

LUNAR JOURNEYS: INVESTIGATING TRANSLATION IN MULTILINGUAL PICTUREBOOKS

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ABSTRACT: Studying the translation process behind multilingual picturebooks represents a fascinating field of research for translation studies. This paper presents two case studies that examine translation in multilingual picturebooks: a trilingual edition (2014) of Tomi Ungerer's *Moon Man* (1966) uniting translations in French, German, and Alsatian, as well as the translingual picturebook *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht* (Vialaneix, 2017), alternating and mixing French and German along the story. The translational analysis of the two picturebooks is guided by the following research questions: What translation strategies are developed to interpret and recreate the semiotic and semantic interplay between the visual and the textual elements of the story in multilingual picturebooks? What stylistic elements of the target language are employed to convey meaning acoustically? What translation strategies are used in translingual picturebooks? What are the principles and effects of language alternation and language mixing within a translingual picturebook story?

KEYWORDS: Multilingual Picturebooks, Translingual Picturebooks, Translation Studies, Indirect Translation, Translanguaging.

1. Introduction

Modern picturebooks can be described as all-embracing works of art that lead to an aesthetic experience appealing to all our senses. Combining textual, visual, aural, and tactile elements, picturebooks crystallise a multimedial art form, based on “the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning of the page.” (Bader, 1976, p. 1)

The concept of *multimodality* has established itself for this sophisticated interplay of images and text in picturebooks (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996), where pictures assume a visual-narrative function by representing, supplementing, counterpointing, or differing from the information provided by the text (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2001). Hence, the multiple tensions between verbal and visual meaning give this multimodal art form a high literary complexity that challenges picturebook readings (Lewis, 2001, Nikolajeva and Scott, 2001, Sipe and Pantaleo, 2008) as much as translation work (O’Sullivan, 2006).

Multilingual picturebooks embody a particularly interesting variant of this literary genre, adding yet another dimension to this already complex mode of representation and meaning-making. In fact, by combining and/or confronting two or more linguistic systems and forms,¹ multilingual picturebooks enact the intercultural encounter and generate an experience of alterity in the receiving audience (Hélot, Sneddon and Daly, 2014, Daly and Limbrick, 2018). As we will see in the two case studies presented here, multilingual picturebooks can adopt quite different forms and constellations.

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¹ Sometimes, two different writing systems and/or two different visual cultures may meet in a bilingual picturebook (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013).

The translation of picturebooks is very challenging, as a number of scholars have pointed out (Oittinen, Ketola and Garavini, 2018, O’Sullivan 2010)², but these challenges are multiplied when the picturebooks in question are multilingual. In addition to issues arising from the target audience and function of the work, the translator’s choices will also be constrained by its artistic, literary, and pedagogical perspectives, and of course by its layout – the spacing, fonts, and importance given to each language on the page (the “linguistic landscape” [Daly, 2019]). In this complex process, the translator becomes a co-author proper and a full-fledged re-creator.

Despite all these fascinating features and challenges, the translation of multilingual picturebooks is still an under-researched field in translation studies. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the translation process behind two different types of multilingual picturebooks, focusing on the following questions: what translation strategies are developed to interpret and recreate the semiotic and semantic interplay between the visual and the textual elements of the story? What stylistic elements of the target language are employed to convey meaning acoustically? What translation strategies are used? What are the principles and effects of code-switching and -mixing within a translingual picturebook story?

The two case studies presented here share a similar theme: the moon. The first is a trilingual edition (*s’Mondmannele*, 2014) of Tomi Ungerer’s picturebook *Moon Man* (1966), which brings together three translations in German, French, and Alsatian. The second is a translingual picturebook, *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht* [Moons... a moonless night (my translation)] by Mélanie Vialaneix (2017), which alternates and mixes French and German throughout the narration.

First, I will present a short typology of multilingual picturebooks and explain the different roles that translation plays in them. Then, I will discuss the case studies, analysing the translation processes used in them, as well as the translator’s choices and strategies. Finally, the findings will be discussed in the light of a poetics of translation that may be considered characteristic of multilingual picturebooks.

2. The role of translation in multilingual picturebooks

Multilingual picturebooks can adopt different forms and functions. Generally, we can distinguish between dual language picturebooks (classic bilingual picturebooks, which present two linguistic versions of the story) and translingual picturebooks, which alternate and / or mix two or more languages throughout.

2.1 Dual language picturebooks

Dual language picturebooks or classic bilingual picturebooks present the original text and its translation according to the mirror principle. The original text is accompanied by a

² It involves not only understanding and reproducing the precise relationship between the visual and the verbal, but also being attentive to the acoustic and dramatic dimension of a picturebook that is designed to be read aloud, as well as the intercultural dimension present in any translation exercise.

complete translation that runs parallel to it and attempts to reproduce its lexical, syntactic and stylistic characteristics. Dual language picturebooks usually involve a collaboration between three artists: the author of the original text, the illustrator (who may or may not be the author) and the translator. In most cases, the bilingual edition is a reedition of the original (monolingual) picturebook with the new language version added. As a result, dual language books would not exist without the translator's intervention.

