

A Cross- Cultural Study of Animal Symbolism in the Persian Translations of Children's Literature

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Abstract Animals are among culture-bound items which make the translation practice a difficult task for translators and need specific considerations on the part of the translators. In fact, animals in each culture carry some symbolic meanings with themselves which are specific to that culture and are different from those carried in other cultures. Accordingly, the present study aimed at investigating the strategies adopted by Persian translators to render the symbolic meaning of animals in children's literature. It also sought to find the effectiveness of using such strategies regarding the target audiences. To achieve these goals, eleven animal terms, with different symbolic meanings in western and Persian culture, were investigated in twelve western children books and their Persian translations. Then, based on Venuti's (1995) categorization of translation strategies, they were categorized into two main domestication and foreignization translation groups to see which group keeps more preferred strategy among Persian translators of children's literature. The effectiveness of using such strategies was measured by interviewing thirty Persian first grade students to elicit their knowledge about the symbol of animals and comparing them with the used strategies. The results showed that most of the Persian translators tend to foreignize these cultural terms. However, the results of the interview revealed that children recognize the native symbolic meanings of animals more than their foreign ones. It was concluded that the strategies used by Persian translators is not an appropriate one for translating cultural symbolic terms for Persian children.

Keywords: symbol, children's literature, translation strategy, foreignization, domestication

1. Introduction

Translating for children is a task in which the role of the translator is very crucial. It is the translator who, by adopting a strategy, decides whether the child should stay at home or go abroad and become familiar with a world other than that of him/her self. The strategy translator adopts in the translation of children's literature is very important in the formation of child's knowledge of the world, especially when the text contains cultural terms which are crucial for the socialization of children and are very difficult to be translated. These cultural terms are highly different in nature. One of them is symbol which is the focus of this study.

2. Background of the Study

We are surrounded by symbols in almost every area of our life, from the world of advertising to mathematics. Every field of study has made use of symbols and provided a definition for it which is different from that in the other fields. But, in spite of the diversity of their meaning, symbols have the same function in all fields. They are used to express the concepts which cannot be expressed through the ordinary language. In this regard, Cassar (2000) states that people in general, and children in specific, use symbols to communicate when they cannot express themselves through mere linguistic devices. Jung (1964) also points to this function of symbols

asserting that since there are many things beyond the understanding of human, we try to use symbolic expression to represent such concepts. That is, symbols are used for expressing those concepts which cannot be fully defined or understood. Jung divides symbols into "natural" and "cultural" ones, explaining that the former are those derived from the unconscious and the latter refer to those which are used for expressing eternal truth. For Jung, it is cultural symbols which form the collective image of a society and are created through many transformations and conscious developments. Another categorization of symbols is provided by Newmark (1993) who divided them into universal, cultural and individual symbols. What is common in both categorizations is the existence of cultural symbols in them. This can suggest that symbols are culture specific terms. Jung (1964) and Newmark (1993) put an emphasis on the symbols as cultural items, stating that animals are among the most cultural symbols. Jung believes that animals are usually the symbol of man's primitive and instinctual nature. The importance of animals in the man's life is evidenced by using animals as totem in the primitive tribes. The symbolic use of animals in modern societies is a continuation of animal totemism in primitive societies (Cirlot, 1971). As Cirlot puts, the symbolism of any given animal varies according to the context in which that animal exists. Nesi (1995) in her article "a modern bestiary: a contrastive study of the figurative meanings of animal terms" also points to the culture-specific meaning of animals asserting that "in each culture, certain animal terms are strongly linked with certain attributes, and there is a communal agreement about what these attributes are" (p. 3). She explains that the intensity of the association between an attribute and the animal is different from one culture to another. Some cultures give stronger connotations to some specific animals than to the others. For example, in English the cultural connotations attached to camel are not too strong, and this lets the person accept the conflicting meanings of that animal in a given text. On the other hand, there are some other animals, like lamb in English culture with strong associations that can hardly be ignored.

The culture specific meaning of symbols becomes more important when they are intended to be used in cross-cultural communications. The communicator may face a plethora of problems if s/he does not know the meaning of symbols in the culture of one with whom s/he communicates. It is in such cases which the role of translation discipline becomes crucial. Newmark suggests different ways for translating cultural symbols: sometimes symbols should be replaced by one familiar symbol in the target language, like in the case of translating cultural symbolic foods; some other symbols can be reduced to sense in translation; and lastly, there are some symbols, like those related to wealth, which require classifiers for translation. Regarding the translation of some animal sounds, Newmark believes that they should be transformed if the target language culture does not contain these animals. Venuti (1995) discusses different strategies of translation which although do not directly address the translation of symbolic expression, they are useful devices for translating cultural items, including symbols. These strategies are domestication and foreignization.

Venuti (1998) defines domestication as involving "an adherence to domestic literary canons both in choosing a foreign text and in developing a translation method" (p. 240). In this strategy, using of which refers back to the 17th century, fluency is the main feature and criterion for reviewers, publishers and readers to judging about a translation as acceptable (Venuti, 1995). Venuti defines fluency as an attempt on the part of translator to adhere to the current usage and find the most precise meaning in the target language. The purpose of a fluent translation, in Venuti's view, is creating an idiomatic text in target language; therefore, it is tried to avoid using foreign words and use a syntax which is more faithful to the target language than to the source. In his view, in a fluent translation, the translator attempts to make him/herself invisible, producing the same effect in the target language as that produced in the source language. That is, it should be translated in such a way that seems natural not translated.

