

REPURPOSED TEXTS AND TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF JOSÉ SARAMAGO'S *EL SILENCIO DEL AGUA* IN TURKISH

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ABSTRACT: This article focuses on the Turkish translation of a picturebook by Portuguese Nobel laureate author José Saramago, first published in 2012 after the author's death. The source text for this translation was a Spanish picturebook for children, *El Silencio del Agua*, created by the Barcelona-based publisher Libros del Zorro Rojo in 2011 by publishing an excerpt from the Spanish translation of Saramago's book *As Pequenas Memórias* (*Las Pequeñas Memorias*, 2007) as an illustrated stand-alone children's book. This represents a repurposing of the work since both *As Pequenas Memórias* and *Las Pequeñas Memorias* targeted an adult readership. The Turkish picturebook, translated from the "original" Spanish picturebook, was published with the same illustrations by Manuel Estrada. Meanwhile, the Portuguese work *As Pequenas Memórias* had also been translated into Turkish, much before the publication of the picturebook, by another translator directly from Portuguese. In this study, the two Turkish translations (the Turkish picturebook and the equivalent passage from the Turkish translation of the ultimate source text) are compared to find out how repurposing a text originally written for adult readership as children's literature influences its translation. The case of *El Silencio del Agua* in Turkish also raises interesting questions about how the cultural status of author and translator affects translation, as well as touching on current debates taking place in the spheres of children's literature, retranslation, indirect translation, and reception studies.

KEYWORDS: Repurposed Texts, Retranslation, Indirect Translation, Picturebook, Children's Literature

1. Introduction

The 1998 Nobel Prize in Literature winner, Portuguese author José Saramago, is not known as a writer of children's literature. In the first paragraph of *A Maior Flor do Mundo* (2001, p. 1), the only work he wrote for children published with illustrations by João Caetano, Saramago actually admits that he does not know how to write children's stories because "the stories for children should be written with very simple words" and he lacks the patience to do so.

Nevertheless, only seven months after the death of Saramago in 2011, the picturebook¹ *El Silencio del Agua* [The Silence of the Water] with illustrations by Manuel Estrada, was published in Spanish by the Spanish publisher of illustrated books, Libros del Zorro Rojo. This 28-page-long large-format (21 x 28 cm) picturebook, with a hardback cover and large fonts, contains a childhood memory of Saramago, extracted from his book *As Pequenas Memórias* published in 2006. The text, spread in verses across the pages, describes the day Saramago almost caught a big fish in the river when he stayed with his grandparents as a child (Figure 1). The fish breaks the fishing rod, and Saramago,

¹ This term is used in this study because in *El Silencio del Agua* the story is told "mainly with images, and the words have a secondary role" (Shulevitz in Oittinen, 2020, p. 15). This is despite that the fact that it does not fully comply with 32-page format typical of picturebooks (Billman, 2002, p. 48 in Oittinen et al, 2018, p. 17), and by having a higher word-image ratio.

determined to catch the fish, runs back home to mend the rod, before returning to the riverside where he stays until evening. In the end, he fails to catch the fish, but somehow feels satisfied because the fish “has his mark on it”.



Figure 1. A page from the picturebook *El Silencio del Agua*.

As Pequenas Memórias was translated into Spanish by Saramago's wife Pilar Del Rio and published by the Spanish publisher Editorial Alfaguara in 2007 with the title *Las Pequeñas Memorias*. It was from this translation that the excerpted text was taken. Since the publisher Libros del Zorro Rojo is the copyright holder of the picturebook, it has served as the ultimate source text for translations and publications in other languages that have been done or might be done in the future. On the copyright page of the Portuguese version *O Silêncio da Água*, which was published in the same year as the Spanish picturebook, the readers are informed that the text was taken from *As Pequenas Memórias*, while the illustrations copyright is held by Libros del Zorro Rojo. The Portuguese version is not included in the analysis in this study because it is not one of the source texts used for the translations into Turkish.

The analysis of this excerpt and its translations is quite interesting in that, although the text within *As Pequenas Memórias* was written and published for an adult readership, its picturebook version in Spanish has a quite different character. Firstly, the narrative voice changes through the inclusion of Manuel Estrada's illustrations in the Spanish picturebook. While, in the Portuguese book, it is the adult José Saramago who is talking about his childhood, in the picturebook, the illustrations imply that we are hearing a child talking about the day he went fishing in the river, and we experience the story through his voice. Secondly, the picturebook is listed in the *infantil* catalogue, and not in the *juvenil/adulto*

catalogue, of the publisher Libros del Zorro Rojo,² which indicates that it was intended for a young child readership. Bookstores also list this book in the children’s section.³ Nevertheless, the story was directly transferred from Pilar del Rio’s Spanish translation of *As Pequenas Memórias*, without any sort of simplification, adaptation and/or modification for the child reader, but with only a one-word addition to clarify the subject of a sentence. Table 1 demonstrates the first sentence of the text excerpted from the ultimate source text *As Pequenas Memórias* (hereinafter referred to as “the Portuguese book”), its Spanish translation *Las Pequeñas Memórias* (hereinafter referred to as “the Spanish book”), and the picturebook *El Silencio del Agua* (hereinafter referred to as “the Spanish picturebook”), where the one-word addition can be seen. Apart from this addition, the texts in the Spanish book and the Spanish picturebook are exactly the same.

