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[See table of contents](#)

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Article abstract

A book such as *Alice in Wonderland*, written for a girl, but nowadays understandable only by adults, the translation of proper nouns can reveal the audience for which translators have addressed their works. This article looks at the translation of proper nouns. These cultural traits are first names, historical references, place names and names of languages: should these be changed to facilitate comprehension by children? This study is then used to evaluate some aspects of theories proposed by Shavit and Oittinen concerning adaptation and translation.

When Children's Literature Transcends its Genre: Translating *Alice in Wonderland*

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RÉSUMÉ

Dans un livre comme *Alice au pays des merveilles*, écrit pour une fille mais compréhensible, de nos jours, uniquement par les adultes, les traductions des noms propres révèlent le public auquel les traducteurs destinent leurs ouvrages. Cet article examine la traduction des noms propres. Les traits culturels sont les prénoms, les noms de personnages historiques, les noms de lieux et les noms de langues. Devrait-on les transformer pour les rendre compréhensibles aux jeunes? Cette étude nous permettra d'évaluer certains aspects des théories de Shavit et d'Oittinen concernant la traduction et l'adaptation.

ABSTRACT

A book such as *Alice in Wonderland*, written for a girl, but nowadays understandable only by adults, the translation of proper nouns can reveal the audience for which translators have addressed their works. This article looks at the translation of proper nouns. These cultural traits are first names, historical references, place names and names of languages: should these be changed to facilitate comprehension by children? This study is then used to evaluate some aspects of theories proposed by Shavit and Oittinen concerning adaptation and translation.

MOTS-CLÉS/KEYWORDS

onomastics, cultural reference, translation theory, children's literature

Introduction

Lewis Carroll (Charles Dodgson) wrote *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* in 1862 (published 1865) for Alice Liddell. She was, at the time, ten years old. Written for a child, and about a very precocious child, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (henceforth AAIW) is a work that straddles the boundary between children's literature, and literature *tout court*. The extraordinary word play, on the linguistic plane, and the parody of mid-nineteenth century society, on the content plane, make this an adult book. At the same time, the fantastic elements and the assertion of the child protagonist's reason against the foolishness of the adults makes this appealing to children.

However, fewer and fewer children can appreciate the text directly. According to Martin Gardner, editor of *The Annotated Alice*, "the time is past when a child under fifteen, even in England, can read ALICE with the same delight as gained from, say, *The Wind in the Willows* or *The Wizard of Oz*" (Gardner 1960: 7). Shavit argues that AAIW was taken over by adult literature, only to be returned to the realm of children's literature because of the confusion of reality and imagination (Shavit 1981: 175-176). Translations therefore must choose their audience, and adjust the text to that audience.

We shall approach that adjustment in a comparative manner, through the study of twenty-three published translations of *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* into French. Most of these translators are clearly aiming at an adult audience, or at least a very sophisticated teenage reader. Hervey, studying translations of Roald Dahl's work, believes that "translations of English children's books into French never seem to follow a strategy of cultural adaptation to expectations *higher* than those placed on their ST [*Source Text*] readership, whereas many TTs [*Target Texts*] are manifestly adapted to *lower* expectations" (Hervey 1997: 61-62; Hervey's emphasis). However such simple choices as the use of the *passé simple* instead of conversational past tenses lift most translations of AAIW to a higher plane,¹ and those making serious concessions to children are a definite minority among the 23 translations. The comparison of these translations will permit us ultimately to evaluate Shavit's claims (1981) about translation and adaptation, on the basis of a large corpus.

The first translation, by Henri Bué, was written in close cooperation with Dodgson himself, and published in 1869, just four years after the English original. Dodgson seemed very pleased with the result, even though he had feared the work was untranslatable. Between the table of contents and the opening page he inserted the following message of thanks:

L'auteur désire exprimer ici sa reconnaissance envers le Traducteur de ce qu'il a remplacé par des parodies de sa composition quelques parodies de morceaux de poésie anglais, qui n'avaient de valeur que pour des enfants anglais; et aussi, de ce qu'il a su donner en jeux de mots français les équivalents des jeux de mots anglais, dont la traduction n'était pas possible.

While Dodgson's main concern is clearly the exceptional difficulty of translating the parodies and puns, by speaking of the value of these effects for English children, he implies his concern that the book will reach French children of the same age. In fact, as we shall see, Bué is one of the more adventurous of the translators in adapting the story for maximum effect on younger French readers, apparently with the full approval of the original author.

Few of the others have strayed far from the words of the original text, and many clearly address an adult audience. Two of the most recent translations (Merle and Berman) are bilingual editions with many footnotes explaining cultural features as well as the translator's choices. Papy includes an appendix with each pun listed, as well as the poems, both Dodgson's parody and the songs he was parodying.

