understand + how funny
- easy to understand + read alone versus read by others

In some cases, the analysis treated Dahl's and Silverstein's poems separately. This was done to make vivid what children find funny in the poems. Although sharing certain similarities (e.g., both humorous and relying on the element of surprise), the poems were also different from each other particularly in terms of genre (one realistic; the other fantastical). The following codes generated a separate analysis for either poem:

- language + how funny
- easy to understand
- easy to understand + what is funny
- easy to understand + how funny
- easy to understand + read alone versus read by others
- intended audience
- can relate as children
- how funny

Moreover, two codes were cross-tabulated with gender to determine whether there are gender differences in the way children perceive humor. These are the codes that probed "how funny" the poems were and "what [wa]s funny" in them. Children's humor is often investigated in connection with age (in other words, from a developmental perspective) but not gender so this study's findings may provide valuable insights in this aspect.

6.8.3 Responses to the form-centered and content-centered translations

As presented in section 4.2, two translations were produced for the poetry reading sessions: one focused on form and another on content. Two tables were created to display the data relevant to the translation focus. One table presents the results on the funniness of the poems ("how funny") versus the focus of translation (form or content). Another table expands the analysis by showing the funniness of the poems and focus of translation against the factor of gender. Dahl's and Silverstein's poems were analyzed separately in both tables. These results address one of the main questions of this research.

As mentioned, the responses to the humor in the poems of Dahl and Silverstein were analyzed separately. This allowed a closer examination of how previously identified humor categories could be applied to the two poems. The overall humor in the two poems were also different, but both with an ironic twist in the end. Looking at the poems separately made it possible to determine specifically what kind of humor appealed more to children than did not. For instance, an analysis of responses to Silverstein's poem point to the female participants' tendency to be more empathetic to characters in unpleasant situations which made the poem less humorous. One of the research objectives is to make the gender differences in humor appreciation more evident as this aspect is often disregarded in other studies.

6.8.4 Strengths of the data

One of the strengths of a semi-structure interview, which also reflects on the outcome and collected data, is it ensures that a broader range of topics relevant to the research questions is covered. Having a set of questions guided the discussion and kept participants on topic, making it possible to ask more questions in a limited amount of time. Because it covers more topics and offers numerical findings (some of the questions can be regarded as closed questions), a strength of the data is it allows the examination of relationships between different variables. This augments the qualitative analysis of the responses by deriving more insights such as patterns and trends.

The results chapter likewise includes feedback from the participants and parents on the poetry reading sessions. Although not analyzed, feedback provides additional qualitative data that supports the positive effect of the sessions on the participants and their reported shift of interest toward reading and enjoyment of poetry.

6.8.5 Limitations of the data

One clear limitation of the data is that because the groups are so small, the data cannot be analyzed statistically since the test would not have enough power. An obvious suggestion for future research is to recruit more participants to address the limited quantitative analysis. Another limitation of the data is that it does not present the responses from all of the participants. This is because in some of the poetry reading sessions, the researcher failed to ask certain questions in the predefined questionnaire in an attempt to make the discussion more conversational and natural. For example, if the participant's response touches on another question, the researcher proceeds to ask that question even if it was not necessarily next in the sequence of questions and despite missing one or more questions in the prepared questionnaire. In some cases, too, while asking a participant, the researcher was interrupted by other participants and thus unable to elicit an answer from the intended participant. But such is the nature of a semi-structured interview: it is open and flexible. As a result, some of the codes have fewer than 26 responses. These include the codes "story versus poem", "read more in Filipino" and "read alone versus read with others."

6.9 Conclusions

Although fewer pupils enrolled in the study for reasons such as competition with other research calls and experiences associated with Covid-19, the turnout was still ideal for creating groups of 2 to 4 participants. It is advisable to match the size of groups with age; in the case of children 10 years old and younger, it has been found that groups with four to six individuals are best for generating discussion and managing activities (Mareschal and Delaney, 2019).

Scholars have mentioned how group interviews can create a safe and pleasant environment for children to voice their thoughts as they minimize the power disparities in one-on-one interviews between adult researchers and child participants. However, even if power was distributed in such a setup where children were free to express their views and experiences, culture and the school setting still affected the adult-child relationship. Some of the children referred to the author as "Teacher" which indicates how they perceived the role of the author in the activity and her "legitimate authority" over them. Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter 3 on humor, one limitation of group interviews is that they tend to be "artificial" in that participants can be pressured to conform to others.

Notwithstanding this limitation, group interview was still selected for data collection as one of the study's goals was to determine whether humor is indeed a social act, that is, whether children find a text more humorous if read or discussed with other children. Putting participants together in a session can produce different findings than individual interviews as children may behave differently in a group. Similarly, being in a group allows participants to encounter firsthand what it means to collectively read and discuss a humorous text, resulting in responses that better capture the experience. The design of the procedure also addresses the central questions in the data collection instrument. For instance, the decision to present the translated poems to the participants both aurally and visually was based on one of the questions investigating whether they prefer to read poems themselves or listen to them.

The poems that were translated were chosen according to the theories of humor discussed in Chapter 3: Dahl's poem showed the superiority theory at work while the incongruity theory could explain the humor in Silverstein's poem. The selected materials had to cover different theories to gain greater insight into children's humor. But using more than one material in the reading session did not only make it possible to compare humorous texts and test the utility of existing concepts and theories in understanding humor. Moreover, it was beneficial to expose children to humorous poems and address the questions on whether knowledge of funny poems would encourage them to, first, read more poetry and, second, to read more in Filipino. As discussed in Chapter 3, humor encourages children to read books actively and makes reading more engaging. If the children in the study were motivated or inspired to read more poetry and Filipino texts, this proves that the research was also practical, with direct and immediate benefits to the participants. As a practical application, poetry reading sessions can be replicated in other groups to inspire primary-aged children to broaden their reading interests.

A semi-structured interview was selected to elicit participants' perceptions, thoughts and experiences without a rigid structure. The questionnaire, designed for variety using both closed-ended and open-ended questions, directly asked the participants about some of the problems identified in the literature review. For example, to address the dual readership of children's literature discussed in Chapter 2, the participants were asked whether they thought the poems were written solely for children, adults or both audiences. A question on whether the

participants preferred reading stories or poems was included in the questionnaire to investigate the issue of demand for particular genres in Chapter 4. The participants were asked what kind of poems they read to examine whether they were more partial to funny poems, which was found in other children's studies as shown in Chapter 3. Finally, questions on whether the participants could relate to the poems as children and as Filipinos closed the reading sessions to assess whether humor is indeed influenced by age and culture. Although there were occasions in which probing was necessary to elicit details, most responses to closed-ended questions were automatically given by the participants with an elaboration such as an example. This shows that the children were sufficiently engaged to provide more extended responses.

CHAPTER 7

Results and analysis

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the series of poetry reading sessions conducted with the participants. It begins with a profile of the participants' general attitudes toward poetry and language preferences for reading. Subsequently, the participants' reading patterns will be discussed, shedding light on comprehension abilities, and favored modality and setting. Then, the outcome of the inquiry on the duality of audience in children's poems will be presented. Responses on content relatability to children and Filipino readers, as a condition for humor appreciation, are reported in the sections after that. Finally, the answers to the central questions of whether funny poems for children are still funny when translated from one language into another and whether form or content is more decisive in determining the experience of humor will be given. Given the relevance of the transcriptions of the interviews for analyzing the questions and substantiating the claims, extracts from the transcripts are included in this chapter.

7.2 General attitudes toward and experiences of poetry

Nineteen of the 26 participants showed a positive perception of poetry. This group can be divided into two subgroups: those with a strong association with poetry (i.e., reporting a wide range of experience with poetry) and those with

a weak association with poetry (i.e., reporting little, some or "not [that] much" exposure to poetry). In the first subgroup, participants responded with a definite "yes" when asked if they read poetry, suggesting a higher frequency of poetry reading and not merely a one-time contact. In the second subgroup, participants not only demonstrated a lower frequency of poetry reading but also demonstrated lower awareness of poetry ("I don't know much [about it]" C3). Although there is some indication that those who read more are likely to be more open to reading poems, this is not the case all the time. As one participant put it: "I like reading but I don't like reading [poems]. I don't really find much [in it]" (C26). By contrast, one participant expressed that she loves to read so "it's nice to read both [poems and stories]" (C10). One preferred poems over stories because they are "shorter and easier to read" (C12).

7.2.1 Effect of poems on reader

According to the children who participated in this study, poems have a positive emotional effect on them. For instance, one mentioned that "sometimes poems make [her] happy" (C10) and another said that she is entertained when she reads poems. Funny poems are particularly attractive to the participants as they provide a brief respite from reality "so [that] it's not always serious [and one] can take a break" (C21). The participants showed interest, for example, in limericks and poems accompanied by cartoons. One shared with the group that he prefers funny poems even if he has not read them ["But I'm sure it will be funny" (C15)]. Although they expressed enthusiasm over poems that are "fun" (C21, C23) with "a lot of jokes" (C22), they are also receptive to reading "informative" (C22) poems that are not necessarily humorous (cf. Styles 1998: children's poetry is traditionally created to make children laugh). Among the informative poems they enjoy reading are those about fables and legends as well as those about prayers, animals and life. At least three participants were open to reading poems on any topic ["nothing specific" (C12) and "anything" (C11)]. There is evidence of awareness of and positive attitudes towards rhyme – at least two participants mentioned the word "rhyme" – which supports the notion that children's poetry must possess rhyme to make them effective (see for example Sloan 2001: "most poetry is written for children, for they respond well to rhymes and obvious rhythms"). They took delight in rhyme found in poems – "I like rhyme" (C15) – particularly in "making or listening to rhyming words" (C10). According to Zafra (2023, personal communication), this could be due in part to the inclusion of poetry in the minimum learning competencies required by the Department of Education and the curriculum of UPIS from kindergarten to Grade 3. Nevertheless, it was not mentioned if rhyme can make a poem funnier or more exciting or, conversely, if the absence of it can make a poem less funny or exciting.

Similar to reading stories, reading poems can be pleasurable for some participants as it stirs one's imagination: "It's fun. Sometimes you can imagine" (C21). In addition, for the participants, poems contain "beautiful words" that

"have meanings" (C16) and the meaning construction process demands creativity from the reader. There seems to be no consensus on this aspect, however. While some of the participants consider the language of poetry as its most attractive feature, for others, it is the refined language used in poetry that hinders the understanding of and appreciation for poetry itself: "Sometimes it is about an object. Sometimes I don't understand what [it's about]" (C20).

7.2.2 Preference for stories over poems

Participants still gravitate towards stories even as they read poetry, looking for stories and morals in poems. This finding substantiates the claim that children positively respond to narrative rhymes (Huck, Hepler and Hickman 1987 in Mallan 1993). When asked if they liked reading poetry, it was instinctive for the participants to refer to non-poetic works such as novels and comic books, suggesting a general bias for prose stories over poems. Furthermore, when made to choose between stories and poems, over half of all 26 participants viewed stories with greater favor as reflected in the following statements:

- "They have happy details." (C2)
- "They have pictures." (C5)
- "They are longer." (C13, C21, C25)/"They last longer." (C19)
- "Stories usually have adventure." (C20)
- "They require imagination." (C25)
- "There are characters." (C17)
- "They are more realistic while poems are not that realistic." (C23)
- "They have fantasy which is exciting." (C16)
- "Finishing them is more fulfilling." (C24)
- "They are fun and have something very interesting." (C22)

Two participants (C1 and C14) articulated their preference for stories but were unsure why they felt that way.

7.2.3 Conduits for poetry experience

Exposure to poetry is mainly through the participants' parents and teachers. Parents familiarize children with poetry when they make certain poetry books or online poetry resources available at home for children to discover and read. These have great recall with some participants citing the poems introduced to them by their parents as examples of poems that they read. The school is an equally important player in developing interest in and connection with poetry

among children. Some participants shared instances of poetry reading in school or admitted reading poetry "only when needed for school" (C15).

The experience of poetry being limited to school tasks is clearly seen among the seven participants who confessed that they are not poetry readers. Some revealed that they have "never tried reading poems" (for instance, C5), perhaps to mean not having experienced reading poems outside of school, that is, there is no initiative to seek out and read poems on their own. One participant noted that most poems known to him "are dark and brooding" (C1), discouraging him from reading poetry. Others remarked that they like reading in general but not necessarily reading poems. One confessed that poetry is difficult to understand. Two participants pointed out the impracticality of reading poetry and said that they do not read poems because "[they have] other things to do" (C14, C23). Finally, one participant demonstrated indifference to poetry: "I don't read poems. It's not that I don't like it. I just don't read it" (C4). Thus, it seems that a mismatch in needs and tastes mainly dissuades poetry reading among this group of participants. This observation means that given a suitable material, one that is neither "dark" nor "difficult" or one that is built around a storyline since many of them are partial to stories, it still likely to convert this group into poetry readers.

7.2.4 Reading more poems

One of the accomplishments of the poetry reading sessions was changing the participants' negative views or misconceptions about poetry. Five of the seven participants who never had any interest in poetry responded in the affirmative when asked at the end of the session whether they were inspired to read more poems after knowing that poems could be funny. It helped that all the children were free to talk about the poems in an environment that was non-judgmental. This is in contrast to the pressure exerted, for example, by a required reading for class that is often "serious" and "highbrow" (as is often the measure of "academic") and on which pupils are graded for their reflections. Thus, although classroom discussions allow pupils to study or even write poetry intensely, the reading task itself can be both daunting and tedious for children, as reasoned out by some participants in this study. As such, poems are peripheral to stories for many children. One participant mentioned that he prefers stories over poems because he does not "understand [those] types" of poems "that [are] old English" (C21), perhaps having encountered these in the classroom.

The results of the poetry reading sessions indicate that interest in reading for pleasure can easily change among children in the elementary years once they are shown the breadth of literary materials available to them. They are not hardwired to reject reading on their own initiative or to accept only one genre to read. More importantly, funny poems have the advantage of engaging children and encouraging independent reading, regardless of the child's reading preferences. This is an important finding as most of the time, funny poems are not deemed "literary" enough to be included in classroom teaching, thus

marginalizing children who are comfortable with amusing texts and discouraging them from getting excited about the idea of reading poems. In fact, none of the participants in this study hinted at their experience with funny poems in school. Therefore, educators could be encouraged to consider the value of humorous poems in teaching literature in general and motivating children to read poetry in particular.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, humor comprehension is a high-level mental activity and a problem-solving task, making it especially suitable for use in the classroom. Children like puzzles and humorous poems are similar to puzzles in that there are logical gaps that they must connect on their own. In the study, not all children were able to locate and work out the gaps in the funny poems read to them. Some admitted outright that they struggled with the poems for reasons such as unfamiliarity with Filipino words. Yet some said that that the poems were easy to comprehend when in fact they misconstrued their meaning. This tendency was particularly evident when Shel Silverstein's poem "Sick" was discussed. Only eight of the 26 participants enjoyed the incongruity in the poem at first reading. Four participants grasped what was funny in the poem after they viewed the video of the poem a second time. The poem did not make sense to one participant even after it was explained to her. What was surprising was that half of the participants did not recognize the absurdity in the poem at all. The poem is centered around a child faking illness to avoid school, only to discover it is a Saturday. But the 13 participants empathized with the child being sick and, convinced that she was truly ill, described the poem as "sad", "painful" or "not funny." Thus, humor in poetry can be complex and cannot be dismissed simply as superficial. With their surprise effect, they can elicit interesting conversations and promote creative thinking and reasoning in the classroom.

The results further show that when humor is added, poetry moves from being impractical and peripheral to something that can be as interesting and enticing as stories. Only two pupils who were biased against poetry expressed ambivalence over whether they had been persuaded to read more poems after the session. However, such a change in interest should be closely associated with a supportive home as well. One participant who initially felt reluctant about poetry was convinced to read more poems "but I don't think we have poems [at home]" (C14). Thus, parents could be encouraged to have some type of involvement including sharing and reading poetry to their children at home to develop poetry readers.

7.3 Language: Preference for Filipino or English

At the beginning of each poetry reading session, the children were asked if they read more in English or in Filipino.[28] Eighteen of them responded that English

[28]One was not able to respond due to technical problems.

was their preferred language for reading. The reasons they gave include the following:

- "It is easier for me. That's how it sounds in my head... I struggle a bit in Filipino." (C1)
- "With Filipino, there are some words that I don't understand." (C5)
- "With English, I learn new words." (C3)
- "That's what my parents buy and they cannot find [books in] Filipino." (C20)
- "I'm used to reading English stories." (C18)
- "I'm not really fluent in Filipino." (C21)
- "I understand English better." (C19)
- "I'm more comfortable [with English]." (C14)
- "English because I have a lot of English books so it's easier for me to read in English." (C26)

Two participants said that they use Filipino more often because "it is [their] language" (C2, C23). On the other hand, five children reported that they use English and Filipino with equal frequency when reading. One of them said that she owns English and Filipino books and while she likes Filipino books more, she is reading more in English now. Another explained that his workbooks, except those used for music and English classes, are in Filipino but the books that his parents buy for him are in English. By contrast, the parents of one participant purchase books for him in English and Filipino. Thus, it can be seen that parents are very influential in shaping children's reading habits and preferences.

7.3.1 Use of Taglish

Since the poems utilized for discussion were in Filipino, the questions asked by the researcher were phrased either entirely in this language or a combination of Filipino and English. It was clear to the participants from the start that they were free to respond in either English or Filipino or a combination of both languages. At least three children spoke primarily in English and at least two switched between English and Filipino throughout the discussion. For example, one tried to respond in Filipino but eventually switched back to English as he was "too lazy to translate it into Filipino" (C1). Many, however, responded in "Taglish" or a mix of Tagalog (Filipino) and English within a single utterance. Taglish is the code-switching variety evident among bilingual (at least Filipino and English) speakers in Metro Manila and is mostly used by educated, middle-

and upper-class urban dwellers.[29] As the questions posed by the author were constructed mainly in Filipino, Taglish was the result of the attempt of the participants who were generally more proficient in English to respond in Filipino. There are two cases identified from the responses of the children.

1. Insertion of English lexical items (Lesada 2017) – Participants opted to use the English terms even if the Tagalog/Filipino counterparts are easily accessible perhaps because the borrowed words have made their way into everyday Filipino utterances.

   "Kasi may pictures siya" (C5).
   (Because it has pictures.)
   Filipino counterpart: Kasi may mga larawan siya.

   "Hindi ako sure" (C24).
   (I'm not sure.)
   Filipino counterpart: Hindi ako sigurado.

   "Gusto ko 'yung about animals or about life" (C16).
   (I like those about animals or about life.)
   Filipino counterpart: Gusto ko 'yung tungkol sa mga hayop o tungkol sa buhay

2. Mixed verb formation – Participants constructed bilingual verb structures (Lesada 2017), which mimic the Filipino conjugation, for instance, employing reduplication to mark the progressive aspect.

   "... pero minsan sinesendan ako ng mommy ko ng mga tula" (C3).
   (... but sometimes my mommy sends me poems.)
   Filipino counterpart: ... pero minsan pinapadalan ako ng nanay ko ng mga tula.

   "Nagre-read lang ako ng tula 'pag kailangan" (C15).
   (I read poems only when needed.)
   Filipino counterpart: Nagbabasa lang ako ng tula 'pag kailangan

   "... hindi ako maka-relate kasi hindi naman ako nagfe-fake na may sakit ako" (C20).
   (I cannot relate [to it] because I don't fake sickness.)
   Filipino counterpart: ... hindi ako makaugnay kasi hindi naman ako nagkukunwari na may sakit ako.

Verbs were also formed from nouns, as in the sentence below.

[29] Lesada (2017) also observed the presence of Taglish among bilinguals who were not mainly Tagalog (Filipino) speakers such as those in the Visayas, a great distance from the Tagalog-speaking region of Metro Manila.

"Sa Tuesday and Friday, nagfa-flag [ceremony]... nagna-national anthem kami" (C24).
(Every Tuesday and Friday, we have a flag [ceremony]... we have the national anthem.]
Filipino counterpart: Sa Martes at Biyernes, nagkakaroon kami ng [pagtaas ng] bandila... kumakanta kami ng pambansang awit.

7.3.2 Preferred language and humor perception

It makes sense to assume that those who have a greater preference for and fluency in English would find the Filipino translations of the poems difficult to understand. However, it appears that the relationship between preferred language for reading and funniness rating is weak. The number of English speakers who found Dahl's poem very funny or somewhat funny and those who found it not funny were almost the same. When it came to Silverstein's poem, the difference between those who found it funny and those who did not was more noticeable but the results did not support the earlier assumption, with more English speakers finding the poem "very funny" and "somewhat funny." It could be presumed that reading the text, apart from listening to it, could have provided some aid to those who were not proficient in the language, thus increasing the poem's funniness.

Table 2: Preferred language and humor perception

	Dahl ($N = 26$)			Silverstein ($N = 26$)		
Preferred Language	Very Funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny	Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny
English	1	8	10	3	9	7
Filipino	0	1	1	1	0	1
English and Filipino	1	1	2	0	4	0
No reply	0	0	1	0	1	0

7.3.3 Reading more in Filipino

Of the 14 participants who were asked, a striking majority articulated that the session has inspired them to read more in Filipino. Of the 10 participants who were more comfortable with reading in English, eight said that they would read more in Filipino, one said that he was "not sure" if he would do so (C24) and one responded that he was motivated "a little" (C21) to find more Filipino texts to read. Of the three participants who read in English and Filipino with similar regularity, two were inspired to read more in Filipino (C11, C12) while

one said "it is possible" (C22). One participant who read more in Filipino than in English told the group that he would continue doing so.

Table 3: Preferred language and likelihood to read more in Filipino

Preferred language for reading ($N = 14$)	Would read more in Filipino	Not sure	A little	It is possible
English	8	1	1	0
Filipino	1	0	0	0
English and Filipino	2	0	0	1

7.3.3.1 Reasons for wanting to read more in Filipino

Some of the participants' main reason for attempting to read more Filipino texts was the need to learn Filipino, which their parents encouraged and supported. However, the participants also know the benefits of a strong mother tongue foundation. According to the participants, they want to "learn to understand Filipino" (C25, C26) possibly to communicate with others, understand the world around them or perform better in school. It could also be that they feel frustrated and alienated from their own culture when they fail to understand certain Filipino words. That "Filipino is [their] language" (C2, C20) was enough stimulus for some participants to read more in Filipino: they are aware that their native language is a fundamental aspect of their cultural identity. In addition, learning their mother tongue is another positive challenge for those pupils who "like learning" (e.g., C21 and C26) and humor helps them have a more positive mindset toward the task. Thus, humor is a good motivator for infrequent, even reluctant, young readers of Filipino who view reading in their native language as a task that needs completion.

7.3.3.2 Humor as an aid for reading Filipino

During the poetry reading sessions, the participants appeared engaged in reading and sharing their ideas even if some of them were not proficient in the language of discussion. Many were able to comprehend the poems in Filipino (although the humor in Silverstein's poem was particularly challenging for a number of them) and give answers that reflected their own creativity and imagination. Humor helped increase the retention of information which was evident in the way the participants connected the funny events in the poems with particular emphasis on Dahl's poem. That they performed well in the discussion despite the lack of immersion in the language possibly made them realize how humorous poems can facilitate learning Filipino and how texts in Filipino can

be as enjoyable as those in English. An interesting point was made by one participant who reported higher fluency in English than in Filipino. He said that he would read more in Filipino "but [he] also [knew the poems] were translated from English" (C1). While he could simply be stating a fact and nothing more, it could also be taken to mean that to him, the appeal of the poems lies in knowing that they were translations. Of Dahl's poem translated into Filipino, he commented that it had a recognizable style and subject even if he had not read the original poem in English: "it sounds like something Roald Dahl would write" (C1). It would be interesting to find out whether he would have made the same connection and comparison if he had not known that the poems he read were translations in the first place.

