

Elvira Cámara Aguilera  
ecamara@ugr.es

Pamela Faber  
pfaber@ugr.es

Universidad de Granada

(Recibido 30 noviembre 2014 / Aceptado 22 mayo 2015)

## A CHILDREN'S COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RECALL, COMPREHENSION AND MOTIVATION OF ONE FOREIGN BOOK IN THREE TRANSLATION VERSIONS

*ESTUDIO COMPARATIVO DE RECUERDO,  
COMPRENSIÓN Y MOTIVACIÓN DE UN LIBRO  
EXTRANJERO EN TRES VERSIONES DIFERENTES DE  
TRADUCCIÓN*

### Abstract

This article presents the results of a research project on the translation of children's literature. The main objective was to determine how the reception of literary works by children can be affected by the general translation strategy used. Second-grade primary school children participated in this study. The material used was one story originally written in English, but which had been translated into Spanish. After producing different versions of the translation, subjects read them and had to answer a series of questions. It was found that for that specific age group, recall and motivation (and therefore comprehension) was higher for the translation in which cultural aspects and references were adapted to the readership (domesticating translation). The translated story that contained both domesticated and foreignized elements (mixed translation) obtained the second-best results. Finally, the translation that retained elements of the foreign culture (foreignizing translation) produced less satisfactory results.

**Keywords:** Reading comprehension, reading motivation, recall, schoolchildren, translation.

### Resumen

En este artículo se presentan los resultados de un proyecto de investigación sobre la traducción de literatura infantil. El principal objetivo era comprobar cómo se puede ver afectada la recepción de obras literarias para niños por la estrategia general de traducción elegida. Para realizar la investigación se eligieron a escolares de segundo de educación primaria. Para ello se utilizó una obra originalmente escrita en inglés y que había sido traducida y publicada en español. Se generaron diferentes versiones de traducción que luego leyeron los niños, y posteriormente tuvieron que responder a una serie de preguntas. Como resultado se comprobó que para este grupo específico de edad el nivel de recuerdo (y por tanto de comprensión) y de motivación era mayor en el caso del grupo que leyó la versión en la que se habían adaptado aspectos y referencias culturales (traducción domesticante). A continuación, la versión que mezclaba los procedimientos extranjerizante y domesticante (traducción mixta) obtuvo los segundos mejores resultados y, finalmente, la versión en la que se mantuvieron los elementos culturales propios de la lengua original (traducción extranjerizante) es la que obtuvo los resultados menos satisfactorios.

**Palabras clave:** comprensión lectora, motivación lectora, recuerdo, escolares, traducción.

## 1. Introduction

As is well-known, reading can play different roles in the primary school classroom. Ewers (2009: 71) differentiates between "school reading" (compulsory and with a pedagogical purpose) and "intended children's reading" (normally voluntary and with a leisure purpose). Petit (1999: 105) noted that reading may help the child in various ways, including access to knowledge, language acquisition, personal development, and different forms of sociability. For example, in a multicultural classroom, reading can be used as a way to integrate immigrants. It can also be used as a means of acquiring knowledge of subjects or solely as a source of pleasure. In this research, reading is conceived as a motivation for children to acquire a liking for the activity.

Reports from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2006 and 2009) describe reading as the main educational deficiency among young people worldwide. Reading is a transversal school activity (it is rarely an independent subject) and is the key to learning all other subjects as well as to the integral development of the student. Indeed, it is the backbone of the whole educational process. In many countries, a large percentage of the reading materials available for children are translations. In Spain, for instance, translated books represent almost half of all books published for children and youngsters (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2014: 16). In a study of the linguistic acceptability of translations of children's literature, Puurtinen called for further research on children's reactions to dynamic and static styles with a view to collecting data on their preferences (1995: 212).

The choice of reading material by the teacher is extremely important. When the primary school is not in an English-speaking country, teachers must choose from reading material that was originally written in the children's native language or from reading material that was translated into their native language. This is an important choice because children's stories can be literally translated so as to maintain all of the symbols and entities in the foreign culture or, alternatively, the story can be adapted to the receivers' language-culture.

Nevertheless, perhaps for the child the most important thing is to find the story interesting and attractive. Marcelo (2007: 136) argues that even though a translated primary school text should be acceptable from a pedagogical or moral standpoint, it should also be attractive to readers. It goes without saying that if the child does not like the book and initially finds it boring, he/she will not read it. Similarly, according to Puurtinen (1995: 23), it is irrelevant to the child reader whether a book is a translation or not. The book should simply be enjoyable. In regard to translated literature, the question is whether children prefer for the text to be overtly foreign or a cultural adaptation with a more familiar set of names, artifacts, customs, and other cultural symbols. In this regard, Klingberg (1986), Shavit (1981) and Stolt (2006), among others, claim that texts translated for children should not be domesticated. They argue that in this way they are able to become familiar with other cultures. However, Bell (in Shavit, 2006: 28) warns that "an 'impenetrable-looking set of foreign names on the first page of a book might alienate young readers and that the degree of foreignness should be carefully considered by translators".

Accordingly, there are basically three macrolevel approaches to the translation of children's stories: (1) a domesticating approach, in which cultural aspects are adapted to the readership; (2) a foreignizing approach, which adheres closely to these aspects and thereby retains elements of the foreign identity; (3) a mixed approach in which the text has elements of both approaches. Depending on the approach used, it is our assertion that a book might be more or less attractive to children.

