

السرد في الترجمة العربية لأدب الأطفال: دراسة تحليلية لروايتين مختارتين

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الملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة الأساليب السردية المستخدمة في الترجمات العربية لروايتين إنجليزييتين من القرن التاسع عشر، تم تكييفهما للأطفال، وهما تحديداً رواية "دراكولا" لبرام ستوكر ورواية "مغامرات توم سوير" لمارك توين. وتبحث الدراسة في تحديات التكيف العابر للثقافات والأزمنة من خلال تحليل الترجمات العربية المعاصرة لهاتين الروايتين. وتركز على كيفية تعديل البنى السردية لتتوافق مع قيم الثقافة المستهدفة، ومعاييرها اللغوية، والتقاليد الخاصة بأدب الأطفال. وتقدم الدراسة تقييماً نقدياً لقرارات المترجمين، وتسلط الضوء على الأخطاء المتكررة والانحرافات المنهجية عن النصوص الأصلية. وتهدف النتائج في نهاية المطاف إلى تقديم إرشادات للمترجمين المستقبليين لأدب الأطفال، مع اقتراح إجراء المزيد من البحوث حول الترجمة الإنجليزية لأدب المرأة العراقية لاستكشاف المنظورات النسوية المتغيرة زمانياً ومكانياً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السرد، الترجمة العربية، أدب الأطفال، الرواية.

Narrative in the Arabic Translation of Children's Literature: An Analytical Study of Two Selected Novels

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Abstract

This study explores the narrative techniques employed in Arabic translations of two 19th-century English novels adapted for children specifically Bram Stoker's **Dracula** and Mark Twain's **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**. The study investigates the cross-cultural and intertemporal adaptation challenges of by analyzing 21st century Arabic translations of these works. It focuses on the way that narrative structures are modified to bring into line with the target culture's values, linguistic norms, and the specific conventions of children's literature. The study provides a critical evaluation of translator decisions and highlights frequent errors and systematic deviations from the source texts. Eventually, the results aim to offer guidance for future translators of children's literature, while suggesting further research into the English translation of Iraqi women's literature to explore temporally and spatially shifting feminist perspectives.

Keywords: Narrative, Arabic translation, Children's literature, Novel.

1. Introduction

First of all, let us go through the essential concepts of this research which are, translation, children's literature and narrative. That is to say, studying the narrative in translation of children's literature entails investigating these main elements which are the basics of this paper. To start with translation, it is an art in itself. translation is an art. Frenz elaborates on this idea in an article entitled "The Art of Translation". He clarifies that translation is "neither a creative art nor an imitative art, but stands somewhere between the two." In fact, the translator is not creating a work of art and is not literally transferring the meaning of another one. The good translation does not adhere to the inner thoughts of the translator, but rather "undertakes to create in the manner of another that which is already created." It is not an "imitative art as well as it "must not only convey the idea of the work translated, but must also transform it." Thus, the translator should be a skilful creator and maker in addition to the need that s/he should be faithful S/ He must adhere to the reality and authenticity of the original text and merge it skilfully and within a suitable framework for the target language and time. ((Stalknecht & Frenz, 1973, pp. 94 – 95)

J. A. Cuddon defines "narrative" according to other literary critics. A comprehensive definition is cited by Genene to be "a relational approach" and "a product or result of the interaction of its different component levels". Barthes defines narrative as " 'a long sentence, just as every constative sentence is in a way the rough outline of a short narrative'." (1998, p.534) In his article "Concepts of narrative", Rimmon-Kenan elaborates on the concept of narrative being derived from "narratology" and has various connotations, but all are associated with narration, telling a story. It is "an act of mediation or transmission which, in literature, is verbal." (2006, p. 10)

Jermy Hawthorn compares writing the novel to the craft of making a film as the novelist as the producer that have to collect the images got from the camera from different angles. He elaborates on the different types of narratives such as "stream of consciousness" with some great novelists as Virginia Woolf or frame narrative by Emile Bronte. The narrative can be made by the first or second narrator or even a third narrator as in the novels under this study. It can be clear or obscure, complicated, interrupted, intimated or simple. However, there are factors for assessing the significance of the narrative technique in any novel which are related to the change in the setting that modern novel is put in and the change of its readers. These factors are:

