Translating Children's Literature: Keeping Functions in Translator's Possible Interpretations

Mojtaba Askari, Alireza Akbari and Mohammad Amiryousefi

Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Iran.

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ABSTRACT

Translating for children has always been crucial perturbation for professional and non-professional translators as Sprachmittlers. This is owing to conjectural vulnerability of this cohort of people in conditions of their world of childhood. When we embark on translating for children, we should bear in mind that a text is not a stable/durable object: it brings along a different response at every reading. Therefore, we are dealing with various readings and also a wide range of interpretations. In this respect, we bring out Skopos Paradigm as for the fulfillment of our intention in translating for children since this paradigm parks more fully-grown the pree of purpose and situation of the clientele (e.g. children). Whatever a story or written form is, when translating for this intended group of people, what matters is the maintenance of function-aim-among possible yet pertained interpretations.

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Introduction

A text is not a stable object: it brings along a different response at every reading. In such a way all texts can be understood as endless chains of interpretations, transformations that take on a new life in accordance with the person reading them. Thus reading, within translating, is a very complex issue. John Spink (1990) points out in *Children as Readers* that we need to go through several steps in development: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, spiritual, and those concerning personality and language. He also mentions factors affecting reader reception—our reading skills and world knowledge, experience, and associations; the response to the imagined author, title, cover, illustrations; our past experience of the author's other books; situation; and several others (pp. 29-45).

Reading can be considered as an involvement. This involvement can be emotional, physical state: the more we read, the more we become involved and attached to the text— in fact we feel, taste and smell it. Reading is a dynamic process, an event that is directed to a great extent by the reader. The reader uses texts; she/he reads for several different intentions. Sometimes she/he needs information, sometimes entertainment; sometimes she/he is reading for her/himself and etc.

Patronicio Schweickart and Elizabeth Flynn (1986, p. 3) point out that "all a reader must do is to get out meaning of the text." Nonetheless "the possibility that different readers might legitimately extract different messages from the same words is not acknowledged."Readers are often given trivial roles under the reading circumstance. The reader, specifically the translator as a reader, is not about to have "the right" to her/his own interpretation of the intended text.

Christiane Nord(1991) delineates the movements in translation as "looping, "which is close to the idea of the "hermeneutic circle"; she expresses that "translation is not a linear, progressive process leading from a starting point S (=ST, source text) to a target point T (=TT, target text), but a circular, basically recursive process comprising an indefinite number of feedback loops, in which it is possible and even advisable to return to earlier stages of the analysis"(p. 30).

Nord's model is not that disparate from Nicole Brossard's (1988, p. 117) model, where the movement does not take place or rather, occur, for it is a conscious activity within any certain unbreakable circle (the circle of the "original" and its culture), but it extends in all directions, three-dimensionally. The movement is not directed to the centre or center oriented. It is "sense [familiar, old] renewed, through excursions into and explorations of non-sense [unfamiliar, new]," as Brossard explains it in her spiral model.

We see reading and translation as this kind of spiral movement moving toward what is new and trying to understand, dialogically, what is old. Thus translation could be understood as Brossard represents female culture: "New perspectives: new configurations of woman-[translator]-as being-in-the-world of what's real, of reality, and of fiction" (ibid., 116-17).

Reading and translation can be accounted for inseparable experiences on many levels. Reading in such a way is often understood as translation; reading is also an essential part of the translation process. With these translator is a very special kind of reader who shares her/his reading experience with target-language readers.

Under any reading circumstance, the reader combines her/his feelings and hopes, way and view of life, and her/his identity. Holland and Sherman (cited in Flynn & Schweickart, 1986) assert that "we shape and change the text until, to the degree we need that certainty, it is the kind of setting in which we can gratify our wishes and defeat our fears" (p. 216).

Stanley Fish (1980) understands that the reader's reaction is the meaning: a text to be read is not just an object to be understood in one or more restricted ways, but the meaning(s) of the text is (are) being created when the reader participates in the reading event (p. 3). Fish (ibid, p.25) accentuates the influence of time: the reading experience, the meanings, flow in time; they are movement between the past, present, and future. The reader not only responds to the whole expression (e.g., the whole book,

the whole story) but, at each phase and moment, to the text she/he has read thus far.

