



Semiotic Exploration of English Pictographic Representation in the Persian Translation of ‘A Diary of A Wimpy Kid’: Socio-Cultural and Ideological Values in Focus

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Received: 15-12-2024, Accepted: 15-01-2025

ABSTRACT

The present study explored the Persian translation of Kinney's Diary of a Wimpy Kid' by Tabasom Atashinjan to see how semiotic items were transferred to the target texts. Kress and van Leeuwen's Social Semiotics Theory (1996) and Farahzad's (2009) CDA model were adopted to scrutinize two volumes of the comic series: 'Hard Luck' and 'The Meltdown'. To pursue this goal, the semiotic items including images, typographical features, and onomatopoeia were specified and compared in the corpus considering the social semiotics principles. Furthermore, the strategies employed in the translation of the semiotics were scrutinized considering the Farahzad CDA framework. The findings revealed some manipulations in the target texts, either due to socio-cultural or ideological stances in the society to comply with the target cultural values. The most commonly used strategies for translating semiotic items included substitution, omission, addition, and literal translation the translator applied to cope with cultural and ideological conflicts of the two cultures. The results have some implications for translation studies students, translators, and those interested in cultural studies.

Keywords: Children Literature; Farahzad Model; Ideological Values; Intertextuality; Social Semiotics Theory

INTRODUCTION

Humans are capable of verbal and nonverbal communication. They employ signs, symbols, music, or paralinguistic techniques to convey a message (Mehawesh, 2014, as cited in Hasyim et al., 2020). According to Ferdinand de Saussure (1959), who coined the term *Semiotics* from the Latin *semefon* (sign), it is the study of the role of signs in society (Hasyim et al., 2020). The idea of semiotics as an interdisciplinary field of study first emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century with the separate work of Saussure and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). Peirce, known as the father of semiology, defined a sign as something that represents something to someone. He classified signs into three primary types: 1) A sign that resembles its source, like a road sign warning of cattle crossing; 2) An index associated with its referent, for instance, ‘smoke’ is an indicator of a fire; and 3) A sign that is only coherently related to its referent (e.g. Britannica). The ideas of Peirce and Saussure began to be employed in a variety of subjects, including anthropology, psychoanalysis, communications, and translation (Amirdabbaghian & Shunmugam, 2019).



Regarding translation studies, Roman Jakobson (1959-2000, as cited in Salmani & Eghtesadi, 2015) assumed language as a verbal sign system, adding that the process of translation, in which the source text (ST) is decoded and the target text (TT) is encoded in the target language, is a semiotic process. He classified translation into three categories: Intralingual translation, Interlingual translation, and Intersemiotic translation. The interpretation of verbal signs using the signs of nonverbal sign systems is known as intersemiotic translation or transmutation. Intersemiotic translation is the translation between two distinct mediums, such as the verbal medium into the musical one or the verbal medium into the cinematographic medium, and so forth. Therefore, the intersemiotic classification of illustrations in a book allows them to be viewed as a form of text translation (Salmani & Eghtesadi, 2015).

Children's comic books include illustrations that are more important than words (sometimes there is no word at all), particularly for those written for illiterate children (Oittinen, 2000). Comics, in the shape of a series of picture panels, is the art of using images to convey concepts, frequently in combination with text or other visual content. Speech balloons, captions, and onomatopoeia are examples of textual devices that can be used to represent conversation, narration, sound effects, or other information (Abida et al., 2021). In comic books, cartooning and other types of illustrations are most frequently used to create images (Kaindl, 1999).

Comics represent three types of signs: linguistic signs, typographic signs, and pictorial signs. Linguistic signs include the title, the narrations, the dialogue texts, onomatopoeia (words that mimic sounds: Sasamoto, 2019), and inscriptions in the pictures while typographic signs refer to the arrangement or choice of letter shapes that will be structured into words and phrases and printed as type in blocks on a page (Wells & Preece, 2023). This technique can be used to give a visual representation of the communicative situation. For example, the font size or proportion and extent can serve to indicate a noise or intensify an emotion (Kaindl, 1999). In addition, pictorial signs deal with images whose composition can offer much information using colors, perspectives, formats, etc. (Kaindl, 1999). Similar to how translations operate as rewritings of the text into new cultures, illustrations not only recreate the literary and cultural qualities of the text but also multiply those values into many cultural systems each time the work is illustrated (Pettrilli, 2003; as cited in Salmani & Eghtesad, 2015). The present research employed the semiotic approach to analyze how ideological and socio-cultural meanings were communicated in children's literature translation; thus, in what follows, the study's theoretical and practical frameworks are presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regarding the prominence of images and semiotics in children's literature, this study concentrated on the Persian translation of semiotics in two volumes of the series '*Diary of a Wimpy Kid*' translated by Tabassom Atashinjan. Kress and van Leeuwen's *Social Semiotics Theory* of visual design (1996) was the framework based on which the images and their content in the corpus were investigated. The use of visual images in a text, as Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) claimed, interconnects the three main elements of a text: First, *salience* can be portrayed using a color variation, font size, and type, as well as the use of upper and lower case letters in the text. *Framing* is the second element showing the distance of sign elements and how salient the elements are and the third one deals with the sign's *informational value* and the positioning of the visual sign in the center, left-right, or upper/lower place.

Additionally, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) asserted that people in each society utilize signs as a "dynamic process" (p. 22). Visual language is more culture-bound than universal, influenced and shaped by the social context in which it is employed. The idea is that the signs are to transfer the specific cultural, social, or political ideology that cannot be expressed explicitly at times. An individual's view can be reflected implicitly through the ironical use of visual language (Moosavinia & Baji, 2017). Several researchers have adopted Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) framework to examine the use of semiotics in various texts. Al-Naimat and Saidat (2019) studied how English signs were employed in Jordan's urban places. Jha, Raj, and Gangwar (2017) probed the way gender roles were represented through semiotic stereotypes in India, and Liu (2013) investigated how visual semiotics were interpreted in multi-modal texts. Moreover, Hoyte (2021) worked on the importance of the sign language children are exposed to in their social education. Furthermore, Kaindl (1999) studied the translation of semiotics in comics as a social practice while Amirdabbaghian and Shunmugam (2019) conducted an inter-semiotic analysis of the ideology presented in the book covers of the Persian version of *Animal Farm* and reported the influence of social and cultural elements on the matter.

