

## **Translating Children's Literature under Skopos and Equivalence Paradigms: A Case Study of the Little Prince**

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### **Extended abstract**

#### **1. Introduction**

The present study aims to investigate the potentials of two significant translation paradigms in children's literature: 1) Skopos paradigm; and 2) equivalence paradigm. The former seeks equivalence in the source text while the latter seeks it in the target text. To this end, three translations of "The Little Prince" by Mohammad Ghazi, Ahmad Shamlou, and Abolhassan Najafi were analyzed. The results showed that the translation by Shamlou, unlike the two other translators, was target-oriented and is based on the Skopos paradigm which fully considers the children as its specific audience. The two other translators adopted a text-based approach in their translations and sometimes used words and phrases that were complex for children to understand. These two translations might conveniently fall under the equivalence paradigm. The findings indicate that Skopos is a more exhaustive paradigm when dealing with children's literature as compared with the equivalence paradigm.

#### **2. Methodology**

Adopting a qualitative approach, this study analyses three translations of the Little Prince's story. To do so, the excerpts of the original text and three of its translations (i.e. Abolhassan Najafi, Mohammad Ghazi, and Ahmad Shamlou) were analyzed. The theoretical frameworks used in this study are two important paradigms in translation studies, namely the equivalence and Skopos paradigms. In fact, the selected translations were analyzed from the perspective of these two paradigms.

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### 3. Discussion

Based on the analysis of the three mentioned translations of the story, it can be concluded that the extent to which a children literature story might be successful is highly related to its particular audience, namely the children. The language should be simple and understandable and avoid any kinds of complexities. In this regard, Nida (1969) believes that “the differences between the translations can usually be attributed to three main factors: 1) the nature of the message; 2) the aim(s) of the author and by proxy, the translator; 3) the type of audience” (as cited in Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 164)

In children's literature, the nature of the message, the purpose of the author (translator), and the audience is very clear. Nida (1969) also believes that the decoding ability in any language includes four following levels

- “1) the capacity of children, whose vocabulary and cultural experience are limited;
- 2) the double-standard capacity of new literates, who can decode oral messages with facility but whose ability to decode written messages is limited ;
- 3) the capacity of the average literate adult, who can handle both oral and written messages with relative ease ;
- 4) the unusually high capacity of specialists (doctors, theologians, philosophers, scientists, etc.), when they are decoding messages within their own area of specialization. Obviously a translation designed for children cannot be the same as one prepared for specialists, nor can a translation for children be the same as one for a newly literate adult” (as cited in Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 166).

According to Nida, children have the least ability to decode the message than the other three groups. Thus, in translations for children this essential point should be taken into account. The three analyzed translations revealed that the translation by Shamlou paid more attention to the children as compared with the two other translations. Using simple words, dynamic, and fluent language, he provides a fluent translation which is devoid of complexity and easier to understand for children. But the two other translations by Najafi and Ghazi have taken a different approach as compared with Shamlou and have more complex words and a language that makes it difficult for children to understand. Based on the analysis, Shamlou's translation can be considered under Skopos paradigm, whereas the two other translations have an equivalence-based approach and are classified under the equivalence paradigm.

### 4. Conclusion

The present study analyzed three translations of “the Little Prince” story under the equivalence and Skopos paradigms. In the end, it was revealed that the translation by Shamlou is more fluent and reader-oriented. Using words such as “Akhtarak”, “Kavir”, “Sahra”, and so forth, Shamlou has provided a more understandable

translation for his specific audience (i.e. children) and adolescents who have limited vocabulary and cultural experience.

Shamlou has also attempted to translate the text in a colloquial style; therefore, decoding the messages is simpler for children with low literacy levels. Thus, Shamloo, categorized under the Skopos paradigm while taking into account his specific audience (i.e. the children who have little cultural experience), has provided a more fluent translation. The other two translators adopted a text-based approach in their translations and sometimes used words and phrases which complicated the text for children to understand and follow. The translations provided by these two translators should be considered under the equivalence paradigm.

**Key words:** Children's literature, The little prince, Translation, Skopos paradigm, Equivalence paradigm.

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