The illustrations also vary widely, from reproductions of Tenniel's originals to highly abstract drawings by the translator himself (Bour). They too are indicative of the translator's intended audience. A comparison of their form and use would be an interesting study indeed (see Oittinen 1993).

Such work though is beyond my competence; as a linguist I work on language. What do the choices of translators, through their adaptation of cultural reference, tell us about their intended audience? In particular we shall look at a variety of cultural references in the form of proper nouns, comparing the translations and examining how a piece of literature is translated as a children's book, or as an adult book. The cultural traits are first names, historical references, place names and names of languages²: should these be changed to facilitate comprehension by children who will find them at best off-putting, and at worst incomprehensible? These proper nouns include general names (Alice, Mabel, Ada, etc.) and specific names (e.g., William the

Conqueror, New Zealand), as well as place names, and language names (English, French, etc.).

Each category, which at first glance might seem unified, turns out to have many subdivisions, for proper nouns are used for a variety of purposes. Not all of these require transformation to make the story more accessible to the child. The differentiation will help us to establish the continuum of intended audience. The first proper nouns encountered in the English text are quite ordinary ones: Alice, Dinah, Ada, Mabel. In Chapters II and III they are joined by proper nouns designating historical characters, such as William the Conqueror and Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury. Other proper nouns refer to geographical entities (Northumbria, the English coast) and finally yet others designate languages (French, English). We shall now consider each of these categories, how the translators have rendered them, and what this tells us about the translators' conception of the target audience.

1. First (given) names

"Alice" is not just the name of the protagonist, it is also the name of the historical figure that inspired the story, and it is a first name that is well known in France.³ For these reasons all of the translators have retained this name. The same is not true for the others, as these names serve different purposes.

"Dinah," the name of the cat, is almost as unanimously retained, with only one translator, Peter, opting for a generic cat name in French, "Minette." However, the peculiarity of such a name for a pet leads three others to explain that this is the name of a cat, lest the reader be confused (Scott & Keukles, Marcireau, and Anon.).⁴

In Chapter II Alice is losing her sense of certainty about herself: so many strange things are happening, could she have been changed into someone else? She fears she might have become "Ada" or "Mabel," two acquaintances of whom she is apparently not too fond.⁵ Although Mabel is of Latin origin, it is extremely rare in France (ranking 3420th among girls' first given names in recent years). Ada, though Germanic in origin, is slightly more common in France, but still very rare (overall 2305th during the past five years, and during the twentieth century never numbering more than 26 new babies in a given year).⁶ Therefore it is safe to say that these names are going to appear exotic to the French reader, while they merely appear old-fashioned to the English reader.

Two of the translators consistently choose to replace these with names better known in France. Rouillard substitutes Adrienne for Ada and Madeleine for Mabel, retaining some sound similarity, while emphasizing the ordinary quality of these girls. Adrienne reached the height of its popularity in the 1920s when it ranked 47th among French girls names, but since 1940 its numbers have been very low; Madeleine ranked as high as 3rd in the 1920s, but has been rare since 1960. Rouillard first translated *AAIW* in 1935, at the height of popularity for both of these names; she was therefore selecting two common names of similar sound. Peter replaced Ada with Annette, and Mabel with Suzanne. Annette reached its peak popularity around 1950 (69th place), and Suzanne in the 1920s (4th place, just behind Madeleine). By the time Peter was writing ca. 1970, these names were on the wane for new babies, but still common enough among adults. For her the ordinariness of the name is more important than sound similarity.

Two translators choose to replace one of the names. Papy substitutes Édith for Ada, and Bour, like Rouillard, uses Madeleine for Mabel. Édith retains the same syllable structure and some sound similarity as Ada, and had two decades of relatively high popularity, roughly 1945-1965, not coincidentally the period when Papy was preparing his translation.

A similar situation arises in Chapter VII, when Alice is asked to tell a story. She begins by naming the protagonists, three rhyming names Elsie, Lacie and Tillie. Gardner explains these choices as a play on the names of the three Liddell sisters. Elsie is "L.C." (Lorina Charlotte), Tillie is a diminutive of Edith's family nickname Matilda, and Lacie is an anagram of Alice (Gardner 1960:100). The great majority of the translators leave the names as is, even though of the three only Elsie is recorded as a French name in the 20th century, and it is extremely rare, the highest usage coming in recent years, with a maximum of 17 new babies receiving the name in a given year.

