

Ethical Mediation and Evaluative Intensification in Persian Children’s Literature Translation¹

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Abstract

Children’s literature is often translated within strong pedagogical and cultural expectations, yet we still know relatively little about how translators shape the ethical tone of a story through everyday linguistic choices. This article examines how translator agency operates as a form of ethical mediation in the Persian translation of Jeff Brumbeau’s *The Quiltmaker’s Gift* (2000), translated by Ferydoun Faryad (2004). Drawing on virtue-oriented translation ethics and Appraisal Theory, the study conducts a qualitative close comparison of selected source and target passages in order to trace shifts in evaluative language. The analysis identifies five recurring strategies of ethical intensification—*affective dramatization, emotional interiorization, sensory magnification, lexical compassion, and cosmological enlargement*—through which the Persian translation foregrounds moral and emotional cues with greater perceptual vividness. These shifts systematically strengthen resources of Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation while leaving the narrative structure unchanged. The article argues that such micro-level adjustments function as a form of ethical mediation, aligning evaluative meanings with culturally familiar ethical discourse. By proposing a framework for observing these shifts, the study contributes to ongoing discussions of translator ethics and suggests that domestication in children’s literature may operate through subtle evaluative reshaping rather than overt ideological rewriting.

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1. Introduction

Ethics has long been a central concern in translation studies, and recent work has renewed attention to questions of representational responsibility, translator agency, and the social consequences of mediation (Lambert, 2023). Chesterman (2016, 2020) distinguishes between macro-ethics—concerned with professional norms, institutional settings, and translator virtues—and micro-ethics, where ethical consequences emerge from local textual decisions. At this micro-level, translation is not simply the transfer of content but an interpretive act capable of reshaping evaluative perspective and moral cueing. As Oittinen (2006) observes, translations inevitably reflect the translator's stance and assumptions about readers.

Children's literature offers a particularly sensitive site for examining these dynamics. Texts addressed to young readers often carry overt or implicit pedagogical aims, shaped by adult expectations about childhood socialization. Earlier scholarship on the subject highlights the didactic traditions of children's literature (Bixler, 1981), while research in moral and narrative psychology suggests that fictional narratives can influence children's moral reasoning by simulating social situations and their affective consequences (Gasser et al., 2022; Rottman et al., 2017). In translation, these dynamics are further filtered through the translator's interventions, which may align stories with local pedagogical and cultural norms.

Research on Persian translations of children's literature has documented ideological filtering, censorship, and domestication (Baleghizadeh & Ranjour, 2010; Vahhabzadeh, 2018), and related work identifies recurring moral themes in Persian children's narratives (Ghazanfari Moghaddam et al., 2021). Less attention, however, has been paid to the micro-linguistic mechanisms through which evaluative meanings are intensified in translation.

This article addresses this gap by analyzing how ethical positioning is constructed at the micro-level in the Persian translation of an English children's book. In this study, ethical mediation refers to translator interventions that reshape the evaluative organization of a narrative in ways that guide reader alignment with particular moral interpretations. Virtue ethics provides a framework for understanding translator agency and responsibility, while Appraisal Theory supplies the analytic categories for tracing evaluation in discourse. The research question addressed is:

How does the Persian translation intensify evaluative and emotional cues to position readers within a particular ethical frame?

2. Literature Review

Children's literature is shaped by pedagogical purposes and adult constructions of childhood. Shavit (1986) argues that the peripheral status of children's literature in the polysystem often grants translators latitude to adapt texts to cultural expectations. Nodelman (2008) similarly emphasizes that children's literature expresses adult beliefs about what children should enjoy and learn, embedding guidance in narrative form.

Translation scholarship likewise highlights the educational and ideological pressures shaping translation for young readers. Alvstad (2019) notes that pedagogical considerations frequently outweigh strict textual fidelity, and Leonardi (2020) argues that children's literature translation cannot be ideologically neutral because of the cultural constraints governing selection and rewriting. Oittinen's (2006) concept of the 'child image' further shows how translators construct an implied model of the child reader, which in turn influences linguistic and narrative choices.

