

## **Norms and Ideological Implications of Translating Children's Literature into Farsi**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Since cultural differences exist between source and target languages, translators adopting a prescriptive approach to the cultural context adaptation usually employ manipulating strategies when translating for children. The present study identifies adaptation strategies employed by translators of literature for Iranian children and the socio-cultural norms used to translate storybooks. The manipulating strategies used by translators identified by the current study indicate the way Iranian society views the concept of childhood and the ideology of this society regarding children. Initially, thirty storybooks and their Farsi translations were compared using the Lambert and van Gorp (2006) model and the frequency of common strategies adopted by translators was identified. The findings revealed that cultural adequacy, omission and creation norms are the norms most frequently-used by Iranian translators. The type of manipulation strategies used by translators suggests that the underlying reasons for the use of adaptation strategies is that children should not be exposed to the misdeeds of the characters; in other words, children are viewed as incomplete people who should be manipulated by complete adults.

**KEYWORDS:** children's literature, ideology, socio-cultural norms.

### **1. Introduction**

Childhood is the stage in life in which children learn about different aspects of life and begin to acquire social and cultural values that will shape their identities. Literature written for children is an important tool for teaching social and cultural values and can play a significant role in influencing and manipulating children's thoughts and behaviors (Frimmelová, 2010:15). The major difference between adult literature and children's literature is that the latter is defined in terms of the reader rather than the author's intentions or the texts themselves. Thus, children's literature tends to be directed more toward its readers (Hunt, 1991:45). Despite this distinctive feature, there is not any consensus over a clear-cut definition for children's literature. As Lathey argues, what makes a clear-

cut definition of children's literature difficult is the concept of "adult-child duality" (2013:31). This concept creates confusion as to what is considered as children's literature: texts written for children by adults, written texts intended for adults but where in fact children form the audience, or texts read by both children and adults. The boundaries of children's literature cannot be defined by textual characteristics such as style or content, but by its audience as children; thus, it plays an educative role in society (Frimmelová, 2010:23). Encyclopedia Britannica defines children's literature as "the body of written works and accompanying illustrations produced in order to entertain or instruct young people". Children's books transfer knowledge, customs, values and behaviors to children and shape their identities and cultural expectations (Puurtinen, 2006:55).

Translated books can also improve the status of children's literature in the target culture (TC) because they expose the writers of a target language (TL) to new forms of literature and trigger the emergence of new forms of literature written in the TL (Ghesquiere, 2006:19). Children's literature has the ability to travel the world, to cross linguistic and cultural borders, make global connections and give new life to the world of literature (O'Sullivan, 2003:198). The translation of children's literature transfers knowledge about the world, customs, values and behaviors and broadens the perspectives of children towards life (Puurtinen, 2006:55). Scholarly interest in the translation of children's literature originated (for example, Klinberg, 1986) with a desire to read the literature offered in other countries; however, cultural differences between the TL and source language (SL) may prevent translators and editors from trusting a child's ability to "delight in and assimilate the unfamiliar" (Lathey, 2013:32). In response, they may need to make adjustments and employ manipulating strategies when translating for children. Adaptation and the use of manipulation strategies present a thorny issue to scholars in the field. To researchers such as Xeni (2010), translation for children is about fulfilling a cultural need, since it extends the life perspectives of children by transferring knowledge about the world, customs, values and behaviors and shaping their identities and cultural expectations. Translators must respect SL norms in their translations so that children are not cheated of their global heritage by exposure to unfamiliar cultural patterns (Xeni; 2010:10).

On the other hand, some researchers, like Hussein Taha (2010:18), believe that translators can adjust a text to make it appropriate and useful to children in accordance with societal opinions about what is

acceptable. The plot, characterizations and the difficulty level of the text can be adjusted to the norms of the TL society. In this relation, Van Coillie and Verschueren point out that translating children's literature has undergone a paradigm shift from "the prescriptive approach (how should you translate) to descriptive approach (how do texts present themselves as translations?)" which focuses on the target readership (2006:5). The focal point of recent scholarly work in this vein is concerned with the effect of translation norms. Oittinen, a leading scholar in this field, also believes that adaptation is an inevitable aspect of children's literature that allows translators a great deal of freedom to manipulate original texts by changing, enlarging, abridging, deleting or adding to them to conform to the target culture (2000:75). She also emphasizes creativity and the child-friendly qualities of a text (Oittinen, 2000:42). Alongside such requirements, translators must be familiar with the didactic norms of children's literature and the ideological and moral values accepted by society (Frimmelová, 2010:16).

According to prescriptive approaches to translation, to remain faithful to what Inghilleri refers to as "objective rules or duties that decide ethical behavior" (2013: 102), translators should be familiar with TL norms of translating for children and take protective measures by first selecting an acceptable text for translation and then adjusting it to the norms of society (Mdallel, 2003:299). Ethics and morality are generally concerned with the translator's ability to make decisions on the basis of what they consider to be morally right or wrong in a specific context (Baker, 2011: 14). Consequently, translators use strategies such as adaptation, additions, abridgement, modifications, and deletions to alter a text to make it conform to the social and ideological traditions of the TL (Van Coillie and Verschueren, 2006:9). Nord contends that the starting point for translators is not the text of the original, but the context and loyalty to readers (1991:92). Translators must have good knowledge of both the source and target cultures to deal with the socio-cultural context of translation. Linguistic and cultural factors influencing cultural references, customs, social and ideological aspects make the translation of children's literature challenging for translators (Oittinen, 2000:6).