This kind of multilingual picturebook operates according to a binary principle, based on a monolingual vision of each language version. The translation accompanying the original text is usually intended for a monolingual audience, rather than expressing or appealing to a bilingual identity. Thus, the two languages of the bilingual picturebook do not mix but work as two autonomous and separate systems (Sneddon, 2009).

2.2 Translingual picturebooks

An alternative is offered by bilingual picturebooks that perform translanguaging,³ that is to say, that use two or more languages concomitantly at either the discursive (in the character's speeches) and / or the narrative level (on the level of the story's diegesis). These may be considered *translingual* or *interlingual picturebooks* (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013, p. 63). In most cases, the published translingual text is not the result of a translation, but of translingual writing by a bilingual author, who draws on his or her multilingual repertoire to integrate two or more languages into the literary creation process.

Translanguaging in picturebooks often corresponds to the actual speech practices of bilingual or multilingual speech communities and conveys a multilingual experience. The identity value of such picturebooks cannot be neglected, therefore, as the work is often addressed to a bi- or multilingual community.⁴

Instead of reflecting a multilingual social experience, translingual picturebooks may have a purely pedagogical purpose. In this case, language alternation is often artificially imposed, whether in dialogues between characters that each speak different languages, or in accordance with a principle of recurrence shaping the narrative units of the story.⁵ The pedagogical aim of this kind of translingual picturebook lies in the concomitant acquisition of reading skills in two languages; indeed, this kind of language alternation is understood to be an ideal way of training the cognitive flexibility of the multilingual brain and fostering its creative performance (Kharkhurin, 2012).

In this kind of translingual picturebook, language alternation can be created by four different auctorial constellations. The work may be written by (1) a bilingual author who alternates languages in the course of the writing process (simultaneous bilingual genesis); (2) a bilingual author who practices self-translation by first writing the whole story in one

³ Translanguaging (Garcia and Wei, 2014) involves language alternation and / or mixing, also called code-switching and code-mixing.

⁴ See, for example, the translingual picturebook *Subway Sparrow* by Leyla Torres (1993), which alternates English, Spanish and Polish (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013, pp. 63-65).

⁵ See, for example, the translingual picturebook *Sag mal, comment on fait les animaux* by Suzy Vergez and Barbara Hyvert (2018), alternating French and German (Hartmann, 2020, pp. 201-203).

language, before translating parts of it into another language (consecutive bilingual genesis); (3) a collaboration between an author and a translator with the latter only translating parts of the story (monolingual genesis and partial translation); (4) two co-authors, each of whom writes a narrative unit in his or her first language (collaborative bilingual genesis based on two alternating monolingual genesis).

3. Investigating translation in multilingual picturebooks

Investigating translation in multilingual picturebooks also means exploring the translation process that gave birth to this interlingual creation. The genetic approach allows us to research the coming-into-being of the translation in its temporal and spatial dimensions, by directing our gaze towards the translator's workshop. This usually involves the study of the translator's drafts and manuscripts, also called *avant-textes*.⁶

In what follows, I will partially adopt a genetic perspective in order to investigate the translation process within the analysis of two multilingual picturebooks.⁷

3.1 *S'Mondmannelle (2014)*: a trilingual picturebook with three translations

Tomi Ungerer's *Moon Man* tells the story of the Moon Man's long-awaited visit to Earth. But when he finally reaches his dream destination, thanks to a comet that happens to fly by, he is taken prisoner because of his otherness. Thrown into a cell and cannonballed, he happily enters his "third phase", shrinking so that he can escape through the bars of the prison window. Taking advantage of his new-found freedom, the Moon Man wonders at the beauty of the natural world and finally realizes his dream of dancing at a costume ball at a garden party. But his joy does not last long: the police arrive, and the Moon Man flees into the forest and finds refuge in the hidden castle of scientist Doktor Bunsen van der Dunkel, who shows him the space rocket he invented. When the Moon Man shrinks again into his third phase, he says goodbye to his benefactor, gets on the rocket and flies home, where he stays happily ever after in the silver moon.

Moon Man was written by Tomi Ungerer, an Alsatian writer and illustrator who grew up speaking the three languages of Alsace (French, Alsatian, and German), and was originally published in English in 1966. In the same year, the work was translated into German (*Der Mondmann*) by Elisabeth Schnack; and three years later (1969) into French (*Jean de la Lune*) by Adolphe Chagot. The trilingual edition *s'Mondmannelle* [The little Moon Man (in Alsatian)] was published in 2014 and presents an Alsatian version by Bénédicte Keck, accompanied by the French and German translations.

