Tracing Complex Translation Choices

Riitta Oittinen, Anne Ketola, Melissa Garavini. 2017. *Translating Picturebooks.*
Revoicing the Verbal, the Visual and the Aural for a Child Audience. New York:
Routledge Advances in Translation and Interpreting Studies. 214 pp. ISBN: 978-1-13-
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The volume under review is a most welcome advancement as it successfully underlines
the multiple roles of the picturebook, alongside its cross-linguistic as well as cross-cultural
transformation, a matter which – as the authors themselves highlight throughout the book
– has remained largely and undeservedly downplayed.

The book comprises six chapters, each starting with a summary and ending with lists of
primary and secondary references. It could be mentioned at this point that the composition
of the book is arguably not what is most commonly found in monographs. The lead authors
are Riitta Oittinen, Anne Ketola, and Melissa Garavini and contributions are simultaneously
acknowledged from Chiara Galletti, Roberto Martínez Mateo, Hasnaa Chakir, Samir
Diouny, Xi Chen, Camila Alvares Pasquetti, and Lincoln P. Fernandes. This arrangement,
however, does not detract from the quality of presentation, as the division of labour is clearly
explained (9-11). Conversely, a natural advantage of such an expanded authorial line-up is
the multiplicity of perspectives that have the chance to cross-pollinate in a single volume.

The opening chapter, titled "First Steps", succinctly presents the rationale behind the
publication, the choice of material to be analysed, as well as one of the methods of analysis,
termed "multimodal comparative analysis" (Garavini 2014). We also learn of the objectives
which are to "analyse translators' solutions and reflect on the reasons behind them", "examine
how the interpretation of picturebook illustrations can change when the verbal part of the
story is translated (…)" as well as to "shed light on the publication process of picturebooks,
including the co-printing of different translation versions and the effects this has on the
translation" which also requires the researcher to recognise publishing houses and editors
as agents in the translation process (1-2). A dimension that the authors draw our attention
to early on – and one that could be easily overlooked – is the sonic dimension which comes
to the fore thanks to digital picturebooks or simply when analogue ones are read out aloud.
Emphasis is also naturally placed on the central role of the visual component in picturebooks
from the vantage point of translation. To that end, the authors seek to ascertain what is done
with the pictorial structure, how it is done, and why it is done.

Chapter 2 – "Picturebook Characteristics and Production" – offers a comprehensive
discussion on the definition and position of picturebooks, with attention given to the notion
of intertextuality – and the less commonly examined construct of intervisuality – addressing
also some of the new experimental developments which can defy traditional formats.

The third chapter profiles the intersemiotic nature of picturebook translation starting
from the title itself – "The Translator Between Images, Words and Sounds" – and offers a
rich survey of interrelated topics ranging from visual techniques, typography and book cover
types to aspects of performativity and characterisation. One of the accomplishments of this

part of the monograph is that the authors appealingly model the translator's interaction with the material in terms of two-way local-global modulation. Another relevant point concerns the alternatingly helpful and hindering nature of the visual component in the translatorial decision-making process.

The title of Chapter 4 – "Dogs and Bulls" – might not be self-explanatory at first, but the subtitle makes it clear that the focus is on "Translating Cultures". This part of the volume reviews ample material from different picturebooks and multiple language pairs. For instance, collating translation data on the Finnish "Koirien Kalevala" from as many as four languages – English, Italian, Karelian, and Swedish[1] – is commendable, for it surmounts the frequent problem of research efforts being fragmented and non-synergistic.

This chapter also provides thought-provoking examples of gradable intervention found in travel books aimed at children (section 4.5), and then in section 4.6 samples from the translation of Maurice Sendak's work are sourced and analysed with special attention to rhythm.

