Cultural Issues in the Arabic Translation of Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*

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Abstract.

Many people think that translating children's literature is an easy work; simple words and short sentences of the Source Language (SL) which can be easily rendered to the Target Language (TL). But the important idea is that most of the translation difficulties are encountered in both children and adult literatures. This paper will take the Arabic translation of Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*[*] as a case study. This story is selected to be the case study because it includes many cultural issues in the children's literature. The study discusses the strategies the translator has adopted in the translation process. Furthermore, the study will examine whether the translator's adopted strategies have achieved the targeted aims of the translation process or not!.

Key words: *cultural problems; children's literature; translation strategies; The Story of Doctor Dolittle*

1. Introduction

The cultural problems encountered in translating literature, specifically translating for children, can be considered one of the major obstacles facing translators. Translating of the children's literature has been ignored for a long time in the world in general, and in the Arab world in particular. O'Connel comments that children literature "remains largely ignored by theorists, publishers and academic institutions" (2006:20). Translating children's literature aims at making the little reader understand, and learn something from the foreign work; an issue which may promote many problems or difficulties since such type of literature is rich in cultural content, denotation and connotation. In the present cultural globalization, children encounter new unusual or unexpected aspects of different cultures daily in TV, internet, and stories recited to them.

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[*]The Arabic translation is published under the name of "رحلات الدكتور دوليتل", but as the researcher looked out the original version, supposedly would be "The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle", the content of this story was totally different from the Arabic translation. The paper found out that the Arabic translation rendered "The story of Doctor Dolittle" not "The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle".

Nida (1993) was aware of this issue and pointed out to the issue of cultural differences in that way:

> *The role of language within a culture and the influence of the culture on the meanings of words and idioms are so pervasive that scarcely any text can be adequately understood without careful consideration of its cultural background. (p. 11)*

It is true that different peoples live on the same planet in relatively similar material surroundings and that each language contains expressions to describe this material world—*sun*, *river*, *rain*, *mountain*, *father*, etc. But through long and unique evolution, each culture develops its distinct conceptions about the world. In addition to the common core expressions that are mostly conceptual or denotative, each language has a myriad of culturally-specific expressions that are full of associations for people belonging to that culture. Thus, the same object can be conceptualized or symbolized with different cultural "colours" or "flavours". For example, in the eye of Western people, "the pale white band of stars and clouds of gas that can be seen across the sky at night" is *Milky Way*, while to Chinese people it is *yinhe* (Silver River). The two phrases refer to the same object, but they have different associations and connotations arising from distinct cultural identities (Wong & Shen, 1999:88).

Beside instructional aims, children's literature also serves cultural aims. Literature is a major carrier of cultural content and a powerful "medium" for understanding the world (Xeni, 2006; 2007). Children's literature introduces children to segments of life in other cultures, succeeding in *furthering cross-cultural understanding* (Metcalf, 2003: 324). Batchelder explains this idea saying that:

> *Children of one country who come to know the books and stories of many countries have made a beginning toward international understanding* (in Metcalf, 2003: 324).

The translation of children's books from other languages increases the number of truly excellent literary works available to young people, and it fosters an understanding of both the uniqueness and the universality of human experience. Having an international outlook, children's literature has the ability to move throughout the world, crossing linguistic and cultural borders, making global connections and giving new life to world literature (Bassnet, 1993; O'Sullivan, 2005; Desment in Pinsent, 2006).

Translating works bridge the cultural gaps between two worlds or more and make communication possible between different linguistic communities. Bassnett likens language to "*the heart within the body of culture,*" pointing out that "*the surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril*" (Bassnett 1992: 14).

To speak now on the "body", Sapir claims (1956: 69):

No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same worlds with different labels attached.

From this quotation and many others, it seems that translating, which involves two languages, is unavoidably influenced by two cultures, the source culture and the target culture. The following discussion sheds light on the history of children's literature, and then both inter-cultural and intra-cultural factors influencing the translation process will be examined.

2- History Children's Literature

Just as other forms of literature, children's literature grew from stories passed down orally from generation to generation. Irish folk tales, for example, can be traced back as early as 400 BC, while the earliest written folk tales are arguably the *Pachatantra*, from India, which were written around 200 AD. The earliest version of Aesop's Fables appeared on papyrus scrolls around 400 AD.