Historical studies show that ethically motivated adaptation has long been common. Wunderlich (1992) documents how U.S. translations of *Pinocchio* softened parental violence to promote obedience; Arzuk (2013) reports comparable moral reconfigurations in Turkish contexts. Lathey (2006, 2010) demonstrates that translators have often treated children's translation as an educational mission, adding commentary or adjusting content to fit pedagogical norms. Diachronic work (Dybiec-Gajer, 2020) similarly shows moral amplification as a recurring pattern across traditions.

Persian scholarship, though scarce, reports parallel tendencies. Baleghizadeh and Ranjour (2010) identify omission, attenuation, and substitution in translations (e.g., *Harry Potter*) to align texts with Iranian cultural norms; Vahhabzadeh (2018) documents extensive moral and religious censorship. Studies of Persian children's literature also note recurring ethical themes (Ghazanfari Moghaddam et al., 2021).

Together, these studies suggest that children's translations are frequently adjusted to reflect culturally specific norms of behavior and emotional evaluation. While they illuminate macro-level filtering, they rarely specify how evaluative meaning is manipulated linguistically. Insights from moral psychology underscore

why this matters: children's moral judgments are sensitive to narrative framing (Rottman et al., 2017) and to emotionally engaging fiction (Gasser et al., 2022). The present study builds on these insights by focusing on micro-level shifts that intensify evaluative cueing in translation.

3. Theoretical Framework

Recent work in translation ethics increasingly shifts attention from texts alone to the agency of translators as ethical actors. Rather than treating ethics simply as adherence to rules or norms, scholars have begun to ask how translators exercise judgment in specific communicative situations. Within this discussion, Chesterman (2020) proposes virtue ethics as a particularly useful perspective because it focuses on the translator's moral dispositions—including qualities such as responsibility, sensitivity to audiences, and professional integrity. From this standpoint, ethical translation is not merely a matter of applying predetermined principles; it involves situated decision-making under practical constraints, including institutional expectations, readerships, and publishing contexts.

While virtue ethics helps explain why translators might intervene in certain ways, it does not by itself provide analytical tools for examining how such ethical positioning becomes visible in language. To address this analytical gap, the present study draws on Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), developed within Systemic Functional Linguistics. Appraisal Theory offers a systematic account of how texts encode evaluation and guide readers' emotional and moral responses. It distinguishes three interrelated subsystems: *Affect*, *Judgement*, and *Appreciation*. *Affect* concerns the expression of emotional states such as joy, sympathy, fear, or regret. *Judgement* evaluates the ethical or social behavior of characters, positioning them as admirable, blameworthy, generous, selfish, and so forth. *Appreciation*, by contrast, evaluates things, events, or processes in terms of aesthetic or affective value. Together, these resources shape the evaluative orientation of a narrative, subtly directing how readers interpret characters and events.

Children's literature provides a particularly revealing context for examining these dynamics. Because stories for young readers often rely on clear emotional cues and stable moral positioning, relatively small shifts in evaluative wording can influence how readers align with characters and interpret narrative events. From this perspective, translation becomes a site where ethical considerations and linguistic evaluation intersect.

Taken together, virtue ethics and Appraisal Theory make it possible to link

ethical motivation with textual realization. Virtue ethics helps explain why translators working in pedagogically-oriented contexts might feel justified—or even obligated—to strengthen moral cues for young audiences. Appraisal Theory, in turn, provides the descriptive tools needed to trace how these adjustments emerge through lexicogrammatical choices and evaluative patterns.

Within this study, such adjustments are understood as a form of ethical mediation. The term refers to instances in which translators reshape the evaluative organization of a narrative in ways that make moral or emotional orientations more salient for the target readership. During the analysis, a recurrent pattern of evaluative amplification emerged across the translated text. This pattern is described here as *ethical intensification*, a tendency for the translation to heighten the perceptual or emotional clarity of ethically significant moments while leaving the overall narrative structure intact.

