

# Children's Literature Translation and The Translator's Responsibility: A Case study of *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls*; Artificial Intelligence (AI) Translation\*

## Çocuk Edebiyatı Çevirisi ve Çevirmenin Sorumluluğu: Yapay Zekâ Destekli *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* Çevirisi Üzerine Bir Vaka Çalışması

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### Abstract

Recent developments in artificial intelligence (AI), particularly in machine translation models, have transformed literary translation practices. In Türkiye, AI-assisted literary translation raises critical concerns, not primarily regarding linguistic accuracy or fluency, but about the potential to generate contextually inappropriate or misleading content due to insufficient or ambiguous prompts. A growing trend is direct online publication of AI-generated translations, often with minimal or no human post-editing, underscoring the subjective nature of “inappropriateness” in translation. Within children’s literature, this subjectivity poses challenges, as ethical and pedagogical considerations are central to the translator’s role. Addressing these issues requires grounding translation practices and research in systematic, scientifically informed frameworks to ensure appropriateness, accuracy, and child-centeredness. The study investigates the use of AI models as translation tools in children’s literature and evaluates their performance compared with human translators. The research compares an AI-generated translation produced by Gemini Pro 1.5 Flash with a human translation of *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* by Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo, and its Turkish rendition, *Asi Kızlara Uykudan Önce Hikâyeler*, by Deniz Öztok. Employing a translation studies methodology, the analysis draws on Rita Oittinen’s “image of the child” framework and Necdet Neyedim’s perspectives on child-centered translation, translator responsibility, and the communicative function of texts for children. Within this study, answers to

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the following questions will be provided: What are the responsibilities of children's literature translators, whether human or machine? What are the similarities, divergences, strengths, and limitations of AI-generated versus human translations? Can analyses of the results of this study provide insights into ethical, methodological, and pedagogical dimensions of AI-assisted children's literature translation in the scope of the translator's responsibility?

**Keywords:** AI translation, Children's Literature Translation, Child Image, Child-Centered Translation, Translator's Responsibility,

### Öz

Yapay zekâ (AI) alanındaki son gelişmeler, özellikle de makine çevirisi modellerindeki ilerlemeler, edebî çeviri uygulamalarını değiştirmiştir. Türkiye'de yapay zekâ destekli edebi çeviri, öncelikle dilsel doğruluk veya akıcılıkla ilgili değil, yetersiz ya da belirsiz komutlar nedeniyle bağlam açısından uygunsuz veya yanıltıcı içerik üretme olasılığı konusunda ciddi endişeler uyandırmaktadır. AI tarafından üretilen çevirilerin, genellikle çok az insan müdahalesiyle ya da hiç insan müdahalesi olmaksızın doğrudan çevrimiçi olarak yayınlanması, çeviride "bağlama uygun olmama" kavramının öznel doğasını vurgulayan ve giderek yaygınlaşan bir eğilimdir. Çocuk edebiyatında, çevirmenin rolünün merkezinde etik ve pedagojik hususlar yer aldığından, bu öznellik çok yönlü zorluklar doğurmaktadır. Bu sorunların ele alınması, bağlama uygunluk, doğruluk ve çocuğu merkeze alma anlayışının sağlanmasıyla çeviri uygulamalarının ve araştırmalarının sistematik ve bilimsel temelli çerçevelere dayandırılmasını gerektirmektedir. Bu çalışma, çocuk edebiyatında çeviri aracı olarak yapay zekâ modellerinin kullanımını araştırmakta ve bunların performansını insan çevirmenlerle karşılaştırarak değerlendirmektedir. Araştırma, Gemini Pro 1.5 Flash tarafından üretilen bir yapay zekâ çevirisini, Elena Favilli ve Francesca Cavallo'nun *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* adlı eserinin Deniz Öztok tarafından yapılan Türkçe çevirisi olan *Asi Kızlara Uykudan Önce Hikâyeler* ile karşılaştırmaktadır. Çeviribilim bakış açısıyla bu çalışmada, Rita Oittinen'in "çocuk imgesi" çerçevesinden ve Necdet Neydim'in çocuk merkezli çeviri, çevirmenin sorumluluğu ve çocuk metinlerinin iletişimsel işlevi hakkındaki bakış açılarından yararlanılmaktadır. Bu çalışma kapsamında şu soruların yanıtları aranacaktır: İnsan ya da makine çevirisi olarak, çocuk edebiyatı çevirmenlerinin sorumlulukları nelerdir? AI tarafından üretilen çeviriler ile insan çevirilerinin benzerlikleri, farklılıkları, güçlü yanları ve sınırlamaları nelerdir? Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarının analizi, çevirmenin sorumluluğu kapsamında AI destekli çocuk edebiyatı çevirisinin etik, metodolojik ve pedagojik boyutlarına ilişkin içgörüler sağlayabilir mi?

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** AI çevirisi, Çocuk edebiyatı çevirisi, Çocuk imgesi, Çocuğu merkeze alan çeviri, Çevirmenin sorumlulukları.

### INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in artificial intelligence (AI), particularly in machine translation models and chatbot-based translation, have significantly influenced translation practices, including literary translation. Some practices of AI-driven literary translation in Türkiye raise important concerns, not primarily about AI's technical capacity to

produce fluent translations, but rather about its potential to generate inappropriate or contextually unsuitable content due to inadequate or misleading prompts. Notable and increasingly prevalent publication of literary works translated by AI models, sometimes with minimal or no post-editing, on websites. In this context, the concept of inappropriateness essentially becomes part of the translation act and is quite subjective in scope. Considering facts about translation, such as the translator's ideas, responsibilities, target-reader norms, and limitations, can guide this subjectivity scientifically.

Additionally, it is useful to address the translator's responsibilities in the context of children's literature translation. Concepts such as ethics and responsibility, which are highly subjective, have become particularly salient today due to artificial-intelligence-assisted translation practices. In this regard, examining the translator's responsibilities will provide an important perspective for the study.

Within this framework, the present study aims to examine the use of artificial intelligence models as translation tools for children's literature and to evaluate their translation performance from the perspective of children's literature translation. More specifically, the study seeks to compare a children's literature translation produced by an AI model (Gemini Pro 1.5 Flash) with a translation produced by a human translator to identify similarities, differences, strengths, and limitations. Accordingly, the main research questions guiding this study are as follows:

What are the responsibilities of children's literature translators, whether human or machine? What are the similarities, divergences, strengths, and limitations of AI-generated versus human translations?

