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## ***SNOW WHITE GETS BLACK HAIR AND BROWN EYES*** **– ON CENSORSHIP IN THE TRANSLATION OF** **ENGLISH CHILDREN’S LITERATURE INTO ARABIC**

### **Abstract**

Children’s literature is subject to different kinds of censorship which aims at adapting foreign texts in some way to fit certain ideology. Censorship in the Arab world involves the process of domestication of culturally-marked expressions, as, in the opinion of Arab scholars, young readers are threatened by a cultural invasion from the West that prevents the spread of local children’s literature. In this case, censorship is a means to preserve Arab cultural identity and moralizing role assigned to children’s literature. This article is aimed at presenting the major features of Arabic children’s literature as well as constraints which the censorship imposes on translators and the consequences of such restrictions. Moreover, some examples of censorship in the translation of English children’s literature into Arabic are provided on the basis of the research conducted by Arab scholars. They compared original English versions with their Arabic adaptations. The results show that the censorship is still a powerful means of influencing children’s books.

### **1. Introduction**

Children’s literature, as the name suggests, is a set of literary genres whose primary audience are children, although teenagers and adults also enjoy it<sup>1</sup>. Zohar Shavit<sup>2</sup> describes it as a vehicle for education, teaching and indoctrinating the child.

A well known example of using literature for pedagogical purposes is the case of Arab children’s literature. In his article, Sabeur Mdallel<sup>3</sup> points out several dis-

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<sup>1</sup> O’Connell, Eithne: *Translating for Children*. In: Lathey, Gillian. (ed.), *The Translation of Children’s Literature*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters 2006. P. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Shavit, Zohar: *Poetics of Children’s Literature*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press 1986. Pp. 34–39.

tinctive features that characterize this genre. He underlines the fact that children's books mainly celebrate the glorious Arab past and heroic Arab figures. Children usually read about good and proper behaviour of an ideal Muslim, history and tradition of Islam and dichotomy between good and evil. There is a tendency to make children aware of the political and military situation in the Arab world. What is more, children's literature is a "powerful political propaganda tool in the hands of politicians and decision-makers".<sup>4</sup>

Writers for children recognize the spreading of Islamic moral values as the main purpose of literature.<sup>5</sup> Going through Al-Hajji's bibliographical guide<sup>6</sup>, we can find many titles that confirm this thesis: *Days in the Life of the Leader Saddam*, *Arab Days*, *Arab Tales*, *Moral Stories*, *Morality Tales*, etc. By religious and national themes, children's literature basically teaches children and imposes a certain point of view on them. It guides young readers by Islamic moral values. Consequently, due to the multiple taboos, international books are considered to have a bad influence on Arab children. That is why there is a very limited amount of them being translated into Arabic. As Mdallel<sup>7</sup> states, modern literature for children in the West offers a great variety of genres and themes because of the liberalism that allows for dealing with such issues like drug addiction, juvenile pregnancy, divorce, death of a family member, ugliness, etc. These are the examples of topics popular in problem-solving literature for children in Western countries but unacceptable for Arab societies, as their literature is based on Koran and its morality tales. Following Mdallel<sup>8</sup>, it may be stated that children's literature in the Arab Islamic world is a "true reflection of the values and child images governing this part of the world".

## 2. Censorship in the translation of children's literature

It has to be observed that children's literature is subject to different kinds of censorship. It applies not only to books in the source language but also to translations, as Mdallel<sup>9</sup> claims that "the way we write for children [...] governs to a great extent the way we translate for them". The translator is entitled to "manipulate the text in

<sup>3</sup> Mdallel, Sabeur: Translating Children's Literature in the Arab World: The State of the Art. In: *Meta Translators' Journal* 48:1 (2003). Pp. 298–306.

<sup>4</sup> Mdallel, Sabeur: The Sociology of Children's Literature in the Arab World. In: *The Looking Glass: New Perspectives on Children's Literature* 8:2 (2004).