Closer comparison of source and target passages revealed five recurring strategies through which this intensification is realized: *affective dramatization*, *emotional interiorization*, *sensory magnification*, *lexical compassion*, and *cosmological enlargement*. These strategies operate across the appraisal subsystems of Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation, redistributing evaluative emphasis at key narrative moments.

The cumulative effect of these shifts is described in this study as *moral indexing*. By this term, we refer to the patterned marking of characters, actions, and events in ways that make their ethical orientation more readily recognizable. Through such evaluative cues, the translation subtly guides readers toward particular moral interpretations.

4. Method

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive-explanatory design to examine how ethical mediation is realized in the Persian translation of Jeff Brumbeau's *The Quiltmaker's Gift* (2000). The corpus consists of the English source text and its Persian translation by Ferydoun Faryad (1383/2004), published by the Center for the Intellectual Development of Children and Youth (Kanoon-e Parvareh).

Notably, the Persian title *Hediye-ye Khuban* [The Gift of the Virtuous] itself suggests a degree of ethical reframing. Whereas the English title foregrounds the narrative figure of the quiltmaker and the symbolic object of the gift, the Persian

rendering replaces this concrete imagery with an explicitly evaluative moral category—"the virtuous" or "the good." The shift arguably directs attention away from the figure of the craftsperson and toward moral characterization. Although titles may also reflect editorial preferences, this paratextual modification is consistent with the broader translational pattern observed throughout the text, where evaluative meanings and ethical orientations are rendered with greater salience.

The narrative provides a suitable case for analysis because the source text foregrounds themes of generosity and resistance to material excess, while the translation circulates within a publishing institution whose mission explicitly emphasizes the ethical and educational development of young readers. This combination makes the text particularly appropriate for examining how moral orientation may be mediated through translation.

To examine how ethical mediation becomes visible in language, the analysis focuses on what is termed here ethical *intensification*. The concept refers to translational shifts that heighten the salience of evaluative meaning. In practical terms, this involves identifying linguistic choices that strengthen the emotional or moral signaling of a narrative moment. Three recurrent indicators were used to guide the analysis: (a) intensified evaluative lexis, such as the addition of moral epithets; (b) explicit verbalization of internal states, where motivations that remain implicit in the source text are rendered as overt thoughts or emotions; and (c) affective or metaphorical amplification, which heightens the sensory or emotional visibility of moral transformation.

The analysis proceeded through purposive sampling of narratively consequential scenes. Scenes were considered consequential when they performed a clear ethical function within the narrative—for example, moments where characters are morally evaluated, where the king's transformation becomes visible, or where relationships of generosity and refusal are narratively negotiated. These segments represent points at which the story's moral orientation becomes most salient, making them particularly suitable for examining evaluative shifts in translation. Within the selected passages, source and target sentences were compared closely in order to trace how appraisal resources were redistributed.

The categories of Appraisal Theory guided the analysis in a gradual and recursive way. The process began with close comparisons between the source and target texts to identify places where shifts appeared in Affect, Judgement, or Appreciation. These initial observations were then revisited across the rest of the

dataset to see whether similar shifts recurred and formed recognizable patterns of evaluative amplification. Working in this iterative manner made it possible to view individual linguistic choices not as isolated stylistic differences, but as part of broader, patterned tendencies in how the translation organizes evaluative meaning.

Since the study focuses on a single text, it does not aim to demonstrate institutional causation or to establish widely generalizable patterns. Rather, it offers a text-oriented exploration of how ethical mediation may take shape in practice. The interpretive claims are grounded in observable contrasts between the source and target texts. Institutional and pedagogical contexts are therefore considered as plausible interpretive frames that help make sense of the translator's choices, rather than as empirically verified determinants of those decisions. Although the study is interpretive in orientation, the analysis focuses on recurrent source–target contrasts rather than isolated stylistic examples.