In Imperial China, storytelling reached its peak during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD). Many stories from this epoch are still used to instruct students in China today. No such equivalent exists in Greek and Roman literature. However, the stories of Homer and other storytellers of the era would certainly have appealed to children.

As Europe became a cultural center of the world, instructive texts became increasingly common. These books were mostly written in Latin, with the purpose of instructing children. During the Middle Ages, a very little literature was written for the sole purpose of entertaining children. Hornbooks and textbooks containing basic texts like the Lord's Prayer and the alphabet would not appear until the 1400's. Alphabet books began popping up around Russia, Italy, Denmark, and other European countries roughly a century later.

During the 1600's, the concept of childhood was evolving. Rather than being seen as miniature adults, children were seen as separate entities with their own needs and limitations. Thus, publishers throughout Europe began printing books specifically intended for children. The purposes of these texts were still frequently didactic, although several collections of fairy tales were published with varying success.

The trend of illustrating children's books prevailed, and children's literature grew in popularity throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1744, John Newbery published *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, which was heralded as the true first book intended for children's pleasure reading. As paper and printing became more economical, the children's book industry veritably boomed during the 1800's.

It was in the 1920's that books could be mass produced in colour, and literacy became sufficiently widespread to make children's picture books a true industry unto its own. Wanda Gag's *Millions of Cats* (1928) was one of the most successful examples of this era, selling more than a million copies. Other classic children's

picture books were published soon after: *The Little Engine that Could* (1930); *Babar* (1931); *Madeline* (1933); and *Curious George* (1941) (see Masters,2012).

As for the Arab World, the children literature passed a tremendous ignorance for many years; the pioneers of this art are the scholars who had travelled to Europe to resume their study, such as Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, Mohammad Othman, Ahmed Abed Al-Muta'al, and Ahmed Shawqi. Interest in children's literature in the Arab world started in Egypt in the late nineteenth century, and a little later in Lebanon. One of the first writers for children was Othman Jalal (1828–1898) who wrote fables in the manner of Aesop and La Fontaine. The poet Shawqi (1889–1932) published fables, songs and poems for children. The real revolution, however, came with the Egyptian Kamel Kilani (1897–1959), who was the first writer to be specialised in producing children's literature in Arabic. Between 1930 and 1950, he was responsible for a long series of children's books which drew on Arabian folk tales and fiction from Western countries, and were distributed throughout the Arab world. Although they were quite attractive in appearance, the contents had certain uniformity. Nonetheless, he was well liked in his day; his books abound in description and are less popular today with a generation used to television and the comic strip. After his death, his publisher Dar al-Ma'aref branched out and began to publish picture books, original and translated fiction for children of different ages, historical and religious stories, biographies of famous Arabs and humorous tales (Abu Nasr, 1996: 781).

Meanwhile, between 1940 and 1960, the Arabic language was evolving in Lebanon, developing a new, simpler style, which broke away from some of the complexities of traditional Arabic and introduced newly created vocabulary and words borrowed from the colloquial. These changes helped to pave the way for the creation of modern children's literature.

Dramatic changes came in the 1960s. Foreign publishing houses became aware of the Arab market and a flood of poor translations which used a sophisticated classical Arabic far beyond the comprehension of most children provoked a strong reaction. Research centres and Institutes for children's literature were set up in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria.

The defeat of the Arab countries in the 1967 war also seems to have led to recognition of the need for national literatures that will take positive actions and procedures to improve the quality of children's books, and a combination of events led to conferences and workshops designed to bring this about.

The same intellectual-political climate that prevailed in Lebanon in the 1960s was also to be found in Syria. Suleiman El Issa, writer of poems, plays and stories, wanted to arouse national consciousness among the young. Other Syrian writers such as Abdullah Abd, Adel Abu Shanab and Zacharia Tamer were more concerned about the messages they intended to convey as opposed to the language and style. Consequently, their writings were difficult for children to read and understand. Iraq

saw a boom in children's literature in the following decade when foreign experts were called in to advise local writers on how to produce good books for children. All this unfortunately came to a halt at the time of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, followed by the Gulf War and the blockade imposed on Iraq in the 1990s. Egypt and Lebanon, therefore, continue to make the major contribution to children's literature throughout the Arab world while Iraq, Jordan, Tunis, Algeria and Kuwait encourage their own local authors. The revenue from the oil industry has been used to finance publishing houses, some specifically devoted to publishing for young people (Abu Nasr, 1996: 783).