<p>Portuguese book <i>As Pequenas Memórias</i> José Saramago (Editorial Caminho, 2006)</p>	<p>“Tinha eu ido com os meus petrechos a pescar na foz do Almonda, chamávamos-lhe a «boca do rio», onde por uma estreita língua de areia se passava nessa época ao Tejo, e ali estava, já o dia fazia as suas despedidas, sem que a bóia de cortiça tivesse dado sinal de qualquer movimento subaquático, quando, de repente, sem ter passado antes por aquele tremor excitante que denuncia os tenteios do peixe mordiscando o isco, mergulhou de uma só vez nas profundas, quase me arrancando a cana das mãos.”</p>
<p>Spanish book <i>Las Pequeñas Memórias</i> (Translation by Pilar del Rio) (Alfaguara, 2007)</p>	<p>“Había salido con mis pertrechos a pescar en la desembocadura del Almonda, lo que llamábamos la «boca del río», donde por una estrecha lengua de arena se pasaba en esa época al Tajo, y allí estaba, ya el día hacía sus despedidas, sin que la boya de corcho hubiera dado ninguna señal de movimiento subacuático, cuando, de repente, sin haber pasado antes por ese temblor excitante que anuncia los tientos del pez mordiendo el anzuelo, se sumergió de golpe en las profundidades, casi arrancándome la caña de las manos.”</p>
<p>Spanish picturebook <i>El Silencio Del Agua</i> (Libros del Zorro Rojo, 2011) *Taken from <i>Las Pequeñas Memorias</i> Illustrations: Manuel Estrada</p>	<p>(1)“Había salido con mis pertrechos a pescar en la desembocadura del Almonda, lo que llamábamos la «boca del río», donde por una estrecha lengua de arena se pasaba en esa época al Tajo, (2) y allí estaba, ya el día hacía sus despedidas, sin que la boya de corcho hubiera dado ninguna señal de movimiento subacuático, (3) cuando, de repente, sin haber pasado antes por ese temblor excitante que anuncia los tientos del pez mordiendo el anzuelo, la boya se sumergió de golpe en las profundidades, casi arrancándome la caña de las manos.”⁴</p>

Table 1. Excerpts from the Portuguese ultimate source text, its Spanish translation, and the Spanish picture book.

The editor of the Spanish picturebook, Alejandro García Schnetzer (2012) reports that in his picturebook projects, he usually takes, as a starting point, works aimed for an adult audience, which he moves to the world of young readers through illustrations because he thinks that “the child and youth categories are fluid”.⁵ Schnetzer’s choice of keeping the

² Available at: <https://www.casadellibro.com/libro-el-silencio-del-agua/9788492412501/1828944> (Accessed: 19 October 2020).

³ On the other hand, in Portugal, the Portuguese picturebook is in the national reading list for the fifth graders.

⁴ The numbers indicate the page division in the picturebook.

⁵ My translation.

original texts untouched, without adjusting them to the needs of child readers and attracting the child audience only through illustrations brings to mind, at first glance, crossover literature (Beckett, 2009) and crossover picturebooks (Beckett, 2012 in 2018), i.e. works that are meant to be read by readers of all ages.⁶ However, in the case of our Spanish picturebook, an excerpt of a book originally written for adult readership gains another readership through being republished with illustrations as children’s literature. In other words, this text functions separately in the adult literary system (where it addresses the adult readership intended by the ultimate source text, the Portuguese book) and in the children’s literary system (where it addresses a child readership as a picturebook). Although picturebooks for children are usually intended to be read aloud by adults to young children (Oittinen et. al., 2018 in Oittinen, 2020; Sezzi, 2010), thus targeting a type of dual readership, the main addressee is actually children.⁷ Besides, as Oittinen (2020) suggests, being read-aloud can bring about some challenges to the translator’s work such as rhyming. This fact, and how this text has crossed into children’s literature, are important to understand the factors influencing the choices of translators and translation of children’s literature.

Therefore, this paper compares two Turkish translations of this childhood memory (one contained in the stand-alone picturebook and the other in the Turkish translation of the Portuguese book) in order to show how reusing a(n) (excerpt of) work with a different purpose and for a different readership affects the translation and the translator’s choices. It also discusses the terminology to be used to describe the crossing-over process of the text and its position as a source text, as well as analyzing the case from the viewpoint of indirect translation and retranslation. Finally, it offers a glimpse of the way the picturebook was received in Turkey.

2. The story *el Silencio del Agua* in Turkish

The Portuguese book was first translated into Turkish by the translator İnci Kut and published by the publisher Can in 2008 with the title *Küçük Anılar: Çocukluk ve İlkgençlik Anıları* (Little Memories: Memories of Childhood and Early Adolescence). On the copyright page, the readers are informed that the book was translated from the portuguese original. Ten years later, in 2018, the same translation was republished by the publisher Kırmızı Kedi. Henceforth this book will be referred as “the Turkish book”.