This study also adopted Farahzad's (2009) three-dimensional model of CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) to analyze and interpret the strategies used in the Persian translation of semiotics in the series. Farahzad's model (2009) encompasses both micro and macro assessments, the first of which examines translational decisions by using the CDA approach and translation analysis on three levels: semiotic, paratextual, and textual. The latter (macro



analysis), is concerned with the translator's sociocultural environment or background (Sharahil & Lin, 2022). Inspired by CDA, Farahzad (2003) used the term "manipulation" to refer to translational choices by a translator. This phrase refers to any conscious or unconscious adjustment or control of the concepts from the original text in the second language text for conceptual, non-linguistic, or personal reasons. Conscious manipulation may be used to describe actions taken in response to ideological, economic, social, political, and cultural reasons while unconscious manipulation is attributed to aspects of human psychology or manipulation brought on by ignorance (lack of language or general information) (Farahzad, 2003).

Several studies have addressed challenges in translating children's literature focusing on comprehensibility (Puurtinen 1994), translation and tense (Lathey, 2003), ideological considerations (Thomson-Wohlgermuth, 2003), censorship in translation (Craig, 2001), and the relationship between illustrations and words in translating a picture book (O'Sullivan, 1999; cited in Al-Fouzan, 2019). Azadsarv et al. (2017) conducted a critical discourse analysis study of two Persian translations of Alice's Adventure in Wonderland, based on the Farahzad model (2009), at micro and macro levels. The micro-level analysis revealed the significance of the formal words used by Honarmandi (1960), and that this type of translation is more suitable for the grownup and the educated, rather than the basic people or children. Also, Sabzalipour and Pishkar (2015) coauthored a study on the translation strategy of proper nouns in children's literature. They utilized two translation models by Fernandes (2006) and Farahzad (1995), and the data were gathered from one of the Rowling's novels. The findings showed that transliteration, the strategy suggested by Farahzad (when the letter of the TL shows the pronunciation of the proper noun in the SL) was the most used. In the same vein, Habibian and Ameri (2017) surveyed children's illustrated books to examine if there were any exclusive strategies for delivering the pictures. Also, Şener (2020) conducted a study on the strategies utilized in idiom translation in the first four volumes of 'The Diary of a Wimpy Kid' series. Similarly, Tulalamba (2014) and Nugraha, (2016) examined the types of translation strategies and errors in 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' and concluded that the equivalent items were translated accurately considering their formality and dynamic equivalence.

The importance of children's literature as a source of input along with other sources like media, at a young age is that it becomes part of one's childhood and plays a key role in encouraging the young to develop their social interaction (Pishkar, 2022). Oittinen (2002) preferred to use the phrase "translating for children" instead of "translating children's literature" (cited in Al-Fouzan, 2019). Gote Klingberg (1986), a pioneer in the field, argued that the translation of children's literature is a special type of translation considering the recipient's cognitive and linguistic abilities. It undoubtedly shows the huge responsibility of anyone who is involved in children's literature including authors and translators. Translators must take greater considerations into account when translating children's literature, as according to Lathey (2006), translating a book for children also means mirroring distinct cultural notions of childhood.

Semiotics, as a very prominent element in children's literature, are fundamental in developing a variety of implied sociocultural meanings. Although several studies have addressed children's literature, to our knowledge, there is scarce research conducted to compare semiotic representation of the translated children's literature. Hence, considering its prominence and to bridge the gap, the existing study compared how English semiotic aspects, manifested either independently (e.g., color, typography, etc.) or in multimodal mode, are translated into Persian in two volumes of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series by Jeff Kinney. Furthermore, the strategies employed by the translator to convey ideological and sociocultural values were examined in the corpus. As the series is an illustrated instance of children's comic books in which semiotics play a prominent role, Kress and van Leeuwen's *Social Semiotics Theory* (1996) was used to probe how visual signs are transmitted to the TT. Furthermore, Farahzad's *Three Dimensional Model* (2009) was employed at micro and macro levels. Of the three levels of micro analysis in her model, the strategies used in the translation of semiotics and the 'intertextuality' of the texts at the macro level were examined. Accordingly, the following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: How are semiotic items translated/ transferred by the translator in Kinney's '*Diary of a Wimpy Kid*' based on social semiotics theory?

RQ2: What strategies have been used in the translation of items at the semiotic level in the '*Diary of a Wimpy Kid*' based on the Farahzad Model?

RQ3: How is 'intertextuality' dealt with in the book based on the Farahzad Model?



METHOD

DESIGN AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study adopted an exploratory descriptive approach for gathering and classifying the semiotics while the analysis and interpretation of the data were done qualitatively. The two volumes of the 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' series were carefully studied and the parts containing semiotic items were identified, categorized, and compared with their Persian equivalents used by the translator.

CORPUS OF THE STUDY

The Diary of a Wimpy Kid, written and illustrated by Jeff Kinney was the main corpus of the study. The main reasons for choosing this series included but were not limited to its popularity all over the world, its humorous nature plus the cultural items of a typical Western life, as well as personal interest in children's literature. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* was a big success just then the first version was released online and many translators including Iranian translators showed their interest in the work (Pamungkas, 2018). There are many different versions of this series available in Iran translated under the titles of: "خاطرات یک بچه چلمن"، "خاطرات یک بچه لاغر"، "خاطرات یک بچه بی عرضه".

