

## **Rainbow of Translation: A semiotic approach to intercultural transfer of colors in children's picture books**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of intercultural translation is to communicate. Communication is acted via verbal as well as visual means. The interaction of verbal and visual means of communication makes a set of complex situations which demand special attention in translation. One context in which the interaction of visual and verbal elements gets vital importance is children's picture books. Color is an integral part of children's books and a visual mode of communication. For the translator, to interpret symbolic colors, cultural knowledge of the source and the target cultures is required. To see how the cultural meaning of colors can be transferred and how the interrelationship of words and colors can be achieved, Nida and De Waard's (1986) Adaptation Theory was utilized in this study. The theory was applied to eight children's colored picture books aimed for school-aged children. Six of the books were originally written in English and translated into Persian and two of them were the other way round. The analysis of the data showed that the required features of the above-stated theory was rarely followed by translators and illustrators, and, except in one case, color symbolism was not considered by them. Findings of the study indicate that since visuals are inseparable elements of translating children's picture books, translators/illustrators should be dressed with enough information of visual-cultural aspects of translation in general, and of color symbolism in particular.

**Key Words:** semiotics, visual semiotics, color, visual communication, multimodal translation

### **Introduction**

#### **The Science of Signs**

Derived from the Greek term *semeion*, 'sign' reveals something which stands for something else (Martin and Ringham 2006). Related to the science of signs, Hawkes (1977) identifies two terms, *semiology* and *semiotics*. The difference between them is that semiology is a term coined by Saussure, which is used by Europeans, and semiotics is what Peirce puts forward, which is used by English speaking people. Referring to Martin and Ringham (2006), semiology studies the system of signs and the inherent organization of them. They point out that semiology is concerned with 'signifier-signified' relations. Saussure (1959) emphasizes on linguistic signs. He regards language as consisting of sound-image and a concept, two united psychological elements. The former is sensory 'material' or 'signifier', and the latter is abstract and 'signified' between which an arbitrary relation exists.

"In its simplest form, the Peircean sign is defined as something that relates to something else for someone in some respect or capacity" (Merrell 2005, p. 28). Merrell (2005) describes Peirce's three-part model of signs as consisting of a third part: 'interpretant', which is the meaning of the sign. According to Chandler (2007), Peirce has identified a three-part typology for signs which shows the relationship which exists between the representant and its object or its interpretant.

**Icon:** replicates the sensory characteristics in the conceptualized thing (e.g. onomatopoeic words).

**Index:** in index, the object is signified by contiguity, causality or other physical relations (Cobly, 2005).

**Symbol:** It is believed that a conventionality is the underground of symbols (Cobly, 2005, & Martin and Ringham, 2006).

Signs are not confined to nature, rather there are some signs made by man to shorten his way through his worldly journey which are called 'symbols', within which exists a conventional relatedness between the sign and their objects. Jung (1964), defining symbols as a word or image which connotes beyond its denotative meaning, asserts that the understanding of man is so limited that he has to symbolically represent concepts. Historical and social conventions, agreements, or pacts, are the cause of making symbols (Danesi, 2004). Another field in which symbols appear is in children's literature. He believes that the instant children start to interpret the world with signs, they lead them to their wholeness". (p. 17)

Symbols get national and cultural identities through time. Accordingly, for symbols to sound meaningful, one should learn them. Children may encounter them through their socialization process. As there are various types of literature imported for children from other nations with different cultures and identities, special attention is needed in translating symbols as culture-specific part of the text. One type of literature vastly translated for children is picture books. Children attend to pictures very meticulously as their linguistic knowledge and worldview are insufficient. This attention gets more prominence when the symbols appear in the visual aspects of the literature. The matter of translating visual symbols is what the present study aims at, centering on 'color' as a visual aspect of communication.

### **Translating for Children**

Literature is a vehicle to transfer ideas and culture of a nation through translation. Children's literature may be a good means of transferring ideas, for children have fresher minds to grasp what is new in comparison with adults who have fostered what they believe. As Vandergrift (2009) believes, "The translation of children's books from other languages increases the number of truly excellent literary works available to young people, introduces them to segments of life in other cultures, and fosters an international outlook and an understanding of both the uniqueness and the universality of human experience".

Translating for children demands a specific attention as their knowledge and world views are not perfect. Translation usually is perceived as transferring any linguistic or extralinguistic aspects of the source into target language through words. However, especially in children's literature, not everything intended by the author of the source text is always conveyed through words. For example, the typeface the texts are printed in, the paper they are printed on, the shape and style of letters and of course the illustrations are considered as visual aspects of children's books by Oittinen (2000, p.101). Nodelman (2005, p. 113), considers picture books as 'signs' which communicate within a network of conventions about visual and verbal representations and about the real objects they represent. Actually picture books are multimodal texts as Kress and Van leeuwen (2006, p.178) term it: "Any text whose meanings are realized through more than one semiotic code" (qtd. in Van Meerbergen (2009, p.1). Oittinen (2008) considers the texts not as closed entities but as open and unfinalized whole, in which the parts and the whole influence each other. Hence, supposing the bilateral effect of the parts on the whole and the other way round, one should be wary about considering the effect of them on the content of a text.

Illustrations in children's books may be the most salient type of visuals used in this kind of literature, which are the repetition of the words, or in other cases they add to the

verbal content. As children have not gained a matured view toward world, and their mental lexicon and linguistic knowledge are not perfect yet, illustrations are useful instruments to help them get a larger amount of the intended meaning. In addition, illustrations are aids to enhance the visual learning of children which, in turn, may equip them with visual literacy. Oittinen (2000) puts a special attention on translating illustrations in children's literature.

