

The Preferences of Teenage Readers Regarding the Translation of Cultural References in Adolescent Fiction: a Pilot Study

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Abstract: Readers' expectations should be an important factor in the process of literary translation, especially concerning fiction for children and adolescents. Their views are relatively unknown, as empirical data regarding that matter is in short supply. This paper presents a focus group pilot study among teenage readers of fiction; it focusses on the readers' preferences for translating references to the culture of the source text. The rationale for choosing the focus group method and the description of the preparation process are provided. The main aim of the paper is to assess the reliability of the project as designed and the related materials, as well as to suggest improvements; nevertheless, the results of this preliminary study are presented as well. Consequently, a methodological foundation for more focus group projects regarding this widely understudied subject is established.

Keywords: translation studies, children's fiction, young adult fiction, focus groups with adolescents, participant-oriented research

1. Introduction

Children and teenagers are often considered the most difficult readership to translate for because they are particularly discerning and unforgiving readers (Manasterska-Wiącek 2015, 24). Many scholars make assumptions about what young readers demand and need from literature on the basis of their own deliberations; empirical data regarding young readers' reactions to translated texts is in short supply, which has been highlighted in recent years (Lathey 2006, 12; Lathey 2016, 10; O'Connell 2006, 15).

The lack of relevant studies indicates a lack of interest among scholars and results in translators' unawareness of their target readers' wishes and expectations with respect to translated fiction. Consequently, the translator's power

- the control that the translator has over how a given text is represented in the target culture (Hermans 2009; Spivak 2012; Venuti 2008) - remains unmitigated or unregulated by the recipient's voice. A translated text may become a platform for conveying a translator's own ideas, interpretations or ideologies in a more or less covert form. This control, however, may be moderated by a sense of responsibility towards both the source text and the target readers. With this in mind, adopting a broader perspective that includes readers' preferences regarding what they want to read seems to be an integral part of the translation process. This is especially true of popular fiction, as the expectations of its target readership seem to be one of the obvious factors taken into consideration during the production of such texts (Botting 2012).

As the issue is exceedingly broad, any study must be limited to a more precise problem. Due to the lack of empirical evidence, a qualitative study based on a research question that would indicate the direction of future research is called for. Moreover, before more comprehensive research is conducted, a pilot study ought to be carried out to evaluate and improve the design of the project. Such a study was carried out in June 2018 among a small group of 16-year-olds; the research question was "What are the preferences of teenage readers regarding strategies of translating cultural references in adolescent fiction?" This paper aims to outline the details of the study and to present the changes introduced as a result.

In Section 2, the reasons for choosing a focus group as the study methodology are laid out. Section 3 is an overview of the design of the research project; it includes descriptions of the sampling method, the set of stimulus materials and the topic guide. Section 4 describes the pilot study session. In Section 5, the results of the study are presented. Improvements implemented in the project design for future use are explained in Section 6.

2. The method - A focus group

Appropriateness is a guiding principle in designing qualitative research (Flick 2018a, 5). Methods are chosen according to the research problem and the researcher's goals (ibid., 2), as one of the intentions of qualitative research is to "produce knowledge that is practically relevant" (ibid., 7). This often necessitates shortcut strategies, "[p]ragmatic ways of using specific methods in situations of applied research, where it may be difficult to use these methods in their full versions" (ibid., 160). Sometimes the methods are used in full, but

the standard procedures may be altered slightly in order to ensure that the most relevant data is obtained. The design of a qualitative study “should be based on reflection on the issue under study, the research question linked to it, the existing knowledge of the issue and the population” (ibid., 75).

The general idea of the study was to confront the participants with different translations of the same excerpt of a book, where each translation would represent a particular translation technique. The participants would then discuss those solutions and chose those that they find the most and least appealing.

This concept poses many challenges. It involves sharing opinions on subjects that, in all likelihood, have not been considered in depth by the prospective participants. Moreover, the environment in which they formulate and express their views must be as comfortable and natural as possible. A focus group is a method that meets these criteria. It is often used to observe participants’ interactions regarding a given issue (Flick 2018a, 106; Barbour 2018, 2). It allows for discussion between the participants while the moderator assumes a minimal role (Barbour 2018, 2). Its goal is to “allow for some debate or differences of opinion” (ibid., 3) between individuals who share several relevant features (ibid., 2; ibid., 69–70).

