


## Expressive language in translation of books for children: a corpus-based study

Diana Prodanović Stankić

University of Novi Sad (Serbia) ✉ 

Helga Begonja

University of Zadar (Croatia) ✉ 

<https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/clac.80532>

Recibido: 15 de febrero de 2022 • Aceptado: 1 de octubre de 2024

**EN Abstract:** The paper focuses on translation solutions used in translating expressive language from English into German, Croatian and Serbian. This qualitative analysis is corpus-based and it includes translations of a children's book from the series *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney. These books are written for children aged 9-12 and represent a kind of a hybrid multimodal form because they contain text accompanied by illustrations in the form of a comic with speech balloons, sound effects and similar. By expressive language we mean wordplay, onomatopoeic words and funny names, frequently employed in children's literature. The source text is in English and the analysis will be based on solutions and techniques used in translations of this bestseller in Croatian, German and Serbian. The main aim of this research is to determine the functions of expressive language and the solutions translators used in order to achieve the same or similar effect in the target languages. The results of the study will give a better insight into the role of the translator in the whole process and the ways expressive language is translated.

**Keywords:** expressive language; translation solutions; multimodal discourse; children's literature.

**Contents:** 1. Introduction. 1.1. Multimodality of expressive language in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book series. 1.2. Translating children's books. 1.3. Translation strategies. 2. Methodology and data collection. 3. Results and discussion. 3.1. Wordplay. 3.2. Interjections and exclamations. 4. Concluding remarks. References.

**Cómo citar:** Prodanović Stankić, D.; Begonja, H. (2024). Expressive language in translation of books for children: a corpus-based study. *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación* 100 (2024) 235-243. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/clac.80532>

### 1. Introduction

Since the early childhood, language, communication and later on, literacy represent the core of children's experience in the world and at the same time a trigger for further learning and growth. An inevitable part of developing children's literacy is encouraging children to read, among other things. By doing that, they develop their language and communication skills without direct instruction; basically they learn intuitively how language works. The aim of this paper is to expand upon the use of expressive language in books written for children from the perspective of Translation Studies and linguistics, in order to see how expressive language is dealt with in translation in several different languages.

Translation has always had an important role in extending the reach and impact of children's literature all over the world. Nevertheless, as O'Connell (2006, p. 15) rightfully observed, as much as this was the case, translating children's literature as a topic has been ignored by theorists, publishers and academic institutions involved in translation research and training. This multifaceted topic involves various aspects, yet in this paper we would like to focus our attention on the very process of translation, specifically, on the ways linguistic creativity in the form of expressive language is rendered in different translations.

Expressive language is one of those concepts that are quite elusive and hard to define, first of all since it is often used as an umbrella term to cover the use of various lexical units to create a specific perlocutionary effect or to have an aesthetic function. Such kind of language use certainly adds to the performance and experience of reading (Oittinen, 1993; Oittinen, 2000). Due to its importance for the development of children's language-based skills and competences, our aim in this paper was to deal with expressive language from a different point of view. In the first place, we wanted to see how it is used in a book written for children, in which

the discourse is multimodal, combining text and cartoons, and how the translators of this book dealt with it in their translations.

The books that have been used for the analysis are parts of the world-famous *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book series, written and illustrated by Jeff Kinney specifically the sixth one, called *Cabin Fever* (2011), and its translations into

- German (*Greggs Tagebuch 6: Keine Panik!* (2014); trans. by Dietmar Schmidt).
- Croatian (*Gregov dnevnik 6: Snježna groznica* (2016); trans. by Ivan Zorić).
- Serbian (*Dnevnik šonjavka 6: Praznična groznica* (2017); trans. by Miloš Mitić).

Our choice was mainly motivated by the book series global popularity, which is not limited to the books themselves, but rather to the whole franchise, including films, YouTube videos and other materials. The number of sold copies of single books from the series might be used as an indicator of the fact that children all over the world were drawn to the book for some reason. As Lathey (2016) notes, the rapidly accelerating globalisation of bestselling children's titles in an international children's culture has had an enormous impact on both publishers and translators. In reference to the impact of culture on translators, Kučić (2016) rightly stresses the bicultural dimension and points out that the translator has to assume the role of a transcultural mediator, since the process of translation does not only involve the linguistic level, but the level of the socio-cultural context as well (p. 105-106). Still, books aimed at the international market inevitably contain less of those culture-specific elements and more of those that are global, so as to make them more easily recognisable among the recipients in the target languages and cultures, regardless of the translator's position.