One important part of illustrations which may be studied semiotically is color. Colors are a special kind of language. They speak universally and culturally. Nodelman (2005) emphasizes that children scan a picture with equal attention to all parts (p. 114). As a result, it is inferable that colors are also captured by children.

### **Color Symbolism and its Intercultural Transference in Children's Literature**

As mentioned before, colors are especial kind of language which would be a means of transmitting what is not verbally transferred or a means of repeating what is intended by the words. Studying colors demand intracultural and intercultural studies through semiotic trends. What attracts children to the books are illustrations (Norton, 1995), and colors (Zarabi, 1995, p.157). One quality the colors may possess which suit child's situation is their symbolic nature (Sheikho-l-eslami's, 1996, p.147). As a result of a vast number of illustrated materials which are translated annually for children, it is worth considering the process of transferring the messages of colors interculturally.

Tarhandeh<sup>1</sup> states that in terms of interculturality transferring printed colored materials, the quality of paper which is chosen in target context should be attended much regarded as they greatly influence the color of the original material. Meticulous computerized reproduction of colors should be done by an art director; however, it does not always happen in Iran. One of the jobs Tarhandeh (2009a) specifies for an art director is to harmonize a communicable, emotionally and psychologically final artwork, which can successfully address the reader. To gain Tarhandeh's assertion, it is important to regard the quality of color transference in the translated color picture books. Faithful transference of colors, regarding color symbolism, should be accomplished by a co-work between art directors, translators, and possible illustrators. However, the importance of art director's job is not considered as important in Iran, and this harms the status of the target 'super-addressees'.

### **Research Questions**

To investigate what happens to culture-specific meaning of colors, two research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Have the translators/illustrators identified the meaning laden in colors used in children's picture books?
2. What strategies have been used by the translators/illustrators to properly transfer the intended meanings of colors?

## **Method**

### **Materials**

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<sup>1</sup>. Sahar Tarhande, M.A in multimedia graphics from Sunderland University, is a critic and specialist of children's picture books; a member of the managerial board and of award committee, and coordinator of international affairs in 'council of Children's Books'; and a freelance researcher. In order to benefit from her views, an interview was made between the researchers of the present study and her.

For the purposes of the present research, symbolic meanings of colors in Persian, American, and New Zealand cultures were analyzed regarding each of the following picture books:

- The Red Three* (Shan Tan, 2001)  
*My Many Colored Days* (Theodore Seuss Geisel, 1996)  
*Something Else* (Kathryn Cave, 1994)  
*Seven Blind Mice* (Ed Young, 1992)  
*Little Blue and Little Yellow* (Leo Lionni, 1959)  
*Love You Forever* (Robert Munsch, 1986)  
 بزرگراه/bozorg rāh/ (Afsaneh Sha'bannejad, 2007)  
 راه صلح/Rāh-e Solh/ (MaziyarTehrani, 2004)  
 (See more on the books in Appendix I).

### **Model of the study**

Following Oittinen's (2000) stance on 'interpretation', as a reader-oriented approach to translate children's literature, in the present research, Nida and De Waard's (1986) approach was taken as a criterion. Oittinen (2000) quotes Nida and de Waard (p. 40) who have 'adaptation' (synonym of interpretation) in their translation typology. Oittinen points that they divide 'adaptation' into two groups: one is for art forms and media, which should be adapted to be compatible to an accompanying code (for example, music, literary genres- a different poetic format), or a different language with its distinctive articulation of sounds (the problem of lip synchronization in translating material for television or cinema). The latter (i.e. different language) has been adopted as the framework for the present study which connotes to relegate some of the roles of the source pictorial message to language.

### **Procedures**

According to Amiri, Asadi and Akbari (2007), school-aged children, acquire what the colors connote as they begin their process of socialization. Consequently, the selected materials are chosen in a way to be appropriate for school-aged children. Thus, the applied procedures to accomplish the work were as follows:

1. Choosing picture books. The choice of picture books, as the data, was a long adventure. The books have some features in common: they are picture books as opposed to illustrated books, they are colored picture books and have colors which can be interpreted symbolically, they are provided for school aged children, and finally, they are translated into Persian or into English.
2. Choosing colors. There are so many colors, from the purest to the most impure ones, which communicate symbolically. However, for symbolically analyzing colors in the realm of children's literature, not all the colors are apt. Cirlot (1971) points that less pure colors give more complex set of symbolic meanings and are not conceived by children. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) point that colors which are allocated a single name are considered pure, such as green, and colors which are referred to by a composite name are mixed ones, like blue-green.

In addition, since 'black' and 'white' are symbolic and considered as colors among the people, they were analyzed in this study as well.

3. Determining the meaning of colors. Regarding the meaning of colors, a special context should be taken into considerations. De Bortoli and Maroto (2001) have discussed colors in different contexts of culture such as webvertising, geography, age group and gender of individuals, and linguistics. For the purpose of the present research, the context of culture was focused to analyze the symbolic meaning of colors in Persian, American, and New Zealand

cultures. Also, as each color may have several symbolic meanings in each culture, the context of the picture book- ignoring what the author had intended- was regarded as a criterion to select the appropriate meaning.

