Abstract
A published translation into Slovene is always a compromise between everybody involved, most often the translator, the text editor and the book editor. In the case of picture books, text editors’ interventions are sometimes such that they change the style, characterization and even meaning of (parts of) the text. The text editor’s task is to revise the first translation in terms of orthography, syntax, grammar and style. The latter’s level sometimes causes problems in the translation process, as text editors often do not speak the source language, are not familiar with the source culture, and do not use the source text while revising. This is especially true for translations between peripheral languages such as Norwegian and Slovene. Here we survey creators of translated picture books about their experience with editorial interventions in the target texts and present an illustrative case study of such interventions in three translated Norwegian picture books. While the final version is always shaped by the expertise, taste and opinion of at least three people, the translator is nevertheless seen as the author of the target text and can influence the final version to a high degree.

Introduction
Literary translation inevitably brings with it many changes and shifts, small and large. Some are made for linguistic or poetic reasons, others for extratextual reasons. These may involve the relative status of the source and target languages and cultures, the competence of those involved in the translation process, or target culture norms and traditions. Previous research (Zlatnar Moe 2010, 2015, 2017) shows that Slovene translators, editors and publishers generally opt for more foreignizing translations when translating for adults, with the exception

1 The authors acknowledge financial support from the Slovenian Research Agency (research core funding No. P6-0265).
of drama translations, which tend to be more domesticating. However, in our work as researchers and translators, we have noticed that Slovene translations of books for children and even young adults often differ significantly in style from their source texts, even if culture-specific elements are retained and the meaning does not change. The most common changes are increased formality, neutralization of language variations, unification of the register, and correction of non-standard language variations. Sometimes those changes are significant enough for the intended audience to change from adults to children (Zlatnar Moe and Žigon 2020). Our own experience and conversations with other translators indicate that these changes often do not occur during the translating itself, but later on, in the process of revision and editing. To determine what is happening and how, we conducted a survey of Slovene literary translators, book editors and text editors and compared our findings with textual analyses of translations of three picture books from Norwegian into Slovene.

Translating picture books

Before we turn to the complexities of translating picture books, let us look at what is considered literature for children in general. There have been many different ways of defining the category. Knowles and Malmkjær (1996, quoted in Lathey 2006) have it as “any narrative written or published for children [including] the ‘teen novels’ aimed at a ‘young adult’ or ‘late adolescent’ reader.” Most of us agree, however, that while children’s literature is literature that is mainly written by adults for children, it is in fact intended for a dual audience, the primary audience being the child, and the secondary audience being the adults buying and (in the case of pre-readers) reading the book to a child.

Translating for children has traditionally been considered a good way to start one’s translating career, as it has been deemed ‘easy’ (Cerar 1997), mainly because the texts in question are often short and (deceptively) simple, and because the genre of children’s literature has often been seen as less prestigious (ibid., see also Shavit 2006). Because of its lower status, literature for children allows the translator greater liberties in dealing with the text: children are mostly seen as young, inexperienced and in need of education (on the subject matter and language among other things), and the translator is seen as the right person to give it to them. Shavit (2006, 26) writes that the translator of children’s literature “can permit himself liberties regarding the text as a result of the peripheral position of children’s literature within the literary polysystem” and is allowed to manipulate the text in various ways if s/he adheres to two principles: adapting the text to what the target society thinks is good for children, and
to what the target society expects the child to understand. Standards of what is good for a child change over time. As López (2006, 41) notes, in the past taboo subjects included divorce, death, and alcoholism, all of which are now frequently discussed in books for children. Meanwhile, Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini (2017) find that taboos, although they have changed, still endure.

Picture books are perhaps the clearest examples of literature for children. The vast majority are intended for young children and their adult purchasers/readers (parents, educators). There is also no question about how experienced the target audience is or whether they need education or not, as they are typically either pre-readers or children learning to read, so not yet either experienced or learned.

Picture books themselves, however, are more complex, as they consist not only of text, but also of pictures, both of which are in constant interaction. Thus Arzipe and Syles (2003, quoted in Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini 2017, 18) define picture books as “books in which the story depends on the interaction between the written text and the image,” while Pantaleo (2014, quoted in Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini 2017, 18) defines them as books in which “the total effect depends on the text, the illustrations, and the reciprocity between these two sign systems.”