Jeff Kinney's satirical realistic fiction comedy novel *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is written and drawn for children and teenagers. The story is about Greg Heffley, a middle schooler who struggles to fit in as he begins middle school (Kinney, 2017). For a better understanding of the story, a list of main characters in the series is provided as follows:

- *Greg Heffley, the series' protagonist, and narrator is a middle school student.
- *Rowley Jefferson is Greg's amiable best friend.
- *Rodrick Heffley is Greg and Manny's older brother.
- *Greg's maternal grandma is referred to as Gramma.
- *Grandpa is Greg's paternal grandfather, who is known to annoy him at times.
- * Sweetie is the Heffleys' dog who irritates Greg. (Kantor, 2020)

From among the fourteen volumes published so far, two volumes of the series (*Hard Luck* [volume 8] and *The Meltdown* [volume 13]) were selected to be scrutinized based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) Social Semiotics Theory and Farahzad (2009) model. The series has been translated by some translators; however, for this study, the versions translated by Tabassom Atashjan were selected for data analysis. The books *Hard Luck* and *The Meltdown* are translated as "بديببازی از نوع خفن" and "نوب می شویم" published by Hoz-e-Noqre.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

To examine the Persian translation of semiotic items in the series, the two volumes of the original books and their corresponding Persian translations were carefully scrutinized and compared. The data were examined at the semiotic level due to the importance of illustrations in the series and the existence of textual material in the translated images. Therefore, all the pictures in the TT and the corresponding ones in the ST were investigated based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) social semiotics model to probe how they were transmitted and designate any changes or modifications. This part dealt with nonverbal/verbal visual signs such as onomatopoeia and typographical features (type of font, size, and style), designs, illustrations, layout, and colors (Bazyar et al., 2019). Then, Farahzad's (2009) TQA model was used to analyze and interpret the strategies employed in the translation of semiotic data. The cases of changes were categorized based on their types and the strategies used in their translation, and then the potential ideological, social, or cultural reasons were discussed. Furthermore, the ST and the TT were compared at the macro level to deal with 'intertextuality' as one of the dimensions of the Farahzad model.

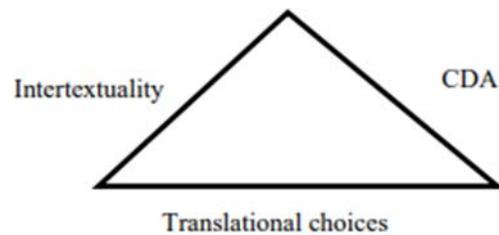


Figure 1. The Three Dimensions of Farahzad's Model

RESULTS

RESULTS OF SEMIOTIC ANALYSES

Signs carry symbolic messages for the audience using multimodal and typographic features. In this part, the social semiotic paradigm is applied to explore how visual semiotic language is restructured to convey ideologies and values in the corpus. The series 'A Diary of a Wimpy Kid' is heavily dependent on the portrayed pictures in the books to visualize the story. Also, the cartoons in this series have the role of conveying a sense of humor via the illustrations and the dialogue in bubbles displayed above each character. The other unique features of this series are the sound words or "onomatopoeia" which are used to reflect the audio dimension of actions or emotions in written form (Kaindl, 1999). In this part, some images from the ST and TT are sampled and compared considering the social semiotics principles and the changes as well as possible reasons.

1. MULTIMODALITY

The author has combined typographical features with images and illustrations in the series. Images portrayed all in black and white, play a very important role in depicting and triggering the sense of sight. Jeff Kinney has advantaged from the interrelationships among various semiotic resources to convey the message to his audience which is the focus of this section.

2. THE LAYOUT

The original books 'Hard Luck' and 'The Meltdown' were published in 2013 and 2018 while the translated versions were published in 2016 and 2019 respectively. The first and noticeable point is that all the images inside the books as well as the book covers are mirrored (reversed) in the TT. Moreover, a slight change is observable which is most likely because of the publisher's preferences.

The book covers in both versions are decorated with diverse color typefaces mixed with typography to represent the content symbolically while adding an attractive visual image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). However, as is shown in Image 1, the logo of the publisher (Hoz-e-Noqreh), the translator's name (Tabassom Atashinjan), and a pair of hands on the cover of *Hard Luck* and three hands on the cover of *The Meltdown* are added in the TT that do not exist in the ST. The Name of the series (*Diary of a Wimpy Kid*) in four colors (each word in a different color) is put in a tag-like manner in the TT; besides, the title of the Persian 'The Meltdown' (نوب میشویم) is smaller in proportion to the name of series, "خاطرات یک بچه چلمن" while on the ST cover, the word 'The Meltdown' is in similar or even bigger font size than the name of the series which might be due to the publishing company preferences.



Image 1. English and Persian Book Covers

3. ONOMATOPOEIA

Onomatopoeia are the words that mimic sounds and they are defined as “the creation of a word from a sound associated with the thing it refers to” (Sasamoto, 2019). Buzz, meow, splash, ough, خخخخ, نهههه, تق تق, غر غر, are some common examples of onomatopoeia in English and Persian. The series characterizes some funny illustrations together with the onomatopoeia (sound words) portraying the symbolic language. The author has utilized imagery literature as the most appropriate tool to display his meticulous art and creativity and help his special audience understand the message communicated via signs. In this sense, the translator seems to be quite successful in transferring the message using the semiotic language creatively. Some examples of onomatopoeia are presented below.

Example 1

In *The Meltdown* (ST: p.2; TT: p.6), a verb is used to express the action. Susan Hefley is filing her nails, but the words “file file” are omitted in the Persian translation.

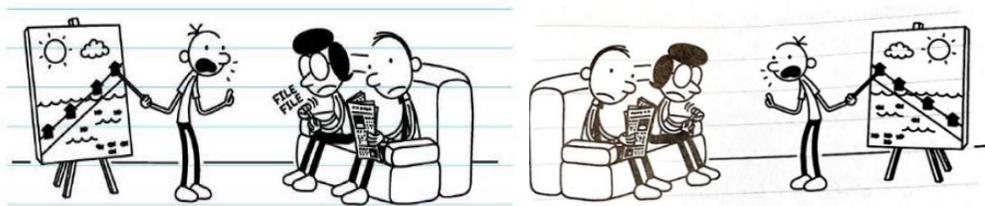


Image 2. Omission of the Onomatopoeia

Example 2

The onomatopoeia is translated literally and at the same time creatively in some other instances. In the original *The Meltdown* (ST: p.70/ TT: p. 73), the typography of the picture is translated as follows:

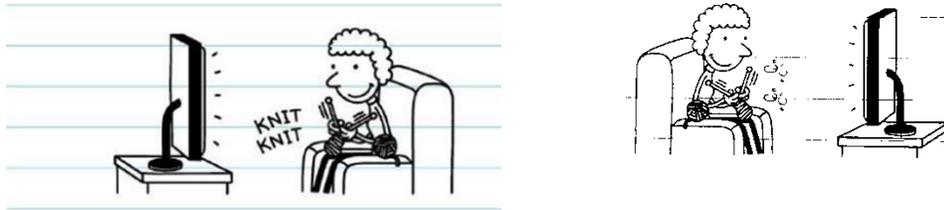


Image 3. Onomatopoeia Literal Translation

Example 3

Other instances are seen in *Hard Luck* (ST: p.134/ TT: p.140) and *Hard Luck* (ST: p.27/ TT: p.33):

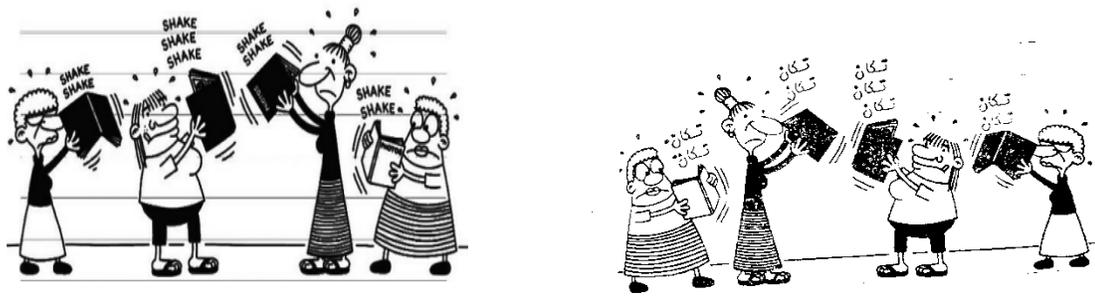


Image 4. Onomatopoeia Translation

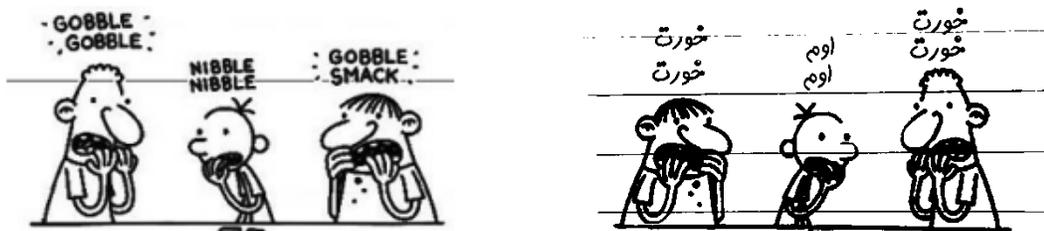


Image 5. Creative Translation of Onomatopoeia

4. TYPOGRAPHICAL FEATURE

The use of different visual representations to add connotative content to the images has made *typography* a significant semiotic source of analysis in the series. As Kostelnick and Hassett (2003) mentioned, typography helps us understand the meaning of signs manifested through font size, upper/lower case, picture scripts, etc. Wienhöfer (1979; in Kaindl, 1999) claimed the change in proportion, size, and extension of the font can show the 'emotion' or 'sound intensity'. Also, using typography, the author can show the movement of the objects or characters (through the spacing between letters or by the directionality of the letters). It seems that in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series,



the typography meant a lot to the author, as one of the most noticeable traits of this series is the different appearance of many words, in 'uppercase' and 'bigger' than the rest of the text.

Example 4

As an example, in *Hard Luck* (ST: p. 183/ TT: p. 189), the word 'exactly' appears as "EXACTLY" in the following sentence:

- Because that's EXACTLY the kind of thing the Magic 8 Ball is good at.

چون این مشکل اینطوری خوراک توپ جادویی بود.

Example 5

Also, in *The Meltdown* (ST: p. 124), the verb 'believed' and 'to be mad' are presented as "BELIEVED" and "were MAD" respectively (TT: p.127):

- Then they BELIEVED their lie, and now they were MAD.

حالا هم دروغ خودشان را باورشان شده بود و حالا از عصبانیت داشتند می ترکیدند.

The orthographical forms of "EXACTLY", "BELIEVED", and "MAD" instead of 'exactly', 'believed', and 'mad' respectively appear to be used intentionally by the author to show either the emphasis and exaggeration or the ironical language the main character is using in the series. The translator has resorted to *idiomatic translation* of the two words (exactly, mad) to show the connotation. However, considering the verb 'believed', it is translated as a simple non-capitalized word and the intended message is completely lost in the translation.

Furthermore, in the two examples below, the translator has *added* the word "خیلی خیلی" to the ST to compensate for the matter. However, in the second instance, the word "WEIRD" is *mistranslated* as "وحشتناک" which connotes a different meaning from the original word.

Example 6

- I'm not really sure how my grades got so bad, because my year actually started off pretty GOOD. (*Hard luck*, ST: p.189; TT: p. 195)

نمیدانم چطور شد که نمره هایم انقدر پایین آمدند چون سال تحصیلی را تقریباً خیلی خیلی خوب شروع کرده بودم.

Example 7

- What was WEIRD was how QUIET it was in there. (*The Meltdown*, TT: p.127; ST: p. 130)

جنبه ترسناک ماجرا این بود که آنجا خیلی خیلی ساکت بود.

Moreover, in *The Meltdown* (ST: p.161; TT: p. 164), the translator resorted to *addition* (وحشی ها) and *substitution* (نجات دهیم) strategies to somehow transmit the message.

Example 8

- Me and Rowley were lucky to crawl out of there ALIVE.

من و رالی خوشبختانه توانستیم خودمان را از زیر دست و پای آن وحشی ها نجات بدهیم.

Similarly, in *Hard Luck* (ST: p. 211), the words "کار کار" are *added* to show the emphasis put on the word "MOM" in English. (TT: p. 217)

Example 9

- For a second I thought maybe the Science Report Fairy had come in overnight and sprinkled some pixie dust on the pages, but then I realized it was MOM.

لحظه ای فکر کردم که حتماً پری پروژه های علوم آمده و مثل قصه های پریان با چوب جادویی اش کاری کرده که پروژه ام تمام شود اما بعدش متوجه شدم که کار کار مامان بوده.

In *Hard Luck* (ST: p. 173), "a lot of" is translated as "خاص" (TT: p. 179) to express the emphasis the author has meant by the word "POWER".