Almalech (2008) and Shahbakhti (2008, p. 66) believe that the meaning of non-verbalized form of colors may be pursued within folklore and secret religious-mystic knowledge. Thus, in this study, *'The Color Connection Book Series'* (1988) - an international color guide, based on customs and way of living of each nation- was used. This series is inspired from Surya Vanka's- an associate professor of art and design at the University of Illinois- research on tradition, belief and religion of nations. In the case of color symbolism in Iran, the sources from which color symbolisms were extracted were *Art in Islamic Iran* and *Persian Literature* (Hassania 2006; Karimi, 2006). The obtained results in the present research in terms of the three related cultures are tabulated in Appendix II

4. Analyzing the compatibility of color meanings in the source and target texts. To do so, the symbolism of colors in each book was tabulated.

3. Identifying translation strategies of colors. The researchers looked for the possible translation strategies and the technical processes of printing which influence color transference.

5. Facilitating the analysis. For the ease of analysis, all the data were tabulated for each book.

### Data Analysis and results

To discover the symbolic colors used in children's literature and the way to transfer them interculturally, symbolic color connotations were discovered in the source data and compared with their equivalents in the translated material. In addition, where the intended translation strategies were identified, the symbol '+', and where no symbolic meaning was defined for the related color, '-' symbol was used. Besides, "?" was used when the meaning of the color was unclear. In what follows, the first 4 tables are related to the books translated from English into Persian which have preserved the original source illustrations in the target texts. They are ordered chronologically. The 5<sup>th</sup> table belongs to a picture book translated into Persian, for which new illustrations have been made in Iran. The other tables represent Persian-English translated texts.

#### *The Red Tree*

Published in New Zealand, *'The Red Tree'* has the highest symbolic use of color 'red' which is sacred for New Zealand people. There are two Persian versions of the book.

**Table 1.** Color symbolism in *'The Red Tree'*

		<i>The Red Tree (2001)</i>				
		Color	Color symbolism	Translation strategy	Paper quality	Art director
Haram-Panahi (2008)	Source	Red	Sacredness	-	changed	-
	Translation	Red	Courage, martyrdom			
Kavusi (2008)	Source	Red	Sacredness	-	Almost the same	+
	Translation	Red	Courage, martyrdom			

***My Many Colored Days***

The author of this book has used so many colors to show the various modes of each day.

**Table 2.** Color symbolism in '*My many colored days*'

<b><i>My Many Colored Days (1996)</i></b>					
	Color	Color symbolism	Translation strategy	Paper quality	Art director
Source	Red	Provocation	Same meaning	changed	+
Translation	Red	Inner eagerness			
Source	Yellow	Joy	Same meaning		
Translation	Yellow	Happiness			
Source	Orange	Energetic color	+		
Translation	Orange	–			
Source	Black	Mourning	Same meaning		
Translation	Black	Mourning			

***Something Else***

Here, an amalgam of sadness and happiness is the result of familiarity of blue 'Something Else' with orange stranger.

**Table 3.** Color symbolisms in '*Something Else*'

<b><i>Something Else (1994)</i></b>					
	Color	Color symbolism	Translation strategy	Paper quality	Art director
Source	Blue	Sadness, calmness	Same meaning	The same	+
Translation	Blue	Calmness			
Source	Orange	Energetic color	–		
Translation	Orange	–			

***Seven Blind Mice***

Since in this book the characteristics of all the mice, save the 'white' mouse, are considered similar, the only color which could symbolically be studied was 'white'.

**Table 4.** Color symbolism in '*Seven Blind Mice*'

<i>Seven Blind Mice (1992)</i>					
	Color	Color symbolism	Translation strategy	Paper quality	Art director
Source	White	Truth	–	changed	–
Translation	White	Purity, faith			

***Little Blue and Little Yellow***

Lionni, the author of this book, believes that by using the meaning of colors and their emotive values, the personal differences between individuals are made clear. He adds that the color ‘green’ - an intermediate color between blue and yellow- shows sympathy.

**Table 5.** Color symbolism in ‘*Little Blue and Little Yellow*’

<i>Little Blue and Little Yellow (1959)</i>					
	Color	Color symbolism	Translation strategy	Paper quality	Art director
Source	Blue	Superiority	–	Changed	–
Translation	Purple	Sadness			
Source	Yellow	Cowardliness	–		
Translation	Yellow	Disgrace			
Source	Orange	Warmth	–		
Translation	Brown	–			
Source	Red	Embarrassment	–		
Translation	Red	Good fortune, Courage			
Source	Black	Grief	Same meaning		
Translation	Black	Grief			
Source	Green	Newness	–		
Translation	Black/ dark green	Grief			

***Love You Forever***

The focus of this book is ‘calmness’ which is symbolized in the color ‘blue’, as a characteristic of a loving mother.

**Table 6.** Color symbolisms in 'Love You Forever'

		<i>Love You Forever (1986)</i>		
		Color	Color symbolism	Translation strategy
Nayeri (2000)	Source	Blue	Calmness	–
	Translation	Purple/ dark blue	Sadness/ ?	
Rajaei (2008)	Source	Blue	Calmness	–
	Translation	White	Calmness	

**بزرگراه/bozorgraah/ (Free way)**

In this book, dangers and the difficulties of life are likened to passing a freeway:

**Table 7.** Color symbolism in "بزرگراه" (Free way)

		<i>بزرگراه (2007)</i>		
		Color	Color symbolism	Translation strategy
Source	Red	Courage	Same meaning	
Translation	Red	Courage		
Source	Blue	Calmness	Same meaning	
Translation	Blue	Calmness		

