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Graduation Project

A house without Mirrors: Translation procedures

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Dedication

I would like to thank Allah for all his blessings, for providing me with his guidance, and under His name, I dedicated this work to all knowledge seekers.

I dedicated this work also to my family, my parents and my siblings who helped me accomplish my goals and encouraged me through good and bad times, without them, I would not have been stepped ahead in life.

Additionally, I would like to send my thanks and gratitude to Dr. Bilal Hamamreh

I hope this research meets your expectations and also I extend my thanks to my teacher and supervisor Dr. Reem Qadan.

Best regards, Haya Husein

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Abstract

This project provides a reflection on the translation of a children story from English into Arabic. It documents the challenges that have been faced and the techniques that have been used in order to make the text as comprehensive as possible. The target age group of the selected story is 7-11 years old; accordingly, it was inevitable to use a very simple language to make sure that the text is easily read and understood. The translator used specific strategies to let the audience know that it's a translated foreign story. There were four decisions the translator made in translating the text; adding more words and adjectives, strategies for transmitting the message easier, simple language and common used word, and translating the story twice. The method used in the translation was literal and free translation. Moreover, the translator used four strategies; foreignization, addition, deletion, and colloquial translation. However, the translator encountered some challenges, not all words could be translated. Finally, the translator concluded the following results:

- 1- The translation of this story is closer to the literal translation than the free translation.
- 2- Children literature translation becomes easy once the major decision regarding foreignizing or domesticating is made by the translators.

Introduction:

"Translation is the process whereby the meaning, style and information of a piece of written text in one human language are reproduced in another written human language".

No author. (No year). What is translation? Retrieved from: <http://www.miis.edu/academics/programs/translation/faqs/node/1202> on 18-5-2017

The purpose of translation is to convey the original tone and intent of a message, taking into account the cultural and regional differences between the source and the target languages. Translation has different genres such as political, cultural, and Literature translation. The focus of this paper will be directed toward the later kind of translation specifically, children literature translation.

Children literature has many important values in our lives; to transmit the selected messages that the parents want their children to learn via literary works. These works are considered as the easiest and the most comprehensible method to transmit the messages and the values. Translating children literature is a wide science that cannot be mastered so easily. In this research the translator translated Marten Sanden's *A House without Mirrors* from English into Arabic; which was first translated from Swedish into English. The translator followed different techniques to make the translation clear. Most of English children literature translators follow the same techniques, and the most important ones are:

1. I put in mind the age group, and by this consideration the translation the used language should be clear enough without any use of complicated sentences or ideas.
2. Using simple and comprehensible words that child can understand while listening to the story. The reason of making choices during the translation is to choose the easiest choice as the translation targets the children.

From a sociological and psychological point of view, we can say that children literature as Pierre Narcisse (2000) quoted from Oittinen is anything read or heard by children through TV, series, newspapers etc. (p.61-2).

A House without Mirrors is our concern since it belongs to children literature, so I will look at the characteristics that make it belongs to children literature and distinguishes it from adult literature.

Also as Narcisse (2006) states that children literature should be suitable for its audience, it should meet their needs (p.37).

As Narcisse argues (quoted from Norton, 1987) children literature can be classified according to its plot, characterization, setting, theme, and point of view. (P.85-104)

Starting with the plot, Narcisse states that a good book for children should contain a good plot. The plot should create suspense and excitement. It should have enough conflict to develop interest .Narcisse (quoted from Norton, 1987) also states that excitement differs in accordance to the age of the child (p.85-6). It can be considered as a good book for children, because its plot has the features mentioned above in the good plot.

Moving to characterization, Narcisse states that the choice of the characters should be suitable for children (quoted from Norton, 1987). So in order for the writer of children literature to achieve his aim, he has to make the main characters develop throughout the story, and the character should be full of life. (p.90)

Themes in children literature should be in agreement with the values and the tradition of the child who reads it, and should be given directly. For the writer of children literature to achieve his goal, he has to make sure that it teaches them

Something in their life. (Norton, 1987, p.95).

The setting of the story "should help the reader to share what a story's characters see, smell, hear, and touch as well as making character's values, actions, and conflicts more understandable"(Norton, 1987, p.91).