<sup>5</sup> Manaa, Aziza: al-Adab al-Mutarjam li-Tifl: Dirasa Tahlilia lil-Madhmun at-Tarbawi (Translated Literature for Children: An Analytical Study of the Educational Content). In: *Arab Journal of Education* 21:2 (2001). P. 202.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Hajji, Faissal Abdallah: al-Dalil al-Bibliughrafi Likitab at-Tifl al-'Arabi (Bibliographical Guide to Arab Children's Books). Sharjah: Dairatu al-Thakafa wal-Falam 1990.

<sup>7</sup> Mdallel, S.: The Sociology of Children's Literature in the Arab World.

<sup>8</sup> Mdallel, S.: Translating Children's Literature in the Arab World. P. 305.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

various ways by changing, enlarging, or abridging it or by deleting or adding to it".<sup>10</sup> Censorship may result from children's assumed incapability of understanding, or, which is more common, from imposing certain norms on what is written and translated for them.<sup>11</sup> The norms differ depending on the country, its culture and social determinants.<sup>12</sup> Following Adamczyk-Garbowska<sup>13</sup>, we may establish two groups of factors which influence children's literature. The first one is a group of pedagogical determinants. Namely, too drastic, sad and cruel elements are excluded from children's books. The second group – of political and historical determinants – deals with the elimination of text fragments connected with religion, discrimination and certain political ideology.

There are many reasons for the presence of censorship in the translation of children's literature. Al-Quinai<sup>14</sup> suggests some of them:

- conventional governmental censorship,
- sociocultural, ideological and political determinants,
- the influence of the translation commissioner who presents certain objectives and gives explicit instructions to the translator,
- intentional intervention in order to create a different image of the source text in the minds of its readers,
- translator's religious affiliation or political allegiance.

### **2.1. Ideology as the main reason for the presence of censorship in children's literature**

When considering censorship in children's literature, we have to take into account one more aspect which shows that every story is adapted in some way to fit a certain ideology. Hollindale<sup>15</sup> defines it as a "systematic scheme of ideas relating to politics or society or to a conduct of a class or group, and regarded as justifying actions". He claims that all novels embody a set of ideological values (whether intended or not) which differ from one culture to another and influence the readers who in turn differ in their tastes, needs, social and ethnic origin. For him, ideology can appear implicitly and the ideas are transferred covertly, abided by the didactic guidelines in order to achieve a moral effect. In this sense, it has a significant role in

<sup>10</sup> Shavit, Z.: *Poetics of Children's Literature*. P. 112.

<sup>11</sup> Fornalczyk, Anna: *Anthroponym Translation in Children's Literature – Early 20th and 21st Centuries*. In: *Kalbotyra* 57: 3 (2007). P. 94.

<sup>12</sup> Albińska, Karolina: "Nothing but the best is good enough for the young." *Dilemmas of the Translator of Children's Literature*. In: *Przekładaniec* 22–23:1 (2011). P. 268.

<sup>13</sup> Adamczyk-Garbowska, Monika: *Polskie tłumaczenia angielskiej literatury dziecięcej: problemy krytyki przekładu*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich 1988. P. 155.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Quinai, Jamal: *Manipulation and Censorship in Translated Texts*. In: García, Romana and Luisa, María. (eds.), *II AIEETI. Actas del II Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Ibérica de Estudios de Traducción e Interpretación*. Madrid: AIEETI 2005. P. 523.

<sup>15</sup> Hollindale, Peter: *Ideology and the Children's Books*. In: Hunt, Peter. (ed.), *Literature for Children: Contemporary Criticism*. London: Routledge 1992. Pp. 19–27.

'socializing children' since they are less sophisticated readers than adults and tend to believe what they read, absorb it and accept easily<sup>16</sup>.