5. Results

The comparative analysis reveals a recurrent pattern of evaluative amplification in the Persian translation. Across a number of passages, relatively neutral narrative description in the English source text (ST) is rendered in Persian through language that carries stronger emotional or moral resonance. These shifts do not appear randomly across the text. Instead, they cluster around scenes where the narrative foregrounds ethical judgement, emotional transformation, or interpersonal alignment—contexts in which the story's moral orientation becomes particularly salient.

Through iterative comparison of source and target passages, five recurring strategies of ethical intensification were identified: *affective dramatization*, *emotional interiorization*, *sensory magnification*, *lexical compassion*, and *cosmological enlargement*. Although these categories emerged inductively throughout the coding process, they closely align with the evaluative subsystems described in Appraisal Theory, particularly Judgement (evaluation of character and conduct), Affect (expressions of emotional stance), and Appreciation (evaluation of objects, events, and aesthetic qualities).

Across the examined segments, the Persian translation frequently introduces additional lexical material, metaphorical elaboration, or evaluative descriptors that sharpen the emotional or moral orientation of a scene. These interventions cluster around narratively consequential moments: the establishment of the king's greed, the

emergence of remorse, the redistribution of generosity, and scenes of communal joy. The following subsections illustrate how each strategy operates through close comparison of selected source and target passages.

5.1. Affective dramatization

One recurring pattern involves affective dramatization through metaphorical amplification. In several instances, narrative description that is relatively neutral in the source text becomes evaluatively charged in the Persian translation.

ST: "So many, many things that the king kept a list of all the lists of things he owned."

«خلاصه، کوهی از هدیه‌های به‌دردبخور و به‌دردنخور روی هم جمع شده بود.»

(Literal gloss: a mountain of useful and useless gifts had piled up.)

The Persian pair *به‌درد بخور و به‌درد نخور* ("useful and useless") introduces a clear element of narrator judgement that is absent from the source text's playful listing. In the original, the phrase "lists of all the lists" works mainly as a humorous exaggeration. In the translation, however, this playful accumulation is reshaped into a more compact evaluative image: a "mountain" of gifts whose value is quietly called into question. As a result, what functions in the source text as comic excess comes to be framed in the translation as a form of surplus that invites ethical interpretation.

From the perspective of Appraisal Theory, a largely descriptive passage is thus reoriented toward Judgement, inviting readers to evaluate the king's wealth rather than merely observe it. The effect is subtle but significant: economic abundance is reframed within a moral register that aligns with long-standing didactic tendencies in children's literature, where material possession is frequently contrasted with ethical virtue (Bixler, 1981).

5.2. Emotional interiorization

A second pattern, emotional interiorization, shifts ethical marking from external narration toward explicit representation of inner moral states. Psychological attitudes that remain implicit or understated in the source text are rendered more directly through narrator attribution or character self-evaluation.

ST: "Now although the king was very good at being greedy, he was very bad at being mean."

«در همان هنگام پادشاه بدکردار... مدام به پیرزن بیچاره فکر می‌کرد و از شدت پشیمانی نمی‌توانست چشم روی چشم بگذارد.»

(Literal gloss: at that moment the evil king kept thinking about the poor old woman and, from the intensity of regret, could not close his eyes.)

The adjective *بدکردار* (“evil-doing”) is absent from the source text and redefines the king’s identity as a moral category rather than simply describing flawed behavior. At the same time, regret is externalized through physical imagery—sleeplessness—which renders the character’s internal state perceptible within the narrative world. The narration thus shifts from describing actions to explicitly evaluating character.

In this expansion the narrator guides reader interpretation by foregrounding the ethical implications of a character’s emotions. Research on children’s narrative comprehension suggests that such explicit evaluative cues can help younger readers interpret moral dynamics more readily (Gasser et al., 2022).

The same tendency appears in the king’s subsequent exclamation:

ST: “Oh my, oh my, what have I done?”

«آخ که من ناجوانمرد نابکار چه کار بدی در حق آن پیرزن بیچاره کردم.»

(Literal gloss: alas, what a dishonorable villain I am; what a bad deed I did to that poor old woman.)

