

Cultural Elements in the Translation of Children's Literature: Persian translation of Roald Dahl's *Matilda* in focus

Matin Abed, M.A., Bandar Abbas Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas, Iran
matin.abed19@gmail.com

Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi*, Associate Professor, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran
h_vahid@yahoo.com

Abstract

Translation can have long-term effects on all languages and cultures. It is not a mere linguistic act, but mostly a cultural act, since language is by nature one of the major carriers of cultural elements. Thus, the translator's job is not just transferring the meaning of words and sentences from the source text to the target text. Culture-specific items often cause translation problems. Identifying such items in the source text and locate their rendering in the target text has been the focus of the present study. This study has attempted to spot culture-specific elements in the source text; i.e. *Matilda*, and to check the extent of the translator's fidelity in rendering such elements and dealing with the concept of domain of discourse in Lefever's (1992) words. To conduct the study, the researchers have applied a qualitative-descriptive (as well as a quantitative) method, focusing on the analysis of the text and classifying the cultural elements in the source text on the basis of Newmark's (1988) taxonomy. The findings thereof revealed that universe/domain of discourse has changed in several cases, mostly when the translator has used domestication strategy.

Keywords: Culture-specific elements, children's literature, domain of discourse, *Matilda*

Introduction

Translation, which is known as a means of communication between different nations with different languages plays a crucial role in transferring culture from one society into another. According to what has been put forward by Casagrande (1954), "The translator's job is not linguistic mediation, as is widely believed, but rather mediation in the act of communication, in which two cultures confront each other with their respective linguistic expressions." (cited in Ivir, 1987; p. 124).

Hence, translation as an intercultural phenomenon has been a source of interest among many translation scholars, and therefore, various procedures have been applied in describing the cultural transferring process. There are appropriate procedures or methods for translating the source culture into the target culture; and accordingly, many strategies have been proposed by different linguists and translation scholars (see, for instance, Newmark, 1988; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Epindola & Vasconcellos, 2006). However, the choice of translation strategies is not simply a personal or random act. According to Alvarez and Vidal (1996), "Translators are constrained in many ways: by the prevailing poetical rules and norms of the time; by what the dominant institution and ideology expect of them; by the public for whom the translation is intended, etc" (p. 6). Actually, they are constrained within what is called socio-cultural constraints. This indisputable fact becomes more critical when it comes to the case of culture-specific items (CSIs) which are considered as a source of difficulty in translation.

Children's literature is a remarkable area of writing and a growing field of study. There have been factors introduced by many scholars as the characteristics of children's literature (see, for instance, Hunt, 2005). Oittinen (2000) emphasizes on the impact of *child image*, which is the translator's view of childhood. She believes that child image influence on the translation of a

translator. She continues that the translators of children's literature should reach out to the children of their own culture; they should understand the realm of childhood, the children around them and the child in themselves. Translation, therefore, plays a very important role in children's literature, since it needs to compromise the source culture with the target culture. In fact, taking into account the cultural aspects of each language, the translator needs to pay attention to cultural elements in the source and target languages. There is no doubt that the greatest difficulty in translation lies in the differences of two languages. In any language, we can find items belonging to the culture of that language. These are culture-bound items with implied semantic loads causing translation problems. Translators should, therefore, benefit from a variety of strategies to cope with the culture-specific items in both adult's and children's literature.

Based on what was mentioned above, the present study aimed to illustrate how different cultural elements provide different inclinations, either consciously or unconsciously, in terms of the translator's choice of specific strategies for translating such elements in a children's novel during the translation process. Therefore, one of Roald Dahl's novels named *Matilda* was investigated. The cultural elements were specified on the basis of Newmark's (1988) taxonomy, and the selected procedures of translation were examined in terms of Venuti's (1995) domestication or foreignization. It was actually intended to explore the feasible inclination being provided through translation to find out what kind of manipulation takes place in translating cultural elements children's literature. It is worth mentioning here that Roald Dahl's works are famous in the world, and *Matilda* was selected due to the availability of its translation.

Based on the problem described above, the present study sought to find answers to the following research questions:

Q1. To what extent has the Persian translator of *Matilda* been loyal in transmitting culture-specific items to the target language?

Q2. To what extent has the ST *discourse domain* changed in the Persian translation of *Matilda* due to foreignization or domestication strategy use?

Literature Review

Before getting on the study of cultural elements in the translation for children and before applying theory to the translation of the famous *Matilda* into Persian, some important background information should be provided. In this chapter, the main related topics are presented. First, the definition of 'children's literature' and the materials about its translation are provided. Then, a brief account of translating culture-specific elements as well as the related empirical studies is presented. Finally, reference is made to the available research on the notion of universe of discourse.

Children's literature

Children's Literature is perhaps the most controversial genre of writing, not simply because of its content but also because of its origin and purpose. Long ago literature consisted of legends, fables, and myths. None were originally children's literature but because of their fantastic, lesson-oriented, primitive character, these narratives were given to children over the years for enjoyment and learning. These tales included moral and cultural lessons. Attempts to create a separate genre of literature for children were thwarted and no consensus was reached regarding whether a given work is best categorized as adult or children's literature Abdelhaq (2006: 1). Many books that were originally intended for adults are now commonly thought of as works for children, such as Mark Tawin's *The Prince and The Pauper*, or *Huckleberry Finn*. The opposite has also occurred, where works of fiction originally written for children are given

recognition as adult books. In some cases, books intended for adults, such as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* have been edited somewhat to make them more appropriate for children.

