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FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
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GRADE / DEGREE

School of Translation and Interpretation

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Reason in the rhyme:
the translation of sound and rhythm in children's books

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**Reason in the rhyme:
the translation of sound and rhythm in children's books**

Linda Ham

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA degree in Translation

School of Translation and Interpretation
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

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Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
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Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-49208-6
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-49208-6

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for granting me a Canada Graduate Scholarship, which allowed me to devote the past year in researching and writing. I am also grateful to my thesis supervisor, Luise von Flotow, whose encouragement and comments helped me to better develop my thesis, and to professors at the Department of Linguistics, University of Ottawa, and faculty of American graduate programs of children's literature for directing me to important texts in their fields.

I would also like to thank those friends and colleagues who took the time to answer my frequent e-mails requesting nursery rhymes and songs of their childhood, and who agreed to proofread and translate my abstract into French in exchange for light meals. I am especially grateful to Beth Martin, who alone read the whole thesis and whose comments and suggestions allowed me to better articulate my ideas in words.

Finally, I greatly appreciate the encouragement and well wishes of everyone I came in contact with this past year.

Abstract

Because child readers are still in the process of fully acquiring their language, children's books and their translations are closely linked to orality and the oral culture. Strong sound, rhyme and rhythm, which are habitual features of children's literature, also figure as important agents in the acquisition of language. Therefore, these linguistic principles might indicate a pedagogical skopos in the translation of children's literature, that of aiding in child language acquisition.

Theory on sound translation and commentaries from translators of children's literature provide arguments for the importance of retaining sound and rhythm in translation. Analyses of three French-Canadian children's books translated into English provide practical observations of how sound and rhythm are translated in actual texts.

Résumé

Puisque l'acquisition de la langue est toujours en cours chez les lecteurs enfants, les livres pour la jeunesse et leurs traductions sont étroitement liés à l'oralité et à la tradition orale. Les rimes, les rythmes et les sons forts, qui figurent habituellement dans la littérature jeunesse, jouent aussi un rôle important dans l'acquisition du langage. Il se peut donc que ces principes linguistiques déterminent un skopos pédagogique lors de la traduction de la littérature jeunesse : l'appui de l'acquisition du langage chez l'enfant.

La théorie de la traduction des sons ainsi que des commentaires fournis par des traducteurs de littérature jeunesse présentent des arguments en faveur de l'importance de conserver les sons et les rythmes lors de la traduction. L'analyse de trois livres canadiens pour la jeunesse en français, et traduits vers l'anglais, a permis d'observer la manière dont les sons et les rythmes sont traduits dans les textes réels.

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0.1 Introduction

Children have a unique relationship with literature because they have a unique relationship with language. They are in the beginning stages of acquiring the words with which they will communicate with others, learn to read and make their voices heard. Biologically, children's faculties of hearing and cognition are primed to process language. Research shows that all humans learn language in the same manner and in the same stages regardless of their linguistic community. Language acquisition, then, presents a universal among humans that transcends countries, cultures and language, a phenomenon that can then be examined in the writing and translation of children's books.

Most translation theory pertains to the translation of literature for adult readerships. Research on the translation of children's literature is limited to a much smaller number of scholars. Researchers investigate many different aspects of the translation of children's books, but it is the use of sound, rhyme and rhythm that is most often mentioned in their studies. I have found, however, that the majority of these works consider sound and rhythm from an aesthetic perspective and not from their deeper significance in literature and in children's books in particular.

In this thesis, I explore the relationship between the translation of children's literature and sound and rhythm in the context of language acquisition. I argue that the role of sound and rhythm in learning language provides a perspective from which the translation of children's books can be approached. I examine the ways in which children's literature is different from

adult literature and how this difference consequently affects the translation of children's books. Moreover, through case studies, I look at how translators honour this difference.

With respect to resources, there is as yet little written specifically on the topic of translating children's literature.¹ It was therefore necessary for me to include in my research not only theory from translation, and particularly sound translation, but also writings in linguistics, with a concentration on first-language acquisition, and criticism on children's literature. The scope of my thesis is consequently limited to observations and not definite conclusions. However, I find that this limitation is, in one sense, a freedom—the translation of children's literature is a relatively open field, which allows me to draw conclusions from readings in other disciplines for my work.

This paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 covers the main themes of my thesis. I introduce the notion of a hierarchy of the senses and propose that the societal subordination of hearing to seeing contributes to the neglect of the study of sound in translation. I continue with an overview of some basic forms of children's literature and how sound and rhythm are used in them. In Chapter 2, I present definitions of children's literature and of children and propose arguments for the translation of children's books and the study of the translation of children's books. In Chapter 3, I cover the basic principles of language acquisition and examine the role of sound and rhythm in learning language. Chapter 4 focusses on translation theory and the lack of an applicable theory for the translation of children's literature. I cite

¹ There are a number of industrious individuals, such as Finnish translators Riitta Oittinen and Tiina Puurtinen, who consistently write on the subject, but I otherwise found that the one or two articles on the subject written by other researchers tend to get recycled from collection to collection.

the works of theorists who have made studies of the relationship between sound and meaning in language and in literature. I also introduce skopos theory and propose that aiding in child language acquisition might be an inherent skopos of any translation for children. Finally, chapter 5 consists of my case studies, three books translated from Canadian French into English by one translator. I outline the criteria that I followed in choosing these books, summarize the texts, examine the sound and rhythm in the texts and offer my conclusions as to how the use of sound and rhythm in children's books corresponds to linguistic principles.

1.1 Sound and hearing

We live in a seeing society. Ask any person to name the five senses for you and likely ‘sight’ will head the list. Western society’s preference for spectacle is evident: visual media such as film and television dominate the entertainment industry while radio gradually gives way to music videos and televised news programs. Our preference for the viewable is even coded in the English language. We have the verb ‘to show,’ which describes the prompting of an individual to a visual experience, but we do not have a term for a comparable auditory demonstration. We say that ‘seeing is believing’ when only concrete evidence will convince, but we call a piece of information ‘hearsay’ when we want to cast doubt on the truthfulness of what has been said. If I understand something, I say, “I see,” but if I say, “I hear you,” suddenly my words sound artificial or patronizing. In terms of the ear, it seems, we are all skeptics.

In suggesting a societal partiality for sight over hearing, I am not expressing a novel opinion. In fact, the hierarchization of the senses has been carried out and discussed in philosophical treatises time and again for centuries. Aristotle, in his *Metaphysics* (350 BCE) makes an observation of our preference for sight in the pursuit of knowledge:

All men naturally desire knowledge. An indication of this is our esteem for the senses; for apart from their use we esteem them for their own sake, and most of all the sense of sight. Not only with a view to action, but even when no action is contemplated, we prefer sight, generally speaking, to all the other senses. The reason of this is that of all the senses sight best helps us to know things, and reveals many distinctions.¹

Centuries later, René Descartes writes in his essay *Optics* (1637):

¹ Aristotle 1956: 3.

All the management of our lives depends on the senses, and since that of sight is the most comprehensive and the noblest of these, there is no doubt that the inventions which serve to augment its power are among the most useful that there can be.²

For his part, Immanuel Kant admits the significance of the sense of hearing; however, he still ranks it below sight:

The sense of sight, even if it is not more indispensable than that of hearing, is still the noblest, because among all the senses, it is furthest removed from the sense of touch, the most limited condition of perception ... Thus sight comes nearer to being a *pure intuition*... (1798)³

Sight may indeed head the ‘hierarchy of the senses’ for the majority, but physical evidence suggests that we are more sound-driven than sight-ruled.

Human sight is limited. Unlike those of birds and other species in the animal kingdom, our eyes are located on the same physical plane—the face—which effectively restricts our visual range to what is directly in front of us and blurs the edges of the periphery. Thus, in order to have a visual experience, our head must be turned towards the object being viewed. Sound, on the other hand, surrounds and for a hearing person can be shut off only by the forcible shutting up of the aural cavities. In *Psychologie du rythme*, Paul Fraisse notes that the human sense of hearing is measurably more acute than human vision is sharp: “Le seuil de discontinuité entre deux stimulations identiques [est] environ 10 fois plus élevé pour l’ouïe que pour la vue.”⁴ Therefore, “la définition temporelle d’une stimulation visuelle [est] toujours moins précise que celle d’une stimulation auditive.”⁵

² Descartes 1965: 65.

³ Kant 2006: 48.

⁴ Fraisse 1974: 71.

⁵ Fraisse 1974: 71.

Linguistics research corroborates Fraisse's conclusion. Studies demonstrate that, up to an average age of six months, infants are able to hear distinctions between the phonemes (i.e. linguistic sounds) of all the world's languages regardless of the language spoken in the baby's environment, meaning that they are born universal listeners.⁶ Furthermore, it has been proven that while still in the womb, babies begin listening to external sounds before any of their other senses are developed (the practice of mothers talking or singing to their unborn babies is fairly common now in the West). By contrast, vision is the least mature of newborns' senses. Newborns are unable to focus their gaze and cannot control the turn of their head, and it is only at around the age of six months that babies' vision becomes as good as that of adults.⁷

Our hearing is perhaps so acute at birth because it is a conduit through which we can acquire one of life's most important skills to human development, language.⁸ Although comparisons have been made between us and singing birds, dancing bees or signing monkeys,⁹ language

⁶ The most well known studies demonstrating phoneme distinction in infants were conducted by Janet Werker et al. at the University of British Columbia. Results were reported in two articles: "Developmental Aspects of Cross-Language Speech Perception" (1981) and "Cross-Language Speech Perception: Evidence for Perceptual Reorganization During the First Year of Life" (1984).

In the experiment reported in 1981, four groups of subjects (Hindi adults, 6-to-8-month-old babies of English-speaking parents, and two groups of English adults) were tested on their ability to distinguish between pairs of sounds. The pairs were: /ba/ and /da/ (which exist in English and in Hindi), /Ta/ and /ta/ (which exist in Hindi) and /t^ha/ and /d^ha/ (which exist in Hindi). It was found that the Hindi adults were able to distinguish between all pairs and that the babies, to a lesser degree, also achieved near-perfect scores, but that English adults performed poorly in discriminating Hindi pairs (with accuracy < 50%).

Werker et al. repeated this experiment, reported in 1984, using data from the Salish language. It was concluded that there is a rapid diminishment in babies' ability to discriminate phonemes from the age of 10-12 months, when they perform similarly to native English-speaking adults.

⁷ Boston University School of Medicine 2001: unpagued.

⁸ An inability to hear is by no means an impediment to learning language. Deaf children learn sign language going through homologous stages of babbling, one-word and multiple-word sentences using their hands.

⁹ A number of birds, such as chaffinches and white-crowned sparrows, learn different 'dialects' of songs in different regions and produce abnormal songs if isolated or deafened at an early age. (Carroll 2004: 360)

is a uniquely human talent. No other example has yet been found in the animal kingdom of a system of communication so complex as human language. And we come to it quite naturally. It only takes the sounds of words and the up-and-down rhythm of speech to trigger the biological mechanisms responsible for language development. In fact, linguists suggest that regular exposure to the sounds of speech in our early years is the principal catalyst in learning to speak.¹⁰

Sound and rhythm in the context of language acquisition also have a strong connection with literature because, while language is naturally acquired orally and aurally, it is more artificially taught through reading. Reading books aloud to children presents them with the same benefits as speaking to them does—the benefits of hearing the sounds and rhythms of natural speech in their language. Moreover, reading books with children exposes them to the human interaction involved in communication, another important aspect of language acquisition. Therefore, when it comes to the translation of children's books, translators might want to consider not only the significance of translating the meaning of words, but also the advantages in conveying the sound of the words and the rhythm of the sentences. In fact, rhetoric on the translation of literature, when examined closely, demonstrates judgements based on the conception of sounding a certain way. Translations are often qualified as good

Through dance, bees are able to communicate to other members of the hive the location of food, but the range of messages that they can communicate are limited. For instance, they can convey horizontal distance from the hive to a food source, but not vertical distance. (Aitchison 1998: 31–32)

A number of apes have been taught sign language to varying degrees of complexity, the most successful cases involving apes who sign in two- to three-word sentences. (Aitchison 1998: 36–37)

¹⁰ Naremore and Hopper 1997: 23.

if they sound natural and poor if they sound foreign.¹¹ Even translation theorists who advocate foreignization in translation in order to reject linguistic hegemony and increase translator visibility (i.e. Lawrence Venuti with his ‘ethics of difference’¹²) still accept, to a certain degree, readability, which is itself dependent upon the uninterrupted flow of the rhythm of a text.¹³

1.2 *Rhythm and movement*

An example of a typical dictionary definition of ‘sound’ states: “any auditory effect” produced by the “stimulation of the organs of hearing by vibrations transmitted through the air or other medium.”¹⁴ In other words, it a phenomenon that originates in the external environment and has physical consequences on the ear. Although dictionaries offer multiple definitions for sound, they all tend to be grounded in quantitative science. Definitions for rhythm, on the other hand, are much more fluid and can run from music—

¹¹ Eugene A. Nida states:

“Translating consists in producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the message of the source language, first in meaning and secondly in style. ... By ‘natural’ we mean that the equivalent forms should not be ‘foreign’ either in form (except of course for such inevitable matters as proper names) or meaning. That is to say, a good translation should not reveal its nonnative source.” (Brower 1966: 19)

Quite satisfactory equivalents for all the words and even the idioms may have been found, but a person’s oversight or inability to rearrange the semantic units in accordance with the different syntactic structure immediately stamps a translation as being “foreign” and unnatural. (Brower 1966: 31)

¹² Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

¹³ In praising the English translation *Kitchen* by Megan Backus of Banana Yoshimoto’s original Japanese novel, Venuti affirms: “This version is highly readable, but it is also foreignizing in its translation strategy.” (Venuti 1998: 85)

¹⁴ “Sound.” Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary. 2nd ed. 2001.

the pattern of regular or irregular pulses caused in music by the occurrence of strong and weak melodic and harmonic beats—

to art—

a patterned repetition of a motif, formal element, etc., at regular or irregular intervals in the same or a modified form—

to literature—

the effect produced in a play, film, novel, etc., by the combination or arrangement of formal elements, as length of scenes, speech and description, timing, or recurrent themes, to create movement, tension, and emotional value in the development of the plot—

to prosody—

a metrical or rhythmical form; meter—

to physiology—

the regular recurrence of an action or function, as of the beat of the heart, or the menstrual cycle—

to physics—

regular recurrence of elements in a system of motion.¹⁵

Literary critic Denys Clement Wyatt Harding deplores definitions like these that promote the “endlessly extending use of the word [rhythm] to cover more and more processes” and serves only as a “broad, reassuring gesture” rather than pinpointing actual developments with any

¹⁵ “Rhythm.” Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary. 2nd ed. 2001.

precision.¹⁶ At the same time, he concedes that there are inherent difficulties in trying to elaborate a formula for measuring rhythm in literary texts, citing the somewhat inconclusive research of other writers in the field.¹⁷

For the purpose of my work, when I refer to rhythm, I will be referring to its biological implications as well as to its more literary, and admittedly, more vague association with the flow of a text. Biologically, rhythm is a product of human perception. What we tend to deem as naturally occurring patterns in our outside environment, be they visual or auditory, are actually results of a biological instinct to group phenomena into what we perceive as being repeated units. Fraisse argues that as a general rule, “une réponse *suit* un stimulus,”¹⁸ but when we respond to rhythm, such as by tapping our foot to the beat of a song, our taps (response) do not follow the musical beats (stimulus), but rather coincide with them. As a point of fact, humans are expertly developed to extrapolate rhythm, so that in fact the foot taps not in reaction to a beat, but in anticipation of it. Rhythm as a perception is thus “la succession répétée de phases d’attentes et de satisfactions.”¹⁹

The ability to find rhythmicity in life is termed ‘subjective rhythmization,’²⁰ and it is instinctive. Rhythmization presents itself as a biological imperative both on the physical (circadian rhythms of activity) and emotional (dance, music and art) levels. Given the omnipresence of rhythm in human activities, it is not surprising that there have been

¹⁶ Harding 1976: 1–2.

¹⁷ Among others, Harding refers to Morris W. Croll and Catherine Ing.

¹⁸ Fraisse 1974: 63.

¹⁹ Fraisse 1974: 7.

²⁰ Durr, Gerstenberg and Harvey as quoted in Elliott, “Rhythmic Phenomena” 1986: 5.

numerous studies linking rhythm with another biological imperative, language acquisition. Seminal research in the field of linguistics and theories such as Noam Chomsky's Universal Grammar²¹ (see section 3.3.2) make the argument that language is largely pre-programmed in humans from birth. Moreover, Charles Elliott points out that there is "evidence that language development and comprehension may have a rhythmic basis" and that "a possible connection may exist between certain speech impediments and various rhythmic dysfunctions"²²

Given the fact that we are built to rhythmize the world around us on such a basic level, it seems relevant to consider other aspects that form the fundamentals of our psycho-physical makeup and how they relate to each other, particularly the correlation between rhythm and language acquisition. I argue that this further invites a correlation between language acquisition and the translation of children's literature when one takes into consideration a pedagogical *skopos* of a children's text. In light of the sound-rhythm-language association and assuming a *skopos* of teaching language literacy, can sound and rhythm be the principles by which children's literature and, in particular, children's literature in translation is studied?

There is general agreement among literary critics, educators and parents that audible rhythm makes texts more enjoyable for children; there have, however, been few in-depth studies

²¹ Chomsky's theories on language acquisition including transformational grammar, Universal Grammar and the Principles and Parameters approach were developed following his article "A Review of B.F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*." (1959)

²² Elliott 1986: 5.

Anthony M. Ciabarra et al. note: "Difficulty with non-linguistic skilled motor tasks has been described in patients with acquired stuttering, including difficulty with rhythmic tapping and copying three dimensional figures." (2000: unpagged)

explaining why and how this works. In the field of translation, for example, Henri Meschonnic argues that while translation theorists acknowledge the significance of rhythm when translating, “[d]ans l’état actuel de la théorie du langage et de la littérature, confronter les deux termes de rythme et de traduction ne consiste plus à rappeler, banalement, stylistiquement, qu’il y a du rythme dans un texte, et que la traduction doit en tenir compte.”²³ I agree with Meschonnic that translation theory needs to move beyond platitudes in order to examine the reason behind the success of rhythm in translation.

For the greater part of the history of translation studies, translators have worked at describing the theoretical notions of equivalence, at the lexical, syntactic or functional levels, for the purpose of modelling increasingly better translations. Sound and rhythm, as biological universals among humans, may provide another interesting point of equivalence from which the translation of children’s literature and its *skopos* can be analysed.

1.3 Sound and rhythm in literature

When we think of sound in children’s literature, we might think of poetry, rhyme and onomatopoeia; when we think of adult literature, the same concepts apply, but other terms such as alliteration, parallelism, style and tone could also come to mind. The fact is that sound is treated differently in adult literature than in children’s literature. Sound in adult literature needs justification. Adult poetry, for instance, is celebrated as much for its imagery as for the way it sounds. Poems have a meaning and a message, and sound is the conduit

²³ Meschonnic 1999: 97.

through which these are conveyed. Books that make sense but do not sound good are at best dry reading and at worst bad writing, but texts that are all sound and no content are experimentation or absurdities.

Children's literature, on the other hand, is characterized by a full use of sound and, at times, an utter disregard for logic. Whereas adults will toil through a tangled text, confident that there is meaning in the words and therefore meaning in their struggle, children won't read the cleverest books if they don't sound good. Adults appreciate the skillful and subtle use of sound, it is true, but almost always expect it to be in the service of the greater meaning of a text.²⁴ By contrast, sound in children's literature is conspicuous and often an end in itself.

Alberto Ríos marks this difference in poetry. He concedes that using rhyme can get the reader's attention—"[I]like dynamite, it can absolutely do the job"²⁵—but once gotten, rhyme must be set a task, it must earn its right to be in a text. Ríos continues:

[I]s there a job to be done by the rhyme? That is, why is it being used? Rhyme may be pleasing to the ear, but upon entering the ear it reaches the brain, which may have a second opinion. If all it does is bring attention to itself, but without furthering the poem in any particular way, then things begin to fall apart.²⁶

²⁴ There are authors and translators who advocated writing that deconstructs meaning. For example, the *nouveau roman* of the 1950s (proponents included Alain Robbe-Grillet and Natalie Sarraute) had as its objective "de mettre un point final au romanesque, par une écriture close sur elle-même, qui affirme sa différence fondamentale d'avec le référent." Consequently, the *nouveau roman* "n'a rien à dire, au sens sartrien de l'expression, mais cherche à dire ce rien. Cette caractéristique est le trait dominant d'une écriture moderne qui, depuis Mallarmé, s'inscrit dans l'absence des choses et des significations préétablies. C'est en ce sens qu'on peut définir les nouveaux romans comme un ensemble d'échecs réussis..." (Allemand 1996: 5)

Translators and poets Ezra Pound and Louis Zukofsky frequently wrote and translated poetry according to the form and sound of the originals (i.e. Pound's translations of Chinese poetry and Zukofsky's translation of *Catullus*).

²⁵ Ríos 2001: unpagéd.

²⁶ Ríos 2001: unpagéd.

On the other hand, “[c]hildren’s poetry or silly poems written purely for fun,” he states, “are often the exception to this standard: *How now, brown cow*.”²⁷ Ríos here dismisses children’s poetry as a game with no purpose; his example, however, reveals how sound in literature can have two very different purposes for the child and for the adult. For adults, a phrase like *How now, brown cow* would fall under the category of nonentities, a mini-lesson in elocution or a quick trick in rhyming like *The rain in Spain falls mainly in the plain* or *The cat sat on the mat*.²⁸ For children, however, these types of expression are endless sources of amusement and the basis of some of the most popular children’s books (e.g. Dr. Seuss’s *The Cat in the Hat*, 1957). Moreover, sentences such as these actually demonstrate the linguistic principle of minimal pairs—sets of words which are mutually contrastive through a change in one sound (the ‘h’ in *how*, the ‘n’ in *now* and the ‘c’ in *cow*)—which encourages sound distinction in language acquisition. This linguistic principle is also featured in poet Shel Silverstein’s posthumously published *Runny Babbit: A Billy Sook* (2005), which consists of poems with transposed letters to make nonce words. Some of the titles in his book include “Runny’s Hew Nobby” and “Runny Hets Gandsome.”

In an ingenious example of a mingling of sense and sound, Watty Piper, author of the children’s classic *The Little Engine That Could* (1930), creates a memorable refrain for the book’s eponymous heroine by imitating the clickity-clack of a train on the tracks to tap into the readers’ own internal rhythm. Going up the mountain:

²⁷ Ríos 2001: unpagéd.

²⁸ The phrase *How now, brown cow* was used in elocution lessons to demonstrate rounded vowel sounds. (The Phrase Finder 17 Apr. 2007 <<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/188800.html>>)

The rain in Spain falls mainly in the plain is a line taken from the film *Pygmalion* (1938) and inspired from, though not written in, a scene in George Bernard Shaw’s original play of the same name.

believe that pre-literate children cannot handle long words and intricate syntax or that parents will find more charm in the illustrations rather than in a text that they might find simplistic.