The target readers of *Wimpy Kid Diaries* are children aged 9 to 12, and following Oittinen's (2000, p. 40) classification of children's literature, it can be said that this is an age group that reads for themselves. The author of this book series has integrated in the text many cartoons, which serve as illustrations but also as triggers of the plot. In most cases these cartoons include both semiotic modes, the visual and the textual and for that reason the books represent multimodal reading material for children. Multimodal discourse in translation of children's literature is still insufficiently explored, even though there are some authors (Oittinen, 1993; Oittinen, 2000; Zanettin, 2008; Borodo, 2014), who dealt with some specific aspects related to it.

### 1.1. Multimodality of expressive language in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book series

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) argue that meaning is not only communicated by language, but by many other modes as well, such as pictorial images, gestures, body postures, colour, sound, etc (p. 21). For that reason, all of these modes "allow the simultaneous realisation of discourses" and may serve as elements that are involved in the process of dynamic meaning construction that takes place in the minds of target recipients, or readers in this case. It should be pointed out that "non-verbal elements in multimodal texts not only perform the function of illustrating the linguistic part of the text, but also play an integral role in the construction of meaning, whether through interaction with the linguistic element or as an independent semiotic system" (Kaindl, 2004, p. 176).

Yet, multimodality can represent a real challenge for theoretical accounts particularly within Translation Studies, since most theories of translation are text-based. Reiss (2000, p. 164-165) indicates that multimodal texts should be regarded as a "hyper-type" which can have different functions, i.e. they can be informative, operative and/or expressive. Based on his research into humour in comics, Kaindl (2004, p. 174) argues that multimodality has direct consequences on the selection of a translation strategy in the process of translation, particularly if we take into account the fact that in these instances we do not translate languages but cultures. Expressive language that is either part of the text or cartoons is no exception in this case.

In this paper, we started with a linguistic approach to define expressive language (Crystal, 2010) or expressives: a special word class that includes all parts of speech describing noises, colours, light patterns, shapes, movements, sensations, emotions, and aesthetic feelings. Synaesthesia is often observable in these words and serves as a guide for individual coinage of new and nonsense words and neologisms. This is quite evident particularly in these book series, since the author often used them in illustrations and speech balloons, combining verbal and visual modes to communicate meaning. The forms of the expressives are thus quite unstable, and the additional effect of wordplay and drawings can create subtle and endless structural variations.

As it is well known, wordplay is a playful and witty use of words to create a specific perlocutionary effect, i.e. to amuse the listener or the recipient of the message (Partington, 2009, p. 1796). In essence, wordplay (Ross, 1998) is based on playing with different levels of linguistic structure. In our corpus, examples of wordplay were quite frequent and of different kinds, in the sense that they involved creative playing with the morphological level (as in the case of the neologism *walkathon* (Kinney, 2011, p. 64)) or pragmatic and phonological/graphological level (e.g. *Peace be with you* vs. *Peas be with you* (Kinney, 2011, p. 57)).

The text in these book series is accompanied by cartoon-like drawings, which became a trademark of the whole series. The main character, a misfit and weakling Gregg Heffley has already become easily recognizable (cf. images at [https://diary-of-a-wimpy-kid.fandom.com/wiki/Greg\\_Heffley](https://diary-of-a-wimpy-kid.fandom.com/wiki/Greg_Heffley)). The author has successfully integrated his two-dimensional drawings into the text in order to elaborate plot twists or to enhance the intended effect. The drawings are either followed by speech balloons or onomatopoeic words that follow the character's body movement, adding to the interactive aspect of the story. Following Borodo (2014, p. 24), a multimodal analysis of translated comic books needs to take into account character's body movements, which represent a major source of the multimodal and multidimensional nature of face-to-face communication

(Allwood, 2002, p. 15), and therefore, these verbs, typically associated with lexical fields related to walking or moving, were also classified in this research as part of expressive language.

Within the Translation Studies, Epstein (2012, p. 15) offers a typology of expressive language based on her research into translation of children's literature and includes in this group neologisms or nonsense words, names, idioms, wordplay and dialect. Furthermore, she (Epstein, 2012) compares expressive language to translation claiming that both represent approximations and argues that "translators must be very conscious of what they are doing and why, and that there should be no false expectations about what a translation is, or can be (p. 20)".

## 1.2. Translating children's books

For the purpose of this paper, we will use Göte Klingberg's definition of literature for children and the young, who includes in that scope all literature that has been deliberately written and published for children (as cited in Reiss, 2000, p. 7). According to Oittinen's (2000, p. 61) such literature is produced and intended for children and read by children. *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book series would fall in the second group, as these books are aimed at pre-teen children who can read them by themselves. Ideally, translation of children's literature is defined as communication between children and adults (Oittinen, 2000), which, unfortunately is not always the case, as Epstein (2012) shows in her analysis of translations of expressive language from English into Swedish.