1. "Changes in the dominant modes of human communication", as the new methods of communication put less emphasis on reading and much more on movie making.
2. "The effect of different world-views, philosophies, ideologies..."
3. "Changes in readership patterns and habits..."
4. Larger changes in human life and modes of consciousness..." (1992, p.43)

The narrative technique implies the type of "narrator", first, second or third narrator, "tense", be it present or past as the incidents are happening according to the narrator, "tone" which means the narrator's attitude towards the incidents being narrated, and the "mood" which means the "point of view" of the novelist and his/ her mouthpiece, i.e., the narrator. There are two other elements which are "voice" and "perspective" which means the person who speaks or sees events and how they see them. (1992, pp. 45 – 46)

The last important concept in this paper that needs to be defined and explained is "children's literature" itself. "Children's literature" is defined by Hunt (1994) as "children's literature seems at first sight to be a simple idea: books written for children, books read for children." (p.4) It can be explained on the basis of "the values and qualities" associated with literariness. For him, there is a cultural view of childhood to mean the period of life when the one has no responsibilities or obligations. Knowles and Malkjær defines this term as "any narrative written or published for children." (1992, p.2) Hence, the two novels upon which this study is made belong to children's literature even though they are read by adults.

This paper questions the methods followed in translating the narrative into Arabic in each concerned novel, i.e., Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The gap in time that separates each novel from its chosen translation is highly considered as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published for the first time in 1876 and *Dracula* was published in 1897. However, the selected translated versions for this study are: Jihad Alshabiny's translation of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, firstly published in 2018 by Takween Publishing in Baghdad, and Inji B. Ahmad's translation of *Dracula* published for the first time in 2013 by Al-Hindawi Publishing Organization in Cairo. Hence, there is more than one century gap between each novel and its translation. The elements of narrative are also analyzed in this study for the translated versions of the novels taking into consideration the characteristics of each language, i.e., English and Arabic. Some mistakes in translation are also highlighted to assess each translation of the narrative of the target novel.

1. Literature Review

In reviewing the previous studies tackled similar topics and poured into the main domain of this study, there are plenty of articles that dwell on translation of children's literature into Arabic. In a study done in the University of Surrey and entitled "Children's Literature and its Translation", the problems that face writers and translators of children's literature such as "adult dominance" are explored, particularly those of "asymmetry", "selection", "ambivalence" and "manipulation". That is to say, the translated versions of children's literature are chosen by adults who have their own standards related to the best sellers and popularity, rather than the language, cultural and amusing factors and issues that better attract the children in their societies and give them entertaining as well as didactic messages. Cultural differences as well as lingual problems are clarified in this study and how the translator should be skillful to keep the aesthetic dimensions and to transfer the original text modifying it to his/ her culture and moral values. The writer also reveals the problem of power that makes English language and norms dominate the world. (Thomson-Wohlgmuth, 1998)

Formerly, Katharina Reiss (1982) probed the problems of translating children's literature in O'Sullivan's book *Comparative Children's Literature*. She clarified how children's literature is governed by many complications and rules. She sorted out three factors that affect the translation of children's literature: Firstly, the works of arts are chosen by adults, written by adults and translated by adults to be read by children; secondly, the taboos and pedagogical as well as didactic rules that are set for the translator of such type of literature, and finally, the limited experience and knowledge of children that have to be considered. (2005, p.76)

Despite their skillfulness in writing ancient fairy tales and stories translated into another language, among which is *Arabian Nights*, children's literature has not come to surface as a separate type of literature until the nineteenth century when the writers and translators started to translate famous English novels for children can be justified accordingly. Yet, Mdallel (2003) clarifies that children's literature in the Arab World is imbued with "morality, didactics, and heavy ideological bias". So, its translation should be adapted to suit the rules of the society and norms and turns into "cultural transfer" rather than translation. (p. 298)