All methods which incorporated writing were rejected because it is arguably more efficient and less daunting to develop an opinion in conversation rather than on paper. It also reduces any limitations imposed, for example, by a finite choice of options or any unintended biases found in a questionnaire. While speaking, the participants can say whatever they want without any implicit answers. It also provides a platform to validate the opinions of teenagers and to give them a voice. This has two positive outcomes: firstly, it manifests a genuine interest in what they have to say, which is beneficial for them, as attention and validation are desired by teens; secondly, it increases the likelihood of obtaining honest and detailed answers, which contributes to the success of the study.

3. The design of a research project

For a focus group project, a unique set of materials relevant to a particular study must be prepared. These include a sampling method, stimulus materials and a topic guide.

Sampling is “the selection of cases, persons, materials, etc., to study from a bigger population or variety” (Flick 2018b, 131). In focus groups, “sampling means basically the composition of groups according to the research question

and intended comparisons" (Flick 2018a, 106). For this study, the "intensity with which the interesting features, processes, experiences, etc., are given or assumed" (ibid., 52) seems to be an accurate prerequisite for participation.

The group of potential participants was narrowed down both by age and by the abovementioned intensity of a feature which, in this case, is a predilection for reading and eloquence. The focus of the study was limited to middle school (*gimnazjum*) pupils aged 12–16 years (in Poland, parents or guardians choose to send their child to school at the age of either 6 or 7). Finding teenagers who read for pleasure was a more formidable challenge. The desired material was the opinions of young people for whom reading is a form of entertainment that they pursue eagerly and often. To find such individuals, a questionnaire was developed which would help distinguish those who read often from those who do not. The English version of the questionnaire,¹ which matches the outline of the original, is presented on the following pages.

As the main part of the study was intended to be audio-recorded and the prospective participants were underage, formal consent from their parents or guardians was needed. The students were presented with consent forms and a form signed by a parent or guardian was necessary for a student to take part in the session.

Another important part of a focus group project is stimulus materials: "[p] re-existing ... or specially designed materials that encourage and help to focus discussion around the topics the research is designed to address" (Barbour 2018, 172). Such material is used in focus groups only to "break the ice" or to inspire a relevant discussion (Barbour 2018, 86), but in the case of the current study, it was an integral part of the project's design.

The material needed to be translated excerpts from a recently published book written in English, targeted towards readers approximately 12 years old and rich in cultural references. *Wolf Hollow*, an American novel by Lauren Wolk published in 2016, met those criteria. Set in 1943, it tells the story of 12-year-old Annabelle and her two younger brothers. Their rural existence and daily struggle – caused by the all-encompassing war effort – are shattered with the arrival of Betty, a violent and recalcitrant new pupil, at the local schoolhouse. Her sinister exploits, confronted by Annabelle's innocence and integrity, escalate into tragedy.

1 All materials have been translated into English for the purposes of this paper. The original Polish version was used in the study.

Class (letter only):		Register number:	
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A study regarding reading habits of people born in 2002

This questionnaire is the first part of the study that focuses on your reading preferences. Some of you will participate in the second part of it. For this reason, this questionnaire is anonymous – by filling out the table above you make it possible for me to identify you and invite you to the second stage of the study. Your answers will remain fully confidential.

This questionnaire aims to gather information regarding your opinions and habits. This is why I would like you to answer honestly and without considering your responses for too long.

For the purposes of this questionnaire, a “book” is understood exclusively as “a book read for pleasure and of your own accord”, so set books, textbooks, or other forms of writing which you read for purposes of school classes are excluded.

1. Do you like to read books?

- a) yes
- b) no

2. Do you read books on a regular basis?

- a) Yes. Usually, when I have finished a book, I start another one immediately, or on the next day.
- b) Yes, but usually I make a gap of a few days or a few weeks between books.
- c) No. It happens that I read one book after another, but then, for a longer time, I do not read at all.
- d) No. I read books sporadically.
- e) This question does not apply to me, as I do not read books.

If none of the above matches your situation, outline it briefly here:

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.....

