Translating Children's Literature Using a Pivot Language

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Abstract: *Any attempt to translate a text may result in distortion(s) of the meaning intended by the original author, and sometimes it may even lead to loss of original meaning. This effect may be amplified if it is necessary to work through a pivot language. However, communication between the translators and, if possible, the authors of the original texts will facilitate the process of translation and may eliminate much of the possible distortion of meaning and other unwanted translation flavors. The phenomenon of "mediated translation" is explored here through reflections on translated works of a variety of children's literature from and into Arabic through English into Gaelic and vice versa. The study first provides a brief introduction to and definition of mediated translation, and then gives an account of the pros and cons of mediated translation, before proceeding to consider the main challenges of translating for children, in particular, when a pivot language is involved. The study will also focus on such issues as cross-cultural communication and translation.*

1. Introduction

Translation is an important means of achieving communication between societies, and which has increased in recent times due to its role in transmitting news, information and learning about other peoples' cultures. The primary objective of translation is to ensure that the target language (TL) and the source language (SL) share a meaning similarity, where the inherent senses in the source language are preserved in the target language. Here lies one of the most important strategies in rendition: it is not about translating literally; it is more about maintaining meaning. The meaning must be given precedence to ensure that it is well-preserved in the target language. Usually, translation is done directly from one language to the other, but sometimes it becomes necessary to translate from a source language to a target language through a third "pivot Language". In this case, the meaning might be "distorted".

There is a particularly problematic case of translation criticism, which is the case of those translations that were not directly rendered from the original language, but through an intermediate language. Regardless of the reasons that might have led and may lead to the emergence of such translations, it is necessary to acknowledge the importance they enjoy in terms of bringing some foreign literature into domestic readership. Were it not for the translations that were made from intermediate languages, the Arabic library, for example, would have been very poor

in foreign literature, European and non-European, such as French, German, Russian and Japanese literature. These translations, like other translations, are required to achieve symmetry or closeness with the original. Two views emerge here: one of those who believe that the translator should not be held accountable for the accuracy and quality of the translation except in comparison with the text from which it originated, i.e., with the intermediate translation, and that of those who believe that intermediate translation does not concern us in anything, and what concerns us is the analogy between the translation and the original literary work.

Even though the translations in this study were from intermediate translations, not directly from the original texts, the most important issue is whether the translations are equivalent or close in terms of text, meaning and style with the original.

It is indisputable that translation has played a very crucial role in intercultural exchange. Throughout history, translation has contributed to the rise of many cultures. Translation from one language into another abounds with difficulties, but it becomes especially difficult when translating between totally unrelated languages. Arabic and Gaelic are two remote languages that have not been subject to intercultural exchange through translation. However, using a pivot language to intermediate between these two languages proved to facilitate the translation and the special challenges that might be encountered in such a process. This mediated translation bears problems, but these can be easily encountered through cooperation between the members of the translation team and the authors as in the case of the Arabic-Gaelic children's translation project. This paper attempts to study the phenomenon of mediated translation as applied to translating children's literature from Arabic into Irish Gaelic and vice versa. The study discusses mediated translation and some of the challenges that faced the translators particularly those related to translating children's literature.

2. Mediated translation: what is it?

Mediated translation is a term referring to the process of translating a text from a source language (SL1) into a target language (TL1/SL2) and translating the translated target-language into another language (TL2), while giving the end translation which is in the TL2 as the translation of the SL1 text (Fig.1). Mediated translation can occur in situations where there is more than one official language, e.g., Canada, Belgium, Switzerland.