Consequently, our initial hypothesis was that different approaches to the translation of books have an impact on the way children understand texts and their motivation to read them. The objectives of this study were to determine the effects of reading a book translated in one of three different manners (foreignizing, domesticating, and mixed approaches) on the following: (i) comprehension (recall) of the text, including recall of the names of characters and recall of cultural features (currency and food); (ii) detection of the geographical setting of the story; (iii) enjoyment of the book and motivation to read similar texts in a sample of 120 children. All of the subjects that participated in the study were 2<sup>nd</sup> grade primary school children (7-8 years old) from Granada and Madrid, Spain.

## 2. Previous Research

### 2.1. Translation of children's literature

There is a general consensus on the lack of empirical research on the translation of children's literature (Klingberg, 1986: 9; Leppihalme, 1997: 137; O'Sullivan, 2005: 94; Lathey, 2011: 211). One of the few studies available has been carried out by Puurtinen (1995) on the linguistic acceptability of Finnish translations of children's literature, using the cloze method with 9 to 10-year-old children and adults (139)<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of the study was to examine the conformity to Finnish linguistic norms of Finnish translations of children's literature within the Finnish cultural context.

Puurtinen investigated the effects of dynamic and static styles on acceptability; she also investigated their frequency of occurrence in children's literature. A dynamic style was reflected by a high frequency of finite syntactic constructions and a static style, by a high frequency of non-finite constructions. Linguistic acceptability was defined in terms of the following concepts: (i) readability (and also speakability); (ii) conformity to the linguistic norms of the target language literature; (iii) conformity to readers' expectations. The main hypothesis was that a dynamic translation was preferable since it was more in consonance with the linguistic norms of Finnish literature and conformed better to reader expectations.

Although it was found that dynamic translation did conform better to Finnish linguistic norms, the results only partially supported the hypothesis that this type of translation was preferred by readers in terms of readability and expectations. This led to the formulation of a more differentiated and flexible definition of the concept of acceptability.

Smits (2004) addressed two questions. The first was how a Dutch translator should translate a children's book in order to obtain the same effect in the translation into Spanish. The second was whether children have the same opinion as adults about a translated book. To answer both questions she performed a comparative analysis of three Dutch texts and their Spanish translations working with schoolchildren (ages 9-12) in Holland and Spain. Her objective was to specify the situations in which translators must adapt the text and to establish any positive or negative effects of the general strategy of translation adopted. She used a basic questionnaire in which the items were related to content comprehension and reading motivation. In that sense, it was the initial model for our questionnaire. She concluded that the children enjoyed translations with domesticated cultural aspects. Nevertheless, she concluded that further research should be done and positioned in favour of foreignization.

---

1 The cloze method consists of omitting a number of words according to a certain principle from a continuous text, and asking test subjects to fill in the gaps with the help of the context.

Liang (2007), as part of a larger polysystemic study of the translation of fantasy fiction in Taiwan, surveyed 15 Taiwanese children to determine their responses to seven foreign elements in the translated Harry Potter books, finding that target readers experienced elements imported from the source culture as less acceptable than localised elements (In Kruger, 2013: 184).

Kruger (2013: 222) performed an experiment to investigate Afrikaans child and adult readers' processing of and their responses to potentially linguistically and culturally foreign textual elements in translated children's picture books, against the background of postcolonial/neo-colonial cultural and linguistic hybridity in South Africa. For that purpose, a reading study using eye-tracking was conducted and structured questionnaires or interviews with participants were used. Overall, the findings of the experiment demonstrate that while there are perceptible effects on processing and comprehension associated with the use of foreignizing strategies, these effects are not straightforward or uniform, with notable differences for child and adult readers.

## 2.2. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is most often defined as the construction of a coherent mental representation of the text in a reader's memory. This mental representation is the final product of reading comprehension. The construction of this representation occurs simultaneously as the reader is reading. Psychological models of reading comprehension establish a distinction between the products of successful comprehension and the processes that end in those products (Kendeou, 2011: 365), acknowledging a causal relationship between both.

Ecalte *et al.* (2013: 118) present a more concrete definition and affirm that reading comprehension includes lower-level lexical skills such as efficient word reading and vocabulary knowledge, sentence-level skills such as knowledge of grammatical structure and higher-level text processing skills such as inference generation, comprehension monitoring and working memory capacity. According to these researchers, word recognition and reading comprehension are difficult to separate at the early phases of learning to read. In the same way as other authors, they consider that comprehension is more closely related to word recognition in younger children, whereas in older children, it is more closely related to oral language comprehension skills at both the semantic and syntactic level.

Andreassen *et al.* (2010: 265) affirm that reading researchers who have studied individual differences in word recognition skills in relation to comprehension of text have demonstrated that word recognition is an important independent predictor of children's reading comprehension.

## 2.3. Background knowledge

The relative lack of relevant background knowledge may be one of the reasons for children to have difficulties with reading comprehension. Burgoyne *et al.* (2013: 132-145) consider that children learning English as a second language lack the cultural and personal experiences that provide them with the necessary background knowledge to fully understand a text. They think that the background knowledge the child puts into the text interacts and makes possible comprehension. In the same research, they mention recall and say that thanks to the background knowledge, children process the content of the text, and at the same time, this helps recall. Thus, in that sense, there are studies that show that texts culturally familiar are easier to understand than texts based on less familiar cultures. In their research, they found that children learning English as another language take longer to access and retrieve newly acquired information. This finding is important

since it suggests that less accessible information is less likely to be used in text comprehension because it takes longer to retrieve.