Peter Hunt, the Professor Emeritus in Children's literature who has been writing, editing and researching children's literature since the early 1980s, believes that 'one of the most interesting starting points for the study of children's literature is the term itself (Hunt, 2001, p. 2). Trying to define exactly what the term 'children's literature' refers to has always been a difficult task. As Hunt (1994: 4) points out 'children's literature seems at first sight to be a simple idea: books written for children, books read by children. But in theory and in practice it is vastly more complicated

The other problematic part of the term is 'children', as defining 'childhood' may differ among different cultures and it also changes along time. Hunt (1994) suggests that 'perhaps the most satisfactory generalization is that childhood is the period of life which the immediate culture thinks of as being free of responsibility and susceptible to education' (p. 5). This is a cultural point of view of 'childhood'.

If we are to accept these definitions of childhood, then at least we know what 'children' are within a given culture. However, a definition of 'children's literature' is yet to be provided.

One definition is provided by Knowles and Malmkjeer (1996), where children's literature is 'any narrative written or published for children' (p. 2). Within this are included the 'teen' novels aimed at the 'young adult' or 'late adolescent' reader. O'Connell (1999) describes this definition as 'a very broad, pragmatic definition which seems to dodge the very difficult issues' (p. 16). Another broad definition is offered by Townsend (1971), which he describes as 'the only practical definition of children's books today - absurd as it sounds [is] a book which appears on the children's list of a publisher' (p. 9). Oittinen (1993) provides yet another broad definition which could also be considered pragmatic. For her 'children's literature' is 'literature read silently by children and aloud to children' (p. 11), although she takes into consideration the debate on the definition of the concept of 'childhood' which she believes to be a 'social or cultural issue'.

Other available definitions of children's literature are more on the descriptive side, where some of the main characteristics of children's books are used to define the genre. Hence McDowell's (1973) differentiated between adult literature and children's books as:

"children's books are generally shorter; they tend to favor an active rather than a passive treatment, with dialogue and incident rather than description and introspection; child protagonists are the rule; conventions are much used; the story develops within a clear-cut moral schematism which much adult fiction ignores; children's books tend to be optimistic rather than depressive; language is child-oriented; plots are of a distinctive order, probability is often disregarded; and one could go on endlessly talking of magic, and fantasy, and simplicity, and adventure" (McDowell, 1973, p. 51).

Translation of children's literature

According to Shammas, (2004), 'the need for translation is a cultural necessity since it encourages the cultural exchange and extends the child's environment. Translation, thus, introduces children to cultural patterns they have never been exposed to before while preserving their own culture from undesired ideas and values. (pp. 106-107).

Bassnett (1996) stresses the need for reassessing the role of the translator by analyzing his/her intervention in the process of linguistic transfer, when she argues that 'once considered a

subservient, transparent filter through which a text could and should pass without adulteration, the translation can now be seen as a process in which intervention is crucial' (p. 22).

According to Lathey (2006), translating for children is quite different from translating for adults in two aspects: 1) the social status of children and their development and 2) the status of their literature which in turn characterize whatever written for them. She strongly believes that the 'unequal relationship' between the adult as a writer and the child reader does govern the way of writing and even translating for children since adults dictate the child's behavior (Lathey, 2006, p. 5). For her, the transportation of children's literature from one language and culture into another reflects distinct expectations and interpretations of childhood (p. 2).

Translation of culture-specific items

The concepts of culture exist in a text in form of some linguistic signs or signifiers. These signifiers are called culture-specific, culture-bound, or cultural elements, all of which refer to the same thing in translation studies. Aixela (1996, p. 54) states that cultural asymmetry between two linguistic communities is necessarily reflected in the discourse of their members. Baker (1992, p. 21) refers that these concepts may be "abstract or concrete, it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food, which are called culture-specific items". The culture-specific items are the reflection of culture within the language. Therefore, it can be concluded that the culture-specific items can be defined as "elements of the text that are connected to certain concepts in the foreign culture (history, art, literature) which might be unknown to the readers of the target text" (Aixela, 1996).

Language as a means of communication and a source of power for human being is considered as a representation of culture and distinctiveness of its speakers. In other words, language reflects the interests, ideas, customs, and other cultural aspects of any specific community. The vocabulary of a unique language manifests the culturally important aspects of a group of people or a nation in a particular situation and context such as religious, social, and environmental areas (Bahameed, 2008). It is already conspicuous that every language has its own specific ways of expressing events in a way that the etymology, origin and the use of culturally loaded words, proverbs, slangs and idiomatic expressions are uniquely bound to the culture of people who speak with that language. Also, every language has its own specific norms and accepted values which are inseparable part of its culture and which are shared by the people of that society (Ostad, 2014). Therefore, as a text is deeper embedded in its culture, it becomes more difficult and arduous to be translated into a new language and culture (Newmark, 1988).