Fig. 1:   SL1→ Translation →TL1/SL2→ Translation→ TL2
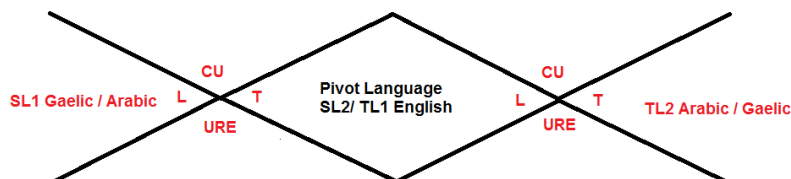↑__Mediated Translation____↑

Mediated translation is different from what is known as 'secondary translation' where the translation is subject to another translation while regarding the first translation as the source language (Fig.2). Therefore, SL1 is not regarded as the original language of TL2 translation. Rather, TL1 (SL2) is the language considered as the original source language.

Fig. 2:   SL1→ Translation → TL1 (SL2) →Translation → TL2
↑_____ ST _____↑

In this regard, referring to the case discussed here, Gaelic/Arabic is SL1, English is TL1 (SL2) and Arabic/Gaelic is also TL2. As far as the final translation products are concerned, they will be seen as translations from Gaelic and Arabic into Arabic and Gaelic, respectively and presented to the reader/receptor as such without particular reference to, or indication of a medium (pivot) language, English, being involved in the process.

In many cases of mediated translation, the translation of an SL1 text into the medium language does not take place to facilitate the translation into the final TL. On the contrary, translation occurs 'naturally', i.e., from an SL into a TL, but for certain reasons, the translation of a text is retranslated into another language. An example is Sándor Márai's novel *Embers*, written and published in Hungary in 1942 (as A gyertyek csonkig egnek: literally, "The Candles Burn Down to the Stump"), and translated from its German edition (Die Glut) by Carol Brown Janeway in 2001 into English.

However, in the case discussed here, English (the pivot language) is used with the definite intention of facilitating onward translation from Gaelic into Arabic (Fig.3)

2.1 Examples of mediated translations

There are thousands of works that have been translated to many languages including Arabic through mediated translation in the past and in the modern era. The most important works of these included many Biblical texts as well as many manuscripts relating to literature, mathematics, astronomy, etc., that were translated in Bagdad from the 9th and 10th centuries and subsequently passed back on to the West during the translation renaissance in Toledo, Cordoba and elsewhere in Spain in the Middle Ages. Following are some examples of works transferred through mediated translation:

> 1. The poetry book of the Pakistani poet Muhammad Iqbal: "Gabriel's Wing" (Bal-i-Jibril) in Urdu, translated from French by Abd Almu'een Al- Mallouhi.

2. "Le Lac" poem by the French poet Lamartine, translated from English by Mahmoud Ali Taha, Zaki Naguib Mahmoud, and Mahmoud Al-Mahrouq.

3. The works of Goethe (late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century), translated from French and English.

4. The works of the German writers Schiller, (*Kabale und Liebe*) *Intrigue and Love* الدسيسة والحب, and William Tell (Wilhelm Tell), translated from French in the early twentieth century.

5. Many works from the literatures of the Far East such as China, Japan and Korea which are usually translated through French and English.

6. Famous works such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Italian) from French and *Panchatantra* (Sanskrit) from Persian language.

7. St. Jerome's (fourth century) translation of the Bible into Latin, from the original Hebrew and Greek, which became the authoritative Bible for the Western Church, known as the Vulgate from which various parts of the Bible were translated into English.

2.2 The pros and cons of mediated translation
2.2.1 The pros of mediated translation

Mediated translation has contributed greatly to the process of transferring science and knowledge from Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age. For example, translators who mastered Greek would translate into Syriac, and then another translator who knew only Syriac would translate into Arabic.

Mediated translation also contributed to the transfer of knowledge and science to Europe during the Renaissance by using a third language particularly in Andalusia, which had a significant impact on the subsequent prosperity and progress of Europe. Original Arabic texts were translated into the Catalan language and then translated into Latin, which was the language of science and religion in Europe at that time.

Sometimes mediated translation may be useful in the recovery of the original text in case of loss by re-translation. Moreover, translation using an intermediate language helps fill the void though temporarily and allows access to literary works and science we cannot have access to in their original language.

