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**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Translation**

Title:

**A Comparative Analysis of Cultural Specific Elements in Three
Persian Translations of Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone**

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In The Name of God

DECLARATION

I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently, using only the sources listed in the bibliography. The thesis has been supervised by Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Hossein Ghoreishi. Dr. Katayoun Toossi has advised me for this thesis. This thesis has never been presented for any similar institution or higher educational degree before.

Birjand, Iran

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Author's signature

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Abstract

CLT (children literature translation) is a complex area of study. Contrary to common belief, translating for children may not be easier than translating for adults. Cultural elements bear concepts related to the culture of a community and translators might face many problems in translating them. Because of their little experience and limited world knowledge, children might encounter some problems in reading the literature of other cultures. Sometimes, there are some cultural elements that are contrary to our culture, especially in the genre of fantasy in which finding a proper equivalent for things that do not exist in real world is difficult. Thus, it is important to consider which strategies translators employ in rendering these items.

This thesis is going to compare three Persian translations of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone*, to analyze and compare the strategies employed by the three translators in rendering CSI (culture specific items) in this story. Finding the most frequent strategy and the best one for translating CSIs in ChL (children literature) is the aim of this study. Eirlys E. Davies's strategies in translating CSIs have been used here. The results indicate that the strategy of preservation has been the most frequent one. Since children have little experience and limited world knowledge, a combination of strategies seems to be a proper one.

Keywords: Children literature, Culture, Children literature translation, Culture-specific items, Davies's translation strategies,

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List of Abbreviations

The Word	Abbreviation
ChL	Children literature
CLT	Children literature translation
CSI	Culture Specific Items
A	Eshragh
B	Shaabani
C	Kebriyaei
Pre	Preservation
Add	Addition
Loc	Localization
Glo	Globalization
Omi	Omission
Tra	Transformation
Cre	Creation

Chapter One

1.1 Statement of the problem

During translation a text of one language is rendered into another one. Larson (1998) introduces a definition of translation as follows: Translation consists of studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, cultural context of the source language text, analyzing it in order to determine its meaning, and then reconstructing this same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context (Larson, 1998:3).

Considering definition of translation from Larson's point of view, we find out that this concept not very simple. Each language has a special lexicon and grammatical structure. Also, when a translator wants to reproduce the same meaning, s/he should consider the cultural context of the source and target languages. Translation is also a means for people to communicate to each other. Varieties in languages (lexicon and grammatical structure) and cultural contexts cause translators to resort to different strategies in the act of translating. Therefore, there is a close relation between concepts such as: culture, language, and translation.

The process of translating and its relation to culture become more complicated when it is located in the area of ChL, and translators should have a different view about translation because of the specificity of its child reader. CLT can be introduced as a means of educating and instructing. Considering children's little knowledge and experience of life and having awareness of being various cultures

of other countries, translators must employ appropriate strategies in translating ChL and culture specific items existed in it. Davies (2003:68) claims that in translating these culture specific items, translator is often portrayed as a mediator whose task is to make these various cultural manifestations accessible to the reader of the translation. Translator by employing a proper strategy can make a text more comprehensible to children. When translators use the localization strategy, in fact they replace the item with an equivalent that makes these culture specific items accessible to target reader.

Due to the importance of the choice of a proper strategy rendering CSIs, the researcher has selected the first Rowling's book, *Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone*, to scrutinize the strategies that translators have adopted in rendering CSIs, such as clothes, customs and games, mythological characters, flora, place, food, drink, weight and measures, and currency.

1.2 Introduction

According to Munday (2006:4), there are several concepts in the field of translation: the general subject field, the product (the text that has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating). If strategies employed by translators are different, various translations will be created. This process is very complex and its complexity increases if the translation is intended for children because of the issues explained before.

Oittinen (2000:6) claims that translation is as cross-cultural communication-including child and adult culture- especially from the point of view of different readers. The issue of communicating and being familiar with cultures of other countries by translating show that in the process of translating translator does not deal with just text of a language. According to Kazimieras Ambrasas-Sasnava

(1978 as cited in Petrulionè, 2012:43), translators' work is not simply "a transformation of written or oral text into the text of another language".

Like other literatures, in Persian literature, many of the texts presented to children are translated from other languages and cultures. Some of these translated texts might have cultural elements such as customs, beliefs and so on that may be different from those of the target culture. The strategies employed rendering these items are different and important.

Regarding the importance of translating of these items, in this research, the researcher is going to compare strategies that three translators employed in rendering cultural items and to recognize which strategies are more appropriate in rendering culture specific items.

1.3 Research questions and hypotheses

After examining the theoretical basis and gathering and analyzing some empirical data on different approaches toward CLT, the researcher tries to answer the following questions:

1. What strategies do translators most frequently employ in rendering CSIs?
2. Which of these strategies are appropriate in translating CSIs in area of ChL?

The researcher has suggested two hypotheses for these questions:

1. Preservation is the foremost strategy used by translators rendering CSIs.
2. A combination of strategies seems to be an appropriate strategy in translating CSIs in area of ChL.

1.4. Significance of the study

Any text written in a particular language carries the culture, beliefs, and thoughts of that society. Translation can be considered a proper tool in familiarizing children with these elements. Awareness of the fact that translation has an important role in spreading these cultures and thoughts, one cannot ignore the importance of works and translations in ChL.

Khwira (2010:18) indicates that the need for translation is a cultural one since it encourages the cultural exchange and extends the child's environment. Translation, thus, introduces children to cultural patterns they have never been exposed to. By transmission of cultural accomplishment of societies to each other, translation leads to growth and development of the target reader and even the source one.

Considering the significance of ChL and its translation and its effect on children life, in this thesis the researcher is going to study on Rowling's book, *Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone*. This work is located in the area of ChL. There are many literary works, especially English stories translated into Persian for children. Strategies employed by translators rendering these works into Persian are important.

The researcher hopes the present study provide guidelines for determining the appropriate strategies of translation in which cultural, social, ideological and moral factors are significant in determining an appropriate method of translation. Such methodologies can provide tools for studying features of Persian and English ChL and the restrictions imposed on any text which could tentatively become part of the children's cultural and linguistic system.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is composed of five chapters. Chapter One introduces the topic, the statement of the problem, the purpose, research questions and hypotheses. Chapter