That was the case of children's literature in German Democratic Republic which shall now be discussed on the basis of Gabriele Thomson-Wohlgemuth's article<sup>17</sup>. East Germany represented an intricate system of political, economic and social legislation, of bureaucratic measures, propaganda and instruments of power where all art was looked upon as a weapon in the class struggle. Therefore, literature also played a key role in education and indoctrination as it must have been partisan, i.e. loyal to the party line. Its main task was to be "purposeful" for children in their socialist development. As a result, it became a tool for propaganda, actively supporting the current power. It idealized the communist world as the only "happy" one in which people find their true selves, free from any material constraints which were omnipresent in the West. Children's books were full of courageous, energetic and sacrificing heroes, radiating optimism and a revolutionary attitude. They were fully integrated into the community as the "collective" was superior to individuality. The reader was expected to identify with them and to develop a similar behaviour. To the same extent as socialist maxims were integrated into literature, western influence was rejected and treated as a serious threat and the worst evil causing degeneration and depravation of children. Censorship was so strong that only approved literature was allowed.

As far as ideology in translation is concerned, Metcalf<sup>18</sup> writes: "translation will always be subject to political, moral, social, economic, cultural, religious, ideological, psychological and other pressures that have to be acknowledged."

There are plenty of examples illustrating this view and they are all connected with domestication of foreign elements. In each nation the tales function differently. Moreover, they indicate something about the national character of a particular country. That is why translators and publishers adjust the story to the reality of their country due to some political or historical reasons. Sometimes it is a matter of convenience or simplification to make the text easier and more comprehensible for young readers. But sometimes – a matter of stereotypes, prejudices or even open hostility towards another nation. Here the best example would be the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the United States during the time of Cold War. The whole Soviet politics was based on nationalization and censorship and it did not omit translation of western children's literature. Everything, what was connected with western countries, was considered decayed and had to be replaced with suitable equivalent. If not so, it was exaggerated, laughed at or condemned. What is more, inconvenient historic facts were changed or even deleted. Regrettably, all

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. P. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Thomson-Wohlgemuth, Gabriele: Children's Literature and Translation Under the East German Regime. In: *Meta Translators' Journal* 48:1 (2003). Pp. 241–249.

<sup>18</sup> Metcalf, Eva-Maria: Exploring Cultural Difference Through Translating Children's Literature. In: *Meta Translators' Journal* 48:1 (2003). P. 326.

those practices affected translated children's literature. Censorship was omnipresent and overwhelming, destroying and distorting cultural heritage of western countries.

As an example of censorship in translation of western children's literature in socialist Poland, Biały<sup>19</sup> mentions Polish adaptation by Irena Tuwim (from 1957) of English book *Mary Poppins* by Pamela L. Travers. The most significant sign of censorship is the title of adaptation, *Agnieszka*, which is completely changed and has nothing in common with the original one. It is well known that the title has significant implications for translation and the way it is rendered shows the general tendency of the translator. Here, the title refers to the name of a main protagonist of the whole story, that is to the nanny. The name is then used throughout the text. 'Agnieszka' is a typical Polish name, that is why it can be suggested that the translator purposely wanted to make the whole story more familiar to the target audience. What is more, in socialist Poland every signs of the West world were unwelcome and translators had to submit to the current authority in order to have their books published.

Fortunately, censorship in Poland does not longer exist, since it was abolished in 1990<sup>20</sup>. In the newest Polish translation of *Mary Poppins* (from 2008), a tendency to leave the original character of the book may be observed, as the title *Agnieszka* is replaced with *Mary Poppins*<sup>21</sup>. Nowadays, in the time of globalization, when people tend to use foreign expressions in everyday life and the occurrence of strange proper names on the covers of books does not surprise anyone, the original title seems to be even more encouraging than the postwar version, considered by many as old-fashioned and outdated.

Nevertheless, there are many countries in which such practices are still applied, depriving children – now young readers, but, in the future, next generations – of opportunity to learn about other cultures and broaden their knowledge about the world.