While reading a picture book, a reader is asked to undertake a complex activity, consisting of a constant passage from the written text to the images and vice versa, since both expressive means provide readers with different perspectives on the same events (ibid., 22). The readers must therefore interpret both the text and the pictures and must also be able to understand whatever is absent from either the text or the illustrations (ibid.). As already mentioned, picture books are often read aloud to the target audience, which also demands some level of interpretation from the reader, as tone, intonation, tempo, and pauses also contribute to the enjoyment of the adult as well as the child (Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini 2017, 69). Like translators of plays or comic books, however, translators of picture books generally only work with one of the multiple channels through which the story reaches the audience, namely the written text.

This situation makes certain demands on the translator, who is faced with deciding the degree to which s/he will take all these considerations into account. Scholars and translators seem to agree that the inexperience of young readers should be considered, but what about the different reading and interpreting competences of their adult readers? Should translators adhere to the norm of easy readability? And what about the culture-specific elements in the text and pictures?

All these choices are in principle the translator’s to make, but in reality, other participants in the translation process also have their opinions on each of them, based on their own expertise (either in language, visual arts, management, or sales and promotion) and personal taste, and the final result is a compromise between all of them.
Translating for children between peripheral languages

Although most translations into Slovene are made from English and other central languages (see Zlatnar Moe, Žigon and Mikolič Južnič 2019), and most available research to date is either between central languages or in central-peripheral language pairs, books from peripheral languages are also regularly translated into other peripheral languages, for example from Norwegian into Slovene. But the entire translation process is affected in many subtle ways by the involvement of peripheral languages (ibid.). In the case of Norwegian books, the translation process is influenced by the fact that there are only a handful of available translators, no bilingual translation tools and no network of experts on the literature and language(s) of Norway. Furthermore, the source country actively participates in the selection of books for translation by generously subsidizing translation of its literature. Another characteristic is that central languages are involved even if the translation itself is done directly from Norwegian, as editors have access to the text in question only through its other translations, and some books are translated via English because of a lack of available translators. This is the case with the recent books (for adults and children) by Jo Nesbø: the publisher used translators from Norwegian for the first few books but has switched to translators from English in order to save time and money. There has been a steady stream of Norwegian literature translated into Slovene in the past two decades. In addition to the (new) translations of the classics, such as Ibsen, Hamsun, and Undset, there have also been translations of modern authors such as Ambjørnsen, Petterson, Knausgård, Ørstavik, Fosse, and Fosnes-Hansen, as well as modern books for children.

Method

We begin with a text analysis of first drafts, edited versions and published versions of three Norwegian picture books, namely Polenček odpre muzej (2015) (Kubbe lager museum [Kubbe Makes an Art Museum] (K)) by Åshild

2 The terms ‘central’ and ‘peripheral’ are here used as defined by Heilbron (1999); see also Heilbron (2000). Peripheral languages are those that contribute no more than 1 percent of the source texts in the global literary translation market.

3 For details on translators from Norwegian into Slovene, see Zlatnar Moe, Mikolič Južnič and Žigon (2019, 45).

4 We gathered this information through informal conversations with the translators of Nesbø from Norwegian.
Kanstad Johnsen, *Garmannovo poletje* (2017) (*Garmanns sommer* [Garmann’s Summer] (G)) by Stian Hole, and Čajna ženička (2018) (*Tesjkjerringa* [The Adventures of Mrs. Pepperpot] (T)) by Alf Prøysen, all translated by one of the authors. All three are originally written in Norwegian Bokmål, one of the two official forms of written Norwegian (the other one being Nynorsk). The first two are more recent, originally published in 2010 and 2006 respectively, while the latter is a Norwegian children’s classic from the 1950s. We analyzed corrections and comments by text editors and book editors and compared them to the published versions of the texts. To determine the degree to which those corrections were universal, rather than the preferences of the individuals involved in the translation process, we then turned to other translators and editors, and asked them about their norms, strategies and solutions when translating, editing and publishing picture books by means of an online survey among translators, book editors and text editors. We compared the results of the text analysis with the answers of our respondents to determine how important a role the editors played in producing the final version of the text, and who had the ultimate say.