The Spanish picturebook, on the other hand, was translated into Turkish from Spanish by the translator Pınar Savaş and published with the same illustrations by Manuel Estrada, under the title *Suların Sessizliği* (The Silence of the Waters) by the publisher Kırmızı Kedi in

⁶ The most well-known example of crossover literature is the Harry Potter series, which actually incited the modern crossover literature fever, although the practice of texts being adopted by adults and young readers at the same time is not new at all (Beckett, 2009).

⁷ On the other hand, Shavit (1986, p. 66), who uses the term “ambivalent texts” to refer to texts that “belong simultaneously to more than one system and consequently are read differently (though concurrently), by at least two groups of readers”, goes on to suggest that in ambivalent texts children are “much more an excuse for the text rather than its genuine addressee” (Shavit, 1986, p. 71) – the adult reader.

2012. Henceforth, this book will be referred as “the Turkish picturebook”. On the copyright page of the Turkish picturebook, the reader is informed that the original title of the book is *El Silencio del Agua* (that is to say, the Spanish picturebook). It is important to mention that this storybook is listed in the children and juvenile section of the publishing house’s catalogue, and on both front and back covers there is the emblem of Kırmızı Kedi Çocuk, the children’s literature branch of the publisher. On the back cover of the picturebook, it reads:

Suların Sessizliği, okumaya yeni başlayan çocuklara edebiyatın keyifli dünyasıyla tanışma fırsatı sunuyor.

[The Silence of the Waters offers children who have recently started to read an opportunity to meet the pleasant world of literature.] (My translation)

This information alone demonstrates that the picturebook has also been published in Turkey with a single audience in mind, namely children. Considering that children start reading at the age of 7 in Turkey at the latest (primary schools actually accept students as early as 5 years of age), this picturebook targets young children. A quick research on the websites of other bookstores also shows that the Turkish picturebook is listed in the children’s literature category, and sometimes in the preschool (6-month – 5-year-old) catalogue.⁸

As mentioned before, in the Spanish picturebook the story was taken directly from the Spanish translation of the Portuguese book and transferred to the new format without any alterations or adaptations. However, in Turkish, the excerpt in question is translated differently in book and the picturebook, by two different translators working from different source texts and source languages. The relationship between the source texts and translations can be seen below in Figure 2.

⁸ Available at: <https://www.dr.com.tr/Kitap/Sularin-Sessizligi/Jose-Saramago/Cocuk-ve-Genclik/Okul-Oncesi-6-Ay-5-Yas/Egitim-Etkinlik-Kitaplari/urunno=0000000416303> (Accessed: 10 April 2021); Available at: <https://www.idefix.com/Kitap/Sularin-Sessizligi/Jose-Saramago/Cocuk-ve-Genclik/Okul-Oncesi-6-Ay-5-Yas/Egitim-Etkinlik-Kitaplari/urunno=0000000416303> (Accessed: 10 April 2021).

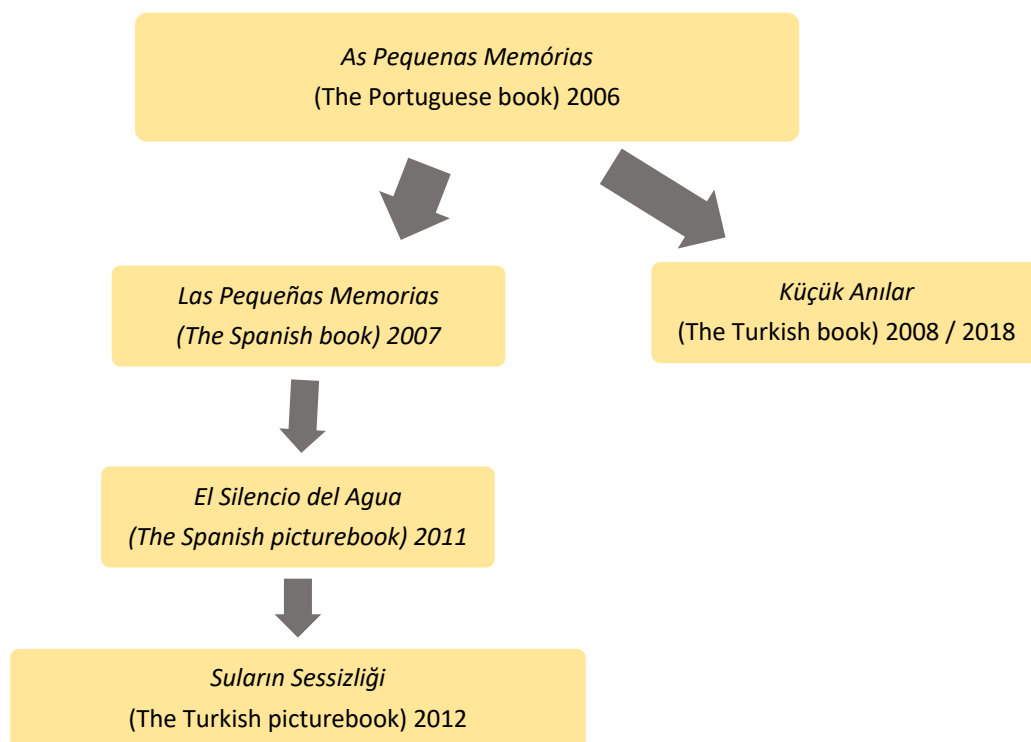


Figure 2. The source texts of the translations in Turkish.

