

Recibido / Received: 01/02/2022

Para enlazar con este artículo / To link to this article:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.6035/MonTI.2022.14.01>

Para citar este artículo / To cite this article:

Valero Cuadra, Pino; Gisela Marcelo Wirthner & Nuria Pérez Vicente. (2022) "Past, present and future of the translation of children's and young adults' literature." In: Valero Cuadra, Pino; Gisela Marcelo Wirthner & Nuria Pérez Vicente (eds.) 2022. *Traducción e intermedialidad en literatura infantil y juvenil (LIJ): orígenes, evolución y nuevas tendencias / Translation and intermediality in children's and young adults' literature: origins, development and new trends*. *MonTI* 14, pp. 30-52.

## PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE TRANSLATION OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULTS' LITERATURE

### PASADO, PRESENTE Y FUTURO DE LA TRADUCCIÓN DE LITERATURA INFANTIL Y JUVENIL

PINO VALERO CUADRA

pino.valero@ua.es

Universidad de Alicante

GISELA MARCELO WIRTHNER

gisela.marcelo@ulpgc.es

Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

NURIA PÉREZ VICENTE

nuria.perezvicente@unimc.it

Università di Macerata

#### Abstract

The diversity of text types and the difficulties faced by translators have meant that these studies are in a constant state of flux. With regard to the translation of children's and young adults' literature (CYAL), an additional factor is the complex framework of this literary system, which has given rise to the many different lines of research that currently abound in the field of CYAL translation. Let us not forget that children's literature has become an inexhaustible source of creativity, formats and genres, and this inventiveness has proven a real challenge for translators charged with the task



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of making these works available for other languages and cultures. For these reasons, in this article we propose a chronological and thematic bibliographical overview of this field of research, which is peripheral, but at the same time complex and highly topical, the translation of children's and young adults' literature.

**Keywords:** Children and young adults' literature (CYAL). Translation. Bibliography. Fields of research. Literary system of CYAL.

## Resumen

La diversidad de tipologías textuales y las dificultades y problemas que se le presentan al traductor han contribuido a diversificar constantemente los Estudios de Traducción. En el caso de la traducción de literatura infantil y juvenil (LIJ), sumamos a estos factores el complejo entramado que constituye este sistema literario, y el resultado de la ecuación se refleja en la gran variedad de inquietudes investigadoras actuales en el ámbito de la traducción de la LIJ. No olvidemos que la escritura para niños se ha erigido en una fuente inagotable de creatividad, de formatos y de géneros, y esta inventiva, a la hora de trasladarla a otras lenguas y otras culturas, supone verdaderos retos para los traductores. Por estas razones, en este artículo hacemos un recorrido bibliográfico cronológico y temático de este ámbito investigador, periférico, pero tan complejo y actual a la vez: el de la traducción de la literatura infantil y juvenil.

**Palabras clave:** Literatura infantil y juvenil (LIJ). Traducción. Bibliografía. Líneas investigadoras. Sistema literario de la LIJ.

## 1. Introduction

The existence of Translation Studies as an academic discipline derives partly from the fact that translation is an eminently human activity, always conditioned by specific historical and geographical factors. The diversity of text types and the difficulties faced by translators have meant that these studies are in a constant state of flux. With regard to the translation of children's and young adults' literature (CYAL), an additional factor is the complex framework of this literary system, which has given rise to the many different lines of research that currently abound in the field of CYAL translation. Let

us not forget that children's literature has become an inexhaustible source of creativity, formats and genres, and this inventiveness has proven a real challenge for translators charged with the task of making these works available for other languages and cultures.