These scholars and researchers agree that all adaptation strategies reflect images of childhood and ideological differences of different cultures (Lathey, 2006; Lopez, 2006). Paloposki and Oittinen (1998) point out that adaptation is not simply a question of how texts are translated, but why they are treated the way they are. This is due to the fact that any product (writings, illustrations or translations) can be considered as a reflection of that society's views of childhood. It demonstrates how that society views childhood as a crucial stage of life. The wants of the children also mirror their

personalities and backgrounds. Given these facts, studying children's products can provide scholars with adults' images of childhood. Likewise, society's image of childhood is reflected in translated books for children; however, the concept of childhood varies from society to society (Oittinen, 2000:41). For instance, Aries (1962) has pointed out the different images of childhood in different time periods in France. In Europe, Aries asserts, the concept of childhood as a separate concept from adulthood arose in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the same vein, Hamalainen-Forslund (1988:20) claims that there was no concept of childhood in Finland until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the first children's books and toys came out in Finland and central Europe. Therefore, translating children's literature "involves rewriting for new target-language audience" (Oittinen, 2000: 75). Lefevere and Bassnett consider translation as an obvious way to study cultural interactions. This is due to the fact that a comparison of original and translation "will not only reveal the constraints under which translators have to work at a certain time and in a certain place, but also the strategies they develop to overcome, or at least work around those constraints. This kind of comparison can, therefore, give the researcher something like a synchronic snapshot of many features of a given culture at a given time." (1998: 6). One of these features is child image as an effective factor playing an important role in selecting these strategies selected by translators of children's literature (O'Sullivan, 2003: 205).

The translation of literature in general, and children's literature in particular, should be conducted according to the set of norms governing a particular literary genre. These norms may be didactic, ideological, ethical and religious, in addition to literary and aesthetic, and they determine what, when and where texts are translated. These norms change over time and vary from language to language, culture to culture, and generation to generation (Lathey, 2006:3). Toury defined the concept of norm as "the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community as to what is right or wrong, adequate or inadequate into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations." (1995:55). Baker states that translation norms are "options that translators in a given socio-historical context select on a regular basis" (2011:64). Norms assume that the translator is essentially engaged in a decision-making process. Toury (1995:56) further suggests that being a translator involves playing a social role, rather than simply transferring phrases and sentences across a linguistic boundary. The translator fulfills a function specified by the community in a way that is considered appropriate in that community.

Society regards childhood as a crucial period for the socialization of an individual to conform to its norms and values. Children's literature is a means for educating and instructing children since as Aries (1962:1) states, "pedagogy has always played an important part in anything created (by grown-ups) for children". Children's literature also exists to entertain children and to introduce them to aesthetic and literary modes of expression. Educators see the need for children to be exposed to the literature of other cultures to instruct them and as an opportunity to broaden their experiences toward life and their understanding and enjoyment of literary genres and styles. In this sense, translation plays an important role in socializing and instructing children (Hussein Taha, 2010:1).

In recognition of the role of norms in the translation of children's literature, this study has identified the use of adaptation norms employed by translators of English storybooks for Iranian children. The current study also examines what adaptation norms reveals about Iranian ideology regarding children and the concept of childhood.

## **2. Corpus**

Thirty children's books form the corpus of this study. These books were selected because they were best-selling books for children in Iran and have been reprinted at least eight times since 2011. Their popularity may be due to the fact that they have an instructive function for children, which is consistent with societal expectations of children's literature in Iran. It may also be the humour or entertainment value of the books that makes them popular. For instance, in the *Horrid Henry* series, Henry misbehaves throughout the story, but something finally happens that triggers him to be good and well-behaved. Similarly, in the *Judy Moody* series, Judy has experiences that are instructive to her and, accordingly, to the children reading the book. The *Amber Brown* series also teaches children to deal with changes in their lives. These books are good examples of children's books representing a child living in Anglo-Saxon Western culture with different values from Iranian culture. Furthermore, these books are replete with cultural terminologies and concepts that represent an alternative culture, making them good candidates for eliciting norms for translating cultural concepts at the preliminary level as in the Lambert and van Gorp model discussed below.