7.3.3.3 Accessibility of Filipino reading materials

Another significant point raised by a participant is access to Filipino reading materials. Although inspired to read more in Filipino, she remarked that she "(didn't) know if there was any [Filipino book] that could be purchased" (C19). While this points yet again to the dominance of English books in circulation for children in this age group as discussed in Chapter 3, this also brings to the fore the actual demand for more texts particularly poems that can be translated into Filipino and made available to Filipino children. Even if the market for translated poetry remains incomparable to that of stories, an awareness that such materials have an economic value should promote increased production and help ease poetry's peripheral positioning in the literary system.

7.4 Self-assessment of comprehensibility

It goes without saying that for humor to occur, the recipient must first understand what is funny in a given context. As stated in Chapter 5, humor reception is a high-intensity mental activity that requires cognitive abilities and, most of the time, an awareness of incongruities. In order to enjoy a humorous text, the reader must first understand the text. In other words, they must demonstrate reading comprehension, a complex skill needed for "simultaneously constructing and extracting meaning through interaction and engagement with print" (Research and Development Reading Study Group 2002 in Snow 2010: 413). To do so, the reader must possess the ability not only to read the words but also to understand the meaning of words. For the "comprehension event" to be successful, there should be "a good match of reader skills, text difficulty, and task definition" (Snow 2010, abstract). The next sections will discuss the responses of the poor comprehenders (i.e., those who reported difficulty in comprehending the poems) followed by the responses of the good comprehenders (i.e., those who reported ease in understanding the poems). By discussing the responses of these two groups separately, the results can be better compared and contrasted.

7.4.1 Poor comprehenders

In this study, although the poems were read to the participants, the texts were also shown in the video for them to read. The participants were asked after each video whether the poems were easy to understand. Almost all of the children agreed that they understood the poems without difficulty with only a small group expressing that they had some problems understanding the poems as is evident in the following statements:

- "I partly understand it. Not entirely but I get the plot." (C21)
- "There were parts where I got confused." (C22)
- "I don't understand much of the words." (C26)
- "I don't understand what happened." (C7)
- "There were a lot of name stuff. Parts of the body. I didn't get the last part." (C8)
- "I don't understand some of the sickness." (C19)

Table 4: Self-reported comprehensibility of poems

	Easy to understand	Difficult to understand	A little/slightly easy to understand	No response
Dahl ($N = 26$)	17	3	4	2
Silverstein ($N = 26$)	17	2	3	4

Taking Snow's explanation, there seems to be an issue mainly with the reader's skills and text difficulty for this small minority of children. Because the children were in school, it can be assumed that they had high literacy skills and a broad experience with books. However, their vocabulary in Filipino was limited as they themselves reported. They could not adequately recognize some words and figure out their meaning. There were also indications that the selected materials were complex for this small group of children to process. They admitted that they failed to connect some ideas and understand the text as a whole in one reading. But what was surprising was that, despite the self-reported reading difficulty, the reading experience was not entirely unrewarding for these children in terms of humor perception. Most of those who found Dahl's poem hard to understand said the poem was still somewhat funny while there were more children who considered Silverstein's poem "somewhat funny" than "not funny." This finding is particularly striking as it contradicts the general

notion that comprehensibility plays a significant role in the reception of humor. For instance, it was reported that good comprehenders generally scored higher on the funniness ratings of jokes (Li-Chuan Ku et al. 2016: 59). One participant who liked Dahl's books and said in the study that Dahl's poem was "very funny" could have been influenced by his bias for the author. However, this was a singular case.

7.4.1.1 Using contextual cues

For the good majority, poor comprehension did not hinder humor appreciation. It can be assumed then that the children who reported reading difficulty relied on contextual clues to process the incongruity in the poems although according to Shardakova (2016: 469), "there is no agreement among researchers as to the number of type of cues needed... to be able to identify humor." For example, even if the poor comprehenders in this study understood only some of the physical complaints that the narrator enumerated in Silverstein's poem, the cataloging device used in the poem might have provided hints to the reader that the rest were as extreme and exaggerated as the ones they recognized. Thus, what they understood was sufficient for them to see a humorous pattern and anticipate that there was more to come, making the twist in the ending both surprising and satisfactory. Furthermore, although this small minority lacked the appropriate vocabulary to handle the text competently, the humor in both poems was universal (compared to linguistic and cultural humor; cf. Schmitz 2002) and appropriate for learners who are not proficient in a language. It could also be that the illustrations provided contextual clues. How some of the participants responded to the illustrations is discussed in section 7.9.1.3.

Table 5: Funniness rating of poems according to the poor comprehenders (poems were "difficult to understand" or "a little/slightly easy to understand")

	Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny
Dahl ($N = 7$)	1	5	1
Silverstein ($N = 5$)	0	3	2

7.4.1.2 Assessing individual elements of narrative poems

Another possible explanation has to do with how narrative poems are structured. A narrative poem contains the elements of a story such as characters, plot, conflict and resolution. It could be interpreted that the children who reported low reading comprehension gauged humor as having independent features of the poem rather than being a complete whole. Even for the poor comprehenders, there were elements in the sequence of events that they understood and found funny which influenced their overall judgment of the poem's humor. For example, one of the children said that he found the beginning of

Dahl's poem "somewhat amusing" and the ending of Silverstein's poem "funny" but not the other parts which for him were "not funny at all" (C22). Another participant found humor mainly in the characters depicted in the cartoons that accompanied Dahl's poem, saying that the characters "looked funny" ["it's not super realistic"(C19)]. Making such a comment on the visual element requires little to some understanding of the text as the cartoons themselves can stimulate humor appreciation independently of the text.

Table 6: Funniest element in the poem for the poor comprehenders who thought the poem was "very funny" or "somewhat funny"

	Situation	Characters	Language
Dahl ($N = 6$)	5	1	0
Silverstein ($N = 3$)	2	0	1

7.4.2 Good comprehenders

For the good comprehenders, a funny situation also largely contributes to the humor in the poem. This is followed by humorous language such as puns and "funny words" (for example, words they do not understand but which sound funny for them).

Table 7: Funniest element in the poem for the good comprehenders who thought the poem was "very funny" or "somewhat funny"

	Situation	Characters	Language
Dahl ($N = 6$)	4	2	0
Silverstein ($N = 12$)	7	1	4

According to Ayakan and Nalçaci 2018 (citing Suls 1972, Wyer and Collins 1992 and Vrticka et al. 2013), humor comes in two stages: the first stage is comprehension and the second is appreciation. However, the study's results indicate that comprehension of humorous content does not automatically lead to humor appreciation. Surprisingly, 13 out of the 16 participants who said that Dahl's poem was easy to understand remarked it was "not funny."

7.4.2.1 Judging the text as a whole

In contrast to the poor comprehenders, the good comprehenders possibly gauged the funniness of the content in its entirety rather than by parts. This assumption is evident in the good comprehenders' reasons for not appreciating the intended humor in Dahl's poem. First, the poem was said to be uneventful

["There's not much to it" (C1); "It really wasn't much" (C8); "Nothing happened" (C6)]. Second, it was "serious" ["They weren't joking" (C9)]. Third, it was "scary" ["If it happened to me, I'd be frightened" (C14)].

7.4.2.2 More realistic poem as funnier

Moreover, there seems to be a difference in humor perception in terms of genre. Dahl's poem is fantastical (falling into the category of "animal fantasy") while Silverstein's poem, which more children found "very funny" or "somewhat funny" than "not funny at all", is a realistic one (that is, humans act as themselves). With Dahl's poem, it was necessary for the children to "fantasy-assimilate"[30] the depicted events, a process "necessary for perceiving those events as humorous" (McGhee 1975: 20). In the case of Silverstein's poem, the children only need to turn to established knowledge as the events belong to the real world. This indicates that in the case of the participants in the study, children aged 8 and 9 can appreciate the humor more when the context is closer to reality and their own experiences. Interestingly, it should be noted that the children who viewed Silverstein's poem as easy to understand but not funny failed to comprehend the text fully. All of them interpreted the child's sickness as real rather than recognizing that the child was only faking it to avoid school. Thus, for this small group, there was a discrepancy between self-assessment of comprehensibility and actual comprehension which could again point to issues of reading abilities.

Table 8: Funniness rating of poems according to the good comprehenders

	Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny
Dahl ($N = 17$)	1	5	11
Silverstein ($N = 17$)	3	9	5

7.5 Mode of input: Reading versus listening

7.5.1 Preference for reading

Nearly half of the 19 participants[31] who were asked preferred reading poems independently. For nine participants in this study, there is evidence that children aged 8 to 9 are more likely to choose visual input, that is, to read than to

[30] McGhee (1972: 64-65), for example, says that when a child sees a drawing of an elephant climbing a tree to sit on a nest of eggs, the child will find this inconsistent with reality but will not change relevant conceptual categories to incorporate this new information about elephants. Instead, the child will "fantasy-assimilate" this new information, that is, interpret the depicted event in a "fantasy or pretend fashion."

[31] Only 19 of the 26 participants were asked the question on mode of input as the natural flow of the discussion necessitated moving on to the next questions.

listen to poems. One of the nine participants explained that this prevents other people from giving information that reduces surprise or suspense [(or "spoilers" C17)]. Another child talked about the perfect environment for reading: "reading silently without other people because [he is] better at silent reading than reading out loud" (C24). For one participant, reading by herself "activates [her] imagination" (C26) which is why she would choose reading over listening. That she can go back to her mistakes and correct them inclines one participant toward reading on her own. She also likes "quiet reading" more (C25).

7.5.2 Preference for listening

On the other hand, slightly fewer participants enjoy the auditory sensory experience when engaging with poems. Six of the 17 participants who were asked responded that they prefer listening to their parents or teachers read the poems to them. One pointed out his lack of confidence and skill in reading, saying that he "sometimes stutter[s]" when he reads (C22) which makes listening an ideal alternative for him. When parents or teachers read poems to children, they then give struggling or less able readers greater access to the genre. Speaking about one of the translated poems in the study, a participant said that it was "easier to understand" because "someone else is reading it [to them]" (C3). The option to read literature to children helps build their listening skills which are essential components of learning and literacy. Children can develop their vocabulary, language and comprehension skills by listening to others speak (see, for instance, Isbell et al. 2004 for a review of related literature on the effects of storytelling and story reading on young children and Robbins and Ehri 1994 on how storybook reading can build vocabulary).

7.5.3 Equal appeal of reading and listening to poems

The remaining four participants view reading poems alone and listening to them with equal desirability. A participant remarked that she gets to "rest" (C14), whether reading on her own or listening to others read. For one other participant, her parents read poems to her on some occasions yet other times she reads them on her own to "familiarize [herself] with reading poems as [she is] not used to it" (C18). Although both children enjoy reading and listening, their reasons for doing so are complete opposites: one sees them as a break from school routine while the other takes advantage of the activity to improve her skills for school.

7.5.4 Relationship between comprehension and mode of input

The results show little relationship between self-reported comprehension and mode of input. Some who preferred listening over reading still found the poems

difficult to understand. Conversely, many of the children who were more independent readers understood the poems with ease. There seems to be some indication though that, in general, children who are exposed to poems as both listeners and readers have higher self-reported comprehension compared to those who prefer a specific mode of input. This finding suggests that listening and reading skills are equally important in building language comprehension in children in general and in poetry appreciation in particular.

Table 9: Preferred mode of input and self-assessed comprehensibility of poems

Mode of input	Were the poems easy to understand?							
	Dahl ($N = 26$)				Silverstein ($N = 26$)			
	Yes	No	A little/slightly	No response	Yes	No	A little/slightly	No response
Listening	3	1	2	0	3	2	0	1
Reading	4	2	1	2	5	0	1	3
Both	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0
No response	7	0	0	0	6	0	1	0

7.5.5 Relationship between funniness and mode of input

There appears to be no clear relationship between funniness and mode of input. With Dahl's poem, the number of children who found the poem "not funny" was the same as the number of those who found it "somewhat funny." This is true for the children who preferred to listen only and to read only. With Silverstein's poem, the children who preferred listening only and reading only were more inclined to find the poems as "somewhat funny." This suggests that it is not the mode of input but the material that determines how enjoyable the poem is for children. Although, there was some indication that children who liked to listen to poems read to them and read them on their own were more likely to find the poems funny (either very funny or somewhat funny), the numbers were too small to make a conclusive statement.

7.6 Reading for pleasure: Reading alone versus reading with others

In Chapter 5, it was discussed how laughter is primarily a social act: it is the presence of another person and not the joke that provokes laughter (Provine 1999: 2000). Laughter occurs as a direct response to a social group. It is an expression of emotion that can create a connection among individuals by sig-

Table 10: Preferred mode of input and funniness rating of poems

Mode of input	How funny were the poems?					
	Dahl ($N = 26$)			Silverstein ($N = 26$)		
	Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny	Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny
Listening	0	3	3	0	5	1
Reading	1	4	4	0	6	3
Both	1	2	1	1	2	1
No response	0	1	6	2	3	2

naling to each other that they share certain similarities. Even a statement or situation that is not funny by itself induces laughter from the rest of the group when one member laughs at it.

In this study, the children were asked whether they would still find the poems funny if they read them alone or whether they were funny because they read them in groups. Many children responded that reading with other people, in general, brings more laughter than when they read individually. For this reason, they prefer to read funny poems and stories with family or other children. There is evidence then that laughter is indeed "a social signal" rather than a "reflexive response to humor" (Addyman et al. 2018). That is, that the presence of other people influences an individual's response to humorous material. At least five participants touched on laughter's contagious property which some researchers describe as a form of mirroring. Consider the following statements made by the participants:

- "I like reading funny poems and stories with other children especially when they are younger than me because it makes me laugh when I hear them laugh. So it's more fun." (C3)
- "When there are more people who laugh, the other person can laugh because when other people laugh, sometimes it forces the person who is not laughing to also laugh." (C7)
- "When I'm with other children. Because it makes you laugh when you hear them laugh." (C13)
- "It's funnier when you're with other people because they say that if you see or hear someone laugh then you also laugh. I just heard it on Brainchild on Netflix. [But] I don't really remember [if I've experienced it]." (C19)
- "When I read with other children because for me it's fun to laugh with other children and friends. Sometimes I laugh louder when another person laughs." (C20)

Others valued the relationship between laughter and social bonding, as seen in these statements:

- "It's just nice if there are other people who are laughing." (C11)
- "I don't know. When they laugh. I feel lonely [when I read alone]. [I like it when I read with] mommy." (C14)
- "For me when I'm with other children because sometimes when I'm the only one reading a poem I don't find it that funny so it's better for me to be with other people so I have company when I read or so I can laugh. I experienced what (C19) said, [laughing when other people are laughing]." (C18)

It is also interesting how, humorous material can stimulate creative thinking and discussion for some children, which results in greater understanding and elicits more humor. It appears that for children, the more they talk about humorous material, the funnier it becomes.

- "In a group. It's lonely when I don't have [company]... You're sharing information." (C2)
- "When I'm with others. It is more fun when you have company. We can add. We can change." (C6)
- "[It's funny with other people because] we have different opinions." (C8)
- "It's funnier when I'm with other people so I can share my feelings about the poem then we can talk if it is funny." (C10)
- "It's funnier if I'm with others so we can talk about the poem and why it is funny." (C12)
- "It's funnier when you read with other people because they have ideas on what jokes to make out of the story." (C15)
- "[With others.] Because I've never... had a conversation for fun and reading in a long time." (C21)
- "When I'm reading with other children because I will understand it more." (C26)
- "It's funnier when you have others with you. Because they can explain what is funny and what it means and I will laugh more." (C25)

For three participants, it is best to share the pleasure of humor, whether reading funny texts together or telling others about them. This response again points to the social function of humor – bringing people closer.

- "When with other children. To share the funny story." (C9)

- "When I read on my own then I share it. Because when I'm alone I can put my attention on it. I share it so they will laugh." (C16)
- "When I read with other people. So other people can be entertained." (C17)

These observations support the findings of Shannon (1999) discussed in Chapter 5 that reading books in a social setting significantly affects humor reception among children. This is because children can talk about what is humorous in the material with one another. Shannon (1999) also observed that children can detect "more subtle forms of humor" when the materials are read aloud to them. The results of this study are likewise congruent with the conclusions made by Chapman and Chapman (1974) and mentioned in Chapter 5. They noted that children smile and laugh more when with others and are more responsive to humor when their companions laugh.

However, four children would rather read humorous material alone for reasons such as force of habit and low confidence in speaking. Some of the reasons cited are the following:

- "[It's funnier] when I read it alone." (C4)
- "For me, I like reading on my own. I'm more used to it." (C5)
- "I also don't like it I also don't want to speak... [I like] to read by myself because I sometimes stutter when I speak Filipino. When I read Filipino all by myself, Filipino poems and stories... I just read it by myself." (C22)
- "Not so much. Because I really don't know the difference with reading alone. I'm not sure what the difference is when reading alone and reading with the other people." (C24)

7.7 Perceived target audience

In Chapter 2, it was discussed how children's literature appeals to a dual audience (or double implied readers) of children and adults. Adults especially parents, teachers and librarians become part of the intended audience when they act as "gatekeepers" who choose the materials that children read. The younger the children, the greater the control adults exert on the reading materials for and reading interests of children. However, children's literature can also speak to adults as readers themselves, although they may respond differently to the material. This tendency can be seen in the case of "crossover" literature which is written for children but may also be read and appreciated by adults. The first chapter of this dissertation discusses the characteristics of children's literature. For example, fantasy – the opposite of realism – has become a trademark of children's literature. It was also explained that even if they are the target audience, children have little influence on the production of children's literature.

The power lies mainly in the adults who create, market and purchase children's books and make the selection for awards. Thus, it would be interesting to know how children themselves categorize texts written for children. that is, if they target only children like themselves or if they likewise address adults. In the study, the children were asked whether the children's poems presented to them were meant for children only, for adults only or both. Because the materials were funny poems, the responses largely examined the poems' humorous content, bringing to light the participants' own notions of children's and adult humor.

7.7.1 Literature written for children

Only three of the 26 participants responded that both poems were written solely for children. According to one participant (C2), grown-ups cannot appreciate the humor in the poems. He said: "When adults read those poems, I think they will not laugh. But when kids read those, they will laugh. Because they're adults, they have work to do." Referring to Dahl's poem, another participant (C14) said that it was only for children "so they can learn that crocodiles are also nice, that crocodiles can be pets and not to be scared of dentists." Children may still find it hard to differentiate fantasy from reality at this age and their engagement in fantasy worlds can lead them to believe that these worlds are true. For the other participants, however, such distinction is clear. Two participants (C3, C4) explained that Dahl's poem was written for children because "the story is more fictional" and "not real" while Silverstein's poem is "more realistic" and "more believable" which makes it appropriate "for everyone." Interestingly, that the children noticed this was one of the reasons the two poems were selected. namely the contrast in genre. As discussed in Chapter 2, the belief that fantasy caters mainly to children and realism to "serious" readers including adults has its roots in the 18th and 19th centuries when children's books were excluded from "serious literature" and became associated primarily with fantasy and supernatural events (then considered the "inferior" genre). Although much of children's writing is still characterized by fantasy or by elements where fantasy and reality intertwine, children these days have greater access to more realism in what they can read. The children's responses indicate that tradition, however, retains a strong hold on children's judgment regarding what is suitable material for them.

7.7.2 Literature written for adults

Some children pointed out a distinction between what is suitable humor for children and adults. One participant (C22) considered "dark" themes as appropriate only for adults: "[The first poem is] for children because it has animals and the [second poem is] for adults because it's somewhat dark." The poems also have jokes that are for adults (C17) but the participant did not elaborate on what these are. Moreover, the children reasoned out based on day-to-day

experience particularly their own exposure to mass media, saying for instance that poems are for everyone "except those 18+, 16+" which are "not for children because they may have bad words or blood" or "dark thing[s]" and therefore only for adults (C19). Readability also sets children's literature apart from literature intended for adults. According to one participant (C20), poems for adults "cannot be understood." Some children were also aware that there is literature meant for adults and were under the impression that literature written for children could not be appreciated by adults: they are not funny for grown-ups (C20).

7.7.3 Literature written for children and adults

According to some children, although there are jokes and poems explicitly tailored for adults, the poems presented to them are appropriate for both audiences. One participant (C17) said: "[The poems are] for everyone. It is easy to understand and there are jokes for adults. It is easy for children to understand [the poem]." One participant (C19) specified what was unacceptable content for children and concluded that anyone could enjoy poems in general: "[The poems are] for children and adults. Poems can be for children. But sometimes they have dark things. They can be for everyone. So that whoever hears them can laugh hard and be happy." Another participant (C20) saw a difference between poems for children and those for adults and added that these are unlike poems that were written with both children and adults in mind: "[They are] for children and adults because I read poems with my parents, grandfather, grandmother, aunts and uncles. If it is for children, they do not find it funny. But if it is for adults, it is not easy to understand. But if it is for children and adults, that's good. They both understand it. It's funny for both of them."

The participants likewise acknowledged that adults were once children which makes it possible for them to enjoy what is entertaining and funny for children. One participant (C7) said the poems were "for children because of the cartoonish style like it was taken from an animated something for kids." But they are also for adults "because sometimes they want the nostalgia for what they [got] as children." Another participant (C11) explained that both poems are for adults as well: "Maybe the adults will also like it... maybe they will [be reminded of the past]." This is evident in the experience of another participant (C21) who also said that the poems were for everyone: "I mean, yes, kids can handle the second [poem] but it's also because sometimes my grandmother really likes to read this stuff. It's really funny for her. She misses the old times." Chapter 2 discusses how reliving the experience of childhood helps adults assume the role of children and gives them an "authentic" voice when writing for children.

Some children made no differentiation between children's and adult humor tendencies and believed that the poems were funny for both young and adult readers. They likely have not developed a deeper understanding of adult humor preferences at this stage, viewing what is amusing for them as amusing for

Table 11: Target audience of the poems according to the participants

	Children	Adults	Children and adults
Dahl ($N = 26$)	7	0	19
Silverstein ($N = 26$)	3	2	21

everyone. The following statements reflect this possibility.

- "I think it's for everyone because I think they were made to make us all laugh." (C5)
- "Maybe children and adults will enjoy it... because it has comedy." (C12)
- "It's for all ages." (C13)
- "For both of them to enjoy because both [poems] are funny." (C16)
- "Because most of the time it's funny for all ages." (C24)
- "Because my mommy is here and she laughed." (C26)
- "Because they can be read by adults too. It's possible that they will like them. Because it has funny jokes... and rhymes." (C6)

Two participants also commented on the universality of poems, that all ages can enjoy them. One participant (C18) expressed: "Children are not the only ones who can read them. Even adults can read them so they can laugh and be happy." For another participant (C23): "Poems are not just for children or adults. Poems are for everyone."

Some participants emphasized the function that poems perform, that is, what children can gain from reading them and the role of adults in children's reading. One participant (C8) said: [The poems are for everyone] "because people might have different interests and you might like the poem because interests are varied. [They are for kids] because it has a lot of jokes and... it has a cartoonish style. Kids like that. [They are for adults because] maybe they want to read it to their children or maybe it's actually interesting for them. Maybe they want to add stuff to it, they can figure stuff out of it." Still, according to one participant (C25), funny poems make excellent reading materials for children: "[They are for children and adults] because children will laugh and so that adults can have something nice to read to children." Moreover, children and adults can learn and talk about the poems when they read together. As one participant (C9) explained: "Children can learn other words and ask the adults what these words are. [They are for adults] to help the children with the meaning of the words... They can ask other jokes. The children may be impressed so they can make something similar on their own." A participant (C10) also said: "For example, the child is reading with either

adult or another child, it's more fun and the child can ask the adult about the poem."

7.8 Relatability of content

7.8.1 Relatability to children

Another question that was asked of the participants sought to understand whether the poems, when translated into a different language, were humorous for them since they could relate to them as children. Stand-up comedy, for example, is very effective when it capitalizes on the ordinary aspects of the viewers' everyday life. The question aimed to find out whether the poems were funny since they captured the children's universal experiences and emotions.

