A Study of Functions of Skopos Theory in Translation of Children's and Adolescents's Literature: A Case Study of Persian Translations of *Animal Stories in Quran* by Ahmad Behjat

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Introduction

In contrast to originalist theories such as the circle of Polish rhetoricians, the theory of Skopos is based on the principle that purposefulness is the main indicator of a translator's success in translation process and that the function of translation is completely dependent upon the level of knowledge, expectations and norms of target readers. Because writers of children's literature do not belong to their intended audience, they sometimes incorporate their adult experiences into the writing process. When such books go beyond borders and are chosen to be translated into another language, the translator faces a dilemma: sometimes he/she focuses on the author according to originalist theory, and sometimes he/she focuses on audience in original language based on Skopos theory.

The present paper seeks to examine the attention of translators of *Ghesas-ol Hayavan fil Quran-alkarim* [*Animal Tales in Quran*] by the Egyptian writer, Ahmad Behjat, to purposeful translation for children and adolescents and to answer the following important question: to what degree have Mojtaba Rahmandoust and Seyed Mohammad Hossein Hosseini as translators of this work adhered to the components of Skopos theory in their translation processes? Rahmandoust has translated and published this collection under the title, *Guardian of the Cave*, and Hosseini has translated and published the same collection under the title *Animal Stories in the Quran*.

Research method, background and goal

The present study is conducted based on descriptive-analytical method and content analysis. In the first step, the existing translations of the collection of stories by the name of *Ghesas-ol Hayavan fil Quran-alkarim* were gathered and studied, from which two translations were selected. Complete and perfect translation of the Arabic text was the basis of this choice. Other translations were discarded due to quantitative and qualitative deficiencies. After juxtaposing the two translations by Hosseini and Rahmandoust, comparative textual analysis of the texts as the research material was started, and the content and structure of the sentence as the translation unit was studied according to Hans Vermeer's theory. Relying on the basics of children's and adolescents' literature as well as the criteria of writing for children, the information was collected by library and indexing method, and the data was analyzed by content analysis and formation of a network of contents. Finally, three key lines were extracted as writing criteria for

children and adolescents, namely "decoding of contents and interpretation", "fluency and fluctuation of text", "speech-like text and attention to tone". After extracting the research lines, the two translations were thoroughly compared with the original text according to the mentioned lines, and numerous textual evidences were derived.

Among the previous researches related with the present study is the paper by Hassanvandi et al. (2015) entitled "Translation of children's literature from the perspective of Skopos paradigm and balance theory: a case study of *The Little Prince*", which examines three Persian translations of *The Little Prince* novella in the light of Skopos and balance theories. The noteworthy point in this paper is that the mentioned query in comparison section has only studied lexical translations and the use of verbal or eloquent language. However, in translating children's literature, purposefulness is not limited to the use of words, and includes topics such as decoding, demystification, localization of characters' names, content censorship, translation of literary proverbs and stylistic devices, tone, style as well as other technical and cultural issues.

Discussion

In comparative analysis of the collection of stories titled *Ghesas-ol Hayavan fil Quran-alkarim* and its Persian translations based on Skopos theory, we found that as the translator gets closer to the purposefulness principle, his translation becomes more fluent and understandable for children. With respect to decoding and interpretation, the success rate of the translators of this collection is different. In some cases, both translators have failed to translate the text

appropriate to the child's understanding due to their faithfulness to the content of source text. Obviously, in this regard, the translation by Rahmandoust is more consistent with purposefulness theory due to omissions and additions, the use of punctuation marks and patterns to which the child's mind is accustomed. Fluency and proper fluctuation in text are other criteria of purposeful translation for children and adolescents. In this regard, the translation by Rahmandoust is more successful due to the correct use of brevity and excerpts, and Hosseini's translation has lost its fluency due to the transfer of the source text's structure. Also, the translation of proverbs in Rahmandoust's translation has made his text more comprehensible and fluent. In line with fluent writing for children and by interpreting stylistic devices such as similes, trope and metaphors, Rahmandoust has been compelled to expand the target text, which is in agreement with the theory of purposefulness, while in Hosseini's translation, the translation has been sacrificed by word-for-word interpretation of these similes and tropes. As for the tone, it is noteworthy that because all the stories were narrated by animals, the translators adhered to the same language of Arabic narration. The language of all stories is serious and formal, and changes in the tone of different animals have not been considered by translators. However, according to purposefulness theory, this analogous and formal tone could have been different, at least in some cases, to express the differences between the mood and temperament of animals for children and adolescents.

Conclusion

Since the translation of children's literature in Iran is done strategically and purposefully, Skopos theory can meet the needs of this approach. The first principle of this theory indicates purposefulness and pre-determined plan of the translator and other principles of this theory can be interpreted in the light of this purposefulness. Research findings show that adherence to the source text in translation-especially translation of children's literature- causes more ambiguity in the text for children and adolescents rather than raising their cultural understanding and introducing them to other cultures. In Skopos theory, the source text is somewhat set aside, and Hans Vermeer interprets this idea as dethronement, so that the source text is no longer the sole criterion for translator's translation method and strategy but a source and piece of information similar to other sources for the translator (like any other audience) who selects what he finds important, useful and sufficient for achieving their goals.

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