CYAL is the first contact children – future adult readers – have with the literary world that will mark their future path. The volume and importance of CYAL in the publishing sphere is clear, given the great variety of published works and the proliferation of publishing houses specialised in this type of literature.<sup>1</sup> However, many adults are unaware of the fact that the majority of these books reach the children as translated texts, an important sector in the publishing sphere in Europe, since nearly a third of CYAL books published in Spain (Martens 2017), Germany (Galling 2019) and France<sup>2</sup> are translations. Given these figures, it is surprising that CYAL translation, in contrast to the so-called “adult literature”, has attracted scant research interest from academic circles. In fact, hardly any monographic volumes have been dedicated to its study, with the notable exceptions of the issue of the journal *TRANS* (Alvstad & Johnsen 2014) and the volume *Traducciones, adaptaciones y doble destinatario en literatura infantil y juvenil* (2019), edited by Elvira Cámara, in spite of its importance as a tool for the personal, linguistic, cognitive and even psychological development of the child (Marcelo 2007), and the fact that research activity on the subject has steadily grown in quantity and quality in many countries.

There are various reasons that may explain this lack of attention compared to the large quantity of translation studies on adult literature. Firstly, the research tradition of Translation Studies is relatively recent<sup>3</sup>, and only when it became consolidated could the study of CYAL translation take off, albeit in a modest fashion, as mentioned above. Secondly, the fact that CYAL has always been regarded as *second-rate* (Pascua Febles 2002) and that it occupies a peripheral position in the literary polysystem since it is

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1. We also include the production of audiovisual texts (films and series) for this target group within the system of children's and young adults' literature, given the similarity of many of the characteristics of both genres, as well as the target group.
  2. SNE\_Chiffres\_EditionJeunesse\_VOK.pdf
  3. The work by James S. Holmes *The name and nature of translation studies* (1972/1988) laid the foundations of Translation Studies in 1972.

a non-canonised branch of literature (Shavit 1981, 1986; Even-Zohar 1990; Fernández López 1996), has led to the study of its translation being undervalued, as well as it receiving such scant attention from academic circles.

## 2. The CYAL as a literary system: past, present, and future

### 2.1. *The CYAL as a literary system*

Nonetheless, to underline the need to continue carrying out research in this particular field, we should bear in mind that CYAL constitutes a highly complex literary system, a fact that has a significant bearing on its translation. This can be observed in the multiple aspects that differentiate this particular literature from adult literature:

- (1) The characteristics of the child or youth reader, who is usually expected to have a limited cultural background. This has often led to an excessive simplification of the text, a trend that is also present in its translation into other languages (Shavit 1986; Lathey 2010; Martens 2017).
- (2) The different concept of childhood in the source and target cultures, which leads to *adjustments* in the target culture in order to adapt to the new socio-educational system (Marcelo 2007).
- (3) The different age groups of the target readers of the original text and, therefore, its translated version (Cámara 2003).
- (4) The existence of a system of norms and conventions that condition the literary production of all cultures, as well as its translation (Shavit 1986; Kurultay 1994; Pascua 2011; Lorenzo 2014).
- (5) The presence of adults in CYAL, whether it be the author, the translator, the editor, the critic, the librarian, the bookseller, the teacher or the parents, which gives rise to *asymmetric communication* (Townsend 1980; Perriconi 1986; O'Sullivan 2003; Martens 2017), conditioning all the phases of the production and promotion of the text (Townsend 1980), as well as its translation (Travalia 2019).
- (6) The attestation, for all the reasons stated above, that there is always a “dual target readership” in the production and translation of CYAL (Marcelo & Morales 2015; Cámara 2019), one of the key factors in the translation of this particular literature into other languages.

- (7) The themes, genres, formats and functions of the works, among which we should cite the historical factor, which has always had a pedagogical purpose (Makarenko 1984; Cerrillo & García Padrino 1999).
- (8) The interaction between image and text, which is one of the most important aspects, given that illustrated books constitute a mixed genre (Fernández López 1996), as do other multimodal text forms such as films, comics and television series.
- (9) The fact that many of them lend themselves to being read aloud, which is reflected in elements of rhythm, rhyme and onomatopoeia found in the texts (Ruzicka 2009).
- (10) The different functions assigned to the texts, whether they be of a pedagogical, artistic, aesthetic, literary, linguistic or social nature (Marcelo 2007), as well as their importance for intercultural education (Pascua 2007).