When translation practice is concerned, some of the most pertinent issues related to this research is certainly the concept of equivalence and the degree of faithfulness to the source text. In Translation Studies, the concept of equivalence is the key concept and the source of different theoretical approaches and models. According to Pym (2004),

equivalence, no matter what its nature, does not simply exist between locales. Equivalences are created by internationalization or translation of one kind or another. They are necessary functions without necessary correlative beyond the communication situation. In this sense, translation is not mapping of one function onto another; it is a productive function in itself. Translational equivalence is thus ultimately determined by what translators actually do or have done in the past, and not by abstract comparisons between falsely discrete languages and cultures (p. 62).

In this paper we will draw on the idea that translation implies translating meaning and function in the given context from the source into the target language and culture. Also, as Kučič and Majhenič (2018, p. 35) argue

translation studies as a young interdisciplinary science has seen the replacement of a language-centred concept of interpreting and translation by a culture-centred understanding, which has led to new concepts by which translation is seen as both social practice and interactive transcultural transfer. At the same time, two structural levels define the interpreting and translation process: the social and the cultural levels (p. 35).

Vermeer (1996) also regards translation as a cultural transfer, in which, according to Höning and Kusmaul (1982), the translated text is a verbalized part of a broader social and cultural context. In that kind of a context, the translator is not just a mediator, but someone who is creative and skillful at the same time. In most situations, the translator has a very specific relation to the source text both as a reader and recipient and then as a translator (Snell Hornby, 1995, p. 2; O'Sullivan, 2000, p. 240), since he/she needs to create fertile ground for communication between two cultures and two languages. For that reason the translator needs to create a space as similar as possible to the source text in order to keep the explicit and the implicit meaning of the original (O'Sullivan, 2000). In Venuti's (1995) terms, the translator should be *invisible* so that the target text reads as the original, both in terms of linguistic and cultural aspects. That concept of *invisibility* is used in Lathey's (2010) approach to the role of translators in children's literature, as she advocates invisible storytellers.

In her model of Translation Quality Assessment, House (1997) proposes two translation types, *overt* and *covert*, which she based on the corpus analysis of different text types. An overt translation would be a text that is clearly marked as being translated from a source text, and which contains both language- and culture-based transfer. On the other hand, a covert translation would rather be a localised text that cannot be easily marked as a translation. Sometimes that implies a relatively big discrepancy between the source and the target text, however, the target text can be accepted and read without any problems. In order to achieve this effect, the translator needs to use a *cultural filter*, which he/she constructs based on findings of empirical contrastive research, and not on intuition. Following this pattern House has developed some patterns of communicative preferences for the language pair English-German.

Cultural filters are of utmost importance in the process of translating text that contains other semiotic modes as well, most notably images. Again, depending on the cultural context and the function of the target text, the translator may decide to change and adopt the text. O'Sullivan (2000, pp. 287-290) described the example of a translation in which the translator added and explained the parts that did not exist in the original (i.e. use of explication and elaboration in terms of Newmark's (1981, 1988) translation strategies), whereas Oittinen (2000, pp. 29-32) argues that in these cases the target reader is deprived of his or her recreating role.

Basically, the problems related to translating the interaction between images and text can be classified as following, using O'Sullivan's (2000, p. 282) categorization<sup>1</sup>, regardless of whether the image contains an additional linguistic element or not:

<sup>1</sup> Translation of the source text in German is provided by the authors

1. Cultural discrepancy that is the result of a localised translation in cases when the original illustration is kept in the text;
2. Problems related to incorporating typographic elements and text within the illustration as well as keeping target language elements in new illustrations;
3. Getting rid of the foreign culture-specific elements that enable comprehension through new illustrations;
4. Shifting the interaction word vs. image by the verbalization of information based on the image in the picture book;
5. Avoiding cultural differences in translation of linguistic elements and illustrations by the means of linguistic levelling of cultural differences in international co-production projects.

To sum up, O'Sullivan (2000) states that both the text and the illustrations in the source language can be clearly marked and that should be considered and carefully dealt with in the translation. If these cultural differences are ignored in the final product of translation by providing new illustrations devoid of these culture-specific elements, not only are children deprived of the possibility to learn something new about other cultures, but there is a possibility that the text and the illustrations will be incoherent. Moreover, the overall effect of the interaction represented by the opposite meaning created by mistranslation affects the whole reading experience. For that reason, there is a tendency nowadays in international coproduction projects to avoid culture-specific elements in the source text altogether and keep the references to culture restricted to global items well-known and familiar to the audience and readership all over the world.