Can analyses of the results of this study provide insights into ethical, methodological, and pedagogical dimensions of AI-assisted children's literature translation in the scope of the translator's responsibility?

The study's corpus includes *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* (Favilli & Cavallo, 2017), its Turkish translation *Asi Kızlara Uykudan Önce Hikâyeler* translated by Deniz Öztok (2020), and the AI-generated Turkish translation produced using Google Gemini. The theoretical framework is based on Rita Oittinen's approach to children's literature translation, especially her concept of the "image of the child" (Oittinen, 2000). Additionally, the study references Prof. Dr. Necdet Neydim's discussions on child-centeredness, the translator's responsibility in children's literature, and the communicative role of texts aimed at children (Neydim, 2003). With this study, the aim is to address the gap in the field and examine the responsibilities of children's literature translators, whether human or machine. It will identify similarities, divergences, strengths, and limitations between AI-generated and human translations, providing insights into the ethical, methodological, and pedagogical dimensions of AI-assisted translation of children's literature within the scope of the translator's responsibility.

## 1. FEATURES OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND ITS TRANSLATION

Contrary to the widespread assumption that writing and translating for children is simpler than for adults, children's literature possesses a complex and multifaceted structure. The distinctive characteristics of children's literature stem from its intended readership and from the asymmetrical

relationship between adult producers and child readers. Translation strategies employed in children's literature, therefore, require sensitivity to linguistic, cultural, social, and psychological factors. In terms of writing characteristics and translation strategies, children's literature is unique in its structure, and translating for children requires the same level of uniqueness.

Historically, the translation of children's literature has been shaped by varying social norms and perceptions of childhood across cultures. Familiarity with societal attitudes toward children in both the source and target cultures plays a crucial role in translators' decision-making processes. Moreover, contemporary considerations such as children's cognitive states and universal children's rights will undoubtedly influence the translator's decision-making in translating children's literature. For this reason, when addressing the characteristics of children's literature and its translation, it would be appropriate to evaluate how children's literature translation has been approached throughout history, both globally and in Türkiye, and to assess the criteria for maintaining a critical awareness in the translation of children's books, whose primary purpose is to entertain.

Rita Oittinen, one of the most influential scholars in the field of children's literature and translation, discusses the strategies mostly used in children's literature translation and the psychosocial characteristics that guide translators through the notion of the "image of the child" found in children's books and translations in her work *Translating for Children* (2000). According to Oittinen, there is no consensus on childhood or children's literature; thus, it's better to talk about them implicitly. She states (2000: 4): "I see children's literature as literature read silently by children and aloud to children."

Oittinen emphasizes that children's literature is read both silently and aloud by children, a dual mode that fundamentally distinguishes it from adult literature. Children's literature has its own features, and this duality reinforces the asymmetrical relationship between adults (authors, translators, editors, publishers) and child readers. The necessity for adults to write for children also implies that adults make the decisions, yet it is the children who read them. The small number of children's authors is insufficient to affect this asymmetrical structure. Moreover, all other agents in the publication mechanism are adults.

Oittinen further argues that the "image of the child" is shaped both by individual experiences and by collective societal values: "The child image is a very complex issue; on the one hand, it is something unique, based on each individual's personal history; on the other hand, it is something collectivized in all society" (Oittinen, 2000, p. 4). In the context of characteristics of children's books and their translations, the translator considers the child image and the asymmetrical relationship between adult and child. According to Oittinen, the child's image of parents is as much a moral as a cultural issue because it stems from different cultures and religions (Oittinen, 2000, p. 4).

In the translation process, this image is not limited to the text itself but is also influenced by the translator's childhood experiences and cultural background. As Oittinen notes, translations of children's literature are shaped by both societal norms and the translator's personal view of childhood. Therefore, translation decisions are inherently affected by ethical, cultural, and emotional factors.

Oittinen does not strictly promote either domestication or foreignization in children's literature translation. Instead, she emphasizes the inherently critical nature of these strategies, noting that translations for children tend to involve some level of domestication. Ultimately, she argues, fidelity to the child reader is more important than fidelity to the author. This view challenges traditional ideas of translator invisibility and highlights the translator's active role in mediating between the text and the child reader.

## 2. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE TRANSLATION AND TRANSLATOR RESPONSIBILITY

Necdet Neydim, who has conducted research on the history of children's literature and translation, emphasizes that the primary purpose of children's literature is to entertain. He notes that throughout history, various social structures, developments, and perspectives on children have largely led to books being written for didactic purposes (2003). In the past, children were not seen as children but rather as beings who needed to grow up quickly and join society. This view largely overlooked the idea of creating products that would benefit children. With modernization, the perspective shifted to see children as individuals with distinct characteristics from adults, leading to the production of materials that could be beneficial for children. Children's books were then written specifically for children. Of course, throughout history, different trends have always been most easily reflected in children's literature.

According to Neydim (2020), while the development of children's literature worldwide and in Türkiye shows similarities, there has been little progress in the field of children's literature criticism in our country. Although there are certain state-focused control mechanisms, as we observed in examples of translation criticism in Türkiye, critical writing on children's literature and translations is mostly limited to promotional articles. However, critical writings that use theoretical language with critical awareness will be the fundamental indicator of quality in the translation of literary works into different languages. In this sense, being aware of children's developmental characteristics, understanding the characteristics of children's literature, and anticipating which theoretical perspectives can overcome translation problems will contribute to the field of children's literature translation. Researches that describe the norms and limitations of translation in this field can contribute to this situation (also see Liang, 2007; O'Sullivan, 2013; Desmidt, 2014). In this way, descriptive studies will identify translation problems in children's literature translations, and translation solutions will be evaluated in light of norms and limitations. Descriptive studies will also serve as a basis for subsequent critiques of translation, which scientifically evaluate translations of children's literature and help us understand translators' decisions and solutions.