2.1 Comparison and analysis of the translations

In this section, the two Turkish translations (that is, the excerpt in the Turkish book and in the Turkish picturebook) are compared and analyzed in terms of textual structure and translation choices.

The comparison of the first paragraph provides a great deal of information about how the fact of having different source texts, and targeting adult or child readership, influences the translation outcome. As can be seen in Example 1, the first thing that attracts attention is the division of the long first sentence of the story with full stops in the Turkish picturebook.⁹ While the Turkish book follows the structure of the ultimate source text in the Portuguese book, in the Turkish picturebook this long sentence is divided into pages, one sentence for each illustrated two-page spread, just as they are divided in the Spanish picturebook.¹⁰ The Turkish picturebook differs from the Spanish picturebook, however, in terms of the use of full stops instead of commas to divide sentences as in the latter.

Example 1

The Turkish book:

“Elimde balık tutma gereçlerimle **Almonda**’nın öteki suyla birleştiği yere gitmişim, “ırmak ağzı” dediğimiz yerde kumdan dar bir uzantının üzerinden o dönemde **Tejo**’ya geçilirdi, işte orada duruyordum, gün ışığı artık çekip gitmek üzereydi ve oltanın mantarı suyun altında en küçük bir hareket belirtisi göstermemişti, sonra birdenbire, iğneye takılan balığın çırpınışlarını

⁹ The numbers in the excerpts indicate the page division of the story in the stand-alone picturebook.

¹⁰ The source texts can be seen in Table 1.

bildiren o heyecanlı titreyiřten eser olmadan, oltayı neredeyse elimden söküp alırcasına suyun derinliklerine dalıverdi.”

[With my fishing tools in my hand, I had gone to the place where Almonda merges with the other water, in the place that we called “mouth of the river”, over a narrow extension of sand, one would pass to Tejo in that period, there I was standing, the daylight was now about to go away, and the bobber hadn’t shown the smallest sign of movement under the water, then suddenly, without any trace of that exciting vibration announcing the convulsions of the fish caught to the hook, it dived to the depth of the water, almost ripping the rod off my hand.] (My translation)

The Turkish picturebook

(1) “Oltta takımı kapıp **Almonda Nehri’nin** döküldüğü yere, balık avlamaya gittim, biz oraya, “akarsuyun ağızı” deriz. Hem **Tejo Nehri’ne** de geçilirdi o zamanlar kumdan, daracık bir dilden. (2) Ve çoğunlukla orada, öylece, gün veda edip giderdi, oltanın mantarı suyun altında hareket olduğunu gösteren bir işaret vermeden. (3) Sonra, birden, oltanın mantarı dalıverdi derinliklere, hissetmemiřti çünkü daha önce hiç, oltanın iğnesini yutan balığın nasıl çirpindiğini, neredeyse kamışı bile kopartıp alıyordu elimden.”

[Grabbing my fishing rod set, I went to the place where the River Almonda flows into [the sea], we call there “the mouth of the stream”. Also, there one would pass [passive sentence] to the River Tejo from a very narrow spit of sand. And mostly there, the day would just bid farewell and go without the bobber giving a sign that shows there is movement under the water. Then, suddenly, the bobber plunged into the depths, because it had never felt how a fish swallowing the hook flounders, almost breaking the rod off my hand.] (My translation)

The linguistic structures are also noticeably different between the two translations. In the Turkish picturebook, inverted sentence structures¹¹ are widely used while the Turkish book mostly follows the canonical sentence structure (See Example 2). This syntactical choice enables the story in the Turkish picturebook to gain a more poetic fable-like character, since inverted sentences are commonly used in Turkish poetic language (Küçük et al, 2017).

Example 2

The Portuguese book:

Puxei, fui puxado, mas a luta não durou muito.

The Turkish book:

Oltayı çektim, o da beni çekti, ama bu **mücadele** fazla uzun **sürmedi**.

[The rod I pulled, it also me pulled, but this **struggle** much long **didn’t last**] (word-for-word translation)

[I pulled the rod, it pulled me, too, but this struggle didn’t last long] (My translation)

The Spanish picturebook:

¹¹ In Turkish canonical sentence structure, the predicate is always placed at the end of the sentence. Sentences where the predicate is located other than at the end of the sentence are called inverted sentences.

(3) Tiré, fui tirando, pero la lucha no duró mucho

The Turkish picturebook:

(3) Bir ben çektim, bir o çektii. Ama fazla uzun **sürmedi mücadele**.

[One I pulled, one it pulled. But much long **didn't last the struggle**.] (word-for-word translation)

[I pulled it, it pulled me. But the struggle didn't last long.] (My translation)

Another example in this category can be seen in Example 3 where the two renditions differ greatly both from their source texts and from each other.