## 2.4. Reading motivation

An important question is why reading motivation should be taken into account in a general process for developing younger readers. A very important reason is that cognitive interaction and motivational involvement with a text can be considered to play decisive roles in reading comprehension (Andreassen *et al.*, 2010: 264). In other words, reading comprehension is a complex task that requires cognition as well as motivation (Sweet & Snow in Andreassen *et al.*, 2010: 263).

Other researchers, in an attempt to understand the role of reading interest, propose what they consider to be powerful predictors for beginning readers, such as general cognitive ability, socioeconomic status, phonological awareness and naming speed. However, general cognitive ability and socioeconomic status are distal factors, which are not directly involved in reading. Phonological awareness, the sensitivity to the sound structure of words, is also a good predictor of reading development (Kirby *et al.*, 2013: 266). Since in a foreignizing translation, the children will have to process a large number of words in a different language (i.e. character names, names of places, etc.), and words related to cultural aspects they are not familiar with (i.e. measuring units, coins, food, buildings, etc.), their phonological awareness and naming speed will be directly affected. Not surprisingly, this will have an impact on their reading interest.

Kirby *et al.* (2013: 277) argue that "maintaining a positive level of interest in reading is a reasonable component of reading instruction" but at the same time they suggest that "instructional effort be focused on cognitive factors [phonological awareness and naming speed], because there is more evidence that they can have a direct effect on reading ability, but that this should take place within the context of maintaining children's positive interest in reading". Since interest in reading declines throughout the early elementary school years (with a sharper decline between grades 1 and 4) (Kirby *et al.*, 2013: 265), it is very important to conduct research to find ways to create consolidated readers among younger readers. For this reason, the books that children are given to promote reading should be taken into account. In that sense, the people responsible for the reading programs must decide to select original texts or translations. If translations are selected, factors to be considered are the general strategy of translation used as reflected in the number of foreign words and cultural elements, etc.

## 3. Materials

### 3.1. Reading material

To attain our objectives (see Introduction), first of all, we carried out a pilot study. For our pilot study as well as the main study, we decided to use a book that already formed part of their reading program. Accordingly, we selected *Horrid Henry's Nits* by Francesca Simon from among the reading books already assigned to this class. It was first published in 1997 by Orion Children's Books. A Spanish translation by Miguel Azaola was published by SM in 2001, entitled *Pablo Diablo y los piojos*. It is one of three books in a reading learning series called *El Capitán Leotodo*, all of which are translations, including two from English. This series is part of *Barco de Vapor*, a collection of books published by SM for children, 6-14 years old.

### 3.2. Evaluation instruments

Two data collection instruments were created to determine the effects of the translations: (i) a questionnaire to measure the recall of the text and to estimate its effect on motivation; (ii) four specific comprehension questionnaires, one for each chapter of the book. Despite the fact that the recall questionnaire was not specifically designed to collect comprehension data, it provided an initial estimate of reading comprehension. As noted by Hirano, despite certain shortcomings, recall results reflect what is involved in the reading process, supporting the validity of this instrument to measure comprehension (Hirano, 2006: 81). Since this research is still in progress, we still do not have the final results from the specific comprehension questionnaires. In future research, an in-depth analysis of the design, implementation and results of the specific comprehension questionnaires designed for each chapter of the book will be performed.

The recall/motivation questionnaire and the comprehension questionnaires were researcher-developed tests based on the model used in Smits' (2004). They were also previously assessed by a group of experts (see 3.3. participants). The recall questionnaire was created after a comparative analysis between the Spanish translation and the original English book. The children had to answer all the questions in the recall/motivation questionnaire as they finished reading the book. It contained questions on the names of different characters, including nicknames related to their physical or psychological characteristics. Also included were items on the following potentially culture-bound features: monetary transactions, food dishes and ingredients, and the geographic setting of the story. Further questions focused on their feelings about the food described in the book, their enjoyment of the book, and their motivation to read more books of the same type. Standard structural criteria (e.g., variables, types of questions, order of questions) were followed.

### 3.3. Participants

The evaluation instruments were validated by a group of experts which included a developmental psychologist, a psycholinguist, a reading specialist, six translation specialists, all from the University of Granada, and two teachers from a local primary school<sup>2</sup>. The participants were 120 schoolchildren from three second-grade classes (n=26/class) at the same primary school in Granada and from two second-grade classes at a public primary school in Madrid (n=21/class) with a bilingual curriculum (9 hrs/week of English learning). The children from Granada and Madrid came from socioeconomic levels ranging from upper to middle class and all of them were Spanish-speaking and had no specific problems.

## 4. Objectives

The objectives of this study in 7-8-year-old primary school children were to determine the effects of reading a book translated at a macrolevel in one of three ways (foreignizing, domesticating, and mixed approaches) on the following elements: comprehension (recall) of the text, including recall of the names of characters and recall of cultural features (currency and food); detection of the geographical setting of the story; enjoyment of the book and motivation to read similar texts.

2 The collaboration of the pedagogue and the psycholinguist specialized in statistics and questionnaire design was carried out as part of an interdisciplinary agreement between the Department of Translation and Interpreting and the Department of the Experimental and Behaviour Psychology of the University of Granada (Spain).