7.8.1.1 Defining relatability

The difference between the two poems in terms of the relatability of content was negligible. The number of children who could relate to Dahl's poem was the same as that of Silverstein's poem. Similarly, the number of children who could not connect to either poem was the same. It was evident then that both poems were equally effective in evoking particular responses from the children such as agreement or disagreement, sympathy or indifference. It is important to note that the children interpreted relatability as having been in the same situation or engaged in the same act. Thus, not being able to relate to the poem does not equate to the poem being outside the bounds of the participant's reality. For instance, feigning illness which was at the core of Silverstein's poem was not "relatable" (i.e., have not been experienced themselves) for many of the participants but they had thought about it or were aware that other children might have done so. One child (C5) explained that she could relate to Silverstein's poem because "[she could] imagine [her]self seeing it in real life." In general, the participants found Silverstein's poem funnier than Dahl's (more on this in the following sections) even if both poems had relatable content. Therefore, in cases where two materials possess relatable content, the more relatable humor appears to be that which is more realistic for the children, which supports the assumption made in section 7.4.2.2 on self-assessment of comprehensibility.

7.8.1.2 Content as relatable

From the children who said they could relate to both poems, there are two subgroups: those who considered the general characteristics of the poems and those who linked relatability to a more personal feeling. One participant (C2) belonging to the first subgroup said that he could relate to both poems because "[they tell] a story to children." Another participant (C4) said that "the first [poem] is imaginary like the minds of... children [and] the second one is kind of like that also." One other participant (C9) found it easy for children to connect

to the poems because they were "all nice and easy to understand." In the second subgroup, one participant (C10) referred to how the poems evoked particular emotions which could be the same for other children: "With the first one the crocodile is frightening. Then with the second one I can somewhat relate to it because I want to fake sickness but I don't want to fake it because it's bad but other children can relate to it." For another participant (C21) in this subgroup, the poems elicited memories, allowing readers to relate to them: "Sometimes like you already have memories. But sometimes it's just a bit more creative than those and you can relate to them because you've already been through it."

The participants' responses indicate that children at this age range generally approach themes and ideas literally. The humor in Dahl's poem, which talks about a dentist and the unexpected visit from a crocodile that frightens him, can be explained by the superiority theory, particularly a role-reversal (the dentist being scared instead of the patient) where the adult is ridiculed. However, none of the participants arrived at this connection. Instead, when asked about the poem's relatability, most of them only associated the poem with visiting the dentist and their actual experiences or (mainly negative) expectations of such a visit. For instance, one pupil (C17) said: "But I go to the dentist. I don't get scared because I know they're experts" while another (C15) mentioned the complete opposite: "... sometimes I'm afraid that if I have my tooth removed, a bad accident might happen. [The instrument] might break and the tool might go too deep." Another participant (C12) also resorted to a direct connection, stating that she could relate to the poem "because [she is] scared of crocodiles." Similarly, one participant (C8) who could not relate to the poem answered that "[he's] never experienced a dentist being afraid of [him]." Only one child (C14) was able to discern a possible representation in the poem, saying "I'm like the crocodile because it is brave."

7.8.1.3 Content as not relatable

On the other hand, those who regarded neither poem as relatable said that they had not been in the situations described in the poems (C6, C11, C18, C19, C22) and found nothing that they could relate to them (C25, C26). It was seen that there were slightly more children who said that they could not connect to the poems than those who said that they could. It appears as well that there is no correlation between relatability of content (i.e., whether they can relate to the poems as children) and the funniness of the poems. Although the number of participants who said they could relate to the poems was the same for both Dahl's and Silverstein's poems, the children did not find the poems equally funny and there were still more children who found Silverstein's poem funnier (see Table 11). Conversely, although both poems were equally not relatable for the children, this did not reduce the funniness of the poems in the same degree: more children still perceived Dahl's poem as lacking in humor.

Table 12: Relatability to children

	Relatable	Not relatable
Dahl ($N = 26$)	12	14
Silverstein ($N = 26$)	12	14

7.8.2 Relatability to Filipino readers

The participants were likewise asked whether they could relate to the poems as Filipinos, even though these were translations and the original texts were written by foreign writers. Translation entails not only expressing words from one language into another but also a passage of concepts from one culture into another. Furthermore, considering what was mentioned in Chapter 5, culture plays a vital role in humor production and reception as different cultures hold different views toward humor. For reasons such as social restrictions, what may be funny in one culture may not be funny in another. A translator then must know how to make a particular society's sociocultural norms and practices understandable to the target reader. As Wang (2014: 2424) puts it, translation is not only a "process of cultural transplantation" but also an act of "intercultural communication" where two or more cultures are brought together. In this study, the researcher aimed to determine whether such contact or interaction was evident for the readers in the translation product and whether this could have influenced the funniness of the translations. If the participants found it hard to relate to the poems as Filipinos, this could explain in part why the humor of one or both poems failed.

7.8.2.1 Content as relatable

Twenty-one of the 26 children reported that they could relate to the poems and that the poems did not seem foreign to them. Therefore, any negative reception of the poems' humor by the participants had either nothing or very little to do with the cultural contexts of the poems. In fact, there were those who commented on the universality of the poems' themes. One participant (C8) remarked: "It seemed like a regular story that could come from anywhere. If I just read it, I wouldn't even have a clue where it came from." Another participant (C16) explained that "it's just normal because we really go to the dentist and we get sick sometimes" while another (C11) believed that what happened in Silverstein's poem was something "Filipino kids would do." Thus, "even if [the poems were] not written by a Filipino, [they are] still for everyone" (C23). That "mostly Filipino kids [also] joke" makes the poems relatable to Filipino readers (C26). One participant (C24) observed that "it look[ed] like both poems were for both foreign and Filipino kids... It's not that they differ, the Filipino children." One other participant (C21) had this to say: "I think Filipino kids can still enjoy it. We are enjoying it so others can enjoy it too."

Others highlighted the importance of translation in making foreign materials available for other cultures to read and appreciate. One of the children (C2) said that "the language was translated so that other children in another country can understand it." For another participant (C18): "For me, it can be read by other Filipinos. Just because the book or poem is in English or another language [it doesn't mean it can't be read by Filipinos]. Filipinos can also read them when translated into Filipino or English." This was supported by another participant (C19) who said: "Yes, [I can relate to it] because all books even if in a different language... you can learn [to read them]. It can be translated." One participant (C12) mentioned how the quality of the translation and choice of words make the translation sound familiar and natural to target readers: "It's not [foreign] because the translation was done well and... the Filipino words were deep." Since the poems have been translated into Filipino, it was likewise easy for the reader to forget that the text was originally in a different language. According to one participant (C14): "The original was in English [but] I don't see that when the words are in Filipino. It's for English and Filipino [readers]." One of the children (C9) articulated: "It seemed [to be a] Filipino [text] already." A participant (C3) was also of the opinion that "it's not that foreign because [she] read something similar but it [was] in Filipino."

7.8.2.2 Content as not relatable

Five participants reported that they could not relate to the poems or that the poems' foreignness was visible. For example, one participant (C7) "felt a bit [that the poems were foreign] because the situation and the words used felt like they were copied from European or American influence. It's not like Filipino legends."

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that some children who were not fluent in Filipino felt that the poems sounded foreign precisely because they were written in Filipino and mainly because of how they were written. While one child considered the use of "deep words" in Filipino as a measure of the translations' naturalness, another child (C10) had the opposite take on it. According to her: "Both poems were like foreign because the... Filipino words were deep and most of the time foreigners learn to translate into Filipino using simple words." Another participant (C20) responded that although she could relate to the poems as a Filipino, it was mainly "to learn to understand some words in Filipino."

7.9 Humor in the poems

In Chapter 5, Shannon's (1999) categorization of children's humor in literature in four categories was introduced: (1) superiority or sense of accomplishment, (2) physical events and appearances, (3) the scatological and gross, and (4) language and wordplay. For Kappas (1967: 68), 10 categories of humor can be

utilized to analyze humorous juvenile literature. These are: (1) exaggeration, (2) incongruity, (3) surprise, (4) slapstick, (5) the absurd, (6) human predicaments, (7) ridicule, (8) defiance, (9) violence and (10) verbal humor. Zbaracki (2003: 21), summarized the different categories by Shannon, Kappas and other researchers into five common types of humor: (1) humorous characters, (2) poking fun at authority, (3) physical humor, (4) nonsense and (5) humorous discourse or language play. Many of these forms of humor mentioned in earlier studies are evident in the poems of Dahl and Silverstein used in the study.

Interestingly, the poems were "very funny" only to boys and not girls. The girls were more inclined to consider the poems as only "somewhat funny."

Table 13: Funniness rating and gender

		Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny
Dahl ($N = 26$)	Male	2	4	7
	Female	0	6	7
Silverstein ($N = 26$)	Male	4	6	2
	Female	0	8	6

7.9.1 Dahl's poem

Dahl's poem makes use of incongruity (a crocodile visiting the dentist), slapstick (the dentist climbing the wall out of fear), physical appearances (funny illustrations), surprise (the crocodile being someone's pet), human predicament (dentist frightened by the crocodile) and violence (crocodile wanting to eat the dentist) as humor strategies.

7.9.1.1 Poem as funny

The poem became "somewhat funny" for many of the children once they were assured at the end of the poem that there would be no actual demonstration of violence and harm. Such revelation is inconsistent with what other scholars have said that children in general find humor in violence. The children gave the following statements:

- "Some parts were somewhat serious but other parts I found a bit funny. When he was at the dentist and... the dentist was frightened. I only laughed when the woman appeared and said that the crocodile was harmless." (C18)
- "The ending is funny." (C22)
- "In the ending she said that it's just a pet. The dentist thought that he would get eaten by the crocodile." (C16)

This was also noticeable in the two participants who found the poem "very funny" with one of them (C21) saying: "There's a crocodile which needs checking and also because in the end he was not harmful at all. It's highly funny."

The presence of humorous characters was also satisfying for the children and rendered the poem "somewhat funny" for them. Below are two comments made concerning character-driven humor:

- "It was scary for the dentist and the reaction of the dentist is also funny." (C10)
- "Some parts I find funny but other parts serious. [The funny part was] when the crocodile needed filling. [The serious parts were] everything else." (C23)

7.9.1.2 Poem as not funny

Even if the poem has many elements that make for humorous material and that many children like based on earlier studies, almost half of the children in this study still thought that it was not amusing at all. Some even felt that the tone of the poem was serious and that the events were neither surprising nor inspiring for them to think creatively, as the following statements convey:

- "There was nothing that could be made a joke out of it." (C7)
- "They are more serious. They aren't joking." (C9)
- "I cannot find anything that's funny in it." (C13)

One participant (C24) was not receptive to the representations in the poem that contradicted reality, saying: "I didn't get the poem. I understand [it] but it's just that I don't get that there is a crocodile at the dentist?" Thus, children at this age can possess a strong understanding of reality/fantasy distinction and blending fantasy with reality may not necessarily be easy for them to accept. Such disbelief in the intersection between reality and fantasy can be attributed to limitations in the child's ability to imagine or to an "overreliance on their own knowledge and personal experience" (Woolley and Ghossainy 2013: 1504). Earlier, the case of one child who viewed fictional and real worlds as the same ("crocodiles are also nice... crocodiles can be pets") was reported. But the case of C24 shows that the ability to distinguish between the two worlds is also present in children at this age.

7.9.1.3 Gender differences in humor appreciation

The reasons given by the children who did not find the poem funny show noticeable gender differences in humor appreciation. The danger and potential violence depicted in Dahl's poem, although used to create suspense and enhance humor, had a negative impact on the girls' perception of humor. Instead of being amusing, the poem was perceived by the young female readers to be

frightening. They sympathized with the dentist and his predicament and felt strongly about the human character being caught in a precarious situation. According to them:

- "It's somewhat scary if you will be eaten." (C3)
- "Not funny. Because the person is afraid." (C5)
- "It's kind of scary." (C12)
- "It's scary what could happen to the dentist." (C11)
- "It's like scary. Because if it were me, I [wouldn't] like [it] because I'm scared." (C14)

Although two boys said that the poem would be funnier "if the dentist wasn't so scared" (C21) and "if you remove the fear felt by the dentist" (C23), neither of them called the poem "frightening" or "scary." Moreover, they did not specify whether they could identify and commiserate with the human character in trouble, unlike the girls who were more openly empathetic.

McGhee and Johnson (1975: 19), citing Helmers (1965), take the view that "much aggressive humor is funny to children because the child knows that it is only a fantasy situation. Whether a child is laughing because he knocked daddy down or because a cartoon character has been run over by a steam roller, it is funny only because he knows that each will get up again. If this did not occur, the child would more likely be frightened or confused." In Dahl's poem, the human (dentist) escaped the attempts of the crocodile to eat him when the animal's owner appeared in the end. However, this was not enough to elicit humor from the participants, with the exception of one female participant (C19) who said: "When the.. crocodile opened its mouth then the teeth were super sharp... I didn't like it because it's a bit serious or I thought he would bite the hand or head of the dentist. But when the woman came, I laughed."

While the girls felt that the events in the poem were enough to trigger negative emotions, the boys experienced the poem differently. They felt that the events were lacking in action and were disappointed that nothing more happened in the poem, as expressed in the following statements:

- "There's not much to it." (C1)
- "It's not funny. It's just interesting." (C2)
- "Not much happened. But he almost got eaten by the crocodile." (C6)
- "It wasn't really that much. It wasn't really that funny. It's about a dentist trying to clean a crocodile's mouth." (C8)

These observations do not mean that certain forms of humor appeal exclusively to a particular gender. They only signify that certain forms are more likely to be funny for one gender than the other. When asked how they could

make the poem funny or funnier, more girls preferred incongruity and surprise in making the characters and situations humorous.

- "When the crocodile walks to the dentist then the dentist thinks it will eat him but it will not. It will just approach him." (C5)
- "Maybe you can add more comedy to make it funnier. Like when the dentist is scared then the crocodile will tell him not to be scared. Something like that." (C10)
- "I will add color. And the crocodile is really human and just fooling around with the dentist." (C26)
- "When the crocodile says that its teeth are not that sharp but they are really sharp and the dentist will get scared." (C11)
- "When the dentist is scared, he will do funny things." (C12)
- "The lady is an alien. Then the... crocodile is also like an alien. Both of them are in disguise. They will be the dentist." (C20)
- "I will add three baby crocodiles and all three baby crocodiles will also visit the dentist." (C25)

Nevertheless, a few of the boys also exhibited this tendency, saying:

- "So when the dentist was about to check the crocodile's mouth then more crocodiles come in asking the dentist to check on their teeth." (C8)
- "I will put clothes on the crocodile. And there is a baby crocodile next to the big crocodile." (C24)
- "In the last line, there's a twist. They can be in a movie and they will be cut." (C9) [to which boy C6 added: "Then came a real crocodile... and ate the actor" which points to the general appeal of violence in humor to boys, as explained in the next paragraph].

It can be gathered from the responses mentioned above that more girls (C25, C26) than boys looked at illustrations to be as important as the text when responding to humor, stating that adding to or modifying the accompanying drawings can make the poem funnier. That images have a powerful potential to contribute to humor was also visible in the responses of the other female participants. According to one girl (C14), sometimes it makes the poem funnier when it has more pictures. Imagining what she would do to the illustrations of Dahl's poem to make the poem more humorous, she added: "You will draw faces like they have mustache and the boys have make-up. You can put lipstick... but not on the girl." Another girl (C19) said that Dahl's poem would be "less funny" if it didn't have pictures because "you wouldn't know the face or body of the characters." One of the girls (C3) commented as well

on how illustrations support a poem, saying that Dahl's poem was funnier because it had more pictures than Silverstein's but if Silverstein's poem had more pictures, it would only be "a little bit funnier." However, not everyone believes that pictures benefit humorous verses all the time. As one of the boys (C7) pointed out, zooming in on the importance of content: "Pictures don't always matter. What matters is where the humor [comes] from."

However, regardless of gender, the participants who were conscious of the fact that the poem combined humor and fantasy elements, and were receptive to such blurring of reality and fantasy, were likely to find the poem enjoyable. Among the reasons cited as to why the poem was "somewhat funny" include the following:

- "The dentist was scared that he would get bitten and swallowed. And why is the crocodile talking? Shouldn't it attack? It's funny that the crocodile talks." (C15)
- "It doesn't seem normal but it's still somewhat funny. A crocodile that went to the dentist... and the crocodile was acting like a human being." (C20)
- "[It is somewhat funny] because there was a crocodile that went to the dentist." (C26)

7.9.1.4 Proposed endings: violence

The responses of the children also show that, consistent with the findings of other studies, boys enjoy comedic violence. There were slightly more boys than girls who thought that violence could be humorous, giving these proposed endings to the poem:

- "To make the situation more exagg[erated]. If the crocodile actually ate the dentist. Or something more dramatic would happen... but not in real life." (C1)
- "Or maybe the crocodile will just pee in the dentist's clothes. Or maybe the crocodile eats the dentist and suddenly poops it. And put it in the toilet." (C2)
- "[The dentist] is eaten." (C6)
- "When the dentist gets swallowed and instead of biting and killing him, he's just in the stomach thumping to get out. Thumping to get out of the crocodile. He shrunk. Then he's jumping on the food. To get out. What if the lady pushes them back then when the dentist comes out, she pushes him back in?" (C15)
- "In the end of the poem when they ask for help then all of them get swallowed. When the dentist asks for help then all of them get swallowed. That would be funnier." (C17)

However, whether the boys were aware that the proposed endings were somewhat violent could not be concluded from this study. This can be further explored as there is some indication from earlier studies that children cannot identify violence correctly. For example, in a study by Snow (1974 in Kirsch (2005), it was found that "violent elements in cartoons were consistently overlooked, with only 27% of 4- to 8-year-olds and a mere 16% of 9- to 12-year-olds correctly identifying that the cartoon (i.e., Roadrunner) they had just watched contained violence." Similarly, in a study by Haynes (1978 in Kirsch 2005), 5th and 6th grade children found cartoons with comedic elements as more violent than cartoons without comedic elements even if both cartoons had "the same amount of violence." This also raises a question on how children define violence.

On the other hand, only three girls suggested endings around similar themes of physical violence and pretend violence:

- "The lady thought that [the crocodile] was her pet but it was not and the crocodile... ate her." (C18)
- "If [the dentist] really puts his head inside [the mouth] then it closes. [It will] pretend to close." (C4))
- "The lady comes over then [the crocodile] swallows them both. Just swallow and they are just in the tummy." (C16)

Two participants suggested adding more jokes to the poem to make it funnier. In this case, the boy was more specific about the jokes that he would want to read ["Add jokes. Alligator dating the woman." (C22)] compared to the girl who failed to think of a specific joke ["I'm not sure. Maybe add some funny jokes." (C13)]. Verbal play was also mentioned by one of the boys ["Make a plot that you don't expect to come and... thrown in puns." (C7)] but not by any of the girls.

7.9.2 Silverstein's poem

7.9.2.1 Poem as funny

Silverstein's poem capitalized on exaggeration (child being overdramatic to avoid school), the absurd (unbelievable physical complaints) and surprise (it was a Saturday instead of a school day) to produce humor. The humor used was relatively effective for the children, with a majority of them describing the poem as "somewhat funny." As mentioned earlier, it could be that children find more humor when the context is closer to their actual everyday experiences. Both boys and girls were equally pleased with the unexpected twist in the end but only because the ending took the main character out of an "unpleasant and depressing situation", which in truth the character only made up.

7.9.2.2 Poem as not funny

Although many of the children understood this to be the case ["The ending [was funny]. She thought it was Saturday so she pretended to be sick. Then she found out it was Saturday so she went out to play." (C13); "She was faking it then it was a Saturday she immediately played because she forgot that it was a Saturday." (C6)], some believed the depicted circumstances to be real and felt sorry for the child in the poem. This observation suggests that exaggeration does not always work as a humorous device for children when it leans toward the negative and especially when children like themselves are at the center of it. Some responses that captured this are given below:

- "The ending is also funny. Oh, it's Saturday bye! But the other parts... because anything more than 40 degrees can kill you and that's sad." (C21)
- "The ending is funny. [The other parts were] not [funny] at all. Describing sickness and also, I was sick one time. It was a bit recently. It was really unfun." (C22)
- "It's funny because she said she will not go to school but in the end, it was Saturday. And what was not funny was she was sick." (C4)
- "At first, she was sick. It's not very funny because at first, she was sick." (C3)

7.9.2.3 Gender differences in humor appreciation

For this poem, there are gender differences that emerged in that only the boys equated funniness with joke-telling, as seen in the statements below:

- "The twist is the funny part but it was not a real joke." (C7)
- "There weren't that many jokes. When he said he had everything so he can't go to class then it's a Saturday." (C8)

There were more girls than boys who found the poem unfunny as well. They tended to give responses expressing "more negative internalizing emotions" (Sanchis-Sanchis et al. 2020) such as sadness.

- "Because if I got sick, I will not find it funny." (C5)
- "It's not funny. The child has a lot of sickness so she was not able to go to school. (C18)
- "She has so many sicknesses like mumps, measles... and she will go blind in one eye and she would lose her hearing. (C19)
- "Because the child is sick." (C26)
- "Because the poem is painful." (C23)

- "Because when she found out it's Saturday she will play outside. And when I think about so many sicknesses, it's sad." (C20)

Although there were also boys who said that the poem was not funny, citing answers similar to those mentioned above, there were still more girls than boys who did so. This finding suggests that girls are more likely to give an empathic response to unpleasant situations, especially if these concern children like themselves. Such a finding is consistent with the typically accepted view that empathy is sensitive to gender, with boys self-reporting it less than girls (Halfpenny and James 2020: 161). The two boys who exhibited affective behaviors toward the child character explained in these statements why they reacted that way:

- "Because the poem is painful." (C23)
- "It's actually a sad poem for me. The child is very sick and has many wounds. He's sick, that's all. I didn't understand the ending." (C24)

7.9.2.4 Proposed endings: Poking fun at other children

Previous studies have shown that children enjoy humor that involves poking fun at adults and their authority (thus with reference to the superiority theory). However, the results of this study indicate that children also find it acceptable to poke fun at child characters but only, it seems, when (1) they are the ones making fun of them and (2) when the humor is good-natured. When asked how they could make Silverstein's poem funnier, they gave variations of such tendency. The likelihood to do so was observable in both boys and girls. Similarly, instead of creating situations where they could deliberately laugh at the adult characters, the children respected their authority over the child character in their proposed endings to the poem. Instead of the child in the poem outwitting the adult characters, as is common in children's literature, the roles had been reversed and it was the child who ended up in a non-desired situation. It is possible that the children viewed the child character to have behaved badly ["Pretending to be sick is bad" (C20); "If you're just acting that you're sick, you might not be able to play for life, one week or one month or maybe one year. Just because you don't want to go to school. But that's bad because that's where you learn." (C19)] and so for them, there has to be some way of making her understand the consequences of lying, as seen in the statements listed below. Thus, children at this age are capable of moral evaluation or value judgment even if the situations presented are silly and fictitious.

- "It will be funnier if she was sick but she didn't know that so she couldn't play." (C7)
- "If the kid starts playing and he [*sic*] actually gets sick." (C8)

- "Maybe if the person who reminded her that it was a Saturday has a reaction when she said 'Goodbye! I will play outside' something like 'Huh? I thought you were sick.'" (C10)
- "If the persons she is talking to, her mother and father, say 'You can't play. Do your homework.'" (C11)
- "She will be told that she needs to go to the hospital." (C12)
- "Her guardian will say 'Don't go out. Lie down and I will treat you'... and she couldn't do anything about it." (C13)
- "When the mother says 'I thought you were sick.' [The child] will be given a lot of medicines a lot of times a day then she couldn't resist it. She would say 'Please no' [and] the mother will say 'You need to take them because you're sick' then she will say that she's not really sick." (C16)
- "When the mother believes her and she was forbidden [to play]... then she needs to eat healthy foods [*sic*]. She will be made to eat 100 vegetable [*sic*] a day." (C17)
- "When the mother finds out in the end that the sickness was not real. She wasn't allowed to play even on a Saturday... She would be asked to go to school for one day." (C18)
- "She wouldn't play forever. Then the mother would say that if she wanted to play, she has to go to school. And she would say that she wasn't sick... then she went to school so she could play. But the mommy was just joking [and] she wouldn't be allowed to play. She just made her go to school." (C19)
- "When she didn't know that she was already in the classroom. Her mother brought her bed there." (C20)

7.10 Form versus content

As discussed in Chapter 5, previous studies have shown that children prefer narrative rhymes (Huck, Hepler and Hickman 1987 in Mallan 1993). Also relevant to the present discussion is the assertion of Shultz and Robillard (in McGhee and Chapman 1980: 72) that a humorous poem fuses "tendentious content" and "poetic form" such that when either one is removed, the altered version would be less funny for children.