**Text analysis results**

In order to see what happens in the process of translating a picture book, we compared first, corrected and final versions of three translations from Norwegian. They were all published by the same publisher (Sodobnost International), but edited by three different book editors and two different text editors. We found that the corrections by the text editors mostly resulted in replacement of non-normative language with normative alternatives, and a more fluent text: thus, on the lexical level, more general words and phrases, such as ‘he took a picture,’ were changed to the more formal and exact ‘he took a photograph’ in *Kubbe*; but the text editor decided to simplify ‘beetle’ to ‘ladybird’ in *Garmanns sommer*. On the lexical level, the fluency concern was most acute in the translation of *Tesjkjerringa*, where the editors (both the book editor and the text editor) deleted all seemingly superfluous conjunctions which served as markers of spoken language in the source text. Some examples of these kinds of changes are shown in Table 1.

To illustrate how the edits changed the style of the translation, let us take a closer look at *Garmanns sommer*.

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5 The different roles of book editors and text editors in Slovene publishing are discussed in the section “Text editors” below.
Garmanns sommer by Stian Hole was first published in Norway in 2006, and its Slovene translation appeared in 2017. It is the story of a six-year-old boy and takes place on the last day before he starts school. He is nervous and begins exploring other people’s fears: his old aunts are afraid of dying, his musician father is afraid of playing too fast, his mother is afraid that Garmann will get hit by a car on his way to school, and so on. The message is that everybody is afraid before a big change and that there is nothing wrong with that. Originally, it was written in standard Norwegian Bokmål, but with the syntax, vocabulary and logic of a six-year-old. This was preserved in the first version of the translation, which was then handed over to the text editor. The text editor made a number of changes, mostly stylistic shifts from non-normative language and style to more normative solutions that made the text seem written by a grown-up, rather than thought by a six-year-old. Most of the changes fall into the categories shown in Table 2, which provides examples of each category.
Table 2. Examples of text editor’s changes in *Garmanns sommer*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of change</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Text editor’s revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More formal forms of</td>
<td>misli</td>
<td>pomisli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual words</td>
<td>[think]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9 changes)</td>
<td>pred sto petdeset leti</td>
<td>pred sto petdesetimi leti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[15 years ago]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More formal words and phrases</td>
<td>vsi ljudje</td>
<td>vsakdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18 changes)</td>
<td>[all people]</td>
<td>[everyone]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>snežena hišica</td>
<td>hišica iz snega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[snow house]</td>
<td>[house made of snow]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bo šel</td>
<td>bo odpotoval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[will go]</td>
<td>[will travel]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bo šel čez</td>
<td>bo prečkal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[will go across]</td>
<td>[will cross]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical changes</td>
<td>zobje</td>
<td>proteza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5 changes)</td>
<td>[teeth]</td>
<td>[dentures]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>velik</td>
<td>visok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[big]</td>
<td>[tall]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hrošček</td>
<td>pikapolonica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[beetle]</td>
<td>[ladybird]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mora vaditi</td>
<td>odhitvi vaditi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[has to go practice]</td>
<td>[hurries off to practice]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes of meaning</td>
<td>Kako pa misliš, da bo iti v</td>
<td>Se že kaj veseliš šole?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6 changes)</td>
<td>šolo?</td>
<td>[Are you looking forward to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(How do you feel about</td>
<td>starting school?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>starting school?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>se nima česa bati</td>
<td>se ničesar ne boji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[has nothing to fear]</td>
<td>[does not fear anything]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactical changes</td>
<td>preverjal</td>
<td>preverjal, če se zobek maje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11 changes)</td>
<td>[was checking]</td>
<td>[was checking whether the little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tooth was moving]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Se ti česa bojiš?” Očka in</td>
<td>“Se ti česa bojiš?” Garmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garmann sedita…</td>
<td>vpraša očka, ko sedita…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[&quot;Are you afraid of</td>
<td>[&quot;Are you afraid of anything?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>anything?” Dad and Garmann</td>
<td>Garmann asks his Dad while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are sitting…]</td>
<td>they are sitting…]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, there are five cases where the typical logic of a six-year-old is changed into grown-up logic. In one example, Garmann links his aunt’s need for a rollator with his roller skates, and offers to give her the roller skates if she ever needs the rollator: “I will soon be needing a rollator to walk,” says the aunt, to which Garmann answers, “In that case you can have my roller skates.” The text editor deleted ‘in that case’ and thus all but removed the thought chain that led to Garmann’s offer. In another, where Garmann listens to his aunts talking about plants, and muses that flowers have similar names to old ladies, the names of the flowers are capitalized. The text editor removed the capitals, as flower names are not capitalized in Slovene, thus ignoring the context in which they were considered as personal names.