### 1.3. Translation strategies

Dealing with any translation problem in the process of translation implies the application of specific procedures, methodology or strategies that can be used to tackle the problems in a systematic way. Sometimes, the authors involved with Translation Studies have different approaches towards the concept of methodology used in translation, which is reflected on the use of different terminology. Scott-Tennent, Davies et al. (2000, p. 108) argue that translation strategies include “the steps, selected from a consciously known range of potential procedures, taken to solve a translation problem which has been consciously detected and resulting in a consciously applied solution.” Venuti (1998, p. 240) indicates that translation strategies “involve the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it”. He employs the concepts of domesticating and foreignizing to refer to translation strategies.

Newmark (1988, p. 81) uses a different terminology for strategies, and distinguishes between translation methods and translation procedures: “[w]hile translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language”. Among the translation methods, he (Newmark, 1988, pp. 44–45) lists: word-for-word translation, literal, faithful, semantic, free, idiomatic, communicative translation, and adaptation. These can be applied globally, while he (Newmark, 1988, p. 91) suggests the application of the following procedures when it comes to the local level: transference, naturalization, cultural, functional and/or descriptive equivalent, componential analysis, synonymy, through-translation, shifts or transpositions, modulation, recognized translation, compensation, paraphrase, couplets, and notes. In expressive texts, the unit of translation is likely to be small, as is the case in this novel, since words, rather than sentences, contain the finest nuances of meaning. For that reason, Newmark (1988) warns that “the expressive components of ‘expressive’ texts (unusual syntactic structures, collocations, metaphors, words peculiarly used, neologisms) are rendered closely, if not literally, but where they appear in informative and vocative texts, they are normalised or toned down (except in striking advertisements)” (p. 50).

For this study, Epstein's (2012) analysis of translation strategies is most relevant and applicable, since it is based on her corpus-based research into translating expressive language in children's literature from English into Swedish. Her (Epstein, 2012) research findings indicate that the most frequently used translation strategies were replacement, adaptation, retention, compensation and deletion. By replacement, she (Epstein, 2012) implies replacing the lexical unit in the source text, originally an expressive, with a lexical unit that does not have these features in the target text. Adaptation refers to the use of the lexical form in the target text with adding some changes, either to its form or spelling. Retention implies keeping the same form and meaning of the lexical unit in the target text, sometimes even in the exact form, which is then called direct retention. Compensation denotes employing the same form with a different meaning and deletion omitting the lexical unit in the target text altogether.

## 2. Methodology and data collection

To collect the data for this research, we have used the sixth book, *Cabin Fever* (2011), which belongs to the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book series, written and illustrated by Jeff Kinney, and its translations into three languages: German, and two Slavic languages, Croatian and Serbian:

- German (*Greggs Tagebuch 6: Keine Panik!* (2014), trans. by Dietmar Schmidt).
- Croatian (*Gregov dnevnik 6: Snježna groznica* (2016), trans. by Ivan Zorić).
- Serbian (*Dnevnik šonjavka 6: Praznična groznica* (2017), trans. by Miloš Mitić).

The choice of languages was determined by the author's working languages and the fact that it was interesting to see how expressive language will be dealt with in Slavic languages on the one hand and on the other, in German, as a family-related, but morphological different one.

The starting point in the analysis was the original text written in English, out of which we extracted the units for the analysis and then compared them to the translated versions of the original. The items that were selected for the corpus had to meet the following criteria, i.e. to be classified as expressives, following Crystal's (2010) and Epstein's (2012) description of expressive language:

- Wordplay (playing with any linguistic level: graphological/morphological/semantic or pragmatic/grammatical, as defined by Partington, 2009).
- Interjections and exclamations (which, as defined by Carter and McCarthy, 2006, indicate affective responses and reactions to the discourse).
- Onomatopoeic words, and speech acts and movement verbs containing alliteration or other sound effects (as defined by Crystal, 2010).
- Neologisms and nonsense words (as described in Epstein, 2012).

