

The Compulsions For Suitability Of A Text For Translation

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Situation and purpose are intrinsic part of all translation work. Translators thus, never translate words in isolation but the entire context. They bring to the translation their own cultural heritage, their reading experience and in the case of children's books, their image of childhood and the child itself. In so doing, they enter into a dialogue and a relationship involving readers, the author, the illustrator, the translator and the publisher. The translator-centered approach to the study differs from the more traditional approaches focused on abstract concepts of equivalence, matches or fidelities, between texts. This model negates the earlier mechanistic models and considers the translator as an influencer and a medium of being influenced. It is only in this mode that the immensity of the translator's importance becomes significant. (Rose, 2001) Then it requires the suitability of the translatability of the text as a crucial part of the project. A few factors to consider before embarking on the translation for any children's text include:

THE TEXT'S INTEGRALITY

The entire concept and methodology of translation has changed over time. While nowadays, the norm is translation of the complete, unabridged text is accepted the adult canonized system, deliberate expurgation of text is rare. However, in the nineteenth century and even at the beginning of the twentieth, such was not the norm and certainly was not was not obligatory. The translators had more or less the complete freedom to alter and modify even the essence and the integrality of the original text. Today, this freedom is confined to the non-canonized system in the adult system. (Shavit, 1986) In this system the translators are free to modify, alter, add or delete as in demanded by the target system, and usually they fail to preserve even the completeness of the original text, let alone the essence and integrality. (Raw, 1991)

The complete same freedom of manipulation lingers when the text is translated into the children's system (even if it a part of the body of canonized literature). This is especially true particularly when adult books are transmitted to the children's literature system. Within this system, the "raison d'être" for abridging children's texts is the supposed aversion of the children towards

long texts and the often-false supposition that children are by temperament incapable of reading texts longer than a few pages. Nevertheless, the actual decision of the content to and retain is, apart from the systemic affiliation based on twin criteria, a) the prevailing norms of morality accepted and demanded by the children's system; b) the level of the child's comprehension determined often by assumption. Hence a translator's decision rarely stops at adjusting and shortening the text to make it simpler wherein one or more strands are invariably cut. These two procedures often work at cross-purposes as fewer elements are now necessitated to be burdened with functions. Consequently, it's an exacting balancing act, where the translators must carefully weigh in the import of each part of the text to maintain the necessary balance, while never losing sight of the above mentioned twin principles in focus. (ed Mona Baker, 1987)

The simplest procedure to alter or modify the text is through deletions. This can be extended to a few elements to entire paragraphs or chapters if these do not meet the necessary criteria. The simplest alteration of the text is achieved by deleting undesirable elements or whole paragraphs. However, this option is not always viable since the very necessity for deletion may become extremely problematic. Such passages or chapters are then modified to suit what the translator deems as an acceptable or ideal format. For instance, the scene where Gulliver extinguishes a fire to save the palace by urinating on it. Swift employs the scene of the extinguishing of fire to take the plot forward as also to integrate insert into the story. The Lilliputians then reveal their nature by being ungrateful refusing to thank Gulliver for saving the palace. (Raw, 1991)

On the contrary, he is severely castigated and incarcerated for breaking the law of the kingdom and later use it as an excuse for sending him away. Swift had sought to make a comment on extant laws that followed the letter of the law too strictly. The whole scene is also employed to satirize the legal system by highlighting the arbitrariness of laws and the resultant ingratitude of the people, when adverse judgment follows, even when the results of the illegal action are beneficial. However, most translations deemed the act of Gulliver extinguishing the fire by urinating on it was unacceptable in a children's book. They also deemed the scene unacceptable as they deemed the satire of the kingdom and its laws beyond the comprehension of the children. However, some translators loathed to discard the paragraphs especially those who accepted the adventure model (Shavit, 1986)

In the adventure versions, Gulliver manages to extinguish the fire by only either dousing it with water (Mizrachi) or by blowing on it (Zelkovitz). Consequently, the passage is left in the text almost intact, even though it contradicts the integrality of the text that has characterized the

Lilliputians as good and grateful people. Here, it is evidently, that in order to conform to the contingencies of the adopted model, a critical aspect of the translation, the adventure model, the translators often unhesitatingly contradict other components of the text such as characterization. (Rose, 2001)

Some other translators, however, deleted the entire scene without compunction, as it very unequivocally violates the taboo in children's literature on excretions apart from contradicting the characterization of the dwarfs as victims. (Shavit, 1986) Another reason for its deletion is that the passage is only employed as a means to satirize certain aspects which translators rigorously try to avoid. Hence, they felt that deletion of this superfluous scene can be easily justified. (Nord, 1998)