Empirical studies on the translation of culture-specific items

Translation of Culture-specific items has been viewed and analyzed from different points of view. Leskovar (2003), as an example, applied the domestication vs. foreignization dichotomy to the translation style of American prose for Slovenian children. In doing so, he chose some American novels which had been translated into Slovenian language and which were still popular to them. What he found was that most translated books into Slovenian had more been domesticated rather than been foreignized which was more or less due to the explanations and introductions that the translators had added to the books in order to explain and clarify unfamiliar and nebulous cultural references. He also found out that some translators took more steps and related the themes of the source text(s) into the ones which were more familiar to the Slovenian language.

In order to analyze cultural elements in translation process, Akef and Vakili (2010) conducted a case study and qualitative research. Their case study included the Iranian well-

known novel “Savushun”. In their research, they were to identify and contrast the cultural elements in two Persian translations of Savushun into English. What they could prove and show was that while one of the translators had resorted to extra textual gloss as the main translation strategy, the other translator had used linguistic (non-cultural) translation as the mostly used strategy in translating culture-specific items.

Hariyanto (1996) expressed that translation manifests culture in two ways. First, the concept or reference of the vocabulary items is somehow specific for the given culture; and second, the concept or reference is actually general but expressed in a way specific in a source language culture. In practice, however, it is suggested that a translator should take into account the purpose of the translation in translating the culture or culturally-bound words or expressions. The translation procedures should also be considered.

According to Zojer (2011), a translator may be challenged by cultural references or culture-bound items which are tied up with a country's culture, history, society or geography. Zojer (2011) also mentions the (un)translatability of cultural elements. In her study about subtitling, she notes that there seems to be a growing tendency not to translate cultural elements in subtitles, but rather leave them as they are and expect the viewer to understand the references. Torop (2009) focused on the relationship between culture and translation as, culture operates largely through translational activity, since only by the inclusion of new texts into culture can the culture undergo innovation as well as perceive its specificity.

Problems in the translation of culture-specific items

Translators face many problems in translating cultural elements, and translation scholars suggest some methods to solve them. In fact, the translator has not only the problem of linguistic obstacles but also the problem of cultural barriers (Komissarov, 1991, pp.33-4). What is necessary for translators is that they should find an appropriate method in dealing with cultural items based on the text and the situation. Lacking some concepts in one of the two languages in translation process is problematic for the translator. There are some concepts in one language that are completely absent in another language. For example in Persian we have some new words which are common often among young people, like *خفن* /xafan/ (perfect way or thing) or *ضایع* /zaye'/ (very bad thing or situation; used for animate and inanimate things). Also, sometimes it is possible that the TT and ST readers have a totally different understanding of a single concept in two different languages. For example, some religious words like *کافر*, *زکات*, *حج*, *جهاد*, *نماز* may have close equivalents in the TT, but they cannot render the same concepts as the original. Obviously understanding these words by a reader of the ST is different from the understanding of the TT readers. Different categorizations of the concepts in languages are also problematic in the translation process. Among these concepts, divergence and convergence are two main points that should be noticed by a translator (Fawcett, 1997, p.43). Divergence occurs when a single item in the ST splits to two or more items in the TT. For example, the verb *دیدن* /didan/ in Persian can diverge into English ‘see’, ‘watch’, or ‘look at’. In contrast, when two or more items in the ST merge into just one item in the TT, it is called convergence. For example, the Persian *خاله* /xale/, *عمه* /amme/, *زن دایی* /zandayee/ and *زن عمو* /zan amoo/ (differentiated by their relationship to father or mother) converge into English aunt. However, in English there is no such distinction.

Universe/domain of discourse

Lefevere (1992) defines universe of discourse “the whole complex of concepts, ideologies, persons and objects belonging to a particular culture” (p. 35). It is also defined as the collection of objects being discussed in a specific discourse, according to the definition of

American Heritage Dictionary. In translation, Lefevere (1992) believes that universe of discourse needs to be balanced in the ST and TT as acceptable to their original author and respective audience. Accordingly, translators usually manipulate the text both in the level of content and on the level of style. In other words, fidelity in translation comprises a complex network of decisions to be made by translators on the level of ideologies, poetics and universe of discourse; because of the uniqueness of each nation's cultures, customs and beliefs.

Lefevere (1992) further suggests that a translation needs to “coin new expressions,” as Cicero advised, if the translations need to be really translated belonging to the original universe of discourse. In other words, because of a balanced universe of discourse, a word-for-word translation is impossible to conduct. By the same token, universe of discourse plays an important role in the treatment of texts on ideological aspects. In other words, the universe of discourse causes ideological constraints on the production of a translation, and consequently, the ideological orientation alters with the alteration of the universe of discourse during the translation.

During rewriting, translators' attitudes toward the universe of discourse is heavily influenced by the status of the original, the self-image of the culture that text is translated into, the types of texts deemed acceptable in that culture, the levels of diction deemed acceptable in it, the intended audience, and the “cultural scripts” that audience is used to or willing to accept (Lefevere, 2004, pp. 87). Therefore, a text that is central in its own culture may not occupy the same status in another culture. The self-image of the target culture is always changing; and a culture with a low self-image will welcome translation from a culture or cultures it considers superior to itself. Different attitudes towards Homer of French at different times are a case in point.