Four consistently altering them: Rouillard and Peter break ranks, as in the earlier case, as do Arnaud and the anonymous translator published by Mulder & Zoon (henceforth Anon.). In addition Bour changes the last two names:

a) Rouillard:	Marie	Annie	Lucie
b) Arnaud:	Lilie	Mimie	Ninie
c) Peter:	Susette	Annette	Toinette
d) Anon.:	Molly	Polly	Dolly
e) Bour:	(Elsie)	Julie	Titi

In general the translators have opted for finding names more common in France, retaining the same ending ([i]) as found in the original, although the spelling is sometimes different (<i> or <y>). Even these, though are not identical choices. Rouillard has chosen the most popular names with the same phonetic construction. Arnaud has settled on a reduplicative pattern, in alphabetical progression. While Anon. has retained the euphony of the originals, s/he has substituted another set of Anglo-Saxon diminutives rather than create native French variants. In an opposite approach, Peter has chosen a French diminutive ending to replace the -ie of the original.

The three common diminutives of the English text are thus generally retained in the translations, on the hope that the frequency of the -ie ending of girls' names in French will make the intended interpretation clear: three ordinary girls. As one means of adapting the text to a French children's audience, Rouillard has chosen names that will be more familiar to the French reader with the same phonetic structure. As another, Peter has replaced one diminutive structure with one more common for French.

Two other common names appear in Chapter IV, as laborers working for the White Rabbit. "Pat" and "Bill" are sent to try to dislodge Alice from the White Rabbit's house that she is rapidly outgrowing, as she changes sizes. "Bill" is the more straightforward of the two. This nickname for William has only the very rare equivalent "Billy" in French (virtually unknown before 1980) and thus it is not surprising that six of the 23 translators opt for something different. For Anon. it is as simple as reverting to the full name, and using the French equivalent Guillaume. In general, though, the translators who look for something different have imagined a common French name. Guillaume has been among the most common French boys' names

since the 1970s, but was relatively unknown before then. Eugène, the choice of Peter, was most common in the 1920s and 1930s, but has little use since 1950; Pierre, selected by Papy and Marcireau, reached the height of its popularity in the period 1940-1960, one year being the second most common boys' name. Bué used Jacques, another extremely common name, although we have no statistics for the 1860s when Bué was composing his translation. The lizard is identified as working class by his language (thank *ye... I goes* like a skyrocket), but I have been unable to determine if any of the names proposed to replace "Bill" have this connotation (or even if Bill had this connotation for Lewis Carroll).⁷

For "Pat" the connotation is more obvious. This is the stereotypical first name for Irish men, and this connotation is clearly Carroll's intention, as Pat uses many stereotypical features of Irish dialect ("sure" at the beginning of a statement, "yer" for "your," the pronunciation "arrum" for "arm," etc.). How is this ethnic and class identification in the original treated by the translators? Once again conservatism induces 17 to retain Pat, although this has no ethnic or class connotations for a French reader. Bué and Bour have made it more French, substituting Patrice for Pat.⁸ Other choices are Auguste (Arnaud), Jean (Peter) and Pierre (Anon.). Auguste was at the height of its popularity at the turn of the 20th century, ranking 18th among boys' names in 1901, and these people would have been adults at the time Arnaud was writing in the early 1930s. Jean was the single most popular first name in twentieth-century France, and Pierre was second. The translators, whether or not they changed from Pat, have not attempted to imitate the class and ethnic origin connotations of Pat, but a few have made the name more French, either by choosing the French equivalent or by choosing another common French name.

The other common name to appear in Chapter IV is "Mary Ann," which is the name the White Rabbit calls Alice. Alice is highly insulted, as she considers this a maid's name, not one that a girl of her class would bear. As this name has an easy French equivalent, all of the translators make it French, either as Marie-Anne or as Marianne (reversing the normal French order for the compound name⁹). Three translators omit one of the two names: Marie (B & A, Peter) and Annie (Anon.), which makes the name even more common (1st and 5th among French girls' first names in the 20th century). The ease of the transition from the original to the French version has made that option more tempting than we found for the earlier names with less obvious equivalents.

To summarize, the common first names used in AAIW are generally retained in the French translations, even when the names are uncommon or even unknown in France. Consistently some translators have chosen to make greater efforts to make the names more accessible to French child readers. Peter, Rouillard, Arnaud, Bour, Anon. and Papy have shown the most flexibility in adapting the story to another culture.

2. Historical names

AAIW has an extended reference to William the Conqueror and English history at the time of the Conquest in Chapters II and III, with accompanying references to the French language. We will return to the latter shortly, but for now we shall examine more closely how the translators render William the Conqueror, Edwin, Morcar,

Stigand Edgar Aetheling, and the two references to national populations, the English and the Normans. At the heart of these translational choices is the decision whether Alice is presented as an English girl or as a French girl.