⁶ See, for example, Hartmann and Hersant (2019). On the genetic approach within translation studies (also called genetic translation studies) see, for example, Nunes, Moura, and Pacheco Pinto, 2021.

⁷ In the case of the translation process behind the trilingual edition of Tomi Ungerer's *Moon Man*, the translator Bénédicte Keck stated in a phone interview that she did not keep any previous versions of the final Alsatian text, though gave me an insight into her translational choices, thus enabling a genetic perspective to be adopted.

The purpose of this trilingual edition is to revitalize the endangered Alsatian language and reaffirm Alsatian identity. As stated in the foreword by the President of the Alsatian Language Office:

Reading a picturebook by the world-famous Alsatian author-illustrator Tomi Ungerer is always a pleasure – and even more so when this book is written in Alsatian. In fact, being French, Alemannic, and European at the same time, Alsations all feel a bit different, like the Moon Man. In this sense, Alsations are sometimes Moon Men too! [my translation]

This foreword thus aims to identify the hero of the picturebook story with the target audience, based on their shared experience of otherness. This evocation of an Alsatian identity embodied both by the Alsatian author-illustrator Tomi Ungerer and the Moon Man as the hero of the story justifies the language choice and its distribution throughout the work.

If we look at the spatial configuration of the three languages on the page, we can see that the Alsatian text is written in large characters, while the French and German texts are very small. The German text is in italics, the French text in normal type; both texts are displayed as parallel texts like in a dual language book, under the much larger Alsatian text. Hence, the layout of this multilingual picturebook is carried by a specific language policy that seeks to promote the Alsatian variety as a language of literature. That is to say, the linguistic landscape (Daly, 2019) of this trilingual edition of *Moon Man* ranks Alsatian – a minority language – higher than the two majority languages, French and German. By inverting the sociolinguistic power relationship between national and regional language (or between standard language and regional variety), this trilingual edition aims to empower the endangered minority language by giving it a dominant literary status within this work. The Alsatian translation is thus given the status of an alleged “source text”, while the French and the German translations are intended to serve as mediation.

The Alsatian translation was elaborated from two different source texts (the German and French versions) that were used simultaneously. In fact, the translation process is made explicit in the peritext that introduces the edition,⁸ which is quite a unique editorial practice. Since neither of these source texts – the German or the French – is the original work by the author-illustrator Tomi Ungerer, the Alsatian translation has to be qualified as an *indirect translation*.

The beginning of the story gives a good insight into the special character of the Alsatian translation. In the passages analysed below, I present the original English (1966) text before the three translations that appear in the trilingual picturebook:

On clear, starry nights the Moon Man can be seen curled up in his shimmering seat in space.

⁸ This is stated in Alsatian on the title page. It was also confirmed by the translator, Bénédicte Keck, in private conversation. Unfortunately, Keck did not keep any translation drafts that might have enabled the genesis of the Alsatian translation to be reconstituted more precisely.

The expression "shimmering seat in space" describes the shining moon in the picture, while the expression "curled up" suggests a feeling of cosiness and transforms the moon disc into a living space. Moreover, the verb *to see* in the expression "the Moon Man can be seen" explicitly alludes to the picture that accompanies the text: hence, the descriptive function that predominates here invites the reader to contemplate the pictures that play the leading part in this story. This means that the multimodal reading mode, which combines text and images, is set from the start: the picture conveys the main information of the story; the verbal relates to the visual.

Following the chronological order of the subsequent translations, let us consider now the German translation (1966):

In sternklaren Nächten kann man den Mondmann am Himmel droben sehen, wie er zusammengekauert in seiner silbernen Wohnung sitzt.

The German version comes very close to the original English text: "starry nights" is rendered poetically as "sternklaren Nächten", while the moon as a metaphorical living space is expressed by "Wohnung", i.e. "home" or "house". The adjective "silber", i.e. "silver" for "shimmering", gives the moon a coloration, but diminishes its shiny effect.

The French version (1969), on the other hand, does not follow the English source text particularly closely:

Avez-vous vu Jean de la Lune, là-haut dans le ciel? Pelotonné dans sa boule argentée, il vous fait signe amicalement. Il attend que vous lui rendiez sa visite, une visite que tout le monde ici à oubliée, et que je vais vous conter.

[My translation: Have you seen the Moon Man up there in the sky? Curled up in his silver ball, he is waving to you in a friendly way. He is waiting for you to return his visit, a visit that everyone here has forgotten, and that I will tell you now.]

By comparing the French and German texts, we can observe that the French translation is not the equivalent of the English source text or its German mirror-image but rather describes the scene given in the picture. The information about the moon man's friendly mode of communication comes from the picture: "he is waving to you in a friendly way" (my translation). In this case, the French text is not an interlingual translation, but an *intersemiotic translation*, because it translates the image and not the English text.