In total, there are four constraints that give rise to rewriting devised by Lefevere (1992) including patronage, ideology, poetics, and universe of discourse. However, Lefevere emphasizes that constraints are conditioning factors, not absolute. Translators definitely do not operate in a mechanistic universe in which they have no choice. Rather, they can choose to go with or against them, namely staying within the perimeters marked by the constraints, or to challenge those constraints by trying to move beyond them.

Method

The corpus

The corpus investigated in this study was the Persian translation (Alipoor, 2012) of Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (1988) which provides a large number of cultural elements for comparative text analysis.

Originally published in 1988, *Matilda* was one of the last books of Roald Dahl before his death in 1990. The main character in this story carries the name Matilda, a small child with an extraordinary intelligence. Matilda lives with her coarse parents and oblivious brother. When she is only 3, she teaches herself to read from magazines and newspapers, but her parents are completely indifferent to their only daughter. Dahl writes about Matilda's parents, “I doubt they would have noticed had she crawled into the house with broken leg” (p. 2).

By age five and a half, Matilda has read all the children's books in the library and quite a few of adult's as well. The protagonist of the story is a head teacher, Miss Trunchbull, the worst kind of violent adult, and it is only through Matilda's cleverness that the school is saved from the Trunchbull's insanity. The trunchbull treatment of her students is nothing short of a child abuse, since she seems to believe that intimidation is the best way to teach students. She expresses her ideas of a perfect school as “one in which there were no children at all” (p. 54).

Meanwhile, Matilda discovers she has a telekinetic power, a secret which she confides on to her teacher, Miss Honey. Miss Honey is poor. She tells Matilda about her past when her mom died and her mean aunt ruined up her life. In fact, Miss Honey suspects that her aunt killed his father and stole her money. She tells Matilda that her aunt is no one but Miss Trunchbull. Finally, Matilda decides to use her telekinetic power to help her teacher, Miss Honey, and takes revenge. Soon, we find out that the Trunchbull obeys Matilda's instruction, and Miss Honey moves home and starts a decent life. At the end of the story, Matilda and Miss Honey become a loving family, when Matilda's father is trying to escape to Spain, because of selling stolen cars.

This Novel has been awarded Federation of Children's book Group Award (UK 1988) and voted "Nation's Favorite Children's Book" in BBC Bookworm Poll (UK 1998). In Iran, *Matilda* is one of the best-sellers among the translated books for children. There are various translations available, but the one considered appropriate for the purposes of the present study is by Parvin Alipoor, published by Ofoq Publications.

Procedure and the framework of the study

As mentioned before, this study intended to investigate the translation strategies used for cultural items, and to determine the extent of alteration in the domain of discourse as well as the ideology of the target text, which affect the little readers of the novel under study. To this purpose, the researchers closely examined the selected English corpus and located those instances in which culture-specific items were distinctively used for some ideological achievements by the author. Then, they compared the Persian translations (Alipoor, 2012) of such items in terms of foreignization and domestication within the framework of Newmark's (1988) taxonomy of culture-specific items and Venuti's (1995) paradigm of translating cultural items. Therefore, the study is by nature a qualitative, descriptive one, conducted through a text analysis approach. In the process of data collection and analysis, the researchers have tried to seek rather convincing answers to the posed research questions, through the steps stated below:

Data analysis procedure

According to Newmark's (1988) taxonomy of cultural items (Table 1 below), the target text (TT) was compared and contrasted with its source text (ST) through the subsequent steps:

Table 1. *Newmark's (1988) categories of culture-specific items*

Category of Culture-Specific Items	Example
Material culture	Houses and towns, clothes, foods, and transport
Social culture	Leisure activities and works
Ecology	Geographical and environmental concepts including flora, fauna, winds, plains and etc.
Organizations, customs, activities concepts	Political and administrative terms, religious terms, artistic terms
Gesture and habits	Cock a snook at sb/sth, spitting

1. The first step was reading the source text, that is, *Matilda*, and its Persian translation thoroughly. The researchers, in this step, gained complete understanding of the cultural items in both texts.

2. The next step was to identify the culture-specific words, phrases and idioms existing in the corpus for analysis in later phases of the study.
3. After specifying the cultural items, they were put into each category of culture-specific items proposed by Newmark (1988), which is a valid categorization that systematizes cultural items.
4. The next step was to determine the translation strategies applied to culture-specific items, and to see if the domain of discourse has changed in the target text.
5. Drawing a conclusion was the final step in conducting the present research. The conclusion was based on the discussion of results and the findings thereof.

Analysis

Translation strategies in rendering ecological culture-specific items

According to Newmark (1988), ecological culture-specific items are related to environment and geographical places and animals. The ecological culture-specific items in *Matilda* and its translation was listed and investigated in the following:

- 1) The periodical cicada... (p. 2)

(۱) زنجیره ها... (ص. ۱۱)

Cicadas are a superfamily of insects, mostly spending their lives in trees, feeding on sap, and singing at night to avoid predators. The periodic cicadas spend most of their lives as underground nymphs, emerging only after 13 or 17 years. The Persian translation retains the exact meaning of the English word, which conveys the same sense to the reader. Therefore, at the first glance, it can be said that the domain of discourse has not been changed during the translation. But the word “periodical” is omitted in the translation, which does not convey the exact suborder of cicada family. In other words, the translator has used a general name of the family and, thus, the translation does not convey the exact domain of discourse.