**'راه صلح' Raah solh/ (The path of Peace)**

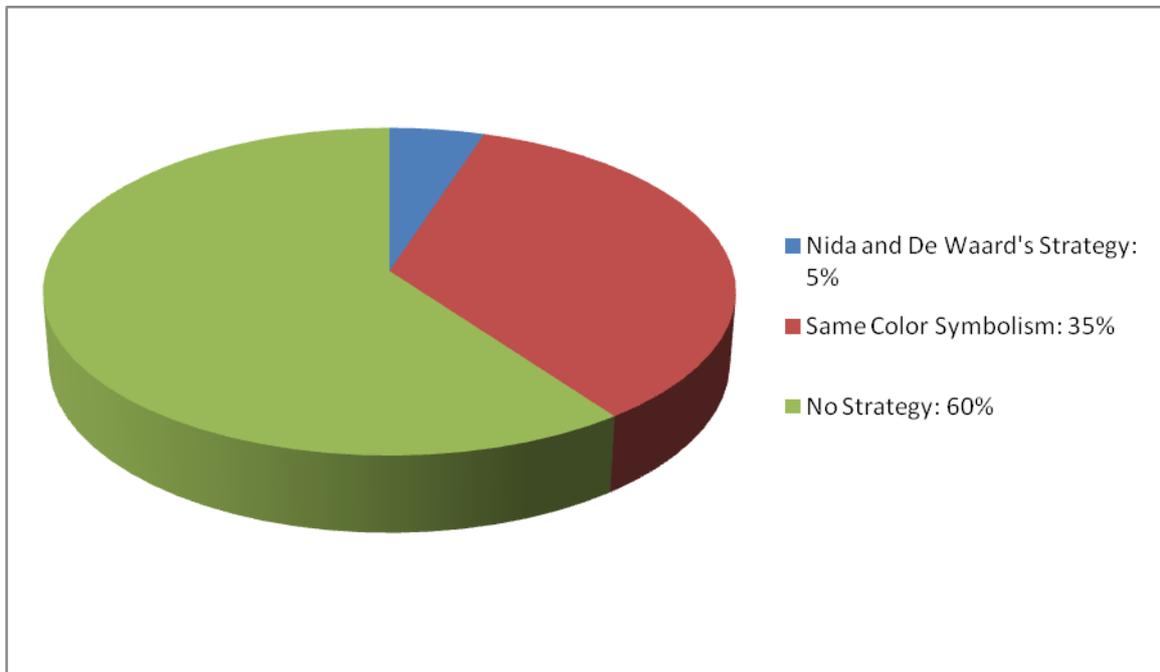
Differentiating between good and bad, holy and evil is mostly depicted in this book by means of analogy; using concepts which best show these attributes. Here, 'holy' is symbolized by the 'green' color.

**Table 8.** Color symbolism in 'راه صلح' (The path of Peace)

		<i>"راه صلح" (2004)</i>		
		Color	Color symbolism	Translation strategy
Source	Green	Sacred	No related meanings in this context (among the various defined)	
Translation	Green			

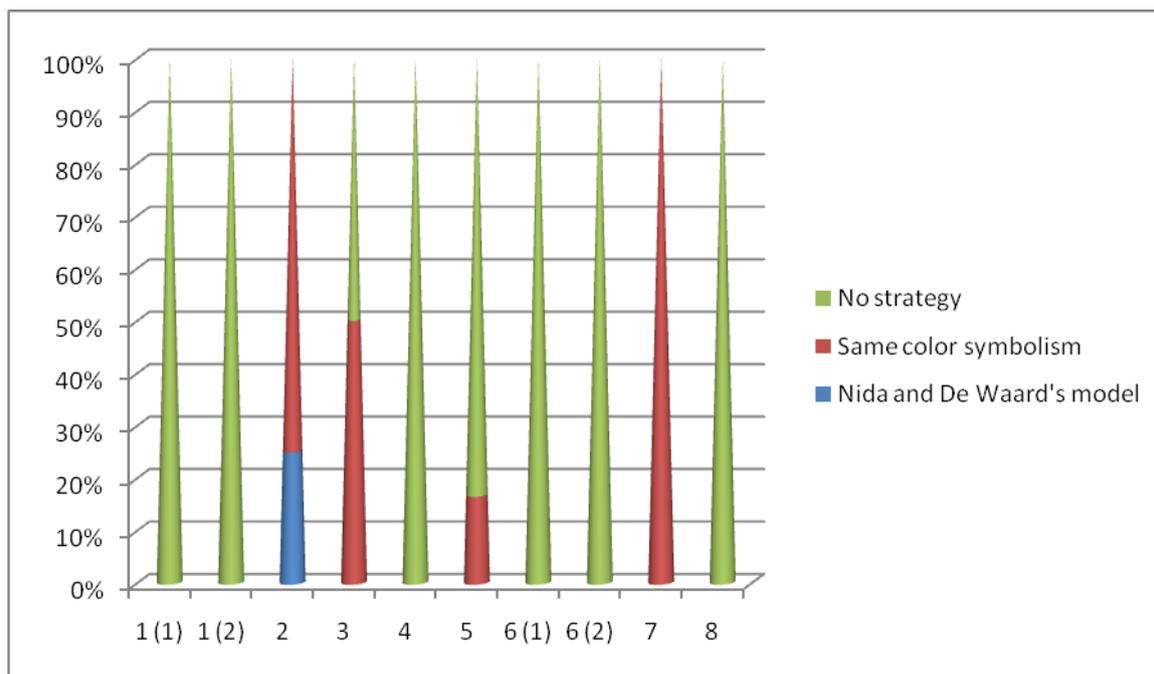
		meanings: Luck, money, growth, jealousy, environment, illness, spring, youth, inexperience, newness)	
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As it is shown in the above tables, most of the translators having not been able to realize the color symbolism intended in picture books and have used no specific strategies to transfer the visual meaning of colors. Some shared meanings among nations regarding color symbolism have, however, paved a bit of the way for them. The figures below show the results by percentage:



**Figure 1.** Percentage of applied strategies for color symbolism

For the ease of analysis, each picture book is figured in terms of its frequent uses of each of the three stated approaches to the color symbolism transference (each book is given a number, according to its presence in the tabulated information. Books with two translated versions are analyzed separately)



**Figure 2**, Frequency of applied strategies for color symbolism4. Discussion

The results obtained from the analysis are discussed separately below to find answers to the research questions.