Another important feature of the French translation is the setting-up of the communication situation. In French, the beginning of the story not only has a descriptive function, but also a communicative one, since it directly interpellates the reader (or, in a read-aloud performance, the listening child). The narrator asks: "Have you seen the Moon Man up there in the sky?" (My translation) Thus, the child who is listening and watching is involved in the act of storytelling, as is the storyteller who is identified by the pronoun *I* ("that I will tell you now"). A model of interaction stems from the pronouns employed in the French text, the *I* of the storyteller and the *you* of the audience, transforming the reading into a read-aloud performance, or even a storytelling performance. This interaction

between the storyteller and the audience is doubled by the relationship between the main character, the Moon Man, and the audience. Speaking about the Moon Man, the French texts says: “he waves to you in a friendly manner. He is waiting for you to return his visit.” (My translation) The interaction between the Moon Man and the audience allows the latter to engage actively in the representation of the story: the audience is invited to enter the narrative universe, to travel to the moon in their imagination, and to participate in the action of the story.

In this passage, the Alsatian translation draws mainly on the French text (*Source Text 1*), reproducing the aural character of the storytelling performance, the audience’s involvement in the storytelling process, and the narrative addition of the moon waiting for a return visit from the children listening to the story.

On the other hand, intersemiotic translation is used in the Alsatian text to describe the moon, depicted in the illustration with a gentle, smiling face and waving hand. This is rendered in Alsatian by “He waves to you with a gentle smile” (my translation), a passage entirely absent from the German and the French texts. In this sense, the reader cannot refer to the German text to understand the Alsatian version that offers here a semantic and narrative supplement due to intersemiotic translation referring to the picture. Consequently, the three translations of the trilingual picturebook cannot be considered parallel versions.

Interestingly, there is another translation strategy two pages later that combines three different procedures. The first sentence of the Alsatian text is a translation from the German text. Accordingly, the German text becomes *Source Text 2* of the Alsatian translation.

English: One night a shooting star [a comet] flashed by.

German: Eines Nachts sauste ein Komet an ihm vorbei.

Alsatian: Einmal in de Naacht isch e Komet an’ m verbi gsüst.

The principal change we can detect between the German and Alsatian texts consists in the verb tense. The simple past or preterite (a verb tense used primarily in written texts in German) that appears in the German translation is replaced in the Alsatian version by the present perfect tense (tense used in oral speech). In this passage, the present perfect tense is simulating the ongoing storytelling process: “sauste (vorbei)” (preterit / simple past) vs “isch (an’ m verbi) gsüst” [ist (an ihm vorbei) gesaut] (present perfect) for *flashed (by)*.

The second sentence in the Alsatian text shows a translation from the French text that is missing from the English and German versions:

French: Jean de la Lune (Moon Man) ne manqua pas l’occasion.

Alsatian: S’ Mondmannele het die Gelajeheet nit welle verpasse!

(My translation: The Moon Man didn’t want to miss the opportunity!)

Taking some liberty with regards to the French source text, the Alsatian translation incorporates a dramatic element and tone, adding an exclamation mark to hint at how it should be said when reading aloud.

The third sentence of the Alsatian translation returns to the German source text, even though the first part of the sentence is left out, as in the French version:

English: The Moon Man leaped just in time to catch the fiery tail of the comet.

German: Der Mondmann sprang gerade noch rechtzeitig hoch und erwischte den Kometen bei seinem feurigen Schweif.

Alsatian: Es het the Komet grad noch in de Zitte an sinem fiiriche Waddel geschnappt un het sich mitschleppe lon.

The final part of the sentence in Alsatian “un het sich mitschleppe lon”, which could be translated into “he let himself be dragged along” (my translation), uses intersemiotic translation: at this point, the Alsatian text describes the dynamic and forceful picture. Hence, as seen above with the description of the Moon Man’s facial expression, the *picture* becomes *Source Text 3* of the Alsatian translation.

The last example illustrates the Alsatian humour that enhances the gentle irony present in Tomi Ungerer’s story. This example also demonstrates the linguistic characteristics of Alsatian as a Germanic language that has had intensive language contact with French. In this passage, the text is found in a footnote marked by an asterisk above the picture of a pink ice-cream seller. The asterisk-discourse is situated at the metanarrative level, which gives voice to the narrator commenting the picture. Consequently, this footnote procedure works like a humorous wink that creates a bond between narrator and reader.

English: The ice cream man hurried to set up his stand for the spectators.

German: Der Eisbudenmann wollte einen Verkaufsstand für die Neugierigen aufschlagen.

French: Un marchand de glace courageux – qui espérait faire de bonnes affaires – les précédait.