Example 3

The Portuguese book:

Imagine-se agora o meu desespero.

[Literally “Now let my desperation/despair be imagined”]

The Turkish book:

Şimdi siz düşünebiliyor musunuz benim ne hale geldiğimi?

[Now can you [pl] think what state I got into?]

The Spanish picturebook:

(4) Imagínense ahora mi desesperación.

The Turkish picturebook:

(4) **varın** siz düşünün nasıl bir umutsuzluğa kapıldığımı.

[come, you [pl] think what kind of despair I got into.]

Whereas both translation strategies aim to engage the reader actively, inviting them to think or imagine the extent of the writer's despair by asking a question in the Turkish book and using the phrase “varın siz düşünün” (come, you think [pl imperative]), the translator's choice of a more vernacular expression in the latter creates a more conversational tone in the storybook.

The difference in the lexical choices used by the translators also catches our attention. First of all, at the beginning of the story, we see that the translator of the Turkish picturebook felt the need to clarify that Almonda and Tejo are rivers by adding the word *Nehir* (River) to provide information and context for child readers that would not have this geographical knowledge (See Example 1), whereas there is no such addition in the Turkish book targeting adult readers.

The second example is related to the translation of vocabulary related to family relations. In the Portuguese book, most of Saramago's childhood memories take place at his maternal grandparents' house. As can be seen in Example 4, Saramago refers to the house as *casa dos meus avós* (house of my grandparents), and it is rendered with its equivalent in Spanish (*casa de mis abuelos*) in the Spanish translation. The translator of the Turkish book, because it is mentioned earlier in the book that they are Saramago's mother's

parents (Saramago, 2014, p. 7), uses the phrase *anneannemlerin evi*. In Turkish *anneanne* means maternal grandmother, and the plural form is used here to refer to the grandmother and the grandfather.¹² On the other hand, in the Spanish picturebook, there is no context enabling the translator to know about these family relations. As a result, the translator chooses to refer to the house as *dedemle ninemin evi* (the house of my grandpa and granny). The translator's word choice for grandmother is also curious because instead of using the words *anneanne* (maternal grandmother) or *babaanne* (paternal grandmother), she opts for '*nine*' which is a neutral word used mostly in tales to refer to grandmothers.

Example 4

The Portuguese book:

Ora, a asa dos **meus avós** ficava a mais de um quilómetro do lugar onde me encontrava, e era preciso **ser pateta** de todo (ou ingénuo, simplesmente) para ter a disparatada esperança de que o **barbo** iria ficar ali à espera, entretendo-se a digerir não só o isco mas também o anzol e o chumbo, e já agora a bóia, enquanto a nova pitança não chegava.

The Turkish book:¹³

İyi güzel de, **anneannemlerin** evi benim bulunduğum yerden bir kilometreden fazla uzaklıktaydı; o bıyıklı **sirozun**, yeni tayını gelene kadar, yalnızca balık yemini değil aynı zamanda iğneyle kurşunu, hatta o arada mantarı da sindirmekle vakit geçirerek beni bekliyor olacağı gibi saçma bir umuda kapılmak için insanın hepten **salak** olması (ya da en azından saf olması) gerekirdi.

[It is good and nice, but, **my maternal grandmothers'** house was more than one kilometer away from where I was; one must have been **fool** (or at least naïve) to be carried away with a nonsensical hope that the whiskered **cirrrosis** (carp) would wait for me there digesting not only the fish feed but at the same time the hook, the sinker and the bobber] (My translation)

The Spanish picturebook:

(7) Pues bien, la casa de **mis abuelos** estaba a más de un kilómetro del lugar donde me encontraba, y era necesario **ser tonto** del todo (o ingenuo, simplemente) para tener la disparatada esperanza de que el **barbo** iba a estar allí esperándome, entretenién dose en digerir no sólo el cebo sino también el anzuelo y el plomo, y ya de paso la boya, mientras la nueva pitanza no llegaba.

The Turkish picturebook:

(7) **Dedemle ninemin** eviyle kıyısında oturduğum ırmağın arası bir kilometreden fazladır. O bıyıklı **sazan** balığının orada kalıp beni bekleyeceği gibi saçma bir umuda kapılmak için

¹² In Turkish, the names or nouns affixed with a plural suffix (-IAr) can be used to refer to a group in certain cases. To illustrate, in this example, if the emphasis was on the grandfather, the translator would probably choose to say *dedemlerin evi* (my grandfathers' house) still referring to the house of the grandparents, or if it was the paternal grandparents' house and the emphasis was on the grandmother, the translation would be *babaannemlerin evi* (the house of my paternal grandmothers).

¹³ In this example, the fish "barbo" (whiskered carp in English) is translated wrongly as "siroz" (cirrhosis) by the translator of the Turkish book while the word should be "siraz". The fish has a few different names in Turkish and "bıyıklı siraz" and "bıyıklı sazan" are two of them. The mistake can of course be a result of a typographical error as well.

tümden **aptal** (ya da sadece saf) olmak gerekir, çünkü ufukta yiyebileceği yeni bir şey görünmediğine göre sadece yemi değil, iğneyi, kurşunu ve hatta mantarı da sindirerek oyalanmazdı ya.