Although the results of this study do not address Shultz and Robillard's claim directly (that is, with a comparison between the original and manipulated texts), the collected data indicates that a humorous poem can still be funny if only its form or content is preserved in the translation. With Silverstein's poem, more children considered the poem very funny and somewhat funny

than those who thought it was not funny in both form-centered and content-centered translations. However, when Dahl's poem is taken into account, humor appears to be less sensitive to form than content: more children (8 out of 14) found the poem not funny in the form-centered translation. Thus, when only form or content can be retained in the translation, the chances of keeping the humor appear higher when content is selected over form. This observation also suggests that, contrary to general belief, rhyme does not have to be an essential component of humorous poems for children.

None of the participants made mention of the features of form (e.g., rhyme, repeated sounds, patterns or songlike quality) as essential factors in making the poems funny, although some have reported that rhyme in poetry can be pleasurable (see section 7.2 on "general attitudes toward poetry"). While such form-related features are exploited for aesthetic ends and memory recall (i.e., they offer retrieval cues), they fail to benefit children's poems in terms of humor appeal. For most participants, the funniness of the poems depended chiefly on the humor of the topics or ideas presented in the poems. A majority of those who said that the poems were "very funny" or "somewhat funny" pointed out the humor of the situation. Four children referred to the characters as the primary source of humor [e.g., a talking crocodile; "their faces are funny" (C23); "the dentist was so scared but he didn't know that he wouldn't be eaten" (C15)] while for three children, it was the language that struck them as the funniest. The children associated the humor of language with the sound of unfamiliar Filipino words (e.g., "balakang" and "beke" which mean "hips" and "mumps", respectively), the way the character talked, and the cataloging or listing device employed ["I cannot think of that many language[s] to say when I am sick" (C17)].

It should be noted that all three children who made reference to language were boys, which could mean that boys are more disposed to find humor in words than girls. This is an interesting finding that should be substantiated with further research with a more significant number of participants. There were no noticeable gender distinctions in the form-centered Filipino translations. However, boys were more likely than girls to perceive the content-centered translations as "very funny" suggesting that the translations dealt with topics or ideas that were generally less appealing to girls. As noted in the previous section, more girls than boys exhibited empathy and a distaste for violence and danger after listening to the poems.

7.11 Feedback from participants and parents

The success of the sessions is not merely measured by the amount and quality of responses gathered from the participants (or how productive the sessions were) but also by the participants' overall experience. After all, the sessions have been designed to also help children develop an appreciation for poetry and, through humor, create a learning environment that is interactive and fun for them.

Table 14: Funniness rating and focus of translation

	Form ($N = 14$)			Content ($N = 14$)		
	Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny	Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny
Dahl	1	5	8	1	5	6
Silverstein	0	10	4	4	4	4

Table 15: Funniness rating, focus of translation, and gender

		Form ($N = 14$)			Content ($N = 14$)		
		Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny	Very funny	Somewhat funny	Not funny
Dahl	Male	1	3	4	1	1	3
	Female	0	2	4	0	4	3
Silverstein	Male	0	6	1	4	0	1
	Female	0	4	3	0	4	3

Half of the participating children liked poetry; the other half did not. Thirteen participants reported that they liked reading poetry while seven said outright that they did not find poetry enjoyable. The remaining six participants said that they liked poetry "a little", "sometimes, or "not [that] much." Among those who liked reading poems, one said that she was "looking forward to the activity" days before their scheduled session. Some also signed up for the study expecting to have more than one session. For example, a week after attending a session, one participant emailed the author of this study to apologize for missing the succeeding "meeting" and promised that "it [would] never happen again." This was the same pupil who said that he did not like poetry that much. Another sent an email a week after joining a session requesting to be admitted into the "poetry class" that week. Thinking that the activity would take place weekly, one other participant asked at the end of the session when the group would meet again (she emailed a day later to thank the author "for a wonderful experience"). Two participants in one group even verbally expressed evident disappointment when told that the session was a one-off encounter. These are strong indications of the participants' enthusiasm for and great interest in poetry and a discussion of it.

Although feedback was not solicited from the participants, some parents emailed about the positive experiences of their children. Among these are the following:

- "C16 enjoyed the session today! She said right away, 'Poetry is so much fun!' Thank you for the opportunity to participate."

Table 16: Funniest element of the poems, and gender

		Situation	Character	Language
Dahl	Male	7	1	
	Female	5		
Silverstein	Male	6	1	3
	Female	4	2	

- "C22 enjoyed the session and was asking when the next session would be. He was surprised and a little sad when I reminded him that it was just for one session."
- "My son is... very grateful for the opportunity to be part of the study."
- "C21 had a great time during your session. He is really thankful that he was included in your study."
- "C9 enjoyed the session earlier. He was able to participate well because of few participants. Thanks for the chance [to participate] in the study. He even asked when the next session would be. He enjoyed the short session they had. He likes social interaction."

7.12 Conclusions

Even children believe in the notion of a dual audience for children's literature. A majority of the participants stated that the poems used in the study were written to be enjoyed not only by children but also by adults for reasons such as sentimentality for the past and the general appeal of poetry and humor. Children know that this is a unique trait of children's literature: although children's texts can also be appreciated by adults, this duality of audience is not applicable to adult literature.

Some findings of this study do not support the findings of previous studies. First, though Dahl's poem has many elements that other studies reported as humorous for children, almost half of the children in this study were not amused at all by the poem. There were striking gender differences in what could explain the failure to elicit humor. The girls felt that Dahl's poem was frightening and the human character pitiful while the boys felt that the events were lacking in action. Second, although violence has been mentioned in literature as a common source of humor for children, the results of this study show otherwise. For many of the participants, Dahl's poem was considered "somewhat funny" when they were assured at the end of the poem that it was free from violence. Third, with Silverstein's poem, the children did not respond positively to exaggeration, which conflicts with the conclusion of other researchers. Exaggeration is ineffective in creating humor when it is more negative than positive and when

children are at the center of it. Fourth, while earlier studies have shown that children enjoy humor that pokes fun at authority figures, the study found that it was also funny for children to poke fun at child characters but only when they are the ones making fun of them and when the humor is good-natured. However, some findings were similar to those of other studies. Regarding gender differences, more girls than boys responded to Silverstein's poem with empathy, which coincides with the generally held views about how girls and boys express themselves.

An earlier work takes the view that a humorous poem for children is a combination of "tendentious content" and "poetic form" and when either one is removed, the altered version would be less funny for children (Shultz and Robillard in McGhee and Chapman 1980: 72). Though this study made no comparison between the original and altered texts, it found that a humorous poem could still be funny if either form or content was prioritized in the translation. Furthermore, it was seen that the humor in the text was better preserved when content was prioritized over form. For many participants, the funniness of the poems depended chiefly on the humor of the topics or ideas found in the poems. Thus, contrary to general belief, rhyme appears to be dispensable in humorous poems for children.

There are also other findings of the study. Between poems and stories, children showed a preference for the latter. Even when reading poems, they prefer those that have stories. Parents and teachers greatly influence the children's reading interests and preferences. The (self-reported) poor comprehenders who found the poems funny possibly evaluated the poems' humor in parts, some of which were funny for them. By contrast, the (self-reported) good comprehenders who did not find the poems funny could have gauged the funniness of the content in its entirety rather than by parts. There is little relationship between self-reported comprehension and mode of input (i.e., reading or listening). Similar to other studies, the children in this study are more receptive to humor in a social setting. Many children admitted that reading with other people (e.g., with family and other children), as against reading alone, makes a text more humorous. In cases where two materials possess relatable content, the more effective humor appears to be that which is more realistic for the children, i.e., that which does not require them to engage with fictional worlds. Most participants said that they could relate to the poems as Filipinos, mainly citing the universality of the poems' themes and the role of translation in making foreign materials available to other readers. Gender differences also emerged regarding humor appreciation. First, more boys than girls expressed the need for jokes to make the poems funny or funnier and were surer of the jokes they wanted to see. Second, girls responded more positively to incongruity-based humor while boys were more open to humor described by the superiority theory.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an elaboration of some of the most important points concerning humor raised in the results and analysis chapter. These points are the impact of culture on humor enjoyment, the implications of reading practices for social relationships and the seemingly weak link between comprehensibility and funniness, the understanding of humor versus appreciation of it and the preference for content over rhyme as a determinant of humor. The impact of culture on humor enjoyment provides a concrete illustration of humor in a cultural context as discussed in Chapter 5 while the second point – the implications of reading practices for social relationships – introduces a plausible explanation to an unforeseen finding about comprehensibility and humor. The third point about understanding humor versus appreciating it makes a case for humor competence demanded in appreciating funny poems, and the last point, dealing with content and rhyme, offers an answer to one of the research questions.

8.2 Influence of culture on humor

As pointed out in Chapter 6, the poems by Dahl and Silverstein, which were used in the study, are widely recognized comic verses for English-speaking children. "The Dentist and the Crocodile" is featured on the website of The Poetry Foundation – the publisher of POETRY magazine – as one of two poems representing Dahl's poetry. "Sick," on the other hand, is one of the two poems chosen

by the Academy of American Poets as samples of Silverstein's poetry as shown on its website poets.org. The fact that poetry organizations have selected these two poems from the poets' many works suggests that they are representative of their best poetry as well as reflect the writers' styles the most. Both poems rely on humorous incongruity to create an element of surprise, making them typical examples of the two writers' oeuvres known for unexpected endings.

However, the analysis showed that the poems did not have the same degree of comic effect on the Filipino children involved in this study, compared to readers from other cultures. Most participants found the Filipino translations of the poems only "somewhat funny" and even "serious" to a certain extent. The reasons behind the children's response reveal how culture could have influenced their perception of humor. As the preceding chapter showed, the poems of Dahl and Silverstein promoted more sympathy than humor among Filipino readers, which hindered the readers from fully appreciating the comedic nature of the poems. They empathized with the characters of the dentist (who was frightened) and the child (whom they believed to be gravely ill rather than just pretending) and regarded them as real people facing difficult and undesirable circumstances.

8.2.1 The Filipino virtue of pakikipagkapwa-tao

The ability to recognize others as fellow humans is a core value in Filipino culture. Such regard for others is called "pakikipagkapwa-tao" in Filipino or interpersonalism in English, borrowing the term used by Aguas (2016). It is instilled from childhood, though the Filipino term is often not used and in its place referred to as "kindness", "sensitivity" or other similar terms which do not fully capture the essence of the Filipino value. Pakikipagkapwa-tao comes from the word "kapwa", the core value of Filipino personhood (De Guia 2005: 28), and which Reyes (2015: 149) maintains is "in a way untranslatable into English. . . . because it is embedded in an entirely different worldview and web of meanings unique to Philippine culture and history."

Kapwa, both a concept and value, suggests "a shared identity and combines or relates the self with the other" (Aguas 2016: 18). Virgilio Enriquez (1992: 52), founder of Sikolohiyang Filipino (Filipino Psychology), describes it as follows:

> When asked for the closest English equivalent of kapwa, one word that comes to mind is the English word 'others.' However, the Filipino word kapwa differs from the English word 'others.' In Filipino, kapwa is the unity of the 'self' and 'others.' The English 'others' is actually used in opposition to the 'self,' and implies the recognition of the self as a separate identity. In contrast, kapwa is a recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others.

He adds (1992: 52): "This Filipino linguistic unity of the self and the other is unique and unlike in most modern languages. Why? Because implied in such inclusiveness is the moral obligation to treat one another as equal fellow human

beings." Enriquez (1979: 12) also said that "the ako (ego) and the iba-sa-akin (others) are one and the same in kapwa psychology: Hindi ako iba sa aking kapwa (I am no different from others). Once ako starts thinking of himself as different from kapwa, the self, in effect, denies the status of kapwa to the other." This is the basis of many Filipino practices that portray collectivism rather than the Western value of individualism. One such example is bayanihan which is taught in school from an early age. From the word "bayan" which means town, community or nation, it refers to a spirit of civic unity and cooperation aimed at achieving a certain goal. For example, donating relief goods to victims of calamities is a form of bayanihan.

Thus, the children could have viewed the situations in the poems and whether they were appropriate for laughter through the lens of the concepts of kapwa and pakikipagkapwa-tao. It felt natural to them to get emotionally involved with the fictional characters as if they were "concrete, acting, relating individual[s]" (Aguas 2016: 17) whose well-being should be regarded as such affective disposition is allowed and encouraged in Filipino society. Sympathy toward the characters was evident even with the proposed alternative endings. Some children stressed that the suggested harsh or tragic endings were merely "pretend" and would "not happen in real life." Others proposed "mild" situations to close the poems. For instance, the crocodile swallows – but not chews and kills – the dentist or the lady and he/they is/are alive and "just in the tummy."

8.2.2 Filipino humor

This is not to say that Filipinos do not possess a sense of humor. Referring to humor as one of the "strengths of Filipino character", social psychologist Patricia Licuanan (1994: 36) states:

> Filipinos have a cheerful and fun-loving approach to life and its ups and downs. We have a pleasant disposition, a sense of humor, and a propensity for happiness that contribute not only to the Filipino's charm but also to the indomitability of the Filipino spirit. Laughing at ourselves and our troubles is an important coping mechanism. Often playful, sometimes cynical, sometimes disrespectful, we laugh at those we love and at those we hate, and make jokes about our fortune, good and bad.

However, the current study also shows that Filipino primary-aged children tend to prefer non-hostile, non-aggressive forms of humor over one that is made at the expense of others with little regard, if any, for their feelings. Reyes (2015: 159) argues that "jokes, laughing and teasing are a huge part of Filipino culture, especially around the dinner table or during feasts and celebrations." But such joking is reserved only to those who are close to someone. Citing Maggay (2002: 87), he adds: "Joking/teasing is also a measure of our closeness or level of comfort with others. We do not joke or tease other people."

8.2.3 Value preferences in humor appreciation

Although the children did not describe the humor in the poems using the good-bad or acceptable-unacceptable dichotomies, their responses reveal their value preferences in evaluating situations. As Aguas (2016: 21) explains, "the Filipino psyche also puts emphasis on concrete situations; Filipino[s] are situation centered and their behaviors are clearly influenced by [the] present situation." In other words, Filipinos respond to the world depending on actual circumstances. Aguas, for example, notes that Filipinos can be "hardworking or lazy", or "friendly or rude" depending on the situation. The Filipino relationship-oriented virtue ethics (Reyes 2015) combined with the tendency to focus on the situation could have affected the way the children in the study perceived the humor in the poems' narrative events where sympathy for the characters took precedence, thereby prompting them to respond with restraint to the intended humor. Hay (2001) writes that "full support of humor" entails four implicatures: "*recognition* of a humorous frame, *understanding* the humor, *appreciating* the humor, and *agreeing* with any message associated with it" (italics in the original). Although Hay applied this framework to verbal joking, it can also be used to analyze responses to written humorous literature. In the case of the children whose appreciation of the humor in the poems may have been affected by cultural factors, there appears to be no agreement with the message associated with the humor. Whether or not the children only answered what is socially desirable still points to the influence of culture in their response to the materials.

8.3 Effects of reading humorous materials

8.3.1 Reading widely for pleasure

The study shows that by the time children reach the ages 8 and 9, they are likely to be more motivated, independent readers: there were slightly more participants who said that they prefer reading on their own – and enjoy it – than being read to by adults. While their love for reading can be supported by giving them texts of their own choosing, this is also an excellent period to introduce them to other materials to develop their reading skills as well as their interest to read widely. For example, the study found that children in this age group are open to reading poems, not just stories, for pleasure. Furthermore, although they preferred poems that tell stories, there is also an indication that informational poems appeal to them, which could mean that they can also develop a liking for nonfiction texts such as essays. This observation contradicts the popular notion that children at this age like only narratives and no other genres. Because children tend to read works by familiar authors, adults can take advantage of this behavior by letting children explore the authors' less famous works. For example, the novellas of Roald Dahl for children are widely popular among Filipino children and their parents. But this cannot be said of

his comic poetry which remains inaccessible and largely ignored: in fact, not one of the children in the study has encountered the poem by Dahl used in the reading sessions, even though it is very popular in other cultures, and none of them knew he wrote poetry.

8.3.2 Stronger social relationships

The current study found that although children in this age group choose to read independently, this does not mean they do not want to read along with others especially when reading humorous texts. On the contrary, reading together with family members or other children makes funny works even more enjoyable for them. Thus, reading for humor is not only a private activity for independent readers; it can also form and strengthen bonds of relationships. When done together with other children, they are able to benefit from shared experiences and knowledge and the freedom from the hierarchy that can be found, for example, in teacher-student interaction. Filipino children's perceptions of roles likewise came into light in connection with reading humorous material and the exchange that comes after. The children in the study recognize that when adults engage with them in reading, their role is to guide them in understanding complex content and vocabulary especially when the work is in a language in which the children lack fluency. Although comprehensibility can be increased when they share texts with other children and talk about them, for the children in the study, it is mainly the role of adults to explain what does not make sense to them which aids humor appreciation. For most children in this study, reading humorous material, whether for personal reasons (e.g., out of curiosity) or socially motivated (e.g., required in class), has implications for social relationships. After all, children develop humor through experience and social interaction which gives them an understanding of how others respond to various types of humor.

8.3.3 Creative responses to literature

Interaction with adults and other children affects humor appreciation insofar as it aids comprehension. However, it seems that the material's comprehensibility does not always impact on its funniness. That is, for a number of children in the study, the text was still (somewhat) funny even if not entirely comprehensible – a surprising finding. Why comprehensibility and funniness appear to be loosely connected in humorous poems for these children is perhaps paralleled by how creatively children respond to literature. For one, a humorous poem that tells a story consists of different textual features (plot, characters, words, etc.) that separately can be pleasurable or enjoyable for children. Similarly, the text evokes "mental images and ideas" (Nodelman 1992) and allows children to visualize and use their imagination and creativity. Thus, when faced with a text that they do not fully understand due to difficulty with language, children seem to "fill in the gaps" through logical deduction based on existing knowledge

and experience. In other words, they may resort to creative solutions to make the encounter with the humorous text still satisfying for them.

This interpretation could be applied to Silverstein's poem, which the children found more challenging to understand than Dahl's poem. Although they could not understand all the sicknesses listed, they could perhaps guess or predict by connecting the parts of the overall situation that what they did not understand were also exaggerations. Mednick (1962: 222) calls this particular way of arriving at a creative solution "similarity" – "the requisite associative elements may be evoked in contiguity as a result of the similarity of the associative elements or the similarity of the stimuli eliciting these associative elements." Mednick adds: "This mode of creative solution may be encountered in creative writing which exploits homonymity, rhyme, and similarities in the structure and rhythm of words or similarities in the objects which they designate." By relying on their creativity, the children were still able to respond positively to the humor in the text even if reading comprehension was not fully achieved. This assumption can be further explored in a follow-up study.

8.4 Humor recognition and appreciation

8.4.1 Intervention in identifying humor

Connecting logical gaps forms the basis for humor in incongruous relationships, as discussed in Chapter 5. The results of the current study confirm that 8- to 9-year-old children can identify and resolve logical gaps when the humorous text has a universal theme with which most children can identify. When they receive help in making these connections, the results show that this does not make the poems less humorous for the children. On the contrary, this makes the poem even funnier. For instance, when the humor in Silverstein's poem was explained to a few of the children who initially struggled with it, their reception of the poem changed, increasing their experienced funniness from "not funny" to "somewhat funny." This contradicts earlier notions that when there is a need to make humor clear, the humor itself tends to disappear. According to E.B. White: "Humor can be dissected as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but the pure scientific mind" (in Deneire 1995: 291). Raskin (1985 in Deneire 1995: 291) also notes that laughter is lost "when we focus our intellect on it and try to understand it" because "one gets a joke or does not get it."

Although the humor in Silverstein's poem eluded some participants at the outset, they responded favorably to the poem once the humor was explained to them. One of them laughed and said that he "found [the situation] funny." Another participant laughed as well, having found the character funny when it was explained to her what the protagonist in the poem did. The fact that such elaboration led to an increased rating of funniness can prove that a humorous poem can be as amusing for children who receive help understanding it as those

who do not.

8.4.2 Two levels of humor competence

Another point worth mentioning has to do with humor competence. Carrell (1997 in Bell 2015: 27) posits two levels of humor competence that are based on jokes, but can nevertheless be applied to humorous texts. The first level is joke competence – the ability to recognize that a text is meant to be humorous. The second level is humor competence – the ability to judge whether or not the text is humorous. Bell (2015) summarizes these two stages of processing as "recognition" and "appreciation", respectively. The study suggests that the humor competence demanded from the participants to understand a funny poem is greater than the humor competence required to understand a joke. Jokes come in a particular format or structure which signals an attempt at humor and makes the readers or hearers more certain about their response. For example, jokes can begin with a question such as in riddles or introduced by words such as "Knock-knock!" to which the audience replies "Who's there?" Lightbulb jokes ("how many people does it take to change a lightbulb?") and bar jokes ("a man walks into a bar...") are also easily recognizable.

However, in the current study, the poems were presented to most participants without any hint they were meant to be humorous.[32] As shown in the results chapter, the children had different ideas about poetry: they can be dark, informative or tell a story. That the poems presented to them were of the humorous type had to be discovered by the children in the process of reading them, which proved challenging for some. It was therefore not surprising that there were participants who misunderstood the humor in the poems the first time, thus failing at the first level, recognition. When the humor was explained to them, they were relieved of the recognition task and could move on to the second stage of appreciation. Failed humor can occur at either of the two stages. In the first stage, it can be unsuccessful when the reader or hearer fails to interpret the text as a humorous one, which was what happened with this small group of children.[33] In the second stage, it can be unsuccessful when, despite recognizing that the text is supposed to be funny, the reader or hearer does not judge it amusing. Thus, before humor can be appreciated, the attempt at humor must be recognized first before a reader can judge its funniness.

[32] Except for seven children (one session with one child, one session with three children and another with three children), the participants were not told beforehand that the poems were meant to be funny. However, even within this small group, knowing that the poems were supposed to be humorous did not affect their judgment: some still regarded the poems "not funny."

[33] Failure at joke competence could have been due to the child's abilities and limits, personality or culture. The first refers to limitations in how children make connections between ideas, affecting their understanding of incongruities. The second reason acknowledges that some children, by nature, tend to be more serious than others. The last reason links culture and the social environment to what is an acceptable way of expressing and appreciating humor.

Similarly, when humor fails to trigger laughter or some related response, it does not necessarily convey that the audience failed at the first stage as it could signify the lack of acceptance of the text as humorous. This was not the case with the small group of children in the study. Humor played out successfully at the second attempt when they eventually understood the humor in the poem, and processed and appreciated it (as "somewhat funny"). The idea of having two stages of humor competence is related to the concept presented in Chapter 5 in which humor is perceived as a negotiation. Humor happens when the intent of the producer of humor is clear to the recipient, which he or she may accept or reject, and the message is clear, which he or she may or may not interpret correctly. When the intent is accepted, the recipient becomes a collaborator and when it is not, the recipient becomes either an unwilling or a hesitant party.