Bo Møhl and May Schack (1981), the Danish scholars, have dealt with the child's reading experience and understanding. They strongly emphasize the importance of understanding entities as well as the importance of fantasy and the "experienciveness" of texts, as opposed to understanding texts in a prescribed, "correct" way.

When the reader goes for answers she/he understands actively. As Bakhtin (1990) points out, active understanding means assimilating "the word under consideration into a new conceptual system, that of the one striving to understand" (p. 282).Active understanding combines the thing to be understood with the new horizon of the one who understands, evoking various complex reactions. Active understanding means making choices, approving and disapproving.

In this direction, the text is constantly given new meanings by new readers, and even by the same readers in new situations. Active understanding improve the issue in a way to be understood, it makes the issue more than it was before understanding. The same thing happens when we translate a text and understand it actively, that is, the original gains from being translated.

Bakhtin's reflection (cited in Attali, 1985) on active understanding is close to composition, the fusion of the old and new. It is accepting and rejecting, saying yes and no. The one who understands is active, she/he confirm and disconfirm, she/he asks and responds (p. 147).

Upholding the idea of an individual and interpreting reader is very problematic. And of course, taking the readers' reaction into consideration causes many problems if you try to describe the only correct meaning. Juhl (1986), in the chapter "Does a Work Have Only One Correct Interpretation"?, gives an affirmative answer to his own question: "Although a literary work usually has several possible or even plausible readings, there is strong evidence that it has one and only one correct interpretation"(pp. 1-9).From Juhl's point of views, unless the reader finds the meanings the author has written in the text, she/he is a "poor" or "ill-informed" reader (ibid., 47).

Michael Benton (cited in Fox *et.al*, 1980)examines reading from a child's point of view and asks, what is actually going on in children's heads as they embark on reading. To him reading is an active plus creative event, and readers, including the translator, are second creators, who produce a "secondary world" in their own imaginations. In such a sense, they are performers, interpreters of texts (pp. 19-20)

These days, reading can be understood as a kind of collaboration, "a compound of what the text offers and what the reader brings," as Benton points out. The reader, even the translator, creates on the basis of two or more imaginations, her/his own and the author's, so "the text event" does not belong to either imagination alone, but remains somewhere in betweenness (ibid., 20-21).

Fish (1980) expresses that an individual is always a member of various interpretive communities, which have a certain disposition toward the reader's reading strategies and interpretations of texts, that is "Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around"(pp. 171-173). These interpretive communities are in state of flux and an individual

may move from one to another— mutual understanding is a sign of belonging to a certain group or community. The reader is, in fact, quite free to move, and her/his strategies, may change.

Bakhtin (1987), in his description of the catharsis in Dostoyevsky's novels, states his views about unfinalizability: "Nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, and everything is still in the future and will always be in the future" (p. 166)Whatever intents authors may have had, nonetheless they may have well imagined their implicit readers, the readers of the future, including the readers of translations, will always read books for their own purposes, from their own perspectives.

By critical reading, the translator starts over the translation, reading the text forward and backward, analyzing and synthesizing it; she/he examines the text closely, wanting to be sure of the legitimacy and coherence of her/his own interpretation. She/he is now utilizing the text for a certain purpose. Yet, it is worth mentioning that I do not see these readings as two or more separate events, but rather, as several successive and overlapping readings, where one reading affects the other. When translating a story, the translator has the memory of the first reading experience persistently in mind, even if it fades and subsequent readings begin to prevail. So even at the more analytical, critical phases, the first reading experience is constantly present in the background. The earlier readings can also be viewed as parts of the translator's experience, as parts of the whole translation situation.

As we understand, now, the process of reading and trends of translation are tightly interwoven to the purpose or Skopos of translation. And that's why when we are translating for children we should be aware of the intended ilk of people we are translating for and take the sensitivity and vulnerability of the taste of the group into account and move in the direction in order that we could saturate it. In the next part, we are dealing with the paradigm which is interconnected to the readability and translation of children's literature.