## 2.2. Censorship as a way to preserve Arab cultural identity

In the opinion of Arab scholars, young readers are threatened by a cultural invasion from the West that prevents the spread of local children's literature<sup>22</sup>. In this case, censorship is a means to preserve Arab cultural identity and moralizing role assigned to children's literature. Western literature is seen as a potential threat and,

<sup>19</sup> Biały, Paulina: Cultural adaptation in translation of English children's literature into Polish. Unpublished MA dissertation. Sosnowiec: Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach 2010. P. 48.

<sup>20</sup> Gwadera, Małgorzata: O zagrożeniach płynących z czytelnictwa dzieci i młodzieży w XXI wieku. In: Heška-Kwaśniewicz, Krystyna (ed.), *Młody odbiorca w kręgu lektur pożytecznych i szkodliwych*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego 2012. Pp. 11–12.

<sup>21</sup> Biały, P.: Cultural adaptation in translation of English children's literature into Polish. P. 48.

<sup>22</sup> Youssef, Abdel: *Kutub al-Atfal fi 'Alamina al-Mu'assir (Children's Books of Our Time)*. Cairo and Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Masri and Dar al-Kitab al-lubnani 1985. P. 20.

therefore, rejected.<sup>23</sup> Ahmad<sup>24</sup> claims that children's way of thinking is frequently modified by the literature they read. Therefore, books should not clash with what is familiar to young readers. For Ahmad, literature enriches children's experiences and shapes their identities. Translations enable them to benefit from the literature taken from other cultures, provided that the unfamiliar elements, which might have negative influence on them, are eliminated.<sup>25</sup> Khafaji<sup>26</sup> pays even more attention to the content of children's literature. For him, it is everything presented to children, including values, experiences and skills that suit children's needs and guide them. It develops religious awareness that an Arab-Muslim is required to behave properly. Children's literature teaches the young that their cultural values and attitudes are distinct from those of other cultures.<sup>27</sup> Najeeb<sup>28</sup> presents a similar position. The content in children's literature must meet the intentions of the culture in which children get to know more about the people, society, life and values. It can help them change false impressions about foreigners. However, world literature should undergo certain modifications in order to comply with the standards of Arab children's literature, which includes selecting the suitable content and purifying it from any harmful elements.<sup>29</sup> Ad-Deek<sup>30</sup> underlines the necessity to constantly check and evaluate the content of children's books as, through reading, children acquire their cultural identity which is hard to change with time. Besides, translators should purify the texts from the originally embedded intentions as some of the translated texts (e.g. the story of Robin Hood) might encourage theft, violence and stupid adventures<sup>31</sup>. For her, the translator's visibility and intervention is basic and highly recommended<sup>32</sup>. Foreign elements of translated stories affect children, e.g. the presence of super-heroes like Superman. On the other hand, translated books may have a positive influence on children by introducing the latest developments and inventions and enhancing various values like self-reliance, discipline and exploration.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Mdallel, S.: *Translating Children's Literature in the Arab World*. P. 305.

<sup>24</sup> Ahmad, Samir: *Adab al-Atfal: Qira'at Nazariyya wa Namazij Tatbiqiyya* (Children's Literature: Theoretical Readings and Practical Examples). Oman: Dar al-Masira lil-Nashr wa at-Tawzi' 2006. P. 47.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* P. 44.

<sup>26</sup> Khafaji, Tal't: *Adab al-Atfal fi Muwajaha ar-Razw at-Taqaifiyy* (Children's Literature Contrary to Cultural Invasion). Cairo: Dar Maktaba al-Isra' lil-Tab' wa an-Nashr 2006. P. 72.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* P. 69.

<sup>28</sup> Najeeb, Ahmad: *al-Madmun fi Kutub al-Atfal* (The Content in Children's Books). Oman: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi 1979. Pp. 45–46.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> Ad-Deek, Nadi: *Adab at-Tifl: Dirasa Naqdiyya Tatbiqiyya min as-Sumariyin hatta al-Qarn al-'Ashrin* (Children's Literature: A Practical Critical Analysis from Sumerians to 20th Century). 'Aka': Mu'ssasa al-Aswar 2001. P. 66.