There is general recognition of the need for information books written in a stimulating and creative way, although from 1987 onwards, there have been more books about science and technology, encyclopedias of the arts, craft books and compilations of general knowledge, as well as books on religious themes.

3- The Intercultural Factors

Newmark defines culture as the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression (1988:94). When translating, differences in cultures must be identified in order to derive solutions in accordance with the established concept of the target text culture.

According to Catford (1965: 94), instances of untranslatability can arise from two sources: one is linguistic, and the other is cultural. A translator who fails to take the cultural context into account is likely to commit some ridiculous errors. The very existence of a cultural gap can act on the process of translating by interfering with the translator's logical judgment and linguistic selection.

It is easier to translate texts between similar cultures than those which are vastly different (Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 1998:30). This is justified by saying that the languages of related cultures have similar historical roots and vocabulary, grammar and language patterns will be similar. Another reason is the fact that a national children's literature, represented of a country's cultural background, is determined by pedagogic, moral and political values; and for children to understand and process these values, they need to be equated with familiar ideas. Therefore, similar concepts in the literature of SL and TL will help the transposition process.

A country receiving a translated text can react in different ways. Wolfram Eggeling portrays a model of how literature can be received socially, and outlines four patterns (see Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 1998:41-42):

1. *Primary conculturality*: Text and audience belong to the same epochal culture. The readers show interest and can identify with the text, although they need not necessarily agree with it. The book promotes debate.

2. *Disculturality*: Expectations and aesthetic experience of the audience clash with the ideological and aesthetic procedures of a text; alienation is created. A

relation between text and audience does not arise due to the audience does not show readiness for discussion and the book is rejected.

3. *Secondary conculturality*: this happens in the case of differing ideological between text and audience. Here, however, the text is adjusted to the audience's expectations. Link sees this type as a common process happening in literature.

4. *Classicity*: The audience perceives the text as aesthetic. However, because of historical or cultural distance, it no longer plays a role. Link stresses that the audience's reaction does not have to be negative and, also, that it is possible that the audience will react with secondary conculturality towards historical texts.

In children's literature, the crucial question is always what it has been deleted from a book and why. In the case disculturality, it should be considered whether there was really no possibility for secondary conculturality, or whether the foreign elements could not have been received as "exotic" in the sense of classicty. Thomson-Wohlgemuth emphasises that, in children's literature, and in contrast to adult's, secondary conculturality is of great significance owing to its pedagogical and didactic task. Revised versions and adaptations make sure that cultural peculiarities of the SL are adjusted to the knowledge and experience of the target text reader (1998:32). A decision must be made from case to case whether such a treatment is justified or not.

Children's literature in the Arab world is impregnated with ideological and didactic concerns. Subversive books for children in the Arab world are rare or non-existent. Major genres published for children in the Arab world can be classified as *moral tales* or *fairy tales*, and some other writings can be classified under the genre *animal realism* (Mdallel, 2003:303). Accordingly, the choice of international books to be translated into Arabic will be limited to those that do not in any way infringe the taboos and the rituals of writing for children in Arabic.

Mdallel (2003:303) reviews the fears of many Arab scholars in the field of children's literature. Those scholars find that the amount of translations presented to Arab children is too high and, as such, alarming, as they have a bad influence on the Arab child. According to them, 75% of the children's books translated into Arabic have "harmful" themes. In the same vein, some of them warn that Arab children are threatened by a cultural invasion from the West, and that the waves of translated books filling the markets in the Arab world prevent the spread of local children's literature. Mdallel agrees fears may be quite justifiable:

> *while every nation has the right to choose the literature to be translated for its children, censorship could be looked at as a normal reaction if the literature to be translated contains elements or themes encouraging violence, racism, sexism or moral values not accepted by the target culture. Censorship*

> *is sometimes a means to preserve one's own cultural identity*
> *and avoid being just a copy of the other.* (Mdallel, 2003:303)

Despite the worry voiced by critics and educationalists, the number of children's books translated into Arabic is steadily increasing. Indeed the bookshelf of Arabic children's literature comprises books that are labeled as international children's classics, such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Charles Perrault's *Cinderella*, Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, most Andersen's stories, some of Gianni Rodari's tales, Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, Tove Jansson's *Moomin* tales, all The Grimm bothers' stories, some of Edith Nesbit's tales and many other books which belong to the same genres.

