

Annika Mattila

TRANSLATION OF HUMOR IN A PICTURE BOOK

Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences
Bachelor's Thesis
April 2020

ABSTRACT

Annika Mattila: Translation of Humor in a Picture Book
Bachelor's Thesis
Tampere University
English Language, Literature and Translation
April 2020

In this thesis, I examine the translation of humor in the English translation of the Finnish picture book *Tatun ja Patun ihmeellinen joulu*, translated into English as *Tatu's and Patu's Marvelous Christmas*. I examine how the humor has been translated and if the translation preserves the original humor. The language pair Finnish–English has been studied less than the language pair English–Finnish which is why the aim of this study is to provide discoveries of humor translation in children's literature from Finnish into a dominant language.

In the theory section, I discuss the notions of picture book, translating for children and humor. The definition of a picture book is multifaceted and, in this thesis, the definition's viewpoints include length, dual readership and non-verbal elements. In the section of translating for children, I discuss the notion of child image and the power of adults. In the humor section, I introduce the notion of *incongruity* as a central term for this thesis. Incongruity is also reflected in the analysis and it characterizes the material.

The Tatu and Patu book series has its own unique humor which is based on incongruity. I collected the material by reading both of the books. After reading the books, I gathered the humorous instances. Then, I categorized the humorous instances into four categories: onomatopoeic sound effects, Christmas carols, humor based on misunderstandings and mixed bunch.

In my analysis, I come to the conclusion that not all of the translations are as funny as the originals. The Finnish onomatopoeic sound effects are unique but only one of their translations is unique like the original. The rest of the sound effects are translated as general sound effects. The lyrics of the English Christmas carols are modified humorous as the originals but the translations do not take rhythm into consideration. In addition, one of the Christmas carols is not translated into English. In the humor based on misunderstanding category, only one of the translations do not preserve the original humor. The mixed bunch category preserve the original humor the best. A more comprehensive study could be done on the entire book series and on the different translations of the original.

Keywords: translating humor, incongruity, translating children's literature, picture book

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Annika Mattila: Translation of Humor in a Picture Book
Kandidaatintutkielma
Tampereen yliopisto
Englannin kieli, kirjallisuus ja kääntäminen
Huhtikuu 2020

Tässä tutkielmassa tutkin huumorin kääntämistä *Tatun ja Patun ihmeellinen joulu* -kuvakirjan englanninkielisessä käännöksessä *Tatu's and Patu's Marvelous Christmas*. Tutkielmassa selvitän, miten huumori on käännetty ja säilyykö alkuperäinen huumori käännöksessä. Kieliparia suomi–englanti on tutkittu vähemmän kuin englanti–suomi, minkä vuoksi tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on tuottaa havaintoja suomenkielisen lastenkirjahuumorin kääntämisestä valtakielelle.

Tutkielman teoriaosuudessa käsittelen kuvakirjaa, lapsille kääntämistä ja huumoria. Kuvakirjan määritelmä on moninainen ja tässä tutkielmassa lähestyn kuvakirjan määritelmää sen pituuden, kaksijakoisen kohdeyleisön ja sanattomien tekstielementtien näkökulmista. Lapsille kääntämisen osiossa esittelen kääntäjän lapsikuvaa ja aikuisten valtaa. Huumorin teoriaosuudessa esittelen *ristiriidan* (*incongruity*) tutkielman yhdeksi keskeiseksi termiksi, joka heijastuu myös analyysiosiossa ja karakterisoi tutkielman aineistoa.

Tatu ja Patu -kirjasarjalla on tunnistettava omintakeinen huumori, joka pohjautuu teoriaosuudessa esiteltyyn ristiriitaisuuteen. Keräsin aineiston lukemalla molemmat kirjat, jonka jälkeen poimin kirjoista humoristiset elementit. Kategorisoin humoristiset elementit neljään kategoriaan: onomatopoeettiset ääniefektit, joululaulut, väärinymmärryksiin perustuva huumori ja sekalainen.

Analyysistani nousee esille, että kaikki englanninkieliset käännökset eivät ole yhtä hauskoja kuin alkuperäiset. Suomenkieliset onomatopoeettiset ääniefektit ovat uniikkeja, mutta niiden englanninkielisistä käännöksistä vain yksi on alkuperäisen kaltainen uniikki ääniefekti. Loput ääniefekteistä on käännetty yleisiksi ääniefekteiksi. Joululaulujen sanat ovat muokattu humoristisiksi käännöksissäänkin, mutta ne eivät ota huomioon laulujen rytmiä. Lisäksi yhtä joululaulua ei ole käännetty englanniksi. Väärinymmärryksiin perustuva huumori -kategoriassa vain yksi käännös ei säilytä alkuperäistä huumoria. Sekalainen-kategorian käännökset onnistuvat parhaiten huumorin säilyttämisessä. Tutkimusta voisi laajentaa tutkimalla koko kirjasarjaa ja sen erikielisiä käännöksiä.