3. Do you read every day?

- a) Yes. I read at least a few lines from a book every day. I hardly even happens that I do not do that.
- b) I do my best, but I do not always succeed. Sometimes I do not open the book I am reading for a few days.
- c) No. It often happens that I do not open the book I am reading.
- d) No. Finishing a book often takes me weeks or even months.
- e) This question does not apply to me, I do not read books on a regular basis.
- f) This question does not apply to me, as I do not read books.

If none of the above matches your situation, outline it briefly here:

.....
.....

Figure 1. Page 1 of the questionnaire used in the sampling process

4. Do you read one book at a time?

- a) Yes.
- b) Usually yes, but sometimes I read several books at a time.
- c) Usually, I read several books at a time.
- d) I almost always read several books at a time.
- e) This question does not apply to me, I do not read books on a regular basis.
- f) This question does not apply to me, as I do not read books.

5. If you are interested in reading a book that was not written in Polish, do you read the original text or the Polish translation?

- a) Usually I read Polish translations of foreign books.
- b) Usually I read original versions of foreign books.
- c) It is hard to say, sometimes I read Polish translations of foreign books, and sometimes I read the original versions.
- d) I do not know, I do not pay attention to that.
- e) I only read books by Polish authors.
- f) This question does not apply to me, I do not read books on a regular basis.
- g) This question does not apply to me, as I do not read books.

6. Write down the titles and the names of the authors of three books that you have read recently.

Title	Author

7. Explain briefly what you liked and disliked in the first book from your list above.

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8. If you like to read books, explain briefly why.

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I appreciate the time and energy that you took to complete this questionnaire.

Figure 2. Page 2 of the questionnaire used in the sampling process

Two excerpts from the book were chosen. One included a reference to a notion that had no equivalent in Polish culture: a victory garden. Citizens of Anglophone countries were encouraged to grow their own food so that the bulk of state production could be sent to the front. This war effort was referred to in state propaganda as keeping *victory gardens*.

When I was smaller, I asked my grandfather how *Wolf Hollow* got its name.

“They used to dig deep pits there, for catching wolves,” he said.

He was one of the eight of us who lived together in the farmhouse that had been in our family for a hundred years, three generations tucked together under one roof after the Depression had tightened the whole country’s belt and made our farm the best of all places to live. Now, with a second world war raging, lots of people grew victory gardens to help feed themselves, but our whole farm was a giant victory garden that my grandfather had spent his whole life tending. (Wolk 2016, 9)



Figure 3. World War I poster promoting victory gardens in the USA (Flagg 1918)



Figure 4. World War II poster promoting victory gardens in the USA (Williams 1946)

In the other excerpt, the frontiersman Daniel Boone, a historical figure who is not widely known in Poland, was mentioned:

“What about me?” James said, prancing into the kitchen wearing a coonskin cap. Apparently, my grandmother had started to read him a new book, presumably about the Wild West.

“You can take some pictures, too,” I said.

“Did Daniel Boone take pictures?”

“I doubt it,” Henry said.

“Then I don’t take pictures either,” James said, galloping off into his own private wilderness. (Wolk 2016, 287)

Two texts were used to see whether responses to two different classes of references – a phenomenon and a proper name – elicit different reactions. To prepare the stimulus materials, two sets of Polish translations were composed. Both excerpts were translated several times according to different techniques of translating references to real-life elements of the source culture: equivalent, barbarism, neologism, periphrasis, footnote approximation, generalisation, contextual translation and omission (Lewicki 2017, 249–263). Every translation was assigned a letter (equivalent – A, barbarism – B, neologism – C, etc.) so that the participants could quickly and clearly communicate their choices.

In the first sheet, the only difference in the translations was how the last sentence was conveyed, as it includes the concept of victory gardens. For brevity, the translations of only this sentence are reproduced below. Where necessary, explanations and English re-translations of those Polish versions are included, together with definitions of the translation techniques according to Lewicki.

Name and definition of technique	Polish translation with commentary and/or back translation
Equivalent – a universally agreed upon and widely used target-language variant of a notion in the source text (e.g. names of capital cities)	An equivalent was not provided, as none exist.