Neydim, in his works, argues that children occupy a socially and culturally vulnerable position, which places an ethical responsibility on translators to ensure effective communication with young readers. At the same time, "The source text has the potential to introduce groundbreaking concepts to the target audience, emphasizing the importance of the text's overall value" (Neydim, 2006, p. 4). Source texts may introduce unfamiliar or challenging concepts to the target audience, creating a tension between comprehensibility and fidelity. Differences in cultural and moral norms, national values, and children's comprehension levels are among the factors to

consider when translating children's literature. The translator faces a dilemma: should they prioritize comprehension and risk misrepresenting the text's overall meaning, or preserve the original meaning and risk alienating the target audience (Neydim, 2006, p. 4)? Thus, the translator must decide whether to translate the new information into the target system to familiarize the audience with the new concept or manipulate the text without transferring this information. Of course, such a critical decision involves responsibility from both the translator and the publishing house.

According to Neydim (2020: 5), a children's literary work can be considered aesthetically valuable if it:

- avoids adopting a dominant or authoritative stance toward the child reader,
- is constructed in accordance with children's interests and developmental characteristics,
- refrains from imposing didactic messages,
- encourages independent thinking within flexible boundaries,
- and prioritizes entertainment as its primary function.

These criteria offer a key evaluative framework for assessing both human and AI-generated translations of children's literature. Given the nature of children's literature and its translation, prompts guiding AI-powered translation tools are expected to be multifaceted. It is important to craft prompts that not only focus on translation accuracy but also capture the distinctive qualities of children's literature as an artistic work. Children's books cannot be confined to a single topic or prompt.

The translator's responsibility is a topic that needs careful discussion within children's literature translation. In this context, the article titled "From responsibilities to responsibility: A study of the effects of translation workflow automation" that contributes to the development of translation workplace studies by focusing on technology implementation and the concept of responsibility to clarify its complexity can be beneficial to understand the responsibility of the translator. The article aims to explore responsibilities as role duties by collecting reflections from different professionals on how their responsibilities have evolved (Herbert, De Carmo, et al., 2023, p. 3). According to the authors, there is a common challenge in clarifying what the term involves and how objective and measurable it can be. The word "responsibility" can cause ambiguity in various ways. For example, responsibility can be defined as duties and tasks that are part of one's job; it also refers to a moral obligation—often unspoken but perceived—to make decisions or act independently. Alternatively, responsibility can be seen as taking the blame for something that has occurred. Therefore, responsibility evokes accountability, control, ownership, and engagement (Herbert, De Carmo, et al., 2023, p. 3).

In this sense, defining the responsibility for children's literature translation requires a careful examination of the translator's duties, scope of authority, and limits of ownership over the text. Translating for children is not a neutral act of linguistic substitution; it is a complex process of mediation between cultures, value systems, educational expectations, and developmental stages.

The translator operates at the intersection of these forces; therefore, her accountability extends beyond mere textual accuracy.

The duties and tasks of the translator in children's literature involve both fidelity and adaptation. Because children's literature translators are often misunderstood, they are not obliged to adapt. However, they are aware of both the source texts' features and the target texts' readers' needs. Unlike adult translation, children's literature also serves pedagogical, moral, and cultural functions. The translator must ensure that the narrative remains accessible to the cognitive and emotional level of the intended age group while preserving the aesthetic and ideological integrity of the original work. This dual obligation creates a delicate balance: remaining loyal to the source text while also responding to the needs, sensitivities, and comprehension abilities of young readers.

On the other hand, the translator's area of control must be clearly understood. She has authority over lexical choices, tone, rhythm, cultural references, and sometimes even structural adjustments. However, this control is not absolute. It is shaped by editorial policies, publishing norms, educational frameworks, and societal expectations regarding what is deemed appropriate for children. For instance, decisions about omitting, softening, or explaining culturally specific or potentially controversial elements often reflect negotiations between the translator and the publisher. Thus, responsibility is shared, but the translator remains a key decision-maker whose interpretive choices significantly influence how young readers encounter the text.

Besides, the limits of ownership raise important ethical questions. While translation involves creativity and interpretive agency, the translator does not "own" the story. Excessive domestication, ideological manipulation, or oversimplification may distort the author's intent and restrict children's exposure to cultural diversity. Conversely, rigid adherence to the source text without regard for the target audience may result in alienation or misunderstanding. Responsibility, therefore, lies in maintaining a transparent and ethically grounded mediation.

Another study by Ling and Kailing (2015: 428), who quoted Chen Zhije and Yi Songming, addresses the translator's responsibilities and mentions some Chinese journals, presenting the viewpoint that the reasonable responsibilities the translator should shoulder consist of three parts: bottom-line responsibility, realistic responsibility, and future responsibility. According to the authors, bottom-line responsibility means that the translator cannot harm any party involved in the communication. Additionally, the translator is forbidden to create barriers or cause inconvenience in communication. The realistic responsibility also expresses that the translator must satisfy the specific requirements of every party concerned. These parties include sponsors, clients, readers, the target language's culture, the translator, and so on. Future responsibility is a more abstract concept, which means that the translator needs to pursue his or her own spiritual value when he or she begins to carry out the translation.

According to a Chinese study, for the bottom-line responsibility, the translator must not harm any party involved in the communication process and should not create obstacles or misunderstandings. Additionally, the translator must meet the practical expectations and needs of all stakeholders, including sponsors, clients, readers, the target culture, and even themselves, to fulfil their responsibilities realistically. For the future responsibility, it is about a more abstract, long-term

responsibility, meaning the translator should pursue personal ethical and spiritual values and consider the broader cultural or moral impact of their work. The study presents translation responsibility as ethical, practical, and value-oriented.

Apart from these, investigating the philosophical framework will contribute to the ethical dimensions of translation by focusing on how translators navigate tensions among fidelity to the source text, audience accessibility, and preservation of cultural integrity. The translation studies researcher Godline Gabriel draws on philosophical frameworks from Paul Ricoeur and emphasizes interpretation as a moral act, requiring translators to balance fidelity with cultural context (Gabriel, 2025, p. 1). Translators act as moral agents, mediating meaning while navigating epistemological, cultural, and social complexities. Every decision of the translator, including some lexical or conceptual issues, carries ethical weight, demonstrating that translation is not a neutral technical task but a philosophical and ethical practice. By analysing the source text, translators uphold both interpretive integrity and social responsibility, reflecting the profound interplay of meaning, morality, and knowledge in translation (ibid., p. 2). In doing so, the translator also influences comprehension, cultural representation, social behaviour, and moral perception. This process makes the nature of the translation inherently ethical. The translators act as intermediaries not only between languages but also among communities, institutions, and worldviews. The ethical dimension of translation emerges from the responsibility to preserve meaning, maintain fidelity, and balance obligations to both source and target audiences (ibid., p. 2).