[It is more than one kilometer between the house of my **grandpa and granny**, and the river on the side of which I was sitting. To be carried away with a nonsensical hope to that that whiskered **carp** would wait for me there, it is necessary to be an **idiot** (or only naïve), because given that something new that it can eat isn't seen in the horizon, he wouldn't idle around digesting not only the feed, [but] also the hook, the sinker and even the bobber [exclamation indicating confirmation]] (My translation)

A similar tendency is shown in Example 5 where the translator of the Turkish picturebook chooses to translate *una bestia corpulenta* as *iri yarı bir canavar* (a big and burly monster) while the same phrase *uma besta corpulenta* is translated as *çok iri bir balık* (a very corpulent fish) in the Turkish book, omitting the word *besta*. Again, the use of the word *canavar* (monster) is particularly well suited to the voice of the child narrator in the picturebook.

Example 5

The Portuguese book:

Aquele barbo tinha vivido muito, devia ser, pela força, **uma besta corpulenta**, mas de certeza não morreria de velho, alguém o pescou num outro dia qualquer.

The Turkish book:

O bıyıklı siroz çok uzun yaşamıştı, o kadar güçlü olmasına bakılırsa **çok iri bir balık** olmalıydı, ama eceliyle ölmeyeceği kesindi, günün birinde birisi onu avlayacaktı.

[That whiskered cirrhosis (carp) had lived for long, looking at his being that strong, he must have been a **very corpulent fish**, but it was certain that he wouldn't die a natural death, someday someone would hunt it.] (My translation)

The Spanish picturebook:

(11) Aquel barbo había vivido mucho, debía de ser, por la fuerza que demostró, **una bestia corpulenta**, pero seguro que no moriría de viejo, alguien lo pescaría cualquier otro día.

The Turkish picturebook:

(11) O bıyıklı sazan belli ki çok yaşamış, ömrü gereğinden uzun olmuş, gücünden belli, **iri yarı bir canavar** o, ama eminim ki ölümü yaşlanmaktan olmayacak, er ya da geç biri tutacak onu.

[It is clear that whiskered carp had lived a lot, it's obvious from his strength, he is a big and burly monster, but I am sure that his death won't be of old age, sooner or later someone will catch it.] (My translation)

Finally, another significant detail regarding the lexical choices of the translators is also shown in the Example 4 (given above). The phrase *ser pateta* in the Portuguese book is translated as *salak olmak* while its Spanish translation *ser tonto* in the Spanish picturebook is rendered as *aptal olmak*. The online dictionary of the TDK (Turkish Language Institution)

defines the word *salak* as “someone who is perceived to be ignorant, erratic, and naive based on their clothes, speech, and behaviour” while the word *aptal* denotes “one with lack of intelligence”.¹⁴ Although both translators have opted for stronger adjectives with a more negative meaning than the ones in the source texts, the use of *aptal* in the standalone picturebook is curious since this word would not usually be expected in books addressing young children because of their insulting nature in Turkish.

3. Discussion

3.1 *The picturebook as a repurposed text and its translation*

As explained above, the excerpt studied in this article was originally written for an adult readership and continues to exist in the adult literary system while at the same time being turned into a picturebook targeting child audience. Such processes in children’s literature and picturebook studies are commonly described as *adaptation*, *recycling* and *repackaging* (cf. Beckett, 2009; Coillie and McMartin, 2020; Klingberg, 1986; Korzeniowska, 2020; Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2018; Lathey, 2012; O’Sullivan, 2005), usually disregarding the difference between modified and unmodified texts. However, the concepts *adaptation* and *recycling* include the modification and alteration of essential aspects of the source text in order to tailor it to the needs and expectations of the target audience, system and culture (for adaptation Munday, 2009; for recycling Korzeniowska, 2020). In contrast, the excerpt in our case has been appropriated without any alterations or modifications, which is an important detail. On the other hand, Beckett (2009) uses the term *repackaging* to describe various processes ranging from only changing the title and/or cover to excerpting a text from a larger work and publishing it with illustrations, without differentiating between modified and unmodified texts. Such general use of the notion of *repackaging*, however, undermines the power of illustrations single-handedly to change the voice and narrative at significant levels, which is what happens in our case.

As none of these concepts do justice to the process that led to the creation of the Spanish picturebook, I suggest defining this work as a *repurposed text*, based on the concept of “repurposed content” used in media studies (see Erdal, 2009; Srisaracam, 2019) to describe a way of creating cross-media content by using the same content on different platforms taking into consideration the norms of new platforms and new audiences (Srisaracam 2019, p. 223).¹⁵ In our case, Schnetzer took this piece of text from the Spanish translation of the Portuguese book and repurposed it as a children’s story by printing it as a large-format illustrated picturebook. It is through this repurposing that the excerpt from the Spanish translation and the same text within the Portuguese original exists in two different literary systems, representing two different genres, and targeting two different audiences.