William the Conqueror is first mentioned when Alice encounters the Mouse in the “Pool of Tears,” in Chapter II. Failing to get any reaction from the Mouse when she addressed it in English, Alice comes to the conclusion “it’s a French mouse, come over with William the Conqueror.” If the translator follows the author, Alice is English; but if the translator is adapting the story to French children, this is a decisive moment that will affect many subsequent choices.

Arnaud: c’est sans doute une souris normande de la suite de Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Bay: ce doit être une souris française venue avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Berman: C’est peut-être bien une souris française, venue ici avec Guillaume le Conquérant.

Bonville – Abraham: ce doit être une souris française arrivée avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Bour: ce peut être une souris anglaise débarquée avec le Prince Noir.”

Bué: “C’est sans doute une souris étrangère nouvellement débarquée.

Déchanet: Ce doit être une souris française arrivée avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Fayet: ce doit être une souris française venue avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Gausseron: Ce doit être une souris française.”

Lapalme: il doit s’agir d’une souris française, venue avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Marcireau: “Ce doit être une souris française venue avec Guillaume le Conquérant. Elle ne comprend pas l’anglais.”

Merle: Sans doute est-ce une souris française, débarquée avec Guillaume le Conquérant”

Papy: ce doit être une souris française qui est venue ici avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Parisot: c’est sans doute une souris française venue ici avec Guillaume le Conquérant.

Peter: “je pourrais m’imaginer que c’est une souris allemande qui est arrivée en France à la suite des armées prussiennes”

Prophétie: Je parierais que c’est une souris française qui a passé en Angleterre avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Ramet: C’est probablement une souris française venue ici avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Rouard: Ce doit être une souris française arrivée ici avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Rouillard: Ce doit être une souris anglaise, venue ici avec ses compatriotes pendant la guerre de Cent Ans.”

Trédez: C’est sans doute une souris française venue avec Guillaume le Conquérant.”

Anon., Scott – Keukles and Métral omit this sentence.

Two separate issues present themselves to the translator who wants to follow Carroll’s text in spirit but not in the literal meaning: the nationality of the Mouse and identity of the one whom the Mouse has followed to this shore. The translator can at least temporarily avoid the decision by making the mouse a foreigner of unspecified origin, and omitting the second half of the sentence. This is the solution chosen by Bué. Although Anon. appears to make this choice, in fact s/he has already taken a third option, making a clear choice of nationality in the preceding sentence, where Alice says to herself “Peut-être qu’elle ne comprend pas le français.” In this option Alice and the Mouse exchange positions, making Alice French, and the Mouse English. Therefore a new historical personage must be invoked in the second half of the sentence, relating to a time when the English invaded France. For Bour this is the Black Prince, and for Rouillard a more generalized group from the same period, “ses compatriotes pendant la guerre de Cent Ans.” Another option is to invoke more recent invasions of France, as does Peter. For her the Mouse is German, and he has come

with the Prussian armies. While this is a different period from the original, it is a period consistent with the time at which Carroll was writing (the Franco-Prussian War erupted only five years after the publication of AAIW), and the memory of German invasions is probably more firmly established in the minds of French children.

In Chapter III, William the Conqueror comes up again, this time as an example of the driest English prose,¹⁰ which by its aridity will help the sopping wet animals recover from their swim in the Pool of Tears. As an example of boring reading the story of William and the English earls is as good, or as bad, as any other, and only two authors, Peter and Anon, make a serious attempt at changing the text. Anon settles for a summary that delivers the message if not the effect: "Mais à la surprise d'Alice, la souris se mit à ànonner tout une leçon d'histoire, avec des quantités infinies de dates." Peter tries to match boring English history with boring French history:

Voici donc la chronologie des rois de France: il y eut tout d'abord, au V^e siècle, la première dynastie, les Mérovingiens ou rois francs, suivie de celle des Carolingiens avec Charlemagne. Vinrent ensuite les Capétiens qui conquièrent l'Angleterre et commencèrent les croisades. ... Tous ces rois contribuèrent à la grandeur du royaume de France. Ce fut toujours leur premier souci. Et ce fut leur premier souci à travers toutes les dynasties jusqu'à la proclamation de la République.

In the two chapters "William the Conqueror" serves different purposes: in Chapter II the historical accuracy is important as it relates to many other elements that will follow in the story. In Chapter III, on the other hand, there is no compelling reason to make the text more French; the point is simply boring academic prose. As a result only one translator, one who has already distinguished herself as the most "gallicizing," goes to heroic lengths to transform the passage into a French equivalent.

In Chapter III there is also a reference to Shakespeare, as the Dodo tries to determine who has won the Caucus race:

This question the Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought, and it stood for a long time with one finger pressed upon its forehead (the position in which you usually see Shakespeare, in the pictures of him), while the rest waited in silence.