Foreignization is "a close adherence to the foreign text, a literalism that resulted in the importation of foreign cultural forms and the development of heterogeneous dialects and discourses" (Venuti, 1998, 241). Venuti points out that a translator can either submits to or resists against the dominant values of the target culture. In submitting those values, he adopts a domestication strategy. While in the case of resistance, translator adopts foreignization making the cultural differences more visible. Venuti's preferred strategy is

foreignization or resistancy since he believes that it not only can help to preserve the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, but also makes the translator's work more visible (1992, 13). According to Venuti (1995), a text should be translated in such a way that encounters the reader with a cultural other and aware him /her of the differences between cultures. However, Venuti's view cannot always be followed with certainty. In some areas of translation the translator cannot decide about the foreignizing strategy as her/his best choice. One of these areas is children's literature where the audiences are children's who are different from adults in many ways and because of some limitations may not be able to tolerate such strangeness which exist in the foreignized texts. Therefore, the area of translating for children needs special attention on the part of the translators.

As Wohlgemuth (1998) points out, Kelingberg identifies four aims for the translation of children's literature:

1. To further the international outlook, understanding and emotional expression of foreign environments and cultures
2. To make more literature available to children
3. To contribute to the development of the reader's set of values
4. To give readers a text they can understand given their back of knowledge (p. 20).

The first two aims justify the adherence of the translator to the source text; while the latter ones need the translator to take into account the norms and values of the target language. But the most important aim, in Klingberg's view, is increasing children's international knowledge.

Still, there exists another approach very opposed to the first one. In this approach the translator should adhere as closely to the target culture as possible. This approach is justified by the children's limited knowledge and experience of the world, compared to the adults; and also by their little tolerance of strangeness.

Puurtinen points to this difference putting that unlike the translator of the adults' literature, the children's translators are allowed to manipulate the original text and adjust them to the literary canons and cultural values of the target language (Wohlgemuth, 1998).

Toury (1995) discusses this issue from the polysystem perspective, stating that translation of even literary books usually occupies peripheral positions in the target literary system. Accordingly, the more peripheral a text (or its genre) seems to the target culture, the more adjustment will the translator needs to make in order to adopt it to the norms of the reading culture. By the same token children's fiction and translation of children's literature tend to be seemed as peripheral in most systems and this can affect the process of translation.

In general, in translating children's literature, the role of the translator is very crucial. The strategies which translator adopts in the translation process, especially when the process involves translating cultural items, have a great effect on the acceptance of the final product of translation by the target recipients.

2.1 Research Questions

Based on what was stated above, the present study sought to find answer to the following questions:

1. Are there any cultural differences between Persian and English in their symbolization of different animals?
2. Which strategies have more frequently been used by translators to render culture- specific animal symbols of English children's literature into Persian?

3. Methodology

3.1 Materials

The materials used in this study comprised "*Dictionary of Mythology Folklore and Symbols*" (volume 1) written by Gertrude Jobes (1961) and "*Animals dictionary in Persian literature*" written by Manije Abdollahi (2003) to compare the symbolic meaning of animals across two western and Persian cultures. 12 western children books containing 12 animals with symbolic meanings and their Persian translation were utilized. Two main criteria were involved in choosing these books. The first one was that those western books were selected that contained animals whose symbolic meanings in Persian were different from those of the western culture. The second was that the selected books had to be translated into Persian in order to make the comparison between the two versions possible. From among the selected books there was one that was translated from Persian into English and the reason for doing so was that though it has been written by a Persian writer, it was greatly under the influence of western culture. All the selected books were appropriate for 5 to 9 year old children. Two main foundations that helped the researcher to identify and investigate the books were Kanooon-e Parvaresh-e Fekri-e Koodakan va Nojavanan (Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults) and Children's Book Council of Iran. They are the main institutions for children literature in Iran. The selected books are as follows:

1. *The Fox and the Hound* (Walt Disney series, 1981)

Translated as: Ghayem Mooshak, Roubah va Sag

Translator: Mina Khazama

2. *The Old Turtle and the Broken Truth* (Douglas Wood, 2003)

Translated as: Lakposht-e Pir va Haghghat-e Shekaste

Translator: Hossein Ebrahimi

3. *Daft bat* (Jane Willis, 2007)

Translated as: Xofash-e Divane

Translator: Masoume Ansariyan

4. *Owl Babies* (Martin Waddell, 1996)

Translated as: Mamanam-o Mixam, Dastan-e Se Bache Joghhd

Translator: Farinoush Ramezani

5. *Pig* (illustrated by: Bettina Paterson, 1999)

Translated as: Ghayem Bashak Bazi3 (Sag Kuchulu)

Translator: Mehri Mahouti

6. *Ghese-e Joghhd-e Dana* (Mahmoud Mirzai Delaviz, 2001)

Translated as: the story of the Wise Owl

Translator: Kourosh Kalantari

7. *The poor woodcutter and the dove* (Max Velthuijs, 1970)

Translated as: Ghese-e Ghomri va Hizom Shekan-e Faghir

Translator: Sharare Vazifeshenas

8. *Seer Crow and eight other stories* (Grimm brothers)

Translated as: Kalaghe Gheybgu va Hasht Ghese-e Digar
Translator: Sepide Khalili

9. *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Roald Dahl, 1998)

Translated as: Agha-e Roubah-e Shegeftangiz
Translator: Saghar Sadeghiyan

10. *The Very Busy Spider* (Eric Carle, 1995)

Translated as: Ankabout-e Porkar
Translator: Nazanin Farzinzade

11. *Flik to the Rescue* (Jane B. Mason, 1999)

Translated as: Shahr-e Mourcheha, Flik Mourche-e Nejatbaxsh
Translator: Leila Hedayati

12. *Wise Piskarev* (Saltykov Schedrin, 2008)

Translated as: Mahi-e Xeradmand
Translator: Seyyed Shoja Mirlatifi

3.2 Procedures

The first phase of the study comprised a comparative analysis of above two mentioned books in order to find out whether or not the symbolic meanings of animals are different in two cultures. The name of animals and their symbolic meanings in western culture were extracted from "*Dictionary of Mythology Folklore and Symbols*" and put into two columns in a table and then, their correspondences in Persian were added in the third column. At last, the results gained from this comparison were represented in a new table.