Some of the items were found exclusively in the main text, while the great majority of selected items were part of the cartoon, either to be found in the speech bubbles, or they accompanied the image represented by the drawing itself. The total of 54 items was selected in the book that has 217 pages. The analysis was qualitative and we used Epstein's (2012) classification of translation strategies.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Wordplay

The examples in the text that contained wordplay were found both in the main text (7 examples) and within the images / cartoons (5 examples). As a kind of creative use of language, wordplay is typically based on some ambiguity, which in this corpus usually implied playing with the graphological, semantic and extralinguistic elements, i.e. cultural aspects, as in the following examples that can be seen in Table 1. The most representative translation solutions used in the examples of wordplay are given in Table 1, in which the examples from the source text (ST) in English are given in the first column and then translation solutions in each of the target texts (TT) in the given languages.

*Santa's scout* is a doll that Greg's mother has put in the house and its main role is to monitor Greg's behaviour and demeanour during the pre-Christmas period. In English, its name carries alliteration but at the same time the meaning of the lexeme *scout* implies that the doll is so to say 'working for the opposite side, being sent to gather information'. This idea of spying is faithfully transferred in German, as can be seen in Table 1, example (1), since the translator used retention. In translations in Croatian and Serbian, the translators replaced the name, opting for an archaic name for Santa (in Serbian), or a well-known name of another dwarf character (in Croatian). This dwarf is familiar to Croatian readers, as it is a character in a fairy tale written by Ivana Brlić Mažuranić, a part of Croatian cultural heritage. Still, the semantic element of spying is lost both in Croatian and Serbian, even though the translators in these two languages focused on intertextuality and the culture-specific elements related to Christmas. As Eraković (2013, p. 790) argues, in cases in which the aims of both the source and target text are compatible, the translator can keep the intended purpose of the original. Our findings also corroborate the results of some other studies of translating names in children's literature. Zobenica (2015, p. 134) argues that translations of children's literature have to keep the same function as the original, including the translation of names.

Table 1. Examples of wordplay

Example	ST English	TT German	TT Croatian	TT Serbian
(1)	Santa's Scout	<i>Spion des Weihnachtsmannes</i> 'Santa's spy'	<i>Djedov domaći</i> 'Santa's dwarf'	<i>Božić-Batin patuljak</i> 'Santa's dwarf'
(2)	"Peace be with you" "Peas be with you"	<i>Friede sei mit dir</i> 'Peace be with you' <i>Frida sei mit dir</i> 'Frida be with you'	<i>Mir s tobom</i> 'Peace be with you' <i>Miris s tobom</i> 'Smell be with you'	<i>Mir s tobom</i> 'Peace be with you' <i>Sir s tobom</i> 'Cheese be with you'
(3)	Walkathon	<i>Walkathon</i>	<i>Hodaton</i>	<i>Šetaton</i>

A good example for wordplay is the phrase *peace be with you* (example (2) in Table 1). One character in the book mispronounces it, playing both with the cultural reference to religion and a typical spelling error made by children in English, due to the homophonic resemblance of *peace* and *peas*. All translators kept the rhyme, appreciating its humorous effect in the text. They tried to keep the phonetic/graphic element, as well as the same reference to religion in their semantic translation. In that context, their solutions preserve the same function of the original, however, they replaced the words so as to create the same rhyming effect in the target language. In German, the translator put the focus on graphic/phonetic play, creating the nonsense rhyme *Friede/Frida*, as in the ST (example (2), Table 1). Again, comparing two very similar languages, Croatian

and Serbian, it can be noticed that the translators resorted to different solutions, either retaining the phonetic/graphic elements and elaborating on the key word *peace* (in Croatian and Serbian *mir* and creating *miris* 'smell' (Croatian), or compensating it with a completely different word, as in Serbian, which creates additional humorous effect.

An interesting example in Table 1 is (3) *walkathon*, a creative neologism coined by the author. The translator into German resorted to direct retention, keeping it in the original form, probably due to the fact that pre-teenagers are quite familiar with anglicisms in German; this particular one can be easily recognizable in the target culture. In Croatian and Serbian, the translators opted for adaptation, changing the root of the neologism, by adding Croatian and Serbian words for walking. Nevertheless, they used different verbs, though verbs that belong to the same semantic and lexical field, such as *walking* and *strolling* in English.