As we can see, most of the text editor’s corrections were stylistic. In addition to the changes discussed above, there were also a few changes of the word order, and a few other cases of replacement of a word or phrase with a synonym or a near synonym. In some cases, those stylistic changes were so significant that they influenced the meaning of the text, but even where this did not happen, they did increase the formality and shifted the whole text from the children’s spoken register towards neutral standard Slovene.

The revised version of the text normally goes back to the translator, who may either accept or reject the text editor’s changes. In this case, the translator deleted most of the stylistic, lexical and semantic changes, sometimes providing explanations in the comments, and also further explanations in the accompanying email. Lastly, the book was edited by the book editor, who accepted all but one of the translator’s suggestions, which then appeared in the published version.

The nature and quantity of the editors’ changes were not surprising. As our previous research (Zlatnar Moe 2010, 2015; Zlatnar Moe and Žigon 2020) shows, children’s language is frequently ‘corrected’ to standard forms not only in literature for children, but also when children appear as characters or narrators in literature for adults. As our previous research was done on translations from English, we draw on it to assess whether our Norwegian sample shows signs of any source-related bias. For instance, Norwegian children’s books sometimes feature content (such as a frank approach to bodily functions) that might be considered too unconventional or unsuitable for children in other cultures. Our sample does not really include any such cases, except perhaps the theme of impending death in Garmanns sommer. In any case, we do not find that the possibly more daring content of the books triggered additional editorial interventions beyond what we have found for English books. Nor were there comparatively more changes in translations of Norwegian picture books than in translated English picture books. This strengthens our confidence that our findings here apply to translated children’s literature more generally. Rather
than between source cultures, the divides were between genres and target audiences; there were relatively more changes in picture books than in novels (translated from either language) for grown-ups, for example. As we shall see later, the answers in our survey to some extent confirm these observations.

Since our text analysis concentrated on a very small sample of three books, one translator, and a handful of editors, we decided to contact other producers of translated picture books and find out what the prevailing norms of the field are.

Survey results

In 2017 and 2018, we carried out a larger study on the division of work and power within the translation process proper, involving the selection, translation and editing of the text. Within this study, we also conducted a survey on the particularities of translating and editing for children. We contacted translators, book editors and text editors. To reach as many potential participants as possible, we contacted the Slovene associations of literary translators, authors and text editors, who forwarded our questions to their members and/or contacts. With their help, we contacted 235 translators, ninety-one text editors, and twenty-six book editors – 351 people altogether. Since we approached respondents through professional societies, we talked to experienced translators, text editors and book editors. To become a member of the Slovene Association of Literary Translators, one has to present a list of published translations. While the Slovene Text Editor Association does not have similar conditions, most of their members are practicing text editors and Slovene language graduates. All of the editors we contacted work for established publishing houses. The survey was open for about a month. In the end, we received sixty answers in total: thirty-two from translators, sixteen from text editors and twelve from book editors. Of these, thirteen translators said they translated picture books (among other things), and two more translated comic books, which are predominantly targeted towards children in the Slovene market (Zlatnar Moe and Žigon 2020). Ten text editors said they edit picture books, as did six book editors, in addition to two who also edit comic books. The questionnaires consisted of two parts: a more general one that was more or less the same for all participants (including questions about experience, working languages, genres, etc.), and a more specific part dealing with the particulars of translating and editing different texts, genres, languages, including collaboration with others. The form of the questionnaire was a combination of multiple-choice questions and open questions where respondents were able to explain their chosen answers if
they wished. Afterwards we analyzed the answers from all three groups and compared them to form a picture of how the translation process happens and how the power relations within it work.

*Who translates books for children?*

All participants in our survey were experienced translators and members of the Slovene Association of Literary Translators, but this is far from usual. When doing our research outside this particular survey, we found that just about anybody who can speak the source language can become a translator of books for children. For example, one owner of a small publishing house freely admitted that she and her son did the translations from English themselves because it was cheaper. One theatre manager said that she translated one of the plays from English herself (and later had it completely rewritten by the text editor). As mentioned, picture books are also often given to beginner translators.