Mediated translation also gives powerful incentives to writers and men of letter to retranslate original works directly from the original language especially after recognizing that the translation of a translation was not accurate and presented many problems. An example is the translation of the Iliad by Homer which was translated into Arabic via English and French.

Moreover, mediated translation had contributed a lot to the understanding of ancient civilizations. The most striking case in point is deciphering the ancient hieroglyphic scripts of Rosetta Stone in 1822, which was attributed to a type of mediated translation. There were three texts of inscriptions: a bilingual text in Greek and the Egyptian Hieroglyphic, and Demotic scripts. The translation of Greek enabled scholars such as Jean-François Champollion and Thomas Young to arrive at the complete decipherment of the Hieroglyphic script.

Another example that leaves no room for doubt about the importance of mediated translation is that of Muslim philosophers who wrote many annotations to Aristotle's books, that were later used to revive the study of Greek philosophy, which in turn had paved the way for the Renaissance and the end of the Dark Ages.

2.2.2 The cons of mediated translation

We cannot ignore the fact that mediated translation poses many problems, the most debatable of which is meaning distortion. The well-known motto 'traduttore, traditore' (translation is treason), though not often accepted by translators, can be best manifested in the process of mediated translation. Faithfulness in translation [1] is measured by its effect on the intended receptor and is measured against the content and character of the original document (Nida and Taber 1969). Mediated translation disregards the principle of faithfulness since the end translation is not rendered from the original text (which is concealed from the receptor), but from a translated text and thus tends to be untrue translation. Yet, in many cases, faithfulness may result in meaning distortion, and sometimes in funny translations.

Whatever the reason for untranslatability or the 'sound wrong' translation (Lyons 1981; Duff 1981; Larson 1984), such as cultural differences, lexical gaps, figurative language, etc., failure to give "the closest natural equivalent to the message of the source language" (Nida 1959:19) is mainly due to the translator's usage of an incorrect equivalent for a word and/or expression. In mediated translation, equivalence is for a source language the equivalence of which is for another that the translator is ignorant of.

When discussing meaning distortion in translation, the following assumptions standout:

1. "The basic principle of translation means that no translation in a receptor language can be the exact equivalent of the model in the source language" (Nida 1959: 13). And "any translation involves a certain loss of meaning, for it is impossible to restructure any message with the total content and explicit and implicit semantic relationships which are found in the original language" (Nida 1967: 78).

2. "Lexical meaning might be distorted due to mismatching of lexical systems between languages" (Larson 1984: 89).

3. "No matter how technically correct a translation may be, it will 'sound wrong' if the influence of the source language can be detected" (Duff 1981: 4).

Based on the above assumptions a meaning can be distorted 'naturally' and in 'normal' processes of translation. In this instance, mediated translation is not an exception. As such, meaning is distorted only if: *the lexical items in the source text are mistranslated due to reasons other than those occurring in normal translation, such as those that are clearly due to the effect of the medium language.*
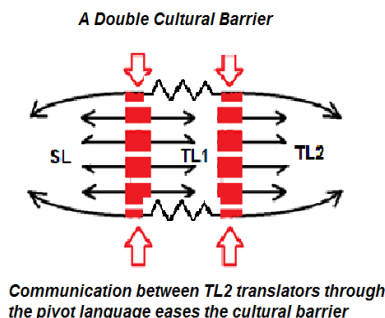
Al-Jahiz (a scholar of the 9th century) says: "The translator cannot perform his job unless he/she is as knowledgeable in using the meanings, structures and in understanding the text interpretations as the original author; and he/she must produce translations that are as equal as those of the authorship of the text.

Translators have to be masters in both languages: the source and the target, so that their work is equal to the original in means and end" (Al Haywan 1955: 76).

If we take the above argument into account, we will find that the most important drawback as a result of mediated translation is that the final translation becomes so detached from the original text, which will lead to distortion in the meaning intended by that original text.