<p>Barbarism – the transfer of a unit from the source text to the target text with no changes</p>	<p>“Teraz, gdy szalała druga wojna światowa, wiele osób zaczęło uprawiać victory gardens, ale cała nasza farma była właśnie takim gigantycznym victory garden, którego mój dziadek doglądał całe swoje życie.”</p>
<p>Neologism – a word created by a translator for a given translation according to derivative norms of the target text language</p>	<p>“Teraz, gdy szalała druga wojna światowa, wiele osób zaczęło uprawiać ogrody zwycięstwa, ale cała nasza farma była właśnie takim gigantycznym ogrodem, którego mój dziadek doglądał całe swoje życie.” <i>Ogrody zwycięstwa</i> are literally victory gardens, a notion which does not exist in Polish historiography and is merely a lexical reflection of the original. Even though the words are Polish, the concept is foreign.</p>
<p>Periphrasis – an explanation of the problematic notion within the target text</p>	<p>“Teraz, gdy szalała druga wojna światowa, wiele osób zaczęło uprawiać ogrody na własne potrzeby, by odciążyć państwową produkcję, skoncentrowaną na zaopatrywaniu żołnierzy na froncie. Nasza farma była właśnie takim gigantycznym ogrodem, którego mój dziadek doglądał całe swoje życie.” The word <i>ogrody</i> (gardens) was used, but the historical meaning added to it by the word “victory” in the original was explained in the translation: Many people started to grow gardens for their own use to unburden the state production, which was focussed on providing supplies for the soldiers on the front line. This made the sentence significantly longer, which is why it was separated into two. In the second sentence, only the word <i>ogrody</i> was used, since the repetition of the entire unit was unnecessary.</p>

<p>Footnote – an explanation of the problematic notion at the bottom of the page or the end of the chapter or manuscript</p>	<p>“Teraz, gdy szalała druga wojna światowa, wiele osób zaczęło uprawiać ogrody zwycięstwa¹, ale cała nasza farma była właśnie takim gigantycznym ogrodem, którego mój dziadek doglądał całe swoje życie.” This passage is identical with that from the third translation (neologism), but the following footnote was added at the bottom of the page: “¹Ogrody zwycięstwa – ogrody uprawiane przez cywilów na potrzeby własne podczas pierwszej i drugiej wojny światowej m. in. w USA i Wielkiej Brytanii, by odciążyć państwową produkcję skoncentrowaną na zaopatrywaniu żołnierzy na froncie.” Back translation: “¹Victory gardens – gardens grown by civilians for their own use during the first and second world wars in countries such as the USA and Great Britain to unburden the state production, which was focussed on providing supplies for the soldiers on the front line”</p>
<p>Approximation – replacing the problematic notion with another notion that, in a given context, resembles the original object or reference</p>	<p>Approximation was not provided as there are no notions similar enough in Polish that would support an endeavour of that kind.</p>
<p>Generalisation – replacing the problematic notion with the name of a class of objects represented by the reference in question</p>	<p>“Teraz, gdy szalała druga wojna światowa, wiele osób zaczęło produkować swoją własną żywność, ale my robiliśmy to od dawna na naszej farmie, której mój dziadek doglądał całe swoje życie.” Back translation: “Now, with a second world war raging, many people started to grow their own food, but we had been doing it for a long time on our farm, which my grandfather had spent his whole life tending.” The notion was replaced with a general description which reflected the situation without going into historical detail.</p>

Contextual translation – changing the sentence structure so that the problematic notion does not have to be used at all	“Teraz, gdy szalała druga wojna światowa, wiele osób samodzielnie dbało o to, by mieć co jeść, uprawiając ziemię na własne potrzeby. Robiliśmy to samo na farmie, której <i>mój dziadek doglądał całe swoje życie.</i> ” Back translation: “Now, with a second world war raging, many people made sure that they had something for themselves to eat by tending the soil for their own use. We did that on the farm, which my grandfather had spent his whole life tending.”
Omission – leaving out the problematic notion	The sentence was not translated.

Table 1. The “victory gardens” excerpt – explanations of translation variants and techniques (Lewicki 2017)

In the second sheet, the difference between the Polish versions is how the name of Daniel Boone was translated in the excerpt of dialogue, “Did Daniel Boone take pictures?,” as it is the only one that includes the name of a potentially unknown historical figure. Below are explanations and English re-translations (wherever applicable) of those Polish versions.