8.5 Impact of form on humor creation and the preference for content

8.5.1 Effects of deviations from "good" verse making

Rhyme has many uses. Aside from helping children read (Goswami 1991: 1110) and helping them with retention and retrieval of verbal information (Rubin 1995 in Tillman and Dowling 2007: 636)[34], as mentioned in section 4.3.1, rhyme and meter are also prominent features of humorous verses for children. Limericks, for instance, which together with narratives are most liked among school-age children (Fisher and Natarella 1982: 346), have five lines, often with anapestic trimeter and with a strict rhyme scheme of AABBA. But according to Menninghaus et al. (2014: 71), rhyme and meter do not help produce humorous effects in just any text; it is only possible with "humoristic poetry." This is because rhyme and meter not only support the humorous content, but they are also funny as poetic features when they deviate from what is considered "'good' verse making." The first deviation occurs when they "disregard both the word class and the semantic weight constraints using... words such as "that," "what," or "too" in the conspicuous rhyme word position." The second deviation happens when funny verses "violate [the] ideal of a metrically "good" verse by routinely imposing a *hyper-regular* [italics in the original] alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, with the resulting tendency to sound "clattering."‴

Their experiment found that "rhyme and meter enhanced funniness ratings, confirming that purely phonological and prosodic properties of a sentence can

[34]It helps children learn to read which suggests that reading is not purely visual for children but that they also resort to phonological factors to process and analyze written words (Goswami 1991: 1110). It creates a song-like pattern that aids the retention and retrieval of verbal information. This makes poetry easier to remember than prose stories: the "rhythmic structures and their associated rhymes" act as memory aids, providing "global organization and useful cues" (Rubin 1995 in Tillman and Dowling 2007: 636) which prose texts lack (Tillman and Dowling 2007: 636).

boost its humorous qualities" (Menninghaus et al. 2014: 74). Rhyme and meter increased the funniness ratings separately but the funniness ratings were highest when both rhyme and meter were present. They noted that this happened because the meter and rhyme used in the funny couplets differed from the "culturally acquired schema of what a good rhymed and metered verse should be" and because it is clear that the mismatch was a "willful mockery of popular lyrical diction." The subjects were adults with a mean age of 26 years. The main assumption of the researchers then is that the participants in the study were aware of the rules of "good verse making" and had enough experience with adult poetry canon and understanding of poetic traditions to be able to contrast a "good" verse from one that was not. But this also suggests that the reception of humor in poetry is not intuitive and instinctive, and instead requires a formal approach to understanding it.

Nevertheless, there is value in their study being one of the few that empirically investigated the relationship between humor and rhyme. In Chapter 4 on translating poems, Tsur's assertion on the effect of rhyme on tone has been discussed but it was purely conceptual and has not been backed by an experiment. If the findings of Menninghaus et al. are indeed accurate, despite the issue of spontaneity in humor perception, then this could explain in part why in this study with children, rhyme and meter did not influence the funniness of humorous verses the way content did. There were no deliberate deviations imposed on the translated texts that could have added to their funniness. The poems relied on the rules of good rhyme-making in Filipino poetry. Nonetheless it can also be said that, unlike with adults, such deviations[35] would have been challenging for children to detect. Children at this age have little varied experiences with poetry, hence, lacking the ability to identify the deviations that have been found to make a humorous poem funny.[36] At this stage, they do not know the "authoritative schema of "good" poetic rhyming and meter" (Menninghaus et al. 2014: 74) and how a departure from it can be amusing. Coates (2010: 122), for example, cites some examples of "playful deviations of the limerick form"[37], the "anti-limerick", which requires "some level of familiar-

[35]The deviation on stress does not apply to Filipino poetry which, instead of stress, depends on the number of syllables per line. But placing unconventional words in visible rhyme positions can be done deliberately. In the translation of Silverstein's "Sick", the word "ano" (what) was placed at the end of the line to rhyme with "maglaro" (play).

[36]That is not to say that children have little prior knowledge of poetry. From their early years, children are introduced to poetry through nursery rhymes and songs. However, even though these possess sound qualities similar to poetry, they do not have depth of imagination and emotion that make up real poetry (Huck et al. 1994).

[37]Coats used the following anonymous limerick as an example and noted that the "surprise [was] based on violating the expected rhythm of a familiar form":

> There was a young man from Japan
> Whose limericks never would scan.
> When asked why this was,
> He replied, 'It's because I always try to fit as many syllables into the last line
> as ever I possibly can.'

ity with the original... to get the joke." Thus, to those who are not familiar enough with the limerick form to find the pattern, "the effect is likely to be confusion rather than humor."

8.5.2 Effects of joint reading and listening

Although none of the children pertained to rhyme and rhythm as contributors to the funniness of the poems, it does not mean that they lack awareness of how these formal elements function. For instance, one child (C6) said that rhymes "entertain" children and adults alike but did not say why and whether this was the case with the funny poems presented to them. This is quite understandable for children at this age; though they can understand riddles, for instance, they do not yet have the skills to say why a riddle is funny (Zimmermann 2014). That the poems were recited to them should have helped make sound and rhyme become more prominent and provoke a humorous effect. In a study by Fisher and Natarella (1982: 352) with first, second and third graders, they observed that "children's preference for rhymed, humorous story poems... may also reflect the methodology which involved listening to the poems rather than reading them. It seems likely that the rhyme and the story format of the rhymed verse and narratives and the broad humor of limericks may carry better to a listener, evoking an immediate positive response, while one's response to lyric poetry or to haiku might be facilitated by seeing the poem and having time to re-read or reflect on it."

However, even if the children in this study could listen to the poems (aside from reading them on the screen), this did not necessarily elicit the "immediate positive response" observed in Fisher and Natarella's study. The form-centered translation of Dahl's poem, in particular, was perceived to be "not funny" by eight out of 14 participants.[38] To reiterate, the children could read the poems on the screen while being recited to them but whether or not this mode of presentation that combined reading and listening had any effect on their response could not be determined from the study. Future studies can examine whether this makes a difference.[39] It could be the case that even if the poems could be heard, the children would focus more on reading the texts particularly the information in them to be prepared for the discussion. Rosenblatt (1994: 24) calls this "efferent reading" where the goal is to search for information. On the other end of the spectrum is "aesthetic reading" where the reader's main concern is "what happens *during* the actual reading event" [italics in the original] or the experience. One of the reasons children were more focused on reading for information is that children are more used to efferent reading as this is the approach taught in schools (Rosenblatt 1994: 79). This is the case even in classes where they study literature.

[38]Of the 14 children, nine reported greater fluency in English over Filipino.

[39]In Chapter 7, one of the assumptions made was that written input (i.e., the written text) could have supplemented the auditory input for children who were more proficient in English than in Filipino, although this could be true only of Silverstein's poem.

8.5.3 Preference for free verse

Kutiper and Wilson (1993) summarized the results of some poetry preference studies, including that of Fisher and Nateralla. They noted that free verse was among the most disliked forms by young students. However, in this study, it was found that the free-verse translations which lacked rhyme and rhythm were preferred by children over the rhyming verses. This shows that our understanding of what is funny for children can vary significantly from the children's own definitions of it. As Fisher and Natarella (1982: 339) noted: "A consistent finding in studies of children's preferences for poetry is that adults cannot accurately predict which poems children will like; their choices of poems for children seldom match the children's own choices. This suggests the importance of examining children's preferences directly." For the children in this study, the plot, story or narrative is a powerful driver of humor, perhaps because, as they admitted, they are more used to reading prose stories than poetry and therefore look for the "story" in a text above all. The situation determined humor to a large extent, with character far behind and language situated even further.[40] This finding could mean that with a different set of children, one who is more exposed to and inclined toward poetry, the results could be different.[41] It must be noted, however, that the findings do not suggest that the formal elements of poetry do not appeal to children. Fisher and Natarella's observation of children in primary grades is most likely true even for the children in this study: "Of the poetic elements that are used in poetry, rhyme is by far the most important in children's preferences. Children also enjoy sound as a device. No rhymed poems were on the least liked list, and none of the unrhymed poems not using sound were on the most liked list" (1982: 353). They added: "The children's preference for rhymed poetry over unrhymed is very clear. Many of the children's comments indicated that they not only liked rhyme, but that they believed a poem must have rhyme" (349). What the findings of this study only show is that, for a humorous poem to appeal to children in this study, content is more important than form. Even without the formal elements, a humorous verse can still be funny. This has implications for translators trying to decide which to prioritize when the goal is to preserve humor in verse for children. In terms of preference for content, the study's findings are consistent with the results of early preference studies that children most enjoy poetry about familiar experiences (Kutiper and Wilson 1993: 29), those that capture the spirit of childhood. Children also like poems about other children (Fisher and Natarella 1982: 340). These could explain why the children in this study found Silverstein's poem funnier than Dahl's poem: the topic covers school, which they routinely encounter, and the protagonist is a child.

[40] These findings are not unique to Filipino children. As early as the 1920s, preference studies involving American children showed that children liked poems that told a story (King 1922 and Mackintosh 1924 in Fisher and Natarella 1982: 340).

[41] It is important to be aware that different children have unique ways of thinking, including appreciating humor, and the only way to understand them is by directly engaging with them.

8.6 Conclusions

Cultural values can influence humor enjoyment. This is perhaps why the children in the study, who grew up in a society that valued "pakikipagkapwa-tao" (or roughly "oneness with others"), responded with restraint to the poems which used the misfortune of others to generate humor. Because children at this age are open to reading materials other than prose stories, adults can expose them to more materials that can enhance their reading skills and interest to read widely. When faced with a text they do not fully understand, children seem to resort to "creative solutions" (Mednick 1962) through logical deduction, thereby making the encounter with the text still gratifying. This confirms that 8- and 9-year-old children can identify and resolve logical gaps in a humorous text. When they receive help in solving these gaps, they do not find the humorous material any less funny. On the contrary, discussing humorous poems with others can make the poems even funnier for the children. The fact that the poems were not entirely easy for the children suggests that poems demand greater humor competence from readers or listeners than jokes. Unlike jokes, funny poems do not possess a particular structure and format that signal humor.

Humor comes in two stages: the attempt at humor must be recognized first before humor can be appreciated. When humor is not successfully conveyed, it could be attributed to failure at either the recognition or appreciation stage. For some of the children in the study, failure at the first stage affected the funniness of the poems. The study of Menninghaus et al. (2014) could partly explain why the poems were less funny or not funny at all for the children: the poems contained no deviations from established rules of "good verse-making" which by themselves can serve as humoristic devices. A study by Fisher and Natarella (1982) postulates that listening to poems can evoke an "immediate positive response" from listeners which was not observed from most children during the poetry reading sessions. Although the children in the present study heard the poems, they also had access to visual input (i.e., the texts and illustrations shown in the videos) which could have affected their response. In terms of humor, content than form was more pleasurable to the children in this study. This does not mean, however, that the formal elements of a poem were not appealing to them. According to preference studies, poems about familiar experiences and other children are most enjoyable for children which was also what the current study found.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusions

9.1 Research questions and findings

Going back to the research questions, the study found the following:

1. Exposure to humorous poems encourages children to read more poems. More than half of the pupils who reported disliking poetry said they were motivated to read more poems after the reading sessions. The sessions also showed that children would more likely read texts apart from prose stories if they were shown what materials were available to them.

2. Children who read more in Filipino than in English did not perceive the humor in the translated poems in Filipino more positively. The relationship between preferred language for reading and funniness rating is weak. In fact, there were more English speakers who found Silverstein's poem in Filipino funny.

3. The self-reported good comprehenders did not find the poems funnier. Conversely, the poor comprehenders did not find the poems less funny. Thus, poor comprehension does not hinder humor appreciation. This is in contrast to the general notion that comprehensibility plays a major role in humor perception.

4. There was no strong relationship between mode of input and the poem's funniness. Instead of mode of input, it appears that the text itself determines the funniness of the poem. This suggests that with the right

material, both listening and reading can be equally effective in making poems enjoyable for children.

5. Children find humorous poems funnier when they read them with other people. Many of the participants responded that reading funny poems and stories with family or other children brings more laughter than when they read them individually. This supports the assertion of scholars such as Addyman et al. (2018) that laughter is a "social signal."

6. The situations in the poems were identified as the poem's funniest element. For the good comprehenders, language came in second and character in third. For the poor comprehenders, character placed second and language last. However, the difference between the choices of the good comprehenders and poor comprehenders was minimal.

7. There were gender differences observed in how children appreciated the poems' humor. For example, more boys than girls were disappointed at the lack of action (such as violence) in Dahl's poem. In suggesting other endings to the poems, more girls than boys used incongruity and surprise while more boys than girls resorted to superiority.

8. A large majority of the children acknowledged the possible dual readership of children's poems. They described children's poems as something everyone could enjoy. For them, adults can appreciate what is entertaining and funny for children since they were once children. Only three of the 26 participants said that the poems were written only with children in mind.

9. Children can better relate to a poem when it is translated into their own language. But this could also be explained by the universality of the poems' themes, as the children pointed out. The manner of translating the poems had consequences as well: the use of "deep Filipino words" gave the impression of foreignness to the children who were not fluent in Filipino.[42]

10. Content is more influential in producing humor in children's poems. Between the translation focused on form and one focused on content, more children found the former not funny. Thus, contrary to general belief, humorous poems for children can still be funny even without the presence of rhyme. This is further explained in section 9.2.6.

[42]When asked, most of them could not remember what words they found difficult to understand. However, it is possible that the English words for the body parts and sicknesses mentioned in Silverstein's poem could have been problematic for them; the author herself was not familiar with these Filipino terms.

9.2 Other findings

The study also found the following:

9.2.1 Children's literature according to children

This thesis started with a discussion of the problem of defining children's literature. It was shown that there is no agreement between scholars and practitioners in terms of what the characteristics, target readership and content of children's literature are and should be. It also discussed how the concept of childhood changed over time and how this influenced what was understood and accepted as children's literature. Two opposing views on children's books were presented. According to one view, children's books are supposed to give children pleasure and not instruct them. According to the other view, children's literature is supposed to be both entertaining and informative. Based on the results of the poetry reading sessions carried out in the current study, the second view appears to be more pervasive among Filipino children, regardless of the authors' intentions. The children responded to the poems as if they were teaching them specific values even if the author of this study did not raise the poems' didactic qualities.

For the participants, the poems were not only enjoyable but there was also a moral lesson to learn from reading them. Thus, although referring mainly to fiction, Rose's assertion that children's literature reflects not children's ideals but traits that adults want children to imitate seems to bear some truth. This tendency comes to light when children's views and perspectives are explored: they are conditioned by the values and virtues of the adults raising them, who as Evasco (2011) pointed out, interpret childhood as a stage where children need to be disciplined. However, one limitation of the existing concepts is that they fail to explain how children feel towards such a tendency and how it affects their enjoyment of a text; such interplay was not explored in this study. Similarly, Rose's argument that there is not only one child to be addressed in children's literature and that children react differently to a text appears to hold when the responses of the children during the discussions are taken into account. When asked if they could relate to the poems, the children gave opposing responses, suggesting that the poems did not speak to them as a homogenous group and supporting Rose's point that there are divisions among children. Gender, for instance, may create divisions and, as Chapter 7 showed, the poems in the current study were received differently by boys and girls.

It should be noted that the well-defined distinctions in the development of the concept of childhood only apply to some cultures. For example, while the concept of the child as a "miniature adult" was in fashion in the medieval West, it was only a contemporary development in the Philippines (Evasco 2011: 117). Furthermore, in the Philippines, the child was not represented by one image alone during the Spanish colonial period from 1521 to 1898 but by a combination of two images, that of an evangelical child and a Europeanized/urbanized

indio, representations which still apply to this day (Evasco 2011: 117). The two merging concepts resulted in Filipino children being treated as "unfinished adults" and possessing colonial mentality and taste (Evasco 2011: 117). The latter could explain why the children in the study reported greater proficiency in and preference for English over Filipino as the language for reading. In the Philippines, there is more prestige attached to English than to Filipino, though both are recognized as official languages, as evidenced by the dominant use of English for teaching and instruction.

Moreover, children tend to hold the same views as adults regarding the concept of child and childhood, suggesting that such perceptions are effectively passed on to children by adults through parenting and education. This is reflected in how children believe children's literature should be, emphasizing the distinction between fantasy and realism. The participants in the study think that the "fictional", "unrealistic" and "cartoonish" are for children. Conversely, "realistic" and "believable" texts are for adults. The "serious" is a realm meant solely for adults because adults, unlike children, have "serious" work to do. Thus, although these traditional ideas were prevalent in the West in the 18th and 19th centuries, there are signs that they persist in the Philippines despite progress in the kind of local children's books available. Seeing that the historical roots of the childhood construct can vary from culture to culture opens up a considerable space for inquiry and discourse from local perspectives. The Western origins and notions of the meaning of childhood are not universal in their temporal influence, and as Evasco demonstrates, the representations of the child are not based on Western models alone. This then calls for a study of the development of the concept of childhood and its effects on children's literature that recognizes the unique experiences of a society and reflects the local sociocultural and historical contexts in non-Western cultures.

9.2.2 Bilingual proficiency and availability of Filipino books for older children

This thesis then discussed children's literature production and translation in the Philippines from its historical context until its current state. Even-Zohar's polysystem theory provided a valuable tool for exploring the status of children's literature in translation. It allowed for a comparison between the position of translated children's books in Filipino and that of foreign English books in circulation. The analysis focused on Filipino translations of foreign children's books, mainly those in English, to determine the position of Filipino books in a country where the educational system is predominantly English-speaking, a legacy of American colonialization. Similarly, it aimed to determine whether children had adequate access to international books translated into Filipino as they did in the original English. This is an interesting point to examine as both English and Filipino are official languages in the Philippines. This being the case, reading resources should be equally accessible in English and Filipino and children should exhibit more or less the same level of literacy and interest

in both languages. The poetry reading sessions revealed, however, that one language was more dominant for the participants: they read more in English and found it challenging to understand Filipino, the national language.

Using the polysystem theory as the framework, it was shown how foreign children's literature translated into Filipino was, and still is, mainly situated in the periphery of the literary system. There are two explanatory factors for this. First, there is a low demand for Filipino reading materials as Filipino children can – and in some cases, can better – read in the original English. Second, the children's publishing industry is producing more local books by local authors in bilingual (English and Filipino) format, which is strategic insofar as capturing the market for both Filipino- and English-language books. However, these are mostly picture books that target the 4-8 age range and reading materials in Filipino for children beyond this age remain few. As a result, even if older children would like to broaden their recreational reading to include Filipino books, they can only get hold of readily accessible English titles. Some of the children brought up such limitation during the poetry reading sessions: although they want to read more in Filipino, they or their parents do not know where to purchase Filipino books.

Recent national data likewise support the finding that Filipino children do want to read in Filipino. According to a survey (National Book Development Board 2018: 55), children are inclined to read in English and Filipino in equal measure if they have more choices in terms of book language. The children in the poetry reading sessions also expressed interest in reading more materials in Filipino after reading Dahl's and Silverstein's poems translated into Filipino. Thus, the low demand for Filipino books could be more of an adult-driven phenomenon than a child-driven one because parents largely shape the reading interests of children by making certain books available at home. Even though the parents of some of the children in the study are supportive of reading in Filipino, this does not seem to be the case with the larger community. Because English is still perceived by many in the Philippines as the only measure of education and intelligence and "the language of power and upward social and economic mobility" (Castillo 1999 in Young 2002: 222), many Filipino parents show greater preference for using English at home which reflects on their book selections for their children. In fact, Penguin Random House noted the large and growing market for English-language children's books in Asia with the Philippines (although wrongly described as having "a 100-percent English-speaking population"[43]) along with China and South Korea "at the front of the pack."

While a bilingual education policy has been in place since 1974 to achieve bilingual competence, English has become the primary medium of instruction in many elementary schools except for Filipino language and history subjects. This provides another input and reinforces children's fluency in English over

[43]In the March 30-April 2, 2008 survey conducted by the Social Weather Station, it was found that 76% of Filipinos could understand spoken English, 75% nationwide were able to read English, 61% nationwide said they could write in English and 46% could speak English (Mangahas, 2016: n.p.).

Filipino; in 2021, the Philippines ranked 18th in the English Proficiency Index, thus belonging to the "high proficiency" band. Classroom education must be supplemented by out-of-class resources that encourage and promote equal interest in Filipino and English among children aged 8 and up to achieve actual bilingual competence. This is one gap that translations can help fill: providing literature in Filipino, whether from English or other Philippine languages, considering that the Philippines is a multilingual society.

It can be gleaned from the interviews with local children's publishers that there are significantly more English-language foreign books for children in circulation than foreign children's books translated into Filipino. From the publishing end, local publishers express that books for middle-grade readers (those 8 to 12 years old) and translations of books written in foreign languages take more time to produce which is why in part Filipino books for older children, such as novels, could not keep up with the number of English books in the local market. Publishers are also prioritizing the translation of original works by Filipino authors (from English into Filipino and from Filipino into English) over works by foreign authors. This is also true for emergent authors. While this is indicative of a healthy publishing industry, there is still work to be done in promoting the Filipino language in the form of books for older children, which is part of the intellectualization of Filipino[44]. Publishers play a key role in language development and dissemination of knowledge. It is not "a neutral middleman" but an agency that "influences both the production and consumption of intellectual works" (Neavill 1975: 23). Such is the case with local children's publishers in the Philippines: judgment on what books should make it to the market, including translations, depends mainly on the publishers and their assessment of the needs of consumers as well as gaps and opportunities in the market. But publishers also decide in response to consumer purchase behavior. Thus, to increase the production and translation of books in Filipino for older children requires adults, acting as "gatekeepers", who recognize and appreciate that competence in the language has both symbolic (e.g., stronger social and cultural identity) and practical (e.g., effective public communication as mentioned by Mangahas 2016) purposes.

9.2.3 Poetry appreciation in children

Similar to how Filipino translations of foreign works are peripheral to native literature, whether in English or Filipino, children's poems occupy a peripheral position with respect to prose stories. This is the case despite the known benefits

[44]According to Sibayan, literature is the only form in which Filipino is intellectualized as there are many literary works in Filipino. The irony is that the intellectualization of Filipino is not separate from knowledge of English. According to Sibayan: "Because Filipino will depend for its intellectualization mainly upon scholarly works in English and those educated in English, the quantity and quality of knowledge to be made available in Filipino will depend upon the state of knowledge in English possessed by Filipino scholars and writers. The intellectualization of Filipino will depend upon bilingual scholars" (Sibayan 1991).

of poetry for children, including contributions to reading and language development, creative thinking and emotional growth. One of the reasons for such "ambivalence concerning the image of poetry among children" is the impression that poetry is "elitist or exclusive" (Maynard et al. 2005: 36). For example, a student in Calkins' research said that "poetry is for rich people; it's for snobs" (1986: 298 in Jacko 2004: 2) while another said that poets "are talking above us and about us. They don't want us to understand" (Calkins 1986: 298 in Jacko 2004: 2). Phinn (1992: 55 in Maynard 2005: 36) expresses children's general lack of interest in and engagement with poetry: "Sadly, research studies and [Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools] reports confirm that for some children, poetry is the poor relation of fiction . . . They reveal that many children dislike poetry, considering it difficult and demanding and largely irrelevant to their lives and interests." Children find poetry as "lacking meaning" for them and "failing to inspire excitement in them" (Maynard et al. 2005: 36). Phinn adds: "It is clear that choosing and presenting poetry is not as easy as presenting fiction" (in Maynard et al. 2005: 36). However, even if poems are "generally shorter, more memorable and easier to use in speaking and listening exercises than stories" (Maynard et al. 2005: 36) and hence can serve as an excellent entry to literature appreciation, this study shows that the succinctness and brevity of poetry do not affect children.

Preference studies in fact found haikus to be unpopular among children because they "were too short, lacked rhyme and were difficult to understand" (Marston 1975: 107). Such dislike for short forms of literature was also evident among the participants in this study who preferred the longer prose stories because they offer a more extended experience of the text and deliver a story with characters and a plot. Children who appreciate literary texts this way are best introduced to contemporary prose in verse (or novel-in-verse) books which are gaining popularity among and well received by young readers. Some of the titles aimed at middle grade readers have been recognized with the John Newberry Medal [such as *Crossover* (2014)] which deals with the subjects of basketball and music], the Newberry Honor [for instance, *Inside Out & Back Again* (2011) about the Vietnamese author's childhood experience as a refugee] or the National Book Award [for example, *Brown Girl Dreaming* (2014) about the author's experience growing up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s]. Although there is a wide array of options for children who want to read this type of book in English, there are no similar books in Filipino. Poetry books for children in the Philippines, whether in English or Filipino, are few because they do not sell well. According to local children's publisher Adarna House, they have only a small number of poetry books as a "marketing decision" because "the market has not yet appreciated poetry." Knowing that children are more interested in reading longer texts and those that tell stories, publishers could look into the production of novels-in-verse not only in English but also in Filipino or translated into Filipino. Such a format could entice children to read more poetry.