- 2) There was a muddy pond at the bottom of Lavender’s garden... (p. 45)

(۲) در انتهای باغچه خانه‌شان، حوض گل‌آلودی بود... (ص. ۱۸۳)

A ‘pond’ is a body of standing water, which is usually natural and smaller than a lake. Its translation ‘حوض’ has a sense of artificial standing water which is usually made by man in the yard of buildings or homes. The translation conveys a different concept from the source text. So the domain of discourse changes in the target text.

Translation strategies in rendering material culture-specific items

Newmark (1988) states that material culture-specific items are houses, towns, clothes, foods and transports. In *Matilda*, there are many of such items. Some of them are provided below to find if they were translated properly.

- 1) Often with a mug of hot chocolate beside her... (p. 6)

(۱) اغلب در حالی که یک لیوان شیر کاکائوی داغ بغل دستش بود... (ص. ۲۱)

Hot chocolate, also known as drinking chocolate, is a heated beverage consisting of melted chocolate, and characterized by less sweetness and a thicker consistency. In the target text, instead, the translator has used the word ‘شیر کاکائوی داغ’, which can be explained as the chocolate milk which is heated. So, the domain of discourse has altered in the target text.

2) He liked to wear jackets with large brightly-colored checks and he sported ties that were usually yellow or pale green. (p. 7)

(۲) دوست داشت کت‌هایی با چهارخانه‌های بزرگ و رنگ‌های تند بپوشد و کراوات‌های زرق و برقی معمولاً زرد یا سبز کمرنگ بزند. (ص. ۳۱)

The terms in the source text, 'large brightly-colored checks' and 'sporting' seem to be neutrally transferred to the target language. The only problem is that the word '*sported*' is a verb which means wearing something which shows it off. In the target text, instead, an adjective and a noun have been used to convey the message of the text. Actually, in the source text there is a verb, while in the target text, the verb has been nominalized into an adjective and a noun. The second statement also is about the neutrality of lexicalization in the target text. So, the domain of discourse has not been changed in the target text.

3) "Car number three cost one hundred and eleven pounds and sold for nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds and fifty pence." (p.15)

(۴) «اتومبیل شماره سه برایم صد و یازده پوند آب خورد، نهصد و نود و نه پوند و پنجاه پنس آیش کردم» (ص. ۶۹)

This example is a clear instance of foreignization in translation. A foreign cultural currency has exactly been translated in the Persian culture. But, the domain of discourse has not been changed in the target text.

4) At breakfast time, Matilda sat quietly at the dinning-room table eating her cornflakes.

(۵) موقع صبحانه، ماتیلدا بی سر و صدا پشت میز اتاق نشیمن نشسته بود و برشتوکش را می‌خورد. (ص. ۷۹)
Cornflakes are a popular breakfast cereal made by toasting flakes of corn. It is usually served with cold milk and sugar. In Persian culture, cornflakes are also served for children in their breakfast which is named as 'برشتوک'. Therefore, the target text conveys exactly the same concept to its reader and, thus, the domain of discourse has not been altered because of the applied foreignization strategy.

Translation strategies in rendering social culture-specific items

Social culture-specific items are words that are related to leisure activities and works. In this section, these kinds of culture-specific items were analyzed.

1) And a strange sight it was, this tiny dark-haired person ... (p. 4)

(۱) واقعا منظره عجیبی بود! این فسقلی مو سیاه... (ص. ۲۱)

This instance does not show a foreignizing or domesticating strategy in the translation, although it seems that the domain of discourse has got some changes in the target text. The word '*person*' means '*an individual*' which could be assigned to all types of people, regardless of the size of their body. Instead, the word 'فسقلی' means a 'tiny person', referring mostly to children. Obviously, the domain of discourse has changed in the target text, since the source text does not convey the size of the person, while in the target text, the reader could think of a small child being mentioned.

2) Hardly the kind of a man a wife dreams about, she told herself. (p. 10)

(۲) و توی دلش گفت: «گمان نکنم هیچ زنی آرزو کند چنین تحفه‌ای نصیبش شود.» (ص. ۴۸)

Lexical choices in translation tend to manipulate the opinion of the text's recipient according to critical discourse analysis proposed by different scholars (Fairclough 1995; Van Dijk 1997; Halliday 1994). In this example, while the source text uses "kind" which means a group of individuals sharing common traits, the target text uses 'تحفه' which is an idiomatic

expression of a rare individual, implying a fool person at the moment. So, it is obvious that the universe of discourse has changed in the target text, for it creates a different concept in the mind of the reader.

3) “Quiet right, sugar-plum,” Mr. Wormwood said, casting a look of such simpering sloppiness at his wife it would have made a cat sick. (p. 33)

(۳) آقای ورم وود با چشمکی عاشقانه و ابلهانه که حال بیننده را به هم می‌زد، گفت: «حق با توست، شاخ نیاتم!» (ص. ۱۳۳-۱۳۴)

In this instance, domestication strategy has been used. According to Venuti (1995), domestication is the translation of source text for a target culture [which] depends on the dominant target culture value. The source text ‘*sugar-plum*’ is translated into ‘شاخ نیات’, with specific culture value. The word in the target text refers to a piece of dragée or hard candy which has small size and spherical or oval shape. Its translation in the target text refers to a candy made of hardened sugar, with homogenous and repeated solid forms of crystals, and their shape are also like a pine branch. So, it is obvious that a different concept would be formed in the mind of the reader. In other words, the domain/universe of discourse has altered in the target language because of domestication.