Avainsanat: huumorin kääntäminen, ristiriita, lastenkirjallisuuden kääntäminen, kuvakirja

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin Originality Check -ohjelmalla.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 2 Theoretical Background | 2 |
| 2.1 Picture Book..... | 2 |
| 2.2 Translating Children’s Literature..... | 3 |
| 2.3 Humor | 4 |
| 3 Tatu’s and Patu’s Marvelous Christmas..... | 5 |
| 4 Analysis of the Material | 6 |
| 4.1 Onomatopoeic Sound Effects | 7 |
| 4.2 Christmas Carols..... | 9 |
| 4.3 Humor Based on Misunderstandings | 13 |
| 4.4 Mixed Bunch..... | 15 |
| 5 Conclusions | 17 |
| 6 References | 18 |
| 6.1 Research Data | 18 |
| 6.2 Literature..... | 18 |

1 Introduction

In this thesis, I will examine how humor has been translated from Finnish into English in a children's book entitled *Tatu's and Patu's Marvelous Christmas*. The book is a part of a book series that centers around the two main characters Tatu and Patu. The book series is characterized by quirky humor, manifested in the main characters' peculiar behavior. In this thesis, I will examine how the humor has been translated and if the translation preserves the original humor. Thus my aim is to analyze if the English translation is as funny as the original. My analysis is a comparative analysis where I compare the two books: the Finnish original and its English translation.

This specific book series Tatu and Patu is well known and loved. The unique humor of the book series was what got me drawn to the topic. I also wanted to analyze this specific language pair Finnish–English instead of English–Finnish. Thus, I needed a book that is popular enough to have been translated into English. According to the Finnish Literature Exchange's website, in 2018, only four picture books were translated from Finnish into English. According to a statistics by the Finnish Institute for Children's literature, in 2018, 156 Finnish picture books were published and 245 translated picture books were published. As this high number of translated picture books suggest, picture book translations have a dominance in Finland.

Moreover, according to a study by the Finnish Reading Center, in 2017, the literacy level of Finnish people under 25 was lower than it was over a decade ago. My aim is to also bring more attention and awareness to children's literature and its translation. As I will explain further on, picture books are children's first contact to literature as well as stories. The topic in children's literature can also be ideological, shape the children's view on the world, society, right and wrong. Therefore, I believe children's literature and its translation should not be undermined or ignored. In Tampere University's online database only four out of 144 Master theses on translation studies researched children's literature. In addition to the importance of children's literature and its translation, humor plays a great role in all of our lives and in our social interactions. Humor is a part of our everyday life. Therefore, translation of humor and of humorous texts cannot be ignored.

In this thesis, I will first discuss the theoretical background and then introduce the material. After the introduction to the material, I will analyze the material and present my findings. A concluding chapter can be found last.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Picture Book

A picture book can be defined in many different ways. Its definition is complex and has many viewpoints. A simple definition for a picture book would be that it is a children's book with pictures. It could also be defined with its length: a picture book is usually 32–48 pages long (Oittinen 2004, 24). What makes picture books unique compared to adult literature is that a picture book does not fall under any specific category, its purpose can be to amuse and educate the reader at the same time (Oittinen 2004, 25). Adult literature can be categorized very strictly as, for example, non-fiction, fiction, autobiography et cetera. As Oittinen remarks (2004, 25), a picture book can be fiction or non-fiction, or even both at the same time.

Another reason why picture books are unique is that their target audience is not usually the actual readers of the book. Picture books are read aloud by parents to their children. The target audience of picture books is unique since the audience is divided into two, children and adults (Oittinen 2004, 26). This means that the writers, illustrators and translators have two target readers to aim their text for (Oittinen 2004, 26). Adults decide what books they buy, loan and read to their children. Adults also write, translate and illustrate the books that children read. Thus, the children do not have power over the literature they are targeted.

The pictures must capture the attention of the child while an adult is reading the book aloud to them. In addition, the pictures must last more views than the words since children tend to look at the pictures on their own, as well (Oittinen 2004, 25). In addition to pictures, picture books can also include other non-verbal elements, such as silent music (Oittinen 2004, 25).

According to Oittinen (2004, 26), the tone of the song will play in the mind of the reader if the reader is already familiar with the song. Thus, the translator must translate the words to fit the rhythm and tone of the song in order to keep the audience happy (Oittinen 2004, 26).

In conclusion, the pictures in the book must match the words. As Oittinen (2004, 35) points out, a picture book is an iconotext, a sequential combination of pictures and words, and when examining a picture book one should consider both of the forms of narration. The pictures

depict the events of the book and help naming things, thus the reader learns to conceptualize with the help of the pictures (Oittinen 2004, 26).

This means a translator has to make sure their translated words match the pictures. Usually it is not possible to change the pictures to match the translation, since picture books are co-printed (Oittinen et al. 2017, 17). Co-printing means that different language translated versions of the original book are printed at the same time (Oittinen et al. 2017, 17). This can result in a mismatch of words and pictures. In addition, if the pictures have words in the source language sometimes they can be left in the book. This can confuse the reader and it also reveals that the book is in fact, a translation instead of an original.