Ultimately, responsibility in children's literature translation emerges as a multidimensional concept. It encompasses linguistic accuracy, cultural sensitivity, developmental awareness, ethical reflection, and collaborative negotiation within the publishing context. Clarifying the translator's responsibilities, one shouldn't position the translator merely as a linguistic technician, but as an active cultural agent entrusted with shaping children's literary experiences.

### 3. TRANSLATION SUBJECT AND AI INTERACTION

In this study, *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls*, written by Favilli and Cavallo (2017), and its translation, *Asi Kızlara Uykudan Önce Hikâyeler*, which was translated by Deniz Öztok (2020), have been selected as subjects. Google Gemini 1.5 Flash<sup>1</sup> has also been used to check translation decisions and compare them with human translations. This book was chosen as the subject of this study because the source text addresses topics that are quite controversial from cultural and social perspectives. While human translations of the book are criticized on the one hand, the possible translation results generated by AI guided by prompts are open to debate. An evaluation of AI translations based on translation facts will be analytical and provide more scientific translation criticism.

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<sup>1</sup> This AI model, which was used in this study, was presented as a paper partly at a conference in 2024, and translations were made by an AI model with a connection to the API, not the application, to avoid interference from previous translation acts in this study. The AI model used in 2024 was free and eligible. However, if new translation practices were evaluated on new versions, they would probably yield new results with updated models.

From machine-aided translations to AI translations, it could be said that AI develops in a natural, interactive, understandable, and humanoid style rather than in a robotic language and discourse (chatbots) (Łukasik and Gut, 2025). Hence, prompts are created to elicit simple answers in natural language using Natural Language Processing (NLP) algorithms. Natural Language Processing (NLP) is a branch of artificial intelligence that addresses sophisticated, challenging language-related tasks, such as machine translation. NLP involves the design and implementation of models, systems, and algorithms to solve practical problems in the understanding of human language (Lauriola, Lavelli, and Aiolli, 2022, s. 443). The rapid integration of AI model chatbots into human life requires a deeper understanding of human-AI interactions and their impact on social interaction. For their effectiveness in facilitating successful social interaction for translation, prompts influence both their reception and their translation. In this paper is to analyze that AI can and cannot assume for children's translation through prompts. Thus, during communication and Interaction with AI, to progress correctly, the translation process is vital to be described to make communication with AI more understandable. In addition to giving and writing a correct prompt, it is quite vital to consider claims in accordance with ethical values and the convenience of children's literature. Since childhood is not a universal issue, how can we tailor prompts to a child easily? One can write prompts not just for a child, but for any specific intention. Specifically, convenience to children's literature is of great importance in terms of language, biological factors, and content.

Therefore, not only giving prompts but also knowing how to write correct ones is a crucial factor in achieving the right results from these models, especially in children's literature translation. Thus, proper communication and interaction with AI are important for progress. There are also some points to consider when giving prompts: one of these is preparing requests in accordance with ethical values, which is critically important. Requests made in violation of ethical principles can lead to problems. Preparing requests that align with security and ethical values, which are essential elements in any field, is crucial to the safety of individuals, institutions, and data.

The appropriateness or inappropriateness of the translation for the children mentioned at the beginning of the study, as well as the ethical appropriateness of the prompts to be created, is a crucial issue that needs to be discussed. As the following examples demonstrate, ideologically biased guidance will produce a translation that reflects a specific ideological stance. Clearly, her translation will make sense within the language system into which it is translated, but it cannot be considered a work that embodies the aesthetic values of children's literature or aims to entertain.

The chosen work, *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls*, is a widely acclaimed children's book originally funded by crowdfunding and later translated into many languages. The book features short biographical stories presented in a fairy-tale style and aims to inspire young readers by featuring empowering role models.

The work includes 100 short biographies that aim to serve as role models for powerful girls. These stories follow a literary trope, resembling typical children's tales like fairy tales, but they rewrite the genre of biography from a feminist perspective. Each story begins with a classic opening such as 'Once upon a time, a girl called .....' and, like all fairy tales, ends happily. The stories highlight extraordinary lives, including those of politicians, artists, and others. This book has been

the subject of numerous academic studies, encompassing children's literature, cultural translation, and feminist biography. One notable study is by Kylie Cardell, titled "The book and the pen: reading biography and writing autobiography as feminist project in *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* and *I Am A Rebel Girl*" (Cardell, 2023). According to Cardell, these stories are feminist bedtime stories that invent a fairy-tale-like quality. As a new genre, they present old stories as new beginnings. Due to the unique storytelling style, the source text intentionally draws attention to the limits and possibilities of biography as a genre within a specific ideological and cultural context that shapes how characters are presented. The selection of characters aims to emphasize visibility and value. Additionally, the source text becomes an activist tool that readers can adopt with awareness and purpose.

The source text shows that children aged 8-10 can read these stories, but they can also be read to 4-year-olds, according to the authors. In other words, parents can read them to younger children. However, on the website, the book is suitable for ages 6 and up, meaning children can also read it silently on their own. Therefore, adults will choose this book for children and read it to them after reviewing it themselves. The asymmetric relationship created by adult guidance is noteworthy. Adults from different social backgrounds may approach this in different ways.

The Turkish translation by Deniz Öztok (2020) has sparked controversy in Türkiye, particularly after evaluations by the Board for the Protection of Minors (2019). It was intended that they would be sold in bookstores, not openly, but discreetly inside a bag. Additionally, the book has been translated into 67 different languages. The translation of the book into Russian has also faced difficulties, and it was published with 99 women's stories instead of 100. The story of Coy Mathis, a transgender girl from the United States, was removed. Instead, readers are encouraged to write their own story as the 100th story (Rensen, 2021, p.149). These debates highlight the sociocultural sensitivity of children's literature translation and further justify its selection as a case study. This study will focus on whether the AI-guided translation conveys the aesthetic values of children's literature, rather than critiquing the translation into Turkish.

