

A COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL STUDY OF ENGLISH CHILDREN NOVEL ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND WITH ITS TRANSLATION INTO ARABIC

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Annotation

Translating from English into Arabic involves certain linguistic and cultural problems. In order to understand these problems, one has to return to the cultural and social background of the source language) English (texts and try to find out how these may affect the process of translating into Arabic.

The research attempts to find answer(s) the following question: What are the basic problems of translation by comparing the English text with the Arabic text?

This paper aims at: Finding out the basic problems of translation by comparing the English text with the Arabic text.

It is hypothesized that the problems of translation from English to Arabic are cultural and linguistic ones.

The methodology of the present study is that an English novel is taken as it is with its translation into Arabic. Then, the original text and the translated one are going to be analyzed comparatively.

This study investigates the strategies used by translators when translating the famous children 's novel Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll translated from English into Arabic.

Keywords: Alice's Adventure in Wonderland, Translation Equivalence, Comparative Linguistics, English, Arabic.

Introduction

Contrastive linguistics is concerned with comparing two languages for the purpose of identifying similarities and differences that hold between the languages compares as well as potential areas of learning problems. Translating a novel into another language is not easy to do. The quality of translated novel sometimes is not good as original one. It can cause the readers misunderstand what the author means. All the problem is caused by the translator who has less knowledge about the translation techniques and lack ability in applying them.

The gap between Arabic and English poses many difficulties in conveying the message

of the original language, especially to the literary translator, due to the importance of stylistic and rhetorical features that are usually untranslatable. Literary translation may be one of the most problematic areas of translation because it is a reflection of both the culture of the source language and the particular use of language of the original author. In this study the researcher shall investigate the linguistic and cultural problems involved in Arabic-English translation.

Section One

Literature Review

2.1 General Overview

Since Contrastive Linguistics (CL) is a relatively new concept, literary critics have created many definitions in an attempt to accurately describe it. Literary critics such as Sale (1978) and Rose (1984) stated that CL is problematic and that it may be impossible to provide an exact definition, while other scholars, such as Nodelman (1996) and Laffrado (1995), disagreed with the concept of not having a definition of CL. Nodelman insisted on the possibility of expressing the essential ingredients of CL in order to set apart the defining characteristics that assign genuine children's texts to their own specific genre.

These characteristics include description of the typical characters, conventional plots, disinvited styles, and repeated thematic patterns found in CL. Laffrado (1995) chose to present her own CL definition: it is probably most useful to define CL broadly, as literature that doesn't exclude children, family literature, literature for a number of generations. Such a definition would include the whole range of children's texts, from picture books to novels.

Translating a written text into a different language is a long and arduous process. The translator has to first understand the ideas in the ST before transferring that information to people who do not understand the language of the target text. Translation presents many challenges for both adults and children. In general, translation for children faces the same challenges as translation for adults, and the methods applied to solve these problems are the same.

Translation of Children's Literature

The child image is an essential factor in the translation of children's literature. To translate children's literature is 'background knowledge in this respect. It is difficult to define the concepts of the child, and it is difficult to determine the upper limit of the age of childhood (Hunt, 1994: 57).

As Oittinen (2000: 13-14) states, it is important to bear in mind that children have lived for only a shorter time than adults and children do not share the same "world view". This is one of the reasons why grown up stand to explain more for children than for older readers. Translators depend on the children images they have and on what they know about the children of their time to know children's experiences and abilities (Hunt, 1994: 1).

So, one can conclude that children's literature tends to be adapted to a particular image of childhood. This is important in translating for children. Translators need to pay more attention to what the readers actually do with the books (Oittinen, 2000: 13).

Shavit (1986: 112-113) gives the translator of children's literature the permission to manipulate the text in various ways by changing, deleting or adding. Yet, these translational procedures are permitted only if conditioned by two principles: an adjustment of the text to make it appropriate and useful to the child in accordance with what society regards as educationally "good for the child"; and an adjustment of plot, characterization and language to prevailing society's perceptions of the child's ability to read and comprehend. As Oittinen points out, translation is "the mirror which not only reflects but generates light" (Oittinen, 2000: 80).

2.3 Translation and Equivalence

According to Nida and Taber (1974: 12), translation reproduces in the receptor a language that is the closest natural equivalent of the SL message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style. Catford agrees with Nida on defining the translation by depending on an equivalence and disagrees on the definition by satisfying that the translation is a transference of meaning from SL into TL since he believes that meaning is the property of a language, i.e. an SL text has an SL meaning, and a TL text has a TL meaning (1965: cited in Ilyas, 1989: 27). In translation, two orientations have been suggested by theorists: SL-oriented and TL-oriented.