Such a reference assumes a familiarity with portraits of Shakespeare that few French children, indeed few English children, would have. Shakespeare is still a well-known literary figure in France so again many of the translators have chosen to assume that the reader can imagine what pose a great writer might strike. Two translators, Gausseron and Anon., avoid the issue by omitting this parenthetical remark altogether. Four others take a different tack. *Prophétie* moves from the specific to the general, noting the pose taken by "les grands penseurs." But this translating team may have had the same image in mind as Peter, who directs the reader to a French example of a similar figure, Rodin's statue of "Le penseur." Métral may have had the same thing in mind in using "le penseur," without attributing this specifically to Rodin. The most original attempt to clarify this image is found in Arnaud's 1932 translation: "comme M. Je Sais Tout dans ses portraits," referring to the periodical *Je Sais Tout*, devoted primarily to science fiction and scientific vulgarisation¹¹.

However the use of a temporary cultural icon as opposed to a more permanent one is fraught with dangers for the longevity of the translation: some 70 years after *Je Sais Tout* ceased publication this evocation of the portrait of M. Je Sais Tout has no effect except puzzlement on the modern reader.

As we have seen in the case of given first names, proper nouns of historical reference can serve varied purposes, and this is reflected by slight variations in the translation of these nouns: where William the Conqueror is meant specifically, the translators have the option of transforming him into a character perhaps better known to a children's audience. Where he is used as an exemplar of a boring text, he can remain mostly untouched, as he and his English earls will be as boring in French as they must have seemed to the Liddell girls in English.

3. Place names

In the translation of place names, a similar pattern emerges. For the most part the place names mentioned designate more often types than actual places. In Chapter I Alice imagines that she has gone so far down the rabbit hole as to arrive at the other side of the planet, which for her means Australia and New Zealand. While this perspective can be construed as peculiar to mid-19th-century British imperialism, the fact remains that these are logical spots to represent "the antipodes" for French readers as well. Therefore 22 of 23 translators use the French versions of these two names of country (Australie and Nouvelle Zélande).

In Chapter II when Alice is trying to decide if she has been turned into Ada or Mabel (see above), she gives herself a geographical quiz. Having failed her self-imposed mathematics exam, the proof of her confusion is that she imagines that one European capital city is in fact the capital of another: "London is the capital of Paris, and Paris is the capital of Rome, and Rome – no, that's all wrong, I'm certain!" Only one translator makes the slightest change, as Bour presents Paris first.

In Chapter III the place names in the passage of boring prose are unchanged except to replace English endings by the French: Mercia > Mercie; Northumbria > Northumbrie in 17 of the translations; Bonville & Abraham and Berman consistently use the original English form, while Anon. omits them and Peter, as we have seen above, changes the sentence completely. Perhaps surprisingly, given the ready French equivalent available, the city of Canterbury retains its English spelling in 17 translations, with only three opting for the French form "Cantorbéry" (Bué, Ramet, Prophétie).

The one case in which the choice of translation is important leads to much broader variation. In Chapter II Alice imagines that near the salt water Pool of Tears there will certainly be a railroad, offering her a quick route back to reality:

Alice had been to the seaside once in her life, and had come to the general conclusion that wherever you go to on the English coast, you find a number of bathing-machines in the sea, some children digging in the sand with wooden spades, then a row of lodginghouses, and behind them a railway station.

Here only seven of the translators include the specification "English," while fourteen avoid reminding the reader of the foreignness of the terrain, a rather surprising choice given the general conservatism of the translators.

4. Names of languages

As we have seen earlier, the decision whether Alice is French or English is a crucial one in the adaptation of the story for a French audience. One would assume, therefore,

that the translation of the nouns representing the French and English languages would be equally important. And it is, but again we must distinguish between the use of the term "English" to express another idea, from its use to designate the language as opposed to other languages. The examples are almost evenly divided.

In Chapters II and VII "English" represents not that language in particular, but instead "correct usage" and "comprehensible language," respectively. Alice opens Chapter II with an ungrammatical form of comparison, which the author is quick to point out: "'Curiouser and curiouser!' cried Alice (she was so much surprised that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English)." Of the 23 translators, only Bour mentions a specific language, and he chooses to make Alice French: "elle avait pour le moment tout à fait oublié le bon français." Four translators simply omit the second half of the sentence, and thus the explicit mention of the language problem (Fayet, Rouillard, Arnaud, Marcireau), and one, Anon., transforms the sentence completely, also avoiding the question. The other 13 translators replace "good English" with the vaguer "parler / s'exprimer correctement," while four are a bit more specific, according to the error they have created in French to translate the opening words (added in parentheses below):

Gausseron: l'étonnement faisait oublier les enseignements de sa grammaire. (De plus en plus curieux, c'est-y pas vrai?)