Description of the original text:

A House without Mirrors is a children story by Marten Sanden who is an educated person with a degree in psychology, yet he never worked as a psychologist but as a song writer besides being passionate about writing stories for children. He is a member of the Swedish crime writers Academy and the Swedish Academy for children's books and he is a winner of the bloodhound award. *A House without Mirrors* was translated from the original Swedish text into English by Karin Altenberg. The story is about a girl name Thomasine who spent a month's living in her aunt's house with her father, aunt, uncle and cousins. When the whole family was bickering about how much the house worths at the same time her aunt was dying and there was nothing that she could have done to her. One day, her youngest cousin discovered a wardrobe full of missing mirrors from the house, those mirrors held a whole new different world that she has never seen before in which you can see not only the things that you wish for but the things that you need.

Translation strategies:

Throughout translation, some strategies were adapted such as:

1. Foreignization:

This means "that the target readers are forced to leave their comfort zone and venture to the foreign culture. This method is invented to evoke the sense of the

ST's foreignness and make the readers aware that they are reading a translation "(Sujarwanto, 2014, p.31).

During the process of translation, translators depend on this strategy when they are translating the names of the characters in the story such as, Henrietta. They translated it the same as it is in the SL "هنريتا". The translators' intention from using this strategy is to show the children that they are reading a foreign story not an original copy. Also, they intend to enrich children's knowledge of the other culture and show them names from the other culture.

2. Addition:

It is a technique in which the translator adds words or phrases that are not used in the original text. This way is meant to help conveying the meaning, if the literal translation failed to do so due to cultural differences. For example, "I'm writing this sitting in my special study" If translated literally, it would be like this "أنا أكتب هذا وأنا جالس في دراستي المميزة" so, the translator must add some words or phrases in order to make the text understandable and makes sense for the reader. The choice of words to convey the same meaning that the writer referred to in his text is very crucial, so the translation became "أكتب الآن وأنا جالس في مكاني المخصص للدراسة". Here as noticed, the word "place" which means in Arabic "مكان" doesn't exist in the original text but it was added in order for the text to make sense. Addition is the best way when facing cultural difficulties or when you try to simplify the text to make it readable for little children.

3. Deletion:

It is a technique in which the translator deletes certain items that exist in the original text but are not very beneficial and adds zero knowledge to the reader. Sometimes there are some minor details or unimportant events, actions, names or expressions; therefore, the main focus is on the most important parts that help the child understand the story without too much boring details. For example, Thomasine says in the original text "I wrapped the duvet closer around my drawn-up knees", these details do not make a difference if not mentioned in the target language since the purpose of the translation is to convey the meanings of the most important events. So, there is no need to mention every single detail that does not add something to the text. It is vital to mention that details could be very important in any literary work but the text I'm dealing with has some which does not add to the overall image so some of those details could be dropped easily without any intervention in the meaning of the original text.

4. Colloquial translation:

It means the use of everyday language rather than using the formal language since it is more suitable and easier for children to understand. In some places throughout the story, colloquial language was used to simplify the meaning for the child as in the title of chapter 1 "Hide and seek". It was translated into "الغميضة" because it is a common word among children but if translated into formal Arabic (العربية الفصحى), it would be "الاختباء والبحث" which could be hard for the child to realize what it means. The used terms in this paper are of the Palestinian dialects because it is introduced to the Palestinian audience.

Translation methods:

I used two methods of translation which are literal translation and free translation. Literal translation or word for word translation is defined as “the act of rendering as closely as possible the wording, structure, and grammar of a source document into the translation”. Whereas free translation is a method in which the translator gets the meaning of the text and then tries to deliver the same meaning in his/her own words to simplify the text especially if the target age group was young children.

So, we can say that the methods used to transform the words and the sentences from the source language to the target language are: literal translation which involves transforming the words and the sentences without any additions, and free translation which is the opposite of literal translation in which different words are used to describe the same content of the source text.

Literal translation is a translation that follows closely the form and the content of the source language. This kind of translation leaves the meaning mostly obscured. Translators often use this type when they don't have a full grasp of either the source or the target language but the translator wants to convey the same exact images of the source text without any intervention of other techniques that can change even a slice of the original expressions. Karacıgan Ipek, I.(Dec 26, 2014)

Literal Translation. Retrieved from:
<https://www.slideshare.net/pekKaracan/literal-translation-43013102> on 19-5-2017

Example of literal translation:

We didn't say anything else as we walked down the stairs to the ground floor, passing through the parlor's, lounges, and the dining room and into the pantry. I smelt the pizza even before I heard the voices from the kitchen. Up until then I had been quite hungry, but as usual it didn't last. Before we came to Henrietta's house I sometimes craved pizza. I didn't think I'd ever crave

pizza again. When it was their turn to make dinner, both Kajsa and Daniel bought pizza one, if not two, evenings each week. Sometimes we ended up having pizza four times a week.