In fact, it is a given postulate that in case the context allows the translators to delete superfluous scenes without destroying the basic plot or characterizations, they will wield their scalpels unhesitatingly. Hence, all translators of *Gulliver's Travels expurgate* the scene where Gulliver is alluded to as having a love affair with the queen, breaches the taboo on sexual activity in children's literature. (Lathey, 1999) In the Swift's adult version, this scene is critical as it highlights how logistically impossible it is for the affair to occur due to the vastly diverse dimensions of the suspected lovers. Seen as part of the satire on gullible readers as well as the keenness to feast on lascivious news, this incident is censored altogether in translations for children the rationale being omit the unnecessary. (Rose, 2001)

The other major criterion that acts as a guidance for translators is their reading or assumption of the level of reading comprehension of children. When a translator ascertains that a certain paragraph is beyond a child's comprehension, s/he will alter, modify delete it to adjust it to the "appropriate" comprehension of level of the system adopted. (Raw, 1991) For the same reason the translators of *Robinson Crusoe* delete the opening dialogue between Robinson and his father in the children's version. This operates at two levels as though the theme is for children, the discourse is for adults as the father expatiates on the bourgeoisie as conflicted with the lower and upper classes. (Lathey, 1999)

The same phenomenon is at work during most translations of *Tom Sawyer*. In the original text, the famous fence-whitewashing scene has two parts. (Lathey, 1999) The first depicts Tom's ingenious device for forcing the children work for him and happily pay for the pleasure of doing that work. In the second, Twain employs several ironic statements about the "sacred" values of work and pleasure. This is gain subject to translator's scrutiny as it is aimed not towards Tom and his treasures, but is a sermon for the adults, whose often warped values the text highlights by

comparing it to those of the children. (Trosborg, 1997) The discourse turns explicitly mocking and condescending attitude vis-à-vis adults forcing most translators to delete this part of the scene entirely. children are thus deprived of learning and reading this ironical scene since it is completely expunged. (Christopher Culy 1995).

Few considerations drive the translators to this conclusion. First, the passage does not add or enhance the main “plot” in its narrowest sense. Translators, are often hesitant to omit a paragraph with a substantive part in the “plot ” even in the face of pressure to make longer texts shorter. (Shavit, 1986). Action and plot are the critical foundation of children's books and cannot be compromised. As in Nina Bawden's words: (Saxby) “Writing for children is not easier than writing for adults; it is different. The story-line, clearly, has to be stronger.... The clue to what they really enjoy is what they reread, what they go back to, and this is almost always a book with a strong narrative line.” (Bawde 1977)

However, in a paragraph that the translators discern to be nonessential to the plot, they can exclude it without compunction. Additionally, most translators are uncomfortable in case they have to highlight life in an ironical or sarcastic manner or such aspects that they do not consider suitable for building values a child should cherish and look forward to be acquire through reading literature. They often overtly state that irony or sarcastic attitude tone or temper cannot be incorporated as these are subtle and incapable of being understood by children as these are multi layered. (Lathey, 1999) Hence, whenever it is possible, the level of irony is totally excluded so as to make the text less complicated. (Shavit, 1986)

This tendency to e and even sidesteps subtle and multilayered texts and/or ironic and sarcastic characterizations of adults, and especially of parents, extends to many other. Even in texts expressly written for children, translators try to insert equivocation and obfuscation in order to extend the readership by blurring the boundaries. Despite targeting adult audience, by, Collodi's narrative is for the children even though its main device has been deliberately chosen as satire and is tailored to dramatically knock the medical and legal professions off their pedestal. (Lathey, 1999)

While analyzing the translations of Pinocchio, Wunderlich and Morrissey argue that Geppetto's description too precludes unsavory adult characterization (Fischer, 1978) : “Geppetto, the image of the parent, also undergoes change. The original Geppetto is a truly human figure. He displays anger, rage and frustration. The parent loves, but the parent also becomes angry and punishing. Raising a child, Collodi shows, is no easy matter. Parents, however, are no longer punishing. They display only love, warmth, support, and self-sacrifice towards the child. So, as with

Pinocchio, Geppetto is weakened through the thirties; his punishing visage is eroded.” (Thomas, J. 1982).

THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY OF THE TEXT

As mentioned before, the text's integrality is determined by the translator's requirements towards abridging the text and the needs of the target audience towards simplifying text. While abridging the text, translators must ensure that they also diminish the proportions between elements and functions while enabling lesser elements to carry off fewer functions. Unlike adult canonized literature, in which the norm of complexity is the preponderant, the norm of simple and simplified models prevails amongst most children's literature (canonized and non-canonized). The non-canonized adult system also displays the same trend (Lathey, 1999)"This norm, rooted in the self-image of children's literature, tends to determine not only the thematic and characterization of the text, but also its options concerning permissible structures." (Shavit, 1986)

While dealing with the issue of complexity, *Alice in Wonderland* is most pertinent. It is interesting how the text came to be gradually accepted and adored by the adults. especially when it is discovered that the critical part was played exactly by the characteristics later considered by adaptors and translators as incongruous for children. Here, the flow was in the opposite direction as the text became first widely adored by children, i.e. which textual elements were already in order to make the text delightful for children. (Canepari, 2002) For the children as a rule, all the entire text was changed and any element too subtle was either modified, altered or deleted. Thereby, all the satire and parody of the original *Alice in Wonderland* was expunged and was facilitated by the fact that most of the passages containing these elements were easily omitted without affecting the storyline or the characterization whilst only contributing marginally to the plot. However, the acute issue posed during translation was the completely imaginative portrayal that infused enormous complexity into the world it portrayed thus presenting a more serious problem for translators who wanted to snip at it.

Every aspect was very subtly connected and refused to make sense once the scalpel went through it because they could not give it up altogether. (Rebecca Hyde Parker, 1996) Carroll employs surrealistic techniques intentionally to blur the distinction in *Alice in Wonderland*, between dream and reality and all the events seem to happen in waking dream. Such a complicated scenario was unsuited both to the translators as well as their target audience who eventually transformed the story into a dream. Thus, the problem of translating into an incongruent target

system was simplified and the transfer into children's literature occurred seamlessly by blurring the clear distinction between reality and fantasy. (ed. Luc van Doorslaer) For instance, one translation opens thus: "Once upon a time there was a little girl called Alice, who had a very curious dream." (Zadik 2011).

Another adaptation in fact explicitly states that it is a dream state: "'I am glad to be back where things are really what they seem,' said Alice, as she woke up from her strange Wonderful dream." (Zadik 2011)

The procedure of transformation of a text into a less sophisticated one and its adjustment to a simplified model is always achieved either by deletions or by changing the relation between elements and functions. (Lathey, 1999) However, often while some elements are retained in the text, their function is transformed they lose their original function without acquiring a new one. (Rebecca Hyde Parker, 1996) This is due to the fact that while the translator leaves certain elements uncertain, allowing them to contribute to some level which they ultimately fail. For instance, in the original *Tom Sawyer*, Twain the aunt is etched quite satirically by making fun of the way she uses her spectacles: "The old lady pulled her spectacles down and looked over them about the room; then she put them up and looked out under them. She seldom or never looked through them for so small a thing as a boy; they were her state pair, the pride of her heart, and were built for 'style' not service -- she could have seen through a piece of stove lids just as well." (Zohar 1992)

The comment explains ironically why the aunt puts her spectacles up and down and does not look through them. (Lathey, 1999) In one of the translations (Ben-Pinhas 1960), the translator retained the part where she lifts her spectacles up and down, but purged the writer's comment. The translator may have thought that the spectacles take forward the plot (because of the "action") but could not realize its critical and did not pay function in the characterization of the old lady. (Shavit, 1986) Hence, in the translation, the spectacles remains functionless.

IDEOLOGICAL OR EVALUATIVE ADAPTATION

In the earlier stages of adult literature, the concept of literature as a didactic instrument for instilling unequivocal values or for a certain ideology was prominent. Long after it ceased to exist in adult literature, the concept was still a driving idea prevalent in children's literature that made the translators amenable to changing entirely even the source text in order to have the revised version conform to the dominant mainstream purposes. (Nord, 1998) A case in the point is the translations of *Robinson Crusoe*. (ed. Luc van Doorslaer). Perhaps the most prominent of its translations was the

translation into the German by Joachim Campe (1746-1818) entitled *Robinson der Jüngere* (1779-80). Notably it catalyzed several other translations: Campe's himself translated the adaptation into French and English (1781). Incidentally, the English translation by Stockdale, published in 1782 in four volumes emerged as the most popular (Lathey, 1999). The cycle of text translation continued unabated, and by 1800 translations could easily be found in Dutch, Italian, Danish, Croatian, Czech, and Latin. The text was translated into Hebrew no less than three times (1824, 1849, 1896, and was even translated into Yiddish (1784, 1840). (ed Mona Baker, 1987)