Here, the Alsatian text is totally freed from the German and French source texts, creating its own humorous aside:

Mit denne ganze Wunderfitzle het s’ kuraschierte Glace-Mannele glich s’gute Gschaft gschmeckt.

[My translation: With all the curious onlookers, the courageous ice-cream seller immediately suspected (tasted) good business.]

We see here that the Alsatian version makes witty use of two stylistic figures: two alliterations (**G**lace – **g**lich / **G**schaft – **g**schmeckt), as well as an ingenious gustatory metaphor that fits very well into the ice-cream context. Indeed, “s’gute Gschaft gschmeckt” [das gute Geschäft schmecken] literally means that the ice-cream seller “tasted good business” (my translation).

Finally, we can detect the linguistic results of language contact between German and French within the Alsatian variety, illustrated by the word “Glace-Mannele” for *ice cream seller*, which shows an interesting combination of the French “glace” (ice cream), and the word “Mannele” that stands for “little man” in many German dialects. The composite word “Glace-Mannele” could thus be interpreted as an example of Alsatian translanguaging.

3.2 *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht* (2017): a translingual picturebook with partial translation

As its title reveals, *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht* [Moons (French)... a moonless night (German)] is a translingual picturebook that alternates and mixes two languages – French and German. However, *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht* is not the creation of a bilingual author practising French-German translanguaging in its written form, but the result of a partial translation into German of certain text passages. This partial translation was carried out *a posteriori* by Sybille Maurer, who converted the monolingual French text, written and illustrated by Mélanie Vialaneix, into a translingual text. The work is therefore the result of a consecutive collaboration between an author writing in French and a translator working into German, who only translates parts of the story – in short, of a monolingual genesis and a partial translation.

The main text of *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht* is accompanied by two complete monolingual versions in French and German, inserted as an appendix at the end of the picturebook. This enables the story to be read entirely in French or in German,⁹ and also allows vocabulary items to be checked against another language.

Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht tells the tale of a journey through the night, a quest for the hidden moon. Two sisters, Magda and Lilo, are fascinated by the moon. One evening, however, the moon does not appear in the sky, so Magda, the older sister, sets out to look for it. This becomes a voyage of initiation, punctuated by fascinating encounters and discoveries of unknown landscapes, until the moon finally appears in front of her.

Magda’s journey follows the well-known narrative scheme of the medieval initiation story, as exemplified by the Arthurian romance *Perceval or the Story of the Holy Grail* (Chrétien de Troyes, 1190). The quest for the moon is placed at the centre of the story, reminding the reader of the quest for the Holy Grail. Magda must overcome three trials before meeting the moon: diving into the ocean, crossing a desert, and climbing a mountain. The aquatic and nocturnal elements represent “threshold” moments, which Magda must cross in order to reach another state of consciousness and gain new

⁹ From a translational point of view, the complete German translation raises several grammatical and lexical questions, which we do not have the space to discuss here.

knowledge. This new stage is symbolised by the final encounter with the moon. Revealing the secret of life dominated by eternal return, the Moon explains to Magda: “I have travelled, just like you. I come and go. I help the ocean on its migrations and the plants to flourish. Nature is constantly changing” (my translation). Magda’s final return to her sister Lilo at the end of the story, symbolizes her reintegration into the diurnal world. Visually, the work is enchanting, with its beautiful illustrations dominated by a *chiaroscuro* effect that creates a dazzling contrast between the nocturnal darkness and the clarity of the lunar rays.

Magda’s initiation journey also symbolizes a gradual initiation into German for a francophone reader, since this translingual picturebook devotes increasing amounts of text to the German language. The first part up to Magda’s departure is written entirely in French, as is the beginning of her adventure, in which she goes out into the nocturnal garden to start her search for the moon. In this translingual picturebook, each language corresponds to a particular colour: the German passages are written in black letters, while the French text is shown in grey. On pages that feature a black or dark blue background depicting the darkness of the night or the depths of the ocean, the German text appears in white, while the French text is written in light grey. With this artistic effect, the text fits perfectly into the illustration and participates in it through its chromatic dimension.

The German text appears for the first time when Magda meets with a great grey owl in the garden. This first change of language occurs in a *dialogical alternation*, because the owl speaks German and Magda speaks French¹⁰:

Ce sont les yeux ronds d’un grand hibou! [French: These are the round eyes of a big owl]

Bonsoir, je suis à la recherche de la lune; l’avez-vous vue? [French (Magda): Good evening, I am looking for the moon; have you seen it?]

Entschuldige, wonach suchst du? [German (owl): Sorry, what are you looking for?]