لم نتفوه بكلمة واحدة بينما كنا ننزل الدرج متجهين الى الطابق الأرضي حيث مررنا بالصالات ثم غرفة الطعام وصولاً الى غرفة المون. لقد شممت رائحة البيتزا حتى قبل أن أسمع الأصوات داخل المطبخ، حتى ذلك الحين كنت أشعر بالجوع ولكن كالعادة لم يدم هذا الشعور. كنت اشتهي البيتزا سابقا قبل قدومنا الى منزل هنريتا ولم أظن بأنني سوف اشتهيها مرة أخرى في حياتي. فعندما كان دور كاجسا و دانييل لتحضير العشاء كانا يقومان بشراء البيتزا مرة أو مرتين كل أسبوع، وفي بعض الأحيان كان ينتهي بنا الأمر بأكل البيتزا أربع مرات أسبوعياً.

Translation challenges:

The main challenge when translating *A House without Mirrors* that I have faced was that I had to take into consideration that the audience of his translation are children in the range 7 to 11 years old.

This challenges affected many strategies, for example, the selection of words and sentences, not all words and sentences are suitable in this case, and a list of words had to be made to make things easier. Besides, the story had to be translated twice to make connections between the words and the sentences in addition to using simple vocabulary and grammar to transform the message and the general concept of the story. Another challenge was narrating the story, in the process of narration the narrator has to follow certain strategies related to the art of narration like controlling the voice, rising and falling action, and controlling the tone to catch their sympathy and attention.

All the challenges faced during the translation were because of one major factor which is the group age that the translators targeted. Because of the group age I had to make many options of the translation to select from, also re-translating the story, in order to stimulate the emotions of the children and to help them understand it better.

Translation decisions:

I had to make a few important decisions to make the story coherent as possible. These decisions were:

- Adding an introduction: to let the reader enter the atmosphere of the story in a smooth way.
- Adding more words and adjectives to describe the settings.
- Using different strategies to transmit the message easier.
- Using simple language and common used words to avoid the difficulty that the child might face while reading the story.
- Translating the story twice and selecting the easiest and the most common word choices.

Semantic field:

"The theory of semantic field assumes that the lexemes(which are an abstract notion used in linguistic morphology, the concrete realization of which is a word and the smallest or minimal units of lexicon in a language that bears some meaning) that are semantically related, whether pragmatically or syntagmatically, within a given language. Systems belong to the same semantic field. The semantic field therefore is a pragmatically and syntagmatically structured subset of the lexicon. The lexical items of language can be classified into sets which are related

semantically and divide up the semantic field in various ways "(Mansouri ,1985,p.39).

Because the translation was directed towards children, the translation was affected strongly in this theory, the choice of words in translation must be suitable for children's understanding, so they have to be easy and comprehensible. The translation targeted the children from 7 to 11 years; therefore, not all words were allowed in the translation. I had made options for the same words to select the most suitable one and the closest one to the children's minds. For example, "Erland stared down at his feet" was translated into "تجهّم" while it is translated in literal translation as "نظر الى قدميه", and so was the word "bravo" which was translated into "أحسنت/" as a functional translation and "برافو" as a literal translation.

Khullar Payal, P. (March 2, 2015) What does the term lexeme mean? Retrieved from: <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-term-lexeme-mean-what-examples-331884>.

Conclusion:

Translating children literature is a new experience for me so I tried to make the target text as comprehensible as possible. The translation of Sanden's *A House without Mirrors* can be described as one which is closer to the literal translation than the free translation yet it is a combination of both. I used different strategies to make the translation more natural. By looking at children literature and its translation, it was noticed that the translators of children literature use different strategies that fit the age group they are translating for. By the way of generalization, it is possible to claim that children literature translation becomes easy once the major decision regarding foreignizing or domesticating is made by the translators. All other decisions regarding word choice and sentential order, or

textual order will be affected by this most important decision to orient the translation to the target readers or to the source text requirements.

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