In addition to all these aspects, if we consider the above-mentioned peripheral position in the literary polysystem, which tends to condition translators' decisions, leading to a manipulation of the text (Shavit 1986), then we can conclude that CYAL is highly complex literary system characterised by a growing artistic sophistication, which endeavours to make maximum use of literary language, experiment with different genres and foster multimodality (Nikolajeva & Scott 1996).

## 2.2. *The CYAL as a literary system: past, present and future*

Regarding the historical evolution of CYAL translation studies, the first steps were taken towards the end of the 1970s, with the third symposium of the International Research Society for Children's Literature, *Children's books in translation: the situation and the problems*, held in Sodertälje in August 1976 and devoted to the translation of children's literature, followed by the publication of the proceedings of said symposium two years later with the title *The Different Aspects of Research into the Translation of Children's Books and its Practical Application* by Göte Klingberg, Mary Orvig and Stuart Amor (1978), which should be regarded as the first significant publication in this field. After those early steps, CYAL translation studies continued to grow in

the following decades, with works focussing on general or specific aspects of CYAL translation (Shavit 1981; Klingberg 1986; Even-Zohar 1990; Ben-Ari 1992; Oittinen 1993; Fernández López 1995; Pascua Febles 1996; Bell 1998, etc.).

Moreover, we should mention the fact that researchers in Spain have devoted substantial attention to this field compared to their counterparts in other countries. The first significant studies to incorporate CYAL in the field of literary translation in Spain were the doctoral theses by Marisa Fernández López, *La literatura juvenil anglosajona: traducciones españolas (s. XX)* (Universidad de León, 1995), and Isabel Pascua Febles, *La adaptación-traducción de la literatura infantil (cuentos de animales ingleses traducidos al español)* (ULPGC, 1996).

A fundamental factor that helped to boost research into CYAL translation in Spain was the creation of centres specialised in children's and young adults' literature, which often fostered the study of CYAL translation, such as the National Association for Research on Children's and Young adults' Literature, founded at the University of Vigo in 1999 on the initiative of Veljka Ruzicka Kenfel. Since then, this association has held international symposiums on CYAL, including papers on its translation which have led to various publications. In 2001, the journal *AILIJ (Anuario de Investigación en Literatura Infantil y Juvenil)* was founded at the same university, with the aim of disseminating studies in this field, at the heart of which the research group *Literatura infantil y juvenil anglo-germana y su traducción* was established.

After this pioneering group, other Spanish research groups specialised in CYAL and which, either directly or indirectly, have fostered the study of its translation, were established. These include GRETEL (Autonomous University of Barcelona), Literatura Infantil y Educación Literaria (University of Castilla la Mancha), CEPLI (University of Castilla la Mancha), ELLI (Complutense University of Madrid) and TRALIMI (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria). The last group in this list has focussed mainly on CYAL translation. There are also prestigious groups and institutions outside Spain that have devoted their activity to the promotion and research of CYAL for a number of decades, such as MeTRa (Università di Bologna), SBI (Stockholms universitet), CCLC (University of Florida) and IFRCL (University of Worcester). More specifically, the University of Las Palmas

de Gran Canaria became the second pioneering centre specialised in CYAL translation, helping to foster this field of study mainly through the *I Congreso Internacional “Traducción y Literatura Infantil”* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 20-23 March 2002) and the *II Congreso Internacional “Traducción, Literatura Infantil-Juvenil y didáctica”* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 16-18 March 2005).

### 3. Research on the translation of CYAL

With regard to the research papers in this field, we should highlight various typologies:

- (1) Many papers, particularly at the beginning of these studies, were of a prescriptive nature, focussing on how these texts ought to be translated.
- (2) Other studies of a more descriptive character have analysed how certain works for children have been translated, with the aim of reaching conclusions of a diverse nature centred mainly on specific translation problems and different approaches to the study of translation.
- (3) The contrastive analyses of translations with their original texts are also an inexhaustible source of data, not only on how translators work but also on how each target system functions when the same work is translated into different languages, an example of which is the monographic paper on the translations into German, French, Italian and English of the series of *Manolito Gafotas* books by Elvira Lindo (Pérez Vicente *et al.* 2016).
- (4) The contrastive analysis of translations of a work into the same target language at different moments in time reveals how a given cultural system functions and evolves over time (Clark Peres 2000).