The difference in norms and cultural gap in translating the children's literature is also elaborated by N. Al-Fouzan (2019). The study clarifies the tight relationships among the author, translator and audience. The study shows how different translators give different translations of the same book. However, it clarifies how the cultural standards and moral norms of the Arab World dominate the process of translation. According to the author,

translation of children's literature in the Arab world undergoes "adaption" even in plots sometimes to serve the target culture, "deletion" of some taboos and unacceptable things or statements in the target culture and time, "replacement" to make the text more down to earth and accepted by the society, "addition" of some vague points or incomprehensible issues, "retention" of the "common features" between cultures such as two cited translated versions of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and "abridgement" as the author sometimes merge chapters or paragraphs together. (pp. 17 – 25)

In a Ph.D. thesis submitted to The University of Leeds, the scholar W. Dukmak (2012) investigates the methods of treating the cultural items in translating children's literature with a case study from a translation of three books of *Harry Potter* into Arabic published by Nahdet Misr Publishing Group and involved three Arab translators. The thesis shows how differently the three translators handle the text and transfer them into Arabic. Their translations fall between "adequacy" and "acceptability" in relation to the "norms" set in the translations. An official translation relies on "adequacy", whereas "acceptability" gives a distorted translation of the book as it has to be modified to the norms and standards of the Arabic society.

A corpus approach of literary translation in children's literature is adopted by A. Čermáková (2018). The stylistic features of translation of such type of literature are explained. The author clarifies that children's literature is dominated by the didactic rules most of the time and simplicity is one of its prominent features in addition to the cultural modifications that happen to its translation. Repetition is stated as one of the weaknesses that most translators commit in translating children's literature. The cultural and ideological factors that affect translation are also explored in this article. Examples are given from *Harry Potter* and *Winnie the Pooh* and their translations into Czech.

Literary translation is set as a challenge for every translator by M. Tanjour (2011), the interaction between the cultures and ideologies of the source and target texts are explored. Emphasis is put on the audience and reader who is intended by the translation. Leppihalme (1997) classifies the cultural problems in literary translations in two main groups "extralinguistic" which are either natural such as "climate, atmosphere, etc." or man-made such as the social institutions and organizations that differ from the target language culture, and "interlinguistic" which means the problems related to words, idioms and phrases such as idioms and proverbs.

All in all, previous studies explored the translation of children's literature as well as literary translation into Arabic in relation to different works of fiction. However, those studies give materials to this study in

highlighting the problems that the translator might face or deficiencies that distort the translation. However, none of those studies dwelled on the narrative of these two novels as this study does.

2. Methodology

This is descriptive research that depends on reviews of previous studies and deep reading of the two concerned novels *Dracula* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and their translations to give the main findings. It depends on secondary data analysis of previous studies published as articles or books from authentic sources. It is a literary criticism of the two novels and their translation. The narrative technique is fathomed in the texts and the differences between the source and the target are highlighted. The study depends on the texts as they reveal themselves, assess their translations and study their deficiencies with consideration of cultural differences and time gap. The conclusion is presented by the thorough investigation of the texts involved. The differences between the cultures and systems of languages that govern the translating process are clarified as well.

3. Discussion & Findings

To investigate the narrative technique in the translations of each of the chosen novels under this study, it can be noticed that these translations have things in common, such as the simple language chosen which sometimes turn into inadequate language lacking official use of the words and phrases in the target language. The idea that these two versions of translations were published recently less than ten years ago, *Dracula* in 2013 and *The Adventures of Tom Swayer* in 2018. Hence, the two translations have similarities as they have been issued in the same era and for the same Arab audience of children who have the same moral standards and cultural backgrounds.

3.1. Inji B. Ahmad's Translation of Bram Stoker's Dracula:

Despite its closeness to the original novel with the same plot, characters and incidents, I. B. Ahmad's translation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* turns to another narration of the story with different techniques. It mostly suits to be a summary of the novel rather than a literary translation of the original novel. Stoker's *Dracula* is written in 542 pages consisting of 27 chapters. Whereas I. B.'s Arabic translation of the novel consists of 17 chapters in 77 pages. This makes the translation another narration which summarizes the novel. In fact, summarizing children's literature facilitate reading for the children and relinquish boredom. This might justify the re-narration of the novel in this translation. So, the translator makes deletion of some details and abridgement of chapters in the translated version.