The paired terms *ناجوانمرد نابکار* (“dishonorable villain”) intensify self-condemnation through culturally resonant ethical vocabulary. In particular, *ناجوانمرد* evokes the Persian ethical ideal of *جوانمردی* (chivalric honor), positioning the king’s behavior as a violation of an established moral code. The source text’s brief expression of regret thus becomes a fuller confession in which the speaker overtly categorizes himself as morally culpable.

Through these shifts, the translation simultaneously intensifies Affect (regret and remorse) and Judgement (ethical condemnation of character).

5.3. Sensory magnification

A third strategy, sensory magnification, extends emotional states into the surrounding environment, transforming localized actions into broader affective atmospheres.

ST: "The king looked about him and saw the dancing and merrymaking and all the happiness his gifts had brought."

«دید همه جا سرشار از شادی و شور است...»

(Literal gloss: he saw everywhere overflowing with joy and excitement.)

Where the ST refers to concrete activities—"dancing and merrymaking"—the translation introduces the saturation term سرشار ("overflowing"). The emphasis shifts from observable behavior to a generalized emotional condition. Joy is no longer simply enacted by characters; it becomes a quality of the surrounding world.

This pattern continues in the depiction of the king's emerging happiness:

ST: "the smallest of smiles began to show on the king's face."

«چیزی چون لبخند... جوانه زد.»

(Literal gloss: something like a smile sprouted.)

The verb زد جوانه ("sprouted") reframes emotional change as organic growth. An internal psychological shift is represented through a metaphor drawn from natural processes, making the king's transformation visible and dynamic.

Within Appraisal Theory, such imagery intensifies Affect, projecting emotional states outward so that they become perceptually accessible within the narrative environment. Beyond environmental amplification, evaluative intensification also occurs through more localized lexical choices that reshape how characters are positioned in relation to one another.

5.4. Lexical compassion

A fourth pattern may be described as lexical compassion, whereby the translation introduces vocabulary that foregrounds vulnerability or moral regard.

ST: "It's no wonder you're so grouchy."

«حیوان زبان بسته من...»

(Literal gloss: my voiceless creature.)

The expression زبان بسته ("voiceless") evokes helplessness and innocence and is commonly used in Persian to refer compassionately to animals. Through this lexical choice, the bear is reframed from a potentially threatening presence into a vulnerable

being deserving sympathy. The reader's alignment shifts accordingly toward empathy.

A similar tendency appears in the characterization of the quiltmaker herself:

ST: "the woman"

«پیرزن لحاف‌دوز نیک‌کردار...»

(Literal gloss: the virtuous quilt-making old woman.)

The adjective نیک‌کردار ("virtuous," literally "good-doing") transforms a neutral reference into a moral designation. Character identity is thus framed less through the narrative function and more through ethical evaluation. The translation explicitly marks the quiltmaker as a figure of moral authority, encouraging readers to interpret her actions through the lens of virtue.

In Appraisal terms, these lexical shifts simultaneously intensify Affect (positive regard) and Judgement (ethical approval of character).

5.5. Cosmological enlargement

A fifth pattern, cosmological enlargement, elevates moments of aesthetic or emotional significance by projecting them onto a wider symbolic or natural scale.

ST: "It was so beautiful that hummingbirds and butterflies fluttered about."

«لحاف به قدری زیبا و باشکوه بود که پروانه‌های رنگین و پرنده‌های کمیاب، بی‌اختیار دور تا دور آن شروع به پرواز کردند.»

(Literal gloss: the quilt was so beautiful and magnificent that colorful butterflies and rare birds involuntarily began flying around it.)

The additions باشکوه ("magnificent") and پرنده‌های کمیاب ("rare birds") intensify the aesthetic dimension of the scene. Beauty is not simply observed; it exerts an almost gravitational attraction on the surrounding natural world.

A comparable expansion appears in the depiction of the king's final transformation:

ST: "his eyes glittered with joy and his laugh was wonderful and thunderous."