Oittinen (2004, 97) remarks that picture books are also children's first contact to literature and reading. Thus, picture books have an effect on the children and the attitude the child will have towards literature later in life (Oittinen 2004, 10). Picture books, therefore, have an important responsibility on children's language learning, verbal and visual. A picture book can also have a social effect on the reader through ideology or social constructs (Oittinen et al. 2017, 21)

2.2 Translating Children's Literature

When translating children's literature, the issue of one's child image appears. According to Oittinen (2000, 3), translators have a specific, perhaps unique, vision of childhood in their mind which affects their translation of children's literature. Different cultures and societies have different perception of children and childhood and, when translating, one must picture the audience to whom they are translating (Oittinen, 2000, 4). A translator can have a specific image of a child who they write to and things that they need to think about include the age of the child, the level of knowledge the child has and what is appropriate for the child to read. Translating for a 5-year-old versus translating for an 8-year-old is different. In different countries children begin school at different ages, therefore there is no consensus even on what age are the children beginning the first grade (Oittinen 2000, 4). This means that if a book's target audience is children under school age, the target audience of the translation could be of different age than the original target audience.

As Oittinen (2000, 4) remarks, child image is a complex concept that simultaneously is personal and society conformed. Alvstad (2010, 22) lists cultural context adaptation as one of the main focuses of children's literature translation. As Alvstad (2010, 22) elaborates, cultural

context adaptation in children's literature has two sides: if children's literature is filled with strange concepts belonging to the source culture and lacking from the target culture, a text can be too difficult for the child to comprehend. On the other hand, these oddities can educate the child and add to the pedagogical stance the book might have (Alvstad 2010, 22).

As mentioned in the preceding section, children's literature can include ideology. Alvstad (2010, 23) mentions that children's literature can sometimes be adapted or ideologically manipulated to fit the adults values. This demonstrates additionally the unique target audience mentioned earlier and how much the adults have control and power over children's literature and, therefore, their worldviews as well.

2.3 Humor

As already mentioned in the introduction, humor is of great value in interactions and social conventions, it is important to us humans (Ritchie 2004, 1). Still, humor has not been clearly defined and no major theory on why or how something is funny is available (Ritchie 2004, 1). Although no major theory on humor is currently available, humor has been an interest of study since the ancient Greece. Plato is inarguably considered as "the first theorist of humor" (Attardo 1994, 18). As this suggests, the concept of humor is complex and difficult to explain or define. Humor also has its ties in copious disciplines such as psychology and linguistics. In this thesis, I will approach humor in the viewpoint of translation.

Ritchie (2004, 13) defines his term *verbally expressed humour* through Attardo's term verbal joke: "jokes which are expressed by means of a linguistic system (or its derivatives, like writing)" (Attardo 1994, 96). In this thesis, I will also be analyzing verbally expressed humour since my material is a children's book and its English translation, therefore written humor.

A definition of a joke would be a text whose fundamental purpose is to create a humorous reaction in its audience (Ritchie 2004,15). In his book, Ritchie (2004, 183) divides jokes into *propositional* and *linguistic jokes* and the humor in both of these types of jokes depends on background information. According to Ritchie (2004, 183), a propositional joke is based on two interpretations, these interpretations can be either contrasted with each other or they have to be inappropriate, whereas a linguistic joke is based on linguistic elements, for example similarity in phonetics. In addition, a linguistic joke has only one interpretation, whereas a

propositional joke has two, and a propositional joke has a delivery mechanism which makes the reader/hearer interpret the joke differently (Ritchie 2004, 183).

According to Ritchie (2004, 46), one of the fundamental concepts of humor is *incongruity*. However, as with humor, incongruity does not have a stable definition (Ritchie 2004, 47). Oxford English Dictionary defines *incongruous* as “not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings or other aspects of something”. This denotes that all the authors writing about incongruity might not even have the same idea of incongruity in mind (Ritchie 2004, 47). However, Ritchie (2004, 47) subcategorizes *static* and *dynamic incongruity* where static incongruity is defined by instantaneous and dynamic as sequential.

As mentioned earlier, jokes are based on background information that the receiver is assumed to have. In literature, a joke is written for a specific audience and when literature is translated the audience changes as well. Jokes can also be culture specific and if translated directly, the humorous effect will not transfer and the target audience will not have the same reaction as the source audience (Vandaele 2010, 150). A translator’s mistake, when translating humor, can be to some extent quite obvious if the reader does not laugh or even smile at the translated humor (Vandaele 2010, 149).

3 Tatu’s and Patu’s Marvelous Christmas

Aino Havukainen and Sami Toivonen are the authors and illustrators of the children’s book series Tatu and Patu. The couple work together as writers, illustrators and graphic designers. Havukainen and Toivonen won the Finlandia Junior award in 2007 with their book *This is Finland (Tatun ja Patun Suomi)* from the Tatu and Patu series. The book sold hundred thousand copies in its first year. Havukainen and Toivonen have also won the children and youth nonfiction literature award Tietopöllö in 2010 with their Tatu and Patu book series. In addition, the rights to the series have been sold to 21 countries so far.