This literary judgement, when adopted by the average publisher, consumer or reader, only serves to strengthen the hierarchization of sight over sound and encourages writers to keep their texts as discreet as possible in order to let the illustrations tell the story. Even the works of authors who have built a reputation on their delightful use of language are subject to criticism when rhymes are separated from pictures. Leilani Clark, in her discussion of Dr. Seuss's books being transferred onto audiocassette, sums up this sentiment when she asks: "What is the point of making an audio recording of a picture book, when the most vital and distinguishing feature of the book—the pictures—is lost?"³² The answer is simple: while visual reading encourages children's cognitive development of their environment, auditive 'reading' is just as important in promoting spoken language acquisition.

It should be noted that some of the genres that constitute children's literature today began in the mouth, and not on the page, as part of an oral tradition. In fact, Hans-Heino Ewers finds that "children's literature still constitutes a type of literary culture in which stories are told, recited at social gatherings, or read aloud"³³ and implies that the oral tradition has been the basis for children's literature, which as "literate storytelling obey[s] the rules of oral stylistics."³⁴ Nursery rhymes, for example, most prominently used for and by children, were passed down orally from guardians to charges. Skipping and clapping songs, though not

³² Clark 2003: 1.

³³ Ewers 1992: 169.

³⁴ Ewers 1992: 172.

strictly a form of literature in that they are rarely written down, should be considered a peripheral genre of children's literature as they not only incorporate the literary devices of sound and rhythm so significant in written children's texts, but are also literature not only *for* children, but *by* children as well. Both can be considered as belonging to the larger genre of children's poetry, even when they transcend the written limitations of formal verse and become oral art.

1.3.1 *Children's poetry*

The use of sound, rhyme and meter in children's literature is most evident in its poetry. Children's poetry follows the same exigencies as adult verse, but its focus or *skopos* is different. Therefore, in the past, when the publication of children's books was still a fledgling industry, writers would clearly identify their audience in the titles or dedications of their works. *Gammer Gurton's Garland* (1784) by Joseph Ritson was dedicated to "the amusement of all good little children who can neither read nor run" and *A Collection of Pretty Poems* (1768), was proclaimed by publisher John Newbery to be "for the amusement of children three feet high by a Mr Tommy Tagg Esq."³⁵ Other works of poetry such as Ann and Janet Taylor's collection *Rhymes for the Nursery* (1806) or Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885) directly addressed children in their titles. Still other books for children published more recently are embellished with large illustrations and comic font (e.g. Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, 1974, and *A Light in the Attic*, 1981), which could possibly be an indication of a modern exploitation of the visual in media.

³⁵ Opie 1997: 88–89.

English poetry for children before the Romantic Age³⁶ started out with the express purpose of instilling religious devotion or used rhyme as a mnemonic device in teaching Latin or etiquette. This sombre trend hardly changed until the publication of Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*. It was around this time that some of the most wonderful nonsense was written—nonsense that still enjoys wide publication and readership today.

1.3.1.1 Nonsense rhymes

The nonsense rhyme was first popularized in the English language through the works of two writers: Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear. The two resembled each other in a number of ways. Both were British and came from large families (Carroll was one of 11 children and Lear was the youngest of 20); both grew up uncomfortable in the company of adults and made friends easily with children. It is perhaps these aspects that allowed the two writers to tap into the child's innate joy for the ridiculous and appreciate the gallop of a well-paced verse.

It is important to note the difference between the definitions for 'nonsense' and 'nonsense literature.' 'Nonsense' has been defined as "words or language having little or no sense or meaning"³⁷ or "that which is not sense; spoken or written words which make no sense or convey absurd ideas."³⁸ Nonsense literature, on the other hand, does, in fact, make sense.

Celia Catlett Anderson and Marilyn Fain Apseloff state that nonsense literature "is not the

³⁶ Romanticism marks a Western European artistic movement in the 18th and 19th centuries typically seen as a revolt from the Enlightenment (which includes the Age of Reason) and the Industrial Revolution. Romanticism in literature is characterized by a yearning for a return to nature and an increased valorization placed on imagination. (Thacker 2002: 13–14)

³⁷ "Nonsense." Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. 2nd ed. 2001.

³⁸ "Nonsense." Oxford English Dictionary Online. 2007.

absence of sense but a clever subversion of it that heightens rather than destroys meaning.”³⁹

Myra Cohn Livingston elaborates:

Nonsense is a literary genre whose purpose it is to rebel against not only reason but the physical laws of nature. It rejects established tenets, institutions, pokes fun at rational behaviour, and touts destruction. It champions aberrations. ... Those who write nonsense verse must use the touchstones of reality—physical laws as well as objects and people—and transfer them, through carefully controlled imagination, to an *impossible* world, a world that poses no threat to us.⁴⁰

The imagination to which Livingston refers, is “carefully controlled” through strictly confining nonsense within the boundaries of established form and meter. The classics of nonsense literature, such as Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* and Lear’s “The Owl and the Pussycat”⁴¹ and “The Jumblied”⁴² show how

³⁹ Anderson and Apseloff 1989: 5.

⁴⁰ Livingston 1981: 123–24.

⁴¹ The first stanza of “The Owl and the Pussycat” reads:

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
‘O lovely Pussy! O Pussy my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!

What a beautiful Pussy you are!’ (Lear 1871: unpagged)

⁴² The first stanza of “The Jumblied” reads:

They went to sea in a Sieve, they did;
In a Sieve they went to sea:
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter’s morn, on a stormy day,
In a Sieve they went to sea!
And when the Sieve turned round and round,
And every one cried, ‘You’ll all be drowned!’
They called aloud, ‘Our Sieve ain’t big,
But we don’t care a button! we don’t care a fig!
In a Sieve we’ll go to sea!’
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblied live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,

nonsense literature strictly adheres to literary rules of grammar and syntax. Livingston remarks:

Here objects of reality are recognizable but put to inane purposes; absurd people and situations abound, and incongruities are juxtaposed in a fixed manner.⁴³ ... Nonsense verse is continually changing just as any form of literature must. But some elements remain constant, and none more so than the form, where the lilting beat of the anapest⁴⁴, so often used, makes our heartbeat speed up a bit. Regularity of meter and rhyme assure us that this impossible world is well under the control of a rational mind.⁴⁵

Although Carroll wrote a number of works that could be categorized under ‘nonsense rhyme’,⁴⁶ the author’s greatest contribution to nonsense poetry is arguably his “Jabberwocky,”⁴⁷ which sets made-up words in a grammatically and syntactically perfect poem.⁴⁸ This poem is discussed in further detail in section 1.6.

And they went to sea in a Sieve. (Lear 1863: unpagged)

⁴³ Livingston 1981: 123.

⁴⁴ Anapest: A foot consisting of three syllables where the first two are short or unstressed and the final one is long or stressed e.g. ‘in the WOODS’. (“Glossary of Poetic Terms.” 2006. *Poets’ Graves*. 6 Aug. 2007. <http://www.poetsgraves.co.uk/glossary_of_poetic_terms.htm>)

⁴⁵ Livingston 1981: 135.

⁴⁶ *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876) and miscellaneous poems published in various collections during his lifetime and posthumously.

⁴⁷ “Jabberwocky” was first published in *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1872).

⁴⁸ In fact, grammatical information can be inferred from unknown words in a passage of nonsense literature provided that the passage follows the rules of grammar. For example, in the first line of “Jabberwocky”—

‘Twas **brillig** and the **slithy toves**

—“brillig” can be supposed to be a predicate adjective since it is linked to the subject “it” (here abbreviated as “p”); “toves” would likely be a noun if the “s” is understood as an inflectional suffix connoting plurality and since it is almost immediately preceded by the definite article “the.” The fact that “toves” is separated from “the” by “slithy,” makes “slithy” most likely an adjective modifying “toves.” (Brisset, Annie. *Introduction aux théories de la traduction / Introduction to Translation Theories*. Course notes. Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 2005: 71.)

Lear's limericks (he popularized the form, but did not invent it), are good examples of a poetic form⁴⁹ that is instantly recognizable for its timely rhythm:

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, 'It is just as I feared!
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!⁵⁰

The music of a limerick is so normalized that the voices of different reciters will inevitably rise and fall at the same points (raised voice at the end of the third and fourth lines, with the fourth line having a slightly lower rise). What is more, if asked to explain what a limerick is, many people might start out by saying, "Well, it goes like this..." and then hum the tune.

1.3.1.2 Nursery rhymes

Nursery rhymes have been around for centuries and show every evidence of having existed for generations with very little change. Iona and Peter Opie, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, claim that the majority of the most common English nursery rhymes date from the seventeenth century, but that some rhymes still in evidence today have been around much longer.⁵¹ Nursery rhymes began as adult entertainment and entered the playroom mostly due to the prevailing notions of child rearing at the time. Considered miniature adults

⁴⁹ "The limerick...consists of a single anapestic stanza. It uses three feet with three stresses in the first two lines, two with two stresses in the next two, and three with three stresses again in the last. ... The rhyme scheme is AABBA." (Humphreys 2007: unpagged)

⁵⁰ Lear 1846: unpagged.

⁵¹ In *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, the Opies include a chart in which it is stated that, of the nursery rhymes studied, 2.3 percent are definitely found recorded in the year 1599 or before, 4.2 percent have been identified as probably existing in 1599 or before, and 27.1 percent are believed to date from 1599 or before.

in Stuart and Hanoverian England, children were often exposed to the spectacle of adult gatherings where they would overhear these rhymes.⁵²

The fact that nursery rhymes have experienced relatively little change over nine or ten generations is partially attributable to a number of rhymes having been recorded in books starting from the 1600s. (This, however, hardly accounts for those rhymes that existed long before they were ever published.) Another reason for the unchanging rhyme is undoubtedly the musicality and the aural pleasure that its recitation gave and continues to give to the listener. As the Opies put it, “They do not fail to satisfy the ear.”⁵³ In fact, Iona Opie goes on to note that nursery rhymes are distinguished by their “brevity and strongly-marked rhythm,” which provides a memorable beat for the listener.⁵⁴

Why have rhymes not changed much, when history and language inevitably have? As is often the case with older nursery rhymes, the words or notions expressed in them can become outdated and difficult for the child to understand; the child will therefore memorize rhymes as he or she hears them. An additional argument which could account for nursery rhymes’ resistance to alteration is the fact that children are often first introduced to them through the recitations of their parents. Passed down from the mouths of the adults who very often represent the pre-eminent authority figures in their lives, children may be more willing to accept the unfamiliar words and syntax of a rhyme and be more loath to fiddle with its tune. Writer Vita Sackville-West explains: “children say ‘tell it again, tell it just the same’,

⁵² Opie 1997: 4.

⁵³ Opie 1997: 2.

⁵⁴ As quoted in Zipes 2005: 1119.

and will tenaciously correct the teller who varies in the slightest particular from the original recital.”⁵⁵ This is in sharp opposition to the process in skipping rhymes, which change frequently and rapidly.

1.3.1.3 Skipping or jump-rope songs and clapping games

Skipping or jump-rope songs and clapping games are a sub-genre of children’s literature different from the ones discussed so far in that these songs are not generally written down. When they are, it is usually in the context of anthropological reference texts or fitness manuals (there are a number of books filed under the rubric of poetry whose authors do not collect existing skipping rhymes but write new ones).⁵⁶ Skipping and clapping songs belong to the tradition of oral or folk literature and it can be safely conjectured that the publications that do make a record of these rhymes are not read by children. Even more pertinently, I would venture to say that these songs are never translated for children.

It is because skipping and clapping songs only live naturally in the playground that they are significant. Unlike the typical works that currently constitute the canon of children’s literature (established by adults), playground chants remain exclusively the domain of

⁵⁵ Quoted in Opie 1997: 7.

⁵⁶ An example of an anthropological reference on skipping rhymes would be Gloria T. Delamar’s *Children’s Counting-Out Rhymes, Fingerplays, Jump-Rope and Bounce-Ball Chants and Other Rhythms: A Comprehensive English-Language Reference* (North Carolina and London: McFarland, 1983). Emma Vietor Worstell’s *Jump the Rope Jingles* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961) is a collection of skipping rhymes passed down generations in one family. An example of a children’s poetry book would be Rebecca Kai Dotlich’s *Over in the Pink House: New Jump Rope Rhymes* (Pennsylvania: Boyds Mills Press, Inc.: 2004) and Ken M. Solis and Bill Budris’s *The Jump Rope Primer* (Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1991) and Sidney Filson and Claudia Jessup’s *Jump into Shape: The Fast, Fun Way to Physical Fitness* (New York and London: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1978) are fitness manuals that include rhymes in chapters devoted to games.

children. Adults do not sit down and compose skipping songs for children (and folk researcher Lucy Nulton argues that those few introduced or adumbrated by adults are quickly rejected or transformed by children);⁵⁷ instead, these rhymes grow out of children's innovation and instinctive sense for rhythm and rhyme. It is perhaps because skipping and clapping songs are so peripheral to adult practices of literary canonicity that children feel free to experiment with and create different versions of the same songs from group to group.⁵⁸ Unlike nursery rhymes, which can go through very little change over generations, playground rhymes can alter as they jump from the mouth of one child to another in the same playground and during the same game.

Briefly, the game of jumping rope usually involves more than one player: two 'enders,' who hold either end of the rope and turn it, and at least one jumper. With a minimum of three chanters, skipping songs are sung in chorus, compounding the rhythm of the songs. The purpose of skipping and clapping songs are actually to aid in the rhythm of the activity of jumping rope or clapping hands. As discussed in the section on rhythm, human bodies are innately attuned to perceiving and creating a rhythm (Nulton expresses this instinct as

⁵⁷ Nulton 1948: 53–54.

⁵⁸ Here are three different versions of the same clapping song. Both of the examples from Watford and Campbellton end in a thumb war (the song I remember from Surrey did not), and were transcribed as shown by persons who remembered these songs from their childhood. Notice the use of nonsense words.

Stella Stella oh la clap clap clap / sing-a-ness chiga chiga chiga chiga chack / sing-a-ness chiga chiga / vah lo, vah lo, vah lo-vah lo-vah lo-vah / 1, 2, 3, 4, 5! (Surrey, British Columbia)

Stella ella ola / clap clap clap / say yes chigo chigo / chigo chigo chat / say yes chigo chigo / balow balow / balow your nose / say one two three four / I declare thumb war / bow, curtsy, hide, touch, begin (Watford, Ontario)

Estelle ella olla quack quack quack / Singing es chigga chigga, chigga chigga quack quack / Singing es chigga chigga, flow, flow, flow, 1,2,3,4, I declare a thumb war... (Campbellton, New Brunswick)

“primitive and as necessary as hunger”).⁵⁹ In playground songs, beats are well defined, and often stressed words at the end of a verse are actually instructions on what the jumper in the middle must do. For example, in the jump-rope song ‘Spanish dancers,’ the jumper must perform the various stunts as sung out at the end of each line in the song:

Spanish dancers do the splits, do the splits, do the splits
 Spanish dancers do the kicks, do the kicks, do the kicks
 Spanish dancers turn around, turn around, turn around
 Spanish dancers touch the ground, touch the ground, touch the ground.⁶⁰

In the clapping game ‘Stella Stella,’ there is an explicit clapping refrain, which the players must mirror:

Stella Stella oh la clap clap clap
 sing-a-ness chiga chiga chiga chiga chack
 sing-a-ness chiga chiga
 vah lo, vah lo, vah lo-vah lo-vah lo-vah
 1, 2, 3, 4, 5!⁶¹

Through the aid of the chant, a jumper’s body will automatically speed up and slow down according to the tempo of the song and the regular swish of the rope. Likewise, when chanting ‘Stella Stella,’ players will clap hands harder as the tempo of the song climbs to the end of the song where on the cry of ‘5!,’ the last player must try to avoid having her hand clapped. It is important to note that the songs, the swing of the rope and the clapping hands are all audible markers of rhythm. While humans automatically measure out a rhythm

⁵⁹ Nulton 1984: 53.

⁶⁰ This is the version that I remember skipping to while growing up in Surrey, British Columbia. As mentioned, songs can vary widely. See note 58.

⁶¹ This is the version I remember from Surrey, British Columbia. In this game, clappers would stand in a circle with their right hand, palm up, on top of the hand of the person to their right. At each beat of the song, one person claps their right hand onto the palm of the right hand of the person to their left and brings their hand back to its original position. That person then claps the right hand of the person to their left on the next beat and so forth. At the call of the number ‘5’, the last person must try to avoid the clap. See note 58 for other versions.

internally, we are more inclined to beat out a rhythm externally in the clapping of our hands or the tapping of our feet, for example.⁶²

Skipping and clapping songs can be considered a type of poetry. As mentioned in the context of nursery rhymes, children have a strong innate sense of rhythm, which shows in their preference for rhymes that exhibit a strong rhythm. As the composition of skipping rhymes shows, gaming chants tend to have frequent stressed syllables and a repetitive beat. For example, the skipping rhyme ‘Cinderella’ can be scanned as follows (where a ‘˘’ marks a stressed beat):

Cínderélla dréssed in yélla
Wént upstáirs to kíss a félla
Bý mistáke she kíssed a snáke
Hów máný dóctórs díd ít táke?
1, 2, 3...⁶³

In order to provide an easier visual, if I replace all the stressed syllables with a ‘0’ symbol and all the unstressed syllables with a ‘–,’ the song looks like this:

0 – 0 – 0 – 0 –
0 – 0 – 0 – 0 –
0 – 0 – 0 – 0
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 ?
1, 2, 3...

⁶² Fraisse notes that “[l]es battements dans ces recherches sont toujours ceux de la main ou du pied sur une surface. Si on prive un sujet de ce repère en lui demandant par exemple de laisser pendre ses bras le long du corps alors qu’assis il frappait de la main sur la table, on constate qu’il recherche systématiquement, sans s’en apercevoir, un autre repère tactile, que ce soit sa jambe ou un montant de la chaise.” (1974: 69)

⁶³ This is the song as I remember it while growing up in Surrey, British Columbia. ‘Cinderella’ is a very popular skipping song and has myriad versions.

By this point, I hope the reader has already tested this song out orally, following the notation. It is only natural that one would, given that rhythm is made much more comprehensible when it is audible.

Skipping and clapping songs are poetry continuously in flux. These rhymes are rarely written down and locked within the normalizing boundaries of letters and punctuation; therefore, they are always being tuned and re-tuned to suit the ear of the reciter, making each rhyme personal to the individual. Thus, this is poetry composed in its telling.

1.4 Sound in poetry

Sound is, of course, of primary importance in the writing of poetry, for both adults and children. It is the rhythm and meter of a poem that is often ascribed significance by writers and literary critics. Prose, too, makes extensive use of sound, through the rhetorical devices of alliteration, consonance, etc., which are taught in classrooms as the hallmarks of good writing.

The greatest distinction between poetry and prose is that poetry not only draws from the denotations and connotations of its words to create a poem's meaning but also relies on rhythm, through sound and form, to create a heightened sense of meaning. Arguably, sound and rhythm in a poem are of more importance than the denotative meanings of the individual words that give it shape. In fact, Ríos points out that “sound itself in the mouth of the reader

may be the point of the poem,”⁶⁴ and writer Stephen Ratcliffe asserts that “[r]eaders...generally pay attention to the “message” (what the writer means to say), as if the sound and shape of the words themselves don’t matter or count—which of course they do.”⁶⁵

Mary Mahir states that poetry is a medium through which sound is “deliberately and fully employed to construct dimensions of meaning to delight language users.”⁶⁶ It is a written form that is meant to take acoustic shape through recitation, and in translation of this medium, it is generally agreed that those aspects of sound and rhythm must somehow be recognized in the target-language text.

1.5 The importance of sound, rhyme and rhythm in children’s literature

As discussed, biology is a factor as to why sound, rhyme and rhythm delight children, and it can explain why these three acoustic elements are classifiers of children’s literature. The oral expression of words holds an incantatory power for the pre-verbal child. It is important to stress that words themselves, scripted on the page, flat and silent, do not hold this magic for children just learning to speak. Rather, it is the sound shape of words that in their speaking constructs a child’s reality.

I should note here that the significance of sound in the context of child language acquisition in no way devalues the importance of writing. In fact, there is a school of thought pertaining

⁶⁴ Ríos 2001: unpagued.

⁶⁵ Ratcliffe 2000: 3.

⁶⁶ Mahir 2006: unpagued.

to the relationship between speech, writing and meaning that questions the assumption that speech precedes writing. Logocentrism, a term coined by Jacques Derrida, relates to the belief that speech, more than writing, is closer to truth or meaning and therefore ranks higher than writing, which is often viewed as a derivative representation of speech. Derrida contends, however, that it is actually the interplay between speech and writing that is responsible for the development of language; therefore, neither speech nor writing should be prioritized above the other.⁶⁷

Those that subscribe to logocentrism question the conviction that speech is more natural and therefore more ancient than writing. Others believe that while speech is born of natural impulse, writing is an invention born out of a need for a visual record of speech.⁶⁸ Whether speech or writing came first is an ongoing debate in literary criticism and philosophy. What is true, however, is that reading is perhaps the best example of an acquired human 'instinct'. The importance of reading is so ingrained in our social consciousness that we sometimes forget that every successive generation must be re-trained to recognize the alphabet. A literate society nourishes a community of readers and not orators, a development which diminishes the ability of its members to tell stories spontaneously. Learning how to read,

⁶⁷ Derrida discusses logocentrism in *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967.

⁶⁸ Writing is often considered to have been invented in civilizations at one time or another in order to fulfill a need:

The Sumerians of ancient Mesopotamia are credited with inventing the earliest form of writing, which appeared ca. 3500 B.C. ... Like all inventions, writing emerged because there was a need for it. In Mesopotamia, it was developed as a record-keeping vehicle for commercial transactions or administrative procedures. (The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago 2007: unpagged)

Historical epistemology poses the questions of when, where, why and how writing was invented in view of the broader perspective of studying writing as a means of representation and the historical transmission of knowledge that may or may not be intimately linked to language as a means of oral communication. (Damerow 2006: 2)

being able to grasp the relationship between the pen marks on a page and the sounds that a child already knows will bring that child pleasure, but this pleasure stems from a cognitive development that differs from the instinctive and biological delight that sound and rhythm inspire. This biological imperative in children explains why “sounds and rhythms become [a] book’s underlying structure.”⁶⁹

1.6 Sound translation and sound in translation

Sound translation, as I use the expression, is that practice of translation where a translator studies the phonics and prosody (that is the linguistic rhythm) of the source text and, to the best of his or her ability, attempts to create something analogous in the target text. This is not to say that the translator in undertaking a sound translation does not also take into account the semantics of a text, but that it is the sound of the translation *as it would be spoken* that determines its form. Sound translation, as such, is a relatively recent development in translation theory; however, the importance of sound in translation has always been a part of translation theory.

Korenei Chukovsky, Russian translator and theorist, puts very high value on translators honing their sense of hearing. “The phenomena of artistic prose,” he affirms, “can be caught only by the most refined, attentive hearing, and every translator must develop his hearing by any means he can.”⁷⁰ He later adds to this statement that the musical element of a text is not

⁶⁹ Shannon 1991: 140.