This study also confirms that humorous poems appeal to children. While

findings from interest studies suggest that it is difficult "to get children to like poems better, and to like better poems" (Marston 1975: 109), the poetry reading sessions were able to change the participants' feelings about poetry. At the beginning of the sessions, some participants only knew poems to be "dark" and serious which they found unappealing. But when introduced to funny poems, they reported being encouraged to read more poems. This was consistent with the findings of James (1998) that there were significant improvements in students' attitudes toward poetry when introduced to poetry through humorous materials. In his study, those who found poetry to be "fascinating and fun" formed 17.1% of the students in the pretest, 21.7% in the control treatment and 42.3% in the treatment posttest. Furthermore, when asked whether they have "a feeling of dislike" when they hear the word "poetry", 29.8% agreed in the pretest, 21.7% in the control posttest and only 7.6% in the treatment posttest.

Although greater exposure to poetry can foster children's interest in the genre, studies such as this one are helpful in that they already give an idea of children's preferences in poems. This has implications for the study of poetry. Humorous works in general are often seen as frivolous and undeserving of a place in the classroom. But humorous texts can also be serious in that they promote creative and critical thinking. Reconciling incongruity, for instance, is in itself a problem-solving activity. In the poetry reading sessions, not everyone was able to comprehend or "get" the joke in Silverstein's poem, suggesting that humorous poems can also be challenging and demand their own discussion. Moreover, humor can promote reflective thinking which requires "the capacity to see things from another angle" and the ability to "change perspectives" (Stroobants 2009: 9). While humorous poems can be a good introduction for children to be interested in and enthusiastic about poetry, they should not be the end-all of poetry reading. Parents and teachers can eventually broaden children's appreciation for poetry by exposing them to more complicated poems with higher quality of language (e.g., award-winning poems). As Terry (1974: 41 in Jacko 2004: 3) says: "an appreciation for poems other than the humorous is developed through continuous experience with poetry." However, Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1999: 46) advise teachers to "proceed with caution on less-liked aspects of poetry until [the] students become fans of poetry" and recommend "a good selection of rhyming, narrative poems with distinct rhythms about humorous events, well-liked familiar experiences, and animals [as] a good starting point for students who have little experience with poetry." But the larger aim should be variety and breadth to foster a lifelong appreciation for poetry.

9.2.4 Impact of culture and gender on children's humor

This thesis aimed to investigate whether humorous poems for children would still be funny if translated into a different language. The results show that the poems were either "not funny" or "somewhat funny" for most participants. It was expected that they would find them "very funny" considering that the poems by Dahl and Silverstein used in the study are both well-known among

English-speaking children and widely recognized by poetry organizations as representative of their humorous poetry. Furthermore, the poems fit into what has been found humorous for third graders: "slapstick humor, clowning, exaggeration" (Franzini 2002 in Dowling 2014: 122). One explanation offered was the role of culture in humor appreciation and response. How the children appraised the situations in the poems could have been influenced by the Filipino value of regarding the self with others, which is often taught as kindness and sensitivity or empathy. The children, especially the girls, felt sorry for the dentist who was scared, even if the situation was only make-believe, and empathized with the child who was sick, even if she was only pretending, because being sick is "not fun." Filipinos love humor and can find laughter in unfortunate circumstances, as seen in Philippine comedy and the many instances of a "joking culture" (Ancheta 2011: 55). But laughing at the misfortunes of others, which was the intended effect of the poems, could have been understood by children as inappropriate since they were expected to be polite and respectful, traits that are highly regarded in Filipino culture. This is especially true when an adult and authority figure (in this case, the author) can likely modify the children's response.

However, culture is only one of the explanatory factors for the relatively unsuccessful humor of the poems. Some gender differences also emerged in relation to how girls and boys responded to humor. The girls did not think Dahl's poem was that funny as the events suggested danger and potential violence. They perceived the poem as frightening instead of amusing and were more empathetic toward the characters in both poems. On the other hand, the boys felt that Dahl's poem could have benefited from more events and greater excitement. They were disappointed that "not much happened" and wished that something terrible had happened to the main character. The latter is consistent with previous studies that boys "laugh more frequently about the mishaps of others" (Neuss 2006 in Dowling 2014: 123). Moreover, these observations showed girls' and boys' preferred types of humor. In giving alternative endings to the poems, more girls than boys resorted to incongruity and surprise while more boys than girls gave answers that exhibited superiority. It can be seen then that existing humor theories can be applied to adult humor and children's humor. However, little attention has been given to gender in examining why children laugh. This is an area that offers many options for further investigation.

Between culture and gender, there is no clear indication based on this study alone which of the two exerts a more significant influence on humor perception. There is some sign that the girls showed higher regard for culturally prescribed behavior by having more empathy. But this response could also be attributed to gender as many previous studies show that girls are more likely to give an empathic response to unpleasant situations (see for example Benenson, Gauthier and Markovits 2021) even though in one study, empathy, as a "prosocial behavior", was observed among Filipino third graders regardless of gender (Rungduin and Reyes 2016: 7). Further research is needed to understand how culture affects or modifies humor response among children.

9.2.5 Greater importance of personal relatability over cultural relatability

The current thesis also investigated whether the poems, when translated into a different language, were humorous because they were relatable. "Relatability" was used to mean that the children can see themselves reflected in the characters or situations. Although the poems were found by most children to be only "somewhat funny" or "not funny at all", they still regarded both poems as equally "relatable." Two types of relatability were explored: whether the characters or situations enabled the children to feel that they can relate to them as children, and as Filipino readers. In terms of being able to relate to them as children, the results show that when two texts possess relatable content, the more relatable humor appears to be that which is more realistic for the children. Conversely, the text that leans more on fantasy, although equally relatable, is perceived to be less humorous. With realistic content, the children only need to turn to established knowledge as the events belong to the real world. On the other hand, with fantastical content, it is necessary for the children to "fantasy-assimilate" the depicted events, a process "necessary for perceiving those events as humorous" (McGhee 1975: 20). Thus, in the case of the participants in the study, children aged 8 and 9 can appreciate the humor more when the context is closer to reality and their own experiences.

The research also aimed to discover whether "intercultural communication" (Wang 2014: 2424) – or two or more cultures meeting – in the translated texts was discernible for the children and whether this could have impacted on the funniness of the translations. Most of the children reported that they could relate to the poems and did not perceive the poems as foreign. Therefore, the failure of the poems to elicit humor among some participants could not be due to the cultural contexts of the poems. Only a few children stated that the poems' foreignness was visible, citing, for instance, how different they were from Filipino legends. Children who said that they could relate to the poems as Filipino readers mentioned how the themes of the poems and the events in the poems were universal and how the poems were already in a language that they and other Filipinos could understand. Thus, children at this age are already aware of the importance of translation in allowing people to read and appreciate materials that were initially written in a language that was not their own. According to Zafra (2023, personal communication), Filipinos are exposed to translation beginning at a young age because of the multicultural and multilingual (including foreign languages such as English) landscape of the Philippines. Thus, translation is part of their everyday life.

The quality of the language and word choices in the translation, however, affects text relatability according to the children and puts them in two different sides. On the one hand, a translation that is "done well" with "deep" words sounds familiar and natural to target readers and gives the impression that the translation is the original text. On the other hand, when the translator uses words in the target language that are "deep" and difficult to understand, the

translation tends to sound more foreign because a translation is believed by the children to contain simple words. The children who were not fluent in Filipino felt this way on account of the translator's diction (word selection and use).

This work tentatively suggests that between personal relatability (i.e., can relate as children) and cultural relatability (i.e., can relate as Filipinos), the more determining factor when reading a humorous poem is personal relatability. Although most of the children could relate to the poems as Filipinos, less than half of them, as children, could find commonalities with the characters or situations which could have contributed to the poems being only "somewhat funny" or "not funny" for many of the participants.

9.2.6 Primacy of content over form when translating humorous poems

In translating poetry, Nida advises aiming for both form and content to avoid producing a mediocre translation. But as mentioned in Chapter 4, quite often, the translator cannot be faithful to both meaning and aesthetic effects and there will always be tension between the two (Nida 2012, Matthews 1959). If this happens, Nida (1984: 83) maintains that meaning should be prioritized over manner while Jakobson (1959: 238) places greater value on form as the poem's meaning relies on sound. Therefore, this thesis sought to address whether it is form or content that is more decisive in preserving humor in translated poems.

The responses towards Silverstein's poem did not indicate any difference between the form-centered and content-centered translations: more children thought the poem was "very funny" and "somewhat funny" in both translations. Nevertheless, the same is not true of Dahl's poem. The results indicate that humor is more responsive to content than form: many of the children who were presented with the content-centered translation of Dahl's poem found it humorous in contrast to the children who were presented with the form-centered translation. This work suggests that when the translator needs to prioritize either form or content in the translation of a funny poem, humor is better preserved when content is prioritized over form. This also suggests that, contrary to general belief, rhyme does not have to be an essential component of humorous poems for children. These findings therefore contradict the predicted results of the study proposed in Chapter 6.

Emphasis must be given to the fact that the findings of this study do not challenge the results of many preference studies that illustrate children's partiality towards rhymed poetry in general over one that is unrhymed. However, the study's findings show that children also favor free verse when it is funny. For a humorous poem to appeal to 8- to 9-year-old children, content is more important than form and even without the formal elements, a humorous verse can still be funny for them. As a matter of fact, even if the rhyme scheme AABB was retained in the form-centered translations, the poems were still only slightly funny for most children and the content-centered translations were considered funnier. The AABB rhyme scheme is characteristic of many children's poems

for children, even funny ones. It was identified in the literature as instrumental in creating humor. For example, Tsur identified the AABB scheme as "wittier" than the ABAB rhyme pattern which requires more prolonged and complex processing. Thus, the current views on the effect of rhyme on humor, including popular perception, seem insufficient to explain the results of this study. This would be an interesting subject for future studies.

9.2.7 Use of group interviews to study children's humor

This work demonstrated that group interviews are particularly suitable for studying humor among primary-aged children. The approach allowed for interaction which the children preferred. When asked whether they like reading funny texts individually or with others, many of the children said that reading with other people makes the texts funnier and reading more enjoyable. They found pleasure in hearing what the other children thought of the funny poems presented to them, especially when their storytelling abilities were tested and they made up alternative comical endings to the poems. The participants gave unique answers when asked to make the poems funny or funnier, possibly comparing their answers to those of others, demonstrating creative thinking. Aside from enhancing the reading of funny texts, the group setup also served to test whether laughter is indeed "a social signal" (Addyman et al. 2018). Although some children reported that laughter increases with company, strengthening the notion that laughter is a social phenomenon, most of the children in the study did not laugh at the poems as they were recited to them even if they found the poems "somewhat funny." Thus, the physical response was not consistent with the verbal response. Even among the few who perceived the poems as "very funny", only two exhibited laughter at hearing the poems. However, there were more instances of laughter when the children shared ideas on how to make the poems funny, with some laughing at their own or other children's suggestions. It would not have been possible to observe how children physically respond to humor had a one-to-one interview was employed as listening to the poems alone was not enough to elicit laughter. Such group dynamics cannot be captured by a survey as well. This study then recommends using group interviews to examine better what children in primary school find funny.

9.3 Recommended topics for further study

This work can also serve as a starting point for future studies. Among the topics that could be further explored are the following:

1. Would more children have found the poems "very funny" had they read the original texts in English? In the study, none of the participants had previously encountered the poems in English, making the relatability questions in the poetry reading sessions relevant.

2. How would children receive the humor of funny poems when they are instead presented with translations from Filipino into English? Would their preferred language for reading (English) affect the funniness of the translations?

3. It was inferred that the self-reported poor comprehenders who found the poems funny could have assessed the poems' humor in parts, some which were funny for them. In contrast, the self-reported good comprehenders who did not find the poems funny could have measured the funniness of the content in its entirety rather than by parts. The difference between focusing on details and looking at the big picture and their implications on humor reception could be examined in another study.

4. It was found that introducing children to humorous poems can change their attitudes toward poetry for the better. Would this likewise make them respond better to other humorous poems that are subsequently presented to them and make the poems "very funny" for them?

5. How different will the findings be when the study is done with children from other age groups? This is important in understanding humor from a developmental perspective.

6. Would interviewing children individually rather than as a group have any effect on the funniness rating of a poem? This study used only a group interview which, as mentioned, had its own advantages.

7. The study of Menninghaus et al. (2014) involving adults found that rhyme and meter increased the funniness ratings of couplets but the funniness ratings were highest when both rhyme and meter were present. They noted that this was due to the use of meter and rhyme in the funny couplets as deliberate deviations from "good verse-making" which themselves serve as funny poetic features. This could partly explain why form was not crucial in Silverstein's poem. There were no intended deviations from culturally prescribed rules that contributed to the poem's funniness. However, such explanation also assumes that children can detect these departures. Although the study cannot prove this, it is suspected that children 8 to 9 years old, with their limited knowledge of poetry and poetry-making, are not sensitive to such deviations. A study that applies a similar methodology to children can help shed light on this subject.

8. Fisher and Natarella (1982) found that rhyming poems which are made for listening could have evoked an "immediate positive response" among school children while lyric poems or haikus which are made for reading gave them time to reread or reflect on them. However, although the children in this study listened to the poems, the response described by Fisher and Natarella was not observed among the participants, possibly because they were also provided a visual input which they could follow

while listening to the poems. Thus, Fisher and Natarella's assumption about how reading affects children's response to funny poems could not be confirmed. It is suggested that a study which allows the children to listen solely to poems be conducted to derive conclusive evidence.

This study provided conceptual and practical information that is useful not only for researchers but also for translators, parents and teachers in obtaining a deeper understanding of children's humor (that is, detecting and interpreting humor) and their appreciation of literary texts particularly poems. It is hoped that the results of the current study will lead to more child-centered approaches in the fields of translation, publishing and education that take into account the preferences and needs expressed by children themselves.

Appendix A. Questionnaire for interviews with publishers

1. Studies have mentioned that children's literature tends to be inferior in status compared to other genres. Is this true in the Philippines?
2. How different is the production of children's books now than years ago?
3. What are some important developments in children's literature production over the years, for instance, in terms of theme or subject matter?
4. What are some challenges faced by publishers in producing children's literature in the Philippines?
5. Karin Westman said that "financial success buys some degree of legitimacy for children's literature from the publishing world, if not from academics or other cultural arbiters." Is this true for the Philippines?
6. What are (the publisher's) criteria for choosing which children's books to publish? Who determines which books get published?
7. Since its establishment, what are (the publisher's) most important contributions to the development of children's literature?
8. Who is the target audience of your children's books?
9. Children's books are written and published by adults, and selected and published by adults. How does (the publisher) ensure that the interests of children are considered when you publish books?
10. What makes your books different from the books of other publishers?
11. What makes our children's books different from children's books from other countries?

Appendix B: Information sheet

Invitation to participate in a study

I, Alice Ross Morta, a Filipino student in the PhD program of the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, The Netherlands, would like to invite your child to take part in the study CHILDREN'S RESPONSE TO HUMOR IN TRANSLATED POETRY which I am conducting with Grade 3 students of the UP Integrated School in (month and year).

Description of the study

This study will examine children's reactions to humorous poems for children that have been translated from English into Filipino. In a Zoom session, five pupils will listen to short poems that I will present to them via a recording. They will answer questions about the subject of the poems, whether the poems are funny, and if so, what they find funny in them. The session will start at 2:00 PM on a weekday and will take about 45 minutes, five minutes shorter than the typical online Grade 3 class at UPIS. I will record the session to help me analyze the responses.

Your child's identity will not be revealed to anyone but me and my PhD supervisors. In transcribing the session, the actual name of the child will not be used. Instead, each child will be given a code name. The codes will be kept secure and made available only to the research team. All other personally identifiable information that will be disclosed by the child during the online session will be removed in the transcription. The recording of the session will be stored on a password-protected hard disk and the Leiden University cloud service and will be destroyed at the end of the research in June 2023.

Risks and benefits

There are no risks to your child's safety. Since the session will be held in Zoom, your child can join in the comfort and safety of your home under your supervision. There will be a short break in the middle of the session. The poems that will be used are grade-level appropriate and are either the works of popular and award-winning children's poets or their translations. By participating in the study, your child can gain better appreciation for children's literature, particularly poetry. The session will engage children in critical and creative thinking and so it may benefit your child's ability to learn new ideas and how he/she understands and solves problems. Finally, your child will enjoy the session. Children want to read things that make them laugh and the poems that will be discussed during the session are amusing for many children. For participating in the study, your child will receive a certificate from Leiden University.

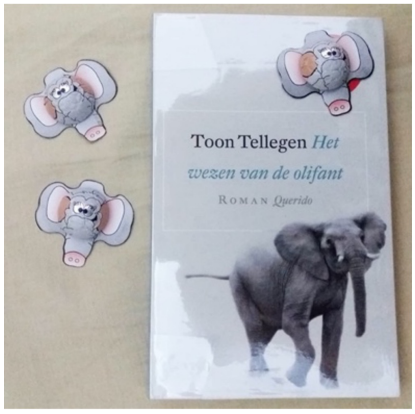
About the researcher

The University of the Philippines is funding my PhD studies in the Netherlands through a fellowship granted to me as an employee of the UP Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. You can know more about my work in UP here: https://ovpaa.up.edu.ph/organization.

I am studying translated children's poetry because I am deeply interested in both children's literature and translation. Even as an adult, I own mostly children's books. I took some translation courses in UP Diliman and they had all been a lot of fun. My goal is to translate more foreign works for Filipino readers especially children. I hope that you can support my research.

That's me in the center having coffee with two other PhD linguistics students.

Middle-grade fiction is my best-loved genre. Here are some of the children's books in my personal library. As you can see, I am always in search of new children's book series to read.



One of my favorite authors is Dutch children's writer Toon Tellegen. I have translated into Filipino some of his poems as well as this novel, which is about an elephant who wants to climb a tree.

Finally, I hope that your child enjoys this poem that I wrote. Thank you very much for your time.

MR. OLIFANT'S HAT

Mr. Olifant, to those around him, is as ordinary as one can be:

He takes the train to work
Wears black socks with black shoes
Talks to clients on the phone
Keeps his mouth closed when he chews.

When the day ends, however
Mr. Olifant becomes far from plain
For in his bedroom hangs a hat
But don't be fooled: it's magical, he claims.

When he puts it on, he closes his eyes
Then claps his hands – one, two, three
In an instant, oh my, he transforms
Into anybody he wants to be.

A baker who makes heavenly desserts
An author with six or more bestsellers
A painter for the rich and famous
An actor whose voice fills big theaters.

An astronaut who has been on the moon (twice!)
A world-renowned circus performer
A president known by all to be so wise
A connoisseur with great wines in the cellar.

So the next time you bump into him
I suggest that you think again
Mr. Olifant is not just a man buying carrots
Or opening an umbrella in the rain.

Yes, he is certainly more than that
Open your eyes and you will see
For whoever has the heart to dream
Can never ever be just ordinary.

Appendix C: Informed consent forms

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I hereby declare that I have been clearly informed about the nature and method of the investigation, as set out in the information sheet. My questions have been answered satisfactorily.

I fully agree to allow my child to participate in this study. I reserve the right to withdraw this consent without having to give a reason and I realize that my child may stop his/her participation in the study at any time. If my child's research results are to be used in scientific publications or made public in any way, this will be done completely anonymously. My child's personal data will not be viewed by third parties without my express permission.

If I would like further information about the study, now or in the future, I can turn to Alice Ross Morta (phone: 09175016643 e-mail: atmorta@up.edu.ph; Address: University of the Philippines Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, 2F Quezon Hall, UP Diliman, Quezon City).

If I have any complaints about this research, I can contact Marcel Belderbos, secretary of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University, The Netherlands (m.c.belderbos@hum.leidenuniv.nl/telephone: +31 715 273870).

Name of parent/guardian	Signature

Name of child

Date

I have provided an explanation of the research. I agree to answer any emerging questions about the research.

Name of Researcher	Signature

INFORMED CONSENT FOR VIDEO RECORDING

I fully agree to a video recording being made of the Zoom session with my child and to this recording, in part or in whole, being used to aid the study. I understand that the research team will own the recording which will be viewed only by the researcher and her PhD supervisors. The video recording will be stored securely with access given only to the research team. The researcher will keep the transcription of the recording anonymous.

Name of parent/guardian	Signature

Date

Appendix D. Content-centered Filipino translations

1. Ang Dentista at ang Buwaya

Umupo ang buwaya, na may ngiting tuso, sa silya ng dentista.
Sabi niya, “Lahat ng ngipin ko’y kailangan mong ayusin.”
Namutla ang dentista. Siya’y nanginig, nangatal at nangatog.
Pabulong niyang sinabi: “Sa palagay ko’y kailangan ko ngang tingnan ang mga ito.”
“Gusto ko,” wika ng Buwaya, “na gawin mo muna ang nasa likod.
Ang mga bagang sa likod na likod ay walang dudang pinakamalala.”
Ibinuka niya ang naglalakihang panga. Isang nakasisindak na tanawin —
Hindi bababa sa tatlong daang matutulis na ngipin, lahat matatalim at kumikinang sa puti.
Siniguro ng dentista na umagwat. Umusod siya nang dalawang yarda’t doon tumayo.
Pinili niya ang pinakamahabang instrumento para hanapin ang nabubulok.
“Ang sabi ko’y unahin ang nasa likod!” hiyaw ng Buwaya. Masyado kang malayo, mahal na ginoo, para makatiyak sa kinikilos.
Para maayos nang tama ang nasa likod, dapat ipasok mo ang ulo
Sa loob na loob ng higanteng bibig ko,” sabi ng nakangising Buwaya.
Pinilipit ng matandang dentista ang mga kamay at nangingiyak sa pangamba
Kanyang nasambit, “Hindi hindi! Kitang-kita ko silang lahat nang mabuti mula rito!”
Biglang may pumasok na babae, sa kanyang kamay ay isang kadenang ginto.
Sabi niya, “Ay Buwi, pilyong bata, nanloloko ka na naman!”
“Mag-ingat ka!” tili ng dentista’t nagsimulang umakyat ng pader.
“Gusto niya ako! Gusto ka niya! Kakainin niya tayong lahat!”
“Huwag kang hangal,” sabi ng babae’t ngumiti nang maganda.
“Hindi siya mapanganib. Siya ang munting alaga ko, buwaya kong kaibig-ibig.”

2. May Sakit

"Hindi ako papasok sa eskwela ngayong araw."
Ang sabi ng munting batang si Pilar Ana Macalalag.
"Mayroon akong tigdas at beke
May hiwa, pantal at mga bukol na kulay lila.
Basa ang bibig ko, tuyo ang lalamunan,
Mabubulag na ang aking kanang mata.
Sinlaki ng bato ang mga tonsil,
Nakabilang ako ng labing-anim na bulutong
At may isa pa, labingpito na,
Hindi ba sa tingin mo'y berde na ang mukha ko?
May sugat ang binti, bughaw ang mga mata—
Malamang instamatik na lagnat ito.
Inuubo at hinahatsing at hinihingal at nabubulunan,
Tiyak na bali ang kaliwang binti—
Sumasakit ang balakang kapag ginagalaw ang aking baba,
Bumaon na ang pusod sa tiyan,
Pilipit na ang likod, ang bukong-bukong ay may pilay,
Sumasakit ang apendiks tuwing umuulan.
Malamig ang ilong, namamanhid ang mga daliri sa paa,
Mayroon pang salubsob sa hinlalaki.
Matigas ang leeg ko, mahina ang gulugod,
Halos bumulong na kapag nagsasalita.
Pinupunan na ng dila ang buong bibig,
Palagay ko'y nalalagas na ang aking buhok.
Baluktot ang siko, ang gulugod ay hindi tuwid.
Ang temperatura'y nasa 42.
Lumiit na ang utak ko, hindi ako makarinig,
May butas sa loob ng tainga.
May balat sa gilid ng kuko, at ang puso ko'y... ano?
Ano 'yon? Anong sabi mo?
Ang sabi mo'y Sabado na?
Paalam, lalabas na ako para maglaro."