In the beginning of *Tatu’s and Patu’s Marvelous Christmas* some background information about the characters is given. Tatu and Patu are brothers who are from Oddsville where things are done differently. Therefore, they are very curious and excited to explore new things in our world. Veera is their best friend and she likes to spend time with them because around them normal things turn out wonderful. In this book, Veera invites Tatu and Patu over to spend Christmas together. Tatu and Patu are excited because they have never celebrated Christmas before. Unfortunately, Tatu and Patu end up going to the wrong house. The family whose

house they go to are away for Christmas at Tenerife so the house is empty. The house is not decorated for Christmas. Tatu and Patu decide to decorate the (wrong) house and surprise Veera. Then the story goes on with Tatu and Patu trying to remember what Veera has told them about Finnish Christmas traditions. They are confused with all the different traditions and combine different elements from different traditions together which results in new and fictional traditions. This combination of the traditions is the basis of the book's humor. In order to find the combinations funny, the reader must be familiar with Finnish Christmas traditions.

4 Analysis of the Material

In this section, I will analyze instances of humor and how they have been translated from Finnish into English. Even though this book is a picture book and the pictures have a major role in the book, systematic multimodal analysis is beyond the scope of this study. However, I will analyze the impact the pictures have on the words and translation when needed. I began my analysis by reading the book in Finnish and in English and by gathering all the instances of the book's characteristic humor. I then categorized the humor instances into four categories: onomatopoeic sound effects, Christmas carols, humor based on misunderstandings and mixed bunch.

As I mentioned in the theory section of this thesis, incongruity is seen as an essential concept of humor and jokes. The humor in this book is no exception to this conception. As a matter of fact, incongruity is the whole basis of the book's humor. This relates to the fact that Tatu and Patu are unfamiliar with many of the Christmas traditions featured in the book. This makes them mixing up different concepts that the reader is familiar with. The reader will most likely recognize the incongruity which results in humor.

All of the Finnish examples have been translated into English by myself with the exception of the sound effect examples. The English translations can be found in brackets after each Finnish example. I have not translated the sound effect examples because they do not have literal meanings. However, I have explained and translated the Finnish words behind the sound effects into English in order for the examples to be completely understood. Next, I will discuss my findings.

4.1 Onomatopoeic Sound Effects

One of the characteristic ways of creating humor for this book and book series are onomatopoeic sound effects. Cambridge dictionary defines *onomatopoeic* as “sounding similar to the noise the word refers to”. The sound effects used in this book are unique and innovative. I have collected the sound effects and their translations that are funny and unusual. Unusual here refers the sound effects from the book sounding similar to the names of objects, instead of the noise these objects make.

The humor of the sound effects is based on incongruity since the reader expects the sound effects to be of the regular kind. Yet, the book has created sound effects of its own which differ from the regularly used sound effects. In addition, the humor represented in this category could be seen as belonging to the category of propositional jokes but also linguistic jokes. Since this category focuses on sound effects, it can be assumed some phonetics are involved. Although, propositional jokes are based on different interpretations and the reader could assume that the sound effects refer to the sound instead of the object. However, these sound effects do not have any delivery mechanisms. They stand alone waiting for the reader to comprehend the linkage between the sound effect and the object or action, instead of the actual sound.

On page 11, Tatu uses a measuring tape to measure Santa Claus. In the picture next to the measuring tape, a sound effect is used to depict the sound the measuring tape makes when it is pulled out. Example 1 presents the Finnish sound effect followed by the English version:

(1) RUL!
RRRM!

I assume the Finnish *RUL!* refers to the verb *rullata* ‘roll’ or to the name of the object in question, *rullamitta* ‘measuring tape’. Therefore, the Finnish sound effect refers to a different word, whereas the English sound effect refers only to the sound the object in question makes. In Finnish *rul* is not a generally used sound effect since it refers to the object and the verb associated with the action instead of the actual sound it makes. Therefore, this sound effect is unique to the text and its humor is derived from the incongruity, whereas the English translation does not have this incongruity.

On page 24, Patu says he brushes his teeth with glögg and douses his armpits with cinnamon, which can also be seen in the picture. These actions are also accompanied with sound effects in the picture.

(2) KANEL! KANEL!

HARJ! HARJ!

SHAKITY! SHAKE!

CH-CH! CH-CH!

The Finnish version has *KANEL! KANEL!* next to the cinnamon container which Patu is shaking towards his armpit and *HARJ! HARJ!* next to the toothbrush which Patu is brushing his teeth with. In the English version, these have been translated as *SHAKITY! SHAKE!* and *CH-CH! CH-CH!*. The same pattern, as in the previous example, is then repeated. In the Finnish version, *KANEL!* refers to the word *kaneli* ‘cinnamon’ and *HARJ!* refers to both the noun *harja* ‘a brush’ and the verb *harjata* ‘to brush’. However in the English versions, *SHAKITY! SHAKE!* refers to the shaking action of the cinnamon container and the *CH-CH! CH-CH!* refers to the sound the action of brushing one’s teeth makes. As in Example 1, the humor in the Finnish version is derived from the incongruity, whereas the English translation does not present incongruity.

On the following page, Tatu and Patu are still panicking about Christmas and it is time to wrap some presents. Tatu says that he is going to wrap himself which the picture also confirms. Three sound effects surround the wrapped-up Tatu:

(3) RAPI! RAPI! RAPI!

RAPY! ROPY! ROPY!