The encounter between Magda and the owl enacts a real intercomprehension situation. Additionally, communication between the two monolingual speakers is facilitated by a non-verbal body language allowing an *intersemiotic translation*: the French text accompanying the dialogue between Magda and the owl describes the girl’s gesture of drawing a moon with her arms. This gesture facilitates the recognition of the referent (the moon): “Magda [...] dessine un grand cercle de ses bras, et pointe son doigt vers le ciel étoilé” [French: Magda [...] draws a large circle with her arms and points her finger to the starry sky]. The owl’s understanding is accentuated by an exclamation: “Oh, der Mond!” [German: Oh, the moon!]

Entschuldige, wonach suchst du? [German (owl): Sorry, what are you looking for?]

¹⁰ Please note that all translations in the given examples and inside squared brackets are back translations.

La lune! [French (Magda): The moon!]

Répond Magda qui dessine un grand cercle de ses bras, et pointe son doigt vers le ciel étoilé.
[French: answers Magda who draws a large circle with her arms and points her finger to the starry sky.]

Oh, der Mond! [German (owl): Oh, the moon!]

Vielleicht ist er im Wald hinter dem Garten? [German (owl): Maybe he is in the woods behind the garden?]

Hulule le hibou. [French: hoots the owl]

In the next translingual passage, the direct speech appears in German, while the narration continues in French. Thus, in this case, the code-switching is motivated by a *discursive change* (direct speech vs narration). As the direct speech shows, Magda and the white plastic buoy, which she encounters floating in the ocean, both speak German. This does not seem to make sense, since Magda only spoke French in her previous conversation with the owl. On the other hand, mastery of the German language is perhaps one of the wonderful new acquisitions obtained at the end of her journey. Yet Magda is only halfway there...

Hallo, ich bin auf der Suche nach dem Mond! [German: Hello, I am looking for the moon!]

Crie Magda à la bouée, en dessinant un croissant de ses doigts. [French: Martha shouts at the buoy, drawing a crescent with her fingers.]

Hm, der Mond? Vielleicht befindet er sich in der Nähe des Ozeans? Komm, ich bring dich dahin! [German: Hum, the moon? Maybe it is near the ocean? Come on, I will take you there!]

Glougloute la bouée. [French: the buoy gurgles.]

Au milieu de la vaste étendue d'eau, il fait noir et un peu froid... [French: In the middle of the expanse of water, it is dark and a little cold...]

Ich kann den Mond nirgendwo sehen... [German: I cannot see the moon anywhere...]

Warte, schau doch mal näher hin, dit la bouée. [German: Wait, take a closer look] [French: says the buoy.]

Once again, Magda's gesture ("drawing a crescent with her fingers") uses non-verbal body language (or intersemiotic mediation) to make her request understandable.

The third type of code-switching corresponds to a discursive differentiation between free indirect speech (expressing Magda's thoughts) and narration.

Des milliers de petits points phosphorescents [French: Thousands of small phosphorescent dots] apparaissent et se mettent à danser autour d'elle. [French: appear and begin to dance around her.]

Winzige Lebewesen! [German: Tiny creatures!]

Oooohhh, [exclamation in French or German] s'écrit Magda émerveillée. [French: exclaims Magda in wonder.]

The German exclamation “Winzige Lebewesen!” [Tiny creatures!] could be interpreted as free indirect speech, integrating into the syntactic continuity of the narration in French and expressing Magda’s thoughts at the semantic level. This discursive change is marked by language alternation.

So far, we have distinguished three different principles that cause language alternation in this translingual picturebook:

- (1) Dialogical alternation in direct speech (Magda / the owl).
- (2) Discursive alternation between direct speech and narration (Magda and the buoy / narration).
- (3) Discursive alternation between free indirect speech and narration (Magda’s thoughts / narration).

From the middle of the story, we can also observe language mixing, before the text ends exclusively in German. The first intrasentential occurrence takes place at the level of narration: the sentence is split into two octosyllabic halves – the first in German, and the second in French – linked by an ongoing assonance in [a], which highlights the mystery of the nocturnal aquatic spectacle. The sentence marks a break within an ongoing movement:

Une lueur balaye alors [French: A glow then sweeps across]

die Oberfläche des Wassers. [German: the surface of the water.]

Although this code-switching in the middle of the sentence seems to produce a poetic effect (a rhythmic equilibrium created by the succession of two octosyllabic unities, as well as the presence of a suggestive assonance), this effect is not clearly motivated at the semantic or narrative level. Possibly, the creation of a mysterious melody produced by language mixing announces Magda’s entrance into the “underwater kingdom”. At a socio-cultural level, however, this phenomenon does not correspond to the natural speaking practice of a bilingual, since in French-German translanguaging, one would rather say: “Une lueur balaye alors la Oberfläche de l’eau” or “Une leur balaye alors la Wasseroberfläche”.

In the following two pages, code-switching continues to occur at the narration level: intersentential language alternation is followed by intrasentential language mixing, which becomes increasingly arbitrary.