Ten books in the corpus were written by Francesca Simon, a British-American author of over fifty books for children of all ages. Her most well-known works are the popular *Horrid Henry* series (1994-2006) published by Orion. Ten books of the forty-nine book series have been translated into Farsi. Horrid Henry is a naughty, aggressive little boy who loves doing unimaginably horrible actions like throwing food and snatching things. He has a younger brother called Perfect Peter who is the perfect child and says “please” and “thank you”. Henry is the central character in all of the stories. His major interest is plotting mischief, exposing Peter to verbal abuse and deceiving him. The books that have been translated into Farsi in 2007 by Atusa Salehi and published by Ofogh are *Horrid Henry’s Holiday* (1994), *Horrid Henry Tricks the Tooth Fairy* (1996), *Don’t be Horrid Henry* (1996) and *Horrid Henry and the Christmas Crackers* (2006). Salehi has also translated and published from English the Junie B. Jones series written by Barbara Park. Other books in the series were translated by Mojgan Calhor and published in 2008 by Ofogh: *Horrid Henry and the Mega Mean Time Machine* (2005), *Horrid Henry’s Nits* (1997), *Horrid Henry and the Football Fiend* (2006), *Henry Gets Rich Quickly* (2006), and *Horrid Henry’s Haunted House* (2006). Mojgan Calhor is an author and translator of children’s stories and has translated books from English such as *Dear Mr. Henshaw* by Beverly Cleary, the *Sophie’s Adventures* series written by Dick King-Smith and the *Trouble with Daisy* series written by Kes Gray. Calhor was awarded the Etessami Literary Award in Iran, an annual award granted to the best woman writer.

Nine of the books selected for this study were written by Megan McDonald, an American author of children’s book published by Candlewick Press in the United States. Her most popular works are the *Judy Moody* series about the humorous adventures of a third-grade girl. In each book, Judy Moody is in a specific mood. She may be moody and weird, but she is always enthusiastic and full of energy. The books translated into Farsi and used in this study are: *Judy Moody Declares Independence* (2005) and *Judy Moody, Girl Detective* (2004), *Judy Moody: The Doctor Is In* (2004), *Judy Moody Gets Famous* (2001) and *Judy Moody & Stink: The Holly Joliday* (2008) translated in 2007 by Mahboobeh Najafkhani; *Judy Moody Saves the World* (2002), *Judy Moody: Around the World in 8 1/2 Days* (2006), *Judy and the Not Bummer Summer* (2010), by Mahboobeh Najafkhani in 2009 and published by Entesharat-e- Fanni-ye- Iran. Mahboobeh Najafkhani has translated many books from English to Farsi, such as *Ella Enchanted*, written by Gail Carson Levine and *The Witches* and *Matilda* by Roald Dahl.

Eight books selected were written by Paula Danziger, an American author of children's books. Danziger is the author of more than thirty books, published by Publishers Weekly, including the *Amber Brown* and *Matthew Martin* series. Seven books of the *Amber Brown* series have been translated into Farsi. The eponymous narrator of this series is a ten-year old girl who is proud of being the only kid in school with a two-color name. Her mother and father divorce; Amber's mother starts dating Max and her father pursues a new job in Paris. Amber's best friend is Justin Daniels from whom she painfully separates when he moves to Alabama. She is concerned that her parents cannot agree on anything and has difficulty coping with all of these changes.

The Danziger books selected for this study are *Amber Brown is Feeling Blue* (1998), *Amber Brown Sees Red* (1998), *Amber Brown is Not a Crayon* (1994), *Amber Brown is Green with Envy* (1994), *You Can't Eat Your Chicken Pox* (1994), *Amber Goes Forth* (1994), *Amber Wants Extra Credit* (2006) and *Amber Forever* (1997). All of these books were translated into Farsi in 2009 by Farmahar Monjezy and published by Ofogh. Farmahar Monjezy has also translated several books such as the *Hank Zipper* series by Lin Oliver from English into Farsi.

Four books were selected from the *My Weird School* series, twenty-one books written by Dan Gutman and published by HarperCollins (2004-2014). Of these, twelve have been translated into Farsi. The four with the most alterations were selected for this study. Dan Gutman is an American author whose works have been published by Penguin, Macmillan, Scholastic Press, and HarperCollins. The main characters in these stories are AJ (a boy who doesn't like school) and his arch enemy, Andrea Young (who loves school and everything else AJ hates). The books selected for this study are *Mrs. Suki is Kooky* (2004), *Mrs. Yonkers is Bonkers* (2004), *Miss Daisy is Crazy* (2004), and *Miss Lazar is Bizarre* (2004) translated in 2009 by Mahboobeh Najafkhani and published by Ofogh. Taken as a whole, this corpus due to containing drastic cultural differences from Iranian culture provided good candidates for observing ideological norms governing translating children's literature in Iran.

### **3. Methodology**

To discern adaptation strategies employed by translators in the translation of children's books in Iran, the original English books were compared with their Farsi translations and were analyzed using the Lambert and van Gorp (2006) descriptive model. This model was used because the findings of a pilot study revealed that the adaptation strategies employed by the translators are of the types proposed by this model which provided a system for comparing ST and target text (TT) literary systems as follows:

- Preliminary data (title, title pages, metatext, and general translation strategies)
- Macro-level data (text divisions, presentation of sections, acts, internal narrative structure, authorial comment)
- Micro-level data (selection of words, dominant grammatical patterns, and forms of speech reproduction, narrative point of view, aspect of culture).

In this model, norms describe practices that guide behavior within a given community. Translation norms can be considered constraints at the macro- and micro-level (extratextual and textual) that determine and influence the decisions and translation strategies that translators adopt.