## 5. Methodology

The research study took place in various phases. In phase 1, we contacted a primary school in Granada in order to carry out an experiment with one class of 7-8-year-old primary school children (second grade). In phase 2, preliminary studies were conducted in the class of one of the teachers in order to assess the viability of the project. In phase 3, a pilot study was conducted in the same class (29 children). In phase 4, two translations of the book selected for the experiment were made. The first translation was a domesticated version of the story in which cultural aspects are adapted to the readership. The second translation was a foreignized version that retained all cultural references and elements of the foreign identity. In phase 5, books were created of each new version. The original translation published in 2001 reflected a mixed approach (since it had both domesticated and foreignized elements). In phase 6, two instruments were created to determine the effects of each of the three translations: (i) for quantitative data, a questionnaire to measure the recall of the text and to estimate its effect on motivation; (ii) for qualitative data a specific comprehension questionnaire. In phase 7, the main study was performed.

### 5.1. Procedure

After the approval of the school director was obtained, discussions were held with the (second-grade) primary school teachers in the collaborative group to (i) explore the possibility of carrying out a pilot study with second-grade children at the school, using a book that already formed part of their reading program; (ii) determine the best data collection method (questionnaires, interviews, etc.); (iii) design a study adapted to the school curriculum and timetable.

Preliminary studies were conducted in the class of one of the collaborating teachers, using the book being read by the children at the time, in order to determine the best type and format of questions for a questionnaire. As a result of this experience, a pilot study was conducted in one of the three second-grade classes at the school (29 children).

#### *Pilot study*

The reading material for the research was first developed in a pilot study. The children read the selected book, and the questionnaire was administered. The results were immediately analysed to detect possible design failures. The main change was an increase in the number of questions offering multiple choices for the response, which had proved more successful than open questions in eliciting a response from the children (data not shown). Based on this pilot study, a protocol for participating teachers was drawn up for application in the main study.

#### *Main study*

One year after the pilot study, the main study was carried out with 120 schoolchildren from three second-grade classes ( $n=26/\text{class}$ ) at the same primary school in Granada and two second-grade classes at a public primary school in Madrid ( $n=21/\text{class}$ ) with a bilingual curriculum (9 hrs/week of English learning). At the beginning of the study, each participating teacher was given the books, the questionnaires, a calendar for the study, an implementation protocol for the teachers, and record sheets for the performance of the children.

*Horrid Henry's Nits* was used for the main study. The main character of the story is Henry, a small boy of 10 or 11, who is always getting into trouble. He has a brother close to his age, who is



exactly the opposite, and who is a model child in all respects. The book has four chapters, each of which is a story of one of Henry's adventures. Each adventure takes place in a different context: at school, at home, in a museum, and in the backyard. The main theme is Henry's inappropriate behaviour, which causes problems everywhere. In the end, however, he always gets what he deserves.

To carry out the main study, a domesticating translation and a foreignizing translation were generated. To foreignize the text, all the cultural elements were preserved in their original form (i.e. pounds were kept as "libras", the Spanish version for the English coin, or cashew nuts were literally translated into Spanish as "anacardos"). To domesticate the text, the cultural aspects were *adapted* to the Spanish culture (i.e. pounds were translated as "euros" or cashews were replaced with a more familiar type of nut for the children, such as "almendras" [almonds]). Although some of more foreign elements may not be entirely unknown to the children, they are certainly less familiar than those more commonly found in their own culture. The Spanish version published by the publisher SM, which was also used in the pilot study, had not followed a general translation strategy that could be classified either as foreignizing or domesticating. Since it contained elements of both strategies, it was regarded as a mixed version.

The foreignizing and domesticating of the books were limited to cultural aspects: names, foods, coins, etc. It was decided not to focus on other interesting aspects such as syntax (i.e. active vs. passive forms), given the young age of the schoolchildren under study. Apart from these adjustments to the text, computer software was used to make any necessary modifications to the illustrations. Thus, in an image of the father preparing a meal, the carrots and celery portrayed in the original, mixed, and foreignizing versions were replaced with lettuce and tomatoes in the domesticating translation. In the main study, the three translated versions were distributed equally and in a random manner to the children in each class.

The final recall/motivation questionnaire generated as result of the pilot study contained 16 items: 5 questions on names; 2 questions on money; 4 questions on food (including 1 on their evaluation of the food); 1 question on the ease/difficulty of reading the book; 1 question on the geographic setting; 1 question asking whether the children liked the illustrations; 1 question asking whether they liked the story; and 1 question asking whether they would like to read other books with the same characters.

In each school, all participating classes underwent the experiment at the same time. The subjects thus read the four chapters at 9 am from Monday to Thursday of the same week, and the recall/motivation questionnaire was administered on Friday. The children were not aware that they were involved in the research project. As far as they were concerned, it was a normal class activity. A model of the questionnaire was designed so that it could be used with the three versions of the book (foreignizing, domesticating, and mixed). The children were not permitted to re-read the text. In order to prevent children from reading the text again outside the programmed schedule, the teachers took the books away after each session.

The statistical analysis performed with the SPSS program, version 11.5 corresponds to the study of the absolute and relative frequencies as reflected in the results obtained for each item. Since the study only focused on qualitative variables, the level of dependence between items and the dispersion measurements of the frequency distribution were not studied. The program outputs show the data relative to the mean and the standard deviation. However, given the nature of the variables, they were not considered relevant to this research study. The statistical significance of the findings are discussed in the results, discussion and conclusion sections.



## 6. Results

Tables 1-18 show the global recall/motivation questionnaire results obtained from the 120 children in the study. Each table gives the question and the correct response for each translation and shows the percentage of students who answered correctly in each group. In some cases, the names or terms in the mixed (published) translation are the same as those in the domesticating (see Tables 4, 8, 9, 12) or foreignizing texts (see Table 11), because no more appropriate translation was available.

