

ETHICAL NORMS IN USING AI TECHNOLOGIES FOR TRANSLATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Abstract. *This article examines the ethical dimensions of using artificial intelligence in the translation of children's literature, focusing on issues such as cultural preservation, age-appropriate language, and the expressive nuances of the original text. The study highlights the risks associated with AI-generated translations, including the loss of emotional depth, stylistic integrity, and culturally specific elements essential for a child's cognitive and moral development. At the same time, the article acknowledges the potential benefits of AI, such as increased efficiency and support in creating draft translations and glossaries. Ultimately, it emphasizes that AI can be ethically integrated into the translation process only when combined with human oversight, professional judgment, and a commitment to maintaining the educational and cultural value of children's literature.*

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, children's literature, ethical issues, translation, cultural adaptation, age-appropriateness.*

Over the past decade, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has radically transformed translation processes, including the field of children's literature. Thanks to modern machine-learning technologies, it has become possible to automatically process large volumes of text, ensuring high translation speed, stylistic accuracy, and adaptation for different audiences. However, alongside this technological progress, serious ethical dilemmas have emerged. These concern issues of reliability, responsibility, data security, and respect for the cultural integrity of the original work, especially when the text is intended for children.

Children's literature has unique characteristics, in addition to its entertainment function, it plays an essential role in education, shaping a child's worldview, and introducing young readers to the traditions of their own and other cultures. Any mistakes or incorrect interpretations made by AI systems when processing such texts may negatively influence a child's developing perception of the world. For this reason, a comprehensive examination of the ethical aspects of using AI in the translation of children's literature becomes particularly significant.

Modern technologies have brought about a revolution in translation practice and continue to evolve rapidly, transforming how translation is perceived by users as well as how it is conceptualized by practitioners and theorists [1, 345]. In the context of children's literature, these technological shifts create both new opportunities and new risks. The convenience and accessibility offered by AI-driven translation tools can support the dissemination of children's books across linguistic boundaries, yet the same tools may fail to grasp the emotional nuance, cultural specificity, and pedagogical intent embedded in texts aimed at young readers. This tension between efficiency and ethical responsibility underscores the need for careful analysis of how artificial intelligence should be



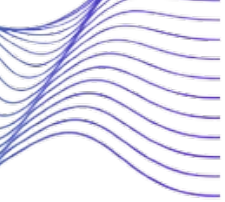
integrated into translation practices involving highly sensitive and culturally meaningful content.

The concept formulated by V. V. Sdobnikov regarding the primary task of the translator provides an important theoretical foundation for examining the ethical challenges associated with using artificial intelligence in the translation of children's literature. According to Sdobnikov, the translator's main objective is to create a text that is genuinely useful for the end user and supports them in achieving their communicative goals [4, 77]. Likewise, readers approach a translated text with the expectation that it will provide information that is accurate, meaningful, and relevant to their needs. Within the context of children's literature, this idea allows us to assert that AI-generated translations can be considered ethically acceptable only when they contribute to the child's intellectual and emotional development and help form an accurate understanding of cultural, historical, and moral values. Thus, the effectiveness of AI translation should not be measured merely by its speed or automation, but by its ability to satisfy the cognitive and developmental needs of young readers.

From this perspective, the use of AI in translating children's books must be guided by the core educational mission of children's literature. Technologies involved in this process should preserve the narrative integrity, emotional tone, and aesthetic qualities of the original text. Artificial intelligence, therefore, carries an ethical responsibility: it must not only process language efficiently but also respect the pedagogical and cultural functions of literature written for children. Only when AI-assisted translations remain faithful to the educational and moral purposes of the original work can such technologies be ethically integrated into the field of children's literature translation. This alignment ensures a balance between technological efficiency and the deeper responsibility of shaping young readers' worldviews.

The language of children's literature is characterized by vivid imagery, emotional depth, and lyrical expression, reflecting the way children think and perceive the world. Authors of children's books take into account that young readers typically have limited knowledge about the world, a value system that differs from that of adults, and a lower level of language competence. These features are manifested in the style, vocabulary, and narrative structures of children's literature, forming its unique linguistic character [8, 565]. When considering the use of artificial intelligence in translating such texts, these characteristics highlight an important ethical concern. AI systems, while efficient in processing language, often struggle to reproduce emotional nuances, lyrical qualities, and culturally embedded references inherent in children's literature. This limitation can affect not only the readability and engagement of the text but also the educational and moral impact it has on young readers. Therefore, ethical AI-assisted translation must prioritize preserving the stylistic and linguistic features that are specifically designed for the cognitive and emotional development of children, ensuring that the resulting translation remains faithful to the educational and cultural purposes of the original work.