### Analysis and discussion

#### *The Red Tree*

The only color that can be analyzed in this picture book is 'red'. Although the color 'red' is preserved in both translations, colors in Haram-Panahi's version are sharper than those of the original, and the little red leaf is lost in some of the red or colorful backgrounds. The cover illustration is changed, and one of the inside illustrations is used instead. According to Tarhande (2009b, p.58), 'the little red leaf appears on the cover page and accompanies the little girl throughout her journey'. However, it is omitted in translation's cover which can lessen the importance of the color 'red'. Also, the paper quality of the translated version is different from that of the original, and no art director is seen in the information page. On the contrary, Kavusi's translation has preserved colors more faithfully by the good paper quality chosen by an art director. What is important is the mismatch between the symbolism of color red in the two cultures of Persia and New Zealand. In New Zealand, red is a 'sacred' color and as a result, it is used to symbolize hope which descends from sacred heaven. The same concept in Iran is depicted by 'green'; hence, a mismatch has occurred. In none of the translations any attempt has been made to describe the function of coloring the 'hope tree' as red (research question 2); therefore, it is inferable that none of translators has identified the color to be symbolic (research question 1). A suggestion here is to keep the same amazing pictures and put a note to describe the feeling that 'red' connotes to a New Zealand child. Using notes may also be an applicable way, since Oittinen (2000) believes that all the layout of books and even the space in each page left for words are part of the 'greater whole' and contribute in conveying the message.

#### *My Many Colored Days*

In this book, there are so many colors introduced by Seuss in words, which are depicted by Johanson and Fancher (1998). The symbolism which some of the colors- blue, green, purple and pink- manifest do not match the color symbolism of American and Persian

cultures. As a result, they are not included in the analysis. Although the quality of paper is changed in the translated version, the colors are re-created by the art director in such a way that look like their original version. As this work is centering on the specific characteristic of each day, symbolic colors are apt to describe days. Thus, the page which makes 'red' salient says: "On Bright Red Days how good it feels to be a horse and kick my heels". According to Oxford advanced learner's dictionary, 'Kicking one's heels' means to have no work to do while one is waiting. However, in the illustration we see a horse which is jumping happily, and there is no sign of being bored by having nothing to do. Here, the relationship between the text and the picture is an inherent irony: the words and picture do not reinforce each other; rather, they are in conflict. In the translated version, instead of transferring the exact message of the words, the translator (Sepah-Mansur) has interpreted the message of the pictures in her own words and has made a reinforcing relationship between words and the picture: *در روزهای بقرمز شاد چقدر شادم* (/dar rūzhāye ghermeze shad che ghadr shādam/: in bright red days how I am happy).

In another page, rampant with bees and yellow color, the same thing has been done by the translator as done for 'red'. 'Yellow' symbolizes 'joy and happiness' in contexts for American and Persian cultures. There is no need for cultural interpretation. However, the translator has added the word "شاد و پر جنب و جوش" (/shād va por jonbojūsh/: happy and active) to show the meaning of yellow in words. Actually, she has made a kind of redundancy here.

In the 'orange' page with a blue seal, the 'orange day' symbolizes the energetic character of a circus seal. In the original text, there is no sign of this characteristic in words. Having identified the symbolic meaning of 'orange' (research question 1), Sepah-Mansur has masterfully added (research question 2) the word 'بازیگوشی' (/Bāzīgūshī/: playfulness) to translate the color 'orange'.

In the 'black' page with a roaring wolf, 'black' symbolizes grief, shared in both cultures.

### ***Something Else***

In the color wheel, blue and orange are complementary colors. Two colors are defined as complementary when they are opposite, can incite each other to maximum vividness, and when mixed, they yield neutral gray-black color (Itten, 1961).

The story is about something different from other creatures around it. Everybody calls it 'Something Else'. It is discarded by everybody as it is something else. It is a lonely creature, living in his house, high on hills--alone. He is colored dark 'blue' to show his loneliness and sadness while others have bright colors. Colors are faithfully transferred to the target language. As blue, in both American and Persian cultures, symbolizes loneliness', there is no need for translation.

Suddenly, one day something comes over to 'Something Else's' house that is some sort of something else too. He is even strange for 'Something Else'. However, he is so energetic and lively that changes 'Something Else's' sad atmosphere and his way of life. He is colored 'orange' to show his vividness. Orange in Iranian culture is not defined symbolically and thus, it is the task of words to compensate for the loss. Something like 'یک چیز باحال' (/yek chize ba hāl/: something cool) may compensate for the lost meaning.

Blue, Something Else and Orange new body are also supposed to complete each other. The art director has successfully chosen the right paper and, therefore, colors are transmitted perfectly. Had the translator identified the symbolism of 'orange' (research question 1) and had he made a compensation strategy for the loss of meaning (research question 2), the translation would have well communicated the entire meaning.