However, translating for children has not always been a success story. Some publishers with certain economic interests and lack of serious interest in children's literature have published many low-quality translations (Al-Manea, 2001). According to Al-Manea's research, eight translations out of 60 were word-for-word translations and clearly difficult to understand; and 27 books out of 60 were published with neither the name of the author nor that of the translator, which is why no copyrights could be paid to any of them.

The major part of what has been translated for children in the Arab world belongs to the genres of adventure, fairy tales, major international children's classics, and some fables. Such books show no elements of subversion and their general frame corresponds to the tradition of story-telling in the Arab world including stories about powerful kings, ghouls, witches, bad step-mothers and ungrateful friends or relatives.

Indeed, modern literature for children in the West is rarely translated into Arabic. Problem solving literature for children dealing mainly with drug addiction and juvenile pregnancy, topics so popular in the United States (Nikolajeva, 1996), is never translated into Arabic. Yet the reason for this situation is not that these problems are alien to Arab societies; quite the contrary, many countries in the Arab world exert a lot of efforts to combat such problems. Rather, behind the publishers' decisions lie the moralising and educating roles assigned to children's literature in the Arab world, as well as the general belief that children should be spared such problems. Carnivalesque literature, for example, where the image of the teacher is mocked, as in Morris Gleitzman's *Sticky Beak* (1993) (see Pinsent 1997: 31-32), has little chance of being translated into Arabic. It even seems that there is a general tendency, though not specific to Arab societies, to overestimate the power of books on children. Nikolajeva claims that:

> *In Sweden, where sex education begins in nursery school and*
> *where masturbation and homosexuality are frequent topics in*
> *the magazine Kamratposten read by elementary school*
> *children, there is nothing extraordinary or controversial in*
> *similar books.* (Nikolajeva, 1996: 31).

Such a magazine would never be published in Arab Islamic societies, which is shown in al-Hajji's *Bibliographical Guide*, which does not include one such book. Similarly, books like Aidan Chamber's *Dance on My Grave* or Lesléa Norman's *Heather Has Two Mommies* dealing with taboo subjects like homosexuality have not been and will probably never be translated into Arabic. The same thing applies to fictitious diaries like Sue Townsend's *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*, Beverly Cleary's *Dear Mr Henshaw* or Barbro Lindgren's *Top Secret*: such books are likely to include subjects which are judged not fit for children in the Arab World, such as masturbation, menstruation, secret love (see Nikolajeva, 1996).

Suffice to say, children's literature in the Arab Islamic world is a true reflection of the values and child images governing this part of the world. Though literature written for adults in the Arab world is coping with similar changes and problems as literatures in other parts of the world, Arabic children's literature is still impregnated with morality, didactics, and a heavy ideological bias, despite some attempts for change. Translating for children is, in its turn, governed by the same rules that govern writing for them. Translation is a cross-cultural communication in a world made up of heterogeneous cultural entities some of which see in translation a potential threat to their cultural specificity: hence the recourse is to ideological manipulation.

4- The Case study :Cultural overview

The Arabic translation of *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* by Kawther Mohammed Mahmood is examined and reviewed in this paper from a cultural perspective to show the cultural problems in translation, and how the translator dealt with such problems. It is worth noting that the paper will focus just on the cultural issues that related to translating for the Arabic children's literature. The present paper will analyse various factors influencing the selection of translation strategies for cultural elements, and attempt to draw the following conclusion: a translator of children's literature is supposed to retain the cultural elements in the source text as much as possible to conform to the time of cultural globalization and contemporary children's characteristics. At the same time, the translation must not go beyond children's capacity and the nature of the source language culture.