Technique	Polish translation with commentary and/or back translation
Equivalent	An equivalent was not provided, as none exist.
Barbarism	“ – Czy Daniel Boone robił zdjęcia?”
Neologism	A neologism was not provided, as it seems inconceivable to create a neologism of a name that was not invented by the author of the source text (let alone a name of a historical figure) which would not be nonsensical.
Periphrasis	“ – Czy traper Daniel Boone robił zdjęcia?” The word <i>traper</i> (trapper) was added.

Footnote	<p>“ – Czy Daniel Boone¹ robił zdjęcia?” This passage is identical to that from the second translation (barbarism), but the following footnote was added at the bottom of the page: “¹Daniel Boone (1734–1820) – słynny amerykański traper, podróżnik i osadnik.” Back translation: “¹Daniel Boone (1734–1820) – a famous American trapper, traveller, and frontiersman”</p>
Approximation	<p>Approximation was not provided, as there are no well-known pioneers from Poland who participated in the colonisation of North America.</p>
Generalisation	<p>“ – Czy traperzy robili zdjęcia?” Back translation: “Did trappers take pictures?” The unit was replaced with a class to which it belonged. This reflects the situation without going into historical detail.</p>
Contextual translation	<p>“ – Czy na Dzikim Zachodzie mieli aparaty?” Back translation: “Did they have cameras in the Wild West?” The sentence was restructured so that the problematic notion was not used, but the meaning and intention of James’s question were conveyed.</p>
Omission	<p>In the last translation, the entire dialogue was omitted.</p>

Table 2. The “Daniel Boone” excerpt – explanations of translation variants and techniques (Lewicki 2017)

The final piece of material was a topic guide, a “set of broad questions or headings that anticipates the areas to be covered in a focus group discussion” (Barbour 2018, 173). In this study, the stimulus materials are precise enough to ensure that the discussion does not deviate from the subject matter. The questions to be asked during the session are limited to variants of “Which translation do you like the most/least?” and, most importantly, “Why?” Exchanges between participants without the moderator’s interference are desired.

4. The pilot study session

The pilot study started with the sampling process. A total of 167 students completed the questionnaire. The first step was to eliminate the respondents who declared that they did not like to read books. For brevity, those who answered “Yes” will be referred to as Readers, and those who answered “No” will be referred to as Non-Readers.

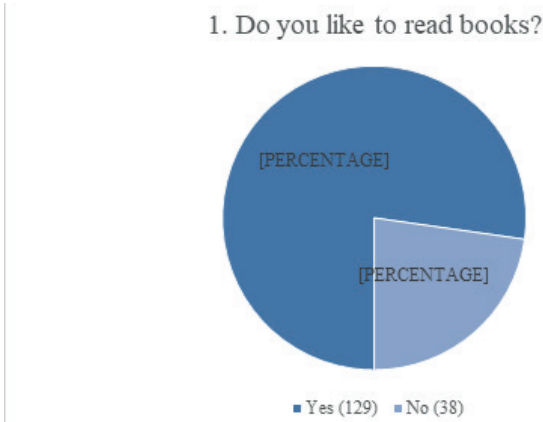


Figure 5. Answers to the question “Do you like to read books?”

The remaining questions provided insight into the reading habits of the students. Any alternative answers are summarised below the respective figures.

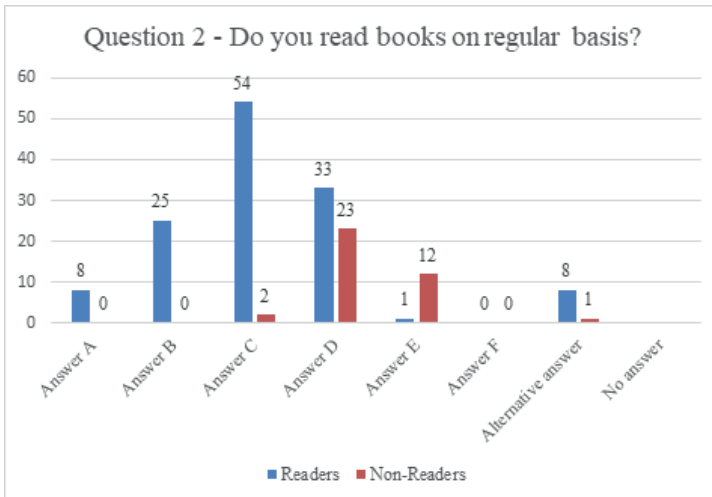


Figure 6. Answers to the question “Do you read books on a regular basis?”

