Children's response to humor in translated poetry
Morta, A.R.

Citation
Morta, A. R. (2023, December 12). *Children's response to humor in translated poetry. LOT dissertation series*. LOT, Amsterdam. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3666270

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

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[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"

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[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 interpreted 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.