### ***Seven Blind Mice***

The author of the book, Young, has attributed to each mouse a specific color and a specific day, starting from 'Red Mouse' in Monday and ending with 'White Mouse' in Sunday (Christians', Holiday). On Sunday, the white mouse finds out the truth. 'White' in the United States symbolizes truth. The translators have skillfully translated the days from Saturday with 'Red Mouse' to Friday (Iranian Holiday) with 'White Mouse'. By making the holiday compatible with Iranian customs, the translators have in fact adapted and suited the source text for the intended audience to be loyal to their status. However, the visual message has not been adapted to benefit Iranian children (research question 2) and, hence (research question 1). What symbolizes 'truth' in Persian culture is 'red' and thus, a mismatch in visual and verbal information occurs for the target audience. Actually, absence of a cooperating art director makes the quality of papers changed in the translated version, and the colors are transferred with dark shades and an unacceptable quality.

### *Little Blue and Little Yellow*

Here, Lionni has created a remarkable work by employing collage technique to make a totally didactic and social sympathy within children's belief. The illustrations are so artfully made that it is preferable to safely transfer them to the target language instead of making new illustrations. For the purpose of the present research, the secure transference of the exact colors should be scrutinized. Actually, from Leonni's work, social sympathy notions in human relations can be connoted. Therefore, the color connotations used for analyzing this work can be attributed to human beings:

**Blue:** In American culture, blue the color of the first protagonist, symbolizes 'superiority'. Little Blue can be deemed as superior in comparison with his friend, Little Yellow. Since the story starts with him, it is his family that is introduced first, and it is him who searches for his lost friend.

**Yellow:** symbolizes 'cowardliness' in America: Little Yellow gets lost and eventually is found by Little Blue.

**Orange:** Little Blue's and Little Yellow's houses are colored orange which symbolizes the 'warm' atmosphere of their homes.

**Black:** The background of the scene where the "Little Blue" searches for his friend is colored black which symbolizes his 'grief'.

**Red:** While Little Blue is still searching for his friend, the color of the background changes to red, which symbolizes his 'embarrassment'.

In the Persian version, the paper used has changed in quality, and hence, has caused changes in colors. While the Persian child reads 'ابن آبی کوچولو است' (/in ābi kūchūlū ast/: This is Little Blue), he sees a blob of 'purple' color which symbolizes sadness in Persian. However, 'blue' has not the same connotations in Persian and American cultures. In Persian, there is no color to connote 'superiority'. So what is suggested is to resort to the same color, and then, adding words to compensate the loss. For example, the translator could use such phrases as 'آبی کوچولو شجاعتر از زرد کوچولو است' (/abi kūchūlū shoja'tar az zard kūchūlū ast/: Little Blue is braver than Little Yellow).

The yellow transmitted in the translated version is a brighter yellow in comparison to that of the source illustration; however, fortunately it is still yellow. But what is problematic in terms of the color 'yellow' is the discrepancy in symbolism of yellow in the two cultures. Also, none of the symbolic meanings in the two cultures are apt for the characteristic which the Little Yellow shows. So this color is not analyzed further.

The houses of Little Blue and Little Yellow are colored orange in the source illustration. 'Orange' symbolizes warmth in America. As a result of the changed paper quality, the orange in the source illustration is changed to 'brown' in the target illustration. For 'brown', no

connotations are found in two cultures. The warmth of the home is not transferred to the Iranian child.

There is a scene in the book in which the Little Yellow is lost and the Little Blue is searching for him in grief. His ‘grief’ is symbolized by ‘black’ in the source illustration. The same color which connotes the same meaning in Persian is transferred to the target illustration. On the next page, Little Blue continues searching for his friend. The background designed for this scene is colored red which connotes his ‘embarrassment’. The same color is transmitted to the target illustration which does not connote the same symbolism. ‘Red’ in Persian connotes courage and inner eagerness. Therefore, it is suggested to express Little Blue’s feeling through words.

When it is the time for Little Blue’s lost body to be found, they hug each other so tightly that they become one. There is no blue. There is no yellow. There is just a blob of green. Green is a moderate color between blue and yellow. They have become something new with new characteristics. Green symbolizes ‘newness and freshness’ in both Persian and American cultures. However, the quality of the green color has changed in the target illustration. Sometimes it is even turned into black, and in other places it is dark green. This can bewilder the child reader. As it is seen, no real attempt has been made concerning the loyal transference of color pigments to the Persian child. When one looks at the publishing information at the very first page of the translated version, it gets clear that no art director has cooperated with the publisher to accomplish the best color transference. The colors of Little Blue and Little Yellow on the book cover have remained intact. It is due to its paper quality. Book covers can attract children to buy the book. But what causes children to keep their interest is the content of the book, to which great attention should be paid. For target children to benefit from Lionni’s masterful pictures, it is suggested that in addition to keeping the same source illustrations in the translation to enhance translators’ color symbolism literacy (research question 1), one of the strategies in the model be used as well (research question 2).

### ***Love You Forever***

In this story, the calm mother forgets about her son’s noisy and disturbing behavior, and every night when the son sleeps, tired of whirling around, the mother hugs him and sings a song for him. The mother is shown in ‘blue’ dress almost on every page. Even the child is shown in blue wear when he is asleep, and when he is grown up and away from his noisiness. His baby daughter is also worn blue. ‘Blue’ symbolizes the calmness of mother as well as that of the sleeping child, and also the calmness of a grown-up man with his baby daughter in his arms.