<sup>31</sup> Shahwan, Najla': *Adab al-Atfal al-Qisasiyy* (Narrative Children's Literature). Jerusalem: Jarid al-Fajar al-Muqdasiiyya 1991. P. 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* P. 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* P. 47.

Marjiyyah<sup>34</sup> believes that children's literature is a link between the Arab and the foreign cultures. Nevertheless, translated books are often appropriate for only the children of the source culture. That is why certain "protective measures" should be undertaken during the process of translation.

### 2.3. Censorship and taboo topics in the Arab world

It may be stated that the Arab world is a blend of various cultures that differ depending on religion, ethnicity, social condition, democracy level, ruling ideology, role of women or literacy level.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, while certain books are accepted and translated in one Arab country, they are rejected in another. Politics and ideology govern the choice of books to be translated. Nevertheless, there are some themes that would not be accepted by any Arab country. Such issues like drug addiction, homosexuality, masturbation, menstruation, secret love or juvenile pregnancy are excluded from the scope of literature because it is believed that "talking openly about such problems is far more harmful than beneficial" and children should be "spared such problems".<sup>36</sup> Suleiman<sup>37</sup> suggests that didactic and pedagogic imperatives tend to be more prominent in traditional and conservative societies, which may feel internally or externally under threat. Censorship occurs when there is a close institutional relationship between children's literature and the educational establishment in terms of patronage. This certainly applies to Arab countries where it is treated not as censorship but rather as a protective measure. Such control may influence the choice of books not to be translated. Suleiman<sup>38</sup> notices also a "strict observance" of children's taboos, including avoidance of alcohol (or its replacement by other non-alcoholic drinks), prohibited foods (or replacement by other permitted foods, e.g. lamb or chicken instead of pork), violence, death, bad manners, sex, teenage relationships, bodily functions, weaknesses and faults of adults.

## 3. Translation of children's literature

O'Connell<sup>39</sup> defines translation as:

a cultural activity that is conducted according to certain norms which are didactic, ethical, and religious. They determine what is translated, when and where, and they change continu-

<sup>34</sup> Marjiyyah, Bashara: *Adab al-Atfal beyna al-Waqi' wa al-Khayal* (Children's Literature between Reality and Fantasy). Kafar Qar': Dar al-Hada lil-Taba'a wa an-Nashr 2001. P. 96.

<sup>35</sup> Mdallel, S.: *The Sociology of Children's Literature in the Arab World*.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Suleiman, Yasir: *From the Periphery to the Centre of Marginality: Towards a Prolegomenon of Translating Children's Literature into Arabic*. In: *Journal of Intercultural Communication Studies* 14:4 (2005). P. 81.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. P. 83.

<sup>39</sup> O'Connell, E.: *Translating for Children*. P. 23.

ally. The norms may vary from one language to language, culture to culture and generation to generation. While specific norms exist in all cultures for writing and translation of children's literature, it does not follow that the same approach is adopted in the case of any two languages.

One of the most prominent scholars in translation studies, Zohar Shavit, deals mainly with translation of children's literature. In her works she describes the translator's actions and decisions as to the extent of his/her manipulation of existing texts. The translator is allowed to manipulate the text in various ways as long as he/she takes into account the following principles of translating for children:

- adjusting the text in order to make it appropriate and useful to the child, in accordance with what society thinks is educationally "good for the child",
- adjusting the plot, characterization and language to the child's level of comprehension and his reading abilities<sup>40</sup>.

In another work Shavit<sup>41</sup> demonstrates that translators of children's literature often adapt the text to fit in with existing models in the target system, write abridged versions of the original text, simplify complex narrative structures or content, or, what is most significant, adjust the text for ideological and didactic reasons. She gives as an example an adaptation of an adult book for a children's book, which is a kind of genre switching<sup>42</sup>. It is a transformation into a child's level of comprehension or to the moral norms which are allowed in children's world. It is achieved by deleting elements which do not exist in children's literature (such as satire, irony, fragments connected with sex, love, politics and social problems etc.), adding elements which obligatorily have to occur in this kind of genre (fantasy, additional descriptions etc.) as well as introducing simplifications and shortening of form in order to adjust it to the common model. The most prominent examples of this technique may be the translations of *Gulliver's Travels* or *Robinson Crusoe*. Such adaptations and adjustments to the plot, characterization and language reveal the target language ideology, society's attitude to childhood and the content of children's literature.