⁷⁰ Chukovsky 1984: 143.

only restricted to poetry: “An instinct for rhythm, a musical instinct, is indispensable to the translator not only in those instances where he must deal with rhythmic prose, but also when he is presented with the task of translating ordinary, everyday prose which has no pretensions to verse rhythms.”⁷¹

Some translators who have attempted a sound translation of works, other than in the realm of ‘serious’ poetry, have deliberately made a game of it all. For example, in works by Luis d’Antin Van Rooten (*Mots d’heures gousses, rames*, 1967), Ormonde de Kay (*N’heures souris rames*, 1980) and Gustav Leberwurst (*Mörder Guss Reims*, 1981), English nursery rhymes are ‘translated’ into French and German, respectively.⁷² These translations are parodies for the authors (whose own fictional identities are an extension of this), meant to lampoon academic writing. While the target-language words used in these translations do exist as words in the target languages, they are chosen and chained together not for their semantic or syntactic functions, but for their proximity to the sound of the English originals, resulting in literature that approximates gibberish. This is how

Peter, Peter
Pumpkin eater

in English becomes

Pis-terre, pis-terre
Pomme qui n’y terre

⁷¹ Chukovsky 1984: 147.

⁷² *Anguish Languish* by Howard L. Chace, takes translation one step further and transforms English nursery rhymes into English according to sound, so that “Mary had a little lamb” is transcribed as “Marry Hatter Ladle Limb”. A full text can be found at <<http://www.crockford.com/wrrld/anguish.html>>.

in its French translation.⁷³ The French texts use real words, only they are cobbled together in a way that makes little or no sense, in spite of the mock explanatory footnotes that accompany the translations⁷⁴. These translations, then, are farces, meant to amuse the adult reader and not intended to be read to or read and understood by children.

Other writers have been derided for more serious attempts at sound translation. For example, poet Louis Zukofsky published an English translation of Gaius Valerius Catullus's poetry in 1969 in which he departs from methodological norms of sense-for-sense translation and instead embraces the acoustic properties in Catullus' words. For example, he matches *nepotes* (descendents) with 'knee-high pots' and *excrucior* (pain) with 'crookeder',⁷⁵ and above all translates words phonetically and aesthetically. This, however, does not stop educated readers from trying to uncover hidden bits of meaning in inscrutable passages.

⁷³ d'Antin Van Rooten 1967: unpagéd.

⁷⁴ For example, for the verse

Pis-terre, pis-terre
 Pomme qui n'y terre (1)
 Ah! de ouilles (2) fenil (3) coup ne qu'y perd (4)
 Il peut errine et pomme qu'y n'échelle (5)
 Iéna équipe soeur verrou elle. (6)

the footnotes read:

- (1) Woe to the earth left to lie fallow. It is not quite clear whether a lack of apples or potatoes is meant.
- (2) *Ouiller* (verb). The practice of filling a half empty wine barrel with wine of the same vintage up to capacity. Air tends to sour wine.
- (3) *Fenil*. A hay press or baler.
- (4) Nothing must be wasted?
- (5) *Terrine* refers, of course, to the earthenware cooking pots of French farm kitchens, and apples that need no ladders are, we suppose, windfalls. These must be gathered and made into preserves.
- (6) Iéna, town in Thuringia, Germany, pop., 70,000. Famous, for its manufacture of optical and precision instruments. Also Napoleon I's victory against the Prussians in 1806. In the balance of the line, "to equip a sister with a bolt (or latch)," the poet refers to the use of chastity belts, in this case of German silver. In bold, broad strokes we have here a magnificent portrait of the thrifty, cautious French farmer. (d'Antin van Rooten 1967: unpagéd)

⁷⁵ Mann 1986: 4.

So it is the case that even in the genre of poetry, where sound is of such importance, translators and translation critics are still perturbed by a seemingly wanton use of sound. When faced with sound translation, the usual reflex is to analyse content for semantic meaning. This is not to say that the sounds in a poem are not taken into consideration in its translation. It is just that sound is either devalued in relation to the semantic value of the poem or simply considered too difficult to translate.

In the case of Carroll's "Jabberwocky,"⁷⁶ one of the best-known classics of nonsense in the English canon has been poked and prodded by countless literary critics and readers until it has been made to give up its secrets. It is a short poem of six quatrains (the first and the sixth quatrains are the same), yet one quarter of the poem is composed of made-up words.⁷⁷ Due to

⁷⁶ "Jabberwocky" was first published in *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1872).

⁷⁷ Of the 167 words in the poem, 43 are nonsense words, making 26% of the poem nonsense:

'Twas **brillig**, and the **slithy toves**
 Did **gyre** and **gimble** in the **wabe**:
 All **mimsy** were the **borogoves**,
 And the **mome raths** **outgrabe**.

"Beware the **Jabberwock**, my son!
 The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
 Beware the **Jubjub** bird, and shun
 The **frumious Bandersnatch**!"

He took his **vorpal** sword in hand:
 Long time the **manxome** foe he sought –
 So rested he by the **Tumtum** tree,
 And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in **uffish** thought he stood,
 The **Jabberwock**, with eyes of flame,
 Came **whiffling** through the **tulgey** wood,
 And **burbled** as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
 The **vorpal** blade went **snicker-snack**!
 He left it dead, and with its head

its popularity and the challenge it presents the eager translator, “Jabberwocky” has been a popular subject for translation research. Although unilingual comparative studies of translations of the poem often weigh the phonetic aspect along with the semantic, there always seems to be a hard-nosed determination to ‘figure’ the poem out. It is interesting that a poem that is ostensibly nonsensical makes so much sense in the hands of learned readers. The first quatrain of “Jabberwocky” reads:

‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.⁷⁸

Carroll’s portmanteau⁷⁹ words—*brillig*, *slithy* and *toves*—from the first line alone are deconstructed by researchers to smaller existing words that share phonemic characteristics with the nonsense words. Granted, in searching for the kernels of lexical sense in every word, translators and literary theorists are only taking Carroll’s lead. Carroll himself provided definitions for many of the words in his poem—through the voice of Humpty Dumpty in

He went **galumphing** back.

“And, hast thou slain the **Jabberwock**?
Come to my arms, my **beamish** boy!
O **frabjous** day! **Callooh! Callay!**”
He chortled in his joy.

‘Twas **brillig**, and the **slithy toves**
Did **gyre** and **gimble** in the **wabe**:
All **mimsy** were the **borogoves**,
And the **mome raths outgrabe**. (Carroll 1984: 134)

⁷⁸ Carroll 1984: 134.

⁷⁹ Portmanteau: A word formed by blending sounds from two or more distinct words and combining their meanings. (“Portmanteau.” Oxford English Dictionary Online. 2007.)

Carroll coined this word in his publication *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871):

“Well, ‘*slithy*’ means ‘lithe and slimy.’ ‘Lithe’ is the same as ‘active.’ You see it’s like a **portmanteau** — **there are two meanings packed up into one word**.” (Carroll 1984: 185.)

Through the Looking-Glass (1871),⁸⁰ where the poem appears; in an article of *Misch-Masch*,⁸¹ a magazine he put together for his siblings; and in the preface to *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876)⁸².

⁸⁰ “That’s enough to begin with,” Humpty Dumpty interrupted: “there are plenty of hard words there. ‘*Brillig*’ means four o’clock in the afternoon — the time when you begin *broiling* things for dinner.”
 “That’ll do very well,” said Alice: “and ‘*slithy*’?”
 “Well, ‘*slithy*’ means ‘lithe and slimy.’ ‘*Lithe*’ is the same as ‘active.’ You see it’s like a portmanteau — there are two meanings packed up into one word.”
 “I see it now,” Alice remarked thoughtfully: “and what are ‘*toves*’?”
 “Well, ‘*toves*’ are something like badgers — they’re something like lizards — and they’re something like corkscrews.”
 “They must be very curious-looking creatures.”
 “They are at that,” said Humpty Dumpty: “also they make their nests under sun-dials — also they live on cheese.”
 “And what’s to ‘*gyre*’ and to ‘*gimble*’?”
 “To ‘*gyre*’ is to go round and round like a gyroscope. To ‘*gimble*’ is to make holes like a gimlet.”
 “And ‘*the wabe*’ is the grass-plot round a sundial, I suppose?” said Alice, surprised at her own ingenuity.
 “Of course it is. It’s called ‘*wabe*,’ you know, because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it—
 “And a long way beyond it on each side,” Alice added.
 “Exactly so. Well then, ‘*mysy*’ is ‘flimsy and miserable’ (there’s another portmanteau for you). And a ‘*borogrove*’ is a thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round — something like a live mop.”
 “And then ‘*mome raths*’?” said Alice. “I’m afraid I’m giving you a great deal of trouble.”
 “Well, a ‘*rath*’ is a sort of green pig; but ‘*mome*’ I’m not certain about. I think it’s short for ‘from home’ — meaning that they’d lost their way, you know.”
 “And what does ‘*outgrabe*’ mean?”
 “Well, ‘*outgribing*’ is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle; however you’ll hear it done, maybe — down in the wood yonder — and, when you’ve once heard it, you’ll be *quite* content. Who’s been repeating all that hard stuff to you?” (Carroll 1984: 185–87)

⁸¹ After providing definitions for the words in “Jabberwocky” very similar to those given by Humpty-Dumpty, Carroll continues:

“Hence the literal English of the passage is: ‘It was evening, and the smooth active badgers were scratching and boring holes in the hill-side; all unhappy were the parrots; and the grave turtles squeaked out.’ There were probably sundials on the top of the hill, and the ‘borogoves’ were afraid that their nests would be undermined. The hill was probably full of the nests of ‘raths’, which ran out, squeaking with fear, on hearing the ‘toves’ scratching outside. This is an obscure, but yet deeply-affecting, relic of ancient Poetry.”

(Carroll as quoted in “Jabberwocky Glossary.” 7 Feb. 2007. *Repository of Mythos and Poesy*. 6 May 2007. <<http://www.home.ix.netcom.com/~kyamazak/myth/alice/jabglossary-e.htm>>)

⁸² As this poem is to some extent connected with the lay of the Jabberwock, let me take this opportunity of answering a question that has often been asked me, how to pronounce “slithy toves.” The “i” in “slithy” is long, as in “writhe”; and “toves” is pronounced so as to rhyme with “groves.” Again, the first “o” in “borogoves” is pronounced like the “o” in “borrow.” I have heard people try to give it the sound of the “o” in “worry”. Such is Human Perversity. This also seems a fitting occasion to notice the

1.6.1 *Sound in the translation of children's literature*

Firstly, it should be noted that relatively little research has been published thus far in the field of the translation of children's literature. Secondly, Eithne O'Connell notes that of the work that has been published, most seem to concentrate on translations to and from minority languages, such as Scandinavian languages or Hebrew.⁸³ Therefore, the majority of the works focussing on the translation of children's books, while dealing with the usual translation problem of equivalence, generally also highlight the issue of translating literature from a cultural hegemony into a minority culture.⁸⁴ As far as I am aware, there has as yet been no research investigating a *skopos* of aiding in child language acquisition (outside of the context of reading literacy).

Riitta Oittinen, a Finnish translator and theorist specializing in the translation of children's literature, comes close to addressing the significance of sound in translation by referring to children's literature as performances. "As in drama and film translation," she attests, "we must pay attention to the readability, even 'singability' of the text. The text must flow while being read (spoken, sung)."⁸⁵ Here, Oittinen stresses the musicality in children's literature that must be retained in translation because it too will be 'sung' to a child.

other hard works in that poem. Humpty-Dumpty's theory, of two meanings packed into one word like a portmanteau, seems to me the right explanation for all. For instance, take the two words "fuming" and "furious." Make up your mind that you will say both words, but leave it unsettled which you will say first. Now open your mouth and speak. If your thoughts incline ever so little towards "fuming," you will say "fuming-furious;" if they turn, by even a hair's breadth, towards "furious," you will say "furious-fuming;" but if you have the rarest of gifts, a perfectly balanced mind, you will say "frumious." (Carroll 1984: 239)

⁸³ O'Connell 1999: 208.

⁸⁴ Eithne O'Connell discusses the dubbing of animation programs from German into Irish in "Translating for Children" (1999: 23–24) and Zohar Shavit discusses translation patterns in Hebrew translations of children's books that seem common to other national dependent literary systems (e.g. Icelandic, Swedish) (2006: 25).

⁸⁵ Oittinen 2000: 111.

Oittinen, however, discusses the issue of sound in translation from the point of view of pure aesthetics. Whatever the perceived purpose of an original, she encourages a *skopos* of aesthetics in its translation. In general, she does not have a high opinion of educational texts and finds that in children's books "pedagogic and didactic aims have often tended to have a flattening effect on the reader's reading experience." This is writing "with a certain agenda, as a pedagogical tool."⁸⁶ Oittinen also equates didactic aims with adult authority, another aspect of the publication of children's literature and their translations: "Adults ask penetrating questions like What will the child learn from the text? (adult view) instead of questions like What does the child enjoy? (child's view)."⁸⁷ From this perspective, she seems to be echoing the sentiments of the Romantic Age when children were viewed as innocents and hedonists for whom pleasure should be everything. Sound for Oittinen, then, should look to no higher purpose than to delight, and is thus set in opposition to pedagogics.

I agree with Oittinen that sound delights—there is no question that it does. However, I argue that the canny use of sound in translating children's literature can also be instructive. More importantly, I believe that sound in translation is instructive *because* it delights. There is a pleasure that children get from the sounds of words that is closely linked to the biological instincts of sound and rhythm in language acquisition. Sound and rhythm can therefore be principles that inform translations for children for the dual purpose of delighting children and aiding them in the search for words of their own.

⁸⁶ Oittinen 2000: 66.

⁸⁷ Oittinen 2000: 167.

2.1 What is children's literature?

It is difficult to say what children's literature is. The expression is a fuzzy combination of two notions that are, individually, vague and vagary. There are those who would argue that children's literature is paradoxical, that literature requires a 'cultivated audience,'¹ and that children prove too green by far to provide this. There are others whose reluctance to use the term stems from its inherent ambiguity: does children's literature mean literature written for children, literature marketed for children or literature picked up and read by children?

Interpretations are many and disparate; in these examples alone, definitions are drawn from the foci of three different agents—the author in the first, the publisher in the second and the child in the third. So it is no surprise that most children's books defy easy categorization.

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was written for 10-year-old Alice Liddell, but today is arguably read by more adults in university courses than children.

Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy is marketed to young readers even though the author has frequently insisted that he does not write for age-specific audiences.² Meanwhile, there are boys and girls everywhere who prefer to peruse the novels in their parents' bookshelves rather than the storybooks in their nurseries—hence the confusion over the term.

¹ Hunt 1995: x.

² In one interview, when asked if he wrote his *His Dark Materials* trilogy for children, Pullman replies:

I don't know about this business of writing 'for' this audience or that one. It's too like labelling the book as fantasy – it shuts out more readers than it includes. If I think of my audience at all, I think of a group that includes adults, children, male, female, old, middle-aged, young – everyone who can read. If horses, dogs, cats, or pigeons could read, they'd be welcome to it as well. I don't want to shut anyone out.

(Pullman, Philip. "Author Interview." 2004. Jubileebooks.co.uk. 25 Apr. 2007.

<http://www.jubileebooks.co.uk/jubilee/magazine/authors/philip_pullman/interview.asp>.)

Perhaps the lack of a firm definition for children's literature is due to its peripheral status within the accepted literary polysystem.³ It is the only genre whose primary audience is unable to participate in active comment on and criticism of it and are therefore told what they ought to read. Perhaps the lack of a firm definition serves only to allow anything and everything as potential fodder for a child readership. According to Eithne O'Connell, this is, indeed, the case. She states that

...the term, *children's literature*, is actually something of a catch-all. Depending on definition, it can cover nursery rhymes, songs, poems, nonsense verse, riddles, fairytales, folktales, picture books, storybooks (with or without illustrations), books written specifically for children or abridged versions of adult books, short stories, novels, plays and sketches, cartoon and comic strips, educational or religious books, etc. This is why children's literature is now more and more seen as encompassing everything a child reads or listens to."⁴

This view, while legitimate, is hardly practical for a serious study of the genre. Notable children's literature scholar, Peter Hunt, offers a closer examination of the term:

If we take the genitive case literally and seriously, and if we assume ownership and possession are involved when we say "children's literature" or the literature of children, then there is no such thing as children's literature, or for that matter, children. As we all know, children cannot easily be lumped together in one amorphous category. As Philippe Ariès revealed some time ago in *Centuries of Childhood* (1973) and as many other significant studies have demonstrated, "children" and "childhood" are socioeconomic conditions that have been determined by cultures. Thus the concept of a children's literature is also imaginary, referring to what specific groups composed largely of adults construct as their referential system.⁵

Hunt's main argument is that a literature can hardly be founded on what is an invisible category of persons formalized only by socioeconomic trends. If children are abstractions, so

³ Literary polysystem: A literary system, in which literature is "part of the social, cultural, literary and historical framework and the key concept is that of the system, in which there is an ongoing dynamic of 'mutation' and struggle for the primary position in the literary canon." (Munday 2001: 109)

⁴ Oittinen as paraphrased in O'Connell 2003: 226.

⁵ Zipes 2001: 39–40.

too must be their literature. Therefore, in order to know what children's literature is, it must first be determined what children are.

2.2 *What is a child?*

What is a child? What age is it? A child can be decided by law to be within a specific age range, but there is no official age limit fixed among or within countries. A dictionary definition of 'child' is so general as to include anyone "between birth and full growth"⁶—it is not elaborated, however, how 'full growth' should be determined. It is generally agreed that children are physically smaller and weaker and sexually and intellectually immature; however, these generalizations do not take into account atypical cases where normal maturation is delayed or stunted. Many prefer to think of 'child' as a psychological concept (the inner child), which personifies the innocence and playfulness of a person's psyche that some of us never outgrow. Not too far from this notion is Oittinen's suggestion that 'child' and 'childhood' are personal ideals defined according to each individual's own child image, which is an amalgam of personal history and social convention.⁷ Although an interesting interpretation of children, 'child image' hardly helps to clarify children's literature. Not only does Oittinen's argument render every definition of 'child' individualistic and valid, but it also ensures non-consensus on the subject.

⁶ "Child." Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. 2nd ed. 2001.

⁷ Oittinen 2000: 4.

In the past, prominent philosophers have attempted to explain the child in order to reflect on the adult. John Locke's (1632–1704) *tabula rasa*⁸—child as blank slate—and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712–1778) 'child as plant'⁹—let it grow naturally as it will—are two of the more memorable arguments to come out of the ages of Rationalism and Romanticism respectively. Locke believed that children were born empty of any world knowledge and therefore needed to be 'written in' by adults' careful rearing, while Rousseau advocated select adult intervention, as he believed that modern society was a corrupting influence. The latter philosophy had adherents in writers, such as poets William Wordsworth (1770–1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) and William Blake (1757–1827)¹⁰, who contributed to the paradigm of "childhood innocence and promise"¹¹ through their literature about, addressed to or read by children.¹² These and other writers, who wrote in response to social upheaval and industrialization, greatly influenced the way that Western society read children.

⁸ Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) was not the first work to support the notion of *tabula rasa*; Hunt (1995: 11) cites William Caxton's *Book of Curtesye* (1477–78):

But as waxe resseyueth prynte or figure
So children ben dispose of nature
Vyce or vertue to folowe

and Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570):

...the pure cleane witte of a sweete yong babe, is like the newest wax, most hable to receiue the best and fayrest printing; and like a new bright siluer dishe neuer occupied, to receiue and kepe cleane, anie good thyng that is put into it.

The full texts of these two works can be found at <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/14761>> and <<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rbear/ascham1.htm>>, respectively.

⁹ Rousseau's theories on education are found in his work *Émile ou de l'éducation* (1762).

¹⁰ William Wordsworth (1770–1850): *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) produced with Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834): "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) produced with William Wordsworth.

William Blake (1757–1827): *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789).

¹¹ Thacker 2002: 15.

¹² Interestingly, Rousseau did not recommend literature for children and thought that only Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), which taught self-sufficiency, acceptable for child readers. (Thacker 2002: 19)

In the present day, the definition of child is becoming increasingly complex. It used to be that there were children and adults, and that the barrier dividing the two was well defined; in most cultures, social convention fixed this division at the age of work or marriage. Nowadays, not only are there children and adults, but there are also teenagers¹³, adolescents¹⁴ and, more recently, tweens¹⁵ and adulescents.¹⁶ The recent neologisms ‘tween’—most often used in the expression ‘tween market’¹⁷—and ‘adulescent’—also coined by marketers in reference to a demographic—reflect a commercial sensibility that some literary critics believe is driving the modern industry of children’s literature. Literary critic John Rowe Townsend plainly states that the only way to tell if a book is a kids’ book or not is to see if it “appears on the children’s list of a publisher.”¹⁸ Similarly, author Marcus Crouch holds that “there are no children’s books. They are a concept invented for

¹³ The use of the word teenage is first recorded around the 1920s and teenager between 1935–40.

(“Teenage” and “teenager.” Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary. 2nd ed. 2001.)

¹⁴ The Oxford English Dictionary cites the first written record of “adolescent” as 1482 in *Monk of Evesham*:

103 A certen adollescente a younge man.

(“Adolescent.” The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989.)

¹⁵ Tween (or tween-ager or tweenie): A person who has not yet, or has only recently, become a teenager, usu. between the ages of 8 and 14.

(Barber, Katherine. Canadian Oxford Dictionary. 2nd ed. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2004.)

¹⁶ Adulescent (or adulescent or kidult): A middle-aged person who continues to participate in and enjoy youth culture. The earliest citation comes from the article “Hey, big spender...” published in the June 17, 1996, edition of *Precision Marketing*, which reads: “Communicating to pre-family adults should be the easiest thing in the world for marketers. After all, most of them fit into the 20 to 34-year-old age profile, even if some do have children. But the adulescent marketplace presents problems for three reasons.”

(Information from “Adulescent - a myth dispelled.” VI: Visible Ink. 25 Feb. 2007. <<http://www.visible-ink.org/default.aspx?tabid=101&mid=434&itemid=217>> and “Adulescent.” Wordspy.com. 25 Feb. 2007. <<http://www.wordspy.com/words/adulescent.asp>>.)

¹⁷ See the article “The ‘Tween Market’” on the Media Awareness Network website at <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/marketing/issues_teens_marketing.cfm>.

¹⁸ Townsend as quoted in Hunt 1991: 63.

commercial reasons.”¹⁹ He goes on to argue that the only classifications under which books ought to be evaluated are ‘good’ and ‘bad.’²⁰

2.3 *Good and bad books: what is literature?*

Like childhood, the definition of literature is equally amorphous, not so much in its assertion that true literature equals merit, but in what merits good literature. According to the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, literature is:

a body of written works related ... by **prevailing cultural standards of merit** ... taken to include oral, dramatic, and broadcast compositions that may not have been published in written form but which have been (or **deserve to be**) **preserved**. Since the 19th century, the broader sense of literature as a totality of written or printed works has given way to more exclusive definitions based on **criteria of imaginative, creative, or artistic value** ... which—for whatever reason—**deserves to be preserved as part of the current reproduction of meanings within a given culture.**²¹ (*my emphasis*)

The main characteristics of literature, then, according to this citation, are artistry, merit and worthiness of preservation. Even the fact of being written, which one might assume to be a fundamental feature of literature, proves inconsequential given that “oral, dramatic, and broadcast compositions” can also be included. Literature is thus primarily to be determined by its aesthetic value (by discerning critics, of course). This, however, poses a problem in the case of children’s literature, which is most frequently evaluated by parents and teachers in regard to its practical effectiveness in imparting moral, social, cultural or linguistic information to children.