¹⁴ My translation. Source: TDK. Available at: <https://sozluk.gov.tr> (Accessed: 16 January 2021).

¹⁵ Taking screenshots from television clips and placing them alongside text on a news website is given as an example of such a practice (Srisaracam, 2019, pp. 195-196). In a different context, Sallis (2015) describes how he repurposed a research text (an ethnodramatic play written for his doctoral dissertation) by performing it for a new audience.

Being read-aloud brings about certain readability constraints to writing and translating picturebooks such as repetitions, alliterations, onomatopoeias, line-breaks and a general rhythm (Oittinen et al, 2018, pp. 71-73). Although the text in the Spanish picturebook does not have such read-aloud characteristics, it is spread across the pages in verse-like format. This spread of the text in the Spanish picturebook together with the illustrations seems to have influenced the translator's choices. When the Turkish picturebook is read aloud, the narrative indeed sounds more poetic and tale-like with the translator's syntactic and lexical choices as shown in the examples. In a personal communication, the translator herself told me that she remembers having tried to create rhymes because there were rhymes in the source picturebook.¹⁶ However, considering it has been a long time since she translated the book, it is possible that she misremembers this detail, and that her choices actually resulted from targeting a child audience.

Nevertheless, as the examples demonstrate, targeting a child readership has not led the translator to try to adapt the language to the linguistic needs of the targeted audience, which is a quite young age group as explained before. The translator's use of a more vulgar word (*aptal*) to render *ser tonto* is the most visible part where we can see it. The translator of the picturebook told me that she does not think the language should be softened for the child reader. According to her, children already use slang and bad words, so they do not need to be protected from such expressions. However, the below quote suggests that the translator did not know or did not consider that the source text was actually a repurposed text originally aimed for adults:

(...) çok büyük bir yazarın çocuk kitabını gördüğü gözle görmeye çalıştım sanırım. Yani Saramago aptal'ı anlayacaklarını düşünüyorsa ben kim oluyorum da başka bir sözcük seçiyorum gibi bir duygum da var tabii.

[(...) I guess I tried to see from the viewpoint of a very great author as he sees the children's book. I mean, of course, I also have a feeling like if Saramago thinks they will understand (the word) "idiot", who am I to choose another word.] (My translation)

The translator claims that she used only the Spanish picturebook as the source text of her translation. Although she says that the author's being a Nobel laureate did not influence her decisions, her defining Saramago "a very great author" and, in a sense, choosing to be loyal to the author cannot be separated from the fact that Saramago has a canonized status as a Nobel prize winner.¹⁷ Therefore, we see here that the translator's decision not to comply with the norms of children's literature in Turkey such as by avoiding complicated sentence structures, words, or slang (see Dönmezler, 2019; Elçin, 2018; Erten, 2012; Karagöz, 2018; Meral, 2016; Sağlam, 2009; Yazıcı et al, 2018) results from the

¹⁶ WhatsApp communication with the translator of the Turkish picturebook, Suların Sessizliği, on 13 April 2021.

¹⁷ Saramago's status in Turkey is shown by the fact that 19 out of the 27 books by him published in the country had already been translated into Turkish by the time the Turkish picturebook was published.

author's prestige, rather than from a consideration of an all-ages readership as might occur in crossover literature (Beckett, 2009; Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2018).

This attitude on the part of the translator also seems to be in tune with the editorial policy. The editor of two other picturebooks of Saramago from the same publishing house (*A Maior Flor do Mundo – Dünyanın En Büyük Çiçeği* and *O Lagarto – Kertenkele*) said in an interview:

Çocuk kitabı çevirilerinin diğer çevirilerden çok farkı yok aslında. Orijinal metne sadık kalarak Türkçeleştiriyoruz. Sadece çok küçük yaş grubunda daha kısa ve sade cümleler, günümüzde kullandığımız kelimeler ve doğru cümle yapıları kullanmaya özen gösteriyoruz. (Özalp, 2020)¹⁸

[Translation of children's books does not actually differ from other translations. We Turkify the texts being loyal to the original text. Only for very young age groups, we pay attention to use short and simple sentences, contemporary words and correct sentence structures.] (My translation)

In the above given statement, *Türkçeleştirmek* (Turkify) can be seen as a keyword that signals an approach towards creating adequate, rather than acceptable, translations (Toury, 2012) for all readers. This practice contradicts some scholarly opinions that intermediary agents, such as translators and publishers, tend to be more careful about the difference between the adult author/translator and the child reader (O'Sullivan, 2015), and that publishers may opt for not publishing a work if it is believed to fail the expectations of target readers, who are children in the case of children's literature (Erten, 2012). Considering the prevalent intervening attitude towards the children's classics in Turkey (Neydim, 2006, 2020), this unusual attitude may result from the author's prestige.

3.2 A curious case of retranslation and indirect translation

Having two translations of the same text, and two source texts in different languages, retranslation and indirect translation are two other concepts that deserve to be discussed within the framework of this case.