In the second phase of the research, all the 12 western books were compared, one by one, with their Persian translations to find the strategies used by Persian translators of the books when translating animal terms with symbolic meanings. Before categorizing these strategies, a system of categorization was needed. Thus, the theoretical framework proposed by Venuti was utilized. Venuti (1995) in his major work "*the translator's invisibility*" categorizes the translation strategies into domestication and foreignization stating that translators which translate from one culture into another should selected from among these strategies.

After putting the translations into appropriate categories, the obtained results were tabulated. Venuti, in his book, has divided each category into some subcategories, but since they were not applicable to the data of this research they were excluded. Lastly, the percentage of occurrence of each strategy was measured and compared with those of other strategies to see which strategy was used more frequently by the Persian translators of children's literature.

4. Data Analysis and Results

The Comparison of two books "*Dictionary of Mythology Folklore and Symbols*" (volume 1) and "*Animals dictionary in Persian literature*" containing the animal symbols in two cultures revealed that some animals have different symbolic meanings in the respective cultures. This is represented in table 1 below:

Table 1. Animals with different symbolic meanings in western and Persian cultures

Number	Animals' name	Symbolic meaning in western culture	Symbolic meaning in Persian culture
1	ant	Anticipation, foresight and knowledge, wild warrior, reason, little murderer, obedience,	Smallness and latency, crowd and abundance, attempt
2	Bat	Madness, black magic, greed	Vigil, seclusion
3	Bee	Annoying person	Bite,
4	Camel	Caution, steadfastness, craftiness	-----
5	Cock	Awareness, warning, energy, perseverance, attempt, caper, happiness,	Good omen, early riser
6	Cow	-----	overeating
7	Crow	Augury, Prophecy, craftiness, devilry, gossip, omnivore, speed	Ominousness, blackness, theft and greed, desert dweller
8	Eagle	Fire, freedom, aspiration, divinity, empire, kingdom, tolerance, chastity, righteousness, victory, chivalry, fertility, greed, headstrongness, brutality, speed, riot, evil, storm, greatness, abundance, incompatibility,	Hunter, ambition, death, raptor world, impossible affairs
9	Elephant	Calmness, dignity, caution, moderation, forbearance, indelicacy, humility, memory, brilliance, tolerance, slowness	Death, impossible things, fatal things, long life, speed, cowardice,
10	Fish	Knowledge, abundance, reason, holy food, baptism, productivity	Foolishness, hush
11	Fox	Acuity	Cunning,
12	Lark	Singing, happiness, Impetuosity	Weakness and surrender
13	Mosquito	Harassment, the carrier of illness, little troubles of life,	Annoyance, smallness, insult
14	Nightingale	Predicted happiness, sweetness, misery, loneliness, infelicity,	Early riser, verbosity
15	Owl	Vision, thinking, wisdom, silence, night, wizards' messenger, soul	Ominousness, dirge, inhabitant of ruins,
16	Partridge	Shamelessness, luxury, fight, craftiness, fun, devilry, lechery, dirt, mischief, debauchery,	Strutting , carol,
17	Peacock	Complacency, resurrection, a life with love, courtier life, dignity, fame, mundane pride	Short life, clear defect in beautiful body
18	Pig	Overeating, corpulence, ignorance, greed, laxity, epicure, lust, dirt	Filth, insult, humility
19	Pigeon	Peace*, Calmness, stamina, dignity, cowardice,	love
20	Quail	Resurrection, lust, debauchery,	Smallness and humility
21	Rabbit	Displacement, instability, erratic destruction, social life, amenity, sentry, tramp	Impossible affair, difficult affairs,
22	Rat	Destruction, irregularity, imminent filth, cowardice, poverty, death,	Bad-temperedness, theft, ignorance of beauty, very

			good sense of smell
23	Snail	Disloyalty, evil, reason	Long life, duplicity, greed,
24	Sparrow	Depression, heartbreak, secularism, pugnacity, sensuality,	Smallness, weakness, impossible thing,
25	Spider	Creativity, knitting, malice, tolerance, cruelty, victory, attempt, witchcraft, cunning, craft, greed, skillfulness, spinning, trapping, temptation,	Worldliness, cumbersomeness of love,
26	Swallow	Sun, displacement, hopefulness, morning, equality, spring, attempt, supporter of the little children, birth, happiness, good luck, a fair-weather friend, prosperous life, contentment in poverty, emigration,	Unstable life, blackness (wing of the sparrow)
27	Tiger	Greed, cunning, shapeliness, vampire, betrayal, conspiracy, meticulousness, illegitimate relations, beauty, cleverness, injustice, intriguing, wildness,	Malice, voracity,
28	Toad	Inspiration, androgyny, amphibian,	Ugliness, unpleasantness and other negative attributes like these
29	Turkey	Pretense, glaringness, pride, dullness, failure,	----- Unstableness
30	Turtle	Wisdom*	Slowness
31	Turtle dove	Calmness, lofty aspiration, inspiration, stamina, inoffensiveness, innocence, chastity, humility, reality, embarrassment, soul, love, dedication, victim, elegance, herald of divine news, dignity,	Singing
32	Vulture	-----	Carrion-feeder, greed, long life,
33	Whale	Strong feeling, lust, deception, power without reasoning	Power, bravery, huge body, symbol of risk
34	worm	Humility, parsimony, theft, weakness, oppression, villainy, destruction, obedience,	Detriment

* Extracted from "*Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols*" (Cooper, 1987)

In the second part of the study, all the selected books were analyzed under two main categories of domesticated and foreignized translations. From among the twelve books, only one was translated through the domestication strategy, while others were foreignized in translation.