*Text editors*

Text editors are usually Slovene language and literature graduates who may or may not be fluent in a foreign language, but not necessarily in the source language of the text in question. They work with both translated and original literary and non-literary texts. Their job is to check that the text is adequate in language (by ensuring that punctuation, capitalization and grammar agree with Slovene standard language norms) as well as in style. They also comment on the text’s appropriateness for the text type and/or the target public. To achieve this, they correct syntax, structure and word order, and replace words and phrases with others they deem more suitable. While most authors appreciate this stylistic contribution by the text editors, the situation seems to be more complicated in the case of literary translation (for children or otherwise), as translation involves competing cultures, styles, norms of good writing, and language experts, and this can lead to (sometimes heated) disagreements between parties. If a text editor is involved in the process, as is usually the case, the role of the book editor is mostly to choose the translator and the text editor, mediate between them, promote the book, and edit the style to some extent.

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6 Sometimes in combination with another degree – either in language, literature or another field of the humanities.
The text editors in our survey were all members of the Slovene Text Editor Association, all had more than fifteen years of text-editing experience, and all but one had a degree in Slovene language and literature. They mostly worked with literary as well as non-literary texts (journalistic, technical, promotional and legal). All of them worked with original Slovene texts as well as with translations. All of them also spoke at least one foreign language, most often English and/or one of the South Slavic languages.

The book editors all had a degree in social sciences and/or arts: seven had double degrees in languages and comparative literature, history, or sociology. The majority listed three writing genres as their work fields, and the most common combination was novels, short prose and picture books.

The editing process

The literary translation process in Slovene publishing houses usually begins with the book editor finding and hiring a translator, who then translates the book and sends it to the book editor. The book editor immediately forwards it to the text editor. The edited text then goes back to the translator, with the book editor serving more as a courier between the two than anything else. Lastly, the proofreader reads the formatted text to determine if anything else needs correcting, as does the translator. Because of all this indirect communication, most translators we spoke with usually wrote either an accompanying letter or comments in the text in which they described the style of the text, and what they aimed to do in the translation. The text editors we contacted, however, said that they did not usually receive those comments, or only sometimes received them, and expressed a desire to have more supplemental information from the translator, if not direct contact.

The most common changes by text editors

Text editors only occasionally used the source text in the editing process. They were more likely to do so when editing a text translated from a language they were to some degree proficient in, and mostly used it for clarification, not for complete revision of the translation. As one of the text editors wrote: “My work is with the Slovene text and the Slovene language, its style and norms.”

But as we see in Figure 1, most changes the text editors made were – according to translators – on the lexical level, exchanging one Slovene word for another, and not always for a very near synonym. One of our respondents was
still perceptibly frustrated over a text editor who exchanged all the simple ‘but’ for more complicated and formal conjunctions. The large number of orthographical changes is due to different factors, one being the rigidity of the Slovene punctuation system. Stylistic shifts were the third most often-mentioned change. Even after all the translators’ efforts to explain the style of the original and the reasons for their choices, the text editors’ changes still revolved around replacing non-standard and informal words with more formal ones, and one translator also gave examples of stylistic changes which were so extensive that they completely changed the style of the book. Translators also mentioned the clear preference of the text editors for standard Slovene expressions. Several of the translators also complained about the simplification of the text by the text editor; translators were very opposed to replacing a more advanced word with a simpler one. One third of the translators translating literature for adults as well as literature for children also noticed that there were more corrections in the texts aimed at children (and also, more in the texts from central languages than
from the peripheral ones). Only two translators (out of all 32) mentioned having experienced a text editor actually pointing out parts where they thought that the translator had used a word or solution that was too formal for a child (whether too formal for the child character in the book to use, or for the child reading it).

Book editors said that they mostly intervened on the stylistic level, and translators agreed, as Figure 2 shows. This brings with it a whole other set of problems for the translators translating from peripheral languages, such as Norwegian, as the editors most often do not have direct access to the original and are thus correcting the style and meaning of the book based on another translation. Most translators pointed out, however, that the book editors did not intervene much in the text. Unlike their experience with text editors, most translators did not feel that book editors worked differently with books for children and young adults. Only three translators reported that the book editors seemed more involved in those texts.