The current study focused on the analysis of books at the preliminary level in order to provide an in-depth focus on the adaptation strategies used by the translators. To this end, cover illustrations, and blurbs of the original books and their Farsi translations were compared and contrasted. In this model, the relation between translations and their originals may be described in terms of manipulations or adaptations used in translation. These adaptations may have been applied to neutralize the cultural differences existing between the source and target language systems.

Bastin's (2005) model of adaptation strategies was used to suggest the norms that govern them. Baker and Saldanha found that there has been no comprehensive definition of adaptation since Bastin (2005) and that "adaptation refers to a set of translative interventions which result in a text that is not generally accepted as a translation, but is nevertheless recognized as representing a source text" (2011: 3). Bastin (2005: 4) developed a selective list of the ways or modes in which adaptation may be carried out. He classifies the mode of adaptation and the procedure used by the adapter as follows:

- Transcription of the original: word-for-word reproduction of parts of the original text, usually accompanied by literal translation.



- Omission: elimination of part of the text, expansion: addition or explanation of source information, either in the main body or in a foreword, footnote or a glossary
- Exoticism: the substitution of slang, dialect, and nonsense words in the original text by rough equivalents in the TL, update: replacement of out-dated or obscure information by modern equivalents, situational or cultural adequacy: recreation in a context that is more familiar or culturally appropriate from the target reader's perspective than the one used in the original,
- Creation: a global replacement of original text with text that preserves only the essential message, ideas, and functions of the original.

According to Toury (1995:55), the norms govern the choices as well as the strategies adopted by the translators. Therefore, in the current study, to identify the adaptation norms at the preliminary level used by the translators in adapting children's literature for Iranian children, the frequency of common strategies at that level adopted by translators was firstly computed. In this relation, it is noteworthy that sometimes while analyzing the data, there were some cases which could be categorized as both cultural adequacy and creation. However, the definition proposed by Bastin (2005), removed the ambiguity in this relation. Bastin suggests that creation refers to global replacement of original texts, whereas cultural adequacy occurs at a local level. Next, to identify the norms in the adaptation of storybooks for Iranian children, the most frequent changes and strategies used by translators were considered as governed by norms of translation. Finally, the adaptation strategies of the translations were analyzed in relation to ideological norms in Iranian society.

## **4. Analysis of Preliminary Level**

### **4.1. Book titles**

The comparison of 30 English books and their Farsi translations revealed that transcription, cultural adequacy, and creation strategies were the most frequently used by translators. The translation of the book title *Horrid Henry and the Football Fiend* [هنری زلزله و عشق فوتبال], for example, presents a noteworthy example of such strategies in the translation of the word "fiend" into Farsi as the word "love" (*Earthquake Henry and the Love of Football*). The Oxford English dictionary defines "fiend" as "a very cruel and unpleasant person"; however, the word "love" has mitigated the SL word in TL. The translator (Mojgan Calhor) has translated the word "horrid" into Farsi as the word "earthquake" (-"Earthquake Henry"-). Horrid in English, as opposed to horrible, is somewhat archaic and therefore

ironic in English, which, along with the alliteration, makes it a jokey title. Calhor has appropriately substituted the attribute “earthquake” which for Iranian children has a positive connotation of being naughty.

Table 1 below indicates the frequency and percentage of adaptation strategies used by translators in the preliminary level.

*Table 1. Frequency and percentage of adaptation strategies used by translators at the preliminary level*

Strategy	Book titles		Photo covers		Blurbs	
	Frequency Out of 30	percentage	Frequency Out of 30	Percentage	Frequency Out of 30	percentage
Transcription	12	40%	9	30%	0	0
Omission	3	10%	0	0	0	0
Expansion	3	10%	0	0	0	0
Exoticism	0	0	0	0	0	0
Update	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural adequacy	3	10%	5	16.66%	7	58.3%
Creation	9	30%	16	53.33%	23	41.6%

As shown, omission formed 10% of the strategies applied in the translation of book titles. For example, *Horrid Henry and Mega-Mean Time Machine* was translated as هنری زلزله و ماشین زمان [Earthquake Henry and the Time Machine], with the word “mega-mean” omitted in the Farsi version to keep the title simple and comprehensible for Iranian children. The title *Horrid Henry Tricks the Tooth Fairy* was translated as- هنری زلزله و دندان شیری [Earthquake Henry and the Baby Tooth] in Farsi. The word for “trick”, which has a negative connotation of deception, has been omitted and the “tooth fairy” has been replaced with “baby tooth”. This occurs mainly because there is no cultural concept of a tooth fairy in the Iranian context.

Another example of omission occurs in the translation of *Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quickly* as

هنری زلزله پولدار می شود [Earthquake Henry Gets Rich], where the word “quickly” has been omitted in the translation. This may be because getting rich overnight is a characteristic of an unstable individual and is not considered wise in Iranian society. Analyses of the strategies used in translating titles indicate that omission serves two purposes: (i) to maintain the simplicity of expression, which, according to Khosronejad (2003:23), is a characteristic of children’s literature and (ii) to eliminate what is considered to be an inappropriate code of conduct.