Eight Readers provided their own answers, all of them stating that their reading is irregular due to a lack of free time, because school, homework and revision took up much of their time. One participant, whose answer was D, added that they usually read fiction on Wattpad and other storytelling platforms.

One Non-Reader provided an alternative answer in which they stated they had never finished a book. Another one, who chose Answer E, added that they did not have time to read.

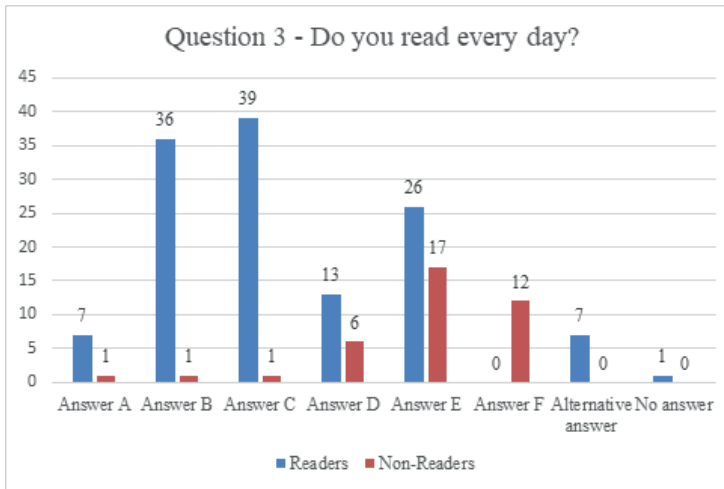


Figure 7. Answers to the question “Do you read every day?”

Only Readers provided alternative answers. They may be divided into two groups. One group was those who said that they finish a book within a few days of starting it; they also implied or stated clearly that they read every day, but with gaps between books. The other group was those who specified that this only happens if a book grips them. One participant, who chose Answer C, added that they do all their reading during the summer break, which corresponds with the alternative answers for Question 2.

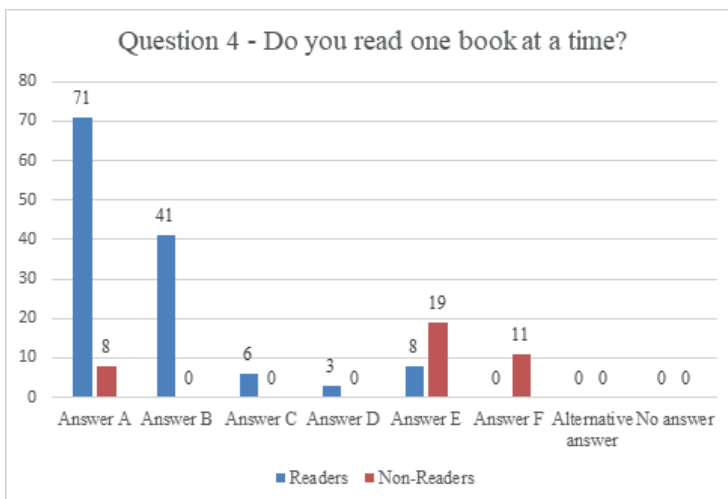


Figure 8. Answers to the question “Do you read one book at a time?”

No alternative answers were provided.



Figure 9. Answers to the question “If you are interested in reading a book that was not written in Polish, do you read the original text or the Polish translation?”

The only Reader who provided an alternative answer to that question stated that they read both versions.

The Non-Readers' answers to the remaining questions confirm that they do not spend a significant portion of their free time reading. In the open-ended questions they left the spaces empty, sometimes providing titles of books they have read (usually one or two) – often without the name of the author – and sometimes writing that they do not like books. In a few cases, they attempted to answer Question 7, but failed to write correct or complete sentences.