### 3.2. Interjections and exclamations

Despite the assumption that discourse particles do not translate well (Fillmore, 1984, p. 128), which was supported by corpus-based contrastive studies, "words that lack systematic lexical correspondences in another language constitute a crucial and stimulating area for translation theory" (Aijmer, 2008, p. 95). Interjections and exclamations certainly fall in this group of words that have no clear grammatical function and that are typical of spoken discourse. Still, our contrastive corpus analysis indicates that translators in most cases resorted to providing a functional equivalent in their translation, using an interjection or exclamation with the same meaning and pragmatic function. Hence, as it can be seen in Table 2 that contains most typical translation solutions, the translators focused on keeping the function. However, it is interesting that by doing so, they frequently used adaptation: they played with the intensity of the intended pragmatic effect of the interjection changing the graphic representations (e.g. small vs. capital letters, adding exclamation marks or hyphens). Another method they employed was adding more vowels in the given exclamation, probably for the same reason: to intensify the effect and add to the dramatic moment in the story. Such changes can be noticed in almost all examples given in Table 2 (examples (4-9) for instance in (6) German 'JAUUL!' or Serbian 'AJOOJ!' as opposed to the exclamation in English *YOWCH*).

An interesting example in the data is the interjection *lol* (example (9), Table 2), which is, technically speaking an acronym, highly popular in computer-mediated communication, though mostly in written form. As a kind of Anglicism, *lol* has been globally used and familiar to younger generations regardless of their native language and probably for that reason the translators in target languages decided to keep it, changing only punctuation.

Table 2. Interjections and exclamations in the text

Example	ST English	TT German	TT Croatian	TT Serbian
(4)	Oops!	OOAH!	UPS! SRUŠ	Ups!
(5)	GAAA! Trip	UAAH! Stopler	U-U-UF! SPOTAK	AAA! Saplet
(6)	YOWCH	JAUUL!	AJAJ!	AJOOJ!
(7)	Yank scream	Zieh KREISCH!!!	AAAA! TRZ	Svis KUKUUUUUUUU!
(8)	WAAUGH!	AUUUUH! WAA-A-AAH!	AJOOJ AAAA! Skliz	AAUUF! VAAAAU!
(9)	LOL.	LOL.	LOL	LOL!

Potentially a very specific translational problem that could be noticed in the text were discourse markers that were part of the illustrations. Basically, these discourse markers represented some kind of elaborations of the activities represented by the drawings in the cartoons. The author used either onomatopoeic or regular lexical verbs to add to the expressiveness of the images or, to some extent, to add a kind of synaesthetic element to his two-dimensional images. By doing so, a specific formula used by the author could be recognized as the activity depicted by the image was followed usually with a double mentioning of the respective verb that followed the activity. In some examples these verbs were either onomatopoeic (for instance examples (13, 16, 17) in Table 2), or they contained alliteration (examples (10-11), Table 2) or assonance (example (17), Table 2) to add to the sound effect.

In most cases, the translators resorted to retention or adaptation, when they needed to make changes in the form, due to morphological differences among these languages. However, they tried to add to the overall expressive and stylistic effect by using truncated verb forms, as can be seen in example (10) in Table 3, or (13). This method represents a new way to mirror the morphological properties of English in languages that do not use conversion and typically have full inflection of verb forms. However, even in the source text it is sometimes difficult to determine whether these examples are nouns or verbs in the given context, as they are used without any other sentential element, and at the same time they are monosyllabic words. In this way, the translators have successfully avoided the need to mark the verbs with indicators of tense/aspect/full infinitive etc., depending on the grammatical and lexical properties of the TLs, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Text in the illustrations

Example	ST English	TT German	TT Croatian	TT Serbian
(10)	Skip skip	hüpf hüpf	hop hop	skoč skoč
(11)	Shake shake	rüttel schüttel	protres protres	zvec zvec
(12)	Slice	Schlitz	Rez	Sec
(13)	Scratch scratch	kratz kratz	greb greb	greb greb
(14)	Pat pat	Nicht weinen	tapš tapš	tap tap
(15)	Shake shake	schüttel schüttel	istres istres	drm drm
(16)	Crackle pop	knister plop	puc puc	krc-krc puc
(17)	Glug glug	gluck gluck gluck	guc guc guc	klok klok klok
(18)	Spray spray	pfft pfft	štrc štrc	prsk prsk
(19)	Trudge trudge	stapf stapf	gac gac	gac gac

In addition to that, it is interesting to compare Croatian and Serbian translation solutions, as these two languages are almost identical in terms of morphological behaviour, and lexical and semantic properties of the given verbs. Despite this fact, the translators often opted for a different onomatopoeic sound sequence to represent the activity represented by the illustrations. In some cases, the translators used a full lexical verb to denote *patting*, for example 'nicht weinen' in German (example (14), Table 3).