Un gigantesque phare se tient sur un rocher [French: A gigantic lighthouse stands on a rock]
qui surplombe l’océan. [French: that overlooks the ocean]

Sein mächtiges Leuchtfener erstrahlt die Wellen [German: Its mighty beacon shines on the waves]
genauso glänzend wie das Mondlicht. [German: just as shiny / glittering as the moonlight.]

The use of the verb “erstrahlt” in the German translation is grammatically questionable, since “erstrahlen” [to shine] is an intransitive verb with no transitive use. The transitive verb “bestrahlen” [to shine on something] would therefore seem more appropriate in this context. If we consult the complete French source text reproduced in the appendix of the translingual picturebook, we can also discuss the German translation of the comparison “genauso glänzend wie das Mondlicht” [German: just as shiny as the moonlight]. The French source text reads as follows:

Sa grande lanterne balaye les vagues *aussi brillantes qu’un clair de lune*.

[French: Its large lantern sweeps the waves as brilliant as moonlight.]

The comparison “aussi brillantes qu’un clair de lune” [French: as brilliant as moonlight] forms around the adjective “brillantes” [brilliant] that qualifies the noun “vagues” [waves] and is placed in an appositive position. The adjectival qualification of the waves cannot be rendered by the adjective “glänzend” [glittering / shiny] in German, because, in its appositive position, the adjective “glänzend” adopts the status of an *adverb*, qualifying the verb “bestrahlt” / “balaye” [shines on]. I would therefore suggest the following translation, which keeps the impression of glittering waves:

Sein mächtiges Leuchtfeuer bestrahlt die Wellen, die wie der Mond schimmern / glänzen.

[German: Its mighty beacon illuminates the waves that shimmer / shine like the moon.]

If we abandon the comparison in favour of a less prosaic rhythm and a physical explanation of the luminescent phenomenon, we could propose:

Sein mächtiges Leuchtfeuer bestrahlt die Wellen, die im Mondschein schimmern.
[German: Its mighty beacon illuminates the waves that shimmer in the moonlight.]

or:

Sein mächtiges Leuchtfeuer bestrahlt die im Mondschein schimmernden Wellen.
[Its mighty beacon illuminates the waves shimmering in the moonlight.]

The following sentence presents intrasentential code-mixing between the nominal group “la petite porte rouge” [French: the little red door] and its determinative complement in the genitive case “des Leuchtturms” [German: of the lighthouse].

Magda s’en approche et frappe à la petite porte rouge [French: Magda comes over and knocks on the little red door]

des Leuchtturms. Keine Antwort. [German: of the lighthouse. No answer.]
Elle frappe encore et attend. [French: She knocks again and waits.]

Although this phenomenon is interesting, it does not correspond to the natural linguistic habit, speaking practice, or “feeling for language” of a bilingual speaker, who would borrow the German word “Leuchtturm” (lighthouse) while leaving the article in French:

Magda s’en approche et frappe à la petite porte rouge du Leuchtturm. Keine Antwort.

This more natural French-German translanguaging version, which enables the bilingual speaker to draw from a single bilingual repertoire, retains a French syntax, in which the borrowed noun “Leuchtturm” [lighthouse] is embedded. Such a configuration would not require a visual change of colour or line, because the two languages would truly merge within a single translingual idiom, imitating a natural bilingual discourse.

The following page presents a final example of intrasentential code-mixing, before the text continues exclusively in German.

Magda marche vers le désert. [French: Magda walks towards the desert.]
Plus elle s’éloigne de la lumière du phare, plus elle réalise que [French: The further she moves away from the light of the lighthouse, the more she realizes that]

die Nacht nicht mehr so dunkel ist wie vorher. [German: the night is no longer as dark as it was before.]

The location of the code-switch in this sentence not only seems unnatural, but also syntactically illogical. We are indeed in the presence of a main clause “elle réalise” [French: she realizes] and a subordinate clause (complement clause) “que die Nacht nicht mehr so dunkel ist wie vorher” [(French) that (German) the night is no longer as dark as it was before]. Subordinate clauses in German adopt a particular structure, since the verb is always placed at the end. In the speaker’s mind, however, this particular construction (i.e. the placing of the verb at the end of the subordinate clause) can only be anticipated if the subordinating conjunction “dass” [that] is expressed, so that the placement of the verb at the end of the subordinate clause can be triggered. At the level of grammatical accuracy in German, it would therefore be necessary that the subordinating conjunction “dass” [that] be expressed in German and that the code-switching occur between the main clause and the subordinate clause, according to a syntactical logic.

Plus elle s’éloigne de la lumière du phare, plus elle réalise, [French: The further she moves away from the light of the lighthouse, the more she realizes]

dass die Nacht nicht mehr so dunkel ist wie vorher. [German: that the night is no longer as dark as it was before.]