¹⁹ Crouch as quoted in Hunt 1991: 42.

²⁰ Crouch as quoted in Hunt 1991: 42.

²¹ Baldick 2004: 141–42.

Hunt notes that unlike other literatures, which must conform to certain standards of ‘goodness,’ children’s literature has the double burden of having to be ‘good for’ children as well.²² However, the two values of ‘good’ and ‘good for’—or aesthetics and function—prove incompatible in the case of children’s literature.²³ Common literary criticism implies that true literature is distinguished from other writing by virtue of its non-functional purpose. For example, recipes and camera manuals are not literature because their primary purpose is to instruct. But if a practical text is read by an audience for whom it was not originally intended or for a different purpose, that text can transcend its function to become aesthetic²⁴—in such a manner has Boswell’s journals or *The Diary of Anne Frank*²⁵ become standard reading material in English literature courses. The value in a child’s book, however, is often evaluated according to its potential to instruct. Ewers even argues that children’s stories continue to carry a didactic function due to their still close relationship with the ancient oral culture in which every story imparted a moral, proverb or advice.²⁶ This practical function thus violates the dictate that true literature is principally aesthetic rather than functional. Consequently, a children’s book that aspires to be the one cannot hope to be the other and so fails in its prescribed dual purpose.

The Western literary system is in such a way established and maintained by adult values that it exiles children’s books to a literary limbo, written between or straddling categories.

²² Hunt 1991: 56.

²³ Hunt 1991: 43.

²⁴ Hunt 1991: 53.

²⁵ The majority of the journals by James Boswell (1740–1795) were published posthumously covering his life between 1762–1895.

The Diary of Anne Frank was first published in 1947 and the first American translation was published in 1952.

²⁶ Ewers 1992: 174.

Children's translator Tiina Puurtinen explains that a children's book "belongs simultaneously to the literary system and the social-educational system, i.e., it is not only read for entertainment, recreation and literary experience but also used as a tool for education and socialization."²⁷ Hunt suggests that owing to its uncategorizable nature, children's literature must be considered apart from other literatures, although sometimes overlapping them.²⁸ It has to therefore be concluded rather lamely that there can be no single interpretation of 'children's literature,' at least from the narrow viewpoint of the current literary polysystem.

2.4 The modern institution of children's literature

As discussed, academics and critics working in literary fields have been frustrated in their efforts to fix a clear definition for children's literature. It is true that as an academically accepted classification, children's literature has its detractors; however, few can deny its significance as an economically viable business. The first person to recognize this was John Newbery (1713–1767), after whom the John Newbery Medal for outstanding American children's books was named. Prior to Newbery, there had been publishers who had produced books targeted for children, but subject matters were typically moral or religious. It was Newbery who seriously pursued the production of children's books and games that were, at least to some degree, entertaining. He effectively invented the children's book market and, consequently, an economically based definition of children's literature.

²⁷ Puurtinen as quoted in O'Connell 2006: 228.

²⁸ Hunt 1991: 56.

Literary scholar Jack Zipes also considers the economic side of children's publication in his reflections on the genre. In his book *Sticks and Stones*, he does not speak of 'children's literature' but rather of the 'institution of children's literature,' which he sees as being formed by the commercial trinity of production, distribution and reception. Zipes' terminology is apt considering what we generally know to be true about the business of children's publication: that it is run and maintained by adults and, although ostensibly in the service of children, it is more geared toward the adult consumers who are the books' end-users by proxy.

The modern machine of publication has made children's literature a recognizable brand. More than any other literary category, except for perhaps the comic book, the children's book is easily recognized through its material presentation: it is larger, often hardbound, its pages glossier and illustrated. The typeface is big, the words are fewer, the pictures bright, the characters cartoonish. The pages are thicker and the binding is durable—a kid's book is made, so Hunt quips, to be, "quite literally, read to pieces."²⁹ In the case of books marketed for tweens and teens, books reflect their readers' in-between status as young adults: books are smaller (though larger than pocket-sized), paperbound and with or without illustrations. In fact, there is a definite architecture to a children's book, which implies a set purpose and design on the part of the authors, illustrators and publishers who are responsible for its creation.

²⁹ Hunt 1995: ix.

2.5 Why translate children's books?

The most obvious reason for translating children's books is that children seem to enjoy them. Unlike adults, who may or may not choose to read a book depending on its status as a translation, children do not care whether or not the book in their hands was originally written in their language. Furthermore, the Western children's literary tradition has greatly benefited from translations in the past, through the fables of Aesop and Jean de la Fontaine; the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Anderson and Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont; the characters of *Pippi Longstocking* and *Babar the Elephant*,³⁰ and so on. In their turn, other countries have eagerly imported and translated English-language children's books.

It should be remembered that translations of children's books are still primarily books. Translations have the same potential as original-language literature to stimulate an interest in reading and production in texts with similar themes. One of the most successful translations in children's publishing has been J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, which to date has been

³⁰ Aesop was a slave around the mid-sixth century BCE known for his fables, short tales with a moral.

Jean de la Fontaine (1621–95) produced *Contes* between 1664–68 and *Fables* between 1668–94.

Contes 64 68The Brothers Grimm were Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) and Wilhem Grimm (1786–1859), compilers of German folk and fairy tales.

Hans Christian Anderson (1805–75) was a Danish writer known for his fairy tales such as “The Ugly Duckling,” “The Little Mermaid” and “The Emperor’s New Clothes.”

Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont (1711–80) was a French writer known for her version of “Beauty and the Beast.”

Pippi Longstocking is a children's book character created by Astrid Lindgren (1907–2002) featured in a series of children's books, originally in Swedish, between 1945–79.

Babar the Elephant is a children's book character created by Jean de Brunhoff (1899–1937) featured in a series of children's books, originally in French, between 1931–1941. After the death of the author, his son, Laurent de Brunhoff, continued the series until 1966.

officially translated into numerous languages, including Ancient Greek and Latin.³¹

Rowling's series has been heralded by many to have rekindled a love of reading in children of the television and computer age,³² and it has inspired publishing houses to produce other children's books dealing with similar alternate fantasy worlds.³³ The *Harry Potter* series has even spurred youth to try their hand at translating themselves. With the publication of the English version of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* in 2000, teenagers in Germany were sued by the book's distributors for posting their own German translations on the Internet before the release of the official translation.³⁴

Notwithstanding the occasional legal dispute, international literary exchange offers children the benefit of exposure to different cultures and literary traditions. Through translations that do not overly domesticate text and pictures, children are made aware of how other people live. When foreign-language texts are adapted to fit in more closely with domestic values, translations can assist in the creation of a strong national children's literature. In smaller countries where the official language is rarely spoken outside state borders, such as the

³¹ Simon Ager. "Omniglot book store: Harry Potter books in many different languages." 2007. *Omniglot: Writing Systems and Languages of the World*. 10 Aug. 2007.
<<http://www.omniglot.com/books/fiction/harrypotter.htm>>.

³² With the popularity of Rowling's series, many critics have stated that the Harry Potter series was responsible for a renewed interest in reading. Peter Munster, a graduate student at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, wrote his Master of Education's thesis, entitled *The Real Magic of Harry Potter*, which surveyed boys and girls on whether or not they preferred to read more after having read the series.

(Marshall, Deborah. "How Harry Potter has affected children's reading." 5 Sept. 2003. University of Southern Queensland. 5 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.usq.edu.au/newsevents/news/050903hpotter.htm>> and Marshall, Deborah. "How Harry Potter has changed children." 10 Sept. 2003 University of Southern Queensland. 5 Feb. 2007 <<http://usq.edu.au/resources/10sep.pdf>>.)

³³ Popular series with similar themes of tone published after the success of the first few Harry Potter books (1997–) include Daniel Handler's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999–2006), Christopher Paolini's *Eragon* trilogy (2002–) and Holly Black's *Spiderwick Chronicles* (2003–).

³⁴ See the article by Ann Busby "German courts keep Potter fans waiting." CNN.com 1 Sep. 2000.
<<http://edition.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/europe/08/31/germany.potter/>>.

Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, there is often a deficit in the indigenous children's literature, which can be strengthened through the inclusion of translations. Like hardier foreign strains of plants introduced into a weak agriculture, foreign literature is imported into these countries in order to invigorate a weak crop of books.³⁵

Children's scholar Rita Bouckaert-Ghesquière references studies which have shown that translated children's books are often of proportionately better written quality than home-grown literature and asserts that the introduction of good translated books can motivate domestic authors to produce equally good literature. She goes on to point out that authors translated into several languages—for example, Astrid Lindgren, Maria Gripe and Uri Orlev³⁶—are more often the recipients of international literary prizes³⁷ and, consequently, frequently appear on recommended reading lists.

³⁵ For example, in 2005, the Swedish Publishers' Association reported an increase in translations of children's books although the overall number of Swedish titles dropped.
(The Swedish Publishers' Association. Book Market Statistics 2005. 19 Apr. 2007.
<http://www.forlaggare.se/files/0/133/SvF2005_eng.pdf>.)

³⁶ Astrid Lindgren (1907–2002) received a Hans Christian Andersen Medal in 1958. The Medal, established in 1956, is awarded every other year to one author and one illustrator in recognition of his or her entire body of work. For a full list of all Medal winners, see <<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/ibby.html>>.

Maria Gripe (1923–2007) received a Hans Christian Anderson Medal in 1974. See <<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/ibby.html>>.

Uri Orlev (1937–) received the Hans Christian Anderson Author Award in 1996. His books have been translated into 38 languages. For a full bibliography and list of other awards, see <http://www.ithl.org.il/author_info.asp?id=192>.

³⁷ Bouckaert-Ghesquière 2006: 25.

2.6 *Why study the translation of children's books?*

All the justifications for studying the practice of translation and the translations of literary texts can also be applied to the study of the translation of children's books. We study translation in order to understand the ideological and ethical position of the translator. We examine translations of different periods in order to know the histories, aesthetics, mores and didactics of the eras in which they were written. We appraise translation norms, the influence of successful translations on the production of original-language literature, and the decisions that go into the selection of foreign texts for translation. Finally, I believe that we study translation as an exercise in self-reflection since that is the hallmark of a legitimate *métier*.

Then there is the translation of children's literature. In cases of countries whose national children's literatures are in large part comprised of translations, there is a need to study the effect that this largescale importation has on domestic literary polysystems. Even in a country such as Canada, where the proportion of translations to domestic literature is far below that of Sweden or Finland, for example, a study of the translation of children's literature could offer significant insight into the field, given the country's officially bilingual and unofficially multilingual status. A closer examination of the translation norms that result in a higher proportion of excellently written translations to original-language books (as pointed out by Bouckaert-Ghesquière) might provide observations into what makes a 'good' children's book. Children's literature, as earlier discussed, is a booming business, and an overview of the marketing practices that dictate the selection of texts for translation might further clarify the process of evaluating children's books. Likewise, marketing practices could explain the greater exportability of certain cultural images.

Then there is that other aspect of children's overall cognitive growth that is affected by children's books. Children's books are typically used by adults as tools in children's language and reading acquisition. Therefore, a study of how language and literary devices are used in the writing and translation of children's books might offer observations as to why certain books work so well.

3.1 *Child language acquisition and the translation of children's literature*

In the academic community, there is often conscious division between research and practice, theory and method, science and art. Translation, which is firmly anchored within the arts owing to its filiation to literature, is given as much considered attention by non-translators as an offshoot of an arts discipline would—which is to say, not much. Consequently, translation theorists have at different times drawn parallels between translation studies and the social sciences (e.g. anthropology, sociology, psychology) in an attempt to gain for their field equal acceptance into the realm of well-established ‘-ologies.’ Linguistics, however, though a science and a field undeniably relevant to translation, is not solicited quite so emphatically. In fact, translation as a separate discipline has long held the status of *pauvre parent* to linguistics, being related to, but not quite as worthy of, serious study as its more respectable cousin.

It would be difficult, however, to ignore the relationship between linguistics and translation. While linguistics is the science of words and syntax, translation is their art. In the past, translation was not even considered a separate discipline, but a subcategory of linguistics. This is why recurring movements in translation theory in the past have advocated literal translation, or translation as straight linguistic transfer. For instance, Walter Benjamin stated that “the significance of fidelity as ensured by literalness is that the work reflects the great longing for linguistic complementation,”¹ and Eugene Nida believed that the meaning of the original was the most important factor in translation: “Translating consists in producing in

¹ Benjamin in Schulte and Biguenet 1992: 79–80.

the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the message of the source language. ... [T]he meaning must have priority over the stylistic forms.”²

Although translation theory has since moved on to include other notions of translational equivalence, linguistics—through phonetics, phonology, semantics and language acquisition—is ever present in translation studies. In particular, language acquisition can be of considerable interest in studying the translation of children’s literature since translators of children’s books essentially work for a target audience whose language skills are maturing and whose reading skills are nascent.

The link between oral language acquisition and literature, and consequently the translation of literature, is plain: literature is language. The link between orality and writing is not as explicit as it was in the past, now that most modern texts today are written without their having been previously orated, and some texts are written first only to be performed afterwards (e.g. theatre plays). Translations, by virtue of their always being at least one step removed from the oral tradition, have perhaps caused theorists to be even more reticent on the importance of sound and rhythm in writing.

I should point out that the large part of this chapter will be a discussion on the role of rhythm in language acquisition. Sound is, for obvious reasons, essential to learning language. The role of single sounds and solitary words (whether in morphological, syntactical or semantic

² Nida in Brower 1966: 19.

research) has been the subject of linguistic studies for decades. Researchers in recent years have, however, taken to examining the specific role of rhythm in language acquisition, a subject which has in the past been overlooked or undervalued. Furthermore, I find that the rhythmical power of language more clearly explains translators' choices in their children's books. This, then, is perhaps the best justification for the focus of rhythm in this work.

3.2 Why study language acquisition in the translation of children's literature?

When translators approach the translation of informational texts with a view to the accurate and unambiguous communication of facts, or the translation of a poem with a view to its sound and shape, they are translating according to the perceived needs of the readers of these texts. Presumably, cooks expect to read clear recipes just as readers of poetry are looking for an aesthetic literary experience, and so translators concentrate on the linguistic and formal aspects that will best address these expectations. It necessarily follows that translators of children's literature might also, in accordance with the needs of their readers, look to those aspects which can inform the shape of an optimal translation.

More specifically than language, one of the characteristic elements of children's literature is orality. Whereas adult prose is read and poetry is recited, children's books are more particularly meant to be performed. Hunt notes that "[c]hildren in some sense belong to an 'oral' culture, which means...that they may well have different modes of thinking, different

story-shapes.”³ It is the aspect of orality of these “different story-shapes” that should therefore be addressed in translation. Unfortunately, children’s literature, as a peripheral genre, is subject to the same written language-based analysis that is used for more solidly established adult literatures with weaker connections to an oral culture. Therefore, translation, which is regarded as a written craft (in contrast to interpretation), is often a ‘silent’ witness of accounts, in that translations are, for the most part, meant to be read and not orated.⁴ This is perhaps one reason why sound translation has been given little serious study as a creditable branch of translation theory.

The translation of children’s books, however, may prove more fertile ground for theories on translation and sound. Because children’s books are so closely connected with child language, they fall outside the definition of literature in its most conventional sense. Children’s books are not just words on a page meant to be read silently. They exploit more of the visual, tangible and auditory potential of words than adult literature does. Through pictures, durable binding, creative font and word choice, children’s books are meant to be handled, read aloud and performed, and for the child who cannot yet read, books are not a written medium, but an oral activity that makes full use of sound and the senses to convey a story.

The reasons for studying language acquisition and sound in the translation of children’s literature are then, firstly, that there have been few theories that address the issues of translating for an audience whose linguistic skills are not yet fully developed. While there are

³ Hunt 1991: 58.

⁴ Sound translations are, of course, the exceptions.

theorists who examine the translation of children's books, I have found that the majority focus on issues of translating text to coincide with pictures, cultural text transference and rhythm for aesthetics. In other words, I have not found any theory that addresses translating for children with a view to using the realities of their linguistic development as criteria in writing for them.

Secondly, it is worthwhile noting that English is today perhaps the most influential language in the world and its publishing power is second to none. English literature holds the impressive position of being one of the most frequently translated in the world and, although having greatly benefited from translations in the past,⁵ currently incorporates translated foreign literature into its own literary polysystem very rarely. Researchers working with a hegemonic language such as English are therefore in a privileged position where they where there are more resources to explore the fringes of literary research where minority language researchers might not.⁶

Thirdly, whereas translation theory has previously attended to the differences between source- and target-language texts in order to find or create a semblance of equivalence, language acquisition provides actual cross-linguistic equivalences from which translation might be contemplated from a fresh perspective.

⁵ The Western English literary polysystem is still greatly influenced by translations from Jean de la Fontaine, the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Anderson, Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont and Astrid Lindgren among others.

⁶ Shavit notes: "Unlike contemporary translators of adult books, the translator of children's literature can permit himself great liberties regarding the text, as a result of the peripheral position of children's literature within the literary polysystem." (Shavit 1986: 26)

3.3 *Linguistic universals*

Language is a paradoxical mixture of biological instinct and learned behaviour. On the one hand, current research in linguistics strongly implies that language is, to some degree, ‘hardwired’ in us from birth and develops naturally and predictably given the right environmental conditions.⁷ Children consistently achieve the same ‘linguistic milestones’ regardless of the language they are being taught,⁸ and associations have been suggested between physical development and the growth of grammar: neurologist Eric Lenneberg observes that as a general rule, babies begin speaking one-word sentences when they can stand, two-word sentences when they can walk and complex sentences when they can jump.⁹ Contrarily, language is also a learned skill and a direct result of a speaker’s linguistic environment. If language development were completely autonomous from extraneous circumstances, people would be mutually comprehensible the world round and the practice of translation would not exist. The fact that a baby born of French-speaking parents in France is not born automatically understanding his German-speaking neighbours proves this. It is the linguistic community into which babies are born and the ambient language that is spoken around them that will determine their maternal languages. Biology proves vigorous, however, in cases where linguistic communities overlap. For example, children born to immigrant parents who speak a language other than that of the general community can adroitly learn both languages to first-language fluency levels.

⁷ Naremore and Hopper 1997: 22.

⁸ Guasti 2002: 4.

⁹ Lenneberg as paraphrased in Gleitman and Newport 1995: 3.

Several observations can be made regarding cross-linguistic universality. All languages make distinctions between vowels and consonants; all languages draw subsets from the same set of sounds.¹⁰ Languages are classable according to their prosody (see section 3.5.2), being either syllable-timed, stress-timed or mora-timed¹¹ ('mora' is a particular type of syllable)¹² and newborns are highly sensitive to prosodic differences.¹³ Further universals relate to the different stages of language development.

3.3.1 Auditory and oral developmental universals

Of all the senses, hearing is the first to mature in babies, and is well developed in fetuses in the womb. At birth, newborns are already capable of processing speech to a very high degree of sensitivity and can discriminate between human speech and non-speech sounds. What is more, for the first half year of life, they are as sensitive to the acoustic cues of their parents' language as they are to any human language.¹⁴ It is only later in their development that their

¹⁰ Naremore and Hopper 1997: 20–21.

¹¹ Nazzi et al. 1998: 757.

¹² Mora: A suprasegmental unit of length, smaller than or coincidental with a syllable, that is studied as a part of the stress pattern of the language. [E]very language defines 'mora' in its own way...Japanese, for example, counts a short vowel, a syllable-final n or a geminated consonant as one mora, and a long vowel as two morae, and the accent (pitch change) can fall over any mora, including that in the middle of a long vowel.

(Angelfire.com. 2 Feb. 2007. <<http://www.angelfire.com/scifi2/nyh/glossary.html>>)

¹³ Nazzi et al, in the article "Language Discrimination by Newborns: Toward an Understanding of the Role of Rhythm" of 1998, describe French infants' ability to discriminate between sentences in foreign languages where the foremost linguistic information was prosody (sentences were low-pass filtered to strip sentences of other linguistic information as much as possible).

¹⁴ This was most famously proven in the work of Janet Werker, et al, in particular "Developmental Aspects of Cross-Language Speech Perception" (1981), which studied babies of varying ages and adults of English-speaking background and their success rates in distinguishing phonemes in Hindi, and "Cross-Language Speech Perception: Evidence for Perceptual Reorganization During the First Year of Life" (1984), which described the results of the same experiment but with Salish phonemes.

auditory talents begin to sharpen to attend to the particular differentiations of what will become their first language by glossing over information of foreign language phonology.¹⁵

With respect to oral universals, similarities between languages begin with biology. The fact that we are all equipped with the same organs for sound production means that we all have an equal ability to produce the same sounds. These sounds are phonemes and are the smallest contrastive unit in a language system.¹⁶ Furthermore, we are, to an average age of six to eight months, able to discriminate between the phonemes of all human languages.¹⁷

Aside from the obvious physiological similarities, humans acquire language in parallel stages, whether one learns Japanese, Portuguese or Sinhalese. At around the end of the first month of life, newborns begin cooing, which can be described as the production of isolated vowel-like sounds. Cooing then develops into babbling, typically in the sixth month, and is distinguished by the production of consonants and consonant-vowel syllables. Again, these syllables are not produced in sequence, but in isolation. As a general rule, it is shortly after babbling begins that babies start combining syllables into repetitious strings.

Babbling is not yet language because, firstly, it is not produced with the express purpose of communicating semantic meaning (although it does serve to get the attention of adults) and, secondly, the sounds produced are not necessarily evident in the language of their community. In fact, linguists R.L. Olney and E.K. Scholnick conducted a study in which

¹⁵ Guasti 2002: 23.

¹⁶ Loos 2004: unpagued.

¹⁷ See note 14.

taped recordings of babbling from an infant of American parents and from an infant of Chinese parents were played to college students. It turned out that the students were unsuccessful in determining the babies' languages, but were able to guess the babies' ages.¹⁸ Therefore, it can be concluded that babbling does not differ from one linguistic culture to another, but is a universal form of vocalization. It is indeed the case that the phonetic features of babbling are universal and not language-specific.¹⁹

What, then, could be the purpose of babbling? Previously, linguists argued that babbling was crucial for the development of language in children. Rita Naremore and Robert Hopper note that babies from around 10–12 months begin repeating sounds, producing repetitious sequences and rhymes, causing some to observe that babbling resembles a pianist practising scales.²⁰ However, Roman Jakobson takes an opposite stance to this theory, stating that there is no seeming correlation between the ability to babble and later language acquisition.²¹ Certainly, there are babies who cannot or do not babble during the usual period due to surgery or disinclination, yet who still acquire language later on as fluently as any other. Jakobson therefore speculates that babbling is a stage of vocal play, not practice. It does, however, seem counter-intuitive that all aspects of language acquisition, save babbling, are focussed on the efficient development of human language. But perhaps play is its own purpose.