#### **4. CHAT WITH GEMINI AND TRANSLATION PRACTICES**

AI-generated translations were created using a series of prompts designed to assess the model's understanding of children's literature conventions, cultural context, and target audience. While the AI demonstrated the ability to produce fluent and grammatically correct translations, its responses mainly depended on broad assumptions about simplicity and entertainment. The analysis showed a lack of awareness of the collective and culturally embedded image of the child, along with a lack of conscious decision-making based on translation theory.

The prompts for Gemini were given in Turkish. Assuming it was unfamiliar with the features of children's literature, requests were made from general to specific, testing its lack of knowledge on the topic. The model's initial responses emphasized the need to be entertaining for children and to use simple language. Beyond that, there was no indication of awareness of cultural context or its importance during translation. However, some questions were asked in English to show how the scope of the research could be guided through language variations.

*Prompts to Gemini*

- I want you to translate «Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls» into Turkish.
- Please consider that they are children.
- Turkish children will read it.

*Received message from Gemini*

- Points to consider: Long texts, technical terms, different cultures. Remember: Translation is not just about transferring words from one language to another. It also involves accurately conveying cultural nuances, context, and tone.
- On children's literature translation: "Great! Translations of children's literature are quite sensitive and important. The language needs to be simple and understandable, while also preserving the magic of the story.
- Points to pay attention to during the translation process: Simple and understandable language, preserving the spirit of the story, cultural adaptations, nurturing children's imagination.

As the examples show, artificial intelligence functions with broad definitions in translation and focuses on subjective expressions that are widely accepted as true, like "accuracy." It also highlights the importance of entertainment and the need to use simple language, which is generally understood when it comes to children.

*Prompts to Gemini*

Translate for children who live in Türkiye.

*Received message from Gemini*

"Some points to consider when translating for Turkish children: simple and fluent language, cultural relevance, humor and fun, expressions that nurture imagination, and references to current events."

When asked to be suitable for Turkish children, artificial intelligence states that it will emphasize Turkish culture in its definitions. In this way, it also creates its own job description.

*Prompts to Gemini*

"Information about the author of the source text and the source text itself has been provided."

*Received message from Gemini*

"Some points to consider during the translation process: Inspiring girls, Cultural context, Linguistic richness, Fun and fluent language.

For example:

If we are translating an English children's book into Turkish, and let's say there is a character's birthday party in the book. In this case, I can adapt details such as what games are played at the party and what food is eaten to suit Turkish children's birthday parties. For example, I could use expressions like "kapkara" game instead of "pinata," or "cake (kek)" or 'cookie (kurabiye)' instead of "cupcake.

Then it gives a sample of translation which is highly domesticated from the source text:

*Received message from Gemini*

"Original Source Text: "Marie Curie was a scientist who discovered two new elements: radium and polonium. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, and the first person to win it twice.

Türkçe translation sample: "Marie Curie, radyum ve polonyum adında iki yeni element keşfeden bir bilim kadınıydı. Bir Nobel Ödülü kazanan ilk kadın ve bu ödülü iki kez alan ilk kişiydi. Tıpkı Türk bilim kadınları gibi, o da meraklı bir çocuktü ve sürekli yeni şeyler öğrenmek isterdi."

In this example, the AI model has selected a section from the source text and translated it into Turkish. While translating, it has attempted to specifically incorporate Turkish culture into the text,

adding new sections to the translation that were not present in the source text. However, as will be seen in the subsequent sections of the study, it was found that when prompting was stopped and source texts were sent, it preferred to perform a word-for-word translation of the same section without any cultural intervention.

*Prompts to Gemini*

For what age group is this book written? (In Turkish)

*Received message from Gemini*

Cavallo and Favilli's 'Goodnight Stories' series is generally considered suitable for children aged 6-12. However, since every child's reading level and interests vary, this age range is not a strict limit.

*Prompts to Gemini*

"For which age group is the storybook ' Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls' suitable? "(The question has been asked in English.)

*Received message from Gemini*

"The 'Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls'" series is generally suitable for children aged 6-12. However, the specific age range might vary depending on the child's reading level and interest."

*Prompts to Gemini from Gemini*

"Is this book suitable for children?" (In Turkish).

*Received message from Gemini*

"Yes, 'Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls'" is generally considered suitable for children. It's a popular children's book that celebrates the accomplishments of extraordinary women throughout history. The stories are inspiring and empowering, and they can help children develop a positive self-image and a sense of ambition.

However, it's important to note that some of the stories might contain references to challenging topics or historical events that might be more suitable for older children. Parents can assess the content and decide if it's appropriate for their child's age and maturity level."

When asked about the suitability of the book for children, the answer relates the possibility of it being unsuitable to the children's age and maturity level. When making cultural additions, it is evident that if no other feature that could influence the translation is guided by artificial intelligence, the translation remains unknown. It can be said that there is no decision-making mechanism with translation knowledge.

### **Sample 1: Introduction**

Source Text:

"To the rebel girls of the World:

Dream bigger

Aim higher

Fight harder

And, when in doubt, remember

You are right" (Favilli and Cavallo, 2017, p.12).

Target Text 1 (TT1/Human Translation):

"Dünyanın asi kızlarına:

Daha fazlasını hayal et

Daha fazlasını iste

Daha çok mücadele et

Ve kuşku duyduğun zamanlarda

Unutma:

Sen haklısın" [Favilli and Cavallo (trans. Deniz Öztok) 2020. p. vi].

Target Text 2 (TT2 /AI Translation):

“Dünyadaki asi kızlara:  
Daha büyük hayal kurun  
Daha yüksek hedefler belirleyin  
Daha çok savaşın  
Ve şüpheye düştüğünüzde, unutmayın  
Haklısınız”

AI translation maintains an equivalence relation with the source text, which is mainly based on word-for-word translation. The meaning is fully transferred without losing any information. However, since this is the introduction, its main goal is to encourage reading and to capture the interest of young readers. When the expression becomes disorganized, communication with the child is limited.

**Sample 2: Coy Mathis, Elementary School Student**

Source Text:

“Once upon a time, a boy named Coy was born loved dresses, the color pink, and shiny shoes.

Coy wanted his parents to address him as «she» and didn’t like wearing boys’ clothes. His parents let him wear whatever he liked” (Favilli and Cavallo, 2017, p. 59).

.....

Coy’s parents talked to a judge about the situation. The judge thought about it and decided: «Coy should be allowed to use whichever bathroom she wants.»