4.1 Domestication

As it was mentioned earlier, only one book was put under this category. The English book titled "*Pig*" was translated into Persian as "*ghayem mooshak bazi 3: sag kuchulu*". Here the translator has translated the original animal, pig, which is not much familiar for the target audiences into "dog" which is a more familiar animal in Persian culture.

4.2 Foreignization

11 books out of the total 12 ones were foreignized in translation. That is, no changes occurred in the name of animals or in the attributes they represented and the animal terms and their symbolic meanings in the source text were exactly transferred to the target language. Some examples of such foreignized texts are as follows:

1. Source book: Owl Babies

Persian translation: Man Mamanam-o Mixam, Dastan-e Se Bache Joghhd

Example: they sat and the thought (all owls think a lot)

Translation: anha neshaste budand va fekr mikardand (joghhdha ziyad fekr mikonand).

Here, the translator has used foreignization strategy in her translation, since, as it was represented in table 1, owl is the symbol of wisdom in western culture, while in Persian it shows ominousness. The translator, without changing the symbol of the animal or replacing it with an animal which is the symbol of wisdom in Persian, has just transferred the same animal into Persian.

2. Source book: Daft bat

Persian translation Khofashe Divane

In this case, the translator has shown bat as a daft (mad) animal in the translation while madness is not what is attributed to bat in Persian culture. Whereas bat in western culture is the symbol of madness, in Persian it just represents darkness.

3. Source book: *Seer Crow and eight other stories*

Persian translation *Kalagh-e Gheibgu va Hasht Ghese-e Digar*

In the source text, crow is a symbol of prophecy, while in Persian culture crows are not the symbol of prophecy but of ominousness and blackness.

From among the data collected there was a book which was written in Persian and translated into English by an Iranian translator. This was considered as an interesting case to be analyzed because the writer had written it under the influence of western culture.

4. Source book: *Gheseye Joghde Dana*

Persian translation: *the story of the wise owl*

As Table 1 below shows, owl is the symbol of wisdom in western culture but not in Persian. In Persian it represents ominousness but the Persian writer has shown it as a wise animal in his book and it can be due to the influence of western culture.

Results derived from the analysis of all the 12 books are demonstrated in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Animals, symbols, and strategies in translated children's books

Title Of the book	Animals in the source text	Animal in translated text	Symbol of animal in ST	Symbol of animal in TT	Symbol of the translated animal in TT	Translation strategy
<i>The Fox and the Hound</i>	Owl	Owl	wisdom	Ominousness	Ominousness	Foreignization
<i>The Old Turtle and the Broken Truth</i>	Turtle	Turtle	Wisdom	Slowness	Slowness	Foreignization
<i>Daft bat</i>	Bat	Bat	Madness	Vigil, seclusion	Vigil, seclusion	Foreignization
<i>Owl Babies</i>	Owl	Owl	Wisdom	Ominousness	Ominousness	Foreignization
<i>Pig</i>	Pig	Dog	Overeating	Filth, insult, humility	Inferiority	Domestication
<i>Ghese-e Joghde Dana</i>	Owl	Owl	Wisdom	Ominousness	Ominousness	Foreignization
<i>Seer Crow and eight other stories</i>	Crow	Crow	Prophecy	Ominous, blackness, theft	Ominous, blackness, theft	Foreignization
	Lark	Lark	Singing and happiness	Weakness and surrender	Weakness and surrender	Foreignization
<i>The Fantastic Mr. Fox</i>	Fox	Fox	Acuity	Craftiness	Craftiness	Foreignization
<i>The Very Busy Spider</i>	Spider	Spider	Attempt and knitting	Worldliness	Worldliness	Foreignization
<i>Flik to the Rescue</i>	Ant	Ant	Foresight and knowledge	Crowd and attempt	Crowd and attempt	Foreignization
<i>The poor woodcutter and the dove</i>	Turtle dove	Turtle dove	Lofty aspiration	Singing	Singing	Foreignization
<i>Wise Fish</i>	Fish	Fish	Knowledge and reason	foolishness and hush	foolishness and hush	Foreignization

The following Table and Figures show the frequency of occurrence of strategies used for the translation of animal symbols:

Table 3. Number and percentage of occurrence of domestication and foreignization strategies applied in the translated books

Strategy	Domestication	foreignization
Number	1	11
Percentage of occurrence	8.33%	91.67%

Figure 1. Percentage of occurrence of domestication and foreignization strategies applied in the translated books