The SL-oriented proponents are those who focus on translation as transference of meaning from SL into the TL, while the TL oriented proponents are those theorists who emphasize that translation is based on equivalence not transference (Ilyas, 1989: 27).

Methods of translation have varied in the attempt to cover all types of texts. Aziz and Lataiwish (2000: 5) remark that "nearly all kinds of translation are based on the equivalence between ST and TT". Equivalence is an empirical phenomenon which can be discovered by comparing the SLT with the TLT (Catford: 1965 cited in Ilyas, 1989: 57).

Nida (1964: 159) suggests two types of equivalences:

1. Formal equivalence in which the translator focuses on the message itself in both form and content.
 2. Dynamic equivalence in which the focus is on the principle of equivalence effect, i.e. reproducing an effect on the TL reader similar to that experienced by the SL receiver.
- Baker (1992: 11-259) makes an elaborated attempt made to discuss translation depending on equivalence which take place at a number of different levels and as follows:

1. Equivalence at word level, where the translator selects a direct equivalent term for a word which is the smallest unit in the text in the TL.

2. Equivalence above word level, when words are associated with others to form the structure of language. At this level, the translator deals with some lexical patterns such as collocation and idioms and fixed expressions.
3. Grammatical equivalence, where the translator should pay attention to the different grammatical categories across language such as number, tense and aspects, voice, person and gender.
4. Textual equivalence, where the equivalence between SL and TL text deals with thematic and information structures, as well as cohesive devices such as those of reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion.
5. Pragmatic equivalence, this is the most complex area since the translator tries to find out the implied meaning of the author's intention by referring to implicatures and strategies of avoidance in a way that assists the reader of the TL to conceive it clearly.

Section Two

Data Analysis

Literary translation is one of the most difficult fields for a translator, since it is closely related to the source text (ST) Literary translation for children, as the source text (ST) I have chosen, is even more difficult to translate because of the target recipient who has a lower reading ability, smaller vocabulary and less awareness of history or other cultural aspects. Regarding literary translation, according to Bassnet (2002) the translator has to accept untranslatability between ST and TT at a linguistic level. Translators should accept the lack of similar cultural references in the TT. This means that translators should focus on the social background, age and gender of the target recipients.

Although Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has a very difficult texts to be translated into Arabic culture and language due to the amount of literary nonsense it holds, it is possible to have a more representative translated Arabic version.

Difficulties in translating parodied verse, puns, jokes involving logic, illogical words, and Lewis Carroll's meaning could be resolved if literary translators made more effort familiar with Arabic and English cultures and languages. . Arabic language and culture bear similar puns and twists of meaning that Lewis Carroll used in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

The Arabic version has also excluded many elements that Carroll had cleverly inserted in his work such as the puns, jokes that involve logic, parodied verses, and his satire of education. In fact, the Arabic translations are more similar to Carroll's *Nursery Alice*, than it is to Carroll's *Alice Adventures in Wonderland*.

The different cultural backgrounds of both the English and Arabic societies along with their different language systems are among the main difficulties for the translation. Literary translation involves lexical and cultural transfer from one language to another. Thus, translating children's literature is difficult especially if the children of

both cultures and languages don't have much in common.

In the "Mad Tea Party", the Arabic translator mentions that Alice only sits at the table for a couple of minutes without even mentioning any kind of conversation that takes place between her and the animals: "Alice found the March Hare, the Hatter, and the dormouse drinking tea and continuously speaking. Alice couldn't stand their gossip and decided to leave immediately". Thus, the Arab child reader will not be able to recognize the madness of the tea party which Carroll had inserted in the conversation through puns, parodied verses and logic jokes. The only "madness" there is the actual word title of the chapter.

3.1 The Translation of the Puns

Puns might be the most difficult part in translation, but still it is not impossible. Most translation problems in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland are related to the large number of puns that appear in the book.

SL Text 1: "You see the earth takes twenty four hours to turn round on its axis." "Talking of axes", said the Duchess, "chop off her head" (Alice in Wonderland (1992: 52).

TL Text 1:

محورها حول لتدور ساعة وعشرين أربعة تستغرق الأرض أن أتعلمين
ص، السادس العجائب، الفصل بلاد في أليس (رأسها اقطعي، الفؤوس عن الحديث بمناسبة: الدوقة فقالت
(110 .

The example above involves a dialogue between Alice and the Duchess.. She tells the Duchess that the earth takes twenty four hours to turn around on its axis; the Duchess mishears her and he thinks that she is talking about axes. As can be noticed, the translation is a literal translation. The given translation leads to a gap in the translated text as the Arabic words "محورها" and "الفؤوس" do not have the same homophonic relation that is available between the English words "axis" and "axes". As such a homophonic similarity does not exist between the Arabic words "محورها" and "الفؤوس", it is impossible for any Arabic reader to understand the misunderstanding that occurs between the Duchess and Alice.