Bonville – Abraham: qui, dans sa surprise, en oublia les règles de la grammaire. (De plus en plus pire!)

Scott – Keukles: elle en oublia un instant les usages de la bonne langue. (De plus en plus épatant!)

Peter: elle employait un mot qui n'existait pas. (Drôlasse, drôlasse!)

Gausseron and B & A speak of grammatical error, but create different sorts of errors, Gausseron adding a tag question drawn from *le français populaire*, while B & A create a comparable error in the morphology of comparison, losing in the process the notion of "curious." For S & K it is a question of using a word deemed improper in polite society; the meaning correlation with "curious" is not perfect but both express surprise. Peter creates a word using the pejorative suffix *-asse*, and then notes simply that the word does not exist.

In Chapter III the Dodo begins a speech using the terms of parliamentary procedure, only to be interrupted: "Speak English!" said the Eaglet. "I don't know the meaning of half those long words, and, what's more, I don't believe you do either!" "English" is used to represent a comprehensible language, made up of short words. Only Berman and B & A translate this as "*anglais*," while four who have consistently represented Alice as French use "*français*" (Bué, Bour, Arnaud, Peter); a fifth, Anon., omits this sentence. Fifteen, however, opt for the abstract concept rather than the specific language. Thirteen speak of clarity (*clair, plus clair, clairement, plus clairement*), one of simplicity (Papy: *plus simplement*), and one of modesty (S & K: *plus modestement*).

In Chapter VII the Hatter responds to Alice's query about his peculiar watch with a non sequitur, and Alice admits her confusion: "The Hatter's remark seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English." Here Carroll explicitly states a concept to which Chomsky was to return a century later: one can recognize

a sequence of sounds as belonging to a language, even if they have no meaning. Four of the translators specify *anglais* (Ramet, Trédez, Rouard, Berman), while four others, not quite the same group as in the previous example, use *français* (Bour, Rouillard, Arnaud, Peter). Four translators omit the second half of the sentence, and Anon. omits the entire sentence. This leaves ten others who take a more abstract approach (*correcte, grammaticale, correctement*).

In four other cases, the choice of language is crucial for the interpretation of Alice's nationality. The first two are in Chapter II. When Alice is attempting to establish communication with the Mouse, she conjectures "Perhaps it doesn't understand English," and therefore decides to try the only other language she knows: "'Où est ma chatte?" which was the first sentence in her French lesson-book." If Alice is an English girl, the first will be translated by *anglais*, the second by *français*, and this is indeed the case for fifteen of the translators. Four (Bour, Rouillard, Arnaud, and Anon.) have reversed the order, as one might expect, and Peter concurs with them for the first sentence. But Peter has set up the conflict between Germany and France, so she substitutes German for English in the second sentence. Bué, who worked with Carroll in creating his translation, uses the unspecific "cette langue" in the first instance, and Italian in the second. S & K omit any reference to language; if the Mouse does not understand Alice, it is because the little animal cannot hear her (*elle a les oreilles bouchées par l'eau*).

The other set are in Chapter IX, when Alice and the Mock Turtle are comparing their schools. Alice states "we learned French and music," to which the Turtle replies "Now, at ours, they had, at the end of the bill, 'French, music, and washing – extra.'" Anon. has omitted this entire chapter, while Fayet, S & K and Arnaud avoid mentioning a specific language. For Bour and Rouillard it is English, maintaining the reversal established in Chapter II, and Bué and Peter also retain the choices made earlier (Italian and German, respectively). The only new complication is Lapalme's inexplicable switch from French to Spanish.

5. Conclusions: Proper names and intended audiences

Through the study of the adaptation of proper names we have determined (1) that the same proper noun in the same text does not always have the same import, and this distinction will be reflected in the translations; and (2) that in adapting the text for a younger audience the fundamental choice for the translator is whether Alice is English or French. Consistently Bué, Rouillard, Bour, Arnaud, Peter and Anon. have considered Alice a little French girl, a fact reflected by their choices in the translation of the specific uses of French (language), English (language), William the Conqueror, and certain first names. However the non-specific use of the same terms offers other options – the almost unanimous use of William the Conqueror when it is simply a question of reproducing boring academic prose, or the widespread substitution of more abstract terms that specify the particular quality of language that is being criticized, in the case of "English." These examples permit us to establish a continuum of adaptation, from very little (e.g., Berman and Merle) to quite extensive (Peter, Arnaud).