One of the problems a translator can face arises from the fact that some words or phrases denoting objects, facts, phenomena,… etc, are so deeply rooted in their source culture and so specific (and perhaps exclusive or unique) to the culture that produced them that they have no equivalent in the target culture, be it because they are unknown, or because they are not yet codified in the TL. When discussing the problems of correspondence in translation, "*differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure*" (Nida 1964: 130).

As it is well-known that a perfect translation of culturally-bound texts is impossible, the translation focusing on the purpose of the SL text writing is, however,

always possible. This can be proven with the translation of so many literary works into other languages (Hariyanto, 2009). The translator can have recourse to several devices for solving the problem of bridging the gap across cultures, providing that s/he is culturally aware of those differences. S/he can rely on various procedures, techniques or strategies to deal with such translation problems.

The assessment of the translation process will be done through discussing the translation "strategies" adopted in dealing with cultural problems. Scholars usually define translation strategies as the procedures leading to the optimal solution of a translation problem. The procedures or strategies based on comparative stylistics also used by other scholars (see Fernández Guerra 2012). Such procedures have been sometimes criticized, among other reasons, because there is even a lack of consensus as to what name should be given to these categories (procedures, techniques, strategies or methods are often interrelated and used as synonyms). Naming problems occur because the procedures sometimes overlap; they only catalogue differences in terms of language and not usage, and they focus on translation results rather than on the translation process. There have been, however, several attempts to differentiate procedures from strategies, which are more related to the translation process. In any case, the procedures or strategies that are usually mentioned in academic publications serve both to analyse and catalogue translation equivalence and to improve the acquisition of translation competence, since knowing and comparing them is definitively necessary to obtain an adequate translation Fernández Guerra 2012:6).

Many scholars have suggested certain procedures in translating cultural terms or solving cultural problems in translation. Adaptation, calque, equivalence, modulation, borrowing, literal translation, transposition, reduction, expansion, particularasation, generalsation, compensation, description, substitution, variation are the general procedures adopted or suggested to be used in the translation process (Fernández Guerra 2012:6).

The Arabic translation of Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* is assessed here through the procedures adopted in her translation. The expected reasons and effects behind adopted a certain procedure are objectively reviewed in the following subclasses.

4.1   Adaptation

Adaptation is used in those cases in which the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the target culture and translators create a new situation. The themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture converted to the TL culture and the text rewritten (Newmark, 1988:46). Thus, it can be understood as what other authors have called cultural, dynamic or functional equivalence. The basic goal of the translator when trying to 'adapt' the translation is to have a similar effect on the TL readers, 'domesticating', in a way, the cultural terms. The translator has adapted the English expression "pilot bread" (p.21) into the

Arabic expression "بسكويت البحارة" (sailors' biscuit). The translator has used this
strategy to transfer the meaning of keeping bread for a long time during travelling by
giving a cultural equivalent though the word "بسكويت" is not from Arabic origin or a
precise equivalent for "bread".

4.2 Borrowing

Borrowing (loan words) is the same as Catford's Transference and it means that
the translator imports a SL expression into the TL. Some of the borrowings from the
Arabic culture are Allah, Quran, Hajj, Mufti, Intifada, and Jihad, whereas borrowings
from English are راديو and إلكترون, بكتريا ,فيروس ,موبايل ,كمبيوتر. Borrowing can be
"pure", if there is no change of any kind in the foreign term (Television: التليفزيون), or
"naturalized", if the word has some change in the spelling, and perhaps some
morphological or phonetic adaptation (Television: التلفاز). The translator has adopted
the "pure" borrowing in translating proper names, geographical places etc.
Borrowing should be used when there is a need for it, and it will only succeed if the
borrowed term is frequently repeated. The translator did not take this note into
consideration when she had translated the expression "alligator" into "القاطور" in the
following excerpt.