SL Text 2:

"to spoil the meter of the verse" or: "to kill Father time" (Alice's in the Wonderland:104)

Here the Hatter explains that because the Queen of Hearts had objected the meter of the verse, she had accused him of "murdering the time". So, it is changed into a pun through the fact that the "Time" was so disturbed and "...ever since that, he won't do a thing [the Hatter] asks" and that explains why it is always six

o'clock. Fortunately, the exact equivalent Arabic phrase "الوقت قتل" carries the same double-folded meaning that Lewis Carroll intends from this pun. If time is killed it is

always fixed at six o'clock.

SL Text 3:

"To take liquid from a container" or "to make a picture". Fortunately, the Arabic language word for draw, "ب يسحب" means "pull" that could be done with a pencil to draw a picture or "pull" water from a well. So, the translation will both refer to that the three sisters could be either learning to draw treacle well or to draw water out of the well. Moreover, some Arabic words can carry multiple meanings if followed or preceded by different prepositions each time to give more than two meanings for the sentence.

3.2. The Translation of Nonsense Words

The literary translation of nonsense words such as the word "muchness" could be handled by inventing nonsense Arabic words that start with the same sound of the translated Arabic nonsense word. An Arabic equivalent nonsense word for "muchness" could be "متوفر" and any other Arabic words that start with the letter (M) could be included. The selection does not need to make sense. In fact, nonsense is what Lewis Carroll intends to convey through this example.

3.3. The Translation of Carroll's twist of meaning

According to "The Mad Tea Party" chapter, many attempts from Carroll to twist the meanings that can be illustrated. In some of the cases, certain phrases can be inserted before or after the sentence to give the twisted meaning.

SL Text 4:

"It was a treacle-well" is meant to answer Alice's question about the reason that made the three sisters live at the bottom of the well. In Arabic the phrase "the Scissor's story is of two words only" is put at the end of any sentence to show that it has been completely answered and, therefore, "there is no need for further explanation."

SL Text 5: They were obliged to have him with them "the mock turtle said: no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise." "Wouldn't it really?" said Alice in a tone of good surprise. Of course not, said the mock turtle: "why, if a fish came to me, and told me he was going a journey, I should say "with what porpoise?" "Don't you mean "purpose?" said Alice. "I mean what I say", the Mock turtle replied in an offended tone (Alice in Wonderland (1992: 86)).

TL Text 5:

أي الى يذهب حكيم سمك من معهم،فما به القبول على مجبرين كانوا :الزائف السلفاة ذكر قال كيف .لا طبعا :الزائف السلفاة ذكر قال حقا؟ ذلك يفعل الا" :كبيرة دهشة عن تعبر بنبرة أليس قالت "دلفين دون من مكان فأجاب ؟ هدف لأي تقصد الا :أليس قالت دلفين؟ أي مع لقلت ،رحلة في ذاهب بأنه وأخبرني الاسماك أحد جاءني لو (200ص ،العاشر العجائب،الفصل بلاد في أليس) .ماقوله اعني أنا :الزائف ذكر السلفاة

In the text above, the conversation is between the Mock Turtle and Alice. The Mock Turtle says that any wise fish must take a "porpoise" wherever they go, so Alice thinks

that the Mock Turtle means all journeys should have a "purpose" and she asks him again: "Don't you mean purpose?" The Mock Turtle insists that he means what he says. As can be observed, the misinterpretation happens between Alice and the Mock Turtle due to the homophonic pun between "porpoise" and "purpose" I

n order to retrain the wordplay, the researcher uses the Arabic word "القرش سمك القرش" (English "shark") which is not equivalent for the word "دولفين" but it belongs to the semantic field of "sea creatures". Therefore, the word "قرش" (English "penny") is required for any journey; any journey needs money.

Conclusion

In view of the aforementioned, the following are the main conclusion arrived at

1. Children Literature plays a vital role in achieving certain didactic, entertainment, imagination, etc. purposes for children. Yet, its translation into another language (Arabic in our case) is not an easy matter, since the translator should reach the child's mind and his tendency to be able to recreate credibility in the target text.
2. Literary translation is an activity in which the professional must be creative, it is also important in the first place to understand the original text, and then, it can and should be transposed for the target recipient while the translator takes care to consider the culture and age of its audience.
3. There are many problems arise in translating the novel which are linguistic problems such as the use of puns, and there are cultural problems as well. It is clear that translators should not only consider the literal meanings that appear to the surface, they are rather required to take into consideration the shades of meaning to be able to capture the intended meaning(s) of the writer in his writing and also consider the difference between the two cultures when translating.

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