### 6. 1. Character names

Tables 1 and 2: The main character's name appears 249 times and his brother's name appears 74 times. Recall of the main character's name was markedly more frequent for the domesticating (92.7%) and mixed (89.7%) translations than for the foreignizing translation (35%). The recall frequency of the brother's name was much more frequent for the mixed translation (79.5%) than for the foreignizing (30%) or domesticating (22%) translations.

TABLE 1

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	Henry el Terrible [Terrible Henry]	35%
DOM.	Enrique el Terrible [Terrible Enrique]	92.7%
MIX.	Pablo Diablo [Evil Paul]	89.7%

What is the main character's name?

TABLE 2

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	Peter el Perfecto [Perfect Peter]	30%
DOM.	Pedro el Perfecto [Perfect Pedro]	22%
MIX.	Roberto, el niño perfecto [Robert, the perfect boy]	79.5%

What is the name of the main character's brother?

Tables 3 and 4: The teacher's name appears 26 times in the book. The domesticating translation of the name was recalled by 85.4% of the children, the mixed version by 38.5%, and the foreignizing version by 15%. The guests' names appeared with almost the same frequency as the teacher's name. The domesticating and mixed versions were the same, Sr. and Sra. Palazón, but the name was recalled by 51.2% in the domesticating translation and by 41% in the mixed translation 41%. The recall for the foreignizing name, Sr. and Sra. Mossy, was 27.5%.

TABLE 3

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	Battle-Axe	15%
DOM.	Mandamás [Big shot or Bigwig]	85.4%
MIX.	Agripina Guillotina [Guillotine Agripina]	38.5%

What is the teacher's name?

TABLE 4

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	Sr. y Sra. Mossy [Mr and Mrs Mossy]	27.5%
DOM.	Sr. y Sra. Palazón [Mr and Mrs Palazón]	51.2%
MIX.	Sr. y Sra. Palazón [Mr and Mrs Palazón]	41%

What are the names of the guests coming for dinner?

Tables 5, 6 and 7: There are 12 classmates in the book. None of the children remembered all of their names in any of the translations. The names in the domesticating translation were recalled with higher frequency, with the exception of two, which were most frequently recalled in the mixed version. Only two names were recalled in the foreignizing version.

TABLE 5

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	Margaret la Tristona [Moody Margaret]	30%
DOM.	Isabel la Tristona [Moody Isabel]	29.3%
MIX.	Marga Caralarga [Long Face Marga]	40%

What are the classmates' names?

TABLE 6

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	William el Llorica [Weepy William]	0%
DOM.	Guillermo el Llorica [Weepy Guillermo]	31.7%
MIX.	Guillermo el Muermo [Boring Guillermo]	7.5%

What are the classmates' names?

TABLE 7

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	Dave el Despistado [Dizzy Dave]	0%
DOM.	David el Despistado [Dizzy David]	0%
MIX.	David el de Madrid [David from Madrid]	17.5%

What are the classmates' names?

## 6.2. Monetary transactions

Tables 8 and 9: In the first question on monetary transactions, the amounts of money were recalled by around 48% of both domesticating and mixed groups but by only 12.5% of the foreignizing group. In the second question, the domesticating translation was recalled by 63.4%, the mixed by 53.8% and the foreignizing by 27.5%.

TABLE 8

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	6 libras [6 pounds]	12.5%
DOM.	6 euros [6 euros]	48.8%
MIX.	6 euros [6 euros]	48.7%

How much does the Dungeon Drink kit cost?

TABLE 9

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	3 libras [3 pounds]	27.5%
DOM.	3 euros [3 euros]	63.4%
MIX.	3 euros [3 euros]	53.8%

How much do they have to pay to see the fangmangler?

### 6.3. Food items

Table 10: In relation to food items, the domesticating translation of the brothers' sandwich, which had the most ingredients, was recalled by 61%, the mixed version by 38.4% and the foreignizing translation by 22.5%.

TABLE 10

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	Sándwich, sándwich de huevo o sándwich vegetal [sandwich, egg sandwich or vegetable sandwich]	22.5%
DOM.	Bocadillo, bocadillo de queso o de jamón y queso y con lechuga y tomate [sandwich, cheese sandwich or cheese and ham sándwich with lettuce and tomato]	61%
MIX.	Bocadillo, bocadillo de huevo o bocadillo de lechuga [sandwich, egg sandwich or lettuce sandwich]	38.4%

What do both brothers take for lunch for the school trip?

Tables 11 and 12: One chapter in the book describes a dinner given by the main character's parents to a colleague and her husband. No child was able to recall both ingredients of the special dish prepared by the father in any version, but the main ingredient and the dessert were recalled by 26.8% of the domesticating translation group, by 7.5% of the foreignizing translation group and by 5.1% of the mixed translation group. The nuts offered to the guests before the meal were recalled by 56.4% of the mixed group, by 53.7% of the domesticating group, but by only 15% of the foreignizing group.

TABLE 11

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	salmón en hojaldre con lima y jengibre" [salmon in puff pastry with lime and ginger]	7.5%
DOM.	Pollo asado con limón y cebolla [roast chicken with lemon and onion]	26.8%
MIX.	salmón en hojaldre con lima y jengibre" [salmon in puff pastry with lime and ginger]	5.1%

What special meal is the father preparing for the guests' dinner?