To be more precise, research on CYAL translation has touched on such diverse aspects as the following:

- (1) The poetic genre aimed at children (Pérez Romero 2007; Lathey 2016; Morillas 2019; Beauvais 2019), including the frequent appearance of rhymes in the stories (Mata Pastor & Morillas 1997; Alvstad 2010).

- (2) The importance of orality as a device to attract the attention of the young reader (Pérez Vicente 2016).
- (3) The intertextuality of the works, which may often be regarded as a “nod” towards the adult reader (Lorenzo & Pereira 2010).
- (4) The treatment of taboo topics and linguistic elements (sex, religion, violence, death, etc.), as a consequence of the dual readership and control exercised by adults (MacLeod 1994; Oittinen & Roig-Rechou 2016).
- (5) Translation at the service of ideologies (Shavit 1981; Klingberg 1986; Hollindale 1988; Clark Peres 2000; Fernández López 2000b; Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009), but also in recent times, translation of the “politically correct” (Fernández López 2000b).
- (6) Censorship as a form of translation (Fernández López 1995, 2000a; Merino 2002; Pascua 2011; Martínez Mateo 2015; Josiowicz 2021) and paternalism (Lorenzo 2014), related to the ideological factor.
- (7) The various strategies used in the translation of cultural references, regarded as one of the main stumbling blocks for translators (Marcelo 2007; Morales 2008; Cámara & Faber 2014).
- (8) The *faithfulness* of the original text in terms of suitability, but also the consideration of the needs of the target reader through the *appropriateness* of the target text (Shavit 1981; Ben-Ari 1992; Kurultay 1994; Ruzicka *et al.* 1995) and, as a consequence, the observation of norms and conventions in CYAL translation.
- (9) Translation versus adaptation (Klingberg 1986; Nord 1993).
- (10) The voice of the translator (Oittinen 2000; O’Sullivan 2003) and the interventionism of the translator (Marcelo 2007).
- (11) The translation of humour, a key ingredient of CYAL (Pascua & Rey-Jouvin 2010; Cámara 2014; Botella 2017).
- (12) The translation of classic works, many of which were not originally written with very young readers in mind (Klingberg 1986; O’Sullivan 2006; Toledano Buendía 2001).
- (13) The trend towards stylistic uniformity in the translation of CYAL, with the subsequent search for a lofty style, avoiding colloquialisms (Blini 2012).



- (14) The conception of translation as a multimodal phenomenon, in which the meaning of the text is constructed as a sum of the various functions involved in the reading or visualisation of the children's text (Nodelman 1988; Oittinen 1993; Lorenzo 1999; Nikolajeva & Scott 2001; Serafini 2011; Ketola & Martínez 2017).
- (15) The reception of the translated CYAL (Cámara & Faber 2014; de los Reyes 2015).
- (16) The translation of stereotypes and archetypes (Ariza 2016; Valero & Lérica 2018; Lérica & Valero 2019; Marcelo 2019; Lozano 2021), the gender perspective (Pascua 2019) and the reflection of new social realities, such as the wider conception of the family unit and the *queer* subject.
- (17) The translation focused on promoting environmental care and sustainable economies, the so-called eco-translation (Badenes & Coisson 2010).
- (18) Editorial and commercial motivations and imperatives (Fernández López 2002); la traducción de los *bestsellers* (Rodríguez Rodríguez 2009) and retranslation (Lathey 2016; Sánchez Iglesias 2016).
- (19) The multimodal translation of CYAL due to the interaction between image and text in illustrated books, children's films (de los Reyes Lozano 2015; Marcelo & Morales 2015; Pascua Febles 2019) and songs (Pascua & Marcelo 2020).

