

The Application of Catford's Translation Shifts to the Translation of the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child from English into Arabic

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Abstract:

The objectives of this study were to determine the most frequent type of translation shifts according to Catford's model of translation shifts in the translation of the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) from English into Arabic and to examine the inevitability of resorting to translation shifts in legal texts. To conduct the analysis, the researcher selected a sample covering the preamble and the three main parts of the Convention representing legal texts in general. Throughout the analysis, every translation shift was traced and manually counted to identify the most frequent type of translation shifts. The inevitability of each of the identified shifts was examined to conclude how necessary translation shifts were to preserve the meaning and effect of the source text. The findings indicated that intra-system shifts were the most frequent type of shifts with the frequency of 174 shifts (=26.6%), followed by unit shifts scoring 171 shifts (=26.3%), then structure shifts with the frequency of 161 shifts (=24.6%), then class shifts being identified 128 times (=19.6%), and finally level shifts with the frequency of 19 shifts (=2.9%). Regarding the inevitability of resorting to translation shifts, 80.1% (=523 cases) of identified translation shifts were obligatory due to the linguistic disparities between English and Arabic. Only 19.9% of detected (=130 cases) were optional due to the technicality of legal texts. Finally, exposure of translators to legal texts was recommended to understand the linguistic and stylistic characteristics of English and Arabic legal texts and to maintain the meaning in the TT.

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