TABLE 12

	Type of translation	Correct
FOR.	Anacardos [cashews]	15%
DOM.	Almendras [almonds]	53.7%
MIX.	Almendras [almonds]	56.4%

Which are the main character's favourite nuts?

Table 13: The food featured in the book was described as good or delicious by 63.4% of the domesticating group by 47.5% of the foreignizing group and by 43.5% of the mixed translation group.

TABLE 13

	Type of translation	Percentage
FOR.	Buenas o deliciosas [good or delicious]	47.5%
DOM.	Buenas o deliciosas [good or delicious]	63.4%
MIX.	Buenas o deliciosas [good or delicious]	43.5%

What do you think about the different kinds of food in the book? They are: a) good, b) delicious, c) not so good, d) bad

#### 6.4. Comprehension difficulties

Table 14: Difficulties in understanding some parts of the book were reported by 38.5% of the children reading the mixed version, 30% of those reading the foreignizing translation, and 14.6% of those reading the domesticating translation.

TABLE 14

	Type of translation	Percentage
FOR.	Sí [yes]	30%
DOM.	Sí [yes]	14.6%
MIX.	Sí [yes]	38.5%

Did you have any difficulty understanding any part of the book?

#### 6.5. Setting

Table 15: The story in the book was believed to be located in Spain by 78% of the domesticating group, 76.9% of the mixed group and 65% of the foreignizing group.

TABLE 15

	Type of translation	Percentage
FOR.	España [Spain]	65%
DOM.	España [Spain]	78%
MIX.	España [Spain]	76.9%

In which country does the story take place? a) United Kingdom, b) United States, c) Spain, d) France, e) Italy

## 6.6. Illustrations

Table 16: Changes were made in only 2 of the 42 illustrations and only in the domesticating version. The relatively high percentage of students that liked the illustrations was similar in all groups.

TABLE 16

	Type of translation	Percentage
FOR.	Si [yes]	82.5%
DOM.	Si [yes]	80.5%
MIX.	Si [yes]	82.1%

Did you like the illustrations?

## 6.7. Personal impression

Table 17: The story was liked by almost all groups, 94.9% in the mixed group and 90.2% and 90% in the domesticating and foreignizing groups, respectively.

TABLE 17

	Type of translation	Percentage
FOR.	Si [yes]	90%
DOM.	Si [yes]	90.2%
MIX.	Si [yes]	94.9%

Did you like the story?

Table: 18: The percentage of children who would like to read similar books was 95.1% in the domesticating translation group, 77.5% in the foreignizing group, and 66.7% in the mixed group.

TABLE 18

	Type of translation	Percentage
FOR.	Si [yes]	77.5%
DOM.	Si [yes]	95.1%
MIX.	Si [yes]	66.7%

Imagine this book is part of a collection of stories with the same characters. Would you like to read other books about them?

## 7. Discussion

A total of 120 second-grade primary school children aged 7-8 years participated in this study of the influence on reading comprehension and motivation of the translation approach. In general, the recall was greater for the domesticating translation of the book, followed by the mixed and then foreignizing translations. Various conclusions can be derived from these data, as discussed below, although caution should be taken in generalizing the results. The study population was not randomly selected and cannot be considered representative (Nobs, 2003: 371), and no comparison was performed between the results obtained in the different primary schools. The study was conducted in

five different classes, but care was taken to minimize any possible bias by ensuring that teachers all followed a standard protocol and timetable.

Recall of the names of the main characters was much higher in the domesticating and mixed translations because in all likelihood, both (Enrique and Pablo) are common Spanish names. Although *Henry* (foreignizing version) is phonetically close to *Enrique*, it is morphologically distinct. The much higher recall of the brother's name in the mixed version than in the other two may be attributed to the greater popularity of *Roberto* (mixed translation) as a boy's name nowadays in comparison to *Pedro* (domesticating translation). With regard to the teacher's name, children would have full access to its semantic content in the domesticating translation (*Sta. Mandamás*), partial access in the mixed version (*Sta. Guillotina*), and no access at all in the foreignizing translation (*Sta. Battle-Axe*). The recall frequencies reflect this difference, with an especially high recall of the domesticating version. It should be borne in mind that these children had a low level of the English language, impeding their "verbal-phonetic-acoustic analysis of the information"<sup>3</sup> (de Vega, 1989: 95).

None of the guests' names are Spanish, but the morphology and phonetics of the name, *Palazón*, would be familiar to the children, favouring its verbal-phonetic-acoustic analysis. Interestingly, although this name was used in both the mixed and domesticating version, it was more frequently recalled in the latter context, possibly due to the closer cultural setting in which the name is set.

The names of classmates were more frequently recalled in the domesticating translation in all except two cases, which were most frequently recalled in the mixed translation, probably because they rhyme (*Marga Caralarga*, *David el de Madrid*), and Madrid would evidently be familiar. The names in the domesticating translation do not rhyme but have relevant semantic content (based on the original). The name *Guillermo el Llorica* in the domesticated version was recalled by 31.7% of the children, *Guillermo el Muermo* in the mixed version was only recalled by 7.5%, while *William el Llorica* in the foreignized version was not recalled by any child. This suggests that phonological and morphological proximity of names may not be decisive for the children's capacity of recall in comparison to the semantic value. On the other hand, the names of only two of the twelve classmates were recalled in the foreignizing versions, and both are phonetically and morphologically close to the Spanish language (*Margaret la Tristona*, *Susan la Malhumorada*).