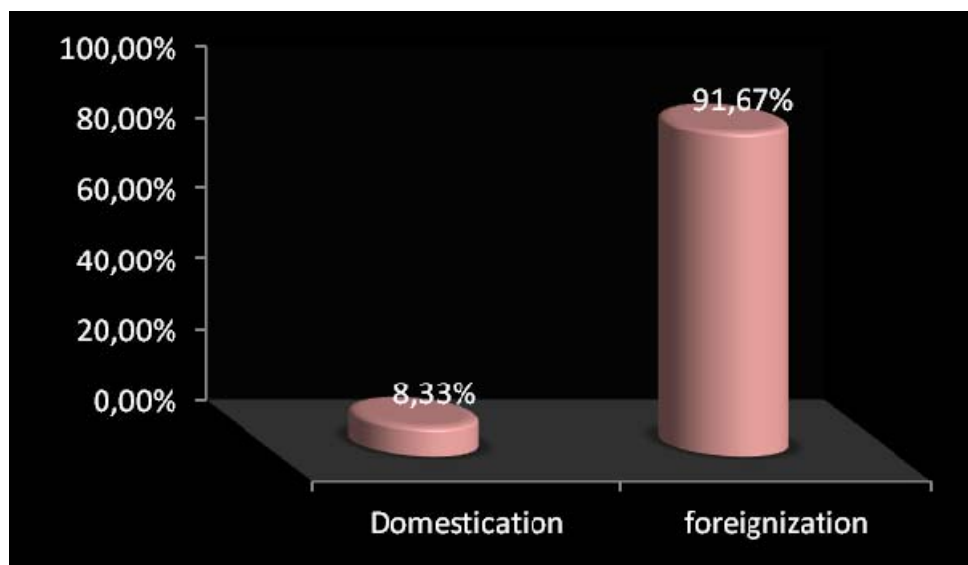
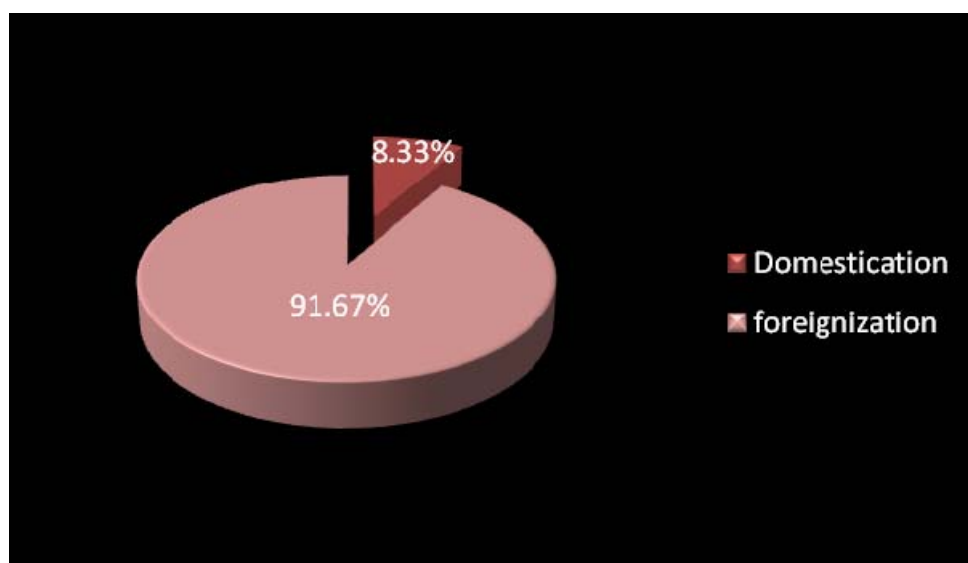


Figure 2. Percentage of occurrence of domestication and foreignization strategies applied in the translated books



4.3 Effectiveness of applied strategies regarding the target readers

In the third part of the study the effectiveness of using domestication or foreignization strategy on the target readers was investigated. For this purpose, thirty children (15 girls and 15 boys) were interviewed to see what they knew about the symbolic meanings of animals. Then, their answers were categorized into 4 main groups: **a)** recognizing the native symbol, **b)** recognizing the foreign symbol, **c)** not recognizing the symbolic meaning and **d)** not recognizing the animal at all. The answers of the girls and boys were analyzed separately to see whether there were any differences between them in their perception of symbolic meaning of animals. The results of the analysis of girls' and boys' answers are represented in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 below.

4.3.1. Children's Answers in the Interview

Tables 4 and 5 below represent the numbers and percentages of the girls' and boys' answers in each category, respectively.