The first illustration shows the mother with her baby held in her lap. The mother is wearing blue. The last picture shows the grown-up son with her baby daughter within his arm. They are both wearing blue. Calmness has crossed the generations. Nayeri’s translation keeps the source illustrations. Having no cooperative art director, the paper quality is changed and the color blue is seen in the target illustrations with lower quality in comparison with the colors of the source illustration. Sometimes ‘blue’ has turned into ‘purple’, which symbolizes grief in Iran. ‘Purple’ dress of the mother in the first illustration and ‘blue’ wear of new father and his newly born daughter, symbolize nothing to the Iranian reader. The translator’s lack of attention to the visual aspect of ‘blue’ (research question 1) and as a result, using no strategy to translate the visual message (research question 2) has caused this discrepancy.

In Rajaei’s version, new illustrations are made to acculturate the original ones. The cover image in this version is changed. It is due to the fact that the cover image of the original book has the image of the child in washroom with some kinds of equipment which are not ordinarily used in Iranian washrooms. Also, when a stranger is present, the mother wears a scarf which obviously suits the target child’s status. While ‘blue’ symbolizes ‘calmness’ in

both Persian and American cultures, ‘white’ is substituted for ‘blue’ in this translated version. Of course, not all the symbolic ‘blue’ occasions in the original text are changed to ‘white’ in the translation. However, there is the constancy of ‘white’ in the very first illustration which shows the mother with her baby in her lap, both in white wears, and in the wear of the sleeping child on different pages. The grown-up child is not shown in white wear. But his baby is again worn white. So it is inferred that ‘white’ has not been used consciously by the illustrator (research questions 1&2), and hence, omitted from the category of colors for which Nida and De Waard’s model (1986) has been applied. Generally, as the source illustrations are not transferred to the target language, talking about the paper quality and the cooperation of art director seems nonsensical.

### **بزرگراه (Free Way)**

Comprising several poems, *Free Way* /bozorg rāh/ centers around living conditions, what happens during life, its possible dangers and also the courage some people show without thought. In two poems, namely, ‘عبور مستقیم’ (/obūr-e mostaqim/: Straight Pass) and ‘پلیس راه’ (/polis rāh/: Patrolman), all the cars in the highway are colored black, except for the red car which always takes courage by driving fast. In ‘Patrolman’, a blue car--police car--is calmly chasing the red car. Fortunately, red symbolizes ‘courage’ and blue ‘calmness’ in both Persian and American cultures and hence, this bilingual picture book is appropriate to be read by American children as well.

### **‘راه صلح’ (The path of Peace)**

The imposed war on Iran is deemed as a ‘Holy Defense’ against the enemy. Hence, the devoted soldiers who participated in war are regarded ‘holy’ as compared to the enemy. In ‘راه صلح’, ‘Green’, the color of Islam, best symbolizes the concept of ‘holiness’ for soldiers. However, ‘green’ does not symbolize the same concept in America; it is ‘white’ which connotes ‘holiness’. The book is bilingual and both languages share the same pictures. For the English part, the loss of visual color meaning should be compensated (research question1) by the translator’s words or art director’s note (research question 2).

### **Concluding remarks**

What motivated the researchers to commence this study was the importance of using color symbolism in children’s literature. As lots of books are imported to Iran and translated for children annually, it was interesting to investigate what happens to culture-specific colors. Two research questions, stated in chapter one, were posed to make a defined path to the study. By reference to figure 2 above, it became obvious that the intended model (Nida and De Waard, 1986) has been followed in the translations of just one of the picture books, i.e. ‘*My Many Colored Days*’; hence, the other translators have not identified the colors to be symbolic. In Sepah-Mansur’s translation of ‘*My Many Colored Days*’, within the picture book’s context, the three symbolic colors (red, yellow, black), out of the total 4, have shared meaning between the two cultures. The other remaining color (orange) which is not defined symbolically in Persian color symbolism table (Appendix II) has been artfully translated through words by the translator.

The findings of the study generally reveal that the 5 percent conscious attention of translators to color symbolism in comparison to the 60 percent negligence of them is indicative of high color visual illiteracy among translators. The remaining 35 percent of shared color symbolism among the cultures under study shows that transnational non-shared meaning of color symbolism is more demanding to be taken into consideration. For the rest, the loss of meaning due to visual discrepancies between source and target cultures can be compensated for by early notes or by addition of descriptive words within the translated text.

A final word is that translation is not a restricted and one-sided task, particularly in the field of children's picture book translation. Cooperation of art, in terms of both art directors and illustrators is, thus, an inseparable part of translation in this respect.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I

#### *The Red Tree*

'The Red Tree' is a picture book in which a red hair girl takes a journey through the dark world of disappointment, of whom no sign can be seen within words (Tarhande, 2009b, p.57). In all the pages, from the book cover to the darkest pages, a little red leaf accompanies the girl, which symbolizes hope and better life and at last grows as a tree and faces the girl with the miracle of hope (Tarhande, 2009b, p.58).

There are two different translations made of this work: Haram-Panahi's (2008) for 'B' age group, titled 'درخت سرخ' (/derakhte surkh/: The red tree), and Kavusi's (2008) for 'c' age group, translated as 'درخت قرمز' (/derakhte ghermez/: The red tree).

#### *My Many Colored Days*

Theodore Seuss Geisel has introduced the different moods one may have in each day by colors. Sepah-Mansur (2007) has translated Seuss's (1996) work under the title of 'روزهای رنگارنگ من' (/rūz-haye rangārange man/: my colored days). The source illustrations are transferred in the target version. The translation is deemed appropriate for 'B' and 'C' age groups.

#### *Something Else*

Illustrated by Chris Riddle (1962) and translated by Vakili (2006), *Something Else* has reserved the source illustration and the text is much loyal to the author, with nothing more or less to help the multimodal translation. It is titled as 'یک چیز دیگر' (/yek chizeh digar/: Something else) and is attributed to 'B' age category.