> .....just as we were beginning to be well off again. Now we shall
> be ruined entirely.
> This is the last straw. I will no longer be housekeeper for you if
> you don't send away that alligator." "It isn't an alligator," said
> the Doctor—"it's a crocodile." (**The Story Of Doctor Dolittle,
> 1997:17**)

هنا قالت أخته سارة: "فاض بي الكيل .كادت أحوالنا تتحسن من جديد !لن يمضي وقت

طويل قبل أن نعود إلى حياة الضنك من جديد يجب أن يرحل هذا القاطور"

فرد عليها الدكتور دوليتل بهدوءٍ قائلا:"إنه ليس قاطورا، بل تمساح" (لوفتيج,2012: 20)

Alligator refers to a creature similar to crocodile but it is bigger. There is no
Arabic equivalent to "alligator", the translator resorted to borrow this word. This
procedure is often combined with definition or substitution. The translator used
neither of these two strategies to combine with borrowing. However, the translator
must not borrow too much in one text because this will impede communication.

4.3 Generalisation

With this procedure, in opposition to particularisation, the translator uses
hypernyms or more general or neutral terms, normally for stylistic reasons, or to
avoid unnecessary repetitions or ambiguity. Newmark states that "This procedure
occupies the middle, sometimes the universal, area between the SL language or
culture and the TL language or culture" (1988:83). The translator rendered the item
"the cat's meat man" into the Arabic term "الجزار" since there is no such an occupation

in the Arabic culture. Having adopted this strategy, the translator was forced to delete a part of the story relating to cat's meat.

> *Do you know that? You see, I'd send all the old women who had sick cats or dogs to you. And if they didn't get sick fast enough, I could put something in the meat I sell 'em to make 'em sick, see?"*
> *"Oh, no," said the Doctor quickly. "You mustn't do that. That wouldn't be right."*
> *"Oh, I didn't mean real sick," answered the* **Cat's-meat-Man.***" Just a little something to make them droopy-like was what I had reference to. But as you say, maybe it ain't quite fair on the animals. But they'll get sick anyway, because the old women always give 'em too much to eat. And look, all the farmers 'round about who had lame horses and weak lambs—they'd come. Be an animal-doctor." (**The Story Of Doctor Dolittle, 1997:10**)*

فصاح الجزار : "غريبة؟ لكنها منطقية تماما .ثمة الكثير من المزارعين المجاورين يملكون أبقارا وأغناما قد تنتفع من مساعدتك، علاوة على كل قطط وكلاب البلدة.

والحيوانات تمرض كثيرا شأنها شأن البشر .ثق بكلامي .عليك أن تصبح طبيبا بيطريِّا"(لوفتيج,2012: 12)

The translator avoided translating this part of the story since it is related to something she had deleted according to a certain strategy she adopted. The translator also avoided the reference to the term" snuff" in the following excerpt

> *Then the boy took from his pocket a great, big red handkerchief and said, "This was my uncle's too."*
> *As soon as the boy pulled it out, Jip shouted,*
> *"Snuff, by Jingo!—Black Rappee snuff. Don't you smell it? His uncle took snuff— Ask him, Doctor."*
> *The Doctor questioned the boy again; and he said, "Yes. My uncle took a lot of snuff." (**The Story Of Doctor Dolittle, 1997:74**)*

The translator had adopted an "exaggerated" generalisation in avoiding translating the details of "smelling" the uncle's handkerchief

فأعطاه الصبي عصابة رأس لونها أحمر فاتح.
فقال جيب :" رائع, ليتك الآن تسمح لي فقط بتشممها ......" وألصق انفه بعصابة الرأس واستنشق رائحتها عدة مرات.
ثم قال:" لا تقلق أيها الطبيب .رجاءً أخبر الصبي بأنني سأعثر على عمه، وسأجد أثره حتماً."
(لوفتيج,2012: 78)

As the snuff is a preparation of tobacco, either powdered and taken into the nostrilsby inhala tion or ground and placed between the cheek and gum"(Dictionary.reference. com), the translator would successfully adopt an "acceptable" generalisation strategy by translating this term into "رائحة السكائر".