¹⁸ Naremore and Hopper 1997: 69.

¹⁹ Guasti 2002: 49.

²⁰ Naremore and Hopper 1997: 68.

²¹ Naremore and Hopper 1997: 68.

Other researchers, having observed babbling and other childish linguistic phenomena, have proposed their own theories on language acquisition. In the field of linguistics, the most notable of these theories comes from Noam Chomsky, whose concept of Universal Grammar still greatly influences the way language acquisition is studied and understood. Likewise, in the field of psychology, Jean Piaget's interest in how children think led to his cognitive theory of development, which links the stages of language learning with physical and psychological stages of maturation.

3.3.2 *Noam Chomsky's Generative Grammar and Universal Grammar*

Chomsky is credited as being one of the principal leaders in the cognitive revolution of the second half of the twentieth century, which re-introduced nativism to the study of language acquisition where behaviourism had dominated (nativism was the prevailing theory in Plato's day). The main catalyst for this dramatic turnaround was Chomsky's article "A Review of B.F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*," published in the periodical *Language* in 1959. In *Verbal Behavior*, Skinner held that language acquisition was a matter of stimulus and reinforcement—children learned language by imitating adult speech and receiving approbation for correct utterances. His argument was based on the tenet that human behaviour, including the process of language acquisition, could only be studied through external indications of that behavior.²²

²² Field 2004: 30–31.

Chomsky, however, controverted Skinner's argument with the observation that acquiring language could not be possible unless humans were born with an innate faculty that supported it. He contended that there was much in the process of language acquisition that behaviourism did not take into account. For instance:

- Adult speech is riddled with errors, ungrammaticalities and hesitations. If adult speech were the example by which we all learned language, theoretically no one should be able to acquire grammatical speech;
- Children make many grammatical mistakes (e.g. *I goed*) that adults are not likely to make;
- Children are more often corrected on the truth value of an utterance than on its grammatical correctness (so *I seed the bunny rabbit* is more likely to encourage positive reinforcement than *I can fly a plane*). Therefore, children should grow up speaking in ungrammatical sentences as they frequently receive approval for them;
- Children, regardless of language background, acquire syntactic features in a similar order. This implies a degree of universality in language development.²³

Chomsky further pointed out that children have no difficulty in producing an infinite number of novel utterances without ever having first heard them from adults.²⁴ This observation is the basis for his generative grammar, which is a language model describing the human ability to create and comprehend any number of utterances. Under this theory, all sentences have a deep structure (an underlying 'unvoiced' form) and a surface structure (the perceptible

²³ Field 2004: 185–86.

²⁴ Field 2004: 31.

‘audible’ or ‘visual’ form) and the one structure moves to the other by way of transformational or movement rules.²⁵

Chomsky’s Universal Grammar outlines a theory by which all languages fall under a principles-and-parameters model. This model is made up of “a set of universal principles which characterise all (or nearly all) languages and a set of parameters, features which differentiate languages, usually on binary lines.”²⁶ An example of a principle would be the existence of vowels and consonants in all languages and an example of a parameter would be the rule determining whether a subject in a sentence is obligatory or not²⁷ (for example, English requires a subject, whereas Korean does not)²⁸. Parameters can be described as switches that are toggled on or off as a particular language develops. Thus, all languages obey the same principles and are different in their combinations of toggled parameters.

3.3.3 *Jean Piaget’s Cognitive Theory of Development*

Piaget was a Swiss psychologist whose ideas on child cognitive development still have currency today. He argued that children’s level of language development was dependent on general cognitive maturation and that only by achieving certain stages of development were children able to advance linguistically. His stages can be summarized as follows:

²⁵ Field 2004: 58.

²⁶ Field 2004: 220.

²⁷ Field 2004: 316.

²⁸ The English declarative “I am going” in Korean would be equivalent to “going.”

- *Sensori-motor period (0–2 years)*: The child cannot establish object permanence. If the child cannot see the object, the object does not exist;
- *Preoperational period (2–7 years)*: The child is subject to egocentric thought. The child cannot identify with others' views and verbalizes private thoughts in monologues. This stage is further divided into:
 - *Preconceptual stage (2–4 years)*: The child displays subjective logic and cannot generalize about the physical world;
 - *Intuitive stage (4–7 years)*: The child uses feelings to make judgments;
- *Period of concrete operations (7–11 years)*: The child uses logic and begins to understand time and spatial relationships;
- *Period of formal operations (11–15 years)*: The child understands the importance of human interaction and the views of others.²⁹

By associating language acquisition with general aspects of cognitive development, Piaget's theory attests to the incontrovertible link between learning language and psychological maturation. As discussed in Chapter 1, language acquisition is closely linked to other phenomena of our psycho-physical make-up. The rhythm of language has its parallel in the rhythm of the body, and word acquisition generally grows in tandem with standing, walking and jumping. As it turns out, language acquisition also mirrors other biologically triggered developments in that it is subject to critical periods or 'cut-offs'.

3.4 Language acquisition and developmental cut-offs

Like some birds that will not learn songs if not exposed to them by a certain stage in their life,³⁰ humans only easily acquire language when very young. The more we age, the more

²⁹ Russell 2001: 27–29.

³⁰ Carroll 2004: 360.

difficult it becomes. Think of the young child who, transplanted to another country, effortlessly picks up the lingo and accent, while her parents struggle to string two grammatical sentences together. Their teenaged son, however, seems to learn the new language well enough, but cannot shake an awkward foreign accent. The fact is that language acquisition is subject to developmental cut-offs. Language is best acquired when young, and the ability to learn language fluently diminishes with age. Lenneberg first suggested a sharp decline in language-learning ability after puberty, and later research has corroborated this.³¹ In an experiment studying English grammar acquisition, Korean- and Japanese-speaking students who moved to the United States at various ages were asked to read a sample of English and comment on whether each sentence was grammatical or not. As hypothesized, those who had moved to the United States when older performed the worst while those who had immigrated as very young children demonstrated native speaker levels. In the case of adults learning a second language, it has been suggested that poor performance could be attributed to interference from expert knowledge of their first language.³² However, there are cases where the acquisition of even first languages can prove incomplete.

Linguists have had the opportunity to study cases where humans have been deprived of linguistic input for extended periods over varying stages of the linguistic critical period. These instances have mostly been with children found in the wild or rescued from abusive parents. In one case, a girl of six was found locked in an attic by a deranged mother who never spoke to her. When the girl was discovered, she knew no language and her cognitive

³¹ Guasti 2002: 20.

³² Gleitman and Newport 1995: 14.

development was not even equal to that of a two-year-old's. However, within a year, she had reached the linguistic and cognitive development of a normal seven-year-old. Another case involved a girl who, from the age of 20 months, was isolated, tied to a chair, beaten and barked at like a dog by her father. When she was found at the age of 13, she had no language and although she received long-term linguistic rehabilitation, she never advanced beyond the speaking stage of a two-year-old.³³

3.5 The role of sound and rhythm in child language acquisition

3.5.1 Positive evidence

Naremore and Hopper point out that “[m]ost rationalists argue that the only environmental factor necessary for the child to learn to speak is exposure to some language.”³⁴ Rationalists such as these, who adhere to Chomsky's nativist theory of language acquisition, believe that negative evidence, such as an adult's correction of a child's grammar, has little effect on the child's overall linguistic growth.³⁵

Ambient sound, then, is the foremost criterion in learning a language. For the hearing child, the sounds of language are the trigger for language to develop. As seen in the case of the older of the two rescued girls, language deprivation can seriously compromise one's ability to learn.

³³ Gleitman and Newport 1995: 11.

³⁴ Naremore and Hopper 1997: 23.

³⁵ Naremore and Hopper 1997: 23.

3.5.2 Prosody

There is a scene in the 1938 film version of George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* where Professor Higgins is teaching protégée Eliza Doolittle to speak English like a lady. Seated in front of a xylophone, he beats out the notes of the phrase:

kind of you to
How *let me*
 come.

(A, F, F, F, F, E flat, E flat, B flat)

Eliza gamely chirps:

kind
How *of you to let me*
 come.

The professor gives an annoyed shake of his head and repeats the notes: (A, F, F, F, F, E flat, E flat, B flat). This second time, Eliza parrots back the phrase, following its prosody exactly, completely in tune with the instrument. Aside from demonstrating how utterly complicated the process of learning a language as an adult can be, this scene illustrates the natural human ability to analyse speech according to linguistic prosody. Some of us may not be able to pick out the notes on a musical scale, but we can all detect a foreign-sounding accent when we hear one.

Maria Guasti states that “[h]umans are born with special sensitivity not to sounds, per se, but to the particular units, structures, and regularities found in natural languages, regardless of the modality of expression.”³⁶ Those units, structures and regularities of natural languages constitute prosody, which is defined by the intonation³⁷, pitch³⁸, loudness³⁹ and tempo⁴⁰ of speech.

3.5.3 *The Rhythm Hypothesis*

The Rhythm Hypothesis is founded on the widely accepted conclusion that prosody plays an important function in language acquisition. The Hypothesis states that “newborns are sensitive to prosody, that is, the overall properties of utterances such as intonation and rhythm. ... [I]nfants extract prosodic, and more specifically, rhythmic properties of sentences and that they sort sentences into a small number of classes or sets based on rhythmic, timing properties.”⁴¹ Infants have been tested on their ability to discriminate speech from different

³⁶ Guasti 2002: 47.

³⁷ Intonation: A term used in the study of suprasegmental phonology, referring to the distinctive use of patterns of pitch, or melody. ... Intonation performs several functions in language. Its most important function is as a signal of grammatical structure, where it performs a role similar to punctuation in writing, but involving far more contrasts. The marking of sentence, clause and other boundaries, and the contrast between some grammatical structures, such as questions and statements, may be made using intonation. For example, the change in meaning illustrated by ‘Are you asking me or telling me’ is regularly signaled by a contrast between rising and falling pitch, e.g. *He’s coming, isn’t he?* (= I’m asking you) vs. *He’s coming, isn’t he!* (= I’m telling you). A second role of intonation is in the communication of personal attitude: sarcasm, puzzlement, anger, etc. can all be signaled by contrasts in pitch, along with other prosodic and paralinguistic features. Other roles of intonation in language have been suggested, e.g. as one of the ways of signalling social background. (Crystal 1980: 190–91)

³⁸ Pitch: the attribute of auditory sensation in terms of which a sound may be ordered on a scale from ‘low’ to ‘high’. (Crystal 1980: 272)

³⁹ Loudness: The attribute of auditory sensation in terms of which a sound may be ordered on a scale from soft to loud. (Crystal 1980: 215)

⁴⁰ Tempo: An application of the general sense of this term in phonetics and phonology to refer to speed of speaking; alternatively known as rate. (Crystal 1980: 352)

⁴¹ Nazzi et al. 1998: 757.

languages using prosody as their primary acoustic cue. In one such experiment, led by Thierry Nazzi et al., utterances were modified so that all linguistic data except for prosody were reduced to imperceptible levels. It was found that infants consistently reacted to pairs of different languages. However, when the same initial linguistic data were stripped of their prosody, infants were unable to make these distinctions. Languages can be classed into three prosodic types: stress-timed (e.g. English), syllable-timed (e.g. French) and mora-timed (e.g. Japanese). When different languages of the same prosodic class were fused together (such as English and Dutch, both stress-timed) and contrasted with another hybrid language born of two other languages of the same prosodic class (such as Spanish and Italian, both syllable-timed), creating two nonsensical utterances, infants again tested positive on their ability to discriminate between prosodic classes.⁴²

Nazzi states that prosody might also explain an infant's preference for their mother's voice, infant-directed language over regular speech, native-language over foreign language and word-like syllable groupings.⁴³

⁴² One experiment involved French infants who discriminated between stress-timed English and mora-timed Japanese, and English-Dutch combined speech (both are stressed-timed) and Spanish-Italian combined speech (both are syllable-timed). This experiment is the subject of Thierry Nazzi et al's 1998 article "Language Discrimination by Newborns: Toward an Understanding of the Role of Rhythm" published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*. In this experiment, infants were unable to distinguish between English and Dutch, suggesting that infants were tuning into prosody.

⁴³ Nazzi et al. 1998: 757.

3.5.4 *Prosodic bootstrapping*

Bootstrapping is a process by which an infant uses existing linguistic or general cognitive knowledge to help in the acquisition of other aspects of language. Bootstrapping is language acquisition in steps: babies exploit one type of knowledge (e.g. innate rhythm) to further their linguistic ability in another area (e.g. distinguishing short and long stress), which will then enable them to recognize the stress pattern of the language of their environment (e.g. English favours a strong stress-weak stress pattern), and so on.⁴⁴ There are different types of bootstrapping: for example, syntactic and semantic bootstrapping are processes by which an infant can acquire language through comprehension of syntax or semantics. However, these two processes themselves rely on bootstrapping since babies are not born with a full grammar or lexicon.

In prosodic bootstrapping, infants rely on their innate knowledge of rhythm to discriminate between phonemes to help them acquire a basic understanding of grammar and vocabulary. Infants can discern long stressed vowels and short weak vowels to determine syllables. With some exposure to the language of the community, a child can then determine whether the language favours words with a stress-unstressed pattern or an unstressed-stressed pattern. As it happens, English prefers a stressed-unstressed pattern for the majority of its lexical items, so when children hear words that contradict this rule, they are apt to truncate them to start with a stress:

⁴⁴ Field 2004: 38.

gi RA FFE	→	‘raffe
ba N Ana	→	‘nana
po T Ato	→	‘tato.

Prosodic bootstrapping can therefore account for infants’ early understanding of word boundaries. Some have suggested that this, coupled with an innate discernment of intonation, contributes to knowledge of phrase and sentence structure later on. Interestingly, people seem to instinctively know this about infants. Researchers have noted that infant-directed speech or motherese tends to exaggerate word stress, intonation and pausing.⁴⁵

3.5.5 *Motherese and human interaction*

Motherese or infant-directed language is the type of speech used by adults, primarily caregivers, to children. It is slowed down, stripped down, and the prosody and enunciation exaggerated. We use nonsense words and noises; we pitch our voices higher; we exaggerate intonation to convey approval or disapproval. When we speak like this, most of us are probably under the misapprehension that slower, louder and sharply pitched speech means that the baby might learn to understand our words better. The reality, of course, is that for pre-linguistic infants, words have no conventional meaning. Instead, their understanding of language is based on speech rhythm. This is perhaps why motherese is naturally exploitative of those aspects of language to which infants of a certain age are most receptive.

Interestingly, adults also tend to adjust their level of language according to the linguistic

⁴⁵ Field 2004: 39.

level of the infant they are addressing,⁴⁶ implying an important aspect of human interaction in language acquisition.

The association between biology and language acquisition is not restricted to the physical and physiological workings that enable sound vocalization; learning language is also very much allied with human interaction. It should be remembered that infants learn language in order to communicate with the people around them. From the beginning, infants understand that language has a perlocutionary force that can cause an auditor to act.

When children are learning to read, interaction with adults also plays an important factor in acquisition. Story-time is all about a child and caregiver and feelings of community and security. This is particularly the case for pre-literate children, for whom story-time has nothing to do with reading from a book, but rather with listening to a story being told.

3.6 Prosody and children's literature

Words on a page are like notes on a musical staff—their full signification is expressed when they take on audible vocal shape. It is hard for us to remember that unlike speaking, there is nothing innate about reading; it is an entirely learned skill that has to be acquired anew with every generation. It is almost beyond belief that reading silently had to be invented and in Antiquity was considered a ‘defective’ method⁴⁷ incapable of providing the full importance

⁴⁶ McLean 1999: 95.

⁴⁷ Hendrickson 1929: 192.

of a text. Today's more literate culture would see defect in a person who does not read silently, but instead feels the need to sound out the words.

Children learning to read, for whom written words are a new curiosity, regard books in a way similar to people in Antiquity, for whom writing was a fairly new invention: the power of the word is in its pronunciation. When we learn to read, we are told to 'sound it out,' and I think it is safe to say that no one tries to teach a child how to read silently before reading aloud. Whether consciously or not, authors of children's books take full advantage of children's genius for language and all its prosodic signals by adjusting the language of their texts to reflect those aspects of language acquisition to which children are most responsive: rhyme, strong stress and audible rhythm. In essence, they are writing in a sort of 'child-directed language' that reflects the sounds and prosody of speech and not of writing. Translators, for their part, should then look to the source text to provide a sense of the spoken rhythm of the written words with the full awareness that their books will be read aloud.

4.1 Translation theory in children's literature

Western thought on the activity of translation goes back centuries before the common era and has in turn questioned, described, prescribed and proscribed the practices of translators. Translation theory has also, in recent decades, become a forum for interdisciplinary studies, mating translation theory with post-colonialism theory, ethics, gender and queer studies. However, all these theories, old and new, are very much centred on the translation of written works for adult audiences. Although theorists have borrowed from other studies in their reflections on the translation of children's books—such as the domestication of cultural images or the representation of girl protagonists—translation theory has yet to expand on research on the the translation of children's literature.

There are reasons for this. As described in Chapter 3, children's literature defies easy categorization as a literary genre because it is a fusion of other better-defined genres. It is literature and poetry; it is educational, visual and aural. Theorists might therefore feel justified in cobbling together a working approach from various literary and translational theories as opposed to formulating a new one. Children's literature, as a peripheral genre in most Western literary polysystems, enjoys less attention from scholars. Because very few authors become internationally famous or wealthy from the profits of their children's books and because there are fewer international awards for children's books, literary polysystems, based on canonized adult literature, allow very little room for children's books. Finally, because they use fewer and simpler words, children's books might also be regarded as easily written and their translations quick tasks of language transfer. Any of these reasons can begin to explain how research on the translation of children's literature has been left behind with

the outmoded notion of literal or word-for-word transfer while translation theory on adult texts has continued to attract research.

On the one hand, the paucity of research being conducted to develop translation theory on the translation of children's literature has predictable negative effects. As long as there is no ongoing examination of the topic or recognition for translators of children's books (witness the lack of appropriate courses offered in universities and frequent absence of translators' names in children's books), the translation of children's books will remain on the periphery of an already overlooked discipline.

On the other hand, minimal interference from conventional theories can allow the translator or researcher much more freedom to establish his or her own connections between source and target texts that might not yet have been fully explored. Therefore, a translation researcher of children's literature such as Oittinen can refer to reader-reception theory, carnivalism,¹ cannibalism,² functionalism and music in the same work³.

¹ As described in Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*. Oittinen states:

Modern children's culture might very well be characterized as some kind of a carnivalistic culture of laughter outside the establishment described by Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World*. ... Carnivalism originated in antiquity and had its golden age in the folk cultures of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Carnival is "festive laughter," it is "the laughter of the people," it is ambivalent, triumphant, and deeply philosophic, and everybody can join in. (Oittinen 2000: 54.)

² Brazilian cannibalism theory is a "postcolonial movement in translation...which emerged in the 1920s with Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago*, drawing on the famous story of the ritual cannibalization of a Portuguese bishop by native Brazilians. From the 1960s, with the poetical work of the de Campos brothers, the metaphor has been used by the strong Brazilian translation-studies community to stand for the experience of colonization and translation: the colonizers and their language are devoured, their life force invigorating the devourers, but in a new purified and energized form that is appropriate to the needs of the native peoples. (Munday 2001: 126.)

³ Oittinen, Riitta. *Translating for Children*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000.

Translators of children's literature, perhaps aligning with the view that children are instinctive creatures, might also feel freer to follow their own instincts rather than established theory when translating. By and large, accounts from and interviews with translators of children's literature reveal that technique and practice are frequently based on a passage's 'sounding right' or on the overall flow of a text rather than conformity to any particular school of thought.⁴ In fact, sound is considered such an integral part of the process that sounding out, reading aloud, performance and 'singability'⁵ are almost always mentioned in texts on translating children's books.

4.2 Sound and meaning in translation theory

It is interesting to note that while authors and translators of children's literature agree on the importance of sound, there is little detailed examination of the topic in theoretical texts. Most translation theories address sound on a very superficial level. For the most part, discussions on sound in translation revolve around the target text's 'sounding' natural (or unnatural in the case of foreignization⁶). Of the works that do examine sound more closely, the great majority deal with the translation of adult poetry, and it is therefore from these texts that I must construct my arguments.

⁴ This, of course, can apply to the translation of literatures other than children's literature.

⁵ A term used extensively by Oittinen in *Translating for Children* (2000).

⁶ Venuti's theory of foreignization can be found in *The Translator's Invisibility*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995; and *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

4.2.1 *Meaning in the name, meaning in the letter*

One of the earliest dialogues on the relationship between sound and meaning was Plato's *Cratylus* (360 BCE). Written as a dialogue between Socrates and Hermogenes, (Cratylus is a largely silent participant), Plato discusses how the meaning of a word is present in *phýsei*, that is in the nature or phonic form of words, and not in *thései*, that is by conventional agreement. Plato, speaking through the persona of Socrates, explains how names, far from resulting from an act of consensus of the majority (meaning in *thései*), are in truth organically linked with the objects and persons that they represent (meaning in *phýsei*). According to him, every object has a nature whose essence or meaning draws the speaker to a particular combination of sounds, that is the name, which is directly informed by that object's nature. Plato states:

...this giving of names can be no such light matter as you fancy, or the work of light or chance persons; ...but he only who looks to the name which each thing by nature has, and is able to express the true forms of things in letters and syllables.⁷

An object's meaning is transformed into sound, and sound is therefore charged with the essence or sense of an object. Mann suggests that this idea—that name and nature are inextricably linked—“has to do most of all with the assumption that language is itself first and foremost a translation of reality” and that “one cannot tamper with a thing's name without affecting the thing itself.”⁸ It is in deference to this intimate relationship between signifier and signified that poets like Zukofsky produce translations that are phonetically

⁷ Plato: unpagged.

⁸ Mann 1986: 6.

faithful to the originals.⁹ Mexican poet Octavio Paz likewise recognizes the undividedness of name and nature. He states:

To lose our name is like losing our shadow; to be only our name is to be reduced to a shadow. The absence of any correlation between things and their names is doubly intolerable: either the meanings evaporate or the things vanish. A world of pure meanings is as inhospitable as a world of things without meaning—without names. (1971)¹⁰

Although Plato, Mann and Paz discuss the natural meaning in words, they do not explore the possibilities of meaning at the phonemic level. Even in today's modern linguistic theory, phonemes are considered to be merely the building blocks of language and possess no autonomous meaning. However, some scholars have indeed recognized a symbolic link between sound and meaning.