Translators employed the transcription strategy in 40% of all cases. For instance, *Judy Moody Saves the World* was translated literally as جودی مودی دنیا را نجات می دهد- [Judy Moody Saves the World]. It appears that this strategy has been employed because no inappropriate behavior is evident in the title, or simply because it is the most straightforward translation.

Expansion constituted 10% of the strategies applied by translators. *Horrid Henry’s Holiday* was translated as هنری زلزله و تعطیلات پر ماجرا- [Horrid Henry’s Eventful Holiday]. The word “eventful” was added to expand the meaning of the title to reflect the content of the story. The Children’s Literature Association of Iran found that children’s books with ambiguous titles do not sell well and that people prefer to buy books whose titles reflect their contents; in other words, thematic titles are given priority to rhematic ones (Egbalizadeh, 2009:15). This translation thus provides an example of the cultural transposition from rhematic to thematic titles.

In 10% of the titles, translators had used the cultural adequacy strategy. For example, *Horrid Henry and the Christmas Crackers* was translated as هنری زلزله و نهار روز عید- [Earthquake Henry and the Eid Luncheon]. This is more likely a result of significant cultural differences between SC and TC contexts. The concept of Christmas is culture-bound (it is a Christian festival), so the translator substituted *eid*, the Iranian New Year holiday, which is an approximate equivalent for Christmas in the TL, thus not only making it more comprehensible to children but also adhering to target cultural norms.

In 30% of the titles, the strategy of creation was applied. For example, *Mrs. Suki is Kooky* was translated to خانم بادی نویسنده غیر عادی [Mrs. Buddy, an Unusual Writer]. The translator maintained the rhyming in the title by changing “Mrs. Suki” to “Mrs. Buddy”, which rhymes with the word for

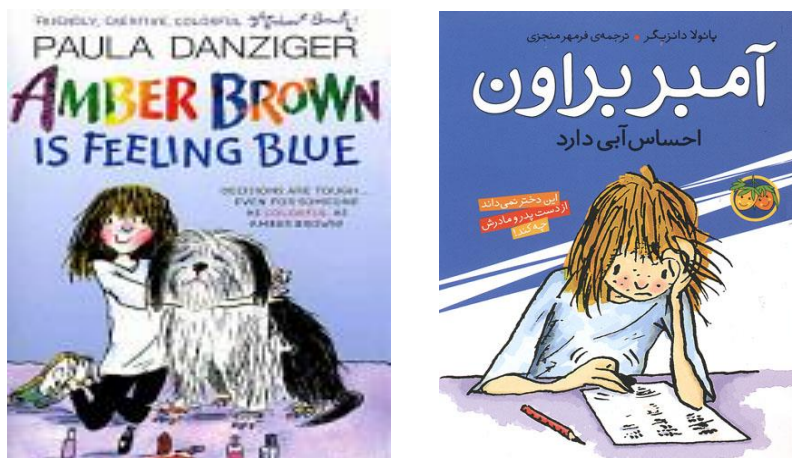
“unusual” in Farsi. She was also creative when translating *Mrs. Yonkers is Bonkers* to خانم ماتی معلم فاتی [Mrs. Mati is an Untidy Teacher], *Miss Patty is Batty* to خانم اسپاک ناظم ترسناک [Mrs. Spack a Frightening Teacher], *Miss Daisy is Crazy* to خانم بریج معلم گیج [Mrs. Bridge a Confused Teacher], and *Miss Lazar is Bizarre* to خانم فابیان سرایدار قهرمان [Mrs. Fabian a Brave Janitor]. As can be observed, the attributes of the teachers such as bonkers, batty, crazy, and bizarre in SL were mitigated in the TL versions. This is because there is a reluctance to be disrespectful to teachers in Iranian society, and these attributes still rhymed with the names of the characters in Farsi.

Baker states that the issue of why a translator opts for one strategy rather than another is just as important as which strategy is ultimately chosen, because the decision of the translator reflects societal norms (2011: 14). Generally speaking, the results of this current survey indicate that when translating book titles, the translation of a storybook is target-oriented. The translators’ adaptation strategies of omission, expansion, cultural adequacy, and creation served to simplify, create and adapt the cultural aspects of -the titles so that they matched the comprehension level of the children and the expectations of the society. For the translated text to comply with societal norms, the translators remove or change the relations between elements and functions (Shavit, 1986:37). As the results indicate, Iranian translators simplified and modified the titles to make them suitable for the level of comprehension of the children. Another norm governing the adaptation strategies is to mitigate words with meanings that are considered impolite in the TL culture. In summary, the evidence suggests that while there is a marked degree of creativity in the transcription and expansion of the titles, a significant feature of these translations is their adaptation with regard to behavioral, ethical and other cultural norms.

#### *4.2. Book covers*

The designs of the covers of the storybooks have a TT orientation, and have been modified and adapted to meet Iranian societal norms. Table 1 shows that cultural adequacy (16.6%) and creation (10%) were most often employed to adapt the cover illustrations of the books. For example, the SL cover of *Amber Brown is Feeling Blue* (Image 1) shows a happy girl hugging her dog; the dog’s nails have been polished and colorful bottles of polish are scattered around them; however, the cover of the translated version has been changed to a sad girl doing her homework.