The source behind the sound effect in the Finnish version is quite obvious. It refers to the verb *rapista* ‘rustle’ which is the sound wrapping paper makes when it is being handled. The source behind the English version I cannot recognize. This could be due to my limited knowledge of the English language and a native speaker might be able to recognize it. Although I believe the sound effect’s reference could be to *wrapping paper* and the act of *wrapping*. However, perhaps the form *WRAPY!* could have been easier to link to *wrapping paper* and *wrapping*. Nevertheless, incongruity is present in both of the sound effects since neither of the sound effects are commonly used.

In conclusion, I find that the English translations of the Finnish sound effects do not preserve the humorous effect the Finnish ones have with the exception of Example 3. In Examples 1 and 2, the unique sound effects have been translated using general and typical sound effects. Therefore, the English versions are quite common and general sound effects used also elsewhere, not merely in this book, whereas the Finnish sound effects are specifically written and invented for this book which is the reason the sound effects are humorous. In other words, the English translations in Examples 1 and 2 do not play with incongruity as much as the original examples. Example 3 does preserve incongruity but the spelling of the sound effect could be easier to link to the source of the word.

4.2 Christmas Carols

Since the book's theme is Christmas, specifically Christmas in Finland, it entails traditional Christmas carols as well. Christmas carols are not traditionally funny or humorous but in the book some lyrics have been altered, resulting in humor. Yet again, the humor can be seen based on incongruity and background knowledge. The reader is assumed to know and recognize the featured carols and if they do not recognize them, the joke is not delivered. The examples in this category, with the exception of one, belong in the category of propositional jokes. The audience expects the carol to finish in a certain way with the original lyrics but instead the lyrics have been modified. The delivery of the humor in the book also has some suspense since the carols have been divided into speech bubbles of the two main characters. One begins the carol with the original lyrics and then the other one finishes the lyrics in an unexpected way. Next, I will present the examples.

In Example 4, the Finnish Christmas carol *Kulkuset* has been replaced with a different song in the English translation, although the carol does have an English version called *Jingle Bells*.

(4) On kuusen alla lämmin... ..kun lunta tuiskuttaa! (It's warm under the tree.. when it's snowing!)

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree! Thy leaves are so sharp and pointy!

The correct Finnish lyrics do not mention that it is “warm under the tree” but that it is “warm under the blanket”. However, the picture depicts Tatu and Patu carrying a Christmas tree on their shoulders and since the Christmas tree is of great size, Tatu and Patu seem to be slightly buried under the tree. Therefore, the modified lyrics refer to the picture.

The English translation follows the lead by also modifying the lyrics to suit the scene. The correct lyrics of the carol refer to the Christmas tree's leaves being "so unchanging", not "sharp and pointy". The modified lyrics also converse with the picture of Tatu and Patu carrying the Christmas tree, and I could imagine, its' needles sting their faces. I believe this translation has preserved the original humor. The translation communicates with the picture same as the original and the modified lyrics also follow the theme of the book. However as mentioned in the theory section earlier, lyrics and their translations in picture books should match the original rhythm of the song. In the Finnish example, the modified lyrics do fit the rhythm of the song but in the English example, "sharp and pointy" has four syllables, whereas "unchanging" has three syllables. This confuses the rhythm of the song.

On the following page, Tatu and Patu are carrying the same Christmas tree inside the house. This time in the Finnish version, Tatu and Patu are singing two different songs. Neither of these original Finnish songs are found in English and they have been replaced by a traditional English Christmas carol.

(5) Joulun taas, joulun taas, lattiat täynnä puuroo! Joulupuun on rakennettu, Tatu on jo ovella!
(Christmas is yet again, Christmas is yet again, floors are filled with porridge! Christmas tree has been build, Tatu is already at the door!)

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Everywhere Tatu and Patu go!

These songs have the same patterns as the previous one: the lyrics have been modified with a humorous effect and the jokes have similar patterns. In the correct lyrics of the first Finnish song *Joulun taas*, "the pot is full of porridge" instead of "the floors". This modification does not refer to the picture nor the scene.

In the second song *Joulupuun on rakennettu* which is Tatu's line, "Christmas being close already" has been replaced with "Tatu being already on the door". Here in Tatu's line, the reference to the scene and picture is quite obvious since Tatu is at the door entering the house. In the English translation a clear reference to the picture and scene is also made with the modified lyrics. The original lyrics of *It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas* tell that "it is beginning to look like Christmas everywhere you go" and in the modification "you" has been replaced with "Tatu and Patu". Therefore, even though the song has been replaced with a different song, the joke has still remained fairly similar: the humorous effect is intact. Yet, the issue of the modified lyrics matching the original rhythm occur. In the Finnish example, the

modified lyrics still match the rhythm of the carol, whereas the English translation does not match since “you” has been replaced with “Tatu and Patu”.

Yet again, the lyric, in Example 6, is from a traditional Finnish carol *Tonttujen jouluyö* which does not have an English translation. This time though, the lyrics are not replaced with an English carol. Consequently, the lyrics have not been translated at all but kept the same as the original.