In fact, Jakobson has studied the link between phonemes and meaning, which he believes is inherent in the phonemes themselves. Jakobson brings in observations from the works of other academics, such as Georg von der Gabelentz's *Lautsymbolik* (1891), in which child language is taken to demonstrate sounds chosen in *phýsei* over in *thései*. For example, Gabelentz refers to the case of a young German boy who named a regular chair *lakeil*, a small doll's chair *likill* and his grandfather's armchair *lukul*. This little boy likewise called his father in shirtsleeves *papa*, but *pupu* when in a heavy fur coat.¹¹ Similarly, in an experiment by Maxime Chastaing, two cardboard figures, one small and one large, were shown to five- and six-year-olds who were asked to designate one as *pim* and the other *pum*.

⁹ Louis Zukofsky was an American poet known for his poetry exploiting the 'sound sense' of words. His and Celia Zukofsky's translation of Catullus. (London: Cape Goliard P., 1969) is based on the phonetics of Catullus' original verses.

¹⁰ Paz in Schulte and Biguenet 1992: 157.

¹¹ Jakobson 2002: 182.

Three quarters of the children chose to name the smaller figure *pim* and the larger *pum*.¹²

Linguist Edward Sapir performed another experiment with three tables of differing size and the terms *li*, *la* and *law*. Overwhelmingly, participants named the smallest table *li*, the largest table *law* and the regular-sized table *la*.¹³ These and other examples, argued Jakobson, not only show the potential of vowels to carry semantic meaning (studies on consonants are generally less conclusive), they also demonstrate a degree of uniformity of phonemic meaning between languages.

In other experiments on various European languages (i.e. English, French, German), participants have also expressed their perception that vowels are small or large, dark or bright, soft or hard, light and heavy. Vowels connote quickness for some and bluntness for others.¹⁴ Jakobson cites one study by Benjamin Lee Whorf in which respondents perceived the vowels *a* (as in *father*), *o* and *u* as dark, warm or soft, and the vowel *i* (as in *see*) as bright, cold or sharp.¹⁵

How can these consistencies in meaning be explained when it is the general assumption that phonemes have no independent meaning? There are several possible reasons for this. The perception that some vowels are smaller or quicker than others can be explained by the physical properties of their pronunciation. Some vowels are measurably longer. For example, the vowel in *sip* is audibly shorter than the vowel in *seep* (and *sip* indicates a short, quick

¹² Jakobson 2002: 187.

¹³ Jakobson 2002: 188.

¹⁴ Jakobson 2002: 184–89.

¹⁵ Jakobson 2002: 196.

action while *seep* implies a slower action). Likewise, vowels that are pronounced further back in the mouth (i.e. with the tongue retracted in the back of the mouth) can convey weightier or darker significations than vowels pronounced further forward (see Appendix I for a table of vowels). Consider *peck*, which connotes a small amount of something, and *pack*, which can be substantially larger. Or the size of the dog that *yips* and the one that *yaps*. In the case of *strip*, *strap* and *strop*, I imagine increasingly thick and heavy materials. The gradual change in vowels from high to low or front to back can also imply anterior tense in verb conjugations in series such as *drink-drunk-drunk* and *swim-swam-swum*, where actions are further set in the past as the tongue moves further back in the mouth.

Consensus on the perceived physical qualities of vowels could also be related to the fact that languages are inter-related within a limited number of language families. Sound symbolism accorded to certain phonemes could therefore be the result of longstanding historical convention. For example, in literature, the use of common poetic conventions with regard to phonemes, (e.g. the letter ‘s’ used to connote fluidity), may have accustomed readers to associate certain qualities with certain sounds. Furthermore, associations where strong “suggestiveness of sound imagery makes some words ‘more fit to survive’”¹⁶ ensure that language becomes increasingly rich in sound symbolism as words with little to no sound imagery go unused.

Another explanation for phoneme–meaning associations comes from the field of medicine. Synaesthesia, sometimes referred to as ‘coloured hearing,’ is a medical condition in which a

¹⁶ Jakobson 2002: 187.

person associates perceptual information in the real world with an involuntary perception in another sense.¹⁷ So a person who hears ‘k’ might automatically think of the colour red or a bitter taste. Some research suggests that as many as 3 percent of the population have synaesthesia;¹⁸ therefore, it is possible that the most common associations, by being vehemently attested to by persons with synaesthesia, gradually enter into and are perpetuated in linguistic communities as convention.

Unlike synaesthesia, which is a medical condition, phonaesthesia is the result of language evolution. Phonaesthesia occurs when sound become associated with meanings for which they have no onomatopoeic basis¹⁹ (e.g. ‘s’ being connected with fluidity). Fiction writers frequently make use of this phenomenon, for instance, in their choice of character names. Dr. Seuss’s name for the Grinch in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*²⁰ cleverly conveys a miserly temperament through its semantic associations with words like ‘grasp,’ ‘greed,’ ‘cinch’ and ‘pinch.’ Charles Dickens was able to do the same a century earlier in *A Christmas Carol*²¹ with the character Scrooge (which brings to mind words like ‘screw,’ ‘scrimp,’ ‘scrounge’ and ‘scrape’). Both names, thanks to their sound symbolism and the popularity of the texts in which they appeared, have since entered the English language as lexical items.

¹⁷ Ward 2007: unpagued.

¹⁸ “Synesthesia.” Wikipedia.org. 20 Apr. 2007. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synesthesia>>.

¹⁹ “Phonæsthesia.” 2007: unpagued.

²⁰ Dr. Seuss’ *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* was first published in 1957.

²¹ Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* was first published in 1843.

How much of sound symbolism is based on instinct in the beginning stages of language acquisition? Are our brains pre-wired to make connections between sounds and sensations? Jakobson's arguments, taken from the speech of young children, show to what degree he believes that language has intrinsic ties with the other senses, and that this tendency is more strongly exhibited in speakers the younger they are. It could be that for the newly verbal child the signifier–signified connection is very meaningful, but that this connection diminishes with maturation and the corresponding development of the other senses. Think of the power of words and how this power gradually wanes as with age. Babies first learning to pronounce sounds understand quickly that vocalizing is by far the most efficient way of getting positive attention from their caregivers. They spend hours babbling to themselves when no one is around to hear them; the true purpose of this activity is still unknown (see section 3.3.1, *Auditory and oral developmental universals*). Growing up, young children believe that words hold an incantatory power and that saying something will make it so. Their stories are filled with examples of magical phrases like *Open Sesame! Abracadabra!* and *Ainsi soit-il!* But over the years, they slowly forget the magic that words once held. They begin to doubt the spoken word; they demand contracts and insist that everything be 'spelled out'. They become disenchanted with sound alone.

However, this does not mean that we, as humans, stop drawing associations between sound and meaning. We are constantly hearing new words around us that need to be signified. Even the children who in Chastaing's experiment named a small figure *pim* and a large one *pum* would have by speaking age been exposed to thousands of words, all of which carry their own associations of smallness or largeness. There is no doubt that their world knowledge

would have informed their decisions in this experiment. Alliterative and rhyme analogies between old and new words (it has already been discussed in Chapter 3 how children are especially sensitive to rhyme) can further the cause of sound symbolism by swelling the ranks of association-based vocabularies. We are bombarded with noises, sounds and words, and this constant stimulation causes us to develop certain instincts about what we hear. The feelings that we seem to reflexively have toward new words might actually be echoes from the words we already know and have learned to associate with certain properties.

Sound holds a central role in child's play. Thinking back to the rhymes of the playground, whether in skipping-songs or childhood taunts, there seems to be more care taken in crafting a well-sounding rhyme than composing verses that conform to metre and the appropriateness of the situation. It is not surprising, then, that writers use more conspicuous sound and rhyme in their works for children than for adults. However, the rhyming in children's books is also more conspicuous for being crafted by an adult. Children will use language more freely than adults will as they are not as concerned with the logic or grammaticality of what is being said. Adults, on the other hand, are sharply aware of whether or not a sentence makes sense. This self-conscious awareness in what we say often results in our correcting the reported speech of others (e.g. He can't have said *x*—that doesn't make sense. He must have said *y*).²²

²² When I was gathering data on the 'Stella Stella' skipping rhyme, I noticed that whereas I remembered the last line as nonsense words (vah lo, vah lo, vah lo-vah lo-vah lo-vah), others seemed to remember 'real' English: "balow balow balow your nose" (as in blow blow blow your nose) and "flow, flow, flow." I wondered whether my hearing or memory was faulty for recalling nonsense; or whether my contributors, in the act of remembering, had legitimized the nonsensical sections of the rhyme; or neither. See note 41 of Chapter 1 for transcriptions of three versions of the rhyme.

It must be remembered that adults have a different relationship with language than have children. They are no longer apprentices; they have learned language and mastered it. Therefore, adults who write books for children, and this of course include translators, find themselves having to adjust their perspective on language in order to write effectively for an audience that has a more basic relationship with language.

4.2.2 *Sound in translation, sound and translators*

Adult writers are compelled to revisit their childish relationship with words through adult logic and explanation. In the case of translators, there is an even greater tendency towards rationality and grammaticality as the general trend in children's literature is for target texts to be more conservative than source-language texts.²³ In one example, translator Cay Dollerup set about re-translating Roald Dahl's children's book *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (1970) into Danish with a class of graduate translation students (a Danish translation was published in 1975). Under scrutiny were the names of the three protagonists in the original: 'Farmer Boggis,' 'Farmer Bunce' and 'Farmer Bean'. The first two names are extant as proper surnames in English, with the latter, 'bunce,' at the time being slang for 'money.'²⁴ However, the students, when faced with the task of translating these characters' names, insisted that "the more sense the names made, the better"²⁵ (the implication of course being that lexical meaning is more

²³ O'Connell 2003: 229–30.

²⁴ "Bunce": money; gains; extra profit or gain, bonus; something to the good. The most recent citation of this word listed in the Oxford English Dictionary is in 1968. (Oxford English Dictionary Online. 2001.) is listed as a word under <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/bunce>> meaning 'boom'; however, other resources have indicated that this is a neologism and under consideration for inclusion in reference books. Therefore, this would not have been a lexical item in 1970 when Dahl wrote his book.

²⁵ Dollerup 2003: 98.

important than sound). They accordingly named the three characters ‘Bolle’ (bun), ‘Bølle’ (hooligan) and ‘Bønne’ (bean).²⁶ The three names in the published Danish translation had also taken this lexical tack, re-naming the three farmers ‘Bred’ (fat), ‘Bidsk’ (gruff) and ‘Bønne’ (bean). Unlike the translator of the 1975 translation, it seems that the students were suitably impressed with the obvious use of sound in the original to play up this aspect in the Danish (through the alliteration of the ‘b’ and the close similarity in vowels and consonants).

Other writers and translators of children’s literature are just as aware, as these Danish graduate students were, of the evocative power that sound has on children. Dennis Lee, a renowned Canadian poet—for both adults and children—states: “the only place I can do metrical rhythm with conviction is in my children’s stuff.”²⁷ Moreover, in a postlude to his children’s poetry anthology *Alligator Pie* (1974), Lee attests to the superiority of the child’s ear in winking out a better rhyme:

One thing I discovered is that the words should never be sacred. A rhyme is meant to be used, and that means changing it again and again. For children’s verse passes around in weird and wonderful versions, and the changes always make sense — to the tongue and the ear, if not necessarily to the mind. If your child inadvertently rewrites some of these poems, please take his version more seriously than mine.²⁸

Therefore, appropriateness in a child’s rhyme is not in the logical sequence of words, but in the naturalness of the rhythm.

²⁶ Dollerup 2003: 98.

²⁷ Lee 2001: 127.

²⁸ Lee 2001: 127.

In his work for children, Lee confesses to drawing heavily from a ‘cadential sense of rhythm’²⁹ which he describes as being part intuition and part kinaesthetics:

...with rhythm kind of playing through, the sense you can get in your body of a kinaesthetic bunching and tightening and flow and hang and whatnot — the thing I’m calling ‘cadence’ is precisely that experience — it’s kinaesthetic for me.³⁰

It is interesting to note that his description of ‘cadence’ closely reflects the real fact of rhythm as manifested as a physical reaction. Although he admits that he does not know where the sound that feeds kinaesthetic rhythm comes from, Lee explains that it is from the rhythm that filters in his inner ear that he takes his poetical inspiration.³¹

Bruno De La Salle, translator of the English children’s classic *Millions of Cats* (1928) by Wanda Gág, also recognizes the different facets of rhythm in a memorable piece of children’s literature. In his preface published to his 1992 translation *Des chats par millions*, he speaks about the musical rhythms in Gág’s story:

Une belle histoire comme celle-ci, c’est aussi une musique.
 Une musique de propositions qui se succèdent, s’accordent et se complètent.
 Cela fit une litanie, une kyrielle, une comptine, une randonnée de mots. [...]
 Et que l’on regarde ces mots en silence, ou bien qu’ils nous soient racontés, ces propositions de paroles exhalent une musique que tout à coup nous reconnaissons comme nôtre.
 C’est la musique de l’enfant qui énumère sa première table d’addition dont il connaît mieux la musique que les paroles [...]
 C’est la musique de l’enfant qui chantonne une comptine avec sa grand-mère...³²

²⁹ Lee 2001: 127.

³⁰ Lee 2001: 127.

³¹ Lee 2001: 127.

³² De La Salle 1992: unpagé.

De La Salle recognizes that music in a story is more than a melodic succession of words and phrases but also a natural impulse in the child. So a well-written children's book must somehow manage to impart some of this childish impulse through its words. It is a music that is recognizable to us all, from child to grandmother, and is above all universal. This is why De La Salle, in keeping with a sound-based methodology, can translate the strong melody of the English refrain:

Cats here, cats there,
Cats and kittens everywhere,
Hundreds of cats,
Thousands of cats,
Millions and billions and trillions of cats.³³

into an equally agreeable French version:

Chats ici, chats là, chats un peu plus loin,
chats et chatons dans tous les coins,
des chats, il y en avait vingt, cent, deux cents, mille et encore un.
Des millions, des billions, des trillions de chats,
et encore un peu plus que ça!³⁴

The effectiveness of De La Salle's passage is not in a literal translation of words, but rather in his ability to perceive and preserve a rhythm—he has listened to the original English melody and re-orchestrated it for a French instrument.

³³ Gág 1988: unpagéd.

³⁴ De La Salle: unpagéd.

4.3 *Rhythm and meaning in translation theory*

Rhythm is more than just the melody of a tune or the prosody of a phrase; it is a perception that is psychological and physiological: rhythm is natural human perception. It is interesting to note that translators and theorists working with children's books seem very aware of rhythm and connect it with translational accuracy and quality. It is as if the language in children's books is more frequently examined according to its quality in sound and rhythm because children are much more strongly associated with the organic, natural language that comes as instinct. Theory on the translation of adult prose, on the other hand, generally betrays the belief that rhythm is a given: if the translation is a success, naturally it must mean that the rhythm is there.

Henri Meschonnic, however, refuses to take rhythm in translation for granted and discusses the topic extensively in a number of works. His essays are examinations of the presence of rhythm in poetry, prose and translation theory. His main position is that rhythm as a natural instinct is older than language and therefore a more primal and reflexive mode of expression. He states:

Les rythmes sont la part la plus archaïque dans le langage. Ils sont dans le discours un mode linguistique pré-individuel, inconscient comme tout le fonctionnement du langage.³⁵

Rhythm, he argues, is a natural aspect of all discourse because it is a fact of all human activity, and theories on translation (also a human activity), that do not take rhythm into consideration are therefore naturally lacking.

³⁵ Meschonnic 1982: 100.

Meschonnic considers rhythm to be more than anterior to language. He also views rhythm as a mould into which language is poured and shaped as discourse.³⁶ He states:

[J]e prends le rythme comme l'organisation et la démarche même du sens dans le discours. C'est-à-dire l'organisation (de la prosodie à l'intonation) de la subjectivité et de la spécificité d'un discours : son historicité. Non plus un opposé du sens, mais la signifiante généralisée d'un discours. Ce qui s'impose immédiatement comme l'objectif de la traduction.³⁷

According to him, rhythm is not itself meaning, but is vital to making meaning. And as translation is by nature an exercise in discourse, the study of rhythm is necessary in the practice of translation.³⁸

Meschonnic makes a very clear distinction between language (*langue*) and discourse (*discours*) in his discussions on rhythm. Simply put, the principal difference between language and discourse is the aspect of agency that is present in discourse. He argues that language cannot become discourse, that is language in use, without the agency of a subject or the mediation of rhythm—rhythm is an aspect of discourse and discourse is inseparable from its meaning; therefore, rhythm must be inseparable from the meaning in discourse.³⁹

The trouble with traditional linguistic theories on translation, he argues, is that they have made too much out of the primacy of language over discourse. He speaks of theorists who base their work on *la théorie du signe*, stemming from the work by Ferdinand de Saussure,⁴⁰

³⁶ Meschonnic 1982: 99.

³⁷ Meschonnic 1999: 99.

³⁸ Meschonnic 1982: 83.

³⁹ Meschonnic 1982: 70.

⁴⁰ This is in reference to Ferdinand de Saussure's theory that the sign is made up of a signifier and a signified linked by an arbitrary relationship.

whose central principle lies in the arbitrariness between signifier and signified. Saussure's theory also finds that meaning is a matter of convention and lies firmly in the realm of language, not discourse.

Meschonnic contests this. He argues that a sign-centered approach to translation relegates rhythm to a structural or formal aspect of discourse, whose relation to meaning, if any, is merely that of imitation.⁴¹ Difficulties in translation arise or mediocrity sets in when translational methods are informed solely by theories supporting the primacy of the sign in discourse without due consideration to the suprasegmental aspects of speech.⁴² When translators focus too much on the dualism of signifier–signified, he argues, poor translations result.⁴³ Meschonnic terms these *traductions-langue* because they do not go beyond the level of words and phrases. He claims that a practical theory that incorporates rhythm would develop better translations or *traductions-texte*.⁴⁴

Meschonnic makes the further claim that rhythm in discourse “peut avoir plus de sens que le sens des mots, ou un autre sens. Le « suprasegmental » de l’intonation ... peut avoir tout le sens, plus que les mots.”⁴⁵ The meaning potentiality of intonation is just what many of us take advantage of when we use sarcasm to convey a meaning other than that implied by the denotative meaning of our words.

⁴¹ Meschonnic 1982: 69.

⁴² Meschonnic 1999: 99.

⁴³ Meschonnic 1999: 104.

⁴⁴ Meschonnic 1999: 99.

⁴⁵ Meschonnic 1982: 70.

Intonation⁴⁶ is that aspect of language that is untranscribed in literature. While there are diacritics to describe the volume or pitch of a phrase—typographic symbols, and rising and falling arrows or dots are used in technical materials, and bold or large fonts and letter skewing are used in children’s books—they cannot provide an exact representation of the intonation of written words. Unlike phonetics, which can be written using the International Phonetic Alphabet or IPA (a number of world leaders can ‘speak’ many different languages by knowing how to read IPA), prosodic transcription⁴⁷ can only indicate general movements in pitch rise and fall.

Intonation is that rhythmical aspect that is proper to spoken language. The distinction between rhythm in spoken language and written discourse is that one is the result of natural biological impulse while the other is an artificial imposition on speech usually in the form of meter. All the hesitations and verbal tics that are natural when speaking are erased over in written speech, and a reader can be coached to a particular intonational reading through punctuation. The rhythm created through punctuation is, in a way, an artificial melody, while intonation, being an inevitable aspect of discourse, naturally participates in imparting sense.

⁴⁶ Intonation is “the pattern or melody of pitch changes in connected speech.” The definition for prosody includes intonation: “the stress and intonation patterns of an utterance.” Outside of the technical field, the two terms are often used interchangeably.

“Intonation” and “prosody.” Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary. 2nd ed. 2001.

⁴⁷ Transcription showing intonational or prosodic features are called suprasegmental transcription or prosodic transcription. I will be using the shorter term ‘prosodic transcription’ throughout.

A sentence using one type of prosodic transcription could look like:

UnVfortunately / their best player didn’t turn `up. (Cruttenden 1997:94)

The diacritic marks here indicate that there is a fall-rise in the word ‘unfortunately’ (V) and a high-to-low fall on the last word ‘up’ (`). The oblique indicates an intonational group boundary. These marks, however, can only give a general idea of changing pitch. There is no way of reading exactly how high a pitch should start nor how low it should fall in a ‘high-to-low fall’.

It is Meschonnic's acknowledgement of the significance of rhythm in writing that must be realized in translation in order for better reading. The realities of prosody should especially be considered when translating children's literature. Because children's books are shorter and more events are condensed into 20 or 30 pages, and particularly because children's books are frequently read aloud, the prosody of the text—the 'singability' of the phrases—take on extra impressiveness. Knowing how a text is likely to sound out loud can guide a translator to create a more enjoyable, and therefore more effective, text. For instance, there are many books that play with font type and placement in order to give more interesting visuals or encourage more dynamic readings. However, if the size or skewing of the text is meant to be a visual representation of the intonation, voice volume or quality of the character speaking (and therefore of the reader playing the character), there is no sense in transferring exactly the font or typesetting in a translation unless these prosodic elements of the phrase are the same in both the source and target languages.

Interestingly, Meschonnic's arguments for the creation of *traductions-texte* correspond to those principles upon which language acquisition operates. He claims that rhythm is instinctual. Rhythm, as explained, is indeed a psychological and physiological phenomenon. As discussed in Chapter 3, linguistic experiments have shown that prosody is the most salient feature of language for newborns and possibly has significant implications in later reading acquisition. Finally, Meschonnic states that to ignore rhythm in translation is to translate incompletely and to diminish the organization of meaning which makes language discourse.

Meschonnic's approach to rhythm centres on an oral approach to literature. His views strongly support literature that speaks to the reader and does not stay dormant on the page as dead words. He reminds translators that it is "le rythme, qu'on ne lit pas, mais qui s'entend dans ce qu'on lit" that they must listen to.⁴⁸ Children's books, being the closest written medium to the oral arts,⁴⁹ are the ideal example of the importance of rhythm in books. Although Meschonnic never explicitly wrote on the translation of children's literature, his research still compels the translator to a choice: *traductions-langue*, an educational exercise in nouns, verbs and adjectives with none of the music of speech, or *traductions-texte* that sing to the child.

4.4 Functionalism in translation: skopos theory

In the 1970s, functionalism in translation marked a shift in theory that historically regarded the objective of translation to be linguistic equivalence between texts. Instead of focussing on parity between source and target texts, functionalism proposed that translation be approached as an activity which had agents and a purpose.

Functionalism did not introduce purpose into translation theory; it called for purposeful translation. Instead of regarding source-language texts as the translator's ultimate reference for his or her translation methods, functionalists focussed rather on the efficiency of the target texts in target communities. Under functionalism, the purpose of translation ranks

⁴⁸ Meschonnic 1982: 102.

⁴⁹ Ewers 1982: 174.

above strict linguistic adherence to the source text. Thus, functionalism, with its emphasis on translators and translating as a purposeful activity, is a sharp departure from centuries of theory based on the perceived primacy of original-language texts.