Image 1: Comparing the book covers of the English original and its Farsi translation of Paula Danziger's *Amber Brown is Feeling Blue*



The Iranian publisher has used cultural adequacy to adapt the illustration to the norms of the TL, where dogs are considered dirty. Furthermore, the TL cover of a sad Amber Brown matches the title of the book, *Amber Brown is Feeling Blue*. The image of a dog was more than likely removed to avoid exposing children to the concept of keeping a pet at home and replaced with a girl who is doing her homework, a more conventional image of a child in the TL context.

Another strategy used by publishers in adapting book covers is creation. In the original illustration for the cover of *Horrid Henry's Nits*, Henry is scratching his head and nits are flying away from him. The nits are black creatures. This image has been substituted with a drawing of Henry and a female classmate who are both smiling and painting while the nits are smiling and flying above their heads. The image of the frightening black nits (ST) has been changed to a non-threatening image in the TT and the color of the cover has been changed from blue to orange. Here, the publisher has used creation to adapt the illustration to the norms of the TL. Tajeran (1980) identified values of focus in children's books including friendship, kindness, and gratitude, which are all emphasized on the cover of this book. He asserts that these values may help Iranian children's writers and translators to create stories and adapt them to be appropriate for the moral development of young readers. The illustration

on the Farsi dust jacket in orange with smiling characters and friendly nits instills an atmosphere of happiness, friendship and kindness.

A second example in which the publisher Ofogh adopted the strategy of creation is the cover of *Horrid Henry and the Mega-Mean Time Machine*. In the original text, Henry is wearing a helmet with a red bolt of lightning on it. Black lines are painted on his face, giving it a menacing appearance; he is sticking out his tongue and making a rude gesture. On the cover of the translated version, his behavior was altered and the actions considered rude have been omitted. These may reveal the fact that the SL cover does not reflect the theme of the story; the illustration is not related to the theme of a time machine. The TL cover has made this relationship more explicit. The change in expression on Henry's on the translation cover is because his behavior (a rude gesture) is not considered decorous and children should not be exposed to it.

Cultural adequacy strategies can also relate to changing the vector of the covers. For instance, as Image 2 indicates, on the English version of McDonald's *Judy Moody Around the World in 8½ Days*, Judy Moody is wearing blue clothes and moving from left to right; in the Farsi version, Judy Moody wears purple clothes and is moving from right to left. The background color of the book has also changed.

Image 2: Comparing the book covers of the English original and its Farsi translation of Megan McDonald's *Judy Moody Around the World in 8½ Days*<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> *Judy Moody Around the World in 8½ Days*. Text copyright © 2006 Megan McDonald. Illustrations copyright © 2006 Peter H. Reynolds. Judy Moody font copyright © 2006 Peter H. Reynolds. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

Kress and Van Leeuwen assert that in some cultures, including Iranian culture, the right side is the side holding key information that the reader must pay particular attention to and conveys the message. The elements on the left are taken as given, while those placed on the right are taken as new (2006: 177). To Kress and Van Leeuwen, these changes in structure are ideological in the sense that they may not reflect the intentions of the publisher or the viewer of the image.

Another example of this type of cultural adequacy adaptation can be found on the cover of *Judy Moody MD: The Doctor Is In* (Image 3). In the original version, Judy's position on the left gives her salience; in the Farsi version, Judy's position on the right does this. If the original cover had been left intact for the Farsi version, salience would be attributed to the cat.

Image 3: Comparing the book covers of the English original and its Farsi translation of Megan McDonald's *Judy Moody M.D. The Doctor Is In!*<sup>2</sup>



In sum, it appears that publishers have changed the TL covers to eliminate depictions of inappropriate behavior or to make the illustrations correspond to the title.

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<sup>2</sup>*Judy Moody MD The Doctor Is In*. Text copyright © 2006 Megan McDonald. Illustrations copyright © 2006 Peter H. Reynolds. Judy Moody font copyright © 2006 Peter H. Reynolds. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

The vector of the illustrations can also be switched to reflect the TL cultural context. Research by the Children's Literature Association of Iran found that book covers affect parental decisions when buying books for children (Eghbalizadeh, 2009: 23). Parents avoid buying books that propagate rude behavior. SL covers that do not portray misbehavior and reflect the meanings of the titles sell better. For example, in the case of the book *Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quickly*, the cover illustration reflects the meaning of the title, so no change was made to the TL version. Only the color was slightly changed: instead of the bright neon-yellow, a warmer tone was preferred. In general, bright and vivid colors are preferred for children literature's book covers in Iran. As Sadeghi (2014) states, bright and vivid colors attract the attention of children and motivate them to read the books more than any other types of colors.