Within the linguistic context of translating children's literature, word choice is especially critical in shaping meaning, tone, and emotional impact for young readers. As I. V. Usova rightly emphasizes, "in literary fiction, the choice of words plays a significant semantic and expressive role" [6, 248]. In the case of AI-assisted translation, this highlights



a key ethical concern: while machine translation can process vocabulary efficiently, it often lacks the nuanced understanding necessary to preserve the expressive and semantic richness of the original text. For children, even subtle shifts in word choice can alter the emotional resonance of the story, affect comprehension, and influence moral or cultural interpretations. Therefore, ethical translation practices require careful human oversight to ensure that AI-generated outputs respect the linguistic and stylistic intentions of the author, maintaining both the educational and emotional integrity of the work.

Another significant ethical issue concerns the preservation of stylistic and artistic quality in the translation of children's literature. Children's texts are characterized by rhythm, musicality, playfulness, and semantic richness, which are essential for young readers' perception and engagement. While AI algorithms can accurately translate standard linguistic structures, they often struggle to render rhymes, puns, neologisms, or sound effects, elements that play a crucial role in children's literary experience. For example, when translating poems or fairy tales, artificial intelligence frequently loses the original rhythm, disrupts stanza structures, or selects rhyming words that do not correspond to the meaning of the source text. Such distortions risk diminishing the artistic value of the text and result in the loss of key elements that shape a child's aesthetic and imaginative experience.

Equally significant is the issue of preserving cultural specificity. Children's literature from different countries often contains elements that reflect national traditions, historical contexts, everyday life, and cultural heritage. A human translator can adapt these elements or select appropriate cultural equivalents, whereas AI systems tend to standardize or "neutralize" the text. For a child encountering the world's cultures through literature, such a loss of cultural richness results in an impoverished educational experience. The ethical dilemma lies in the fact that excessive simplification or erasure of cultural elements diminishes the value of the work as a pedagogical tool and undermines the principles of intercultural communication.

Critical aspect is the age-appropriateness of the translation. Children's literature is targeted at specific developmental stages, and translations must consider the cognitive and emotional characteristics of young readers. AI, particularly when operating without clear guidance, may select vocabulary that is too complex, use inappropriate expressions, or, conversely, oversimplify the text, omitting essential elements of the content. In some cases, it may misinterpret scenes involving emotionally sensitive themes, such as friendship, fear, loss, or loneliness, resulting in phrases that do not correspond to the developmental level of the intended audience. Errors in translations intended for children are perceived differently than errors in adult texts: they can alter a child's understanding of the moral message of the story or create a misleading impression of social norms and behavior.

Despite the risks mentioned above, artificial intelligence can offer significant benefits in translating children's literature if used properly. It can accelerate the preparation of draft translations, assist in creating dictionaries and glossaries, and support teachers and students in language learning. Some AI systems also allow texts to be adapted for different levels of language proficiency, which is particularly useful in bilingual schools and early education programs. However, these advantages are meaningful only when a



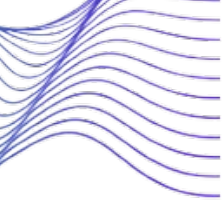
professional translator is actively involved, providing editorial, cultural, and stylistic corrections.

For the ethical use of AI in translating children's literature, a set of guiding principles is essential to ensure both quality and safety. First, human oversight must be an obligatory stage: AI can serve as an effective tool but should not act as an autonomous translator. Second, the preservation of the original work's cultural identity must be prioritized, avoiding excessive standardization. Third, transparency in the translation process is crucial, and, where necessary, readers or publishers should be informed when AI has been used. Fourth, translations must be reviewed for age-appropriateness to prevent potential risks to the young audience. Finally, ultimate responsibility for the quality of the translation must remain with a human professional, a translator or editor with expertise in children's literature.

In conclusion, translating children's literature with the help of artificial intelligence is a complex and delicate process that requires careful ethical consideration. While AI can speed up translation and make texts more accessible, it cannot fully capture the creativity, emotional nuance, and cultural richness that are essential for young readers. Children's books are not only meant to inform or entertain, they shape how children understand the world, develop moral values, and engage with language and imagination. Relying solely on automated systems risks losing the subtle rhythms, wordplay, cultural references, and educational intent embedded in these texts. Human oversight is therefore indispensable. Translators and editors play a key role in ensuring that AI-assisted translations remain faithful to the author's intent, preserve cultural and stylistic features, and are appropriate for the child's age and understanding. When used responsibly, AI can be a valuable tool that supports the translation process, but it should complement, not replace, the human insight, empathy, and expertise that are vital for creating high-quality, meaningful translations. Ultimately, the ethical use of AI in children's literature requires balancing technological innovation with cultural sensitivity, educational purpose, and respect for the literary experience of young readers.

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