4) “My mother goes to Aylesbury every afternoon to play bingo.”

(۴) «مامانم هر روز بعد از ظهر به آیلزبری می‌رود که دبلنا بازی کند»

In the Unites States, Bingo is a game of chance in which each player matches numbers pre-printed in different arrangements on 5*5 cards with the numbers the game host draws at random, marking the selected numbers with tiles; and when a player finds the selected numbers are arranged on their card in a row, they call out “bingo!” to alert all the participants to a winning card. In Persian culture, also, the game is called “دبلنا”, which is mostly played with more than two players, but instead of “Bingo”, it is called out “دبلنا”. Actually, the translator has used a foreignization strategy and, therefore, the domain of discourse has not been changed.

Translation strategies in rendering organizations, customs, activities, concepts

As Newmark (1988) states this category consists of political and administrative terms, religious terms and artistic terms.

1) “And do you usually put your lunch on the front of your shirt, Nigel?”

(۱) "و جناب عالی معمولاً غذایت را روی پیراهنت می‌ریزی، نایجل؟"

In this instance, there is no domestication or foreignization strategy used, but there lies an important notion which is to convey a different concept to the mind of reader in target text. In fact, the source text uses ‘*you*’ which is a pronoun, which has a neutral sense, used to refer to the one who has been addressed, while in the target text the expression is used in such cases to scorn the addressee. So, the domain/universe of discourse has altered in the target text. In other words, the target text implies the concept of scorning someone, while the source text seems neutral.

2) Go and get yourself a pad and a pencil and let’s see how clever you are. (p. 15)

(۲) حالا برو، یک مداد و دفتر بیاور تا ببینم چقدر مرده حلاجی! (ص. ۶۸)

Here, also, both source and target texts aim to convey a similar message to their readers, although the translator benefits from idiomatic expressions to reinforce her statement. In other words, the source text message of ‘*how clever you are*’ would be an expression for estimating the

extent of intelligence, while the target text conveys a sense of estimating the extent of being skilled. Therefore, the universe of discourse has changed because of domesticating an expression into an idiomatic target culture expression.

3) “I hope the rest of you are listening to this” (p. 23)

(۳) «انشاءالله که هممتان گوش می‌دهید.» (ص. ۹۸)

Similar to the above example, the translator chooses the word “انشاءالله” to transfer similar effect to the target text receiver. However, the Persian equivalence, “انشاءالله”, carries a religious potential, meaning, “if God will”; which does not create a similar domain in the mind of the reader. In other words, the domain of discourse is different in the source text and target text because of domesticating a religious concept.

4) “oh dear” Matilda said. “I am not really sure.” (p. 23)

(۵) ماتیلدا گفت: «وای، خدا. واقعا مطمئن نیستم.» (ص. ۹۹)

According to Brown (1996), ‘oh dear’ is used to express shock, dismay, disappointment, sympathy and so on. In the target text, the translator has used ‘God’ instead of ‘dear’, which has a religious concept and, therefore, has domesticated the expression. Thus, the universe or domain of discourse has shifted.

Translation strategies in rendering gestures and habits

As Newmark (1988) remarks, gesture and habit culture-specific items are words like cook and spitting. Here, some examples of such culture-specific items in the source text, *Matilda* and its Persian translation are presented and analyzed:

1) Mrs. Wormwood sat munching her meal with her eyes glued to the American soap-opera on the screen. (p. 8)

(۱) خانم ورم وود همانطور که به صفحه تلویزیون چشم دوخته بود و یک سریال بازاری آمریکایی را تماشا می‌کرد، ملج-ملوچ کنان شامش را هم خورد. (ص. ۳۷)

Munching as a culture-specific item means to eat food audibly, which implies a sense of pleasure. Similar to the source text, the word ‘ملج ملوچ’ is the sound of eating, which is in most cases with pleasure. So, the translator has chosen a denotatively very close equivalent for the original, which also carries the same value in the target culture and thus, the domain of discourse has not changed.

2) The father glanced up sharply. (p. 8)

(۲) پدر به او چشم غره رفت... (ص. ۳۸)

‘Glance up’ means to direct eyes at someone or something for a short time, which in the source text it is followed by an adverb ‘sharply’, while in the target text, ‘چشم غره رفتن’ means to direct eyes sharply at someone for more than a second, and it is not a brief eye contact. So, each of the words in the source and target texts has a specific implication for their readers. In other words, the universe of discourse has changed in the target text due to mistranslation.

3) Mr. Wormwood jumped. “What happened to him?”, he spluttered. (p. 10)

(۳) آقای ورم وود از جا پرید و نته پته کنان گفت: «چه...ب...ب... بلایی سرش اومد؟» (ص. ۴۶)

The word ‘splutter’ means to speak hastily or incoherently, mostly because of confusion or getting angry, while the word ‘نته پته کردن’ means unsteadiness in speech, which is mostly because of a sense of horror or fear in the speaker. Comparing the meanings would reveal the

difference of the domain of discourse between the source and target texts. This difference is again the result of mistranslation.