#### *4.3. Blurbs*

Analyses of the blurbs showed that cultural adequacy and creation strategies were the most frequent strategies applied by the translators, or possibly by the publicity team in the publishing house. In *Horrid Henry and the Football Fiend*, the English blurb is: "Utterly wicked, totally brilliant, his fiendish plots will make you ache with laughter." In Farsi it reads: "Toward the goal! Goal! Hooray! Horrid Henry doesn't play football well at all, but he uses lots of tricks to score a goal. The sound of the referee's whistle! The game is over. Who is the winner? Henry?" [به طرف دروازه! گل هورا هنری زلزله] [اصلا فوتبالش خوب نیست. اما با هزار جور حقه و کلک بالاخره گل میزند. صدای سوت داور. برنده کیه؟ هنری؟]

The English version focuses on the paradox between Henry's behavior and its humorous effect on the reader. He may be wicked, but he is also brilliant. The English version alludes to the conventions of a typical book cover where snippets from reviews are provided to attract the reader's interest. As observed, the language of the blurb contains incomplete sentences such as "utterly wicked" and "totally brilliant". In the Farsi version, the blurb reads like quotations from a novel and Henry's paradox of wickedness and brilliance is played down. Instead, the focus is on giving the reader more information about the novel: Henry is playing in a football match. He does not play well, he uses tricks and he scores. The game is over. Then a cliffhanger is put forth to attract the reader's interest.



Did Henry win? To this end, the translator Mojgan Calhor has used the strategy of creation to produce a blurb that is compatible with Iranian norms.

The visual aspects that accompany the blurb have also been changed in the Iranian version. All illustrations that suggest wickedness and tricks such as the cunning woman wearing a villainous smile and running have been omitted. Instead, other books in the *Horrid Henry* series are promoted on the book cover.

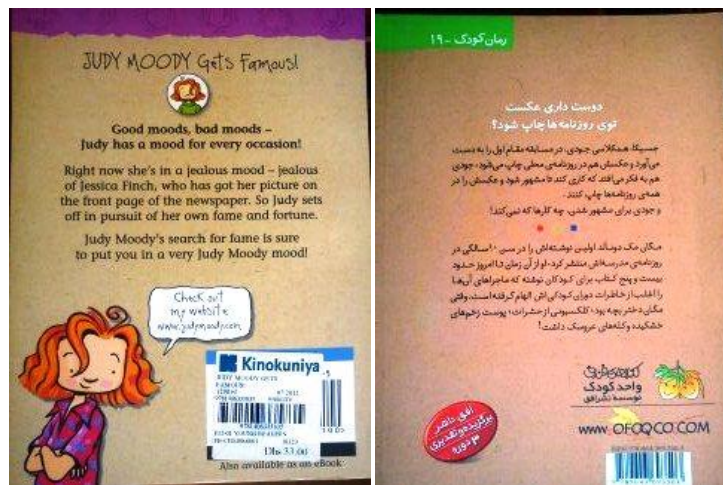
Another example in which the translator has avoided exposing children to negative human behavior can be found on the cover of *Judy Moody Gets Famous* (Image 4). The English blurb reads:

Good moods, bad moods--Judy has a mood for every occasion! Right now she's in a jealous mood--jealous of Jessica Finch, who has got her picture on the front page of the newspaper. So Judy sets off in pursuit of her own fame and fortune. Judy Moody's search for fame is sure to put you in a very Judy Moody mood!

The blurb on the Farsi translation is: "Would you like to get your picture in the newspaper? Jessica, Judy's classmate, places first in the match and her picture is published in the local newspaper. Judy decides to become famous too and to get her picture in the newspaper. Judy would do anything to be famous."

دوست داری عکست تو روزنامه ها چاپ شود؟ جسیکا همکلاسی جودی در مسابقه مقام اول را به دست می آورد و عکسش هم در روزنامه محلی چاپ می شود. جودی هم به فکر می افتد که کاری کند تا مشهور شود و عکسش را در همه روزنامه ها چاپ کنند. و جودی برای مشهور شدن چه کارها که نمی کند!

Image 4: Comparing the blurbs of the English original and its Farsi translation of Megan McDonald's *Judy Moody Gets Famous*<sup>3</sup>



The Farsi blurb removes the negative trait of being moody and changes an exclamatory sentence into an interrogative one in order to further attract the young reader's attention. It suggests that, if children read this book, they will learn ways to get their pictures in the newspaper.

In the Farsi narrative of the blurb, the translator downplays Judy's jealousy, which is considered to be a negative trait. The original blurb topicalizes Judy; the translated version prioritizes Jessica, Judy's classmate, by discussing her success. The conjunction "so" in the English version suggests that Judy "setting off in pursuit of her own fame and fortune" is the result of her jealousy of Jessica. The Farsi translation omits this conjunction and replaces it with "also", subtly but significantly changing the cause-effect relationship: the cause of Judy "setting off in pursuit in her own fame and fortune" is no longer jealousy, but her desire to get her picture in the paper.

As Image 4 indicates, the illustration of Judy was removed because the focus of the blurb changed in the translated version; Judy's picture in the English version does not match the theme of the Farsi blurb.

<sup>3</sup> *Judy Moody Gets Famous*. Text copyright © 2006 Megan McDonald. Illustrations copyright © 2006 Peter H. Reynolds. Judy Moody font copyright © 2006 Peter H. Reynolds. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

As seen in this section, Iranian translators have used creativity and cultural adequacy strategies to translate the blurbs of children's books. Two general trends can be observed in the translated blurbs: firstly, they usually quote parts of the story to arouse curiosity, and secondly they tend to omit mischievous acts, negative characteristics and misbehavior of the main characters.