«در چشمان پادشاه دریایی از شادی و روشنائی موج می‌زد.»

(Literal gloss: in the king's eyes a sea of joy and brightness was waving.)

Here, the translation replaces the source text's mixed visual and auditory imagery with a luminous metaphor of abundance. Emotional change is rendered as an expansive landscape, transforming internal feeling into a visible field of light.

Within the appraisal framework, this strategy primarily intensifies Appreciation while simultaneously reinforcing Affect, scaling emotional experience to a level that borders on the symbolic or transcendent.

Taken together, these examples reveal a consistent pattern of increased evaluative density. At narratively significant moments—moral failure, remorse, generosity, and communal celebration—the Persian translation tends to heighten the salience and perceptual vividness of ethical cues. Emotional states are frequently externalized through metaphor and sensory imagery; compassion is foregrounded through evaluative epithets; and moral transformation is represented as an environmental or symbolic spectacle.

The cumulative effect may be described as “moral indexing”: a patterned marking of characters, actions, and outcomes that allows readers to recognize the story's ethical orientation more immediately. Through these recurrent shifts, the translation redistributes resources of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation, moving the narrative's evaluative stance from relatively implicit description toward more salient moral signaling.

Importantly, these intensifications cluster around ethically consequential narrative moments rather than appearing evenly throughout the text. Their precise motivations, however, remain interpretively open. The observed expansions may reflect pedagogical orientation on the part of the translator, stylistic conventions within Persian children's literature that favor emotional expressivity, or editorial norms associated with the publishing institution.

Because the analysis focuses on a single text, these possibilities should be understood as contextual interpretations rather than causal explanations. What the comparison clearly shows, however, is a systematic shift in evaluative density between the source and target texts. The Persian translation preserves the narrative structure of the original story while presenting a discursive texture in which moral meanings are articulated with greater clarity and sensory vividness.

6. Discussion

The analysis shows that the Persian translation of *The Quiltmaker's Gift* reshapes the evaluative texture of the narrative while leaving its plot and core moral message intact. Across the examples examined, shifts in lexical choice, metaphor, and narrator stance foreground moral and emotional cues more vividly. Rather than altering narrative events, the translation redistributes evaluative emphasis through language. In this sense, the findings support the view that translation can function as a form of ethical mediation, where interpretive guidance is embedded in micro-level linguistic choices.

From a translation-studies perspective, this pattern refines classical explanations of adaptation in children's literature. Shavit (1986) argued that the peripheral status of children's literature within the literary polysystem grants translators greater latitude to adapt texts to pedagogical expectations. The present case suggests that such adjustment need not involve structural rewriting. None of the examined passages introduce new narrative events or remove existing ones. Instead, ethical recalibration may occur through what might be described as micro-level redistributions of Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation that cumulatively reshape the narrative's moral tone. In this sense, Shavit's macro-systemic account of translational freedom becomes observable at the micro-discursive level, where ideological alignment is traceable in lexico-grammatical patterning.

This micro-level perspective also illuminates the translator's pedagogical role emphasized in scholarship on children's literature translation. Lathey (2006, 2010) describes translators as cultural educators whose interventions often guide the interpretation of young readers. Although the Persian translation examined here does not explicitly articulate such a mission in the paratext, the repeated intensification of empathy, remorse, and generosity suggests a comparable orientation.

The findings also resonate with Oittinen's (2006) concept of the child image, the translator's implicit model of the intended reader. The clarification of internal emotional states and the overt labeling of moral qualities appear consistent with a readership imagined as benefiting from clearer evaluative cues. In this sense, the translation can be understood as scaffolding interpretation, reducing ambiguity about characters' ethical positions. Such scaffolding aligns with Nodelman's (2008) broader observation that children's literature frequently reflects adult assumptions about how young readers should perceive and interpret narrative experience.