Robinson Crusoe after making suitable ideological adjustments was thus easily transferred and preserved in the canonized children's literature for over a century. Furthermore, the text rapidly became a model for adventure travelogue genre and was followed up by various imitations. In fact it became the model for one of the "most prominent models in children's literature, that of the Robinsonnade". (Lathey, 1999) Yet, it is interesting to note that though Campe's adaptation spawned the model for one of the most successful models and was the main reason behind Robinson Crusoe's attaining the cult status for children, he practically reinvented the text. Having decided in the beginning that the original was unacceptable, from the ideological point of view he turned it into a totally different text, retaining only some parts of the original setting. (Raw, 1991)

Campe's desire for translating *Robinson Crusoe* was not only to subserve a particular ideological point of view but was a nod back to adapting it to the Rousseau's pedagogical system, which unsurprisingly underpinned the pedagogy in his school in Dessau. (Fischer, 1978) In fact, Campe's motivation for translating *Robinson Crusoe*, was that Rousseau himself suggested that *Crusoe* "be the only book given to a child due to its portrayal of the individual's struggle with nature. (Shavit, 1986). In consonance with Rousseau's views in mind, Campe reckoned that the translation demanded a makeover as "*Defoe's views on the bourgeois ethos and colonialist values contradicted those of Rousseau*". (Shavit, 1986) Thus, in the original text, *Robinson Crusoe* arrives at the island along with all the trappings of Western culture meant to civilize the ignorant world like weapons, food, the Bible) and even manages to cultivate nature. In Campe's translation, however, he reaches the island naked and possession less (he even has to spark the fire by rubbing stones). (Shavit, 1986) Robinson has to learn to live within nature without building a quasi-European culture. Rather, he builds an anti-European culture and suggests it as an alternative to the European. (Lathey, 1999)

When Campe's adaptation was quickly translated into Hebrew and ran into multiple editions, many refinements were necessitated before it could be adapted to the prevailing

Enlightenment views of the nineteenth century. (ed Mona Baker, 1987) In one of the translations, by Zamoshch, the translator tried in a rather paradoxical manner to combine Campe's antirationalist views with the views of the Jewish Enlightenment (Shavit, 1986); This is even when the latter turned out to be inadvertently similar to Defoe's ethos viz, the belief that a rationalist can overcome nature and even cultivate it. The translator in fact, tried to stress not only Rousseauian values, but also those of the Jewish Enlightenment movement such as productivization. (Shavit, 1986) Thus, the children listening to the story told by their father do not sit idle, but willingly busy themselves with some sort of work. In this example, it can be seen how a text is selected for adaptation on the basis of ideology, yet still requires ideological revision; paradoxically, the new version resulting from this revision included elements of both Defoe and Campe. (Lathey, 1999)

THE STYLISTIC NORMS

Discussion in English of the stylistic norms governing translation of children's books into Hebrew is impossible; however, the guiding principle can be analyzed. The predominant stylistic norm for both for adult and children's literatures' Hebrew translation - is towards high literary style that appears in most inconceivable places. Despite the fact that both systems share a common stylistic norm, however, its motivation and legitimation is different in each system. (Shavit, 1986) While in adult literature, the high style is driven by a desire for "literariness" per se, in children's literature it based on the translator's wish to enrich the child's vocabulary- that acts as a didactic concept (Shavit, 1986) This didactic concept dictates of children's literature assumes that "books can and do influence outlook, belief and conduct," and that "for this reason, the writer for children will weigh his words carefully." (Nord 1991).

In case any translator subscribes to this concept in children's literature it becomes impossible "to liberate itself either from its didactic aims or from this specific norm of high style". Even if "literariness" disappears from adult literature that has normatively turned into everyman's language, it continues to dominate children's literature, as long as it is regarded as educationally "good" and until the didactic concept of children's literature declines or at least loses its sway. (Lathey, 1999) This phenomenon reflects the strong grip that systematic constraints hold on the children's system. These constraints govern not only the selection of texts to be translated from the adult canonized system, but the presentation, characterization, and model affiliation as well. (Raw, 1991)

Translating for children shares one major issue with translating for adults: like all translations, it is anonymous, even invisible. While we acknowledge the original literature written for child readers, we do not acknowledge the translation for children. Yet we think of translators as humans afflicted with a child image. Child image is very complex on the one hand it is individualized based on the translator's impressions of the translator, on the other it is the outcome of collective norms for the child of the society. (Oittinen, 1991) One question they deal with universally is: FOR WHOM? If the aim of the translation is to simply convey the original, we forget the purpose and the function of the translation process: the translation needs to give importance to child as a reader. Hence the criticality of the suitability of translation. (Lathey, 1999).

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