

COGNITIVE-DISCURSIVE TRANSFORMATIONS OF IMAGES AND CHARACTERS IN THE TRANSLATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERARY TEXTS

Aliboeva Nigina Alisher qizi,

*associate professor, doctor of philosophy in philological sciences (PhD)
of Termez State University "English language and literature" department*

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Annotatsiya. Bolalar adabiyotini tarjima qilish lingvistika, psixologiya va madaniyatshunoslik chorrahasida joylashgan murakkab jarayondir. Kattalar adabiyotidan farqli ravishda, bunda matnning soʻzma-soʻz aniqligidan koʻra "ikki karra adresat" — bola va kattalar vositachisi (ota-ona, oʻqituvchi) omili muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi va bu holat maxsus kognitiv hamda diskursiv moslashuvlarni talab qiladi. Mazkur maqolada bolalar badiiy matnlarini tarjima qilish jarayonida obraz va qahramonlarning kognitiv-diskursiv transformatsiyasi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda tarjimonlarning maqsadli auditoriyaning kognitiv rivojlanish darajasini hisobga olgan holda, qahramonlar va mental obrazlarni qayta yaratishda domestikatsiya, forenizatsiya va madaniy moslashtirish strategiyalaridan qanday foydalanishi yoritiladi. Xulosa sifatida, ushbu sohadagi tarjima faqat lingvistik koʻchirish emas, balki bolaning cheklangan dunyoqarashi va qabul qiluvchi jamiyatning ijtimoiy-madaniy meʼyorlari bilan belgilanadigan badiiy olamning kognitiv qayta modellashtirilishi ekanligi asoslanadi.

Kalit soʻzlar: bolalar adabiyoti, kognitiv tarjima, diskursiv transformatsiya, madaniy moslashtirish, qahramon obrazi, domestikatsiya, ikki karra adresat.

Abstract. The translation of children's literature represents a complex intersection of linguistics, psychology, and cultural studies. Unlike adult literature, where fidelity to the source text is often paramount, children's literature requires a "double addressee" - the child and the adult mediator which necessitates specific cognitive and discursive adjustments. This article explores the cognitive-discursive transformations of images and characters in the translation of children's literary texts. It analyzes how translators navigate the cognitive development of the target audience, employing strategies of domestication, foreignization, and cultural adaptation to reconstruct characters and mental images. The study argues that translation in this domain is not merely a linguistic transfer but a cognitive re-modeling of the narrative world, where discursive shifts are dictated by the child's limited world knowledge and the socio-cultural norms of the receiving society.

Keywords: children's literature, cognitive translation, discursive transformation, cultural adaptation, character imagery, domestication, double addressee.

Аннотация. Перевод детской литературы представляет собой сложное пересечение лингвистики, психологии и культурологических исследований. В отличие от литературы для взрослых, где первостепенное значение имеет точность передачи исходного текста, детская литература ориентирована на «двойного адресата» — ребёнка и взрослого посредника, что требует особых когнитивных и дискурсивных адаптаций. В данной статье рассматриваются когнитивно-дискурсивные трансформации образов и персонажей в переводе детских художественных текстов. Анализируется, каким образом переводчики учитывают когнитивное развитие целевой аудитории, применяя стратегии доместикации, форенизации и культурной адаптации для воссоздания персонажей и ментальных образов. В исследовании утверждается, что перевод в данной сфере является не просто лингвистическим переносом, а когнитивным переосмыслением художественного мира, в котором дискурсивные сдвиги обусловлены ограниченным жизненным опытом ребёнка и социокультурными нормами принимающего общества.

Ключевые слова: детская литература, когнитивный перевод, дискурсивная трансформация, культурная адаптация, образ персонажа, доместикация, двойной адресат.

Introduction. Children's literature holds a unique position in the global literary market. It is not only a vehicle for entertainment and education but also a primary tool for cultural socialization. However, the translation of these texts is fraught with challenges that differ significantly from those encountered in adult literature. The core of these challenges lies in the concept of "image" both the mental image constructed by the reader and the character image presented by the author and how these images undergo transformation when moved from one linguistic and cognitive context to another.