4.4 Substitution

This strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a TL item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader (Baker, 1992: 40). For examples, veil vs. نقاب, chapter vs. سورة, and capitation vs. جزية. This method could be combined with addition. Here, the receptor has no difficulty to understand and identify the term and concepts. However, substitution removes the strangeness of the foreign culture. Therefore, substitution is easier if the terms have something in common, for example, tax vs. زكاة or if the terms are functionally similar, for example, chapter and سورة. Other examples can be found in proverbs in both languages. For example,

"a cat has nine lives"   القط بسبع أرواح
"he who steals an egg steals an ox"   من يسرق بيضة يسرق جملا
"diamond cut diamond"   لا يفل الحديد إلا الحديد

The translator used this strategy in translating some cultural terms which would be unacceptable if translated literally. For example, the term "Lord save us" (p.43)is translated into "وادهشتاه". Another example is "Good gracious" (p.55)which was translated into "عجباً".Substitution is similar to adaptation in that it expresses the same situation in a different way, mainly in cases of idioms and formulaic language.

4.5 Particularisation

Particularisation is in opposition to generalisation. It refers to the procedure in which the translator uses in the TL hyponyms or more precise or concrete terms (Fernández Guerra 2012:11), as the presence of duality in Arabic and its absence in English. The translator used this strategy in particularise a rare creature in the story called "pushmi-pullyu" as "ظبي البوشمييوليو". The translator had concluded this translation from the conversation, though not translated, between this rare animal and Doctor Dolittle:

> *"Excuse me, surely you are related to the Deer Family, are you not?"*
> *"Yes," said the pushmi-pullyu—"to the Abyssinian Gazelles and the Asiatic Chamois—on my mother's side. My father's great-grandfather was the last of the Unicorns." (**The Story Of Doctor Dolittle, 1997:44**)*

It seems that this strategy has not been implemented accurately in rendering the term "uncle" into "العم" in the following excerpt.

> *"You laugh like a friend," he said—"not like a pirate. Could*
> *you tell me where my **uncle** is?" (**The Story Of Doctor***
> ***Dolittle, 1997:68***)

قال الصبي:" ضحكتك ودودة للغاية .ليست كضحكة القراصنة على الإطلاق، لكنني

أشعر بالقلق .هل رأيت **عمي**؟" (لوفتنج,2012: 74)

The Arabic language differentiates between "العم" (parental uncle) and "الخال"
(maternal uncle). The story's author specified the family relationship between the boy
and his uncle in later chapter

> *And while they were letting down the anchor, the little boy's*
> *mother (**who was also the man's sister**) came running down to the*
> *shore to meet them, laughing and crying at the same time. (**The***
> ***Story Of Doctor Dolittle, 1997:82***)

Therefore, the expression "خالي" would be faithful to the SL and more accurate
for the TL readers.

4.6 Deletion

The translator according to this strategy (also termed compression, reduction,
condensation or omission) synthesizes or suppresses a SL information item in the TL
text, mainly when that information is considered unnecessary because the cultural
term does not perform a relevant function or may even mislead the reader. Baker
states that "If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital
enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy
explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or
expression in question" (1992:49). Hence, deletion is necessitated not by the nature of
the cultural element, but by the nature of the communicative situation in which such a
cultural element appears. For example, Arab people sometimes greet each other in the
morning by saying ''صبحكم الله بالخير'', so when we translate it into English it is enough
to say "good morning" because English culture prefers simple greetings.

Compression/reduction/condensation/omission of information is not common
when translating cultural terms and, when it occurs; it is usually to avoid repetitions,
misleading information, or lack of naturalness. The translator resorted to this strategy
for more than one reason:

   a. **Adopting a certain strategy**: the translator had neglected translating
parts of the story as a result of adopting a certain strategy in translation (examples
are listed in generalisation or particularisation).

   b. **Racial reasons**: she avoided translating terms relating to racism. She
rendered the title of the 11the chapter "black prince" (p. 46) into "قصة الامير". She
also avoided the literal translation of the surname of the sea pirate "Ben Ali, the
Barbary Dragon" (p.61) since it implicates the Arab origin of this pirate. She
rendered it into "تنين الساحل البربري".

c. **Religious reasons**: some taboos in the Islamic/Arabic culture are deleted in the translated version. The translator had adopted the deletion strategy and avoided reference to the term "rum" in the following excerpt"

> *"I declare, it is the pirates' rum-room!" said Jip in a*
> *whisper.*
> *"Yes. Very rum!" said Gub-Gub. "The smell makes me*
> *giddy."* (***The Story Of Doctor Dolittle, 1997:68***)

Adopting the adaptation or substitution strategy would be more accurate and faithful for both SL and TL texts. The Arabic expression "غرفة العصائر" would good choice and culturally acceptable to the TL reader.

d. **Unknown reasons**: the translator avoided translating parts of the story for unknown reasons. The following excerpt was not translated in the Arabic version.