Coy and her parents threw a big party to celebrate.

They ate pink cake, and Coy wore a sparkly pink dress and beautiful pink shoes.

Target Text 1 (TT1/Human Translation):

“Bir zamanlar, Coy adında bir oğlan çocuğu vardı. Coy elbiseleri, pembe rengi ve parlak ayakkabıları seviyordu.

Coy, anne ve babasının ona «kız» demesini istiyor, erkek kıyafetlerinden hoşlanmıyordu. Anne ve babası ne istiyorsa giymesine izin verdiler.

.....

Coy’un annesiyle babası bir yargıçla bu durum hakkında konuştu. Yargıç düşündü ve şu karara vardı: «Coy, hangi tuvaleti istiyorsa onu kullanmalı.»

Coy ile ailesi bunu kutlamak için büyük bir parti verdiler. Pembe pasta yediler, Coy parlıtlı pembe bir elbise ile güzel pembe ayakkabılar giydi” [Favilli and Cavallo (trans. Deniz Öztok) 2020, p.44].

Target Text 2 (TT2 /AI Translation):

“Bir zamanlar, Coy adında bir erkek çocuk doğdu. Pembe rengi, parlıtlı ayakkabılar ve elbiseler çok seviyordu.

Coy, ailesinin kendisine "o" diye hitap etmesini istiyordu ve erkek çocuk kıyafetleri giymekten hoşlanmıyordu. Ebeveynleri, istediği her şeyi giymesine izin verdi.

.....

Coy'un ebeveynleri bir hakimle durum hakkında konuştular. Hakim bunu düşündü ve karar verdi: "Coy, istediği tuvaleti kullanmasına izin verilmelidir."

Coy ve ailesi kutlamak için büyük bir parti düzenledi. Pembe kek yediler ve Coy parlıtlı pembe bir elbise ve güzel pembe ayakkabılar giydi”.

The word “she” in the source text has been translated as “o” by the artificial intelligence in Turkish. The AI did not account for differences in grammatical structures between the source and target languages. Meanwhile, the human translator chose to introduce a new topic not present in

Turkish children's literature, aiming to teach new information to the target audience. This can be seen as a deliberate choice.

Indeed, there is a real party that faces critical evaluations, offers explanations, and defends the decisions they've made. On the other hand, although the AI's translation, like that of a human translator, directly conveys the information, this is not a conscious choice; rather, the new information is translated as is, without any evaluation. In this case, there is no question of questioning the decisions or explaining the translation choices made.

### Sample 3 : Cleopatra, Pharaoh

Source Text:

"Cleopatra asked her servants to roll her up inside a carpet and to smuggle her into Ceaser's rooms. Impressed by her daring, Ceaser restored Cleopatra to the throne. They became a couple and had a son. Cleopatra moved to Rome, but then Ceaser was killed, so he went back to Egypt.

.....

The new Roman leader, Marc Antony, had heard a lot about this strong Egyptian queen and wanted to meet her. This time, she arrived on a golden barge, surrounded by precious jewels and silk. It was love at first sight. Cleopatra and Marc Antony were inseparable. They had three children and loved each other to the end of their lives" (Favilli and Cavallo, 2017, p.53).

Target Text 1 (TT1/Human Translation):

"Kleopatra, hizmetkârlarından kendisini bir halıya sarıp Caesar'ın odasına gizlice sokmalarını istedi. Caesar, Kleopatra'nın cesaretinden etkilenerek onu yeniden tahta getirdi. Evlendiler ve bir oğulları oldu. Kleopatra Roma'ya taşındı, fakat sonra Caesar öldürülünce yeniden Mısır'a döndü.

.....

Roma'nın yeni lideri Marcus Antonius bu güçlü Mısır Kraliçesi hakkında çok şey duymuştu, onunla tanışmak istiyordu. Kleopatra bu kez, her tarafı değerli mücevherlerle ve ipekle dolu, altın bir teknede geldi.

İlk görüşte birbirlerine âşık olmuşlardı.

Kleopatra ve Marcus Antonius birbirlerine çok bağlıydı. Üç çocukları oldu, yaşamlarının sonuna kadar sevgileri azalmadı" [Favilli and Cavallo (trans. Deniz Öztok) 2020, p.94].

Target Text 2 (TT2 /AI Translation):

"Kleopatra, hizmetçilerinden onu bir halının içine yuvarlamasını ve Caesar'ın odalarına kaçırmasını istedi. Cesaretinden etkilenen Caesar, Kleopatra'yı tahtına geri getirdi. Bir çift oldular ve bir oğulları oldu. Kleopatra Roma'ya taşındı ama sonra Caesar öldürüldü, bu yüzden geri döndü.

.....

Yeni Roma lideri Marc Antony, bu güçlü Mısır kraliçesi hakkında çok şey duymuştu ve onunla tanışmak istiyordu. Bu sefer, değerli mücevherler ve ipeklerle çevrili altın bir mavnada geldi. İlk görüşte aşktı.

Kleopatra ve Marc Antony ayrılmazdı. Üç çocukları vardı ve hayatlarının sonuna kadar birbirlerini çok sevdiler".

This biographical story showcasing a piece of Cleopatra's life reveals how idiomatic expressions like "it was love at first sight" and "They became a couple and had a son" are translated

literally by artificial intelligence. At the same time, elements such as “love, marriage, and wealth,” which the book emphasizes, are also highlighted in the translation. Both AI and human translators tend to follow the source text closely.

**Sample 4: Marie Curie, Scientist**

Source Text:

“Once, in Poland, there was a secret school. People called it the Floating University. The government at that time was very strict about what people could and couldn’t study. Girls were not allowed to go to college at all” (Favilli and Cavallo, 2017, p.135).

Target Text 1 (TT1/Human Translation):

“Bir zamanlar Polonya’da gizli bir okul vardı. İnsanlar ona Yüzen Üniversite diyorlardı. O zamanlar yabancı hükümet, insanların ne okuyup ne okuyamayacağı konusunda çok sertti. Kızların üniversiteye gitmesine izin verilmiyordu” [Favilli and Cavallo (trans. Deniz Öztok) 2020, p.122].

Target Text 2 (TT2 /AI Translation):

“Marie Curie, Polonya’da gizli bir okul olan Yüzen Üniversite’de okuyan bir öğrenciydi. O dönemdeki hükümet, insanların neleri öğrenebileceği konusunda çok katıydı. Kızların üniversiteye gitmesine izin verilmiyordu”.