At this point, we should stop to consider this last aspect, which has been the subject of much interest: the importance of the various illustrations that accompany and enrich these texts, images that are key complementary factors in understanding the texts, especially for young readers, as they listen to adults reading the stories to them. The presence of these illustrations is therefore not merely decorative, since they form part of the so-called multimodal texts (Van Leeuwen 2005; Pérez-González 2014), and their importance in the construction of meaning, both of the original and the translated texts, has already been amply proven (Martín & Marcelo 2021). Some important studies on this subject have been published by the Finnish researcher Riitta Oittinen, in works such as *I am me — I am other: On the dialogics of translating for children* (1993), *Translating for children* (2000) and *Translating*

*picture books: revoicing the verbal, the visual and the aural for a child audience* (Oittinen, Ketola & Garavini 2017), core studies in this field that have not only helped to give these studies more prestige, but have also helped to place illustration in the position it deserves in the field of translation, as have works by Emer O'Sullivan (2005) from Germany, Gillian Lathey (2006) from England and Roberta Pederzoli (2013), as well as Gloria Bazzocchi & Raffaella Tonin (2015) from Italy.

Likewise, given their importance in the market, we should not overlook audio-visual works, another important sector aimed at child and juvenile readers, and part of the so-called multimodal texts: series and films which have so far received scant attention from translation researchers, and which have begun to be regarded as one of the leading-edge sectors in view of their convergence with the other major multimodal translation area, namely, audio-visual translation in its two sub-domains of dubbing and subtitling.

#### 4. The research on the translation of CYAL in this volume

Therefore, although research into CYAL translation has continued to produce valid, meticulous and diverse studies, the significant diversification of the research conducted in Translation Studies in general has not been seen in equal measure in our particular field of study. This reasoning has led us to put together the present monographic issue, which has enabled us to incorporate the current research interests in this field; a volume in which we have endeavoured to keep in mind the particular characteristics of these texts, their target readers, and the entire CYAL system, with its specific character and flexibility when it comes to embracing new themes, genres, formats and different types of readers, all of which are addressed from present-day perspectives, reflecting the complex nature of the CYAL system: the reception of the different genres of CYAL (stories, theatre, poetry) through their translations and from the reader's perspective, translation for children from a gender perspective, the didactics of literary translation through CYAL, multimodality in CYAL, the dubbing of films for children and young people, the cognitive dimension in CYAL translation, and taboos in texts for children and young people. This is therefore a volume in which the past –with an overview of the research thus far, as well as the study of old works

from modern and novel perspectives–, the present –current research– and the future –new lines of research–, all converge, with the aim of offering a representative, if incomplete, sample of the research interests in this field, and disseminating CYAL translation studies.

For all these reasons, this issue begins with a review by **Gisela Marcelo and Isabel Pascua** of the various theoretical approaches that have shaped the foundations of CYAL translation studies, and which also looks towards the future and a new approach to studying classic and modern illustrated texts through multimodality.

Indeed, the importance of multimodality is highlighted in various articles that explore it from several different angles: firstly, scientific translation for children in a paper by **Ingrid Cobos**, who focuses on the adaptation for children of texts on cancer, taking into account the needs and capabilities of the target readership and emphasising the function of translation as a mechanism for scientific dissemination and the education of young children; secondly, the analysis by **Xi-Chen** of intersemiotic translations in modern adaptations of illustrated books of traditional Chinese poems, the so-called nursery rhymes; and thirdly, the examination of the blurry line between translation and adaptation or rewriting by **Miren Ibarluzea Santisteban and Amaia Elizalde Estenaga**, who review the evolution of *Cinderella* through different versions from a multimodal perspective. Similarly, **Gerardo Fernández San Emeterio** offers an analysis of the relationship between text and illustration in the development of the narrative and descriptive planes of the collection of stories by Miguel López, *El Hematocrítico*. Moreover, **Iván Villanueva** studies the film version of Oscar Wilde's tale, *The Happy Prince* (2018), open to numerous interpretations due to its semiotic associations. And lastly, from a multimodal perspective, **Naroa Zubillaga Gómez** examines audio-visual translations into Basque, exploring the curious path of *Maya the Bee* from the original book by Waldemar Bonsels in 1912 to the present-day TV series for Basque children.