Still, this suggested constellation is not natural for a bilingual speaker either. We therefore propose another version, formed by the juxtaposition of two independent clauses that are connected by a colon:

Plus elle s’éloigne de la lumière du phare, plus elle réalise: [French: The further she moves away from the light of the lighthouse, the more she realizes:]

Die Nacht *ist* nicht mehr so dunkel wie vorher ! [German: the night is no longer as dark as it was before!]

This version would have the advantage of presenting the linguistic alternation at the discursive level (narration vs free indirect speech revealing Magda's thoughts), a change that would be coherent with the principles of code-switching observed in this picturebook.

As several researchers have observed, language mixing (translanguaging) has a certain grammatical logic. For example, Timm (1975) identified the constraints of Spanish-English code-switching, distinguishing between sentences that bilingual speakers consider well-formed (e.g. The students *habian visto la pelicula italiana*) from those that sound unnatural (e.g. The student had *visto la pelicula italiana*). Researchers who followed these discoveries (Poplack, 1980, Myers-Scotton, 1993, MacSwan, 2000) have convincingly demonstrated that code-switching, like all linguistic behaviour, is governed by specific constants and rules. Consequently, creating a translingual picturebook by using partial translation can prove to be quite a challenge, since every instance of code-switching must be evaluated grammatically, discursively, and poetically.

4. Towards a poetics of translation in multilingual picturebooks

Multilingual picturebooks can disclose various translational and editorial strategies. The two case studies presented here reveal that translation strategies in the trilingual picturebook *s'Mondmannele* are quite different from those observed in the translingual picturebook *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht*. They also allow the examination and analysis of different types of language distribution, alternation, and mixing, which create different literary effects in the two picturebook stories.

4.1 Translation strategies in the trilingual picturebook *s'Mondmannele*

What can we learn from our investigation of the translation process that leads to the Alsatian version in this trilingual picturebook? First, translating picturebooks always means shifting between the verbal and the visual, combining both *interlingual* and *intersemiotic translation*. In the case of the Alsatian translation, we have seen that intersemiotic translation (used for example to describe the friendly facial expression of the Moon Man) is as important as interlingual translation (which is carried out simultaneously from two source texts, German and French). This rather rare phenomenon could be qualified as *double indirect translation*.

Second, not only the verbal and the visual, but also the aural dimension of the story is taken into account within the translation process. In fact, as the picturebook is also meant to be read aloud by an adult, the Alsatian text adopts an aural storytelling style, by directly addressing the audience and soliciting their involvement in the story, and by creating sound repetition such as alliterations. Taken all together, the combination of the verbal, visual, and aural, transforms both the translation process and reading-aloud performance into a holistic aesthetic experience.

Third, translating picturebooks also implies a level of cultural mediation that is conditioned by the cultural background of the audience and the medium of the target language. In the case of the Alsatian translation, we have seen that the translator engages with the audience by using humour (for example through the insertion of the gustatory metaphor). Another important stylistic feature of the Alsatian text would be orality (as shows, for example, the use of the present perfect tense) and translanguaging for expressions emerging from language contact (e.g. “Glace-mannele”).

Overall, the translation process underpinning this trilingual edition can be considered as a multimodal mediation process.

4.2 Translation strategies in the translingual picturebook *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht*

How can we describe the translation strategies at work in the translingual picturebook *Lunes... eine mondlose Nacht*? First, partial translation is used to create language alternation in the form of intersentential code-switching and intrasentential code-mixing. These phenomena always have a poetical and narrative effect. That is to say, code-switching creates an estrangement effect that underlines the experience of otherness and corresponds poetically to the nocturnal universe of the story. As a narrative strategy, it can emphasize discursive shifts between dialogue and narration (discursive alternation), or between the speech styles of the different characters (dialogic alternation).

Intrasentential code-mixing, however, is more of a challenge. I personally feel that the translation should be modelled on a natural translanguaging practice, rather than creating an artificial language mix that jeopardizes grammatical accuracy in one or another language. Moreover, it should ideally be not only semantically and narratively motivated but should also respect the syntactic order and rhythm of each language in order to achieve a literary effect and enhance the overall aesthetic impression. Nevertheless, code-switching and mixing based on partial translation can be an excellent form of language play, designed to develop linguistic flexibility. In this particular case, the initiation into a new language is felicitously combined with the initiatory quest to the moon.

5. Conclusion

The translation of multilingual picturebooks is a multimodal mediation practice, which involves both interlingual and intersemiotic translation. As we have seen, a range of different strategies may be used: indirect translation, orality and humour, the interpellation or involvement of the target reader, the creation of phonetic and stylistic effects that colour the read-aloud performance. In addition, partial translation creates a translingual text, which enriches the poetic value of the picturebook story and introduces the reader to a bilingual universe.

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