Example 10

- I realized being the yearbook photographer gives me a lot of POWER, too.

متوجه چیز دیگری هم شده‌ام اینکه عکاس کتاب سال بودن به من قدرتی خاص بخشیده است.

In the ST, the author preferred to use the words in capital and bigger sizes purposefully and with an intention behind them. They might be different, to evoke or intensify the emotions and get the reader more involved while they were ignored or dealt with differently in the TT.

5. IDEOLOGICAL MODIFICATIONS

In the series, some modifications are made which are mostly due to cultural and social observations. The instances include changes in the characters' genders, animal types, food types, and the content of the conversations. The point is that the modifications have led to a slight to complete change in meaning in some places.

Example 11

In *Hard Luck* (ST: p. 21), the dialogues in the bubbles are totally changed because of cultural considerations (TT: p.27).

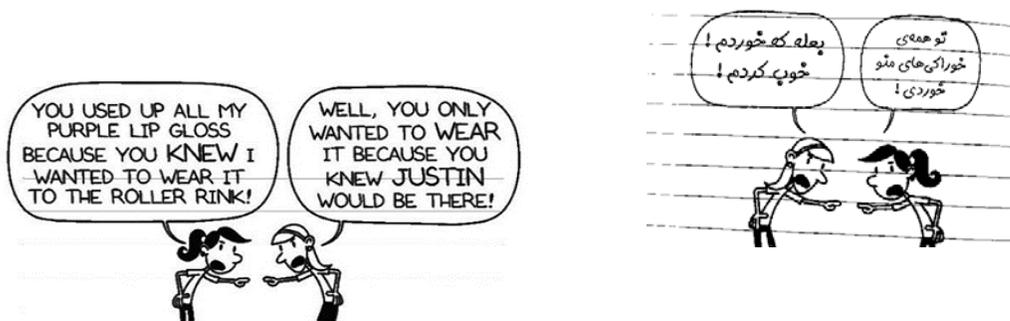


Image 6. Cultural modification of the Content

Example 12

In *The Meltdown* (ST: p.119/ TT: p.125), Greg says "On Christmas, the second you get home from church you can just totally unwind" and below this statement, there is a picture in which the boys are getting undressed, but in the Persian translation, their bare body is colored in black (the undressed boys are censored).



Image 7. Social modification the Content

ANALYSIS OF THE EMPLOYED STRATEGIES

In this part, the changes made in the image contents including the characters or the dialogues will be presented considering the strategies proposed in Farahzad's (2009) model.

1. SUBSTITUTION

Among all the strategies suggested, 'substitution' was the most frequently used one in this series.

Example 13

In *The Meltdown* (ST: p. 12/ TT: p.15), **Britain** is replaced by England.

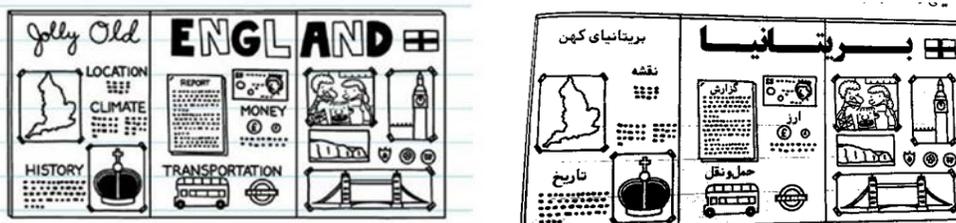


Image 8. Substitution

1.1 SUBSTITUTION DUE TO SOCIAL OR CULTURAL REASONS

Most of the substitutions employed in the series were due to social, cultural, or religious reasons.

Example 14

On page two of the original *Hard Luck* (TT: p. 8), there is a picture in which Rowley's girlfriend is wearing a skirt, holding Rowley's hand and her hair is long, but in the translated book, she is portrayed in a way that this character is a boy and they are not hand in hand.

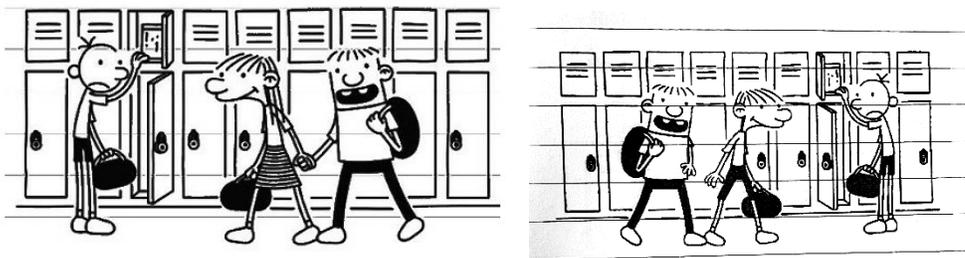


Image 9. A Change in the Content

Example 15

On page 13 of the original *Meltdown* (TT: p. 17), in response to Greg's question asking "Where Malt is", his friend says "In your butt" which is not a polite expression; thus, the translator substituted the expression with "beneath your chair."



Image 10. Substitution due to Social Appropriateness

Example 16

In *Hard Luck*, in the two pictures provided below, the dialogues in the bubbles are totally changed because of cultural issues (ST: p. 21/ TT: p.27) and (ST: p.22/TT: p.28).