Chapter 5 presents the potential of diaries produced by translators at work. The procedure does not purport to be fully rigorous – possibly even less so in section 5.1 than in section 5.2 – which could be seen as a methodological drawback in terms of how reliable the evidence is. On the other hand, such a less structured, and therefore less constrained, mode of expression could uncover aspects that are otherwise hard to keep track of. The diaries analysed in this chapter importantly come from translators with discernible profiles – an experienced translator, on the one hand, and a group of translation trainees, on the other – and they jointly show that monitoring one's cognitive activity in the process of translating can yield practical insights that successfully foreground how multi-faceted the decision-making process can be when different communicative resources are deployed and need to be handled under multifarious constraints. The data elicited from the trainees – guided by three questions that are neatly summarised (188) – make it possible to arrive at a pragmatic guideline-like set of findings (199) that will be of interest to translation professionals and can inform the translator-training process. Concrete insights like those distilled in this chapter are a vital asset of the book as they stress the need for what we could call a critical and holistic approach – one in which the translator is able to "read, hear, and re-interpret verbal, visual, and aural information" (2).

Looping back to the observation which opens this review, the volume ends with a brief chapter ("Last Steps") that zooms in on the essential juxtaposition of picturebook translation that is underappreciated by the market compared with the critical importance given to quality assurance, as the authors straightforwardly remark: "We propose that picturebook translation is one of the most demanding types of translation there is, and that its quality can have far-reaching consequences. A bad translation can not only ruin a book—it can also ruin its reader's motivation to enjoy literature. This is particularly important when discussing the very first books that children come across" (204).

This passage illustrates one more property of the monograph, i.e. its style and language. Metaphoric conceptualisations like those in the quotation above could give the impression of suboptimal precision but they ultimately present the reader with a highly accessible,

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[1]   Another target language covered in this chapter is Arabic, and an important source language under examination is also Chinese.

unpretentious, and at times even personal account (e.g. on p. 182), one which is not overly technical yet stays sufficiently informative.

References

Garavini, Melissa. 2014. *La traduzione della letteratura per l'infanzia dal finlandese all'italiano: l'esempio degli albi illustrati di Mauri Kunnas* [Translating Children's Literature From Finnish into Italian: Mauri Kunnas's Picturebooks as a Case Study]. Turun Yliopiston julkaisuja—Annales universitatis turkuensis. Sarja—ser.B osa—tom. 383. Humaniora.

Literature in English Language Education

Bland, Janice, ed. 2018. ***Using Literature in English Language Education: Challenging Reading for 8 – 18 Year Olds***. London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 328 pp. ISBN: HB 978-1-3500-3425-9.

<div align="right">Tea Gavrilović Smolić</div>

Reading is one of the essential skills for lifelong learning. In the digital era, it is becoming more and more challenging for educators to motivate learners of the twenty-first century to read written texts. It might be even more challenging to find ways to help learners keep their focus on the written text, struggle through potential difficulties while reading, and actually benefit from reading a particular text.

This book is an edited collection of papers by different authors throwing "light on areas where major opportunities for literacy development in language education are being missed" (13). The key issues which the chapters in this book address are pointed out in the Foreword, written by Peter Hunt, and accompanied by notes on the editor and the contributors. The Introduction, written by the editor Janice Bland, is followed by fourteen articles divided into three parts, the first two comprising six chapters, and the third part two chapters. Each article is followed by the authors' recommendations, bibliography and an extensive list of references. Theories, concepts, topics and issues addressed in the book, as well as the authors' names, are listed in the Index at the end of the book, preceded by an annotated bibliography of literary texts, divided into ten categories (such as picturebooks, story apps, poetry books, etc.), offering a wide range of titles suitable for use in an ELT (English language teaching) classroom.

In the Introduction, Janice Bland as the editor of this volume defines its topic as "English literature in language education in school settings" (1). As she points out at the very beginning, and as all the chapters in this book elaborate, "literary texts afford wide educational benefits in addition to language benefits, for example cultural understanding, empathy, multiple literacies, an understanding of the connectedness of the world and global issues, tolerance, cognitive and affective gains and self-reliance" (1).

The author stresses the important place that literature should have in education, where especially ELT offers a range of opportunities to include and make use of literary texts to achieve not only language aims, but a much wider range of goals. While arguing for "a wider understanding of literacy" (Bland 2018: 5), the author discusses multiple literacies which