Another difference in the narrative technique is the way the story is narrated. The narrative in Stoker's *Dracula* varies as it takes many ways such as letters, diaries and newspaper articles, and each chapter starts with the day and month as a chronology of the incidents included in the letters and articles. I. B. Ahmad uses the third person in the Arabic narrative of the novel. However, she makes it as a story being told by "once upon a time". This surely can keep the fantasy in the novel and makes it depart from reality due to its horrible and fantastic scenes.

In dwelling on Stoker's novel, we can recall Thomson-Wohlgmuth's findings cited in the literature review (1998) about the dominance of adults on this type of literature intended for children. That is to say, children's literature has a didactic message for bringing up the child far away from taboos and horror that create complexes inside the child. Yet, we find the novelist adheres to the rules and type of novel prevailed in his time, i.e., the Victorian age. The novel is a pure fantasy full of horrible scenes. It follows the traditions of gothic novel. Citing other studies and citations from the novel, Gates (1976) dwells on the elements that makes Stoker's *Dracula* a typical gothic novel, such as the horrible setting of darkness, empty castle, the bloody scenes, the vampires and the narration of their horrible actions. An example of the horrible narration can be traced in the following quotation in Chapter 6:

A little before twelve o'clock we three, Arthur, Quincey Morris, and myself, called for the Professor... When we were alone and had heard the last of the footsteps die out up the road, we silently, and as if by ordered intention, followed the Professor to the tomb. He unlocked the door, and we entered, closing it behind us. Then he took from his bag the lantern, which he lit, and also two wax candles, which, when lighted, he stuck by melting their own ends, on other coffins, so that they might give light sufficient to work by. When he again lifted the lid off Lucy's coffin we all looked, Arthur trembling like an aspen, and saw that the corpse lay there in all its death beauty. (Stoker, 2010, p. 305)

In I. B. Ahmad's translation of the novel, horrible scenes are not excluded from the narrative as they cannot be dropped out in any way due to the main theme of fantasy and horror that the novel tackles. The same narration was translated in another way in the Arabic version in Chapter 12 entitled *لوسي تتغير مرة أخرى* (Lucy Changes Once more) which is given by the translator. The above cited passage is translated as follows:

لم يكن متيقناً على منتصف الليل سوى خمس عشر دقيقة عندما تسلقت المجموعة التي تألفت من فان هيلسنج وكوينسي موريس وسيوارد وأرثر سوراً منخفضاً ووصلت إلى المقبرة. فتح الأستاذ فان هيلسنج الباب وأضاء مصباحاً وأشار إلى تابوت لوسي. لقد كان فارغاً. (2017, p. 53)

The original text has undergone a radical change in this translation. The translator merges paragraphs, changes some of the incidents even the number of the characters and the time which is defined as 11:45 in the Arabic version whereas it is stated to be a little before 12:00 in the original novel. Hence, the original novel undergoes replacement, deletion and abridgement in this translation.

The translator also seeks acceptability in her culture as she adheres to the norms of the Arab world. She deletes sexual narratives and replaces them by pure Platonic love scenes that can be accepted in the Arab World. Seed (1985) clarifies how the original novel was apt to criticism due to the sexual themes. However, this sexuality is symbolic. (p. 61) But these themes are excluded to some extent from the translated version due to the cultural difference that views such narrative as taboos. An example of this can be cited from the farewell scene between Arthur and dead Lucy when he puts her in her coffin for the last time: "When he raised his head Van Helsing said to him, 'And now, my child, you may kiss her. Kiss her dead lips if you will, as she would have you to, if for her to choose...' Arthur bent and kissed her..." (p. 310) As lips' kiss is a taboo to be mentioned in the children's literature for the Arab audience, Ahmad turns it to a kiss on forehead in the Arabic translation:

“قال فان هلسنج: 'الآن يمكنك تقبيلها.' انحنى آرثر نحوها وطبع على جبينها قبلة (p. 55)