### 3.1. Translation of children's literature into Arabic

Salama<sup>43</sup> claims that children in the Arab world seem to prefer reading in European languages (e.g. French, English) rather than in Arabic. To prove his point, he mentions an article published in *The Daily Star* in Lebanon in 2005, where it is stated that stores in Beirut are full of beautifully illustrated books for children in French,

<sup>40</sup> Shavit, Zohar: Translation of Children's Literature as a Function of Its Position in the Literary Polysystem. In: *Poetics Today* 2:4 (1981). Pp. 171–177.

<sup>41</sup> Shavit, Z.: *Poetics of Children's Literature*. Pp. 121–122.

<sup>42</sup> Shavit, Z.: Translation of Children's Literature as a Function of Its Position in the Literary Polysystem. Pp. 172–177.

<sup>43</sup> Salama, Sulaiman Abdullah: *Cultural Context Adaptation of Children's Literature: A Case Study of The Joining*. Unpublished MA dissertation. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand 2006. P. 30



and almost as many in English, on various subjects: games, how-to books, books about adventure and friendship, cartoons and children's classics. However, when one wants to find them in Arabic, there are very few available<sup>44</sup>. Nowadays, educators try to change this situation. They notice children's need to be exposed to literature and culture different from their own. That is why translation is an indispensable necessity, even though it is to a great extent restricted by cultural determinants.<sup>45</sup>

It was noticed by Suleiman<sup>46</sup> that "studies which deal with the translation of children's literature into Arabic are almost non-existent in the West. The situation is not much better in the Arab countries". Translation of Western children's literature into Arabic is a problematic issue due to numerous factors<sup>47</sup>. The translator is subject to various constraints as the source and target languages belong to two different "cultural entities" (with different behaviours and beliefs), whose relation has not always been friendly. It has sometimes been even antagonistic (e.g. during the Crusades, the colonialisng period of the West, the current Middle East war and all its repercussions). Nowadays, we can observe a tendency in the Arab world, and especially in the countries directly occupied by Israel or the United States, to create a "resistance culture" among the young. Besides, children may fail to accept or understand some aspects of English culture. Khwira<sup>48</sup> notices that many of translated works are inappropriate for the values of Arabs. She gives as examples books such as Joanne K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, William Shakespeare's plays, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. She further recommends that translators be aware of the differences among the Arab and foreign cultural, social and ideological systems, and urges people responsible for children's literature in the Arab world to constantly evaluate, revise and censor all incoming children's books.<sup>49</sup>

### 3.2. The notions of 'cultural invasion' and 'acculturation'

Al-Faisal<sup>50</sup> distinguishes between the notions of 'cultural invasion' and 'acculturation' in the texts transferred from other cultures into the Arab one. Cultural invasion begins with the translation of the literature that expresses ideologies distinct from that of the Arabs and distorts their identities. However, acculturation takes

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Khwira, Zeinab: Strategies and Motivations in Translated Children's Literature: Defoe's Robinson Crusoe as a Case Study. Unpublished MA dissertation. Nablus: An-Najah National University 2010. P. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Suleiman, Y.: From the Periphery to the Centre of Marginality. P. 77.

<sup>47</sup> Mdallel, S.: Translating Children's Literature in the Arab World. P. 302.