Table 4. Numbers and percentages of girls' answers in each category

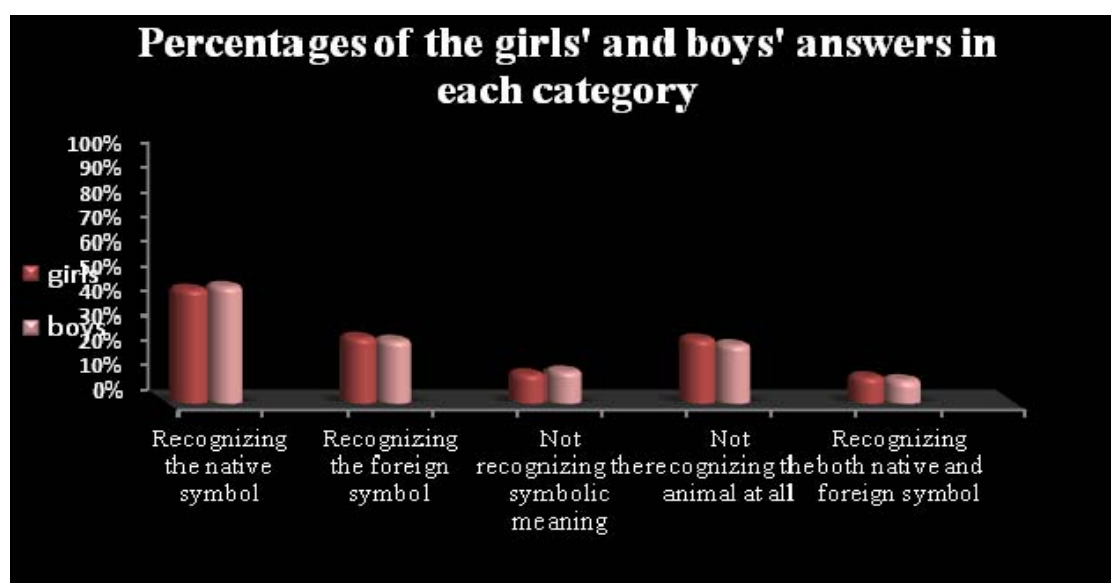
Animal's name	Recognizing the native symbol	Recognizing the foreign symbol	Not recognizing the symbolic meaning	Not recognizing the animal at all	Recognizing both native and foreign symbol
Ant	9 (60%)	4 (26.67%)	3 (20%)	----	1 (1.67%)
Bat	10 (66.67%)	----	2 (13.34%)	3 (20%)	----
Crow	14 (93.34%)	11 (73.34%)	----	----	10 (66.67%)
Dove	----	----	----	15 (100%)	----
Fish	4 (26.67%)	6 (40%)	5 (33.34%)	----	----
Fox	12 (80%)	1 (1.67%)	3 (20%)	----	1 (1.67%)
Lark	----	----	----	15 (100%)	----
Owl	2 (13.34)	9 (60%)	1 (1.67%)	3 (20%)	
Pig	5 (33.34%)	----	3 (20%)	7 (46.67%)	----
Turtle	15 (100%)	1 (1.67%)	----	----	1 (1.67%)
Spider	5 (33.34%)	12 (80%)	2 (13.34%)	----	4 (26.67%)
Total answers	76 (46.06%)	44 (26.67%)	19 (11.51%)	43 (26.06%)	17 (10.30%)

Table 5. Numbers and percentages of boys' answers in each category

Animal's name	Recognizing the native symbol	Recognizing the foreign symbol	Not recognizing the symbolic meaning	Not recognizing the animal at all	Recognizing both native and foreign symbol
Ant	8 (53.33%)	4 (26.67%)	4 (26.67%)	----	1 (1.67%)
Bat	11 (73.34%)	----	2 (13.34%)	2 (13.34%)	----
Crow	12 (80%)	13 (86.67%)	----	----	10 (66.67%)
Dove	----	----	----	15 (100%)	----
Fish	6 (40%)	4 (26.67%)	5 (33.34%)	----	----
Fox	11 (73.34%)	----	4 (26.67%)	----	----
Lark	----	----	----	15 (100%)	----
Owl	3 (20%)	8 (53.33%)	2 (13.34%)	2 (13.34%)	----
Pig	6 (40%)	1(1.67%)	4 (26.67%)	5 (33.34%)	1 (1.67%)
Turtle	15 (100%)	----	----	----	----
Spider	6 (40%)	12 (80%)	----	----	3 (20%)
Total answers	78 (47.27%)	42 (25.45%)	21 (12.73%)	39 (23.64%)	15 (9.09%)

Figure 3 below compares the results of the above tables. As it can be seen, there are no significant differences between girls and boys in their knowledge of the symbolic meanings of animals.

Figure 3. Percentages of girls' and boys' answers in each category

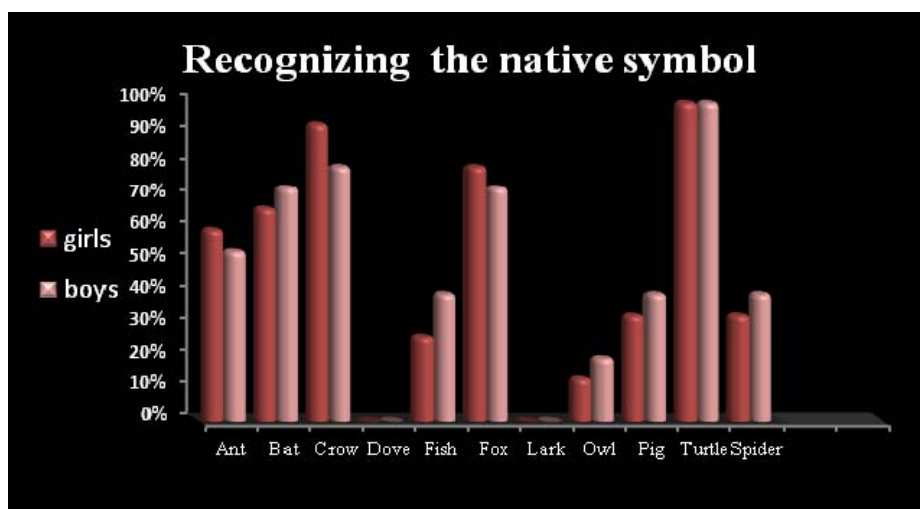


In the following sections, each of the above mentioned categories is analyzed in more details.

4.3.1 Recognizing the Native Symbol

As the Figure 3 shows, in general, most of the children recognized the native symbols better than the foreign ones. 154 answers out of the total 330 belong to the first category, recognizing the native symbol. However, there are some differences in the number of answers of the first category across different animals. For instance, turtle (100%) is the most familiar animal among Persian children followed by crow (g = 93.34%, b = 80%), fox (g = 80%, b = 73.34%) and bat (g = 66.67%, b = 73.34%); while, dove (0%) and lark (0%) are the least familiar ones. No children recognized their native meanings.