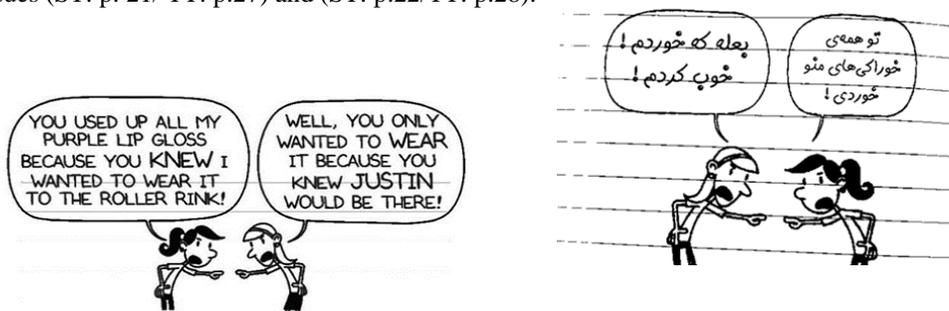


Image 11. Substitution due to Cultural Issues

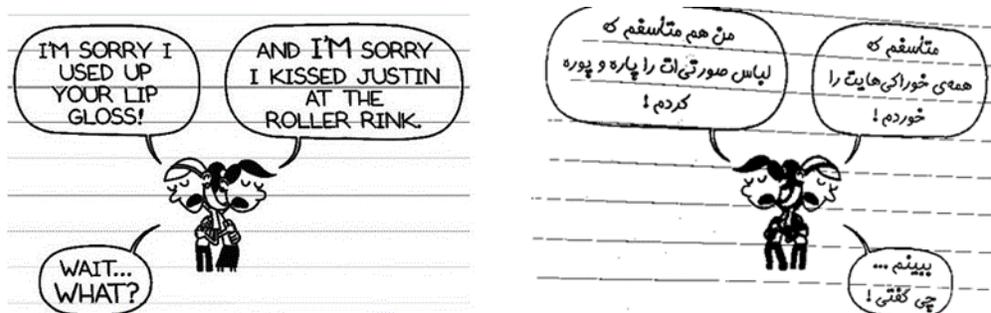


Image 12. Substitution due to Cultural Issues

Example 17

In *Hard Luck* (ST: p.137), the main character is looking for the plastic Easter egg in his deceased grandmother's underwear drawer. The plastic egg is supposed to have the grandmother's diamond wedding ring within, but suddenly his mother comes and catches him holding his grandmother's underwear. However, in the translated text, the picture is slightly different not to show there is underwear in Greg's hands (TT: p.143).



Image 13. Substitution due to Cultural Issues

1.2 SUBSTITUTION OF ANIMAL TYPES

Also, in the series, there are some cases in which the animal type is changed due to religious or cultural considerations.

Example 18

In *The Meltdown* (ST: p.39), "a pig" is changed to "a cat", perhaps because of religious observations (TT: p.42).

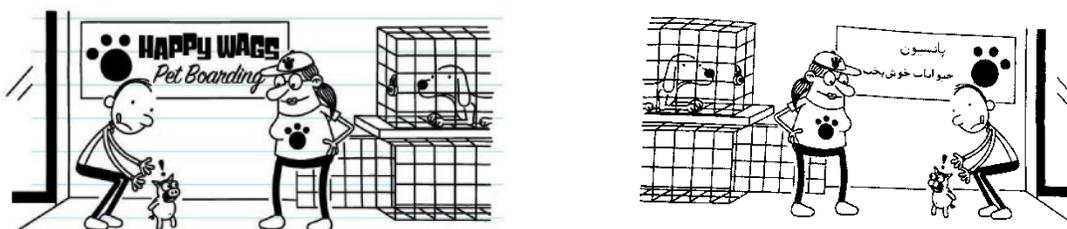


Image 14. Animal Substitution due to Religious Observation

Example 19

Another case of changing the animal type can be seen in *The Meltdown* (ST: p.76/ TT: p.79) and *Hard Luck* (ST: p.111/ TT: p.117). Sweetie 'the pet dog' is changed to 'a cat' which does not follow any logical explanation.

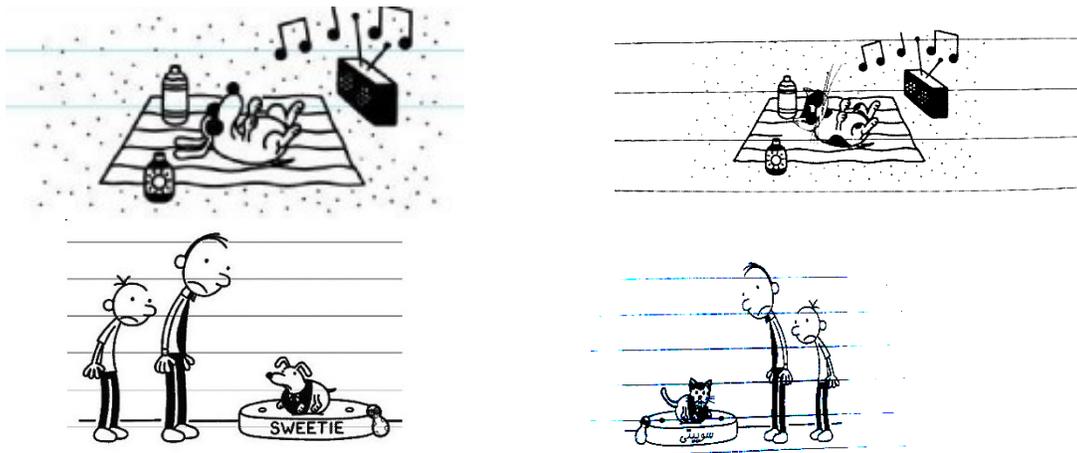


Image 15. Animal Substitution 2

1.2 SUBSTITUTION OF FOOD TYPES

The translator has also changed the food type in some places in the series because of NO clear justification.

Example 20

In *The Meltdown* (ST: p. 15/ TT: p.19), there are two cases of substitution: “asparagus” is substituted with something different (اندیو) and “hotdog” is substituted with “sausages”. Moreover, “meatloaf” is transferred literally from the ST.



Image 16. Substitution of Food Type

1.4 OMISSION

After substitution, ‘omission’ was the strategy used the most due to some social, cultural, religious, or other reasons.

Example 21

In *Hard Luck* (ST: p.29; TT: p.35), the girls are omitted, and consequently, the whole idea of being *in a relationship* is missed.