The examination of this type of adaptation leads us to consider whether adaptation of a book on the boundary between children's and adult literature is a permissible

or an impermissible “liberty.” Shavit claims that the translator of children’s literature “can permit himself great liberties regarding the text because of the peripheral position children’s literature occupies in the polysystem” (Shavit 1981: 171). These liberties might take the form of changing the text to boost its moral/ educational value, or changing the text to adapt to the child’s level of reading comprehension. Shavit asks “which textual elements were changed so that they could become, in the translator’s opinion, acceptable for children” (*ibid.*: 175). Noting that Carroll himself adapted the book to clarify its moral messages (in *The Nursery Alice*, published in 1890), Shavit claims that “translators who adapted *Alice in Wonderland* to children acted principally in the same framework of system constraints.” In particular, Shavit thinks that

adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland* tried to adjust the text to the acceptable modeling of reality in everything concerning the relations of time and space and the separation of reality and imagination. This modeling can be discerned most clearly when analyzing the translations of the first chapter. (Shavit 1981: 175)

This evidence is drawn from the blurring of the beginning – is Alice dreaming or is this reality as the White Rabbit runs past:

So she was considering, in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

In an analysis apparently of Hebrew translations of the text, Shavit makes the following claim:

In the original, Alice is sleepy, but not asleep, and it is impossible to decide whether she is seeing the rabbit in a dream or in reality. The rabbit could be part of the described reality, passing by the bank of the river, and on the other hand, could be part of an imaginative world. (Alice herself is wondering about him, thus “making strange” of his appearance). Translators, however, decided not to leave the situation blurred and made Alice definitely dream the whole story. (Shavit 1981: 176)

While this analysis of Alice’s state is justified, can one say the same for the comments on the translation, based on the broad survey of 23 translations into French?

The study of the treatment of proper nouns has given us a framework for classifying the amount of “liberty” the translators are willing to take with the text. As we have already noted, only six of the 23 translations we have studied take significant liberties in the domain of proper nouns. We have studied how these might have facilitated comprehension by the younger reader. Only one of these translators, Anon., has taken serious liberties with the text itself, intercalating a long story by Alice’s sister at the beginning, omitting chapters IX, X, and XI, inserting his/her own commentaries to a little girl with a dog names “César,” and substituting a didactic ending for the original, much in keeping with Shavit’s predictions. In the very last paragraph the anonymous translator explains this freedom:

Bien sûr, les enfants se rendent bien compte que tout ce voyage d’Alice dans cet univers de rêve ne représente pas la réalité de tous les jours. Mais le Pays des Merveilles et tous ses habitants sont bien connus de tous les enfants.

Chacun d’eux y est allé au moins une fois, et les aventures qu’ils y ont vécues sont parfois un peu différentes de celles d’Alice.

[...]

C'est pourquoi le récit d'Alice au Pays des Merveilles n'est pas toujours exactement le même; plus on le raconte à des enfants, et plus il s'enrichit d'épisodes nouveaux que les enfants ajoutent eux-mêmes à la véritable histoire d'Alice.

Aussi, il est possible qu'un jour on écrira toutes les aventures que toutes les petites filles ont rêvées au merveilleux pays du lapin blanc. (Anon. n.d.: 113-114)

By stressing the boundary between reality and dream this translator would seem to follow the constraints mentioned by Shavit.

But even this case is somewhat questionable. In Anon.'s version of the first chapter, first Alice's sister reads her a long story about a 'strange princess.' Only at the end of this long (10-page) story, do we get to the transition from the summer day on the bank to Wonderland. However, in this translation Alice and her sister are clearly wide-awake at the first sighting of the White Rabbit:

La soeur d'Alice ferma le livre et demanda:

– Comment trouves-tu cela, Alice?

– Magnifique! s'écria Alice, transportée de plaisir. Raconte encore quelque chose!

Mais avant que la soeur d'Alice ait eu le temps de répondre oui ou non, un lapin blanc aux yeux rouges s'échappait presque sous leurs pieds.

Therefore the boundary between reality and dream is actually less clear here than it is in the original, and in the other, more conservative, translations.

Let us then look at this transition from reality to imagination in the other translators, to see if Shavit's conclusions are justified by the evidence from the French translators. First the full text in English:

So she was considering, in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" (when she thought it over afterwards it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural) but, when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across a field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

Here I shall focus on one element that relates to the state of Alice's consciousness: "sleepy" in the first paragraph. How much of a hint does the translator provide that she has gone into a dream? In the first case, the most direct indication of a dream comes in the use of the term *demi-songe* by Bay, and the verbs *dormir/ endormir* by Bué, Papy, B & A, and Arnaud. The next level of sleepiness is provided by Peter, who states that the heat *lui donnait sommeil*. Two others, Trédez and Merle, describe Alice as *somnolente*. By far the most common equivalent, used by nine translators, is the verb *engourdir*, or its past participle. In a similar vein, Bour uses the participle *assoupie*. Two translators, S & K and Rouillard make no mention of sleepiness at all, while Gausseron omits this sentence.