<sup>48</sup> Khwira, Z.: Strategies and Motivations in Translated Children's Literature. Pp. 4–5.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. P. 98.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Faisal, Samir: Adab al-Atfal wa Thaqaatihum: Qira'a Naqdiyya (Children's Literature and its Culture: Critical Reading). Damascus: Athad al-Kitab al-'Arab 1998. P. 79.

place when the text introduces children to new customs and traditions that enhance social and human behaviours such as discipline, patience and endurance<sup>51</sup>. These two terms seem to be related to two basic notions of translation strategies for cultural words, namely *domestication* and *foreignization*. Whereas domestication basically means accommodating to target cultural and linguistic values, foreignization is all about preserving the exotic and the unknown elements in the target text.<sup>52</sup> For Bednarczyk<sup>53</sup>, domestication means substitution of an element characteristic of the target culture for an element characteristic of the source culture in order to make it sound more natural and comprehensible for the readers, while foreignization involves leaving this element of the source culture in its original form to make it sound exotic and, consequently, intriguing. As tales indicate something about the national character of a particular country, it is obvious that censorship approves of only the first approach to translation, which adjusts the story to the reality of a certain country due to some political, religious or social reasons. Such an attitude may reflect some stereotypes, prejudices or even open hostility towards another nation. Sometimes the notion of domestication can be used interchangeably with the term *purification*, defined by Klingberg<sup>54</sup> as:

modifications and abbreviations aimed at getting the target text in correspondence with the values of the presumptive readers, or – as regards children’s books – rather with the values, or the supposed values, of adults, for example, of parents.

Purification allows the translator to remove offensive or incomprehensible elements in order to ensure the positive reception of the target text.<sup>55</sup>

### 3.3. Examples of censorship in the translation of English children’s literature into Arabic

Geraldine Baum in her article *Scholastic makes inroads into Arabic children’s book market* published in *Los Angeles Times* in 2010<sup>56</sup> observes that Arabic educators translate English books in order to use them at schools in some Arab countries. She emphasizes the fact that it is a “rare and delicate mission to translate [...] books from America for a part of the world that often rails against American values”. Arab education ministers spent hours reading and choosing books which they considered

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Pp. 83–84.

<sup>52</sup> Oittinen, Riitta: Where the Wild Things Are: Translating Picture Books. In: *Meta Translators’ Journal* 48:1 (2003). P. 129.

<sup>53</sup> Bednarczyk, Anna: *Kulturowe aspekty przekładu literackiego*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Naukowe „Śląsk” 2002. P. 63.

<sup>54</sup> Klingberg, Göte: Research into the Translation of Children’s Books. In: Klingberg, Göte. (ed.), *Children’s Books in Translation: The Situation and the Problem*. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International 1978. P. 86.

<sup>55</sup> Salama, S.A.: *Cultural Context Adaptation of Children’s Literature*. P. 14.

<sup>56</sup> <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jul/04/entertainment/la-ca-arab-book-20100704>. Retrieved September 23rd, 2013.

appropriate for translation. They drew up a list of 27 “no-nos”, that is a list containing all themes which were believed as inflammatory, contradictory to Arabic values and religion, and, therefore, prohibited. Among them were dogs, pigs, magic and boys and girls touching. The content of some books was modified for the Arabic edition. Baum provides some examples of this procedure: *Ladybug’s Birthday* was renamed *Ladybug’s Anniversary* (as Islam does not acknowledge the celebration of birthdays), Ms. Frizzle’s students on *The Magic School Bus* were given Arabic-sounding names, skirts were lengthened, body parts were covered and the skin tone and hair of the Swiss orphan girl in *Heidi* was darkened. Moreover, educators looked for anything that could be interpreted as American propaganda. In a book about shapes, a flag was removed from the Pentagon building in Washington, D.C.