> *While they were doing this they discovered a lot of new*
> *and wonderful things that the pirates must have stolen*
> *from other ships: Kashmir shawls as thin as a cobweb,*
> *embroidered with flowers of gold; jars of fine tobacco*
> *from Jamaica; carved ivory boxes full of Russian tea; an*
> *old violin with a string broken and a picture on the*
> *back;…….. (****The Story Of Doctor Dolittle, 1997:66****)*

This excerpt indicates to some cultural facts about famous commodities from around the world, but the translator neglected translating them. The literal translation strategy would be good choice to transfer this cultural information to the TL reader.

The translator also has avoided translating the proper names of many of the story's characters and some geographic places for no reasons, for the researcher at least. She neglected translating the proper names of significant characters such as "Prince Bumpo" whom the story writer dedicated the 11th chapter for his story. The translator also neglected translating "the Lands of Jolliginki", the destination of the Doctor Dolittle journey and the place of most of the story events. Reflecting the variety of places and characters of the story is important for the TL reader to know the intention of the author in reflecting this variety, as will be seen in the following table:

Procedure	*Strategy used (times)*	*%*
Deletion	17	51.52
Generalization	7	21.21
Particularization	3	9.09
Substitution	3	9.09
Adaptation	1	3.03
Borrowing	2	6.06
Total	**33**	**100%**

This table shows that the translator adopted the deletion strategy 17 times (adopting a certain strategy (6), racial reasons (2), religious reasons (2), and unknown reasons (7) during translating the cultural expressions. The deletion strategy was sometimes adopted as a result of adopting another strategy. The generalization strategy came second in 7 times. Adaptation was the least one adopted in just one time.

Conclusion

The present paper has first made a quick reference to some theoretical aspects concerning cultural terms, mainly to the most important typologies and classifications proposed, as well as the translation procedures or strategies that can be used to translate these terms. Despite the fact that translators have been carrying out their task for more than two thousand years, some scholars consider that, in some cases, translation is impossible, basically when one has to translate poetic texts or those of a cultural nature. Of course, when "gaps" between two languages and cultures exist, to achieve a perfect transfer will be very difficult, and cultural gaps certainly seem to prove the problematic nature of translation.

Since anything that can be said in one language can be expressed in another (Nida and Taber: 1982), it is possible that everything can be translated from any given language into any other language. Therefore, the translation of any text is objectively possible, even if there are different codifications, historically conditioned, resulting from the fact that not all speech communities are at the same stage of evolution.

To overcome the difficulties and problems that cultural elements pose, the translator can use a wide range of strategies, such as the ones synthesized in section 5. Many translation scholars consider them pivotal in the translation process, but these strategies are not the universal solution and studies on translation strategies and procedures have been sometimes criticised. Some authors criticise the nature of these procedures, indicating that borrowings, for instance, are not really translation procedures, while others (especially adaptation) are beyond the limits of translation, or that there is no clear boundary between them. Procedures have also been criticised arguing that knowing them is not useful for the translator and that studies on the several types of strategies or procedures are mere labels used to designate what translators do intuitively and what they have done for centuries, before linguists gave those procedures a name. The present paper concluded through the process of analysis the Arabic translation of Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* that understanding and knowing when to apply such procedures, however, can be very helpful and methodologically useful for translators and students *per se*.

For an optimum transfer of message, a combination of procedures is better than single use. Therefore, a translator decides on the optimum strategy of translation depending on each individual text s/he is faced with. Now, the problem which faces

any translator is how to deal with cultural references when they are only in the text as background. If the translator omits these references, then s/he will lose the faithfulness. At the same time, if the translator translates them, then s/he will give them more importance than what was originally intended. This is a no-win situation; translators can only use compromise and relativity.

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