Our respondents confirmed that the book editor usually was not involved in the discussion between the translator and the text editor. But sometimes, when the text-edited version differed very much from the original, they did express their opinion. One translator said that she got the marked version back with the book editor’s instruction not to accept any of the text editor’s changes except for commas. Others mentioned that the book editors either left it up to the translators to decide whether they wanted to keep a change or not, or implied that the translators should take the corrections “more as a recommendation, not a rule.” Most translators, however, did not experience many contradictions between the book editor and the text editor.

Text editors mostly confirmed that they approached children’s texts differently than texts for adults: they concentrated more on the clarity of the text and avoided complex words, phrases and sentences. They also took greater care with the style of the book. Examples of translators’ mistakes in literature for children, as reported by text editors, concerned lexical choices and sentence length, and the use of terminology. Text editors also commented on “deleting translator’s footnotes as young readers do not know what to make of them.” The answers thus confirmed the translators’ feeling that the text editors intervened more in texts for children, although there might be some difference of opinion as to the necessity and quality of those interventions. It was also confirmed that the editing is mainly focused on style, keeping the target text within the frame of what is considered ‘good writing in Slovene.’

The answers from the book editors confirmed that the translation and editing norms when translating for children are different from the norms governing translation and editing of texts for grown-ups. Domestication of proper names is more prevalent, and the use of non-normative language is
unwelcome. Book editors also said that, unlike with literature for adults, they did give some instructions to the translator before they started translating the book. Several respondents felt that children needed to be ‘trained’ to read in an adult way. Several book editors also felt that text editors adhered more to the norms of standard Slovene in literature for children, while one thought that the text editors were actually more open to the lower registers and non-normative language in such a text than the book editor in question.

The answers in our survey, then, confirm the results of the textual analysis: most of the corrections are stylistic, significant enough to change the register and tone of a text, and often rather unpopular with translators, who seem to choose solutions that are nearer to the source text.

**Conclusion**

Our textual analysis as well as the answers of professionals we talked to show that while the translator is seen as the ultimate author of a picture book translation, its final version is often heavily influenced by the (text) editors, and a result of negotiations, mostly between the translator and the text editor, with the book editor acting as a mediator between the two. Text editors are often the first (or even only) people who read the target text after the translator, but they mostly work without the source text, and often adapt the target text to the target language and stylistic norms, as well as to their private opinion on what ‘sounds better.’ This happens even if those norms were violated intentionally in both the source text and the translation. But as they mostly do not have access to the original, do not use it in editing (nor do they use a translation), do not work together with the translator, and do not receive translators’ explanations and descriptions, they cannot know this. The changes they make in the text mostly tend towards replacing non-normative language with normative solutions, unconventional messages (e.g. that kids need not always look forward to going to school, as mentioned above) with conventional ones, and informal registers with more formal ones. The appearance of the final version seems to depend very much on three factors: (1) the power relations between the people involved (experienced translators and/or text editors have an advantage, as do translators from peripheral languages); (2) the additional explaining the translator is willing to do; and (3) the book editor’s trust in the translator and/or the text editor.

As our textual analysis shows, together with other translators’ reports in our survey, the text editor’s corrections can change not only the style, but
sometimes also the meaning and the message of the text. The reason for this is not only that they mostly work without the source text, but also the beliefs they hold about what is good for children (hence the simplifications and standardization of language). The translator, in our experience, can reject those changes, but not all translators do. As one of our respondents said: “I was too young and too afraid to quarrel with them.” The editing is also frequently done in a hurry in order to meet (often unrealistic) deadlines, which limits everybody’s time and energy to explain, argue and negotiate. An ideal solution to this problem would be to replace text editing with revision by a person who speaks both languages and can work with the source text, and to give everybody enough time, but that is not possible for the majority of the source languages. A realistic solution, which costs the translator some additional time and frustration, is for the translator to go carefully through all the editors’ changes and only include the acceptable ones, or to go through the text together with either the text editor or the book editor, which is the practice of at least one publisher (who has eliminated text editors altogether). Our survey shows that translators, who frequently see themselves as overlooked agents, are nonetheless seen by others involved in the translation process as the main authority on the source and the target texts – even more so when they work with peripheral languages. As such, translators are often able to see their own vision of the target text through to publication.

Bibliography