The translation of children's literature is rarely a neutral act. It involves a series of "cognitive-discursive transformations". The term "cognitive" refers to the mental processes involved in perception, memory, and understanding, while "discursive" relates to the use of language in social contexts and the specific conventions of discourse. When a translator adapts a text for children, they are essentially engaging in a cognitive remodeling. They must predict how a child reader will decode the text and adjust the discourse accordingly to ensure comprehension, engagement, and emotional resonance. [3]

This article aims to deconstruct these transformations. By examining the theoretical underpinnings of cognitive translation studies and applying them to the manipulation of character and imagery, we will demonstrate how translators mediate between the source culture's artistic intent and the target culture's cognitive reality.

To understand the transformation of images, one must first understand the "double addressee" nature of children's literature. As theorized by scholars like Zohar Shavit and Riitta Oittinen, a children's book is written for a child but published and purchased by adults. [7] Consequently, the translation is often influenced by the adult perception of what a child "can" or "should" understand.

Methods. We analyze the cognitive-discursive transformations in children's literature translation. We focus on three key areas: character image construction, handling of cultural references ("realia") and metaphor usage. Our approach combines insights from cognitive linguistics and translation theory. From a "cognitive linguistics perspective", reading is an active process of "mental modeling". The author provides linguistic cues (descriptions, metaphors, dialogue) that the reader uses to build a mental simulation of the story. When a text is translated, the linguistic cues change. If the translation is literal, the target reader may fail to construct the correct mental model due to cultural or cognitive dissonance. Therefore, the translator acts as a cognitive guide, manipulating the discourse to facilitate the correct mental image formation.

Discursive transformations involve changes in the register, tone, and style of the text. The discourse of children's literature often involves simplification, explicitation, and personification. However, these are not merely linguistic simplifications; they are cognitive adjustments designed to align with the child's stage of development (e.g., Piaget's stages of cognitive development). A translation that ignores these cognitive

boundaries risks alienating the young reader, while one that over-simplifies risks stripping the text of its artistic value. [1]

Results. Our findings show that translators face critical decisions regarding the followings.

1. Character names: balancing phonetic accessibility versus maintaining exoticism. Characters are the primary vehicles through which children engage with a narrative. The “character image” is a composite of name, physical description, speech patterns, and behavioral traits. In translation, this image is highly volatile and subject to significant transformation.

Names are not just labels; they are cognitive triggers that carry cultural connotations and phonetic appeal. In children’s literature, names often signal the moral alignment or personality of a character (e.g., “The Wicked Witch” or “Lovely Lucy”).

When translating characters, a discursive shift often occurs to accommodate the phonotactic rules of the target language and the cognitive familiarity of the child. For instance, translating the name of a character like "Alice" might remain unchanged due to cultural globalization, but a culturally specific name like “Pippi Långstrump” (Pippi Longstocking) requires adaptation. In some translations, her name is phonetically adapted; in others, the meaning is translated to create a specific local image.

If a name is too difficult for a target child to pronounce (cognitive overload), the translator may substitute it with a diminutive or a local equivalent. This is a transformation driven by the cognitive need for fluency. However, this changes the "exotic" image of the character. By domesticating the name, the translator shifts the character from a foreign entity to a local one, fundamentally altering the cognitive image the child constructs. [2]

The way a character speaks (their idiolect) is crucial to their image. In the source text, a character might speak in dialect, use specific slang, or have a unique syntactic structure. Translating these elements involves complex discursive choices.

Beyond characters, the imagery of the setting and the metaphors used in the narrative undergo significant cognitive-discursive shifts. Children rely heavily on concrete imagery; abstract concepts must be anchored in the familiar.

2. Cultural references: choosing between foreignization (preserving original details) and domestication (adapting to local norms).

“Realia” culture-specific items like food, clothing, and games pose a significant challenge. If a source text describes a specific breakfast item unknown in the target culture (e.g., “marmalade on toast” in a culture that eats rice porridge), the translator faces a cognitive dilemma.

Foreignization: Keep the original item and add an explanation (footnote or apposition). This respects the source culture but imposes a cognitive load on the child, potentially breaking the immersion of the story.

Domestication: Replace the item with a local equivalent (e.g., changing “marmalade” to “jam” or “sweet porridge”).