As in the case of the guests' names, the word was the same (euro) in the domesticating and the mixed versions for the monetary questions, but the recall was slightly higher in the domesticating translation. It is worth noting that despite the fact that the cultural references are the same in the case of guests' name and in the case of the currency, recall is greater in the domesticating versions, what may be due to the whole context in which the name is set, culturally closer to the reader.

Despite having the most ingredients, the sandwich eaten by the brothers was recalled with much higher frequency in the domesticating version. Background knowledge and cultural proximity of the selected products appear to facilitate recall. Moreover, the recall frequency was higher for the mixed than for the foreignizing translations, which contained almost identical items. Again, this may be due to the whole context in which the words are set, culturally closer to the reader. With regard to the dish prepared by the father, the recall was relatively low but much more frequent for the domesticating than foreignizing or mixed translations, whereas the recall for the type of nut served was much higher for the domesticating and mixed versions, which used the same term, than for the

3 Translation by the authors of the article.

foreignizing version. In this case the reason for this would be that almonds are very familiar to the children whereas cashew nuts are not.

In general, these results indicate that cultural knowledge/familiarity facilitates recall. Nord stated that a story set in the reader's own cultural world allows for identification, whereas a story in an unknown setting may induce the reader to stay 'at a distance' (2003: 185). Interestingly, most of the children in this study believed the book to be set in Spain (78% of those in the domesticating translation group, 76.9% of the mixed group, and 65% of the foreignizing group). The fact that the majority of readers of the foreignizing translation expressed this belief suggests that younger children tend to interpret the text within the culture to which they feel closest. The children may need to identify with the culture displayed in the book to feel comfortable, secure, and willing to keep reading just for the sake of it.

Difficulties in understanding the book were more frequently reported by readers of the mixed version than by readers of the foreignizing version, while a much smaller percentage of the readers of the domesticating version appear to have experienced problems. In this regard, Stolt (2006: 68) pointed out that mixed processes in translation may be more negative than positive, claiming that a mixture of translation and 'adaptation' would throw the reader back and forth 'like a ball between his own and the alien world'. This may also be borne out by the children's responses when asked whether they would like to read more books from the same collection, given that almost all (>95%) those who read the domesticating version answered that they would, in comparison to 77.5% of those who read the foreignizing translation, and 66.7% of those who read the mixed version. Since motivation is essential in developing consolidated readers, these results should be taken into account.

According to De Vega (1985: 95), short-term memory involves an acoustic-phonetic-verbal analysis of information. Thus, items without distinctive acoustic features would be more difficult to recall (1989: 95) and readers that come across an unfamiliar word must first unravel its visual and phonetic codes before gaining access to semantic levels (de Vega, 1989: 432). This author also points out that texts that go beyond the schematic knowledge of children may have a negative impact on motivation and hamper the "up-down processes" usual in comprehension (1989: 437).

Numerous scholars have called for the target reader to be borne in mind in the translation process (O' Sullivan, 1992: 5; Puurtinen, 1995: 23; Nikolajeva, 1996: 28; Oittinen, 2000: 68, 78; Marcelo, 2007: 139; Morales, 2008: 122), and this is of special importance in regard to books for children. The data obtained in this study may be of interest to the authorities responsible for promoting reading at schools, which is of such critical importance for the general educational and social development of children.

## 8. Conclusions

These results support the first study hypothesis, because recall and motivation were higher in those reading the domesticating translation. Children of this age have a limited knowledge of the world or background knowledge, and stories containing unknown references appear to reduce their recall capacity. Their tolerance of foreignizing elements within a book is much lower than that of the adults, as pointed out by Puurtinen (1995: 23), Oittinen (2000: 33) and Kruger (2013: 222) and confirmed in our study. Although most of the children liked the story, regardless of the translation approach, the percentage was much higher in the domesticating group than in the foreignizing group and was lowest, although still relatively high, in the mixed translation group.



Our findings also verify the second study hypothesis on the more negative effects of a foreignizing translation on recall and motivation. Most of the children thought that the story took place in Spain, confirming the importance of their own space, the personal and familiar universe for younger children, who use reading as a means to extend their knowledge but always of and from their own world. Nevertheless, there is an argument for the use of foreignizing as a form of knowing other cultures, as strongly proposed by Smits (2004).

Numerous opinions have been offered by different researchers on the translation of children's literature, but the voice of the key players, the children themselves, needs to be heard. Further empirical research is required to establish children's preferences among different translation approaches at different ages. It is evident that a balance must be struck between two objectives: one is to develop the ability to read and encourage the reading habit, prioritizing readability, accessibility, comprehension and motivation; and the other is to widen the perspectives of children and offer access to other cultures and traditions. It is possible that the balance should be weighted towards the more familiar and comfortable domesticating translations at earlier ages, when the need to develop confidence in and enjoyment of reading is critical. The balance may then shift at later ages, when reading capacity and leisure reading habits are more consolidated, towards a more foreignizing approach. However, more information is required from the children themselves, as in the present study, in order to inform and support the optimal policy on the translation of children's literature. Finally, it should be emphasized that the over-riding aim is to generate readers. As noted by the Nobel Prize in Literature Günter Grass, "*there is no more beautiful sight than that of a child reading*"<sup>4</sup>