The movement in functionalism in translation theory began with the publication of a number of influential German works. The first of these was published in 1971: Katharina Reiss' *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik* (Possibilities and Limits of Translation Criticism).⁵⁰ In her book, Reiss examines the relationship between source and target texts and argues that the purpose of the target text can, in some cases (i.e. in intersemiotic translations⁵¹), override the formal or linguistic equivalences that are generally considered to be the translator's main references. Reiss' work was continued and the functionalist aspect in her theory further developed by one of her interpretation students, Hans J. Vermeer, whose objective in formulating a "general theory of translation" resulted in one of the most influential modern theories in translation: skopos theory. His skopos theory is developed in *Ein Rahmen für eine allgemeine Translationstheorie, Lebende Sprachen* (1978) (Framework for a General Translation Theory)⁵² and *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* (1984) (Groundwork for a General Theory of Translation)⁵³ co-authored with Reiss. In skopos theory, it is the skopos—the Greek term for 'aim' or 'purpose'⁵⁴—of the translation which determines a translator's choices in composing a target text. According to Vermeer, a translator's principal guideline is to design his or her translation based on its purpose in a

⁵⁰ Gloss of title from Nord 1997: 9.

⁵¹ As described in Jakobson, Roman. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation." On Translation. 2nd ed. Eds. Reuben Brower. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

⁵² Gloss of title from Munday 2001: 151.

⁵³ Gloss of title from Munday 2001: 150.

⁵⁴ Vermeer 1996: 4.

given linguistic community, the rationale being that in order to produce an optimally acceptable⁵⁵ translation, translating must be considered from the viewpoint of the end users.⁵⁶

It should be noted that Vermeer makes a distinction between ‘intention,’ ‘skopos’ and ‘function’ in his theory. He describes ‘intention’ as the purpose of a translation from the commissioner’s point of view, ‘skopos’ as the purpose for which a translator creates a target text and ‘function’ as the purpose of a translation as inferred by target-text readers.⁵⁷ These three purposes, seen from the viewpoints of three different agents in a translational action,⁵⁸ may or may not coincide.⁵⁹

Skopos theory is closely related to action theory, which states that all human actions have a purpose.⁶⁰ As translating is a human activity—that is, “intentional, purposeful behaviour that takes place in a given situation”⁶¹—skopos theory is thus a “theory of purposeful action”⁶² and is therefore applicable to all forms of translation.

⁵⁵ According to Gideon Toury, ‘acceptability’ refers to a translation that subscribes to target-culture norms. This is contrasted with ‘adequacy,’ which refers to translations that adhere to source-culture norms. (Toury 1995: 56–57.)

⁵⁶ Munday 2001: 79.

⁵⁷ Vermeer 1996: 7–8.

⁵⁸ ‘Translational action’ is a term proposed by Justa Holz-Mänttari and describes “a complex action designed to a particular purpose” (as quoted in Nord 1997: 13). I will use Holz-Mänttari’s term throughout my work.

⁵⁹ Vermeer 1996: 8.

⁶⁰ Nord 1997: 13.

⁶¹ Vermeer paraphrased in Nord 1997: 11.

⁶² Nord 1997: 16.

As an action theory, or rather, as a theory proposing an action to translation, skopos theory implies the actions of an agent. In fact, since there is commonly more than one person involved in a translational action, skopos theory can be considered more of an *interaction* theory.⁶³ Vermeer's agents in a translational action are:

- the **commissioner**, who 'orders' a translation from
- the **target-text producer**, who, in consultation with the commissioner, produces a translation according to its 'intended' skopos. The translation then reaches
- the **recipients**, who are the end users of the text and who 'infer' the purpose for which the translation was designed. Recipients then ascribe this 'function' to the text. In cases where the target text is designed for the end user, recipients are termed **intended recipients or addressees**.⁶⁴

In the case of children's books, these roles can typically be filled by:

- the **publishing house**, who receives an original-language text and 'orders' its translation from
- the **translator**, who produces a translation according to its 'intended' skopos, as determined in consultation with the publishing house. The translation then reaches
- the **parents and children**, who are the end users of the text and who 'infer' their own individual purposes for which the translation was designed and ascribe these 'functions' to the text.

Since in skopos theory a translation is considered optimal if it adequately fulfills a purpose in the target community, the most important element in a translational action is the addressee.⁶⁵

The problem in the case of children's literature is that the addressee is not often well-defined.

Ostensibly, children's books are for children; however, publishing houses, which are

⁶³ Nord 1997: 16.

⁶⁴ Vermeer 1996: 5.

⁶⁵ Nord 1997: 12.

obviously in the business of making money, must market their books for the parents, teachers or librarians who buy books on behalf of children. The translator, who works between publishing houses and recipients, is in the difficult position of having to please editors, parents and children, and in some cases, the original author and illustrator as well. The translator must therefore design a target text which meets both the commissioner's expectations with regard to the financial objective as well as the readers' expectations with regard to content quality and language appropriateness.

It is the general opinion that children's books are meant to instruct children in something, whether this be cultural acceptance, values, morals, reading skills, language skills or even just an appreciation for words. The pedagogical aspect is one of the recognizable characteristics of children's books and could therefore be easily thought of the *skopos* of most if not all translations of children's books. Even in works by translators who rebel against a purposefully didactic *skopos*, such as Oittinen, it can be assumed that the function of translations, as ascribed by readers, might differ from translators' possibly non-educational *skopos*. Of course, as a "general theory of translation," *skopos* theory places the responsibility of formulating and fulfilling a translation's *skopos* in the translator's hands.

Given that a commissioner's intention, a translator's *skopos* and a reader's function may not coincide at all points—such as the level of literal fidelity, the portrayal of cultural images through words, the degree of foreignization/domestication, etc.—it might be worthwhile to consider other aspects on which cultures do tend to resemble each other in order to match intention, *skopos* and function. I propose that the use of sound and rhythm is one such aspect.

Sounds and prosody are, of course, particular to each language; however, in all languages they are central to communication and, in the case of books, an expedient to teach communication. Therefore, I believe that a *skopos* of teaching language skills to children is inherent in every translation for children.

What is more, a *skopos* of aiding in language acquisition also addresses Hunt's paradox of children's literature which must be both 'good' and 'good for' children.⁶⁶ Sound and rhythm in a translation can fulfill multiple purposes—used skilfully, they can both enhance the entertainment value of a book as well as provide children with basic linguistic data of their language through minimal pairs, prosody, phonaesthetics, etc. More than that, I believe that translating with a careful ear to the sound and rhythm of a text will always complement these two *skopoi* because, as discussed, children are primarily attracted to those sounds that help them to advance in language acquisition. Therefore, words and phrases in a book that best mimic the natural sounds and prosody of speech are as valid as natural speech in providing linguistic data for the child. And since a child's feelings will more quickly 'etymologize'⁶⁷ with more aural exposure to language, children would benefit more from books that have been translated with an ear to spoken language.

For my work, I have chosen to study two translations and an adaptation of children's books with the purpose of helping children to acquire language in mind. Furthermore, I argue that this *skopos* is at least partially intended, consciously or unconsciously, by translators of

⁶⁶ Hunt 1991: 56.

⁶⁷ Jakobson (2002: 182) quotes Gabelentz (1891: 218): As we gradually acquire our other tongue, "our feeling etymologizes, so to speak, without any regard to historical linguistics."

children's texts and ascribed this function by adults who choose these books on behalf of children.

5.1 *Case studies*

I have chosen to study three books written by three different French-Canadian authors and translated into English by the same translator. I selected these books based on the following criteria:

- The source texts should be written in French and translated into English in order that I might work in my first language.
- All three source texts should be written by the same author or all three target texts should be translated by the same translator, thereby reducing the possibility that a marked difference in the treatment of sound and rhythm in the originals or translations are the natural result of all six books having been produced by six different people.
- All three target texts should demonstrate range in perceived reading ability, thereby allowing for the comparison of translation choices with respect to the age of the target readership.
- The translations should not be self-translated, thereby reducing the possibility that an adherence (or not) to the sound and rhythm from the source text is not the result of the source text and translation having been written by the same person.
- The source texts should be based on original material and not adaptations of pre-existing literary or media works, since the writers and translators of such books might have had to adhere to standards of language already used by these characters.

I thought it ideal to find the same translator for all three source-language texts. This might better illustrate how differences in the use of sound in the three books are a result of actively chosen translation strategies (based partially on child language acquisition as per my hypothesis), rather than on the personal writing styles of three different translators.

I have also chosen to use an adaptation for one of the case studies in the interest of observing how the translator would write when given more freedom to exercise his own use of rhythm in his language and style. I feel that three case studies is too small a corpus to yield definitive

conclusions as to the translation of children's books. Therefore, I believe that any dilution of the observations through the addition of this variable is acceptable when weighed against the potential benefits of observing the translator's choices in this case study.

One difficulty I had in locating texts was in finding translations where the translators' names were identified. There were several books I had short-listed for my study that had to be discarded because I was unable to find the name of a translator either on the bibliographic pages or on the Internet (these books were, interestingly, all from Europe). There were other books by French-Canadian authors that had to be discarded as they proved to have been self-translated by the authors. Another frustration I had while looking for texts came from the fact that a number of books that did make interesting use of sound and rhythm had not yet been translated into English. Furthermore, I was aware that restricting myself to French books translated into English, and not the other way round (which has greater traffic), limited my selection further.

It is true that all three books forming my case studies were written by authors who are better known as illustrators. However, since the children's publishing industry has always thrived on author-illustrators, this did not seem a great impediment. Moreover, I believe that writers such as these, who are not extensively published and for whom writing is not yet old hat, might prove to write in a more natural manner with respect to what sounds right rather than what they believe is or ought to be right. I realize that a corpus of three texts is too small to offer any conclusive data on the subject of sound in translation; however, I hope that my study will provide a glimpse into how translations for children can be examined differently.

Furthermore, I am aware that one book per reading level category is hardly representative of a whole age readership, and therefore my comments related to this variable are more observations rather than arguments.

5.2 Reading levels

Children's books reflect the philosophies and expectations of the adults who write them. There seems to be tacit consensus among adults in publishing houses, schools and homes that children's linguistic and cognitive capabilities are best furthered by reading. Thus, literature for children actually is made a pedagogical tool to further a social mandate based on what adults believe children need.¹

Publishers, authors and translators, determine what children 'want' to read or what children 'should' read and continually reflect these judgments in their work. Similarly, reading levels are determined by publishing houses, educators and parents. The target age group of children's books can be determined through

- publishing house established levels. For example, children's publishers Dominique et compagnie/Dominique and Friends have a collection *À pas de loup* / Little Wolf Books, which designates books for reading levels 1–3².
- the judgments of educators, librarians and literary critics. Teachers and librarians have great autonomy in choosing the books that will be made available to children, and literary critics, through their reviews of children's books, help establish a canon of children's literature.

¹ Shavit 1999: 85.

² The reading levels for *À pas de loup* (Little Wolf Books) are: Niveau 1 – J'apprends à lire (Level 1 – I learn to read), Niveau 2 – Je sais déjà lire (Level 2 – Now I can read), Niveau 3 – Je dévore les livres (Level 3 – I love books)

- authors' or illustrators' dedications. For example, some books are dedicated to a particular child or to children in general.
- the estimated ages of the characters in the book. Authors will generally match the age of their protagonists to the age of their desired audience, so that a book about a young protagonist just starting school would be for a four-to-five-year-old child who is also beginning school.

In this work, I have decided to study one example from each of three reading level categories that I have determined partially from existing publishing practices and from Piaget's cognitive theory of development. The three categories are as follows:

Read-aloud literature (ages 0-2). Children are pre-literate and are read to by adults. Story-time is not so much about reading a book as it is a labelling exercise and an opportunity for human interaction.

Learning to read (ages 3-4). Children are being taught to read, usually with a caregiver. During story-time, children contribute verbally to the story. There is more explanation and improvisation of the story.

Grade school (ages 5-7). Children are in an institution and are building on their reading knowledge started at home. They are learning to read individually. Here, language is the primary focus.

For my determinations of the reading level of each of the books in my case study, I looked to publisher house recommendations; author, translator or illustrator dedications; and the properties of the books themselves. It is important to note that the reading levels of the source-language texts and their translations do not always match; however, with the three books I have chosen, this was not the case.

In the first category of storytelling books for pre-readers, I have chosen the books *Monsieur Ilétaitunefois* and *Mister Once-upon-a-time*. This is not to say that these books would not be equally attractive to children just learning or already able to read (in fact, Annick publishing house recommends this book for children aged 4-7); however, the books' format and text

make them ideal as read-aloud books. They are large and hardbound (soft cover editions were published later), which makes them easier to share between an adult and child sitting next to each other or sturdy enough to be held up and read to an audience. The pictures are bright and take up most of the page space and the text size is varied, which provides visual interest for the pre-literate child and suggestive reading cues for the adult. Furthermore, the fact the books' storylines were about telling stories was not lost on me.

In the second category, that of learning to read, I have chosen *Plaisirs d'aimer* and *Play Time*. These books come in both hardbound and paperbound versions and are square and medium-sized, which make them easy for two people sitting next to each other to read together. The texts are short and consistently spaced out on the page (four short lines in stanzas) and the text fonts are large. There are full-page pictures for every stanza.

The books, *Pépé, Flox et les chaussettes* and *Peppy, Phlox and the Socks*, belong to the third category of books for grade-school children. In fact, these two books are included in the *À pas de loup* and *Little Wolf Books* collections of the publishing house Dominique et compagnie / Dominique and Friends and are recommended for their "Niveau 2 / Level 2 - Je sais déjà lire / Now I can read."

The books are paperbound and the size is smaller, though not quite matching the size of an adult novel. The font is small and uniform, and the text is organized to look more like paragraphs. The pages are numbered. There are pictures throughout the text, which are laid out at different positions of the page.

5.3 Background on the translator, David Homel

David Homel was born in the United States, but has lived and worked in Montréal, Quebec, since 1980. He is a journalist, editor, novelist, literary translator and teacher. Homel won the Governor General's Award for Translation in 1995 for *Why Must a Black Writer Write About Sex?*, his translation of Dany Laferrière's *Cette grenade dans la main du jeune Nègre est-elle une arme ou un fruit?*, and in 2001, with Fred A. Reed, for *Fairy Ring*, a translation of Martine Desjardins' *Le Cercle de Clara*. His translation *How to Make Love to a Negro* of Laferrière's *Comment faire l'amour avec un Nègre sans se fatiguer* was also nominated for the Governor General's Award for Translation in 1988.

Homel has translated a number of children's books from French, notably Roger Paré's *Plaisirs de...* series and Bertrand Gauthier's *Zuneek* series. He co-wrote *Travels with My Family* with his wife, celebrated children's author and illustrator, Marie-Louise Gay.³ When translating children's books, Homel has said that he considers concision, rhythm, rhyme and language levels, and believes that reading aloud is the key.⁴

³ Homel's biographic and bibliographic information from the Canada Council for the Arts website at <<http://www.canadacouncil.ca/prizes/ggla/nx127248841943125000.htm>>, the Writers' Union of Canada website at <<http://www.writersunion.ca/h/homel.htm>> and the L'infocentre littéraire des écrivains québécois website at <<http://www.litterature.org/detailauteur.asp?numero=257>>.

⁴ Homel 2007: unpagéd.

5.4 Monsieur Ilétaitunefois and Mister Once-upon-a-time

5.4.1 Background on the author, Rémy Simard

Rémy Simard is a Quebec comic strip artist, illustrator and writer as well as the current director of publishing house Boréal's Kami-Case collection (which he founded in 1986). He was also president of the *Association des Créateurs et Intervenants de la Bande Dessinée* (ACIBD) from 1989 until its dissolution. Simard began writing children's books in 1990 when he had difficulty finding a good children's book to read to his son. He has won a Governor General's Award, a Mr. Christie Book Award and a *Studio Magazine* Merit Award for his book *My Dog Is an Elephant*, which also made the White Raven Collection, International Youth Library (Munich, Germany).⁵

5.4.2 Summary of the text

In a nameless, pluvial village, the townspeople only have one pastime: to tell stories. One day, a stranger comes to town and starts popping up every time someone begins a story with "Once upon a time" (*Il était une fois*). This is because the stranger's name happens to be Mister Once-upon-a-time (*Monsieur Ilétaitunefois*). The townspeople get fed up with Mister Once-upon-a-time interrupting their stories and so lock him in jail. Unfortunately, the town's stories start to lag as the townspeople become more concerned with poor Mister Once-upon-a-time. So, the mayor officially changes the stranger's name to Mister The-end (*Monsieur Fin*), which is how the story ends.

⁵ Simard's biographic and bibliographic information from the BD Québec website at <<http://www.bdquebec.qc.ca/auteurs/simard/remy.htm>> and the Annick Press website at <<http://www.annickpress.com/authors/simard.asp?author=287>>.

5.4.3 *Rhythm and repetition*

At the sentence level, the well-known phrase *Once upon a time* (and, in French, *Il était une fois*) is inherently rhythmic. It should be remembered that rhythm is a series of “d’attentes et de satisfactions”⁶ and that there is nothing more anticipatory or promising in the children’s literary tradition than these four words. They have their own music refined through uncountable recitations over the ages: *Ónce upón a tíme*. It is the same stress/unstress pattern that makes the Cinderella skipping song so memorable. The line “Once upon a time” also acts as a refrain throughout the text, repeating every time a character begins a story and every time the book’s eponymous hero interrupts. The exchange of “Once upon a time” and Mister Once-upon-a-time’s personal refrain—“Mr. Once-upon-a-time here, at your service” (*Monsieur Ilétaitunefois, pour vous servir*)—creates a predictable back-and-forth rhythm that must continue until the last line “Mr The end, at your service...” (*Monsieur Fin, pour vous servir...*) achieves harmonic resolution that in music gives the listener a sense of completion.

The words “story” and “stories” (*histoire/histoires*) also appear frequently, on every page in fact, and serve as keystones around which the rest of the text is built. This is the translation’s secondary rhythm created through the repetition of each successive “story.” Think of a grasshopper trailing a string behind it, hopping from one keystone to the next, each time affixing the string as it lands. What is created is a steady, curving rhythm that works together with the larger ‘Once-upon-a-time’ rhythm to create a natural flow for the reader and listener. The best example of this dual rhythmic intensity can be found on the first page. Here is the French:

⁶ Fraisse 1974: 7.

Il était une fois,
 dans un village éloigné de tout, des villageois qui
 n'avaient qu'une seule chose à faire :
 se raconter des **histoires**.
 Il était une fois par-ci.
 Il était une fois par-là.
 Il n'y avait pas de télé au village, que des orages
 à tout casser et des **histoires** à raconter. Des belles
histoires, des courtes et des longues, des **histoires**
 à dormir debout et des **histoires** drôles
 à en faire pipi dans sa culotte.

and the English:

Once upon a time,
 in a village far, far away, the people had only
 one thing to do, and that was to tell **stories**.
 There was a "Once upon a time..." here.
 And a "Once upon a time..." there.
 There was no television in the village, just great
 rain storms, and great **stories** to tell.
 Beautiful **stories**, **stories** short and long, tall tales
 and **stories** so funny they made you want
 to wet your pants.

It is interesting to note in another passage how the repetition in the French text is not as obvious in translation. The passage in the French original is:

Les villageois purent
 recommencer à **raconter des histoires** drôles.
 Puis ils **racontèrent des histoires** un peu moins
 drôles, pour ensuite **raconter des histoires** tristes.
 Tristes comme la pluie.
 Le cœur des conteurs n'y était plus.
 À chaque histoire que les villageois entamaient,
 ils se mettaient à penser à ce pauvre
 petit monsieur seul dans sa cellule
 toute noire.

Homel in the English version, by contrast, translates three manifestations of *raconter* once (with the present participle "telling") and translates the last *histoires* with the pronoun "they":

The people in the village
 could go back to **telling their** funny **stories**
 without being bothered. But their **stories** weren't
 so funny, and soon **they** turned downright sad.
 As sad as a picnic on a rainy day.
 The storytellers' hearts weren't in it. Every time
 the people started a story, they began to think
 of the poor funny little man all alone
 in his dark, damp cell.

These translation choices could be an indication of the cautious tendency in English writing to limit the repetition of the same word in one section,⁷ or it could have been a conscious decision on the part of Homel to adopt a narrator's voice that is more colloquial, familiar and oral than that of the French narrator. For example, Homel translates

⁷ H.W. and F.G. Fowler in *The King's English* warn against the indiscriminate use of repetition in elegant writing:

‘Rhetorical’ or—to use at once a wider and a more intelligible term—‘significant’ repetition is a valuable element in modern style; used with judgement, it is as truly a good thing as clumsy repetition, the result of negligence, is bad. But there are some writers who, from the fact that all good repetition is intentional, rashly infer that all intentional repetition is good; and others who may be suspected of making repetitions from negligence, and retaining them from a misty idea that to be aware of a thing is to have intended it. Even when the repetition is a part of the writer's original plan, consideration is necessary before it can be allowed to pass: it is implied in the terms ‘rhetorical’ or significant repetition that the words repeated would ordinarily be either varied or left out; the repetition, that is to say, is more or less abnormal, and whatever is abnormal may be objectionable in a single instance, and is likely to become so if it occurs frequently. (Fowler 1973: 218)

Conversely, repetition is expected and justified in lucid writing:

The writers who have most need of repetition, and are most justified in using it, are those whose chief business it is to appeal not to the reader's emotions, but to his understanding; for, in spite of the term ‘rhetorical’, the object ordinarily is not impressiveness for impressiveness' sake, but emphasis for the sake of clearness. ... [Moreover,] of the two motives, impressiveness and lucidity, the latter is far the more likely to seem justifiable in the reader's eyes. (Fowler 1973: 219)

The use of frequent repetition is one of the principles of the plain language movement, which strives for clear and understandable writing (usually in the context of official or governmental writing):

Don't worry about using a term more than once in the same sentence or section of text. It is better to repeat a term than use a less suitable alternative and risk confusing your reader.

(Kirklees Council 2007: unpagged)

Plain language still advocates judicious use of repetition:

And you can use the same word twice in a sentence if you can't find a better word. Of course, this does not mean you should break these so-called rules all the time – just when they make a sentence flow better.

(Plain English Campaign: 2007, unpagged)

Puis ils racontèrent des histoires un peu moins
drôles, pour ensuite raconter des histoires tristes.

with

But their stories weren't
so funny, and soon they turned **downright** sad.

His choice of the adverb “downright”—a familiar word generally used in conversation—gives this story more the flavour of an oral narration than of a book. Homel nurtures a conversational tone in his story through choices such as this and others. His use of the second person, for example, creates an oral voice for the narrator and implies a closer connection with a listening, and not just a reading, audience:

Beautiful stories, stories short and long, tall tales
and stories so funny they made **you** want
to wet **your** pants.

for the original

Des belles
histoires, des courtes et des longues, des histoires
à dormir debout et des histoires drôles
à en faire pipi dans sa culotte.

and

Despite the lightning and thunder, **you** couldn't
start a story without Mr. Once-upon-a-time
showing up. If **you** locked the door, he would slip
through the keyhole or squirt out the kitchen
faucet or arrive by registered letter or fax.

for

Le mauvais temps persistait, mais il n'y avait plus
moyen de raconter la moindre histoire sans que
Monsieur Ilétaitunefois n'apparaisse. Quand
ce n'était pas par la porte, il arrivait par le trou de
la serrure ou par le robinet de la cuisine et même
par courrier recommandé ou par télécopieur.