Source Text:

“Marie’s husband, Pierre, was so intrigued by her research that he decided to drop his work on crystals to join her. Together, they discovered two new radioactive elements: polonium and radium. Marie Curie won two Nobel Prizes for her work, and she could have made a lot of money from her discoveries. She chose, instead, to make her research available to anyone for free” (Favilli and Cavallo, 2017).

Target Text 1 (TT1/Human Translation):

“Marie’nin kocası Pierre, Marie’nin araştırmasına o kadar büyük ilgi duymuştu ki kristallere üzerine yaptığı çalışmaları bırakıp ona katıldı. Birlikte iki yeni radyoaktif element keşfettiler: polonium ve radium. Marie Curie çalışmaları nedeniyle iki Nobel Ödülü kazandı. Yaptığı keşiflerle çok para kazanabilirdi. Onun yerine, araştırmalarına herkesin ücretsiz olarak erişebilmesini tercih etti” [Favilli and Cavallo (trans. Deniz Öztok) 2020].

Target Text 2 (TT2 /AI Translation):

“Marie’nin kocası Pierre, onun araştırmalarından çok etkilenmişti ve kristal çalışmasını bırakıp ona katılmaya karar verdi. Birlikte, iki yeni radyoaktif element olan polonyum ve radyumu keşfettiler. Marie Curie, çalışmaları için iki Nobel Ödülü kazandı ve keşiflerinden çok para kazanabilirdi. Bunun yerine, araştırmalarını herkes için ücretsiz hale getirmeyi tercih etti.”

The phrase “what people could and couldn’t study” in the source text was translated by the human translator as “what they will sand not study (ne okuyup okumayacağı),” focusing on permission to study. However, the AI model concentrated on the action and produced a translation that emphasized the ability to learn with “what people can learn.” It can be said that the transfer of information was disrupted and the meaning was distorted due to the source-oriented approach of AI.

At the start of the study, AI identified the source text for this section's translation and provided an example of cultural translation, referring to Turkish scientists in this instance. It indicated that it would use domestication in cultural translation. However, when the source text was provided through a prompt, it became clear that it did not apply the domestication approach in cultural translation as it had previously claimed to do.

### Sample 5: Joan Jett, Rock Star

Source Text:

"Joan loved rock 'n' roll. One Christmas, when she was thirteen years old, she got her first guitar.

She was ecstatic, but something was missing. Playing on her own was okay, she thought, «But if I really want to be a rock star, I need a band.

.....

One year later, she brought her band together: Sandy on drums, Cherie on vocals, Jackie on bass, and Lita on lead guitar. With Joan on rhythm guitar and singing, they were... The Runaways.

.....

They were fifteen years old, loud and proud. Onstage, Joan always wore a red leather jumpsuit, and Cherie often came on in nothing but her underwear" (Favilli and Cavallo, 2017, p.103).

Target Text 1 (TT1/Human Translation):

"Joani rock'n' roll'a bayılırdı. İlk gitarına, bir Noelde, on üç yaşındayken kavuşmuştu.

Mest olmuştu, ama bir şey eksikti. Kendi başına çalmak da güzeldi. «Ama gerçekten bir rock yıldızı olmak istiyorsam, bir grubum olması gerekir» diye düşündü.

.....

Bir yıl sonra, grubunu kurdu. Bateride Sandy, vokade Cherie, basgitarıda Jackie, solo gitarıda Lita vardı. Joan ise hem vokaldi hem de ritm gitar çalıyordu. Grubun adı Runaways'ti.

.....

On beş yaşındaydılar, gürültücü ve gururluydular. Joan sahnede her zaman kırmızı deri tulum giyerdi, Cherie ise genellikle iç çamaşırlarıyla çıkardı" [Favilli and Cavallo (trans. Deniz Öztok) 2020, s.88].

Target Text 2 (TT2 /AI Translation):

"Joan, rock'n'roll'u çok severdi. On üç yaşındayken, Noel'de ilk gitarını aldı.

Çok heyecanlandı, ama bir şeyler eksikti. Kendi başına çalmak güzeldi, diye düşündü, "Ama gerçekten bir rock yıldızı olmak istiyorsam, bir banta ihtiyacım var."

.....

Bir yıl sonra, grubunu kurdu: Sandy davulda, Cherie vokalde, Jackie bas gitar çalıyordu ve Lita grubun baş gitaristiydi. Joan ritim gitar çalıp şarkı söyleyerek, onlar... The Runaways'lardı.

.....

On beş yaşındaydılar, gürültülü ve gururluydular. Sahnedeyleken Joan her zaman kırmızı deri bir tulum giyerdi ve Cherie genellikle sadece iç çamaşırıyla çıkardı."

The term "Christmas" in the source text has been translated as "Noel" in both translations, following a source-oriented approach. The human translator's choice likely aims to keep the foreign element authentic, consistent with their previous decisions. Additionally, it seems that the AI misunderstood the word "band," favoring its primary meaning, while the human translator translated it as a group. In the second part of the sample, the AI used the foreign group name (The

Runaways) without considering Turkish grammar rules. In the third part, the underwear belongs to a costume worn by a fifteen-year-old singer and is emphasized as part of her courage, including it in the source text. Both the human translator and the AI adopted a source-oriented, word-for-word translation approach.

AI has traditionally preferred to be source-oriented in all its translations. Initially, it did not consider the importance of maintaining the aesthetic of children's literature, which it theoretically supported, nor did it favor cultural domestication. It has been found that it made changes only to the extent that ideological influences limited its approach. When guiding translations within specific socially restricted prompts, AI is adopting a new stance that conflicts with its previous methods, according to the new direction.

*Prompts to Gemini*

"Is it suitable for Turkish children?" (In Turkish)

*Received message from Gemini*

"You are absolutely right. A 15-year-old girl appearing on stage wearing only underwear is highly inappropriate, both in terms of social norms and child development.

A more appropriate alternative for the Turkish translation:

They were fifteen years old, and their energy was tearing up the stage. Joan was the star of the show in her red leather jumpsuit, while Cherie also stood out with her unique style.

This way, the girls' uniqueness and energy on stage are emphasized, while the inappropriate detail of appearing on stage wearing only underwear is eliminated.