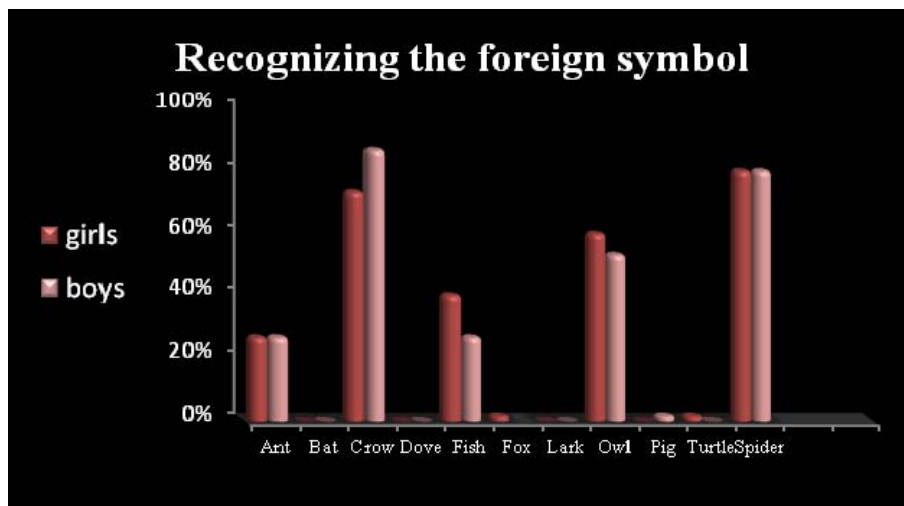
Figure 4. Percentages of answers in the first category



4.3.2 Recognizing the Foreign Symbol

There are also some animals whose foreign symbols were more familiar than their native ones. Most of Persian children recognized owl and spider through their foreign symbols rather than their native ones. Figure 5 shows this matter.

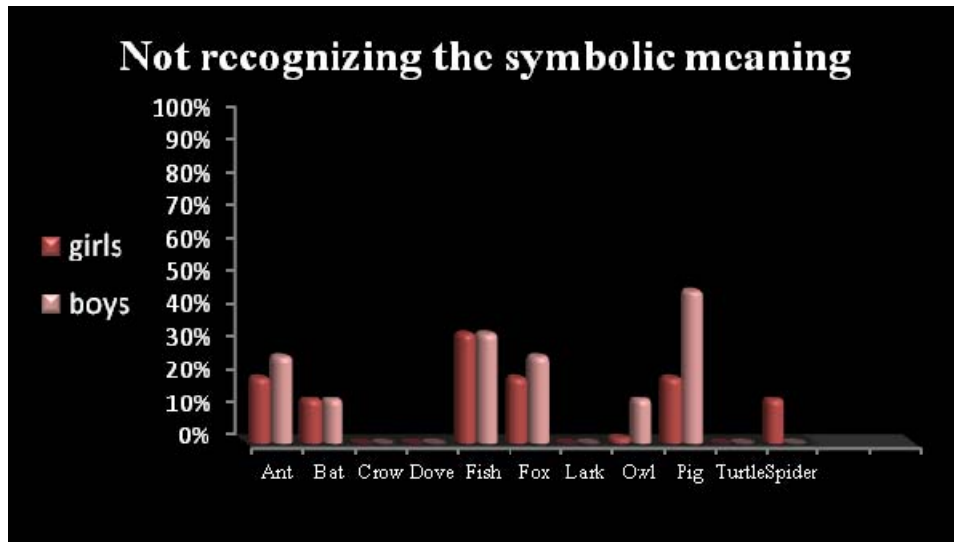
Figure 5. Percentages of answers in the second category



4.3.3 Not Recognizing the Symbolic Meaning

In some cases, although children knew the animals, they could not recognize their symbolic meanings. For example, 33.34% of children had no knowledge of the symbol of fish either in Persian or in western culture. As Figure 6 shows, ant, fox and pig are other animals whose symbolic meanings were not recognized by children. In this category, there is a difference between girls and boys in that boys were more ignorant about the symbolic meaning of pig than the girls and, in the case of spider, girls were more ignorant than boys.

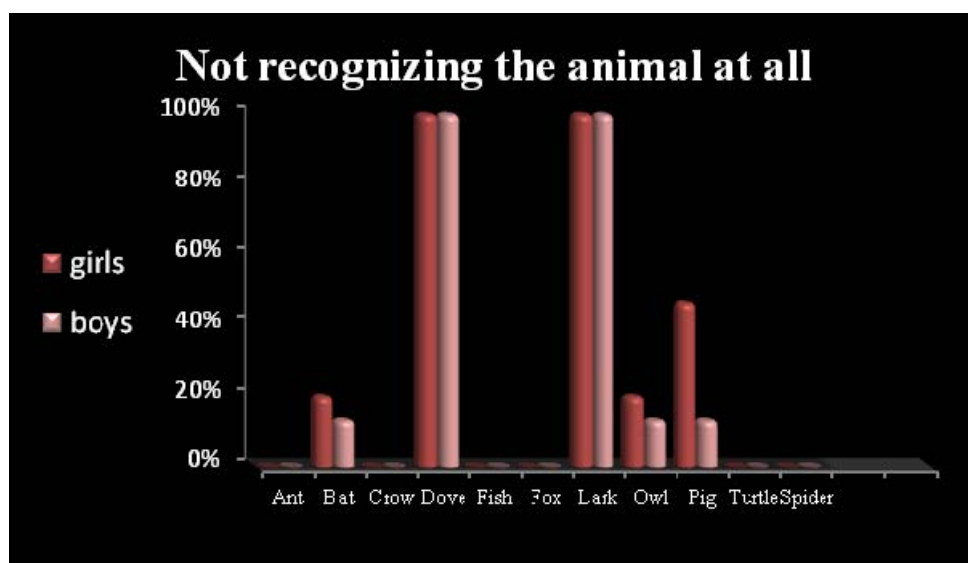
Figure 6. Percentages of answers in the third category



4.3.4 Not Recognizing the Animal at all

Not all the animals existing in the source books were familiar to Persian children. As it is shown in Figure 7, some of the children participating in this study (g = 20%, b = 13.34%) did not know owl and bat. Pig was unfamiliar to 46.67% of the girls and 33.34% of the boys and none of the participants knew dove and lark.