The next example in which socio-cultural and ideological considerations are taken into account is the translation of a short story called *Snow White*. Khwira<sup>57</sup> explains the differences between the source and target texts. Firstly, in translation, the title is changed into شمس (*šams – sun*). Khwira claims, that in the English culture, *snow* symbolizes beauty and purity. In the Arab one, it does not have the same connotations because of the differences in the nature of the climate in the Arab region and in the West. In the Arab culture, beauty is associated with the sun. Secondly, in the original version of the fairy tale, when the girl, the major protagonist, gets sick and faints, the prince kisses her. Immediately after that, she wakes up and gets better. In translation, the word *kisses* is changed into يمسك (*yumsik – holds*) because kissing is not appropriate in a text intended for Arab children as it may negatively affect them. It is a taboo and has to be deleted in order to adhere to what is acceptable for the target readers. Furthermore, the illustrations in the Arabic version of the book are changed. In the English version, the girl named Snow White has yellow hair and blue eyes. In translation, she becomes a girl with black hair and wide brown eyes in order to show a typical kind of beauty in Arabic culture.

In his MA dissertation, Salama tries to provide translation for a contemporary English book *The Joining*, written by Peter Slingsby, according to Arabic rules. He gives numerous examples of modifications as solutions to ideological and cultural issues. Generally, he deals with translation of taboos as he believes that the ideas of the source text should be rendered without losing the value system of the Arab society<sup>58</sup>, e.g. a lady in Arabic culture is allowed to travel only with her husband, father, brother or uncle. Travelling with any other male is considered immoral. In the original version of the novel it is stated that the mother had *gone overseas with that other bloke*<sup>59</sup> Salama<sup>60</sup> suggests the following translation: *she went [...] overseas with her brother*.

<sup>57</sup> Khwira, Z.: Strategies and Motivations in Translated Children’s Literature. Pp. 23–24.

<sup>58</sup> Salama, S.A.: Cultural Context Adaptation of Children’s Literature. P. 46.

<sup>59</sup> Slingsby, Peter: *The Joining*. Cape Town: Tafelberg 1996. P. 44.

<sup>60</sup> Salama, S.A.: Cultural Context Adaptation of Children’s Literature. P. 44.

The translation of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is the last example given here of censorship in translation of children's literature in the Arab world. Zeinab Khwira in her MA dissertation provides us with various instances of modifications of that kind. She claims that Defoe's novel presents themes of racism and superiority of the white man over other races, which do not occur in the Arab ideology and might threaten the values of Arabic children. Besides, she deals with many other controversial issues such as translation of food terms or some elements typical of English culture. On the other hand, she treats this book as a tool for education and socialization as it teaches children how to cope with difficulties and how to be creative. It exposes them to a social life that is different from their own and helps them learn more about the English culture.<sup>61</sup>

#### 4. Conclusions

In his work, Mdallel<sup>62</sup> concludes: "children's literature will remain permeated with ideology, didactics and morality because it is a true reflection of Arab society". It should involve only those values which agree with cultural traditions of Arabs. Nevertheless, in many cases they significantly differ from Western ones. Therefore, any foreign book entering Arab children's literature is censored in order to match target culture and ideology. Arab educators strongly believe in censorship as a tool for preserving the Arab identity, e.g. Khwira<sup>63</sup> openly encourages translators to purify the texts from any kind of "violations of the target culture". Nevertheless, the crucial questions should be posed and answered. If the cultural references of a story set in a specific culture are domesticated, does the book lose a part of its charm?<sup>64</sup> Besides, is it really proper and beneficial to children to censor everything they read? Nowadays, it is believed that young people have the right to know the truth and develop their own opinion on controversial issues, as, in the era of globalization, they will, sooner or later, have to face them in their own lives. Therefore, they should be introduced into foreign cultures and prepared for cultural contrasts.

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<sup>61</sup> Khwira, Z.: Strategies and Motivations in Translated Children's Literature. P. 14.

<sup>62</sup> Mdallel, S.: The Sociology of Children's Literature in the Arab World.

<sup>63</sup> Khwira, Z.: Strategies and Motivations in Translated Children's Literature. P. 99.

<sup>64</sup> Hagfors, Irma: The Translation of Culture-Bound Elements into Finnish in the Post-War Period. In: *Meta Translators' Journal* 48:1 (2003). P. 118.

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