Retranslation (both product and process) refers to a new translation of a text that already exists in a particular target language (see Koskinen and Paloposki, 2010; Tahir Gürçağlar, 1998), while indirect translation is considered in this study as translating from an ultimate source text in a source language into an ultimate target language to create the ultimate target text through the mediation of a text in a language different than the ultimate source and target languages (see Assis Rosa et al, 2017; Pieta, 2019). According to these definitions, the Turkish picturebook is an indirect retranslation.

It is curious to see that the Turkish publisher has opted to retranslate this repurposed text instead of using the existing direct translation in the Turkish book just as the Spanish publisher took the excerpt from the Spanish translation of the Portuguese memoir

¹⁸ This interview was given after this editor stopped working with the publisher of the picturebook. The editor of the picturebook *Suların Sessizliği* did not want to talk about her editorial choices because she does not work there anymore, although the picturebook continues to be reprinted under her name.

targeting adult readers. The reason for this seems to have to do with copyright concerns. First, the copyright of the Spanish picturebook belongs to the Spanish publisher Libros del Zorro Rojo, which means that the work is treated as a separate original rather than as its source text. Secondly, the copyright agreement held by the current publisher Kırmızı Kedi states that Saramago's books must be translated from Portuguese originals or from Spanish translations done by Saramago's wife, Pilar del Rio.¹⁹ Hence, although theoretically this case is an example of indirect translation (motivated by both the repurposing of a text for another audience and the copyright issue), the copyright agreement for Saramago's works also seems to have influenced the Turkish publisher's perceptions regarding the directness of the translation. It signals that the Spanish translations are deemed higher status and/or more trustworthy than translations in other languages because of the translator's symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1989) as the author's wife. Hence, the Spanish picturebook may not have been perceived as a translation at all by the Turkish publisher, which means it is treated as an original work, with the translator del Rio treated as an (co)author.

Furthermore, although the indirectness of the translation does not seem to have had an influence on the target text in the Turkish picturebook, the lack of a wider context shows itself in this short excerpt when the translator needed to translate the word for grandparents (*abuelos*). In the Turkish book, because the translator has the full context, she knows that Saramago is referring to his mother's parents and uses the word *anneanne* to render it, whereas the translator of the Turkish picturebook uses a neutral word, *nine*. Therefore, this situation also hints that repurposed texts taken out of their wider context may be challenging for translators. In such situations, turning to the ultimate source text and/or existing translations may ease the work of the translator. More research on similar cases is clearly needed to observe the challenges of the translation of repurposed texts.

3.3 Reception of the Turkish picturebook Suların Sessizliği

Although the main focus of this study is not reception, it would be incomplete if it left out an account of how this storybook has been received by Turkish readers. Therefore, I looked into online resources such as social media and reader platforms²⁰ to find evidence of Turkish readers' response to the work.

Twenty-five comments collected from various platforms²¹ and one website article on the Turkish picturebook, show that most readers think that Saramago himself wrote this story directly for children. Six readers think that it is not suitable for young children at all, mostly because the sentences are difficult for young children to understand. While most of the other readers think that it is a good book to introduce literature to children, they do not seem to agree about what age group the book is for. Some readers say it is suitable for

¹⁹ Written interview through e-mail communication with editor Mert Tanaydın on 2 November 2020.

²⁰ Readers play an active role in shaping other readers' opinions by sharing their opinions on these platforms (see Işıklar Koçak, 2017; Işıklar Koçak and Erkul Yağcı, 2019)

²¹ 1000kitap.com, eksisozluk.com, kitapyurdu.com, hepsiburada.com, insanokur.org, Instagram with #sularinsessizligi, Facebook with #sularinsessizligi.

4-7-year-old children, while others argue that it is appropriate for over 6-year-olds, and one commenter writes the book is for children over 12. The comments show that these readers have bought the book because they simply like reading Saramago's books, so in the first place it was Saramago's name that made them buy and read the book themselves or with their children. Some readers also question if the difficult-to-understand inverted sentences may be the result of the translator's choices. The comparison and analysis of the two Turkish translations demonstrates that this is indeed the case.

4. Conclusion

This case study demonstrates how the process of turning an excerpt from adult literature into a picturebook for children influences the translation choices. In order to describe this process, "repurposing" and "repurposed texts" are suggested as alternatives to "adaptation", "repackaging" and "recycling" to prevent conceptual confusion, and to offer researchers and translators a better understanding of what they are dealing with. The current case also suggests that handling a repurposed excerpt published with illustrations as a picturebook targeting small children causes the translator to create a more poetic, tale-like translation compared to the translation of the same excerpt within the book targeting adult readership. On the other hand, the decision by the translator of the picturebook to create an adequate target text that deviates from the norms of the children's literature in Turkey for that age group is shown to be related to the author's prestige. The case study also offers new perspectives for the reasons for retranslation and indirect translation. It shows that factors such as the translator's symbolic capital and copyright ownership are behind the decision to opt for an indirect retranslation of the repurposed excerpt analyzed in this study. Finally, a glimpse of the reception of the picturebook in Turkey demonstrates that the author's prestige has caused the readers to buy the picturebook for their children, though most readers do not think that the linguistic aspects are adequate for the small children that the book is marketed for.

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