Is there a correlation between the relative clarity of the division of consciousness and unconsciousness, and the other adaptive features we explored earlier? Previously we established that Peter, Arnaud, Bué, Rouillard, Bour, and Anon. most frequently used the manipulation of proper nouns to adapt the text to a younger French audience. At the far end of the “sleepy” continuum we find several familiar faces: Peter, Arnaud, Bué, but Anon. and Rouillard are at the other end, indicating no sleepiness at all, with Bour (*assoupie*) in between.

A further look at the relative complexity of the passage indicates a slightly different list. The passage includes two very long and complicated sentences. By the punctuation each paragraph is a single sentence. Very few of the translators break up the first paragraph (Marcireau, S&K, B&A, into three sentences, Rouillard into two). All except Merle break up the second sentence/ paragraph:

1 sentence: Merle

2 sentences: Berman

3 sentences: Gausseron, Parisot, Fayet, Bour, Déchanet, Peter, Lapalme

4 sentences: Bué, Ramet, S&K, Papy, B&A, Prophétie, Rouard, Arnaud, Métral

5 sentences: Bay, Trédez, Rouillard

6 sentences: Marcireau

7 sentences: Anon.

There is no real correlation here; although two of the six are at the high end, the other four are firmly in the middle of the pack.

What this makes clear is that there are many types of adaptation possible. While some will make little concession to the child reader (e.g., Merle, Berman), others will take advantage of several adaptive strategies for the benefit of the child (Rouillard, Arnaud, Bué and Anon.). The correlation of this with Shavit's reality/ imagination distinction is slight, and with clear counterexamples. The value judgment implicit in Shavit's approach (fidelity is good, adaptation is bad) seems to us too narrow an approach. We prefer the sage conclusions of Riitta Oittinen, who warns against submission to authority, and sees adaptation and translation as parts of the same whole (Oittinen 1993: 179-180). As she so ably demonstrates, the adaptations made are part of the dialogue between author, translator and reader (not to mention illustrator). Every translation is a new text that the average target-language reader is going to approach, and – if the translator is successful – enjoy, with no knowledge of the original. Whether the average reader is a child or an adult is the strategic decision the translator of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* must make at the outset.

NOTES

1. The only major exception to this is Rouillard's translation. She has used the present tense almost exclusively, and when a past tense must be used, only the *passé composé*, never the *passé simple*.
2. Other types of cultural comparison are obviously possible – the songs and poems, culturally specific words such as “marmalade,” or onomatopoeic words, such as “splash,” just to name a few. Our selection here is based on space limitations, not on a value distinction among types of cultural reference.
3. According to French birth statistics, “Alice” reached the height of its popularity in the 1920s, when it was 13th among first given names for girls. After two lean decades from 1950 to 1970 it has seen its popularity return. In 2000 it ranked 36th. (Source: <<http://www.abc-prenoms.com/>>). The story of Alice in Wonderland is well-enough known in France that many of the respondents to a French web forum on names listed teasing about “Alice in Wonderland” as the primary reason not to name a child Alice. (<<http://www.prenoms.com/recherche/forum.php?prenom=alice>>).

4. There are no equivalent statistics for pet's names, but several French web sites devoted to names for cats include Dina or Dyna, e.g. <<http://www.mysunrise.ch/users/bberthoud/noms.htm#D>>.
5. In the original manuscript, written for Alice, the names were Gertrude and Florence, cousins of the Liddell girls.
6. Source: <<http://www.abc-prenoms.com/>>.
7. The French web site <<http://www.familles.com/prenoms/>> offers the results of a questionnaire on the connotations of many names, but these are opinions as of 2000, and their scientific value is further limited by the self-selection of the participants.
8. Both Patrice and Patrick were extremely popular in France during the middle of the 20th century, when more than 500,000 boys received one of the variants of this name. Patrick is not quite three times as common as Patrice. (Source: <<http://www.familles.com/prenoms/>>)
9. In the 20th century Anne-Marie was more than twice as common as Marie-Anne and Marianne combined. (Source: <<http://www.familles.com/prenoms/>>)
10. This passage has been identified as coming from a history book published in 1862, and used by the governess of the Liddell children in their education. (Gardner 1960: 46)
11. This periodical is perhaps best known for launching the Arsène Lupin series by Maurice Leblanc. It was founded by Pierre Lafitte in 1905 and continued publication until merging with *Lectures pour tous* in 1929. I have not been able to obtain any images of portraits of M. Je Sais Tout.

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