This flaw exists almost in all translations of a translation. As long as the translator does not know the language of the original text, there is no way to know the amount of accuracy and fidelity on which the second translation is based. A third or more translation of a text is sometimes presented as a direct translation of the original although there may exist actual direct translations of that text. Such translations have nothing to do with the original texts and must not be attributed to them. Furthermore, some of these translations are not worth reading, which is not due to their topics, but to the difficulty of understanding their intended meanings. *Still, this problem can be surmounted if channels of communication and liaison are established between the translators and/ or the authors in question as is the case discussed: translating children's literature from Arabic into Gaelic and vice-versa through English***.**

The phenomenon of mediated translation has enticed much debate and discussion, especially with regard to its being a creative process whether negatively or positively .The aesthetic and semantic loss arising from translating a literary text using an intermediate language may be very serious. It can be vulnerable to distortion and misunderstanding because of the difference in the cultures of the translated texts, so that the first translator adapts the translation to the culture of the language to which he/she is translating, for example translating from English to French. Then comes the mediator translator who transfers from the second language and culture (French) to the Arab reader, where the culture and spirit of the original is absent, and the end translation is more associated with the culture of the second text not that of the English original. Thus, "the recipients receive new ideas and cultural forms which either detach them from a certain perspective or link them with certain ideas and beliefs" (J Hamdan, Naser, H Hamdan 2021: 81). (Fig.4)

A Double Cultural Barrier

Communication between TL2 translators through
the pivot language eases the cultural barrier

3. The project
3.1 Background
Despite the geographical, linguistic, and cultural distance separating the Irish and the Palestinian nations, there is much, beyond their common humanity, that also unites them, their relatively small size, their experience of colonization and war, not to mention the historic association of the Judaic-Christian-Islamic tradition with Palestine.

The children's literature translation project, 'Noor Ash-Shams' [2], described here, attempts to forge links of solidarity between the Irish and Palestinians through the literary exchange. It grew out of a visit in 2012 of some Irish academics to Palestinian universities under the "Right 2 Education" banner and who were seeking to cooperate with Palestinian colleagues. The main goal of the project is to contribute to the diversity of literature available to children in both countries in their native language.

This voluntary project involved the translation of materials for children in Gaelic and Arabic as part of cooperation to exchange Palestinian and Irish children's literature. Noor Ash-Shams focused on the translation of children's literature from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Palestinian Arabic into Irish Gaelic (via English as pivot language) and vice versa.

The texts selected for translation in both directions, i.e., into Irish Gaelic and into Arabic, were mainly texts written by adults for children, though a few texts were written, dictated by, or transcribed from an oral telling by children. Some texts were retellings of traditional folk stories, while others were modern works with contemporary themes and settings.

3.2 Importance
No one disagrees on the importance of translation and its impact on the renaissance of nations and civilizations and on the promotion of dialogue among nations and

cultures especially those who understand and support the Palestinian plight. From this viewpoint came the idea of translating excerpts of contemporary Palestinian children's literature to the Irish language (Gaelic) as well as translating Irish children's literature to Arabic using English as an intermediate language.

3.3 Purpose of the project

One of the main general purposes of project Noor Ash-Shams is to exchange different perspectives on children's literature translation. A further goal was to foster cultural exchange through the translated works in both Arabic and Gaelic by opening children's minds to other languages, cultures, values, and literature. Moreover, making available a collection of children's stories in Arabic and Gaelic is, without doubt, a unique unusual, original, imaginative contribution to children's literature with its original objectives whether reading for entertainment or educational purposes.

4. Translating children's literature

Certain characteristics make children's literature distinct, and often controversial, from adult literature (Egoff 1981:1; Oittinen 2000: 4-5). Children's literature may have features peculiar to the plot, setting, characterization, theme, point of view, and style. All in all, such features are to serve and satisfy the needs of the child reader as opposed to others, though in many contexts these are not very dissimilar.