Furthermore, one of the pillars of CYAL for very young readers, as we already know, is reading aloud, which is analysed in this volume by **Esther Morillas** with an article on the mechanisms that foster this type of reading in the work *Du Iz Tak?* by Carson Ellis (2016), a text written in an invented

language that brings sonority to the reading, and in which the interaction between image and text is fundamental.

Besides, as we have also mentioned above, the history of CYAL and its translation cannot be comprehended without taking into account the omnipresent ideology, which has always conditioned its creation through the dominant norms and conventions in each cultural system and era, a reality reflected in the censorship of *uncomfortable* or *delicate* elements. In this respect, **Handegül Demirhan** explores an extremely delicate aspect of CYAL from a gender perspective: the sexual taboo. Accordingly, after presenting an overview of the sexual genre in CYAL, she focusses on the dilemma between gender education and taboos in Turkish culture through the study of five translations related to sexuality. Another very interesting form of censorship is self-censorship, an interesting example of which is analysed by **María López Medel** in the passage “Bad Tuesday” from the novel *Mary Poppins* (Travers 1934). López Medel shows us how the norms and conventions of the same system change over time and how different systems do not function in the same way. Following the ideological line, **M<sup>a</sup> del Carmen López Ruiz** explores another classic example of CYAL, the novel *Five on a Treasure Island* (1942), by Enid Blyton, analysing the ideological, moralistic and didactic elements in its French and Spanish translations, which contrasted with the innovative quality represented by the author at that time.

The retranslation of CYAL has also given rise to many cases that are worthy of attention, such as the example chosen by **Rocío García Jiménez**, who analyses the production of new versions of Disney classics, leading her to redefine the concept of retranslation from the audio-visual perspective. **Inma Mendoza García and Gustavo Filsinger Senftleben** offer another example of retranslation, presenting the results of an experimental project with specialised translation students focussing on the novel *Five Go Off to Camp* by Enid Blyton.

Furthermore, the article by **Paula Martínez Sirés** provides an example of the ability of translation to innovate in the target systems, examining the influence of the translator's voice by reviewing the style and techniques of the Japanese scholar Iwamoto Kashi (1864-1896) who, under the pseudonym Wakamatsu Shizuko, was a pioneer in CYAL translation in Japan.

Moreover, the complexity of the CYAL system, as we have already mentioned, is inevitably reflected in the practice of translation. From this perspective, **Maria D. Oltra Ripoll** carries out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the animated series *The Adventures of Puss in Boots* in the version dubbed into Valencian, concentrating on the techniques and strategies adopted to solve specific problems, such as the translation of proper nouns, wordplays, lexical creation and phraseology. Lastly, **Daniel Segura, Sara Rovira and Helena Casas** pay attention to the accessibility for child and young readers in a study conducted via questionnaires on the reception of professional and *amateur* translations in Catalan sign language of two stories (*L'elefant Mainú i l'amistat* 2014; and *La màgia dels colors* 2011).

## 5. Final remarks

All these papers support our hypothesis that the field of CYAL translation has become a hotbed of research interest that has witnessed a new examination of the classics from present-day perspectives, where the dominant ideology of this system continues to condition literary production and its translation, where retranslations serve different purposes and different points of view, and where technical advances are incorporated; in other words, they reflect the complexity of the children's literary system and its translation.

To conclude, we should consider the importance of CYAL texts. Let us imagine the reading of a short story or fairy tale to a child of three or four years old: the child will listen to the adult tell the story (intonation, rhyme, onomatopoeia, words...), he or she will look at the story (illustrations, images, letters, shapes, colours...) and will even touch the book (textures, embossed elements, grooves...), and the sum of all these sensations and messages will leave an indelible impression on the child's mind, to which many others will subsequently be added. And part of this magic will be thanks to translation.

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## BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

PINO VALERO CUADRA is a lecturer in Translation (German-Spanish) at the University of Alicante (Spain) since 1996. She worked before during several years as Assistant Professor at the University of Bielefeld (Germany). She specializes in monastic translation in Spain and Latin America, Didactics of Translation (German-Spanish), German Phraseology, machine translation in the general-translation classroom, German intercultural Literature and its translations and Translation and Gender in Children's and Young Adult's Literature, which have led to several publications at national and international level. He has been a member of the BITRA research project (Bibliography on Translation) and the FRASYTRAM research group (Phraseology and Translation) and is currently a member of the HISTRAD (History of Translation) and MHISTRAD (Mission and Translation) research groups.