(6) TIP TAP TIP TAP TIPETIPETIPTAP

In the book this *tip tap* also refers to the sound of the leaking water faucet, which is seen in the background of the picture. *Tip tap* is the typical onomatopoeic expression for drops of water in Finnish. I believe this is the reason why this song reference has not been replaced in the English translation. If it had been replaced by an English carol, there would not have been a reference to the leaking water faucet. Therefore, the translation would have missed an element and a reference to the picture from the book.

As I mentioned earlier, children’s literature is usually read aloud by adults to children. Therefore, when the adult is reading the book, the child focuses on the pictures instead of the words. This element that links the song to the leaking water faucet is something that the adult might not notice because they are focusing on the words they are reading. Thus, the child looking at the pictures is more likely to notice this and perhaps links it to the song. It could also be that the adult remarks this and explains it to the child. Since this song is not found in English, the Finnish-speaking and the English-speaking readers have a different experience. The Finnish readers are most likely to be able to recognize the song and also link it to the leaking water faucet. Therefore, the Finnish readers can find humor from the link between the Christmas carol and the leaking noise.

To the English readers, in turn, the effect is different. English readers are not likely to recognize the song unless they have knowledge of Finnish culture and Christmas traditions, Finnish Christmas carols in particular. This could be possible, though, if the English readers were living in Finland, for example. The readers of the English translation could also be Finns living abroad or Finns whose children do not speak Finnish. Therefore they might be familiar with the Finnish culture and traditions. However, to those English readers who do not recognize the song, a part of the joke is missed. They can probably link the song to the leaking sound but they do not recognize that it is, in fact, a song and not just a random sound.

For example, they might think that Patu is just mimicking the leaking sound. Therefore, the joke is not transferred completely in the English translation.

In addition, this sequence of words might be difficult for the English readers to read, especially aloud. The pronunciation can be tricky for the English readers, especially *tipetiptiptap* because there are no spaces between the “words”. I believe the spaces have been deleted in order to represent the rhythm of the singing: the *tip tap* is sung slower than the *tipetipteptiptap* part. However to the English reader, this sequence can be difficult to comprehend, for it does not make any sense, and thus to pronounce, as well. As I discussed earlier in the theory part, children’s books are usually co-printed. This could be the reason why this *tip tap* sound effect of the water faucet has not been translated into English. In English, *drip drip* is perhaps more commonly used sound effect for a leaking or dripping water faucet.

In Example 7 below, the translator did not need to replace the Finnish song with a different English song because this song is found in both languages: *Jouluyö*, *Juhlayö* and *Silent Night*.

(7) Jouluyö, Juhlayö... ..häähhyyh haih oh hyö! (päättynyt kaik on työ = all the work has been done)

Silent night, holy night... ..aaa iii caam aaa iii brai! (= all is calm all is bright)

However, the translator was faced with a different problem. This scene follows the wrapping paper scene mentioned earlier in Section 4.1. Tatu is inside the wrapping paper and Patu has a Christmas present in his mouth. Due to Patu having a present in his mouth, he cannot pronounce the lyrics clearly which is represented in the spelling of the lyrics. Patu cannot close his mouth and his lips cannot touch because the present stretches his mouth wide. For this reason, Patu cannot pronounce the letters *p*, *t*, *n*, nor *k*. In the text, these consonants are replaced with the letter *h*. In the English version, the same technique is not used. For example, *m* and *b* cannot be pronounced without lips touching. Therefore, the Finnish spelling is more realistic than the English spelling. Although, I believe the aim is not to be as realistic as possible but to humor the reader.

In conclusion, the translations of the Christmas carols do preserve the humor of the original to some extent with the exception of one. In Example 6, the humor and reference of the original do not transfer in the translation, or non-translation, since the lyrics have not been translated into English. Luckily for the translator, Christmas carols are also found in the English-

speaking cultures. Even though some of the carols found in this book do not have lyrics in English, the translator managed to find adequate replacements. I also believe the pictures had some impact on the choosing of the English carols and the lyrics' modifications. However, I suggest that the translator has not taken the rhythm of the songs into consideration as well as the Finnish writers have since the English examples do not fit the original rhythm of the carols in question.

4.3 Humor Based on Misunderstandings

As noted before, Tatu and Patu are not familiar with Christmas and its traditions. Therefore, they do not fully understand all traditions or Christmas in general. They do have some ideas of what Christmas is and what kind of traditions Finnish Christmas has but they mix them up, for example they think that during Christmas you decorate Santa Claus instead of a Christmas tree. In this category, I will examine the humor based on these misconceptions that Tatu and Patu have of Finnish Christmas traditions. In this category, I believe the connection with incongruity is quite obvious. The reader is familiar or at least assumed to be familiar with Finnish Christmas traditions, therefore the mix ups of the traditions create incongruity for the reader.

In Example 8, Patu says that he is excited that Veera invited them over to celebrate Christmas. In Finnish, the word *joulu* 'Christmas' and *koulu* 'school' rhyme. Due to the similarity of the two words, Patu has mixed them up and he says that he is excited that Veera invited them over to spend school (instead of Christmas). Then Tatu corrects Patu by saying that "No, Christmas, Patu, Christmas!" and later Patu mixes the two words again by saying "Soon we will arrive there. Then the school begins!" Tatu corrects Patu again by saying "No, Christmas!". In the English version, the joke has been translated slightly differently, since in English *Christmas* and *school* do not rhyme. The English joke does not play with rhyme, either. Instead, the joke is based on the use of the definite article *the*. In English, Christmas is not referred to with an article but here in the book, Patu refers to Christmas as "the Christmas".