In assessing the Arabic language used in Ahmad's translation, we can deduce that it cannot be compared to the standard and coherent language used in the original novel. The translator follows the grammatical rules of sentence structure in Arabic. Yet, it lacks cultivation in the literary expressions. Linguistic gaps are found there prove that the translator lacks skillfulness in writing official Arabic language. For example "شئون" which means affairs is written wrongly as it should be written as شؤون (p. 19) "كسا الغضب لحظات", (p. 44) "وجهي كل من لوسي وآرثر" This sentence is totally incoherent and can be cited as examples of the incoherent sentences and clauses found in the translation. Mistakes of punctuation are abundant such as the use of comma in the following sentence: "اتفق الرجلان على عدم إخبار آرثر بالكثير، حتى لا يزيد قلقه" (p. 40) "خطرت" For no way the pause indicated by comma can be done here. (p. 24) Here, the sentence lacks coherence in language used that can be resolved by an expression such as "فكرة مفادها أنه..." or at least replace the full stop by a colon.

However, the language used by the translator is simple and it can be read and comprehended easily by the children of elementary school. Yet, there are some repeated phrases. But, all in all this translation can be viewed as a summary rather than a translation of the original novel published in the

nineteenth century. The narrative is also modified to the target culture and moral standards in the Arab societies.

4.2. Jihad Alshabiny's translation of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*:

J. Alshabiny's translation of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, firstly published in 2018 by Takween Publishing in Baghdad, turns to be more accurate as it consists of 35 chapters as the original novel. Despite the translator's use of some replacements and merging in the paragraphs, he keeps the original incidents and narrative technique similar to the original novel published in the nineteenth century.

In fact, Twain's novel is different from that of Stoker as it comes closer to children's lives narrating the whims and adventures of their peers. In fact, this novel was best seller at that time. Feinstein (1946) describes it as a novel that tells itself and the writer is only holding a pen. "The customary narrative stream he likens to a canal." The narrative is chosen deliberately to be loose and spontaneous to suit such type of novel allotted for children and teenagers as the writer recalls his own memories on the sides of the Mississippi River. (p. 160)

The original and translated versions of the novel are narrated by the third narrator. J. Alshabiny's translation has kept this aesthetic dimension of the narrative with slight replacements to suit the Arabic language. An example of this can be found in chapter one in the following passages sketched from the original novel:

The old lady pulled her spectacles down and looked over them about the room; then she put them up and looked out under them. She seldom or never looked through them for so small a thing as a boy; they were her state pair, the pride of her heart, and were built for "style," not service—she could have seen through a pair of stove-lids just as well. She looked perplexed for a moment, and then said, not fiercely, but still loud enough for the furniture to hear: (Twain, 2021, p.2)

Alshabiny's translation for this text comes as follows:

أزاحت السيدة العجوز نظارتها إلى طرف أنفها ونظرت من فوق العدسات إلى أرجاء الغرفة، ثم رفعتها ونظرت أسفلها، إذ قلما كانت تستخدم نظارتها للبحث عن صبي صغير مثل توم. كانت نظارتها موضع فخرها، فكانت تضعها في المناسبات، كنوع من المظاهر وليس للغرض الذي صنعت من أجله النظارات، بل كان من الممكن أن تستبدل نظارتها بعيني موقد. بدت حائرة للحظة، ثم صاحت بصوت يكاد يخترق الجدار، ... (Twain, 2018, p.9)

In comparing the original text with its translation, it becomes clear that the translator gives an authentic translation of the original text modifying it to the target language. The translator makes some replacements in his translation to give a good translation according to the target language system, i.e., Arabic and to avoid literal translation, word-by-word translation that distorts the translation. For example, the following clause "then said, not

fiercely, but still loud enough for the furniture to hear” has been translated as “ثمّ صاحت بصوتٍ يكاد يخترق الجدار” which means literally (a voice that can pierce the wall). This idiom is used in Arabic as it is not common to say: “furniture to hear”. As it has been stated earlier, replacement happens in translation to give suitable idioms or proverbs in the target language.