Typical onomatopoeic verbs were in most cases adapted to the sound system or spelling of the TL, and in most cases, repeating the given word implied the intensification of the expressive effect (e.g. (17) English *glug glug*, German 'gluck gluck gluck', Croatian 'guc guc guc', Serbian 'klok klok klok'). Also, in some examples, the translators decided to use the onomatopoeic verb instead of the regular one, even though they could have used the same verb as in the SL (e.g. (18) Engl. *Spray spray* vs. German 'pfft pfft'). It seems that when onomatopoeic sounds are concerned, as well as discourse markers, the translators oscillated between adaptation and free translation, feeling the urge to increase the intended perlocutionary effect of the source text and probably to add to the reading experience of the target readers of the text. Still, some of these suggestions are problematic for reading-out-aloud as it is quite difficult to pronounce some of the truncated verb forms in Croatian and Serbian such as: 'tapš tapš' (14) or 'prsk prsk' (18) (Table 3), since they contain too many consonants.

The results of this study also indicate that the author of the source text and the translators were well aware of the fact that this book was aimed at the global market. Regardless of the target language and culture, the potential readers will most probably watch the films based on the books and YouTube videos and in that way become part of the global community of fans who communicate and share their opinions and views online, of course, mostly in English, the global lingua franca. That fact puts an enormous pressure on the translators, especially in reference to translating expressive language. In a way, the translators are torn between the need to offer original and creative renderings of expressive language on the one hand, and on the other, the need to create a uniform translation devoid of too many culture-specific elements, since the translated book is supposed to be a bestseller in the target culture as well. At the same time, the translation needs to provide the readers the chance to understand all humour, intertextuality, allusions and puns, so that they can be part of the global community of fandom. A good illustration for this is (20) *Löded Diper*. Namely, in the novel, the main character's brother has a band called *Löded Diper*, and later, in real life, a very numerous fandom group and a platform on the Internet became named after the band. The subscribers and members of the group share funny memes and jokes from the books on that platform. Linguistically, the name represents an example of wordplay that results from playing with the graphological and phonological and at the same time semantic level. In addition to that, the name is actually found as a part of the picture in the book. All the translations indicate that the translators were well aware of this fact, since they tried to recreate the same humorous effect in the target languages (in German 'Folle Vindl', in Croatian 'Püne peline', in Serbian 'Pütni plen'). They kept the same elements that could lead to correct semantic reading, yet manipulated with scripts, languages (using the German 'ü' in Croatian in Serbian in line with the interlingual amalgam of the original) and spelling.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

Translating expressive language in children's literature is undoubtedly a demanding task, even more so when it is part of multimodal discourse. Its complexity is highly related to the fact that expressive language by itself includes various forms and meanings which require from the translator a careful, methodical and creative approach. As much as they need to take care of the language/culture and meaning-related problems, translators are also aware of the need to inspire and encourage children in the modern Internet era to read and enjoy the experience of reading.

Considering translation problems related to translating multimodal text suggested by O'Sullivan (2000), described in Section 1.2., it has to be mentioned that there were no examples of obvious cultural discrepancy

that resulted from a mismatch between the ST and TT and/or illustrations. In other words, all translators tried to find a solution to fit and match the text to the images, even though this was very challenging considering morphological and graphological features of the respective languages. In ST, most of the movement verbs used in images were monosyllabic, so in order to incorporate them in morphologically more complex languages, such as German, Croatian or Serbian, the translators used some creative adaptations, truncating the inflections and keeping the roots of the verbs. Furthermore, they retained the ratio of the text to illustrations, or when it comes to text itself, all examples of expressive language were kept in all translations.

In terms of culture-specific problems, it has to be mentioned that the text contains many examples of expressive language, such as wordplay for instance, which pivot on the interaction between language and culture. The fact that the source culture is in a way globally known and familiar to the prospective target readers in German, Croatian and Serbian made the translation process easier, particularly for the translator in German, who opted for direct retention more often than the translators in these two Slavic languages. In trying to preserve some culture-specific elements in their target languages, Croatian and Serbian translators sometimes used replacement. It is noteworthy that deletion was never used, nor was the text incoherent due to the mismatch between text and images.

In addition, the results of this study indicate that the translators focused on function and the stylistic effects of the text and for that reason, balanced between different translation strategies, mostly retention and adaptation. We found variation between the content and presentation of sound effects, which accounted for differences that arose between the lexical categories of sound effects. In terms of textual stylization, translators showed the tendency to keep the same format, changing punctuation or adding words to increase the intended perlocutionary effect. To summarise, it can be said that the translators of this novel reflected in their translations the author's use of global cultural elements, to cater for the international market.

