JOURNAL OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Volume: 02 Issue: 12 | Dec – 2023 ISSN: 2720-6882
http://journals.academiczone.net/index.php/jiphr

Ethical Challenges in Translating Children's Literature

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Abstract

Children's literature, a gateway to imagination and cultural understanding, presents a unique challenge in the realm of translation due to its delicate balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural sensitivity. This paper explores ethical dimensions in translating children's literature, drawing from scholarly discussions on translation theories, cultural representation, and ethical decision-making processes. It addresses the complexities of conveying sensitive themes, preserving cultural identity, and ensuring age-appropriate language and content adaptation.

Key words: Children's literature, translation, cultural sensitivity, ethical considerations, sensitive themes, age-appropriate adaptation, transcreation, cultural identity.

INTRODUCTION

Children's literature, a realm cherished for its ability to captivate young minds and foster cultural understanding, poses intricate challenges in translation. Beyond linguistic conversion, ethical considerations loom large, demanding careful navigation of sensitive themes and cultural peculiarities. This paper delves into the ethical complexities faced by translators in the realm of children's literature translation, drawing upon a diverse range of scholarly works in translation studies.

MAIN PART

Numerous scholars in translation studies have delved into ethical considerations. Works by Lawrence Venuti, particularly his notions of "foreignization" and "domestication," discuss the ethical implications of translation choices and the impact on cultural representation. Studies like Maria Nikolajeva's "Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers" explore the intricate relationship between culture, power dynamics, and subjectivity in children's literature[1]. These studies shed light on the ethical dimensions of conveying cultural peculiarities in translations for younger audiences. Explorations into the translator's role and ethical decision-making processes, such as those discussed by Mona Baker in "In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation," delve into the responsibilities of translators when faced with sensitive content and cultural differences[2]. Studies focusing on transcreation and adaptation strategies, such as the works by Peter Newmark and Theo

[1] Nikolajeva, M. (2002). "Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers." Routledge.
[2] Baker, M. (2011). "In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation." Routledge.

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Hermans, explore creative methods in translation that allow for the conveyance of cultural nuances and sensitive themes while maintaining loyalty to the original text. Drawing from these diverse sources, it's evident that ethical considerations in translating children's literature involve a complex interplay of cultural sensitivity, age-appropriate adaptation, and decision-making that profoundly impacts the reception and understanding of translated works by young audiences.

One of the foremost ethical considerations in translating children's literature is handling sensitive themes. Stories often contain elements like death, violence, or complex familial dynamics that may differ in acceptability or understanding across cultures. Translators are confronted with the responsibility of preserving the essence of these themes while ensuring they are age-appropriate and culturally comprehensible in the target language[3].

Children's literature reflects the values and identities of their cultures. It can be difficult for translators to appropriately portray these peculiarities without offending the intended audience. It is not just a language work; it also requires a thorough awareness of the cultural background in order to retain authenticity and make sure that any cultural allusions are understandable to the readers of the translated text.

Translating for children demands Deep comprehension of language tailored to different age ranges and content. The challenge is to strike a balance between maintaining the original text's integrity and adapting it in a way that suits the cognitive and emotional capacities of the target audience. This includes simplifying complex ideas without diluting their essence and using language that resonates with the age group without undermining the original narrative's depth[4].

Translators often find themselves at ethical crossroads when faced with content that might be considered inappropriate or culturally sensitive in the target culture. Decisions regarding censorship or altering content to align with cultural norms require careful consideration. Balancing fidelity to the original work with cultural appropriateness in the translated version demands a difficult ethical approach[5].

Strategies for Ethical Translation in Children's Literature:

Collaboration and Consultation: Engaging with cultural experts, child psychologists, or educators from both source and target cultures can provide valuable insights into navigating sensitive content and ensuring cultural appropriateness.

Transcreation and Adaptation:[6] Utilizing transcreation, a creative translation approach, allows for the recreation of cultural variations and sensitive themes in a way that maintains authenticity while resonating with the target audience.

Reader-Targeted Approach: Prioritizing the needs and understanding of the target readership by employing child-friendly language and age-appropriate storytelling techniques while retaining the essence of the original narrative.

[3] Yusupov O. Y., Nasrullaev J. R. Linguo-social and cultural features of learning English //ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science. - 2020. - Т. 2. - №. 82. - С. 408.
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CONCLUSION

Translating children's literature is a delicate yet enriching endeavor that requires ethical considerations to ensure that stories maintain their cultural richness while being accessible and relevant to diverse audiences. Navigating these ethical considerations demands a fine balance between linguistic fidelity, cultural sensitivity, and age-appropriate adaptation—a harmonious blend that upholds the integrity of the original work while resonating with the hearts and minds of young readers worldwide.

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