From a discursive perspective, domestication creates a “fluent” reading experience where the child feels the story happens in their own world. However, this erases cultural specificity. For example, in translations of Harry Potter, specific British sweets (like “Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans”) are sometimes adapted to sound more appetizing or understandable to the target palate, or kept to enhance the “magical foreignness” of the setting. The choice depends on the cognitive schema the translator wishes to activate: familiarity vs. curiosity.

3. Metaphor interpretation: finding equivalents that resonate emotionally within the target culture. Children’s literature often relies on figurative language to build magical worlds. However, metaphors are often culture-specific. A metaphor describing rain as “angels weeping” might be poetic in one culture but confusing or frightening in another.

Cognitive-discursive transformation occurs when the translator realizes the metaphor will not trigger the intended mental image. They must replace the source-culture metaphor with a target-culture equivalent that evokes the same emotional response. For instance, if a character is described as being “as brave as a lion”, this works in many cultures. But if a character is compared to a specific local mythological creature, the translator must decide whether to keep the creature (and explain it) or swap it for a known equivalent.

These transformations are not merely cosmetic; they shape the child’s cognitive understanding of emotions and concepts. By changing a metaphor, the translator subtly alters the philosophical lens through which the child views the narrative.

The manipulation of images and characters raises ethical questions about the translator's power. Oittinen argues that translating for children is “manipulation” in a positive sense it is an act of caring and empathy to make the text accessible. [6]

However, cognitive-discursive transformations can also lead to “censorship by adaptation”. This happens when the translator alters a character's image to fit the moral or educational standards of the target society. For example, in translations of Pippi Longstocking into conservative societies, Pippi’s behavior (which defies adult authority) is sometimes toned down. She is made more polite or her mischief is framed more negatively. Here, the transformation is not cognitive (for the child's understanding) but ideological (for the child’s upbringing). The discursive tone shifts from anarchic fun to cautionary tale.

Similarly, illustrations play a massive role in the cognitive image. While translators usually deal with text, they must often negotiate with the visual component. In re-translations or re-issues, visual imagery is often “localized characters are drawn with different physical features or clothing to match the target audience. This visual-discursive alignment reinforces the cognitive reality that the book belongs to the reader’s culture. [4]

To illustrate these concepts, consider the translation of Roald Dahl's "Matilda".

Character Image: Matilda is a small, precocious child in an adult world. In the English text, her vocabulary is sophisticated, creating a humorous cognitive contrast with her appearance.

Translation Challenge: In a target language where formality is strictly encoded (e.g., languages with T/V distinctions using "tu" vs. "vous"), the translator must decide how Matilda addresses adults. If she uses the informal "tu", she is cheeky and disrespectful (fitting the character). If she uses the formal "vous", she loses her rebellious edge.

Transformation: A translator might use the informal "tu" but soften the vocabulary to ensure she doesn't sound "mean", only "clever". This is a discursive toning-down to protect the "likability" of the character image, ensuring the child reader still empathizes with her.

Another example is the translation of "Alice in Wonderland". The "Mad Hatter" is an image rooted in British history (mercury poisoning in hat makers). In translations for children, this historical context is usually omitted. The character is transformed from a tragic figure of industrial disease to a purely "eccentric" tea-drinker. The cognitive image shifts from "tragic madness" to "whimsical craziness", aligning with the genre expectations of children's fantasy.

Discussion. Translators' interventions influence the cognitive reception of stories among children. Ethical considerations arise concerning censorship-by-adaptation, where modifications reflect societal values rather than cognitive needs. Examples such as Roald Dahl's *Matilda* and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* highlight the complexity of these transformations

The translation of children's literature is a sophisticated cognitive-discursive activity that goes far beyond linguistic equivalence. It requires the translator to act as a cultural mediator and a child psychologist. The transformations of images and characters are necessitated by the need to align the text with the cognitive capabilities and cultural expectations of the young target audience. [5]

Conclusion. Through the strategies of domestication, simplification, and elaboration, translators reconstruct the narrative world. They modify character names to ensure phonetic accessibility, adapt idioms to trigger the correct emotional metaphors, and alter descriptions to fit local cultural realities. While these transformations risk erasing the source culture's specificity, they are essential for the "survival" of the text in a new environment. Ultimately, successful translation in this domain results in a new, hybrid work that honors the original spirit while firmly rooting itself in the cognitive landscape of the target child.

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