Appendix E. Form-centered Filipino translations

1. Ang Dentista at ang Buwaya

Buwaya'y umupo, na may ngiting tuso, do'n sa may dentista.
Bukang-bibig niya, "Ang mga ngipin ko'y dapat nang ipasta."
Dentista'y namutla. Katawa'y nangatog, nanginig, nangatal.
Pabulong nawika, "Pwede ko sigurong mga ito'y tingnan."
"Ang nais kong gawin mo," sabi ng Buwaya, "unahin ang likod.
Mga bagang dito'y walang alinlangang malubha na't bulok."
Kanyang ibinuka malalaking panga. Ay nakasisindak—
Tatlong daang ngipin, lahat ay matulis, matalim, makislap.
Dentista'y lumayo ng dalawang yarda't tumayo na roon.
Pinili ang gamit na ubod nang haba para pang-inspeksyon.
"Sabi ko'y unahin ang nasa likuran!" Buwaya'y dumaing.
"Napakalayo mo, mahal na ginoo, para tiyakin.
Para magawa mo ang likod na likod, ulo mo'y isuksok
Sa pinakaloob ng higanteng bibig ko," nakangising udyok.
Kawawang dentista'y napakiskis-kamay at tuluyang napaiyak.
Siya'y nagsisigaw, "Naku hindi hindi! Tanaw lahat-lahat!"
Nang biglang pumasok babaeng may tangan na gintong kadena.
Siya'y bumulalas, "Ay Buwi na pilyo, nanloko muli pa!"
"Hala mag-ingat ka!" tili ng dentista't inakyat ang dingding.
"Gusto niya ako! Gusto ka rin niya! Tayo'y sasakmalin!"
"Huwag ka ngang hangal," sabi ng babae't magandang ngumiti.
"Siya'y di panganib. Mahal kong buwaya, alaga kong munti."

2. May Sakit

"Hindi ako magkaklase ngayong araw,"
Ang nasambit ng batang si Ana Kalaw.
"Meron akong beke, bukod dito'y nagkatigdas,
Idagdag pa ang bukol ko, pantal, gasgas.
Bibig basa, lalamuna'y natuyo na,
Mabubulag na tiyak ang kanang mata.
Mala-bato sa laki ang aking tonsil,
Ang bulutong binilang ko labing-anim
May isa pa—ngayo'y naging labimpito,
Di ba't berde ang kulay na ng mukha ko?
Mata'y asul, ang binti ko'y nagkahiwa—
Instamatik na trangkaso aking hula.
Humahatsing, sinasamid, hingal, ubo,
Binti'y bali sa kaliwa pihado 'to—
Pag ngumuya, kumikirot ang balakang,
Ang pusod ay lumulubog na sa tiyan.
Likod bakli, bukong-bukong napilipit,
Sa pag-ulan ang apendiks sumasakit.
Namamanhid ang daliri pati ilong,
Salubsob sa hinlalaki'y nakabaon.
Pirming leeg, ang gulugod ay nanghihina,
Bumubulong nang bahagya pag nagwika.
Bibig puno ng dila kong namimintog,
Ang buhok ko'y isa-isang nahuhulog.
Siko pati gulugod ay nabaluktot,
Init ko'y sa 40 na umabot.
Ang utak ay lumiit na, nabibingi,
Meron butas sa taingang di mabuti.
Nagbabalat sa may kuko, puso'y... ano?
Ano kamo? Ano ulit ang sabi mo?
Ang sabi mo'y Sabado na? O paano?
Paalam na. Labas na ko't maglalaro."

Appendix F. Questionnaire for the poetry reading session

1. Gusto ninyo bang nagbabasa ng tula?
2. Anong klase ng tula ang gusto ninyong binabasa?
3. Mas gusto ninyo ba na kayo ang nagbabasa ng tula o mas gusto ninyo na makinig habang binabasa ito sa inyo ni teacher o ni mommy o ni daddy?
4. Ano ang mas gusto ninyo: magbasa ng tula o magbasa ng mga kwento?
5. Anong wika ng karamihan sa binabasa ninyo – English o Filipino?

VIDEO (Ang Dentista at ang Buwaya)

6. Madali bang intindihin ang tula?
7. Gaano nakakatawa ang tula?
8. Ano ang nakakatawa sa tula?

VIDEO (May Sakit)

9. Madali bang intindihin ang tula?
10. Gaano nakakatawa ang tula?
11. Ano ang nakakatawa sa tula?
12. Alin ang mas nakakatawa?

13. Pwede pa bang mas maging nakakatawa ang dalawang tula na napakinggan nyo? Paano magiging mas nakakatawa ang mga tula?
14. Naeengganyo ba kayo ng mga nakakatawang tula na magbasa ng iba pang tula?
15. Naeengganyo ba kayo ng mga nakakatawang tula na magbasa ng iba pang tula sa Filipino?
16. Sa tingin nyo ba ay nakakatawa pa rin ang tula kung babasahin niyo ito ng mag-isa o mas nakakatawa ito kapag binabasa kasama ang iba pang mga bata?
17. Sa tingin ninyo, para kanino isinulat ang mga tula?
18. Bilang mga bata, nakakaugnay ba kayo sa dalawang tula?
19. Bilang mga Filipino, nakakaugnay ba kayo sa tema ng dalawang tula?

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Summary

The study sheds light on how children perceive humor in translated funny poems. Grade 3 pupils from the Philippines participated in poetry reading sessions to discuss poems translated from English into Filipino. The findings reveal that children are likely to appreciate the humor in the translations from a personal lens rather than a cultural one. Humor also motivates children to read more poems and to read more in Filipino. This finding suggests the need for more available reading materials in Filipino for Filipino children in this age range. In contrast to the findings of earlier studies, poor comprehension does not hinder humor appreciation and the study offers some insights into this. The study likewise confirms that humor is a social act: children are likely to appreciate a humorous text when it is read with others. That children can discuss the humor in the poems makes the texts funnier; this view contrasts with other studies that argue how humor is diminished when it is discussed. However, no preference is shown when it comes to children reading texts on their own or listening to the texts read to them. Furthermore, the mode of input does not affect the funniness of poems. Children perceive the humor in funny children's poems as universal (that is, it can be appreciated by adults as well) which suggests that children themselves agree that children's literature can have a dual readership. The study also reveals gender differences in humor appreciation. More boys than girls have responses that support the superiority theory of humor while more girls than boys have answers that substantiate the incongruity theory of humor. The study explores how a Filipino virtue could have influenced the children's responses. Finally, the study shows that content is more crucial than form in determining humor in funny poems for children. That is, a poem can still be funny even without rhyme and rhythm. This contradicts the notion that rhyme is indispensable in humorous children's poems. As opposed to the findings of other researchers, free verse (i.e., a poem lacking rhyme and rhythm) is seen to appeal to children. One recommendation given is to examine whether the results hold for children from a different age group and when the poems are instead translated from Filipino into English.

Chapter 2 focuses on the definition of children's literature. The chapter demonstrates that although children's literature can be defined, the task of defining it is open to debate since the definitions themselves are not fixed and scholars and practitioners have different, at times contradictory, ways of defining the genre. But these definitions exclude children's perspectives and are based solely on what adults think about children's literature. Thus, how children perceive texts primarily meant for them is examined in this study by inquiring about the intended audience of children's poems in the poetry reading sessions. Another aim of the chapter is to show how the understanding of children's literature is influenced by the evolving concepts of childhood, from medieval times until modern times. However, such concepts of childhood are culturally constructed and did not develop linearly for all cultures. Because the original poems are passed into a different culture when translated into Filipino, it is important to see whether the readers can connect with the poems' contexts. Whether the children can identify with the poems' characters and situations is explored in the poetry reading sessions. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the status of children's literature. For some scholars, children's literature does not enjoy the same status as adult literature. Nevertheless, this varies from culture to culture. The chapter ends with the introduction of role dualism, a concept formulated by the author that can be used to explain what legitimizes the role of adults as creators and controllers of what children can and should read.

It is not only children's literature that is peripherally situated but, quite often, so too is translated literature. Even-Zohar proposes this in his polysystem theory which is discussed in Chapter 3. It briefly examines how translated literature in the Philippines moved from a peripheral position to a central position during the Spanish colonial period. Special attention is given to this part of Philippine history as it was during this period when translated children's literature in the Philippines had been formalized. A historical take on the translation of children's literature in the Philippines provides insight into the evolving functions of translation in a former colony. To compare early and current functions, the chapter also discusses present directions in translated children's literature in the Philippines. Contemporary trends show that the translation of children's literature is still influenced by the country's colonial experience, as indicated for instance, by the number of bilingual books published for children. Such influence is corroborated by the results of the poetry reading sessions which looked at the children's preferred language for reading.

Poems are more challenging to translate than prose because the translator must consider not only the content but also the form which includes rhyme, rhythm and meter. In Chapter 4, it is shown that most of the time, the translator cannot be faithful to both form and content and must choose which to prioritize between the two. For this reason, two types of translations were used in the study: one based on form and another based on content. There are different frameworks available that can explain form-based translation. This study looks at two: Holmes' four forms of poetry translation and Kochol's three ways of translating poetic rhythm. However, although the frameworks are helpful to

some extent, they are not without limitations: certain cases do not fall neatly into a group or category. This suggests the need to use existing frameworks with caution and to update these by including new, even "hybrid", classifications that can accommodate other cases. The chapter turns to Tsur's cognitive poetics to explain why specific rhyme patterns are more appropriate for creating humorous poems. Regarding content, it is shown that even if the translator possesses creative freedom, he or she is not at liberty to alter the meaning of the text. This is particularly difficult to guarantee as the translation is the translator's interpretation of the poem, requiring the translator to be an excellent reader to understand what the text means. The humor in narrative poems becomes effective when readers suspend their disbelief in the absurd. The chapter discusses how knowing the role of suspended disbelief in humor can guide actual translation. Finally, the chapter examines the translation of proper names and how it can be challenging given inconsistencies in the theories surrounding it.

Chapter 5 explores the similarity between humor and children's literature: both are difficult to define. Humor can be defined according to the physical response it generates, its intent and the cognitive processes involved in its appreciation. Nevertheless, similar to children's literature, the definitions vary greatly among scholars. Three theories of humor are studied: the incongruity theory, the relief theory and the superiority theory. Humor is influenced by culture and the chapter makes this point by citing how culture, for example, determines appropriate humor. The influence of culture on humor appreciation is evident in the children's responses in the study and further explored in Chapter 8 on interpretation. Humor in children is discussed based on McGhee's stages of humor development in young children. Particular emphasis is given to the final stage of development to which the participants of the study belong. As McGhee's assumptions only support the incongruity theory, there is still a need to understand how the relief and superiority theories figure from the perspective of cognitive development of humor in children – this can be the focus of other studies. The chapter moves on to a discussion of humor in children's literature. Finally, the chapter presents some features of humorous poems for children. One of these is the combination of "tendentious content" and "poetic form" which is said to work hand in hand in creating humor. The study investigates which of the two determines humor in poetry more; the findings can be read in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6 zooms in on the methodology employed in the study. It begins with a section on the interviews conducted with publishers in the Philippines, the results of which are used to substantiate the claims made in the literature review. The activities related to participant recruitment are discussed, including ethical considerations and problems with recruitment. In particular, it discusses how the research adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic, which situates the study in an extraordinary time with a new set of norms. A considerable part of the chapter is devoted to discussing how the materials for the poetry reading sessions have been prepared. As mentioned, two translations have been produced: one focused on form and another focused on content. In translat-

ing for form, the two elements considered are line length/syllable count and rhyme. When it comes to content, the primary consideration in translating the poems is lexical correspondence or the meaning of the texts. The chapter then moves on to the design of the group poetry reading sessions, detailing how the Covid-19 pandemic affected and transformed the study design. The shift to online channels of collecting data as a result of the pandemic has its pros and cons. But if used correctly and planned well, the digital means can have more advantages than disadvantages as observed in the present study. Semi-structured interviews were employed in the study and the chapter expounds on the benefits and drawbacks of this type of data collection. A general evaluation of the poetry reading sessions has been included to aid those who plan to use semi-structured interviews in their work. The chapter concludes with how the sessions have been transcribed and the responses analyzed.

Chapter 7, which presents the results of the poetry reading sessions with children, is organized according to the codes generated in the analysis of responses. There are nine sections in all. These are: general attitudes toward poetry, language preferences in reading, self-assessment of comprehensibility, the preferred mode of input for poetry, shared versus individual reading experiences, the perceived target audience of children's poems, the relatability of content, perception of humor, and the primacy of form or content in determining humor in poems. Direct quotes supplement the findings to provide evidence and more information and context. The chapter also includes some tables to display how certain variables have been cross-tabulated, for instance, the correlation between the poems' funniness ratings and the gender of the reader. The chapter ends with some feedback received from the participants and their parents. Feedback was included to show how poetry reading sessions, despite the online setup as the "new normal", can inspire poetry appreciation among young readers by showing them that poems can be fun. What this points to is that researchers can design and conduct studies that not only work for them but also directly benefit participants. Unfortunately, the potential to make studies valuable for participants is often lost in favor of mere data collection.

Chapter 8 includes an interpretation of the results. It provides a closer look at some of the study's most important findings. The Filipino concept of being one with others is used to explain the participants' responses to the translated poems. The effect of reading funny poems on social relationships, reading widely, and creativity is also discussed. Furthermore, it is shown how funny poems are more complex to process than jokes which have implications for humor competence. Whether it makes a difference when poems can be heard and read simultaneously is offered as a topic for future studies. Finally, the chapter makes a case for the preference for free verse among the children in the study, which contradicts the findings of earlier preference studies.

In Chapter 9, the conclusions of the study are presented. These touch on how children view children's literature, how Filipino books can strengthen bilingual proficiency and how poetry can appeal to children. In addition, the chapter discusses the role of culture and gender in poetry appreciation, which type

of "relatability" is more influential when reading a translation, whether it is content or form that determines humor in translated poems, and the use of group interviews to study children's humor. The chapter ends with some recommended topics for further study.

Samenvatting

Deze studie werpt licht op hoe kinderen humor ervaren in vertaalde grappige gedichten. Filipijnse leerlingen uit de derde klas (8-9 jaar) namen deel aan sessies waarin gedichten werden gelezen en bediscussieerd die van het Engels naar het Filipino waren vertaald. De resultaten laten zien dat kinderen geneigd zijn de humor in de vertalingen te waarderen vanuit een persoonlijk perspectief en niet zozeer vanuit een cultureel perspectief. Humor motiveert kinderen ook om meer gedichten te lezen en om meer in Filipino te lezen. Dit resultaat suggereert de noodzaak voor meer beschikbaar leesmateriaal in Filipino voor Filipijnse kinderen in deze leeftijdsklasse. In tegenstelling tot de uitkomsten van eerdere studies blijkt het dat een gebrekkig begrip de waardering van humor niet in de weg staat en de studie geeft hier enkele inzichten in. De studie bevestigt eveneens dat humor een sociale handeling is: kinderen zijn meer geneigd om een humoristische tekst te waarderen wanneer deze met anderen wordt gelezen. Het feit dat kinderen de humor kunnen bediscussiëren maakt de teksten grappiger, in tegenstelling tot eerdere studies, die betogen dat de humor afneemt wanneer erover gepraat wordt. Er wordt echter geen voorkeur getoond als het gaat om kinderen die zelfstandig teksten lezen of als ze naar de teksten luisteren wanneer die aan ze worden voorgelezen. Bovendien heeft de manier van input geen invloed op de grappigheid van de gedichten. Kinderen ervaren de humor in grappige kindergedichten als universeel (dat wil zeggen dat ze ook door volwassenen kunnen worden gewaardeerd), wat suggereert dat de kinderen zelf het erover eens zijn dat kinderliteratuur een tweeledig lezerspubliek kan hebben. De studie laat ook genderverschillen zien in de waardering van humor. Meer jongens dan meisjes geven antwoorden die de superioriteitstheorie van humor ondersteunen terwijl meer meisjes dan jongens antwoorden geven die de incongruentietheorie van humor onderbouwen. De studie onderzoekt hoe een Filipijnse jeugd de antwoorden van de kinderen kan hebben beïnvloed. Ten slotte toont de studie aan dat inhoud crucialer is dan vorm als het aankomt op het vaststellen van humor in grappige kindergedichten. Dat betekent dat een gedicht nog steeds grappig kan zijn, zelfs zonder rijm en ritme. Dit is in tegenspraak met het idee

dat rijm onmisbaar is in humoristische kindergedichten. In tegenstelling tot de resultaten van andere onderzoekers blijken vrije verzen (gedichten die geen rijm en ritme hebben) kinderen aan te spreken. Een aanbeveling die wordt gegeven is om te onderzoeken of de resultaten ook opgaan voor kinderen van een andere leeftijdsgroep en wanneer de gedichten vertalingen zijn vanuit het Filipino in het Engels.

Hoofdstuk 2 richt zich op de definitie van kinderliteratuur. Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat kinderliteratuur weliswaar gedefinieerd kan worden, maar dat de definiëring ervan onderwerp is van discussie, aangezien de definities zelf niet vaststaan en wetenschappers en beoefenaars verschillende, soms zelfs tegenstrijdige, manieren hebben om het genre te definiëren. Deze definities houden echter geen rekening met het perspectief van kinderen en zijn alleen gebaseerd op hoe volwassenen aankijken tegen kinderliteratuur. Daarom wordt in het huidige onderzoek onderzocht hoe kinderen teksten ervaren die in de eerste plaats voor hen bedoeld zijn. Dit wordt gedaan door te vragen naar de beoogde doelgroep van kindergedichten in sessies waarin gedichten worden gelezen. Een ander doel van het hoofdstuk is om te laten zien hoe het begrip van kinderliteratuur wordt beïnvloed door de in ontwikkeling zijnde concepten van de kindertijd, vanaf de middeleeuwen tot het heden. Zulke concepten betreffende de kindertijd zijn echter cultureel bepaald en hebben zich niet lineair ontwikkeld voor alle culturen. Omdat de originele gedichten in een andere cultuur worden geïntroduceerd wanneer ze in het Filipino worden vertaald, is het van belang om te bekijken of de lezers zich kunnen vinden in de contexten van de gedichten. De vraag of de kinderen zich kunnen identificeren met de personages en situaties in de gedichten wordt onderzocht in de leessessies. Bovendien bespreekt het hoofdstuk de status van kinderliteratuur. Voor sommige wetenschappers heeft kinderliteratuur niet dezelfde status als literatuur voor volwassenen. Dit varieert echter van cultuur tot cultuur. Het hoofdstuk sluit af met de introductie van "roldualisme", een concept dat is geformuleerd door de onderzoeker en dat kan worden gebruikt om uit te leggen wat de rol van volwassenen legitimeert als de ontwerpers en controleurs van wat kinderen kunnen en zouden moeten lezen.

Niet alleen kinderliteratuur heeft een perifere positie: vertaalde literatuur heeft dat vaak ook. Even-Zohar betoogt dit in zijn polysysteemtheorie, die wordt besproken in hoofdstuk 3. Er wordt kort nagegaan hoe vertaalde literatuur in de Filipijnen vanuit een perifere positie een centrale positie kreeg tijdens de Spaanse koloniale tijd. Er wordt speciale aandacht besteed aan dit deel van de Filipijnse geschiedenis, omdat vertaalde kinderliteratuur in deze periode geformaliseerd werd in de Filipijnen. Een historische kijk op de vertaling van kinderliteratuur in de Filipijnen geeft inzicht in de zich ontwikkelende functies van vertalen in een voormalige kolonie. Om de vroege en huidige functies te vergelijken, bespreekt het hoofdstuk ook de hedendaagse trends in vertaalde kinderliteratuur in de Filipijnen. Deze trends tonen aan dat de vertaling van kinderliteratuur nog steeds wordt beïnvloed door het koloniale verleden van het land, wat bijvoorbeeld tot uiting komt in het aantal tweetalige boeken dat voor

kinderen wordt gepubliceerd. Deze invloed wordt bevestigd door de resultaten van de leessessies die keken naar de taal waar de kinderen de voorkeur aan geven bij het lezen.

Het is een grotere uitdaging om gedichten te vertalen dan proza, omdat de vertaler niet alleen moet letten op de inhoud, maar ook op de vorm, zoals rijm, ritme en metrum. In hoofdstuk 4 wordt aangetoond dat de vertaler vaak niet trouw kan zijn aan zowel de vorm als aan de inhoud van het origineel en daarom moet kiezen welke van de twee de prioriteit krijgt in de vertaling. Om deze reden werden in het onderzoek twee typen vertalingen gebruikt: één gebaseerd op de vorm en een andere gebaseerd op de inhoud. Er zijn verschillende kaders beschikbaar die vertalingen gebaseerd op de vorm kunnen verklaren. Dit proefschrift kijkt naar twee van deze kaders: de vier vormen van poëzievertaling van Holms en de drie manieren om poëtisch ritme te vertalen van Kochol. Hoewel deze kaders tot op zekere hoogte houvast bieden, zijn ze echter niet zonder beperkingen: bepaalde gevallen passen niet precies in een bepaalde groep of categorie. Dit betekent dat er voorzichtigheid geboden moet zijn bij het gebruik van bestaande kaders en dat ze aangepast moeten worden door nieuwe, zelfs "hybride", classificaties toe te voegen die geschikt zijn voor de overige gevallen. Het hoofdstuk richt zich vervolgens op Tsur's cognitieve poëzie om te verklaren waarom specifieke rijmpatronen geschikter zijn om grappige gedichten te creëren dan andere. Met betrekking tot de inhoud wordt aangetoond dat de vertaler niet de vrijheid heeft om de betekenis van de tekst aan te passen, ook niet als hij of zij creatieve vrijheid heeft. Het is echter moeilijk om dit te garanderen aangezien de vertaling de interpretatie van het gedicht van de vertaler is, wat betekent dat de vertaler een zeer goede lezer moet zijn om te begrijpen wat de tekst betekent. De humor in verhalende gedichten wordt effectief wanneer lezers bereid zijn te geloven in het absurde. Het hoofdstuk bespreekt hoe de kennis van de rol van de opschorting van ongeloof in humor de eigenlijke vertaling kan sturen. Ten slotte onderzoekt het hoofdstuk de vertaling van eigennamen en hoe uitdagend dit kan zijn, gelet op de inconsequenties die er te vinden zijn in de theorieën die hierover bestaan.

Hoofdstuk 5 gaat in op de overeenkomst tussen humor en kinderliteratuur: beide kunnen moeilijk gedefinieerd worden. Humor kan worden gedefinieerd op basis van de fysieke reactie die het opwekt, het doel van de humor en de cognitieve processen die betrokken zijn bij de waardering ervan. Net als bij kinderliteratuur het geval is, zijn er echter veel verschillende definities in omloop onder wetenschappers. Drie theorieën over humor worden bestudeerd: de theorie van incongruentie, de theorie van opluchting en de theorie van superioriteit. Humor wordt beïnvloed door cultuur en het hoofdstuk laat dit zien door aan te tonen hoe bijvoorbeeld cultuur bepaalt wat gepaste humor is. De invloed van cultuur op de waardering van humor blijkt duidelijk uit de reacties van de kinderen in het onderzoek, iets wat verder wordt onderzocht in hoofdstuk 8, dat gaat over interpretatie. De bespreking van humor bij kinderen wordt gebaseerd op de stadia van McGhee van de ontwikkeling van humor bij jonge kinderen. Bijzondere aandacht wordt besteed aan het laatste stadium van de ontwikkeling,

waar de participanten van het onderzoek onder vallen. Aangezien de aannames van McGhee's aannames alleen de theorie van incongruentie ondersteunen, is het nog steeds noodzakelijk om te begrijpen wat de rol van de ontladingstheorie en superioriteitstheorie zijn vanuit het perspectief van de cognitieve ontwikkeling van humor bij kinderen – dit kan in vervolgonderzoek worden uitgezocht. Het hoofdstuk vervolgt met een discussie van humor in kinderliteratuur. Tot slot presenteert het hoofdstuk enkele kenmerken van grappige gedichten voor kinderen. Eén van deze kenmerken is de combinatie van "tendentieuze inhoud" en "poëtische vorm", waarvan wordt gezegd dat deze samenwerken om humor te creëren. In dit proefschrift wordt onderzocht welke van de twee bepalender is voor humor in poëzie; de resultaten staan in hoofdstuk 7.