5.4.4 *Rhyme and alliteration*

Neither the French nor the English text is written in rhyme (although the text is center-justified on the page, suggesting the form of a poem); however, the French text, by virtue perhaps of a more restricted phonemic inventory,⁸ has more coincidental rhyme. There are instances of seemingly serendipitous rhyming throughout the French text, such as:

Il n'y avait pas de télé au **village**, que des **orages** à tout *casser* et des histoires à raconter.
Mais, un jour, tout **cela** changea. Car **voilà** que sous une pluie diluvienne...
Le soir **venu** ce **fut** une toute autre histoire...
Elle ouvrit la porte et vit le drôle de **petit** monsieur tout humide.
Bonjour madame, vous m'avez appelé? —Non monsieur, je **n'ai** appelé personne.

Most of these rhymes are owing to the rules of French grammar, which ensures the rhyming of morphological verb endings. The English text, by contrast, has little by way of rhyme, but compensates with alliteration. In one passage, Homel makes extensive use of the phonemes /s/ (in bold face) and /z/ (underlined), which help to convey an image of running water:

Safe from the **storm**
in her house with a thousand
lightning rods on top, Mrs. Slush

⁸ Numbers are dependant on dialectal variations; however, English generally has more phonemes than French.

sat down in her favourite chair
 to tell her kids a story.
 She'd scarcely had time to say,
 "Once upon a time," when
 someone knocked on the door.
 Knock! Knock! Knock!

This is matched in a corresponding alliterative force in the French original:

Bien protégée
 de l'orage dans sa maison
 aux mille paratonnerres,
 madame Sloche s'installa
 confortablement avec ses enfants
 pour leur raconter une histoire.
 Elle n'eut pas aussitôt dit
 « Il était une fois » que quelqu'un
 vint frapper à la porte.
 Toc ! Toc ! Toc !

5.4.5 *Storytelling and human interaction*

Monsieur Ilétaitunefois and *Mister Once-upon-a-time* also encourages another aspect of language acquisition, human interaction. Human interaction, as previously discussed, is important for conveying to pre-literate children the ultimate purpose of language—communication with others (see section 3.5.5, *Motherese and human interaction*). As storybooks, *Monsieur Ilétaitunefois* and *Mister Once-upon-a-time* are to be told to someone and not read silently.

5.5 Plaisirs d'aimer and Play Time

5.5.1 Background on the author, Roger Paré

Roger Paré was born and raised in Abitibi, Quebec. He spent twenty-five years as a designer-illustrator at Radio-Canada before becoming a full-time illustrator of children's picture books. His books have won several awards, including the Canada Council Children's Literature Prize in 1985 (it was renamed the Governor General's Literary Award in 1987) for his book *L'Alphabet*, and for illustration in 1979 for Raymond Plante's *Une fenêtre dans ma tête*.⁹

5.5.2 Summary of the text

Homel's *Play Time* is not a translation of Paré's *Plaisirs d'aimer*, but is rather an adaptation. Homel rewrote the text choosing to adhere to only two qualities of the original: that the text be composed of poems and that they match Paré's pictures. There is no traceable plot line. Instead, both books consist of vignettes where a picture is embellished with words. The texts consist of short, four-line poems that describe the illustrations on the facing pages.

5.5.3 Rhyme

The most characteristic feature about both the French and English versions of this book is rhyme. Each poem conforms to definite rhyme schemes (i.e. the pattern of rhymes in a poem with end rhymes represented by matching letters); however, the rhyme schemes vary. Paré in

⁹ Paré's biographic and bibliographic information from the Annick Press website at <<http://www.annickpress.com/authors/pare.asp?author=393>> and the University of Victoria, British Columbia, website at <<http://gateway.uvic.ca/clic/Awards.html>>.

the French version uses AAAA, ABCC, ABAB, ABAB and AABB rhyme schemes, although he favours the latter for the last five vignettes. By contrast, Homel's English version consistently uses an ABCB rhyme scheme. Because Homel keeps to one rhyme scheme throughout, there is a stronger overall rhythm in his text compared to Paré's text. Since rhythm must be predictable in order for the listener to anticipate it, reading Homel's text out loud creates a stronger internal rhythm in the reader early on, whereas Paré's verses, which go through several different rhyme schemes before settling an AABB rhyme scheme, delays the build up of a strong rhythm. The first verse in *Plaisirs d'aimer*:

Tous les matins
la famille Finfin
chante un refrain
qui donne de l'entrain

has an AAAA rhyme scheme. The reader is therefore momentarily perturbed by the changing rhyme scheme in the second verse:

Gros-Minou
fait la paix
avec Souris-Lili
et ses amies.

which is ABCC. This continues with the third (ABAB) and the fourth verse (ABCC) before Paré chooses to stick to the AABB rhyme scheme in the fifth verse and for the rest of his book.

Before going further in a discussion of rhyme and its significance in these books, I will outline some basic types of rhyme:

- *true rhyme*: words that differ by only one phoneme at the beginning of the word (e.g. **house**/mouse).
- *identical rhyme*: a word rhymes with itself (e.g. Sniff **it**, / gnaw **it**, / then start to paw **it**).
- *assonant rhyme*: words have similar vowels, but different consonants (e.g. den/pet).
- *consonant rhyme*: words have similar consonants, but different vowels (e.g. cat/cut).
- *end rhyme*: rhyme at the end of line (e.g. **Cinderella** / dressed in **yella** / went upstairs to kiss a **fella**).
- *internal rhyme*: rhyme within a line (e.g. Il n'y avait pas de télé au **village**, que des **orages**).
- *one-syllable rhyme*: rhyme occurs on the final stressed syllables of a poem (e.g. One, two, / Buckle my **shoe**).¹⁰

Both Paré's and Homel's books make use of true rhymes, which for the child are the most easily recognized. In fact, true rhymes exploit young children's natural ability to discriminate between different phonemes through minimal pairs (two words which only differ by one phoneme, such as *cat* and *mat*), and the one-syllable stress rhyme supports children's preference for strong stress (see section 1.3.1.2, *Nursery Rhymes*). So we can see how seemingly silly phrases such as *How now, brown cow* work so well in kids' books because they exploit both the minimal pair aspect of language acquisition and strong stress: *Hów nów brówn ców*.

¹⁰ Definitions were summarized from Alberto Ríos' "Glossary of Rhymes." at <http://www.public.asu.edu/~aarios/formsofverse/furtherreading/page2.html>.

5.5.4 Reader interaction

It is interesting to note that the French and English rhymes differ in narrative voice. The French version is more descriptive and writes characters in the third person, whereas the voice of the narrator in the English version is frequently in the first person and frequently addresses the child reader in the second person. Consider the following French and English verses (verses 2, 5 and 7) for the same pictures:

Gros-Minou
fait la paix
avec Souris-Lili
et ses amies.

It's party-time
for cat and mice.
**Would you like some cheese
or strawberry ice?**

Un beau et grand concert
dirigé par Albert
ça donne des frissons
à tous les violons.

Listen to the music
floating down the hall.
It's the rhino's band
getting ready for the ball.

Huit renards bien forts
qui font du sport
pour s'amuser
et se taquiner.

A fox ballgame
on a sunny day.
Who's going to win?
It's hard to say.

The narrator in the English verses draws the reader in through direct address (marked in the examples with bold face) to become an active participant in the story. This illustrates one of the principles of oral communication that, Ewers stresses, is literarily manifested through children's literature. He states:

The narrator announces his story and explains its procedure, continually involving the reader by addressing him directly all the while. The idea is to create the impression that oral communication is taking place; such "communicative redundancy" essentially accounts for

the “simplicity” of children’s literature. The story is easily identified by the addressee as a simple act of oral, face-to-face communication, with its literary nature disguised.¹¹

The French narrator, by contrast, while not completely invisible (deictics such as *je* and *ma* are used), does not directly address the child reader. The French narrator is more removed from the reader. Interestingly, many of the characters that appear in the pictures are given names in the French verses, such as La famille Finfin, Gros-Minou, Souris-Lili, Albert, tante Vadrouille and Ours-Martin, where Homel in English tends to use the generic terms for the animals, such as the monkey family, cat and mice, rhino, monster mama and big fat bear. The French poems are therefore abstracting themselves from the child reader, by not asking questions or making personal comments. Even the fact that the characters in the pictures are given names, disallowing the child the opportunity to name them him or herself, runs counter to the interactive spirit of storytelling and oral communication.

5.6 P  p  , Flox et les chaussettes and Peppy, Phlox and the Socks

5.6.1 Background on the author, Marisol Sarrazin

Marisol Sarrazin was born and resides in Quebec. She began her career as a children’s book illustrator when she was 20-years-old and has won awards for her illustrations. The *Peppy and Phlox* series is her first collection of books as an author.¹²

¹¹ Ewers 1992: 173.

¹² Sarrazin’s biographic and bibliographic information from the Kids Can Press website at <http://www.kidscanpress.com/kidscanpress/KidsCanPress_3/KCP/creators/creators_detail.htm?id=565> and Dominic and Friends’ website at <http://www.dominiqueetcompagnie.com/Createurs/illustrateurs_details.asp?ID=33>.

5.6.2 Summary of the text

This is one book in a series of books featuring the characters Peppy and Phlox.¹³ Phlox (*Flox*), a puppy, is taught by his grandfather Peppy (*Pépé*) how to take care of his teeth—by chewing on socks, clothes, shoes and toys.

5.6.3 Rhyme and repetition

There is a deliberate use of rhyme in both Sarrazin's book and Homel's translation. Sarrazin tends to use internal and end rhymes:

Tu la mâ**chouilles**, tu l'écra**bouilles**, tu la cha**touilles**,
tu la dé**chires**, tu la res**pires** et puis l'é**ti**res.... (page 14)

Tu le prends délicate**ment**.
Tu le renif**les**,
tu le lèche**s**,
tu le grignote**s** avec tes **dents**.
Ensuite, tu le mordille**s** vigoureu**sement**. (page 20)

and repetition, such as in the pronoun *tu* or in the refrain of sentences such as *Pour (le / la) trouver, vive (le panier / la chambre à coucher / le grenier) / C'est un trésor, un vrai mine d'or...* (pages 10, 19 and 27), to create a perceptible rhythm through the frequent return to a refrain.

Homel's translation also uses frequent internal and end rhymes:

¹³ Other books in the series are *Pépé, Flox et le bain* and *Pépé, Flox et le facteur*, translated as *Peppy, Phlox and the Bath* and *Peppy, Phlox and the Postman* by Homel.

First, choose a sock...
 Not too big, not too **small**,
 not too short, not too **tall**,
 make sure it's wool, and give it a pull,
 cotton's good, *too*, right from the *shoe*. (page 8)

but employs identical rhymes as well:

Sniff! Sniff!
 Choose one carefully.
 Sniff **it**,
gnaw it,
 then start to paw it.

Then you shake the daylights out of **it**!

You chew and tickle and tease **it**,
 you bite and pull and squeeze **it**. (pages 12–14)

Sarrazin repeats the pronoun *tu* in a certain couplets. Homel does not repeat the English equivalent “you,” but instead chooses to repeat the co-ordinating conjunction “and” to achieve a similar up-and-down rhythm. He translates

Tu la mâchouilles, **tu** l'écrabouilles, **tu** la chatouilles,
tu la déchires, **tu** la respires et puis l'é tires.... (page 14)

with

You chew **and** tickle **and** tease it,
 You bite **and** pull **and** squeeze it. (page 14)

Similarly,

Tu le croques, tu le tords, tu le dévores,
 tu le fouettes, tu l'émiettes et puis le déchiquettes... (page 23)

becomes

You wrestle **and** gnarl it **and** bite it,
you tussle **and** snarl **and** fight it. (page 23)

5.6.4 Rhyme in reading

Researchers in the field of reading acquisition have studied the role of rhyme in children's ability to learn how to read. In a joint paper by the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* and the University of Cambridge, it was observed that both English and French children learning to read used a rhyme analogy strategy when faced with unfamiliar words.¹⁴ So, if a child was faced with a nonsense word like *bicket*, he would pronounce it according to his pre-existing knowledge of the pronunciation of words such as *ticket*. The study also showed evidence of superior skills from three- to four-year-olds when asked to perform rhyme-matching tests¹⁵ and a relationship between poor results in rhyme matching or production and dyslexia.¹⁶

5.6.5 Binary opposition

According to the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, binary opposition is

the principle of contrast between two mutually exclusive terms: on/off, up/down, left/right etc; and important concept of *structuralism, which sees such distinctions as fundamental to all language and thought. The theory of *phonology developed by Roman Jakobson uses the

¹⁴ Zeigler and Goswami 2005: 12.

¹⁵ Zeigler and Goswami 2005: 6.

¹⁶ Zeigler and Goswami 2005: 16.

concept of ‘binary features’, which are properties either present or absent in any *phoneme: voicing, for example is present in /z/ but not in /s/.¹⁷

In language, binary opposition is present in the contrast of phonological features among phonemes—a sound is defined by what it is not as much as by what it is. Minimal pair sets are indicative of this principle in the contrast of two words with only one phoneme contrast (e.g. **cat** vs. **mat**). With respect to the lexical items, there are also binary opposites in concepts. For instance, for every “up” there must be a “down,” for every “short,” a “tall,” etc. Because binary opposites are a set and stating one in a pair is a natural anticipation of the other, there is an inherent rhythm to them as well. This is made perceptible when these passages are read aloud—the voice goes up, the voice goes down with each head and end term of a set:

Not too big, not too small,
not too short, not too tall, (page 8)

Not too old, not too new,
not all stiff and hard to chew. (page 18)
Not too old, not too new,
a forgotten toy, that’ll do! (page 26)

5.7 *Case studies conclusions*

It seems that, according to the skopos that children’s literature should instruct, books are first and foremost meant to teach children how to read. Even in the case of a read-aloud text, oral performance acts as the beginning step in children’s full apprenticeship into the world of

¹⁷ Baldick, Chris. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

adult language and orthographic culture. The gap between illiteracy and literacy continues to shrink, with some children learning how to read fluently by the age of three. Children spend little time as solely speaking creatures before also becoming reading creatures. Ewers emphasizes this pedagogical function of children's books and considers reading as the primary key to full language acquisition. He states:

Just as the traditional art of storytelling accompanied mankind throughout history ... children's literature accompanies the individual at the personal level, from his initial stages of oral language on into the world of orthographic culture.¹⁸

However, it is interesting to note that writers of children's books often disparage or eschew 'educational' writing that is meant primarily to teach. This is perhaps because books that teach are so often associated with overly moralistic tales, heavy-handed didactics and slow-moving narratives of the "See Jane run" variety. Pedagogics for many writers have no place in children's books and run counter to the ideals of originality and artistry attached to proper literature.

But there are other ways of defining educational texts. Children's books can teach a number of useful lessons that these same writers would not hesitate to embrace—life skills, cultural tolerance, coping mechanisms, etc.—all presented in the pleasant infrastructure of a thoroughly enjoyable book. The inherent pedagogical aspect of the sounds and rhythm of

¹⁸ Ewers 1992: 174.

words, which are the building blocks of books,¹⁹ tends to get overlooked by writers. Writers and translators alike forget that books, at their most basic level, are language aids.

Before I began my case studies, I had hypothesized that rhyme and rhythm would be more in evidence in books for very young children and less in books for older children. However, I have since observed that it seems to be the opposite case. I found that rhyme was more actively used in the books for older, already literate child readers, rather than in what I would consider read-aloud storybooks for younger readers. This could perhaps be a reflection of the general assumption that strong rhyming skills have an effect, direct or indirect, on reading acquisition. Although there are mixed results from studies examining the link between rhyme and improved reading, most give strong evidence that children who have already learned to read (such as the target readership of Sarrazin's book) greatly improve their reading skills when given rhyme instruction.²⁰ Homel's translations, by virtue of their conservation of rhyme in English, actually work to aid in reading and general language acquisition.

Homel makes full use of the potential of language to create communication. He instills in his readers a desire to actively participate in the production of language by inspiring them to follow along orally with his story. He accomplishes this through strong rhyming (e.g. in a consistent ABAC rhyme scheme in *Play Time*), word repetition (e.g. in identical rhymes in *Peppy, Phlox and the Socks*) and alliteration (e.g. in passages in *Mister Once-upon-a-time*), which all serve to create an overt and infectious rhythm. Moreover, these techniques aid in

¹⁹ There are exceptions to this rule. Raymond Briggs' *The Snowman* (1978) is a celebrated children's book entirely without text.

²⁰ Macmillan 2002: 25.

the reader's developing knowledge of the natural stress patterns and contrastive phonemes of the English language.

I find that Homel's translation choices, which exploit the natural prosodic tendencies of the English language, consequently aid child readers by reinforcing the sounds and rhythms of their language. Moreover, Homel writes his texts in a more personal narrative voice than do the authors of the original French texts. His choices to use familiar language (in *Mister Once-upon-a-time*) and address the reader through the pronoun "you," imperatives and questions (in *Peppy, Phlox and the Socks*) serve to highlight the human interactive aspect of reading. His narrative voice invites the reader to become a participant in a conversation, and in this way, involves the reader in an act of two-way communication. Therefore, while both the French and English texts make full use of the acoustic properties of language, Homel's translations further promote spoken language learning through the introduction of the a strong narrator's voice that asks the reader to speak in turn.

6.1 Conclusion

6.1.1 Purpose and development

My decision to study the role of language acquisition in the translation of children's literature comes from the understanding that there is a basic difference in the relationship between adults and adult literature and children and their literature. Children, as new students of speaking and reading, respond strongly to the sounds of words and the rhythms of speech because it is the acoustic properties of language that are of primary importance in its acquisition. Rhythm, being a biological instinct, also invites parallels between language and literature and can provide a mutual dimension in the examination of source and target texts.

In the development of this topic, I first elaborated on the notions of sound and rhythm, in both artistic and biological contexts; discussed the peripheral status of children's literature in the Western literary canon and how this position contributes to an underdeveloped area of theory in the translation of children's books; and summarized theory on sound in translation. Furthermore, I referred to skopos theory and argued that there is a pedagogical aspect to the use of sound and rhythm in translation.

During my research, I noted that the general consensus among writers, translators and critics is that the acoustic property of words is of vital importance in children's literature. They talk of 'sound,' 'rhythm,' 'melody' and even 'singability'; there is, however, little in-depth examination as to the purpose of sound in children's books beyond the aesthetic. Still, these writers hold to the general observation that children's books are meant not only for enjoyment but for instruction as well. As sound and rhythm are essential for language

acquisition, I proposed that aiding in language acquisition, then, was an inherent, if unconscious, purpose in all writings and translations for children.

In order to obtain practical observations regarding my hypotheses, I chose three French-Canadian children's books and their English translations to form a trio of case studies for closer examination.

6.1.2 Observations

Through various readings, which included works on the translation of children's literature, sound in translation and sound translation, and my case studies, I have found that writers and translators of children's books are eager to exploit the natural sounds of language and rhythms of speech in order to create a more appealing text for child readers. Drawing on commentaries and interviews by writers and translators, I concluded that adults recognize the fact that children's books enjoy a dual life as written and oral works. Furthermore, translators seem to be aware that, in the area of the sounds, music, and melody of words, children are tuned in from the womb and much better listeners than adults.

Nevertheless, although cognizant of the power of sound in writing and often possessed of a canny use of melody, these adults seemed at times to be responding to an unconscious impulse to create texts with a strong rhythm. I concluded that this was demonstrative of the natural human expression of rhythmical impulses.

It is perhaps because children's books are a bridge between the world of speech and the world of literature that they are so closely tied to sound and the oral culture. Although translations can be seen as being two steps removed from the oral culture from which the original texts are derived, it must be remembered that as works of literature in their own right, translations are only one step removed from the act of oral narration in their target cultures. Translators should not ignore the importance of this fact. They can respect the oral origins of the written word and recognize that their works, too, will follow in the same direction.

6.1.3 Areas for further research

Since theory on the translation of children's literature is not as extensive as that for the translation of works for adults, there continue to be many areas that invite further study. Moreover, of the research in the field, there is very little focus on the linguistic aspect of the children's books in translation. Therefore, commentary from translators of children's books on their decisions and writing processes would be invaluable in the development in this area of theory. What are the principal objectives when translating? What features of the original do translators find most meaningful and which ones do they strive to transfer in their target texts?

Comparative analyses of translations with originals could also demonstrate to what extent sound and rhythm are carried over (or compensated, added or omitted) in translation.

Moreover, researchers could consider the translation decisions and type of literary devices

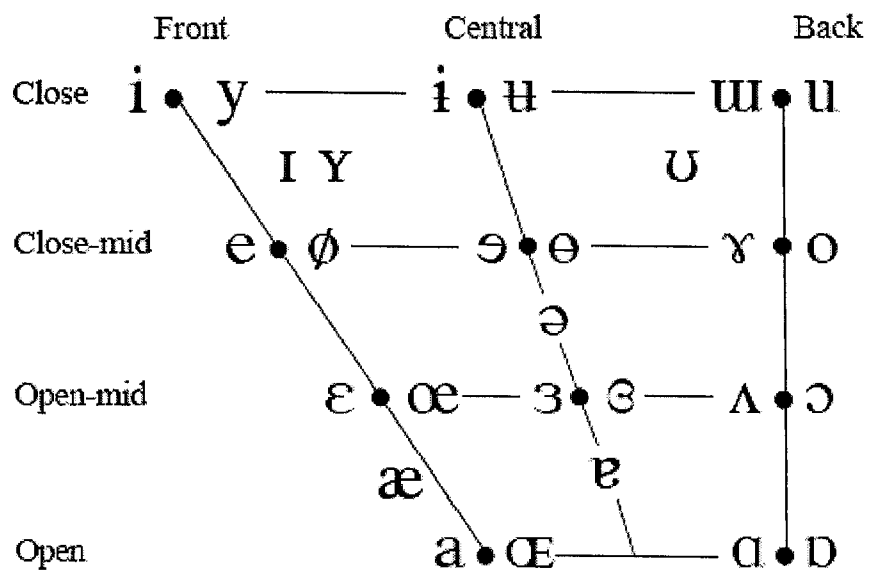
used in order that translations might better reflect the prosody and sounds of the target language.

I have also suggested that the linguistics of children's books in translation is closely linked to a pedagogical *skopos* in the context of language acquisition. Therefore, it would be interesting to observe the use of translated children's books in school curricula. Are they used as part of reading syllabi? For what reasons are translations included in school libraries? Is there a conscious choice to include translations?

In this thesis, I was only able to provide a brief discussion of the role of sound and rhythm in the translation of children's literature and this, because of an appreciation for children's literature and a curiosity for sound translation. The field of theory on the translation of children's literature is wide open. A closer examination on any number of themes can still serve to nourish a fallow area of research. At the very least, reflection would open up new channels for future study and perhaps entice other translators just as curious to read more into children's books.

Appendix I

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

“Reproduction of The International Phonetic Alphabet (Revised to 2005).” 5 Apr. 2006. *The International Phonetic Association*. 10 Jun. 2007. <<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/IPA/vowels.html>>

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