In my opinion, the English joke is not as funny as the Finnish joke. It does not have the play on words that the Finnish one has. It could have been translated by replacing Christmas with something else, or replacing school with something that rhymes with Christmas, or using alliteration, or Patu could have mistaken Christmas with another holiday since the whole point

of the joke is the misunderstanding and mix-up. This joke could have also retained the basis of the joke misunderstanding since the whole book and its storyline and the humor are based on the misunderstandings. Although, using the definite article *the* wrong or inappropriately does create incongruity.

(8) Veera oli tosi mukava, kun pyysi meidät kotiinsa viettämään **koulua!** (It was really nice of Veera to invite us to her home to spend school!)

Eikun **joulua**, Patu, **joulua!** (No, Christmas, Patu, Christmas!)

Kohta ollaan perillä. Sitten alkaa koulu! (Soon we will arrive there. Then the school begins!)

Eikun **joulu!** (No, Christmas!)

It was so nice of Veera to invite us to her house to celebrate the Christmas!

Christmas seems like a very interesting and enjoyable event.

We're almost there and then the Christmas starts!

In Example 9, there is also a word play and a mix of two words: 'stressi' and 'strösseli' *sprinkles* and *stress* which are similar words even in English, not only in Finnish. In Finnish, the words begin with the same consonant clusters. In English, the words also begin with consonant clusters but with the difference of one letter. This joke can be categorized as a linguistic joke since the joke is based on the two words sound similar and the spelling is also similar. Yet, the same cannot be stated of the English translation.

(9) Ai kamala, meille tulee älytön kiire! Nyt iski kuule ihan järkyttävä **jouluströsseli!** Äh, eikun tarkoitin tietysti **joulustressi!** Äkkiä hommiin! (Oh no, we're going to be in such a rush! Now I got hit with a terrible Christmas sprinkle! Ugh, no I meant Christmas stress of course! Quickly to work!)

This is dreadful! We have so much to do! Oh no, here comes the **Christmas stress!** Help, stop me! I'm getting the **holiday jitters!** Quick, to work!

In the English version, the joke has been rewritten and it does not have the same playfulness of words nor the mix up of words. The translation does not preserve the similarity of the words either. In the English version, "Christmas sprinkles" has been replaced with *holiday jitters*. Even though *holiday jitters* is a playful phrase, it does not have a reference to *the Christmas stress*. In the picture, Tatu is shaking presumably due to *the Christmas stress*. Therefore, I believe *holiday jitters* here refers to the picture where Tatu is seen shaking or jittering. Thus, instead of playing with the words, the translator makes an explicit reference to

the picture. In the original, this sort of reference is not made. The Finnish-speaking readers most likely do see a reference between the picture of Tatu shaking and his line about the stress, that the shaking results from the stress, but it is not implied as explicitly as it is in the English version. The joke and the reference is still humorous, even though the strategy is different.

In Example 10, the joke is translated word-for-word and the joke plays around the fact that Tatu and Patu have mixed up two different Christmas traditions: Christmas tree and its decoration and Santa Claus. In the joke, Santa Claus is described with two adjectives that usually describe Christmas trees: fresh and fragrant. In addition, the joke also refers to the decoration of Santa Claus, which is usually associated with Christmas trees. Therefore, the comedy is derived from combining words in a peculiar way, i.e. incongruity. A person is not normally referred to as fresh; fragrant, in the other hand, could refer to people.

(10) Ihmiset hakevat aina jouluisin joulupukkikauppiaalta tuoreen ja tuoksuvan joulupukin, veivät sen sitten kotiinsa ja... ööö... koristelevat sen. (During Christmas, people buy a fresh and a fragrant Santa Claus from the Santa Claus dealer and then they take it home and... umm... decorate it.)

Every Christmas people go to the market and buy a fresh-cut Santa Claus, take it home and ... umm... decorate it.

To conclude, the translations of the jokes based on misunderstandings vary. Two jokes were altered and one was not. Examples 9 and 10 successfully remained funny but Example 8 did not preserve the humor of the original. However, Example 8 could be argued to have preserved the original humor since the humor in both the original and the translation is based on incongruity, even though the execution is not as elaborate.

4.4 Mixed Bunch

In this category, I present examples of humor that do not fall under a specific category. Nevertheless, I came to the conclusion that these examples would make a good addition to the other categories.

In the joke presented in Example 11, the Finnish version plays around the word 'kuusi' which means both the number six and the spruce tree. This joke falls under the linguistic jokes category as does the English translation of the joke.