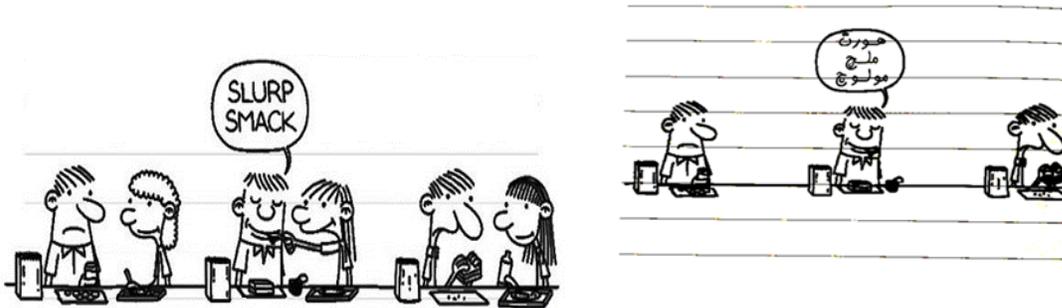


Image 17. Cultural Omission

Example 22

Also, on page 197 of the English *Hard Luck* (TT: p. 203), the concept of ‘being in a romantic relationship’ is censored and they are introduced as they are two regular friends.



Image 18. Cultural Omission

Example 23

In *Hard Luck*, the ST (p.1), Rodrick (Greg’s brother) is sitting on the toilet clipping his toenails but in the TT it is omitted, probably because it might imply that he is using the toilet and it is not culturally/socially appropriate to show a person in this situation.

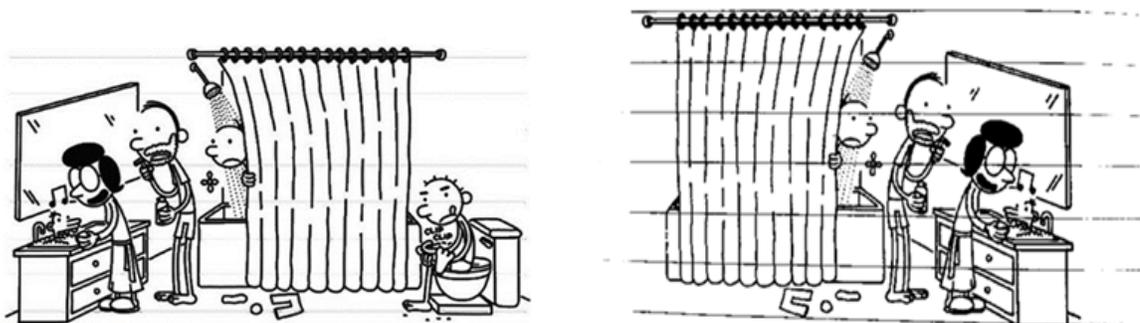


Image 19. Omission due to Social Appropriateness

1.5 LITERAL TRANSLATION

In some situations, like the instance below, the translator employed 'literal translation' to avoid transferring some connotative meaning of the expressions in some parts of the story.

Example 24

In *Hard Luck* (ST: p.4), the dialog between Rowley and his girlfriend is simply translated in a way that does not reveal they are talking *ironically* (TT: p.10).



Image 20. Literal Translation of the Content

1.6 MISTRANSLATION

There are some instances of mistranslation which might be due to the translator's mistake or socio-cultural observations.

Example 25

On page 113 of the original *Hard Luck* (TT: p.118), it is said: "I'm sure my great grandfather wishes he could change his name, but he's about ninety-three years old, so there's no point now". Right under this statement, there is an image on which the great-grandfather is called *Peepaw*, which is transferred to the TT as (پپا). However, it is not clear why the great-grandfather might be unhappy with his name.

The reason is that most probably, a kid of the family first had intended to call the great-grandfather 'papa'; however, s/he failed to pronounce the word correctly, and due to the mispronunciation, it's heard as "peepaw" (pee+paw) which is not a nice name for calling someone in English. However, the idea is vaguely presented in the TT and the sense of humor is missed.

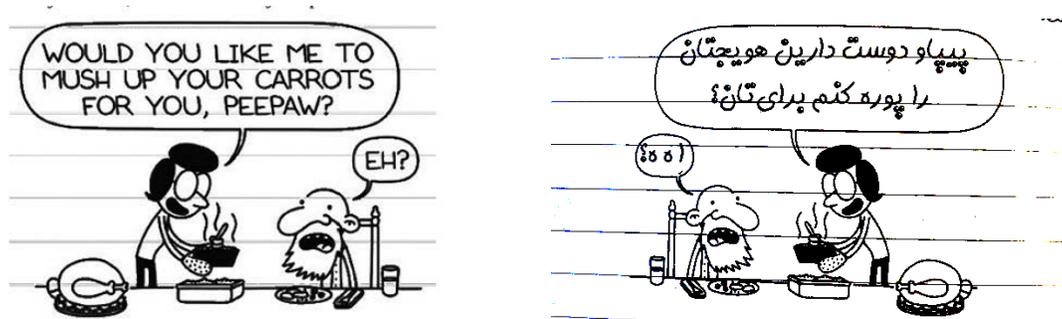


Image 21. Mistranslation



DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted to examine the Persian translations of semiotic elements in two volumes of the series 'A Diary of a Wimpy Kid': 'Hard Luck' and 'The Meltdown', by Jeff Kinney probing their symbolic and informative implications using the social semiotics principles and Farahzad CDA model. In the series, the author has relied on multiple semiotic modes to convey the message to his audience via the use of language as the linguistic element and typographical features, images, and onomatopoeia as paralinguistic elements. The semiotics carry symbolic and ideological messages for the reader via typographic features and multimodality restructured to deliver social/cultural ideologies and values. Considering the first research question, cultural, religious, and social observations caused most of the modifications and distortions. One phenomenon that can be easily recognized in the TT is the frequent occurrence of culturally biased translations of the visual elements.

Typographical aspects received little attention in the TT while they were introduced as a very instrumental vehicle to transfer or intensify feelings in the ST (Kaindl, 1999). One of the prominent characteristics of the series is the great number of words in different font sizes, ALL in capital letters, to catch more attention and provoke feelings like excitement, anger, indifference, etc. The author had an intention to make a difference in the visual appearance of some parts of the source texts which received almost NO attention in the translated texts. In terms of appearance, the font size is the same in the translated texts with no visual effect, and no distinctive strategy is applied to make the emotional side visible in the TT. This finding is aligned with what was reported by Ebrahimi et al. (2022) and Habibian and Ameri (2017). Nonetheless, onomatopoeic words were transferred to the TT pretty much in the same manner as in the ST. The translator seems to be successful in transmitting the message as she has tried to preserve the message by a faithful and exact translation which is in line with what Al-Naimat and Saidat (2019) as well as Azeez and Turki (2019) mentioned regarding the sound words in their papers. The translator took advantage of a creative approach to translate the semiotics in her work.