#### *Seven Blind Mice*

Originated from an Indian tale and retold by Molavi's, great Iranian poet, has now entered into children's literature by Ed young's (1931) '*Seven Blind Mice*'. It is a vehicle to show the path of reaching truth to the young readers.

Titling it as 'هفت موش کور' (/haft mūshe kūr/: Seven Blind Mice), Pur-rezaei and Shojaei (2004) have translated as well as 'adapted' the work in a very skillful way. The source illustrations are preserved in target text. The quality of colors is unacceptable as no art director's name is present in the copy right page. It is attributed to 'B' and 'C' age groups.

#### *Little Blue and Little Yellow*

Written and illustrated by Leo Lionni (1910-1999) in 1959, *Little Blue and Little Yellow*, one of the children's best classical works-introduced by Peter Hunt- is considered as the best example of picture books by Haji-Nasrollah (2002, p.64). Little Blue and Little Yellow is Lionni's first book for children in which blobs of colors reveal the human relationship (Townsend, 1990). Haj-Nasrollah (2002, p. 64) declares that Lionni has used abstract shapes and symbols which are revitalized by color and other visual elements. The colored shapes in Lionni's work are made from Collage technique (Simon Kal, 1991, p. 36). In French, Collage refers to a kind of gluing in which different shapes are cut from different materials, such as newspapers, photos, garments, colored pasteboards and colored papers (chitsaz, 1998, p. 76-81). Lionni's symbols motivate imagination in children: what makes the young viewer to observe and notice the Little Blue in the first page is the contrast of blue on a white background; the different color of the described house makes the child to imagine the atmosphere of the house; while the color of Little Blue is a symbol of 'faith', the color of his best friend, Little Yellow, is a sign of knowledge; the black background shows the imbalanced state of Little Blue and the red background his anxiety as he has lost his best

friend (Haj-Nasrollah, 2002, p. 64); the green color, made from uniting Little Blue and Little Yellow when they find each other, is a symbol of social harmony (Simon Kan, 1991, p. 36). In total, by using the meaning of colors and their emotive value, Lionni states the personal differences between individuals and eventually, by means of the color 'green'- an intermediate color between blue and yellow- shows sympathy (Haj-Nasrollah, 2002, p.64). Haj-Nasrollah continues that these illustrations manifest a world of imagination to the child, a bundle of words cannot be capable to.

Translated as 'آبی کوچولو و زرد کوچولو' (/abi kūchūlū va zard kūchūlū: *Little Blue and Little Yellow*), The '*Little Blue and Little Yellow*' is translated by Adineh-Pur (2004). The source illustrations are transmitted in the target text. What have changed in terms of target illustration are their colors (in some occasions) and the quality of the paper. Children in primary school (A and B age groups) are considered capable to read this picture book.

### ***Love You Forever***

Robert Munch (1945- ) has authored this lovely work (1986) about a calm mother and his noisy baby. His words are simple and appealing to children, and Sheila McCraw has illustrated his work whose illustrations have given a ridiculous atmosphere to the story (Vaisius, 1991).

Rajaei (2008) has translated the work into Persian. Source illustrations are replaced with new illustrations. As Rajaei's version was not owned by the library of 'Children and Young Adult's Intellectual Development Institute'<sup>2</sup>, the age group is not defined.

### ***'بزرگراه' (The Freeway)***

Versed by Sha'bannejad in (2007), "بزرگراه" (/bozorg rāh/) is about the path of life and its difficulties, dangers, and also the cautions one should take in passing this path. 'Highway' is used as a symbol to show these concepts. Tahvili has illustrated the work, whose use of colors may be perceived symbolic.

Tehrani-Rad has translated the work into English (The Freeway), whose text is placed within the same Persian book (a bilingual picture book). "بزرگراه" is provided for 'D' age group.

### ***'راه صلح' (The Path of Peace)***

Tehrani's "راه صلح" (/Rāhe Solh/) is about a man, injured in war, who recites his memories. Zahed has illustrated the work, whose use of color may be realized symbolic. Ghandhari has translated "راه صلح", titled as 'The Path of Peace'. The work is provided for 'B' age group.

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<sup>2</sup> This library is specialized in the fields of literature, art and children and young adults' reading materials

**Appendix II****Color symbolism in the three cultures of Iran, New Zealand and U.S.A.**

	Persia	New Zealand	U.S.A
White	Purity, calmness/ sacred color, peace	Surrender	Purity, holiness, innocence, silence, wedding, truth, peace, cleanliness, emptiness, fright
Black	darkness, silence, non-existence, awaiting/ mourning	Patriotism	Mourning
Red	Inner eagerness, martyrdom, Courage/ good fortune	Sacred color	Provocation, embarrassment, Christmas, national holidays, patriotism
Yellow	Happiness, grief/ disgrace, illness		Joy, cowardliness, freshness, illness, caution
Blue	Calmness, purity, faith		Male color, corporate, conservative atmosphere, youth's clothing color, sadness, superiority, freshness, calmness
Green	Happiness, life, freshness, youth/sacred color of Islam,		Luck, money, growth, jealousy, environment, illness, spring, youth, inexperience, newness
Orange			Energetic color, vibrancy, energy, warmth, cheerfulness
Purple	Coming bloodshed (color connection), In literature it is considered as a kind of blue and sometimes as black: it symbolizes mourning (Karimi, 2006)		Luxury, power, mystery, religion, maturity, richness
Pink			Feminine color, rosy health, grace, gratitude, admiration, innocence, romance