## **5. Iranian Ideology and the Concept of Childhood**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the target culture subordinated the source culture. As Shavit points out, adaptations and adjustments to plot, characterization and language provide considerable insight into the ideology of the target language and reveal a society's attitude toward childhood and the content of children's literature (1986:114). Khosronejad (2003:35) believes that each literary work for children indisputably shows the writer's conception of childhood. When authors write, illustrate, translate, create or censor their work for children, they do it on the basis of their perceptions of childhood that are based on their society's cultural perception of childhood.

It is possible that changes to book covers, titles and blurbs may reflect the ideology of the individual translators, publishers or editors rather than Iranian society as a whole. Mason writes that "we are all constrained by the discourses that circulate in our environment and that there is, thus, no need to attribute the divergent discourse of the target text to any deliberate intention of the translator." (2012:83).

The publisher's strategy of cultural adequacy for the cover of books, the translator's or publicist's strategy of creation in the blurbs and the other strategies used to adapt the books based on the target culture's norms reflect that society's perspective towards the child. As this study shows, translators used omission to delete misbehavior and unethical actions to replace them with behaviors considered ethical and appropriate by society in the titles, book covers and blurbs. Accordingly, when the title is changed by translators, the publishers have to make illustrations consistent with that title. In this respect, Tompson-Wohlgemuth claims that parents want their children to internalize order and discipline and want to bring up their children in such a way that they adopt their parent's social values (1998: 35). Therefore, publishers and translators, feeling pressure from parents and adult members of society at large, will adapt and manipulate translation of children's literature in order to

sell their books, or they anticipate what it is that parents want and will censor and adapt anything that they feel would not meet with parental approval.

Table 1 showed that the most frequent strategies used by translators for the titles of the books is to adapt them using the creation strategy. Translators use creation strategies to adjust the difficulty level of the texts to the comprehension level of children or to match their cultural experience and to avoid their exposure to cultural taboos.

The same holds true for the cover illustrations and blurbs. The covers were adjusted to the cultural expectations of the target society, as indicated, for example, in the removal of the dog from the cover of *Amber Brown is Feeling Blue*, for the Farsi translation. The second norm governing the changes in book covers was to alter the illustration to reflect the meaning of the title or the content of the book. The blurbs quoted parts of the story and removed reference to misbehavior and unethical attributes.

Naeemi believes that, in Iranian society, adults exert control over children and may overstep their jurisdiction by manipulating and controlling children's behavior (2000: 14). In this way, adults may block avenues by which children can experience the world and prevent them from being exposed to the facts of life. Translation strategies employed for children's literature suggest that translators believe that Iranian children should not be exposed to bad behavior, such as Henry's misbehavior, or what society considers inappropriate, for example, cuddling a dog, and that children require guidance and supervision when choosing books to read.

Despite the fact that, as O'Sullivan asserts, children's literature has the ability to travel the world, cross linguistic and cultural borders, make global connections and give new life to the world of literature (2003:205), another strategy used by translators was cultural content adaptation, for example, in the case of changing the concept of Christmas, which is a Christian concept, to *eid* which is an Iranian one. The use of these strategies deprives children of broadening their perspectives towards life in contrast to Puurtinen's contention that the translation of children's literature transfers knowledge about the world, customs, values and behaviors and broadens the perspectives of children towards life (2006:54).

Translators and publishers adapt stories to expose children to culturally favorable situations and to educate them about what is considered to be useful for them. Translators and society do not consider

needs from the child's point of view; they just fulfill what they perceive to be the needs of children as prospective adults in society through the medium of children's literature. Naeemi believes that children's literature has been changed from an instructive tool to an informative tool for inculcating morality and ethics (2000:32). In sum, the adaptation strategies, of cultural adequacy, creation and omission, used by translators and publishers in adapting children's book titles, covers and blurbs point to this fact that the norms of Iranian society incline towards a didactic approach to children's literature, premised on the idea that children should not be exposed to misbehaviors and various negative traits of humanity such as jealousy.

## **6. Conclusion**

The present study has identified the translation strategies used by four Iranian translators on the primary level of the Lambert and Van Gorp (2006) descriptive model. It has examined the titles, covers and blurbs of 30 children's books and specified the norms governing the use of these strategies. The selected texts were 30 English children's books that became best-selling Farsi translations. This analytical comparison of the source and target texts indicated that adaptation strategies employed by translators at the preliminary level were TT-oriented and predominantly occurred when children in STs were mischievous or where a serious clash of cultures occurred.

These adaptation strategies were observed in the titles, covers and blurbs of the books under investigation, including the titles, covers, and blurbs. Adaptation is not simply a question of how texts are translated, but of why they are translated in a specific way. The adaptation strategies employed by the translators indicate that they, as representatives of a larger community, believe that children should not be exposed to mischievous acts. They translate SL texts to TL texts so that the didactic aspects of children's literature are maintained. In sum, this study pointed out to the fact that norms may be in the first instance linguistic or literary, but they will also include a wide range of domestic values, beliefs which accommodate ideological force which are always housed in the social contexts where translations are produced.

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