Regarding the strategies used in the translation of English semiotic items of 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' to Persian, it is apparent that *substitution* was the most frequent strategy followed by omission, addition, and literal translation. As Wang (2012) put it, omission, addition, or substitution are misleading applications used to signify cultural conflicts. In this study, the strategies were used to avoid the details of the cultural mismatches in the semiotic aspects of the series. Undoubtedly, this conscious manipulation (Farahzad, 2003) did not happen due to the translator's knowledge inefficiency. It seems that the translator has changed the ideological values of the ST following the recipient culture to observe cultural or social considerations. This finding is supported by Amirdabbaghian and Shunmugam (2019) as well as Ranzato (2013) who explained the same reasons for cultural manipulation of the translated texts. Moreover, observing religious restrictions and social norms as well as publication limitations have probably made the challenges the translator faced more serious. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the translator's attempt to avoid social/cultural issues led to some mistranslation in the translated texts. This result is in line with that of Al-Fouzan (2019), Habibian and Ameri (2017), as well as Poordaryaeinejad and Khorian (2019).

Furthermore, as the third focus of the research, *intertextuality* was explored in the two volumes of the series based on Farahzad's (2009) model. Farahzad believed that the ST is not the origin of TT, rather TT is the extension of the ST in an intertextual chain (cited in Yazdanimogaddam, 2011). Considering the intertextuality in the ST and TT studied, there were some noticeable cases of change in meaning at the semiotic level. Cultural items were the ones that challenged the translator the most leading to the message distortion. The semiotic items were intentionally substituted or simply omitted leading to a different ideological manifestation. It is unlikely that the translator was unaware of them but it seems that some social, religious, or cultural observations play a key role in these kinds of distortions. For example, the 'pet pig' and the 'pet dog' are substituted with a 'pet cat' in the TT perhaps due to some religious observations. Another example is the substitution of *food types*.

In *The Meltdown*, Greg Hefley is afraid of ordering pork at the school's restaurant, because he has heard from a classmate the dead animals are kept in the restaurant's fridge until spring, when it gets warm and they can be buried. Because their pet pig is lost, he is anxious to see if the restaurant crew has used their pig (possibly dead) for pork sandwiches. Eating pork is forbidden for Muslims (it is not Halal) so pork is substituted with "غذای گوشتی" which shows the ideological change in the food type. Moreover, there are instances of 'omission' from different types including cultural and social items. Of the cultural ones, the main items are the same as those discussed earlier: being in a relationship, having dogs and pigs, and not being dressed properly. One noticeable point in our culture is the relationship limitations between males and females. In the series, the translator has tried NOT to reveal the romantic relationship of the characters leading to a change in the story and misrepresentation of the message. All concepts around this subject like *valentines* or *being in a relationship* and consequently the dialogues have been



changed. As an instance of social observation, in *Hard Luck*, in all the situations in which Hefley is in the bathroom, Rodrick is omitted. The translator has resorted to different strategies to avoid violating social and cultural red lines as much as possible but one change has led to a chain of changes in the socio-cultural connotations affecting the overall ideology of the ST. The results are compliant with those of Moosavinia and Baji (2017) and Sharahil and Lin (2022).

CONCLUSION

The current study was designed to explore the representation of English semiotic aspects in the Persian translation of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series and compare their connotative functions. The translated texts were examined at the semiotic level including the images, the typographic features (mostly the dialogues between the characters, self-talking, or thoughts presented in speech bubbles), onomatopoeias, and other visual representations. The findings reveal that the modifications made in the series have caused some ideological changes to comply with the target cultural values. It was even worse for typographical representation which followed no logical reason. The intensity of the feelings was more noticeable in the ST because of the different appearance of emotive words. While this method is defined as a powerful tool to transfer feelings by Kaindl (1999), they were rendered in the TT the same as the rest of the book; in other words, no method was used to transfer the emotionally loaded words and phrases. The researchers believed those items could be delivered with a *typographically* different appearance in the TT to convey similar connotations. However, it can be claimed that onomatopoeic words were largely translated acceptably. The collected data and their analyses revealed that the imposed ideology by the society caused some challenges for the translator. The observation of cultural, social, and religious values in Iran was the main reasons that led to the conscious manipulation of the text. The point is that for the cultural items that were just absent in the target culture (and caused no harm to any values), the translator could have resorted to a better approach instead of omitting and substituting them with different things.

No matter how well thought out, every study encounters some challenges. The main focus of this research was on 'semiotics', which is a very broad subject per se and could be investigated from different points of view. The present study compared the ways semiotic items were presented in the ST and TT using social semantic principles and the Farahzad model of CDA; other studies may examine the texts considering other constructs and other frameworks. Moreover, the genre of the corpus was children's literature; the models applied in this study can be used to probe other genres and adult literature. In this study, the semiotic items in *two volumes* of the series were investigated; thus, other studies can work on other volumes and compare their results with those of this study.

One of the practical implications of the present study can be considered as raising the awareness of the publishers and those who are involved in writing or translating children books. These people should take into account the importance of the materials presented to young generation. The results can also be useful for the students of translation studies. They should realize that not all translated texts carry the same meaning and concepts as the ST and this will happen if English language teachers identify the hidden ideologies in the ST and the TT and expose them to their students. In this manner, translation studies students can have a broader overview on the interpretation of social and cultural issues in translated texts.

Children's literature as an influential cultural, social, and ideological instrument should gain a position as an academic field. Education should be concerned with children's social growth which can be enhanced through presenting the literature portraying socio-cultural conflicts (Hoyte, 2021). As Lathey (2006) beautifully articulated, children's literature is in its infancy and requires much more academic consideration. Authors or translators of children's books should always bear in mind that anything said, written, or illustrated for children will influence their ideological perspectives in the future. The results of this study illustrated that semiotics, as one of the symbolic constituents of culture, can be one of the most challenging elements in translation requiring translators' special attention to prevent any possible problem. When translating children's picture books, translators must bear in mind that many other factors including memories and images as well as their reading experiences and cultural heritage are involved in the translation of these books.



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