



# Manifestation of Cross-Cultural Adaptation in the Translation of Linguistic and Graphic Content for Young Readers.

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**Abstract:** Translation appears as an interdisciplinary field which encompasses a wide range of subjects to convey the real nature and spirit of its existence. The primary intention of this field is to communicate the essence of the source text into the target text. It is the role of a translator to exchange the source language to the target language in order to produce a parallel situation for source and target readers. Meeting the needs of the reader remains as the chief consideration and therefore children along with their particular literature is of high importance in the field of translation. This paper deals with the adaptations and manipulation performed by a translator for the proper transference of the visual and verbal content for young readers. The paper investigates on the significance of translation of the illustrations for children and also analyses the primary challenges in translating children's literature. The final part explores different aspects of transmuting an Indian text into a western domain.

**Index Terms:** Translation, Adaptation, Children's literature, Illustrations.

## INTRODUCTION

Children's literature is a minor and peripheral literary form in many cultures. According to Zohar Shavit, the reasons behind this assumption is that

The emergence and development of children's literature have followed common patterns across different countries. This condition of inferiority derives from the history and tradition of this body of literature, which is strictly bound to those of childhood, representing a minority group that has historically suffered a status of inferiority and subordination to other groups. (28)

Shavit mentions that when Maurice Sendak was awarded a prize for his children's illustrations, his father asked whether he would now be allowed to work on real books. (5) This shows the status of children's literature during that period.

The present scenario of children's literature translation is due to the joined efforts of the international community of scholars, translators, authors, child readers, publishers and all parties with an interest in Children's Literature. Influence of different disciplines like Translation, Comparative and Literary Studies along with Educational Sciences, Childhood Studies, Cultural Studies, Literature, Linguistics, etc. brought children's literature translation into another level. Children's text adaptations usually occur with the assumption that children lack the knowledge and experience of adults and child readers have only a limited capacity to absorb the unfamiliar and the foreign. A translator should be aware of the stylistic features and the way of addressing different age groups. In recent decades translators render more faith in children's ability to accommodate difference. The youngest children hear stories rather than reading them and therefore sound and rhythm plays an important role for them when they discover the power of language and narrative. By adding line drawings and illustrations on the text translators address the visual element. They attempt to preserve the intricate relationship between image and text in the modern picture book.

Reading and translating a children's book has its own significance. Reading and translation are inseparable experiences on many levels. Few adaptations offer a strictly word-to-word substitution from one language to the other are successful but it is the

translator's role to use their own personal interpretation of a work to create a complete transmission of the original. It is a process that requires subtle alterations to both language and structure. It is a delicate process to recapture voice, rhythm, dialogue, cultural meaning, and tense without compromising the spirit of a translated work. Adaptations of cultural signifiers are also important. These cultural signifiers should be considered even in the transmission of works from England to America.

### 1.1 ILLUSTRATIONS AND THE CHILD READER

Illustrations remains as an integral part in children's literature as they are important to the child reader in a number of ways. When they read picture books children often come up with unique and creative interpretation of the plot, settings, and characters. Illustrations gains importance as they provide mental scaffolds to the child reader for facilitating their understanding of the written text. In *A Schema- Theoretic View of Basic Processes in Reading Comprehension*, Anderson and Pearson states that:

The short attention spans of the young child, coupled with their limited vocabulary, syntax and world knowledge, place special demands on illustrations to help develop plots and characters so that fewer words and less complex syntax can be used. Reading comprehension has been characterized as a constructive process in which the reader uses what is already known to help interpret the new information in the text. (84)

Pictures are first-order symbols which represent relatively concrete, familiar experience that young readers can easily identify with. Whereas words are the second order symbols which is more abstract and detached from immediate experience. Thus, picture books juxtapose the more familiar and concrete with the more abstract semiotic symbols and maximize text comprehensibility.