In Question 6, the participants were asked to write down three titles of books they had read recently and the names of the authors. The Readers' answers resulted in an extensive list of books: a mixture of popular young adult titles (e.g. novels by John Green), children's literature (the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series by Jeff Kinney and the *Nicholas* series by René Goscinny and Jean-Jacques Sempé), general "adult" fiction (novels by Haruki Murakami and *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger), fantasy (e.g. the Middle Earth books by J. R. R. Tolkien and *The Witcher* series by Andrzej Sapkowski), crime (e.g. novels by Agatha Christie and the *Millennium* series by Stieg Larsson) and occasional cases of poetry, horror, science fiction and non-fiction.

Although the Readers' answers to Question 6 provided an eclectic collection of titles, their answers to Questions 7 and 8 were rather uniform. Their answers to Question 7 indicated that they generally like a brave, wise and relatable protagonist who experiences captivating and fast-paced adventures in a believably depicted world. They do not enjoy irritating and boring protagonists going through the motions for no particular reason in a bloated and standardised plot.

The answers to Question 8 were even more uniform and could be divided into three categories. Firstly, there was the desire for escapism through immersion. Thanks to books, Readers could go "to a better place," "forget about the real world" and "not think about [their] problems" for a while. Entertainment is another category. Books help the Readers "relax" and "fight boredom"; reading is simply "pleasant." Books were relatively often described as superior to films, which is interesting, as films were not mentioned in the questionnaire or instructions for filling it in. Thirdly, there was the aspect of learning. Reading "expands vocabulary," "improves writing," "inspires" and "provokes thought."

On the basis of the questionnaires, 58 students were invited to the focus group session. Ten expressed a willingness to take part and presented signed

consent forms. Two groups were formed and two sessions were conducted, with six and four participants in the respective groups.

The study was audio-recorded via mobile phone. The session began with an introductory conversation about the participants' reading preferences. It was intended to make them more comfortable, help them forget about the recording device and focus their attention on the subject of books and reading. Then, the planned outline of the session was explained to them. They were made aware of their right to withdraw at any point without giving a reason. The sheets with translations of the first excerpt were distributed and the participants were given a few minutes to read them. Then, each of them said aloud which letter represented the text they considered the best. After that, they explained their decisions. Finally, we discussed their opinions on different solutions and their possible implications. This procedure was repeated when the participants discussed what they considered to be the worst solutions. The whole process was conducted once more for the second set of translations.

5. Results of the study

For both sets of translations, the preferred solutions were primarily E (footnote) and D (periphrasis). Some participants hesitated between two options, one of which was always the footnote. Regarding the worst solution, I (omission) was usually chosen, although G (generalisation) and B (barbarism) were indicated as well. In the discussions, the participants stressed that the "sense" and "emotions" conveyed in translations are expected to reflect those of the originals. "Faithfulness" and "respect for the author" were also mentioned as expected features. The idea of omissions met with strong disapproval and sometimes indignation.

A more detailed analysis of this study is redundant for several reasons. Firstly, the aim of a pilot study is primarily to test and improve the project design. Secondly, the sample was too small to even attempt to formulate research questions for subsequent studies. A similar but better-structured study with a larger sample is necessary. Thirdly, some issues with the existing design which were identified during the sessions rendered the material unreliable. The list of changes introduced in the project design as a consequence of the pilot study is included in the following section.

6. Conclusion – improvements to the project design

First of all, the wealth of data provided by the questionnaire reaches far beyond its intended purpose. Even though this material may inspire further investigation, it did not directly contribute to the specific goals of the project, so it was significantly shortened. Questions 2 to 4 were merged and transformed into a set of statements that the participants will mark as applicable or inapplicable to them. Question 5 seemed irrelevant or at least of minor significance, and thus was eliminated. Questions 6 to 8 turned out to be of the greatest importance in the sampling process, so they were left unchanged.

The examination of the recordings and the subsequent production and analysis of transcripts revealed that the way in which the study was moderated could have suggested a certain direction for the participants' train of thought. The discussion often tilted towards comparing translation techniques. The result was that instead of talking about the texts themselves, we began to talk about the role and tasks of translators (this happened in the latter part of the discussion after the participants had explained their choices). This is not advisable, as the participants were not meant to examine the subject from the perspective of translators or translation scholars, but from that of readers. The reality of a focus group session and the examination of several different versions of the same passage is artificial enough. The participants were supposed to speak from the perspective of a role they are familiar with, not a role in which they had never been and which some of them had never even considered. In further sessions, the participation of the moderator will be limited to the absolute minimum: providing instructions, asking for clarification, ensuring order in communicating and justifying choices and giving everyone an equal chance to express their opinion in the discussion.