4) “Miss Trunchbull!” Matilda cried, jumping about a foot in the air. (p. 71)

(۴) ماتیلدا نزدیک دو و جب به هوا پرید و فریاد زد: «خانم ترانچبال!» (ص. ۲۷۷).

While the source text uses ‘foot’ as a scale of measuring, the target text domesticates it into a more familiar word in the target culture, which is an extent from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger, called ‘و جب’. Therefore, the domain of discourse has altered in the target text as a result of using domestication strategy.

Results

As was mentioned previously, the theoretical framework of the present study is associated with the theory put forward by Venuti (1995). According to Venuti, translation of texts from one culture into another usually requires a choice between two translation procedures; namely, domestication and foreignisation (cited in Munday, 2001). Therefore, to account for the translator’s possibly-applied strategies in the body of the novel, *Matilda*, the translations of 149 instances of culture-specific items were extracted and analyzed. Table 2 below shows the obtained results in terms of frequency and percentage.

Table 2. *Frequency and percentage of strategy use*

	Frequency	Percentage
Domestication	64	42.95 %
Foreignization	36	24.16%
Neutral	49	32.88%
Total	149	100%

Table 2 shows that 42.95 percent of the culture-specific items extracted from the corpus were mostly domesticated. It also shows the translator’s orientation towards the translation of cultural elements in the process of translating children’s literature. In fact, there were words for which the translator did not use any of the two strategies, i.e. domestication or foreignization. It means that she has used a neutral translation strategy. It would be worth mentioning that the percentage of the applied strategies is not exactly 100 based on the analyzed data, for a 0.01 tolerance consideration. In the following figure, the number of different strategies is shown:

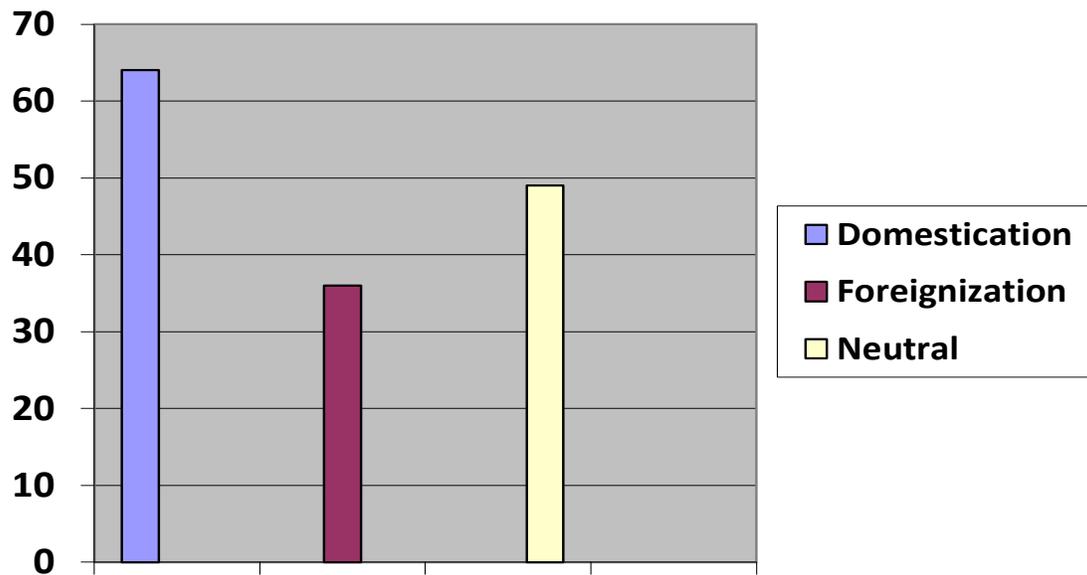


Figure: *Frequency and percentage of strategy use*

As stated, the culture-specific items specified in the novel were 149, which mostly fell under material, gesture, organization, custom, activity, and concept categories, respectively. In table 3 below, the distribution of the cultural elements in the novel is provided in terms of frequency and percentage according to Newmark's categorization.

Table 3. *Frequency and percentage of CSI use*

	Frequency	Percentage
Material CSI	46	30.87%
Social CSI	18	12.08%
Economic SCI	15	10.06%
Organizations, etc., CSI	32	21.47%
Gesture and habit CSI	38	25.52%
Total	149	100%

The above results obtained from the analysis of the data will be discussed in detail in the following section to answer the posed research questions.

Discussion

In this section, the answers to the research questions are to be released and discussed, based on the obtained results. In accordance with the instances of texts examined above, the researchers' strong belief is that, at a general glance, as far as the first research question is concerned, the translator has been fairly loyal in rendering Roald Dahl's *Matilda* into Persian,

although there exist some rare mismatches between the ST and the TT due to some likely misunderstandings of the source text, source culture, or because of some dissimilarities between linguistic features in the two languages involved. All in all, the translator has done a great job in translating *Matilda*, trying her best to be loyal, as much as possible, to the content of the original text, specifically as related to culture-specific items.

As to the conveyance of some cultural elements, the main point is related to some discrepancies between different types of words for each single concept in the TT. Actually, the translator has benefited from certain words to produce the same effect or tone in the children's mind. Generally, the translator has been confronted with an inescapable situation in translating *Matilda*, which has made her employ different strategies to communicate a similar message to the target audience.