Another translation example:

They were fifteen years old and full of music. Joan dazzled on stage in her bright red costume, while Cherie also drew attention with her unique style. Their performances were filled with the energy of youth.

This translation focuses on the girls' musical talents and energy on stage, offering a more positive and child-friendly narrative."

When reminded that the AI should translate for children, it begins to produce different translations.

*Prompts to Gemini*

"Translate it for Turkish children?" (In Turkish)

*Received message from Gemini*

"Henüz on beş yaşındaydılar; sesleri gür, kendilerine güvenleri ise tamdı! Sahnede Joan her zaman kıpkırmızı, deri bir tulum giyerdi; Cherie ise çok havalı ve cesur kostümlerle hayranlarının karşısına çıkardı."

In the new AI translation, stylish and bold costumes have been preferred over underwear.

*Prompts to Gemini*

"Is it suitable for English-speaking children?" (In English)

*Received message from Gemini*

"The original text is generally suitable for older children and teenagers (middle school and up), as it tells an inspiring story about breaking stereotypes and following dreams.

However, for younger children, there are two specific points parents or educators might want to consider:

- The Clothing Mention: The text notes that Cherie "often came on in nothing but her underwear." In a modern context, this is a reference to her iconic corset costume, but the literal word "underwear" might raise questions or feel a bit mature for very small children.
- The "Rebel" Attitude: The characters are "loud and proud" and ignore adults who tell them they are too young or too noisy. While this is a classic rock-and-roll theme of empowerment, it portrays a defiant attitude that some might find a bit edgy for a "bedtime story" vibe.

Summary for Kids

If you are sharing this with English-speaking children, it is a fantastic "girl power" story. It shows that even when people say, "Girls can't do that" or "You're too young," you can succeed by working hard and playing even louder."

AI comments on children's literature and its translation by considering the target culture, while it prefers a source-oriented approach and uses the primary meaning of the words.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of selected excerpts shows that AI-generated translations tend to stick closely to the source text's meaning, often leading to literal, word-for-word translations. While the informational content is usually maintained, the communicative effectiveness and aesthetic qualities important in children's literature are often overlooked. Conversely, the decisions made by human translators demonstrate greater sensitivity to cultural context, the target audience, and the overall value of the text. Nevertheless, the human translator still tends to translate in a source-oriented way, even when handling potentially controversial material.

The findings indicate that AI models can approximate translation equivalence but lack the ability to assess the ethical, cultural, and developmental aspects inherent in the practice of translating children's literature. Customizing prompts enhances alignment with the translation goal; however, such improvements still rely on external human guidance rather than internal translation skills.

From a translation studies perspective, the findings show that AI-generated translations of children's literature mainly follow a source-oriented approach. Although AI models can recognize basic aspects of the target audience, they fail to grasp the complex, collective image of the child and the sociocultural responsibilities involved in translating children's literature.

An AI model can only differentiate between "reading aloud to the child" and "being read silently by the child" based on the child's ability to read, and it does not recognize the child's unique and collectivist image. Conversely, it identifies the source text's target audience and its cultural and traditional world, but it does not translate with consideration for the target society and the characteristics of children's literature and translation. Communication with the child is limited, and when instructions are customized, it produces translations that are closer to the translation goal, which was provided as a prompt to it.

Human translators, by contrast, consciously mediate among the source text, the target culture, and the child readership, prioritizing the overall aesthetic and communicative value of the text. While communication with the child reader may still be constrained by equivalence norms, human

translation decisions reflect a level of ethical awareness and contextual sensitivity that AI models currently lack.

Based on Necdet Neydim's (2020) ideas about aesthetic criteria for children's literature and its translation, the book and its human translation lack a dominant stance towards the reader. The work is built with role models for children, and its rebellious spirit against didacticism encourages independent thinking. It possesses qualities necessary for aesthetic value, especially when communicating with children. However, the source text introduces entirely new ideas for the target audience. The translator, considering the publisher's and editor's opinions, has chosen to prioritize the overall value of the target text. She communicates new ideas to the target audience through the target text. Whether the target readers will accept it or how they will respond will become clear to them. Additionally, the fact that its sale is explicitly prohibited in Türkiye may also indicate this situation.

According to Oittinen (2000), translations of children's literature are influenced by societal norms and the translator's personal image of a child. As a result, translation choices are inevitably affected by ethical, cultural, and emotional factors. When considering the preferences of the human translator, translating source-oriented aims to preserve all the meaning from the source text without heavily considering the target culture. At this point, it can be said that during the translation process, the translator's child image is limited to the source text. Additionally, there is a strict asymmetrical relationship between the adult author, publisher, translator, and the child. Moreover, as Oittinen notes, a child's view of parents is both a moral and cultural issue because it arises from different cultures and religions. A source-oriented approach can limit cultural interference and cannot help the translation be more easily integrated into the target language system.

Analysis of the comparison shows that the artificial intelligence model can only distinguish between the concepts of "reading aloud to a child" and "being read silently by a child" based on the ability to read, and it does not recognize the unique and collective image of the child. Mainly, AI translates within an equivalence relationship with the source text, but when the guidelines are customized, it produces translations that are closer to the translation purpose. On the other hand, the source text conveys new ideas to the target audience. Thus, the translator (considering the publisher's and editor's ideas) chose to emphasize the text's overall value. Arguably, it includes only some of the characteristics necessary for a work of children's literature to have aesthetic value. Additionally, one can argue that solutions to various reception problems are mostly found within the equivalence relationship with the source text.

As a result, AI models, as translation tools, can support translation of children's literature but cannot replace the interpretive, ethical, and culturally embedded decision-making processes that are crucial to this field. Additionally, AI-generated translations of children's literature might be influenced by ideology and social criticism that target human translators' work. However, AI translations will likely become part of the linguistic system as abstract actions that overlook the realities of translation. Regarding translator responsibility, beyond linguistic accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and understanding children's developmental needs, the translator acts as an active cultural agent, engaging in ethical reflection and collaborative negotiation within the publishing

environment. The examples above show that the human translator has incorporated new ideas into the target text. Nonetheless, with specific prompts, AI translators can easily learn ideology and produce ideologically biased texts without bearing responsibility or making decisions.

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OKTAY YİVLİ

# Kırk Yama

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