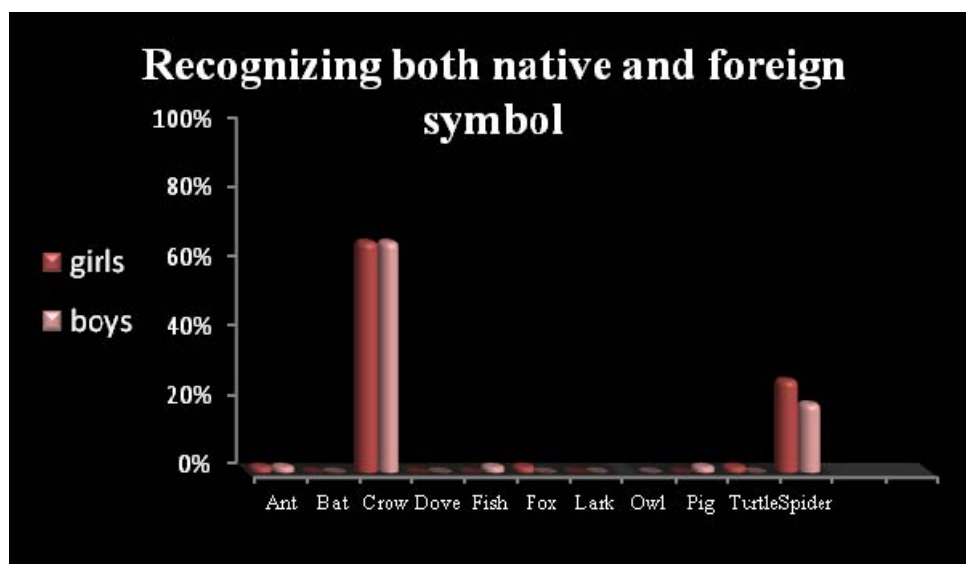
Figure 7. Percentages of answers in the fourth category



4.3.5 Recognizing Both Native and Western Symbol

The last columns of the Table 4 and 5 show the number and percentage of those answers which are common between the first and second category; that is, recognizing the native symbol and recognizing the foreign symbol. In this column the percentage related to crow (66.67%) is the most significant one. Children, mostly, recognized crow through both its western and Persian symbols.

Figure 8. Percentages of answers in the fifth category



5. Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating whether there are any cultural differences between western and Persian cultures in their symbolic use of animals in children's literature. If so, how children's translators deal with such differences in their attempts to translate them.

The first question concerned the possible differences across cultures regarding the symbolic meanings of animals. Studying the reference books of animals' symbols in two cultures and comparing them put an emphasis on the existence of such differences. Every culture attributes some specific symbolic meanings to animals which is different from that which exists in other cultures. In the other words, this comparative study showed that the symbolic meaning of animals is culture-specific.

Regarding the second question dealing with the strategies adopted by Persian translators to translate such symbols, as Table 3 demonstrated, almost all Persian translators (91.67%) tend to foreignize their translations. That is, the western culture has dominance in Persian children's literature. Adopting such strategy may have two reasons. On the one hand, it may be due to the power relations where the western languages and especially English are supposed to be the dominant and superior languages of literature. The presence of the book "*the story of wise owl*" among the data collected can put an emphasis on such a view. In this book the Persian writer has shown the owl as wise, the symbol which is attributed to the animal by western, but not Persian, culture. On the other hand, it can be said that the Persian translators have not paid any special attention to the difference of the symbolic meaning of animals across cultures during the process of translation or they have not at all been aware of the existence of such differences. It is evidenced by the translation of "*pig*" where the translator has changed the animal into "dog" in the target text without being aware that pig in western culture is the symbol of overeating and thus in Persian translation it should be replaced by cow, the animal which represents overeating in Persian culture.

Despite the foreignization strategy adopted by Persian translators, the results of the interview revealed that what Persian children know about animals is their native, not foreign, symbols. As it can be seen in Table 4 and 5, most of children's answers (154 out of total 330 answers) belong to the first category, recognizing the native symbols. Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that the strategies adopted to translate cultural terms for children in Iran is not an appropriate one since most of the children are not familiar with the foreign symbols and this may affect their understanding of the book they read. Albeit, there were some children who knew the foreign symbols of animals but they were not aware that these are foreign symbols. In fact children considered them as the native ones. The reason for this matter, as children themselves assert, is due to the numerous cartoons and story books imported to Iran from other countries. Unfortunately, it is a reality that there is no control on these products before they enter into the circle of our literature. It is true that knowing about other cultures, their rules and canons is necessary for children to help them to increase their general knowledge, but it would be better that children, at first, become fully knowledgeable about their own culture and then try to know about other cultures. Since, posing children just to the culture of other countries causes they consider it as their own culture and don't notice the cultural difference among countries. In making children familiar to the culture of our country, the cooperation of our educational system as well as children writers, publishers and translators is needed.

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