At the same time, the results complicate prevailing descriptions of ideological manipulation in Persian children's translation. Previous research has largely

emphasized censorship, omission, and ideological filtering (e.g., Baleghizadeh & Ranjour, 2010; Vahhabzadeh, 2018). The present case highlights a subtler phenomenon. Rarely do the shifts identified here suppress foreign elements; instead, they amplify moral and emotional resonance, yet often through culturally familiar ethical vocabulary. Expressions such as ناجوانمرد (“dishonorable”) draw on recognizable moral registers within Persian discourse. Rather than censoring the source text, the translation appears to reframe its ethical salience within locally resonant evaluative language. In this instance, alignment with local ideological and ethical norms operates more through evaluative enrichment than through restriction.

These findings also intersect with research in moral psychology suggesting that emotionally vivid narratives can support moral understanding by enabling readers to empathize with characters and simulate social situations (Rottman et al., 2017; Gasser et al., 2022). The translation’s sensory imagery and affective amplification may therefore enhance the moral readability of the story. The notion of moral indexing proposed here helps describe this process: evaluative cues are distributed in ways that make the ethical orientation of characters and events more readily recognizable.

At the same time, interpretive caution is necessary. Because the analysis focuses on a single translated text, it does not claim that evaluative intensification characterizes Persian children’s translation more broadly. The observed patterns may reflect the stylistic preferences of the translator, editorial practices within the publishing institution, or wider conventions of Persian narrative style. While some degree of emotional explicitness may reflect broader stylistic tendencies within Persian narrative prose, the analysis focuses specifically on recurrent evaluative additions that emerge relationally through source–target comparison. Likewise, while the shifts identified are consistent with pedagogical motivations, the study does not attempt to infer the translator’s intentions; its claims remain grounded only in *observable contrasts* between the source and target texts.

Taken together, these findings suggest that translator agency in children’s literature often operates through subtle shifts in language rather than overt rewriting. By adjusting the distribution of evaluative cues within the narrative, a translation can gently recalibrate the story’s emotional and moral orientation while leaving its overall structure intact. From this perspective, domestication in children’s literature may be understood less as simple cultural substitution and more as a form of ethical

mediation, carried out through the nuanced linguistic shaping of how characters, actions, and values are evaluated within the narrative.

Future research could test the broader applicability of these observations through comparative studies of other translations, translators, or publishing contexts—particularly within institutions such as Kanoon's catalogue—or through corpus-based analyses of appraisal resources in translated and non-translated Persian children's literature.

7. Conclusion

This article examined how translator agency may function as a form of ethical mediation in the Persian translation of Jeff Brumbeau's *The Quiltmaker's Gift*. Through close comparison of selected source and target passages, the analysis identified a recurring tendency for the translation to heighten the emotional and evaluative clarity of ethically significant moments. Five strategies of ethical intensification were observed—*affective dramatization*, *emotional interiorization*, *sensory magnification*, *lexical compassion*, and *cosmological enlargement*—through which evaluative cues become more salient while the narrative structure remains unchanged.

Using the analytical categories of Appraisal Theory, the study showed how translator agency can become visible at the level of discourse. Rather than appearing only through overt adaptation or ideological rewriting, agency may also emerge through patterned redistributions of evaluative meaning across *Affect*, *Judgement*, and *Appreciation*. The notion of *moral indexing* proposed here describes the cumulative effect of these shifts, whereby characters, actions, and outcomes are marked in ways that make the story's ethical orientation more readily recognizable to readers.

The findings also offer a more nuanced view of domestication in children's literature translation. In this case, ethical alignment occurs not through structural modification or censorship but through subtle adjustments in metaphor, lexical choice, and narrative evaluation. Domestication can therefore be understood as a form of structured ethical mediation, enacted through micro-level discursive choices.

Because the analysis focuses on a single translated text, these observations should be regarded as exploratory rather than generalizable. Future research could extend this approach through comparative or corpus-based studies of appraisal resources in Persian children's literature translation, helping to clarify whether similar patterns of evaluative redistribution appear across other texts and publishing contexts.

Such work would further illuminate how translation for children functions not merely as linguistic transfer, but as a culturally situated practice of ethical and emotional mediation.

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