PINO VALERO CUADRA es doctora en Filología Hispánica por la Universidad de Alicante. Tras desempeñar durante seis años diversas labores docentes y de investigación en la Universidad de Bielefeld (Alemania), en 1996 se incorporó a la Universidad de Alicante, en la que es Profesora Titular de Universidad en el Departamento de Traducción e Interpretación. Sus líneas fundamentales de investigación son: la traducción monacal en Hispanoamérica, la didáctica de la traducción español-alemán, la fraseología en alemán, la traducción automática en el aula de traducción general, traducción y género en la literatura infantil y juvenil y la literatura intercultural alemana y sus traducciones,

que han dado lugar a diversas publicaciones a nivel nacional e internacional. Ha sido miembro del proyecto de investigación BITRA (Bibliografía sobre Traducción) y el grupo de investigación FRASYTRAM (Fraseología y Traducción) y lo es en la actualidad de los grupos HISTRAD (Historia de la Traducción) y MHISTRAD (Misión y Traducción).

GISELA MARCELO WIRNITZER is PhD and senior lecturer for Translation at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Her research interests include translating literature and films for children and young adults, with special attention to cultural references, addressees and gender in the field of translation. She has written several articles and books on these subjects, as for instance *La traducción de las referencias culturales en la literatura infantil y juvenil* (2007). She has also researched the translation activity in the Canary Islands, what has resulted, for instance, in the publication of *Traducir la historia desde diferentes prismas* (2016).

GISELA MARCELO WIRNITZER es licenciada y doctora europea en Traducción y Profesora Titular de Universidad de la UPLGC. Sus líneas de investigación se han centrado en diferentes temáticas: principalmente, en la traducción de la literatura para niños y jóvenes, concretamente en la traducción de las diferentes referencias culturales dentro de este tipo de literatura, así como en textos audiovisuales y en la traducción de películas para niños desde la perspectiva cultural, del destinatario y de género, que ha dado lugar a múltiples publicaciones como *La traducción de las referencias culturales en la literatura infantil y juvenil* (2007). Su otro campo investigador relevante es la historia de la actividad traductoria, como la traducción de textos en el ámbito historiográfico de las Islas Canarias, que ha dado como resultado, entre otros, la publicación *Traducir la historia desde diferentes prismas* (2016).

NURIA PÉREZ VICENTE holds an european PhD in Philology from the UNED and is a Senior Lecturer in Spanish Language and Translation in the Department of Humanistic Studies at the University of Macerata (Italy). Her research interests focus on the theory and practice of translation, mainly of literary texts and children's literature. She has published numerous essays, including the monograph *Traducción en contexto: análisis crítico de traducciones literarias (español/italiano)* (Bologna, 2021); she is coordinator and

co-author of the volume *Manolito por el mundo: análisis intercultural de las traducciones al inglés, francés, alemán e italiano* (Sevilla, 2016). She has translated texts by various Italian and Spanish authors, such as *Il ladro di libri* and *L'intimità* by Nuria Amat (Macerata, 2015 and 2019).

NURIA PÉREZ VICENTE es doctora europea en Filología por la UNED y profesora titular de Lengua y Traducción española en el Departamento de Estudios Humanísticos de la Universidad de Macerata (Italia). Sus líneas de investigación se centran en la teoría y práctica de la traducción, principalmente del texto literario y de la LIJ. Ha publicado numerosos ensayos, entre ellos la monografía *Traducción en contexto: análisis crítico de traducciones literarias (español/italiano)* (Bologna, 2021); es coordinadora y co-autora del volumen *Manolito por el mundo: análisis intercultural de las traducciones al inglés, francés, alemán e italiano* (Sevilla, 2016). Ha traducido textos de distintos autores italianos y españoles, como *Il ladro di libri* y *L'intimità*, de Nuria Amat (Macerata, 2015 y 2019).