Skopos paradigm

Purpose paradigm or Skopos paradigm, as its name revealed, pays much heed attention to the goal, target, function, and purpose of the target translation in this respect. Scrutinizing the real and exact function of the target translation is the sole and mere aim of Skopos paradigm in general. According to Vermeer (1989/2004), "what the Skopos states is that one must translate, consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principles respecting the target text. The theory does not state what the principle is; this must be determined separately in each specific case (p. 234)." As beheld, target sidedness and target language regulations would be fraughtly prevalent in translation. Therefore, deep structure along with surface structure of translational items would be compared to the role of translator as the Sprachmittler in the circle of practical translation. In this interaction amongst agents, client and the role of the client are the indispensable part in Skopos paradigm. Multiplicity of superficial layers of language in this paradigm shows various principals adopted for diverse text. However, deep structure or meaning of the source text remains the same in various translation. Therefore, durability and stability of rudimentary meaning make Skopos paradigm as the "the House of many rooms" (Hatim, 2013) in this vein.

Translating children's literature

When a translator under takes to translate, he/she should consider two crucial factors. The first factor is the purpose of translation and the second one is the circumstance under which

translation has occurred. Translators do not translate words in isolation, that is the context or the whole situation should be taken into consideration. Concerning the purpose of translation, Snell-Hornby (1988) contends that "the problem does not depend on the source text itself, but on the significance of the translated text for its reader as members of a certain culture, or of sub-group within that culture, with the constellation of knowledge, judgment and perception they have developed from it". Translators ingrains the translation with their reading experience, their cultural heritage and specifically in translating for children and their image. In fact, they become involved in a complex dialogic relationship in which authors, translators and even the publisher play an essential role.

Scrutinizing a text, as an essential part in any translation, is always fulfilled within a situation and for a certain purpose, which Nord (1991) points out in her significant book "*Text Analysis in Translation*". In her book, she presents her model as "a model of translation-oriented text analysis "comprising of three sets of factors: extratextual (who? why? to whom?), intratextual (what? Which verbal or nonverbal element? By means of which word?), and the effect on the reader (pp, 35-8). The factors mentioned above refer to the communicative function that influences the ways the translated texts are analyzed, as Snell Hornby (1988) points out.

What has been demonstrated, concerning translating for children, to this point explicitly or implicitly refers to functional approach in translation which has been introduced by Katharina Reiss in 1978, and later on by Vermeer as Skopos theory (Nord, 1991, p. 4). These German scholars (1986, pp. 67-68) claim that the function of a translation and its original may not be in the same direction. They moreover notice that a translation should be coherent in itself not to draw a comparison between the translation and its original text.

Thinking of translation of Iranian folk or fairytales, this part of literature, folktales and translation of which, can be considered as basic part of children's literature. For instance, the initial situation in these tales starts with the clause "*Yeki bood yeki nabood, joz khoda hich kas nabood* ". Some Iranian translators like Forough Hekmat (1970), an expert in folklore and folktale translation, claims that such a clause is imbued with philosophical thought that when the world was nothing and void, there still existed creative force to which may be attributed, may be, the miracles which come to pass in the tales that follow. She asserts that this clause should be translated as "there was one, there was no one, except God, and there was no one else". And also she adds that "once upon a time" which is mostly used for the translation of these stories cannot convey the meaning as it should. Let us consider some other examples in other languages in this trend.

As far as translation is concerned, every piece of rendering in particular or translation in general is equipped with two utmost layers namely: deep layer of language and surface one. Reaching up to the deep layer of language for the translator would be significance since similarities and dissimilarities of meaning component exist in this layer. Therefore, the renderer takes part as the mediator or in better sense as the 'Sprachmittler' between Source Language and its counterpart Target Language. To sum, perhaps, the sheer objective of eternal and indelible translation might be reached to the foundation or depth of meaning in general. However, surface structure of languages are greatly different and more often than not acts as the decoration of the language especially in practical translation. This is the case in equivalence paradigm in that directional equivalence never abides from the rules and regulations of the intended