In connection to the second research question, the results reveal that the domain of discourse has changed in many instances as a result of domestication of cultural elements of the ST in TT. In fact, the domain of discourse, and, as a result, the ideology conveyed by the two texts, has turned out to be different due to the application of either foreignization or domestication strategies.

It is to be noted finally that based on the analysis of the source and target texts and the instances mentioned above, and also based on the quantitative measurement done, the dominant strategy in translating culture-specific items in this study was Venuti's domestication. Actually, 42.95 percent of mentioned culture-specific items extracted from the corpus were mostly domesticated (Table 2). Also, since domestication alters the domain of discourse, it can be said that the domain of discourse has changed a lot.

Concluding remarks

In the light of what was mentioned about the challenging nature of translating cultural items, the findings of the present study indicate that the translator of *Matilda* has been fairly faithful in her translation. To put it in a nutshell, despite some minor discrepancies between the ST and the TT, specifically with respect to some instances related to the shift of the domain of discourse or ideological orientations of the source text, all in all, she has tried greatly to observe utmost fidelity, especially in relaying culture-specific items in the original novel.

The results of this study provide translation students with a chance to learn how the translation of cultural items can influence the conveyance of message in translation, and how erroneous translation can change the universe of the discourse provided in children's literary texts. In short, since trainee translators often pay little attention to the meanings related to the cultural/social aspects of the texts, the findings of this study can show them the importance of the translators' critical language awareness about the deep layers and the profound meanings of literary texts, using Venuti's (1995) dichotomy of foreignization/domestication strategies which familiarizes them with various dimensions of texts and context by uncovering significant social and ideological imports.

References

Abdelhaq, S.M.A., (2006). "Ideology in Translating Children's Literature into Arabic". Unpublished master thesis in American University of Sharjah. Retrieved online on May 16, 2015, from: <https://dspace.aus.edu/xmlui/handle/11073/38>.

Aixela, J. (1996). *Culture-specific items in translation*. Clevedon- Philadelphia-Adelaide: Multilingual Matters.

Akef, K., & Vakili, T., (2010). "A Comparative Analysis of Culture Specific Items in Two English Translations of Savushun" *Journal of English Language Studies*. 1(4). 157-168.

Alvarez, R., & Vidal, M. (1996). *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

Bahameed, A., (2008). "Hindrances in Arabic-English Intercultural Translation". *Translation Journal*. 12(1). Retrieved on 19th May 2015 from: <http://translationjournal.net/journal/43culture.htm>.

Baker, M. (1992). *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bassnett, S. (1996). The Meek or the mighty: Reappraising the role of the translator. In R. Alvarez & M. C. A. Vidal (Eds.), *Translation, power, subversion* (pp. 10-24). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Dahl, R. (1989). *Matilda*, London: Puffin.

Fawcett, P (1997). *Translation and Language*. UK: St. Jerome, Manchester.

Hariyanto, S., (1996). "Of Poetry Translation". *ELE Journal*. 2(1). 91-104.

Hunt, P. (1994). *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, P. (2001). *Children's Literature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Ivir, V. (1987) "Procedures and Strategies for Translation of Culture". In: Gideon Toury (ed). *Translation Across Cultures*. New Delhi: Bahr: Publications Pvt. Ltd.

Knowles, M., & Malmkjaer, K., (1996). *Children's Fiction in the Hands of the Translators*. Lund: Bloms Boktryckeri Ab.

Komissarov, V.N (1991). "Language and Culture in Translation: Competitors or Collaborators?" in *traduction, terminologie, redaction*. vol.4. Retrieved from <http://www.erudit.org/revue/tr/1991/v4/n1/037080ar.pdf>

Lathey, G., (2006). *The Translation of Children's Literature: A reader*. Clevedon. Buffalo. Toronto: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Lefever, A., (1992). *Translation, History, Culture*. London: Routledge.

Lefever, A., (2004). *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*. London: Routledge.

Leskovar, D. (2003). Domestication and foreignization in translating American Prose for Slovenian children. *Meta: Translators' Journal*, 48(1), 250-265.

McDowell, M., (1973). "Fiction for Children and Adults: Some Essential Differences". *Children's Literature in Education*. 4(1). 50-63. Retrieved on 29th May 2015 from: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/j326h88r10283033>.

Munday, J (2001). *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. USA and Canada: Routledge

Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. New York & London: Prentice-Hall.

Oittinen, R. (1993). *I am Me - I am Other: On the dialogics of translating for children*. Tampere: University of Tampere.

Oittinen, R. (2000). *Children's Translation*. New York: Garland Publishing.

Ostad, A. (2014). *Cultural representation of English translation of culture specific items (CSIs) in contemporary Persian literature*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Islamic Azad University; Science & Research Branch, Tehran, Iran.

Torop, P., (2009). "Social aspects of translation history or forced translation". *Kielen ja kulttuurin saloja*, 239–248.

Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's invisibility: A History of Translation*. London & New York: Routledge

Zoer, H., (2011). "Cultural References in Subtitles: A Measuring Device for Interculturality?" *Babel*. 57(4). 394-413

دال، ر. (۱۹۸۸). *ماتیلدا*. ترجمه پروین علی پور، (۱۳۹۱). تهران: افق، کتاب‌های فندق