---

4 Speech given in Spain on receiving the Prince of Asturias Award for Literature in 1999.

## REFERENCIAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS

- Andreassen, R. and Braten, I. (2010). "Examining the prediction of reading comprehension on different multiple-choice tests". *Journal of Research in Reading*, 33, 263-283.
- Bassnett, S. and Lefevere, A. (1990). *Translating, History and Culture*. London/New York: Printer Publishers.
- Burgoyne, K., Whiteley H.E. and Hutchinson, J.E. (2013). "The role of background knowledge in text comprehension for children learning English as an additional language". *Journal of Research in Reading*, 36, 132-148.
- De Vega, M. (1989). *Introducción a la Psicología Cognitiva*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Ecalte, J., Bouchafa, H., Potocki, A. and Magnan, A. (2013). "Comprehension of written sentences as a core component of children's reading comprehension". *Journal of Research in Reading*, 36, 117-131.
- Even-Zohar, I. (1978). "The position of translated literature within the literary polysystem". In Holmes, J. S., Lambert, J. and Van den Broeck, R. (Eds.) *Literature and Translation: New Perspectives in Literary Studies*. (pp. 117-127). Leuven: Acco.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1990). "Polysystem studies". *Poetics Today*, 11, 1-20.
- Ewers, H. H. (2009). *Fundamental Concepts of Children's Literature Research. Literary and Sociological Approaches*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Grass, G. (1999). Prince of Asturias Awards. Literature 1999. Consulted 30 May 2010, <http://www.fpa.es/en/awards/1999/gunter-grass-1/speech>.
- Hirano, K. (2007). Recall protocols as a measure of reading comprehension: advantages and disadvantages. *Bull. Joetsu Educ.* 26, 79-86. Visited 20 April 2012, <http://www.repository.lib.juen.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10531/486/1/kiyo26-06.pdf>.
- Kendeou, P., Muis, K.R. and Fulton, S. (2011). "Reader and text factors in reading comprehension processes". *Journal of Research in Reading*, 34, 365-383.
- Kirby, J., Ball, A., Geier, B. K., Parilla, R. and Wade-Woolley, L. (2011). "The development of reading interest and its relation to reading ability". *Journal of Research in Reading*, 34, 263-280.
- Klingberg, G. (1976). "The different aspects of research into the translation of children's books and its practical application". In Klingberg, G., Ørvig, M., and Amor, S. (Eds.) *Children's Books in Translation. The Situation and the Problems*. Sweden: Almqvist and Wiksell International.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1986). "Children's Fiction in the Hands of the Translators". *Studia Psychologica et Paedagogica. Series altera LXXXII*. Lund: Bloms Boktryckeri.
- Kruger, H. (2013). "Child and adult readers' processing of foreignised elements in translated picturebooks". *Target*, 25(2), 180-227.
- Lathey, G. (2011). "The translation of literature for children". In Malmkjaer, K. and Windle, K. (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* (pp. 198-213). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leppihalme, R. (1997). *Culture Bumps. An Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Liang, W. (2007). "A descriptive study of translating children's fantasy fiction". *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 15(2), 92-105.
- Marcelo, G. (2007). *Traducción de las Referencias Culturales en la Literatura Infantil y Juvenil*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. (2014). *(Los Libros Infantiles y Juveniles en España (2012-2014))*. Observatorio de la Lectura y el Libro.
- Nikolajeva, M. (1996). *Introduction to the Theory of Children's Literature*. Tallin: Pedagogical University.

- Nobs, M. L. (2003). *Expectativas y Evaluación en la Traducción de Folletos Turísticos: Estudio Empírico con Usuarios Reales*. PhD dissertation. Granada: University of Granada.
- Nord, C. (2003). "Proper names in translations for children: 'Alice in Wonderland' as a case in point". *Meta*, 48(1-2), 182-196.
- Oittinen, R. (2000). *Translating for Children*. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc.
- O'Sullivan, E. (1992). "Kinderliterarisches Übersetzen". *Findevoegel*, 93/94, 4-8.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2005). *Comparative Children's Literature*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Petit, M. (1999). *Nuevos acercamientos a los jóvenes y la lectura*. (Translated by R. Segovia and D. L. Sánchez). México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- PISA 2006. *Science competencies for tomorrow's world*. (2007). OECD. Consulted 11 February 2007, <<http://www.oecd.org/publishing/corrigenda>>.
- PISA 2009. *Results*. (2010). OECD. Consulted 8 December 2010, <[www.oecd.org/edu/pisa/2009](http://www.oecd.org/edu/pisa/2009)>.
- Puurtinen, T. (1995). *Linguistic Acceptability in Translated Children's Literature*. Joensuu: University of Joensuu.
- Shavit, Z. (1981). "Translation of Children's Literature as a Function of its Position in the Literary Polysystem." *Poetics Today*, 2(4), 171-179.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2006). "Translation of Children's Literature". In Lathey, G. (Ed.) *The Translation of Children's Literature. A Reader* (pp. 25-40). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Smits, A. (2004). *La Literatura Infantil: Traducciones y Adaptaciones*. PhD dissertation. Utrecht: University of Utrecht.
- Sousa, C. (2002). "TL versus SL implied Reader: Assessing Receptivity when translating Children's Literature". *Meta*, 47(1), 16-29.
- Toury, G. (1995). *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Stolt, B. (2006). "How Emil becomes Michel: On the Translation of Children's Books". In Lathey, G. (Ed.) *The Translation of Children's Literature. A Reader* (pp. 67-83). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Stolt, B. and Klingberg, G. (1980). *Het Vertalen Van Kinderboeken. Buiten Het Boekje*. Den Haag: NBLC.