exhaustive paradigm in translation; nevertheless, it is paralleled to the deep layer of language upon conveying the main essence of the equivalents chosen. Tellingly, should the translation in the target language be functionally adequate and acceptable, the translator should prepare the equilibrium scale between source and target languages. Conveying the main and sheer deep structure of source language into the target one might be regarded as the *Seul et Alleiniges* task of the translator-die Aufgabe des Übersetzer-in the analytical circle of Translation Studies. To help discerning the concealed yet pertained facet of surface and deep meaning, some examples would be posed for better perceiving. For instance, in translation studies, perhaps one of the pitfalls and challenges might be transferring the main idea and gist of Food. Names of the food in general cover some special facets of the source language to be distinguished by the other sets of cuisine compared with target language. In this direction, whenever a translator is willing to render such cultural food into the target language, he/she encounters seas of discrepancies causing the surface of languages to be treated completely different. However, every translation conceals the deep structure within itself. Whether a translator can reach to this layer of meaning, correspondingly, his/her translation turns to be eternal yet indelible in nature. Observing form, function, and reference in translation would be a drudgery yet possible task to achieve. For example, '*tagliatelle ai porcini*'-the Italian dish-would rendered as '*Die Pilzuppe*' and '*Supe Qrč*' in German and Persian languages respectively. As stated, form, function, and reference in translational items might be observed to some degree. Noticingly, form and reference as surface facets of surface layer of language would be differed to that of the source language. This is due to the fact that the translator utilizes directional equivalents in the intended languages. However, in case of surface structure differences, the deep structure of the intended food in corresponding languages is the same. It signifies that translator as the Sprachmittler could make a balance between source and target languages. Reaching up to the deep structure of translational functional items would be time-consuming in that most of the translators shun applying in their translation; however, consequently, their translation might be treated as superficial in nature. As another example, in order to show form, function, and reference and to depict the stability and durability of the deep structure in meaning, one excerpt of Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) is opted:

Ecco mormorar l'onde
E tremolar le fronde
Al'auramattutina, e gliarboscelli
E sovra i verdi rami i vaghiaugelli
Cantarsoavemente
E rider l'Oriente
Eccogial'albaappare
E sispecchianel mare
E rasserenailcielo
E le camapagneimperlail dolce gelo
E glialtimontiindora
O bella e vagna Aurora
L'aura e tuamessaggera, e tu de l'aura
Ch'ogniarsocorristaura

The intended English translation made by Mike Towler (1998) depicts disequilibrium between form and reference in the target language. However, this translation abides from directional functional translation since the translator can fully-grown delineate the policies, norms, values, and function of the source language.

Now the waves murmur
And the boughs and the shrubs tremble
In the morning breeze
And one the green branches the pleasant kids
Sing softly
And the east smiles
Now dawn already appears
And mirrors herself in the sea
And makes the sky serene
And the gentle frost impearls the fields
And the gilds the high mountains
O beautiful and gracious Aurora
The breeze is your messenger, and you the breeze's
Which revives each brunt-out heart

As beheld, form, reference, sentence length and distribution of transitional and translatorial items in English version are thoroughly different to that source language. However, the translator, in this vein, could perceive the real and exact intention-function-of the source language and mostly utilized compensation technique to convey the concealed purpose of the text. Wholly, whether short or long, equilibrium or disequilibrium, well-formed or ill-formed, the translator should and must transfer the deep layer of language as Mike Towler did to persuade and convince the audience either active or passive upon the feasibility, workability, and practicality of translation so as to satiate the needs and criteria of target reader especially children group.

Conclusion

Surface structure of meaning in general and deep structure of meaning in particular all constitute the circle of translation. However, understanding the real, hidden, and exact meaning of the source text into its counterpart, target language is an asset in order to prevent equivocal meanings in the texts. In this direction, Skopos paradigm would be regarded as an asset in functional meaning of the source language. Since the intended paradigm mostly pays much heed attention to the various principles adopted into the target language, however, to advance in real and exact meaning of the translation, it utilizes the exact denotation or meaning of the source language. It is generally accepted such truism since conveying the exact meaning of the source text is the sheer aim of translation studies to shun inferring loose yet irreverent meaning by the target reader. Therefore, the translator as the powerful Sprachmittler, prior to the act of translating, should regard the type of the audience such as children, literates, and so forth so as to transfer the appropriate essence of the meaning into the target language. Notable to say, multiplicity of functions and principals adopted into the target language would not be the absolute license of translation, yet to be loyal to the exact meaning of the text besides function of the text guarantee the Futurity of translation goodness on the flipside.

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