Illustrations printed in the picture books remains as an elaboration of the text and therefore it facilitates learning by helping the child reader to construct mental images from the given information. Specifically for young children, illustrations make the content easier to understand and the pictorial information guides to mould verbal information. Illustrations in picture books cultivates children's aesthetic appreciation of art and beauty. Illustrations in picture books helps children not only to become aware of the variety of artistic styles that artists employ but also develop a sense of judging quality.

### 1.2 CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE.

Child readers always have an imperfect knowledge and language ability and this creates great difficulties and challenges in translating children's literature. Children's literature will always be presented in a highly local cultural form and therefore a translator always confronts translating problems related to culture specific items. When a translator focuses on translation issues and strategies concerning the translation of culture specific terms in children's literature, there is a chance to get stuck in the dilemma of whether to foreignize or to domesticate it.

Children reads but they do not read what is behind the lines and therefore it is the task of a translator to faithfully transmit both the message and what is behind the message in the target language. Children have limited experience and this limited view about the world must be taken into consideration while writing and translating for them. Two essential factors are to be considered when a translator focuses on the process of translation. The first factor is the purpose of translation whereas the second factor is the circumstance under which translation has occurred. Translators do not translate words in isolation but the context should be taken into account. Focusing on the translation of children's literature, one of its distinguishing features is its didactic nature. Readability and naturalness in the translations of children's literature provide more space for creativity of translators. At the same time, the translations need to be ideologically parallel with the target literary norms. There are five issues that need to be concerned when translating for children and they are:

1. Cultural context adaptation.

“it means modification of the original aimed at adjusting a text for the intended reader's frame of reference, which may include adjusting historical and cultural backgrounds such as measurements or names” (Klingberg 70)

2. Ideological manipulation.

Klinberg calls it as “purification” and “which is basically a form of censorship that may include stylistic changes or even more drastic content adjustments” (86)

3. Dual readership (children and adults).

A good children's book will always have some appeal for adults as well.

4. Features of orality.

It focuses on the texts that are intended to be read aloud and it may force the translator to choose between the content and sound.

5. Relationship between text and image.

Illustrations should support the source text's content and during the course of translation process, the original illustration may no longer be adequate for the translation.

### 1.3 TRANSLATING 'INDIANNES' INTO WESTERN

When we translate from Malayalam language into English language, the culture and diversity of India, particularly Kerala was translated into English or global language. The concept of child in Indian society is an important factor since it paved the way for development of children's literature. In the Indian literary tradition, classical Sanskrit literature is one of the earliest to describe children and childhood. Rather than an individual with the capacity to feel or react, child is considered as an object of adoration. The separate identity of a child is never carved out of its parents. Not only Sanskrit literature but 1 medieval regional literatures like Hindi also consist rich accounts of children and childhood.

From the perspective of traditional India, we can see that the early stage of childhood is considered as one of the most cherished phases of a person's life in contrast to the importance of adulthood in the west. In western social relations, more emphasis is given to sharing of space and time between father and son to strengthen the bond but in the context of India, nurturing of relationships does not need an extra effort. In Indian scenario, the dichotomy is between the boy and the girl child. The boy always remains as the centre of attraction of the whole family and gets affection and attention more than a girl child. Children's literature cannot be considered as a peripheral literary phenomenon. It fulfils a basic role in the dynamics of literary field. The children's books and children's discourse are systematically developed on the basis of international comparative traditions and therefore children's literature and its basic role is heavily influenced by translations.

Since Children's literature has a vital role in shaping the minds and thoughts of children, the literature for children has been made a subject of academic research. There are some major factors which facilitated such studies and one important factor is that the translated children's books create a bridges between different cultures, the source culture and the target one. The polysystem theory classifies children's literature as a subsystem of minor prestige within literature. It should be aware that translation of children's literature is nearly similar to that of other literary texts but translating children's literature has its own special importance. It should be reminded that children's literature is not just a peripheral literary phenomenon but it fulfils a basic role in the dynamics of the literary field.

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