The age range (12 to 16 years) seems unnecessarily limiting. Participants younger than 12 and older than 16 are also within the target readership of adolescent fiction and could provide valuable material for analysis. A wider age range is called for in the more comprehensive version of the study, with a willingness to read and the ability to communicate being the key aspects of the sampling process.

The participants' answers might have been influenced by their fear of being criticised by the peer group (Barbour 2018, 26), especially in the process of providing their initial choices. For example, if three of them in a row chose the same option, the fourth participant may have provided the same answer in order

to not stand out, regardless of whether it was their actual choice. This is why the participants should write down their preferred and rejected solutions and then hand it to the moderator. This may significantly reduce potential bias.

To obtain a backup copy of the recordings, two devices (a mobile phone and a separate digital audio recorder) will be used during the next sessions instead of one.

Regarding the stimulus materials, a new classification of cultural references was introduced: a general cultural reference, a proper name and an equivalent. A cultural reference is understood as a real-life object which is not a proper name and does not have an equivalent in the target language or culture (*victory garden* is an example of such a reference). The class of proper names only consisted of names that are not known in Poland and do not have equivalents (such as *Daniel Boone*). The third category is equivalents. Despite being rejected in preparation for the pilot study, this category was introduced in the improved version of the stimulus material. The respondents' opinions should not be assumed, even concerning a matter that seems as straightforward as notions with clear equivalents in the target language. This data should also be collected and compared, both with other equivalent translations across sets and with translations of units representing other classes of real-life objects within a set.

Changes were also made in terms of the number of sets of translations. Three references from a single book were not enough to provide relevant data. Three more sets were prepared: translations of excerpts from Emma Carroll's *Letters from the Lighthouse* (2017), the story of a girl who wants to escape German bombs falling on London by leaving for Devon with her younger brother, where she tries to make sense of the war and her family's secrets; Lisa Thompson's *The Goldfish Boy* (2017), a novel about Matthew – who does not leave the house and spies on his neighbours because of his obsessive-compulsive disorder – and the role he plays in the search for a toddler living next door who vanished into thin air; and Melissa Savage's *Bigfoot, Tobin & Me* (2017), a novel about two young cryptozoologists who set out to find a bigfoot in the woods around Willow Creek, California. The protagonists of all four books (including *Wolf Hollow*) are all 12 years old, which means that children around that age are the target readership. Each set contains translated excerpts from one book. One set will be used during each session, which will make it possible to identify any patterns between choices and arguments regarding different books and different cultural references. These two major alterations raised the number of units from two

to twelve, and provided a more adequate representation of many types of real-life objects and the translation challenges they may cause.

The process of preparing a wider range of materials included an examination of the existing set. The chosen neologism for the excerpt from the first sheet (“victory gardens”) did not fully match Lewicki’s definition, even though it is applicable and serves its purpose. Lewicki states that a neologism “is based on the models of derivation in the target language; thus it realises its potential, even though such a unit does not exist in that language”² (Lewicki 2017, 251). According to his understanding of the technique, a neologism should be a single new word (or a collection of words of which each is new). The literal translation of victory gardens (*ogrody zwycięstwa*) used in the set was a new notion in Polish, but neither word is a neologism. Therefore, a different solution was implemented: “*wiktorioogrody*.” This is a new compound word created according to the Polish norms of derivation, which meets Lewicki’s criteria for a neologism.

No changes were introduced in terms of the participants’ interaction with the materials. They were not made aware of any of the above details or categorisations. This would influence their opinion, which would consequently be given from the standpoint of a co-analyst (Barbour 2018, 148–149), and this was not a role the participants are expected to adopt.

Apart from providing a replicable research design, this paper underscores the importance of conducting pilot research in preparation for participant-based studies concerning literature and translation. This is especially true with respect to fiction for children and adolescents. A practical value of such research is difficult to overestimate: The opinions of young readers could help translators make better informed decisions during the translation process. The potential for other studies involving readers of fiction is a vast and uncharted territory ready for exploration.

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2 Translated by the author of this paper.

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