Hoofdstuk 6 gaat in op de methodologie die is gebruikt voor het onderzoek. Het hoofdstuk begint met een bespreking van de interviews die gehouden zijn met uitgevers in de Filipijnen. De resultaten hiervan worden gebruikt om de beweringen die bij de bespreking van de literatuur zijn gemaakt te onderbouwen. De procedure die is gevolgd om participanten te werven worden besproken, inclusief ethische overwegingen en problemen met de werving. Er wordt met name ingegaan op de manier waarop het onderzoek is aangepast aan de Covid-19-pandemie, die ervoor zorgde dat het onderzoek in een uitzonderlijke periode en met een nieuwe set normen moest worden uitgevoerd. Een groot deel van het hoofdstuk is gewijd aan de bespreking van de manier waarop de materialen die zijn gebruikt voor de sessies waarin de gedichten werden gelezen zijn voorbereid. Zoals eerder besproken werden er twee vertalingen gemaakt: één gericht op de vorm en een andere gericht op de inhoud. In de vertaling die zich richtte op de vorm werden twee elementen betrokken: regellengte/aantal lettergrepen en ritme. Voor de inhoud was de voornaamste overweging bij het vertalen van gedichten de lexicale overeenkomst of de betekenis van de teksten. Vervolgens bespreekt het hoofdstuk het ontwerp van de leessessies, waarin in groepen gedichten werden gelezen. Hierbij wordt ook aandacht besteed aan de invloed van de pandemie op het ontwerp van het onderzoek. De omschakeling naar onlinekanalen om data te verzamelen als gevolg van de pandemie heeft voordelen en nadelen, maar in dit onderzoek werd duidelijk dat de digitale middelen meer voordelen dan nadelen kunnen hebben, mits ze op een juiste manier worden gebruikt en er goed wordt gepland. Semigestructureerde interviews warden afgenomen in het onderzoek en het hoofdstuk legt uit wat de voordelen en nadelen zijn van dit type datavergaring. Een algemene evaluatie van de leessessies is ook opgenomen om degenen die in hun werk gebruik willen maken van semigestructureerde interviews te helpen. Het hoofdstuk sluit af met een beschrijving van de manier waarop de sessies werden getranscribeerd en hoe de reacties werden geanalyseerd.

Hoofdstuk 7, waarin de resultaten worden gepresenteerd van de leessessies van de gedichten met kinderen, is opgebouwd op basis van de codes die zijn gegenereerd in de analyse van de reacties. Er zijn in totaal negen secties: algemene houdingen ten opzichte van poëzie, taalvoorkeuren bij het lezen, zelfbeoordeling van de begrijpelijkheid, de geprefereerde manier van input van de

poëzie, gedeelde versus individuele leeservaringen, de perceptie van de doelgroep van kindergedichten, de herkenbaarheid van de inhoud, perceptie van humor en de voorrang die wordt gegeven aan vorm of inhoud in het bepalen van humor in gedichten. Citaten ondersteunen de resultaten en bieden meer informatie en context. Het hoofdstuk bevat ook enkele tabellen om te laten zien hoe bepaalde variabelen zijn gekruist, zoals de correlatie tussen de scores voor de grappigheid van de gedichten en het geslacht van de lezer. Het hoofdstuk sluit af met enige feedback die is ontvangen van de participanten en hun ouders. Dit is gedaan om te laten zien hoe de leessessies, ondanks de online omgeving waarin deze plaatsvonden als het "nieuwe normaal", de waardering voor gedichten een boost kunnen geven bij jonge lezers door hun te laten zien dat gedichten leuk kunnen zijn. Dit laat zien dat onderzoekers onderzoeken kunnen ontwikkelen en uitvoeren die niet alleen voor hen werken maar ook voordeel hebben voor participanten. Helaas gaat de kans om onderzoeken ook waardevol te maken voor participanten vaak verloren ten gunste van de dataverzameling.

Hoofdstuk 8 bevat een interpretatie van de resultaten. Het geeft een nadere kijk op enkele van de belangrijkste resultaten van het onderzoek. Het Filipijnse concept van één zijn met anderen wordt gebruikt om de reacties van de participanten op de vertaalde gedichten te verklaren. Ook wordt het effect van het lezen van grappige gedichten op sociale relaties, meer lezen en creativiteit besproken. Bovendien wordt aangetoond dat grappige gedichten moeilijker zijn om te verwerken dan grapjes, wat gevolgen heeft voor de vaardigheid in humor. Of het verschil maakt wanneer gedichten tegelijkertijd worden gehoord en gelezen is een onderwerp voor vervolgonderzoek. Tot slot benadrukt het hoofdstuk de voorkeur voor vrije verzen bij de kinderen in het onderzoek, wat ingaat tegen resultaten uit eerder onderzoek.

In hoofdstuk 9 worden de conclusies van het onderzoek gepresenteerd. Deze hebben betrekking op de manier waarop kinderen kinderliteratuur zien, hoe Filipino boekenmeertaligheid kunnen versterken en hoe poëzie kinderen kan aanspreken. Daarbij bespreekt het hoofdstuk de rol van cultuur en gender in de waardering van poëzie en de vraag welk type "herkenbaarheid" meer invloed heeft bij het lezen van een vertaling, de vraag of het de inhoud of de vorm is die humor bepaalt in vertaalde gedichten, en het gebruik van groepsinterviews om humor van kinderen te bestuderen. Het hoofdstuk sluit af met enkele aanbevolen onderwerpen voor vervolgonderzoek.

Buod

Nilalayon ng pag-aaral na ito na bigyang linaw kung paano naiintindihan ng mga bata ang katatatawan sa mga isinaling nakakatawang tulang pambata. Sumali ang mga bata na nasa ikatlong baitang sa Pilipinas sa mga pagbabasa ng mga tula upang pag-usapan ang mga isinaling tula mula Ingles patungong Filipino. Natuklasan na mas napapahalagahan ng mga bata ang katatawanan sa salin mula sa personal kasya pangkulturang pagtingin. Nahihikayat din ng katatawanan ang mga bata na magbasa ng iba pang tula at magbasa sa Filipino. Ipinapahiwatig nito ang pangangailangan para sa mga babasahing Filipino para sa mga batang Pilipino sa ganitong edad. Hindi tulad sa natuklasan ng mga ibang pag-aaral, ang mahinang pag-unawa ay hindi hadlang para mapahalagahan ang katatawanan at nagbibigay ang pag-aaral na ito ng ilang kadahilanan. Pinagtitibay din ng pag-aaral na ito na ang katatawanan ay isang gawaing panlipunan: higit na nagugustuhan ng mga bata ang nakatatawang teksto kung ito'y binabasa kasama ang ibang tao. Mas nagigiging nakatatawa ang nakatatawang tekso kung napapag-usapan ang katatawanan dito, salungat sa mga naunang pag-aaral na sinasabang humihina ang katatawanan kung ito ay pinag-uusapan. Subalit walang pagtatangi na nakita pagdating sa kung ang teksto ay binabasa sa sarili o pinakikinggan habang ito'y binabasa. Nauunawaan ng mga bata ang katatawanan sa mga nakakatawang tulang pambata bilang para sa lahat (ibig sabihin ay nagugustuhan din ito ng mga nakatatanda) na nangangahulugang tinatanggap din ng mga bata na maaaring magkaroon ng dalawahang mambabasa (o dual readership) ang panitikang pambata. Lumalabas din sa pag-aaral na mayroong mga pagkakaiba sa kasarian pagdating sa pag-unawa ng katatawanan. Mas maraming batang lalaki kaysa babae ang nagbigay ng sagot na kinakatigan ang superiority theory ng katatawanan habang mas maraming batang babae kaysa lalaki ang may mga tugon na nagpapatunay sa incongruity theory ng katatawanan. Siniyasat ng pag-aaral na ito kung paano naimpluwensyahan ng isang pagpapahalaga sa kulturang Pilipino ang mga tugon ng mga bata. Sa pagtatapos, pinapakita sa pag-aaral na mas mahalaga ang nilalaman kaysa anyo sa paglikha ng katatawanan sa mga nakakatawang

tulang pambata. Ibig sabihin, ang tula ay maaari pa ring maging nakatatawa kahit walang tugma o ritmo. Sumasalungat ito sa paniwala na kailangan ang tugma sa mga nakatatawang tulang pambata. Salungat din sa natuklasan ng ibang mga mananaliksik, ang malayang taludturan ay nagugustuhan din ng mga bata. Isa sa mga mungkahi ay suriin kung ang mga natuklasan sa pag-aaral na ito ay totoo rin para sa mga bata sa ibang edad at kung ang mga tula ay isinalin mula Filipino patungong Ingles.

Nakatuon ang Kabanata 2 sa kahulugan ng panitikang pambata. Ipinapakita ng kabanata na bagaman mabibigyan kahuluguan ang panitikang pambata, ang pagpapaliwanag dito'y bukas sa debate dahil ang mismong mga kahulugan ay hindi permanente at may iba't iba, at minsan pa nga'y magkakasalungat, na pamamaraan ng pagbibigay kahuluguan sa dyanra. Subalit hindi kasama sa mga kahulugang ito ang mga pananaw ng mga bata at nakabatay lamang sa palagay ng mga matatanda tungkol sa panitikang pambata. Kung kaya't sinusuri ng pag-aaral na ito kung paano nauunawaan ng mga bata ang mga tekstong pangunahing nakalaan para sa kanila sa pamamagitan ng pagsisiyasat sa poetry reading session tungkol sa nilalayong mambabasa ng mga tulang pambata. Isa pang nilalayon ng kabanata ay ipakita kung paano kaakibat ng pagkakaunawa sa panitikang pambata ang umuunlad na konspeto ng pagkabata, mula sa panahong medyebal hanggang modernong panahon. Subalit ang mga konseptong ito ay kultural na binuo at hindi umuusad sa tuwid na direksyon para sa lahat ng kultura. Dahil ang mga orihinal na tula ay naipasa sa ibang kultura sa pagkakasalin ng mga ito sa Filipino, mahalagang makita kung ang mga mambabasa ay nakakaugnay sa konteksto ng mga tula. Kung nakakaugnay ba ang mga bata sa mga tauhan at sitwasyon sa tula'y sinaliksik sa mga poetry reading session. Tinatalakay din ng kabanata ang estado ng panitikang pambata. Para sa ibang iskolar, hindi natatamasa ng pantikang pambata ang estado na mayroon ang panitikang pang-nakatatanda. Subalit ang estadong ito'y nag-iiba ayon sa kultura. Nagtatapos ang kabanata sa pagpapakilala ng role dualism, isang konsepto na binuo ng may-akda upang ipaliwanag kung paano nagiging lehitimo ang papel ng mga nakatatanda bilang tagalikha at taga-kontrol ng kung anong maaari at dapat basahin ng mga bata.

Hindi lang ang panitikang pambata ang nasa periphery ngunit kadalasa'y pati ang isinaling panitikan. Ito ang minungkahi ni Even-Zohar sa kanyang polysystem theory na tinatalakay sa Kabanata 3. Sinisiyasat ng kabanata kung paano ang isinaling panitikan sa Pilipinas ay kumilos mula periphery patungong gitna sa panahon ng pananakop ng mga Espanyol. Binigyan ng natatanging pansin ang bahaging ito ng kasaysayan ng Pilipinas sapagkat sa panahong ito nagawang pormal ang isinaling panitikang pambata. Ang pangkasaysayang pagtingin sa pagsasalin ng panitikang pambata'y nagpapalalim sa pag-unawa sa umuunlad na tungkulin ng pagsasalin sa isang dating kolonya. Para maihambing ang dati at kasalukuyang tungkulin, tinatalakay din ng kabanata ang mga kasalukuyang direksyon ng isinaling panitikang pambata sa Pilipinas. Pinapakita ng mga kontemporaryong tunguhin na ang pagsasalin ng panitikang pambata'y may impluwensya pa rin ng karanasang kolonyal ng bansa. Isang

palatandaan nito ang bilang ng mga bilingual na aklat para sa mga bata. Ang nasabing impluwensya'y pinagtitibay ng resulta ng mga poetry reading session na tiningnan ang higit na gustong wika ng mga bata sa pagbabasa.

Higit na mahirap magsalin ng tula kaysa akdang tuluyan sapagkat kailangan isaalang-alang ng tagasalin hindi lamang ang nilalaman kundi pati na rin ang anyo kabilang na ang tugma, ritmo at sukat. Sa Kabanata 4, ipinapakita na madalas ay hindi maaaring maging tapat sa parehong nilalaman at anyo ang tagasalin at kailangan mamili kung alin ang higit na pahahalagahan. Sa ganitong kadahilanan, dalawang uri ng salin ang ginawa para sa pag-aaral na ito: isang batay sa anyo at isang batay sa nilalaman. May iba't ibang balangkas na maaaring magpaliwanag ng pagsasalin batay sa anyo. Dalawa ang tiningnan ng pag-aaral na ito: ang apat na anyo ng pagsasalin ng tula ni Holmes at ang tatlong paraan ng pagsasalin ng panulaang ritmo ni Kochol. Gayunman, bagaman nakatutulong ang mga balangkas, mayroon silang mga limitasyon: may mga kasong hindi malinis na nabibilang sa isang uri o kategorya lamang. Ibig sabihin ay dapat gamitin ang mga umiiral na balangkas ng may pag-iingat at itama ang mga ito sa pamamagitan ng mga bago o hybrid na klasipikasyon na kabibilangan ng ibang mga kaso. Tinatalakay din ng kabanata ang cognitive poetics ni Tsur upang ipaliwanag kung bakit may natatanging padron ng ritmo na mas nararapat para sa nakatatawang tula. Tungkol sa nilalalaman, ipinakikita na bagaman may malikhaing kalayaan ang tagasalin, hindi siya malayang baguhin ang kahulugan ng teksto. Ito'y mahirap na igarantiya dahil ang salin ay interpretasyon ng tagasalin sa tula, na nangangailangan ng husay sa pagbabasa upang maintidihan ang kahulugan ng tula. Nagiging mabisa ang katatawanan sa mga naratibong tula kung pipigilin muna ng mambabasa ang hindi paniniwala sa balintuna. Tinatalakay ng kabanata kung paano makakagabay ang kaalaman sa papel ng nabanggit na suspension of disbelief sa aktwal na pagsasalin. Panghuli, sinisiyasat ng kabanata ang pagsasalin ng pangngalang pantangi at ang mga hamon nito kapag isinaalang-alang ang mga pagkakaiba-iba sa mga teoryang tumatalakay dito.

Sa Kabanata 5, sinisiyasat ang pagkakapareho sa pagitan ng katatawanan at panitikang pambata: pareho silang mahirap bigyang kahuluguan. Maaaring bigyan ng depinisyon ang katatawanan batay sa pisikal na tugon dito, layunin o sa mga kognitibong proseso na kailangan sa pagpapahalaga rito. Subalit, tulad ng pantikang pambata, ang mga depinisyon ay magkakaiba sa pagitan ng mga iskolar. Tatlong teorya ng katatawanan ang pinag-aralan: ang incongruity theory, relief theory at superiority theory. Ang katatawanan ay naiimpluwensyahan ng kultura at pinapakita ng kabanatang ito kung paano naiimpluwensyahan ng kultura ang katanggap-tanggap na anyo ng katatawanan. Ang impluwensya ng kultura sa pagtanggap sa katatawanan ay makikita sa mga sagot ng mga bata sa pag-aaral at higit na siniyasat sa Kabanata 8 patungkol sa pagpapaliwanag. Ang katatawanan para sa mga bata'y tinalakay batay sa mga yugto ng pagbuo ng katatawanan na minungkahi ni McGhee. Partikular na diin ang binigay sa huling yugto kung saan napapabilang ang mga lumahok sa pag-aaral. Sapagkat kinakatigan lamang ng mga palagay ni McGhee ang incongruity theory, may

pangangailangan pang maintindihan ang relief theory at superiority theory mula sa perspektibo ng kognitibong pagbuo ng katatawanan sa mga bata – maaari itong maging pokus ng ibang mga pag-aaral. Matapos ito, tumungo ang pagtalakay sa katatawanan sa panitikang pambata. Panghuli, nagbibigay ang kabanata ng ilang katangian ng mga nakakatawang tulang pambata. Isa rito ang pagsasama ng tendentious content at anyong patula na sinasabing magkatuwang sa pagbuo ng katatawanan. Sinisiyasat ng pag-aaral na ito kung alin sa dalawa ang higit na nagpapasya ng katatawanan sa tula; mababasa ang mga natuklasan sa Kabanata 7.

Ang Kabanata 6 ay nakapokus sa metodolohiya na ginamit sa pag-aaral. Nagsisimula ito sa isang seksyon tungkol sa panayam sa mga manlilimbag sa Pilipinas kung saan ang mga resulta'y nagpapatibay sa mga mga sinabi sa pag-susuri ng mga unang pag-aaral (o literature review). Tinatalakay sa kabanatang ito ang mga ginawa sa pangangalap ng kalahok, kabilang na ang mga etikal na pagsasaalang-alang at mga naging suliranin sa pangangalap ng kalahok. Sa partikular, tinatalakay kung paano umangkop sa pandemya ng Covid-19 ang pag-aaral, na nilagay ang pagsisiyasat sa isang pambihirang panahon na may mga bagong hanay ng pamantayan. Malaking bahagi ng kabanata ang ginugol sa pagtalakay sa pagsasalin ng mga materyales para sa mga poetry reading session. Tulad ng nabanggit, dalawang salin ang ginawa: isang nakapokus sa anyo at isang nakapokus sa nilalaman. Sa pagsasalin batay sa anyo, ang dalawang elementong binigyang pansin ay ang haba ng linya/bilang ng pantig at tugma. Pagdating sa nilalaman, pangunahing isinaalang-alang ang leksikal na correspondence o kahulugan ng mga teksto. Pagkatapos nito, ibinabahagi ng kabanata ang disenyo ng poetry reading session; dinedetalye nito kung paano naapektuhan at nabago ng pandemya ng Covid-19 ang disenyo ng pag-aaral. Ang paglihis patungo sa online na channel ng pagkalap ng datos bilang resulta ng pandemya ay may kalamangan at kahinaan ngunit kung gagamitin ng tama at mapaplano nang maayos, higit ang mga kalamangan ng digital sa tradisyonal na pamamaraan tulad ng napuna sa pag-aaral. Ginamit sa pag-aaral ang mga semi-structured na panayam at tinatalakay ng kabanata ang mga benepisyo at kawalan sa ganitong uri ng pagkalap ng datos. Isang pangkalahatang pag-susuri sa mga poetry reading session ang isinama upang gabayan ang ibang mananaliksik na may balak na gamitin ang semi-structured na panayam sa kanilang pag-aaral. Nagtatapos ang kabanata kung paano ang transkripsyon ng mga panayam at ang pagsusuri ng datos.

Ang Kabanata 7, na naglalahad ng resulta ng mga sesyon sa pagbasa ng tula, ay nakaayos batay sa codes na nabuo sa pagsusuri sa mga kasagutan ng mga kalahok sa poetry reading session. Mayroong siyam na seksyon sa kabuuan. Ito ay ang: pangkalahatang pagtingin sa panulaan, itinatanging wika sa pagbabasa, sariling pagtatasa sa pag-unawa sa tula, itinatanging mode ng input sa panulaan, mga kolektibong karanasan sa pagbabasa laban sa indibidwal na karanasan, mga kinikilalang target na mambabasa ng mga tulang pambata, ang relatability ng nilalaman, pag-unawa sa katatawanan at ang kahigtan ng anyo o nilalaman sa pagtukoy ng katatawanan sa mga tula. Dinadagdagan ng mga sipi

mula sa poetry reading session ang mga natuklasan upang magbigay ng katunayan at higit na impormasyon at konteksto. Kasama rin sa kabanata ang ilang tables na nagpapakita kung paano ginawan ng cross-tabulation ang ilang variable, halimbawa na lang ang ugnayan sa pagitan ng kung gaano nakatatawa ang tula at ang kasarian ng mambabasa. Nagtatapos ang kabanata sa ilang punang natanggap mula sa mga kalahok at kanilang magulang. Isinama ang mga puna upang ipakita kung paano ang mga poetry reading session, kahit online ang set-up dahil sa "new normal", ay nakapupukaw ng pagpapahalaga sa panulaan sa mga nakababatang mambababsa kapag naipakita sa kanila na masaya rin magbasa ng tula. Pinapakita nito na maaaring mag-disenyo at gumawa ng pag-aaral na hindi lamang nakatutulong sa mananaliksik kung hindi direktang nakikinabang ang mga kalahok. Sa kasamaang palad, ang potensyal ng mga pag-aaral na magkaroon ng halaga para sa mga kalahok ay karaniwang nawawala pabor sa pangangalap lamang ng datos.

Sumasaklaw ang Kabanata 8 sa interpretasyon ng mga resulta ng pag-aaral. Nagpapakita ito ng malapitang tingin sa mas mahahalagang natuklasan. Ginamit ang konseptong Filipino na "kapwa" sa pagtalakay sa kasagutan ng mga kalahok. Ang epekto ng pagbabasa ng nakatatawang tula sa relasyong panlipunan, mas malawak na pagbabasa at pagkamalikhain ay siya ring tinalakay. Bukod dito, ipinakita kung paano mas masalimuot ang pagproseso sa mga nakatatawang tula kaysa mga biro at ito'y may implikasyon sa kakayanan na umunawa ng katatawanan. Kung may kaibahang dulot ang sabay na pakikinig at pagbabasa sa tula'y ibinibigay bilang paksa para sa pag-aaral sa hinaharap. Panghuli, ipinapakita ng kabanata ang kagustuhan ng mga bata para sa malayang taludturan na sumasalungat sa mga natuklasan ng mga naunang pag-aaral.

Sa Kabanata 9, ang mga konklusyon ng pag-aaral ay inilalahad. Ang mga ito'y may kinalaman sa pagtingin ng mga bata sa panitikang pambata, ang pagpapalakas ng mga aklat na Filipino sa kakayanang bilingual at ang pang-akit ng panulaan sa mga bata. Bukod dito, tinatalakay ng kabanata ang papel ng kultura at kasarian sa pagpapahalaga sa panulaan, kung anong uri ng "relatability" ang mas nakaiimpluwensya sa pagbabasa ng salin, kung nilalaman ba o anyo ang nagpapasya ng katatawanan sa mga salin na tula, at ang gamit ng grupong panayam sa pag-aaral ng mga katatawanan ng mga bata. Nagtatapos ang kabanata sa ilang mungkahing paksa para sa karagdagang pag-aaral.

Curriculum Vitae

Alice Ross T. Morta was born on 11 July 1979 in the municipality of Cainta, Rizal Province, Philippines. She graduated from the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman campus with a BA in political science (2000) and an MA in urban and regional planning (2009). Her earlier interests in antisocial behavior led to an undergraduate research work on juvenile delinquency among higher income families and a master's thesis on the spatial analysis of campus crime, the first of its kind in the Philippines. In July 2019, she started her doctoral research at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics which focused on children's literature and children's reception of humor. Her most recent paper "Exploring humor in translation: Children's perspectives on translated poems" was based on her dissertation and presented at the 2023 Network of Interdisciplinary Translation Studies Conference in Leiden. Alice has worked as a writer and researcher for media organizations, academic institutions, research institutes, and local and international development agencies. Her writings have been used as an aid for planning and policy-making. She also has a formal training in creative writing from UP and has written poems and autobiographical essays. She currently works as a writer at the UP Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. UP supported her PhD studies at Leiden University through the Faculty, REPS and Administrative Staff Development Program.