## References

- Aijmer, K. (2008). Translating discourse particles: A case of complex translation. In G. Anderman, M. Rogers (Eds.) *Incorporating Corpora. The Linguist and the Translator* (95-116). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Allwood, J. (2002). Bodily communication dimensions of expression and content. In B. Granström, D. House, & I. Karlsson (Eds.) *Multimodality in language and speech system* (7-26). Dordrecht: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-2367-1\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-2367-1_2)
- Borodo, M. (2014). Multimodality, translation and comics. *Perspectives* 23.1, 22-41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2013.876057>
- Carter, R., McCarthy, M. (2006). *Cambridge grammar of English: A comprehensive guide: Spoken and written English grammar and usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2010). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Epstein, B. J. (2012). *Translating expressive language in children's literature: problems and solutions*. Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Eraković, B. (2013). Prevođenje knjiga za decu: problem strategije. In I. Živančević-Sekeruš (Ed.) *Encounter of Culture 2*. ed. (789-799). Novi Sad: Faculty of Philosophy.
- Fillmore, C. (1984). Remarks on contrastive pragmatics. In J. Fisiak (Ed.) *Contrastive Linguistics: Prospects and Problems* (119-143). Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter 1984. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110824025.119>
- Hönig, H. G., Kussmaul, P. (1982). *Strategie der Übersetzung. Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch*. Tübingen: Gunther Narr Verlag.
- House, J. (1997). *Translation Quality Assessment*. Tübingen: Gunther Narr Verlag.
- Kaindl, K. (2004). Multimodality in the Translation of Humour in Comics. In E. Ventola, C. Cassily, & M. Kaltenbacher (Eds.) *Perspectives on Multimodality* (173-193). Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ddcs.6.12kai>
- Kinney, J. (2011). *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever*. New York: Abrams Books.
- Kinney, J. (2014). *Greg's Tagebuch 6 Keine Panik!* (Trans. by D. Schmidt). Köln: Baumhaus Verlag.
- Kinney, J. (2016). *Gregov dnevnik 6: Snježna groznica* (Trans. by I. Zorić). Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
- Kinney, J. (2017). *Dnevnik šonjavka 6: Praznična groznica* (Trans. by M. Mitić). Beograd: Dereta.
- Kress, G., Leeuwen, T. v. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Arnold; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kučiš, V., Majhenič, S. (2018). Cultural and stress-related manifestations of political controversial language in the European Parliament from the view of interpreters. *Babel* 64.1, 33-62. <https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.00024.kuc>
- Kučiš, V. (2016). *Translatologija u teoriji i praksi*. Zagreb: Hrvatsko komunikološko društvo, Nonacom.
- Lathey, G. (2010). *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature: Invisible Story Tellers*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Lathey, G. (2016). *Translating Children's Literature*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *Approaches to Translation*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall.
- O'Connell, E. (2006). Translating for Children. In G. Lathey (Ed.) *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader* (15-25). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters; Toronto: Buffalo
- Oittinen, R. (1993). *I Am Me – I Am Other: On the Dialogics of Translating for Children*. Tampere: University of Tampere.
- Oittinen, R. (2000). *Translating for Children*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.



- O'Sullivan, E. (2000). *Kinderliterarische Komparatistik*. Heidelberg: Universitätslag C. Winter.
- Partington, A. (2009). A linguistic account of wordplay: The lexical grammar of punning. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41.9, 1794-1809. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.09.025>
- Pym, A. (2004). *The moving text*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Reiss, K. (2000). Type, Kind and Individuality of Text: Decision making in translation. In S. Kitron, L. Venuti (Eds.) *The Translation Studies Reader* (160-171). London, New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1772491>
- Ross, A. (1998). *The Language of Humour*. London: Routledge.
- Snell-Hornby, M. (1995). *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*. Revised edition. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Scott-Tennent, C., Davies, M. G., Torras, F. R. (2000). Translation Strategies and Translation Solutions. In A. Beeby, D. Ensinger, & M. Presas (Eds.) *Investigating Translation: Selected papers from the 4th International Congress on Translation, Barcelona, 1998* (107-116). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.32.14sco>
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Venuti, L. (1998). Strategies of translation. In M. Baker (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of translation studies* (240-244). London, New York: Routledge.
- Vermeer, H. J. (1996). *A Skopos Theory of Translation: (Some Arguments For and Against)*. Heidelberg: TEXT-conTEXT-Verlag.
- Zanettin, F. (2008). The translation of Comics as Localization: On Three Italian Translations of La piste des Navajos. In F. Zanettin (Ed.) *Comics in translation* (200-219). Manchester: St. Jerome 2008.
- Zobenica, N. (2015). Funkcionalni pristup prevođenju imena u dečijim knjigama Mihaela Endea. *Filolog* 12, 126-136.