(11) Osta kuusi tai seitsemän (Buy a spruce/six or seven)

Buy a tree or three

In the English version, the joke has a similar logic with *tree* and *three* being similar-sounding words. One difference is the number, since the Finnish version tells you to buy “six or seven” or “tree or seven”, whereas the English version tells you to buy only one or three. The other difference is in the tree. In the English translation, the original spruce has been replaced with its hypernym *tree*. In Finnish, a Christmas tree is ‘joulukuusi’ meaning ‘Christmas spruce’ or ‘joulupuu’ ‘Christmas tree’, whereas in English the species of the tree is not specified. Still, the joke transfers in both languages and they even have similar bases for the jokes.

In the scene of Example 12, Patu still has the same Christmas present in his mouth as mentioned earlier in Example 7. Again, Patu cannot pronounce words correctly which can be seen in the spelling of the words in Example 12. I have not added a translation of the Finnish example because the English example is a direct translation of the Finnish example.

12) Veera! Honhhu! =tonntu

Veera! Ewf! =elf

Yet again the humor comes from the misspelling. In the Finnish example, the letter *t* has been replaced with the letter *h*. This is the same strategy as in Example 7. As can be seen in the English version, the letter *l* has been replaced with the letter *w*. Therefore, the English translation employs a similar strategy. The joke is simple, yet funny and the translation does justice to the original.

Below in Example 13, another stressful situation is depicted. Here the humor is derived from the compound *Joulurauhoitu* ‘Christmasrelax’ which is not a typically used word, instead it is unique to this book. Instead of translating it word-for-word the translator chose to use a commonly used phrase with a Christmassy twist and alliteration. The phrase referred to here is “Cool your jets”. As with the Finnish version, a known phrase has been combined with a Christmas related word to fit the scene of the book. Both of these also rely on incongruity since the reader is expecting the regular phrase. The translation has the same idea as the original but it has been adapted to fit better the target audience and language.

(13) Hyvä on, Hyvä on. Joulurauhoitu! Jatketaan etsimistä. (Alright, alright. Christmasrelax!
We’ll keep looking.)

OK, OK. Cool your jingle jets! We’ll keep looking.

In conclusion, the translations in this category seem to have reached their goal of preserving humor. The translations follow the strategy of the originals. Although the examples in this category do not have a common factor, the translations have followed the strategy of the originals which brings this category together.

5 Conclusions

In this thesis, I set out to answer the questions how the humor has been translated and if the translation preserves the original humor in *Tatu's and Patu's Marvelous Christmas*. I categorized the instances of humor found in the book into four categories: onomatopoeic sound effects, Christmas carols, humor based on misunderstandings and mixed bunch. Then, I analyzed the instances in these categories. During my analysis, I found that some of the English translations were not as funny as the Finnish originals. In the onomatopoeic category, two sound effects were translated into general sound effects and one sound effect was translated into a unique sound effect similar to the original sound effect. In the second category, Christmas carols, multileveled results were found. Since Christmas carols exist in English as well, all the carols were translated into English with the exception of one. However, the English translations did not take the rhythm of the carols into consideration. In the third category, humor based on misunderstandings, the results altered since two of the translations did preserve the humor, whereas one translation could be argued not to have as humorous effect as the original. In the last category, mixed bunch, the translations preserved the humor and the strategy of the originals better than the translations in the previous categories.

Due to the fact the language pair Finnish–English has been studied less than English–Finnish, this thesis provided interesting discoveries of translation of Finnish children's literature into a dominant language. Due to the limitations of a Bachelor's thesis, this thesis studies only few examples. A more comprehensive study, perhaps a Master's thesis, could employ more examples. A study could be done on the entire book series and its humor. The multimodality factor could also be studied thoroughly. In addition, a comparative study with different language translations, for example with languages that have a smaller or a nonexistent Christmas vocabulary could also bring interesting viewpoints, especially with the Christmas carols.

6 References

6.1 Research Data

Havukainen, Aino and Sami Toivonen. 2015. *Tatun ja Patun ihmeellinen joulu*. Keuruu: Otava.

Havukainen, Aino and Sami Toivonen. 2017. *Tatu's and Patu's Marvelous Christmas*. Translated by Owen F. Witesman. Helsinki: Otava Publishing.

6.2 Literature

Alvstad, Cecilia. 2010. "Children's literature and translation." In *Handbook of Translation Studies. Vol 1*, edited by Gambier, Yves and Luc van Doorslaer. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co.

Attardo, Salvatore. 1994. *Linguistic Theories of Humor*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Cambridge Dictionary. 2020. S.v. "onomatopoeic." Accessed April 22, 2020.
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/onomatopoeic>

Oittinen, Riitta. 2000. *Translating for Children*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc.

Oittinen, Riitta. 2004. *Kuvakirja kääntäjän kädessä*. Helsinki: Lasten Keskus.

Oittinen, Riitta, Anne Ketola, Melissa Garavini and Chiara Galletti. 2018. *Translating Picturebooks: Revoicing the Verbal, the Visual, and the Aural for a Child Audience*. New York: Routledge.

Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd ed. (2010), s.v. "incongruous."

Ritchie, Graeme D. 2004. *The Linguistic Analysis of Jokes*. London: Routledge.

Vandaele, Jeroen. 2010. "Humor in translation." In *Handbook of Translation Studies. Vol. 1*, edited by Gambier, Yves and Luc van Doorslaer. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co.