Another replacement the translator has done of another kind. This replacement is essential for the ethos of the age. Mark Twain has published the novel in 1876, when the rights of the black have never been issued clearly, even after Lincoln's emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The South that Mark Twain belongs to still had such a down look to the black. Twain used such terms as “nigger” or “negro” to refer to Jim who was a slave as well as other blacks. However, the translator couldn't by any way translate the way literally into Arabic as “زنوج” and “زنجي”; otherwise, he and the publication organization would be sued. Thus, the translator used the word “أسود” and “سود” which means “black” in a type of replacement in translation.

The suspense is still there in narrative, however with some changes and replacements to suit the target language, i.e., Arabic and the ethos of the age. However, there are some lapses that Alshabiny falls in. These are not clear linguistic mistakes as in I. B. Ahmad's translation of *Dracula*, but broken Arabic in some structures. For example, “جلست حزيناً بكبرياءٍ مجروح” (p. 192), “كان الليل مظلماً وعاصفاً. حول العرش في الأعلى، لم تهتّز نجمة واحدة..” (p. 215) These structures suit better the English system, while the structure of good Arabic needs some changes of the prepositional phrase place or find stronger words to give the meaning such as: “وكبرياؤها مجروح” or “مجروحة الكبرياء” and “كان الليل مظلماً وعاصفاً ولم تهتّز نجمة واحدة حول العرش في الأعلى...” Another mistake that the translator commits when he adds a sentence is in saying directly that this sentence is not there in the original novel. “لم يكن بحاجة إلى أن يكرّر كلامه، مرّةً واحدةً كانت كافيةً، لم يحتج أن يكرّر ها له (لا توجد هذه الجملة في النصّ الأصلي)” (p. 270). The translator here not only falls into the trap of repetition that distorts translation, but also gives unnecessary clarification. That is to say, the good translator is another creator that can manipulate the language add or omit some phrases or sentences to give the required meaning keeping the aesthetical characteristics of the language.

In brief, Alshabiny used an approximately similar narrative technique to that of the original novel, yet his style cannot be equal to that of Mark Twain. There are some lapses in translation, but not fatal mistakes. However, he used simple Arabic terms and phrases that can be read and comprehended easily by the Arab children. Replacement has to be done in certain cases to serve the cultural background and the age of 21st century, when some concepts changed radically.

4. Conclusion

Throughout this study which is comparative in most of its parts, it is evident that the translation of each novel was adapted to suit the time and the culture. On the surface, these translated versions seem modified and lack accuracy or skillful use of the target language, which strongly appear in Ahmad's translation of *Dracula*, with differences between the translated versions of each novel but the deep fact is that the translators sacrificed the aesthetic for the simple as far as language and plot are concerned. Thus, it is evident that the translators view their themselves not as artists whose role is to maintain the beauty of the source text, but rather as mediators whose role is to ensure that the story is readable. However, each translator depended on different narrative methods to introduce the plot to the Arab world of children. They omit some words or phrases, or even rearrange the plot and summarize it as in I. B. Ahmad's Arabic version of *Dracula*. Hence, there appear some gaps in the Arabic narrative technique in both translated novels which make the translated versions deviate from the original ones in their style and frame. This is essentially significant since such gaps and deviations that exist in the translated texts do not necessarily involve a lack of skill but they could be intentional to, let say, clean Western Gothic themes, e.g. those in *Dracula*, for an Arab audience simply because the translator acted as a gate-keeper to defend the cultural values in the Arabic children's literature. Actually, the translators, by rearranging and summarizing particularly in Ahmad's *Dracula*, have essentially re-authored the book. This, roughly, implies that in the 20th century Arab translation background, the children were seen as readers who required a filtered and simplified reality rather than a straight meeting with the complex foreign literary structures. However, such strategy had a side effect. Thus, *Dracula* which relies on the suspense evoked by the Gothic framework had been stripped from its generic characteristics by summarizing the plot to make it easy. This crudely indicates that while the story survived the translation, the experience of the genre did not.

5. Recommendation

The researchers hopefully recommend similar studies that tackle Iraqi Women's novels in English translation in order to shed light on the perspectives of feminist translation in investigating the way in which Iraqi women's story-making has been mediated in English translation over differing times and locations.

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