The purpose of writing children's literature has also to be present as much as possible in its translation. Having said that, one should bear in mind that the reasons for writing original children's literature are not usually the same as for translating it. Two major reasons for translating children's literature are identified by Klingberg (1986:10): to make it available in another cultural context, and to promote international recognition of child readers. However, within these major reasons, the intentions of the author as well as the translator are intertwined and may involve entertainment and/or didactic, social, or political goals.

Translating, in itself, is a challenging task, regardless of whether the projected target readership comprises adults or children. In translating literature for children or adults, many of the same challenges and difficulties may present themselves. Moreover, it is very helpful for the translator to define the target audience for all types of text and in all situations.

The educational purposes and aims of children's literature are certainly different from those of adult literature. Therefore, the translators of children's literature may sometimes 'manipulate' the original texts to serve certain purposes and intentions. Oittinen (2000) believes that children's literature should be "entertaining, didactic, informative, therapeutic, and it should help the child to grow and develop. A children's book should also strengthen the child's feelings of empathy and identification" (p. 65).

4.1 What is meant by *children*?

Before considering the general and specific challenges of translating children's literature, it is important to clarify what exactly is meant by *children* and *children's*

literature. Unambiguous definitions prove elusive when examining many scholarly books and articles which address children's literature. It comes to be clear that what is meant and understood by *children* may depend on varying factors such as nationality, ethnicity, and gender. For example, at first glance, 'English-speaking children', in Ireland, as opposed to, 'Irish-speaking children' may appear to constitute at least a linguistically homogeneous target audience, but in reality, such a target audience may be divided into various subgroups such as:

a) native speakers of Irish in areas where Irish is the daily language of the community,

b) native speakers of Irish in areas where Irish is not the daily language of the community,

c) Anglophone children attending total immersion Irish-language schools, and

d) children whose first language is neither Irish nor English but who are learning Irish as a school subject.

Similarly, a group entitled 'Arabic-speaking children' is likely to have a very different profile depending on whether those children live in Ireland or Palestine, for example, or elsewhere. And even once a group is identified in terms of language use, it can again be subdivided by other criteria such as age, nationality, culture, religion, etc.

Therefore, the reality defined by the generic term *children* is inevitably much more heterogeneous than frequent usage suggests. This is of significance to the translators of texts for children who, if they endeavor to maintain as much of the variety and diversity of the original texts, will come up with richer translations better able to satisfy the wide-ranging needs and expectations of a heterogeneous audience of children. This issue of audience heterogeneity was of critical importance to the Noor Ash-Shams Project which aims to appeal to children aged from approximately 4 to 12 years. Translation strategies and decisions were influenced by an awareness that the final texts were addressing a group, which can be subdivided in terms of literacy into children who must be read aloud to, children who need help when reading and independent readers.

4.2 What is meant by *children's literature*?

The precise scope of the term *children's literature* is likewise often unclear, and the term can be understood in a narrow sense or used to cover a broad range of text types. After all, a broad definition of texts for children includes songs, poems, nursery rhymes, riddles, nonsense verse, fairy tales, fables, folktales, picture books, storybooks (with or without illustrations), books written specifically for children or versions of adult books abridged for children, novels, short stories, plays and sketches, cartoon and comic strips, and educational or religious works. Furthermore, there is a solid reason for the inclusion of audiovisual texts and multimedia under the heading of children's literature in contemporary society.

But broadening the scope of what is meant by children's literature in recent decades to include such things as comic books and audiovisual and multimedia materials may have contributed to the perpetuation of the perception that works of children's literature, with a few notable exceptions, do not strictly constitute

'literature' at all. Indeed, children's literature is often seen as somehow second-rate and primarily functional, unlike literature for adults which is considered to be of high quality and deserving of critical attention. This, in turn, affects how children's literature translation is both conducted and perceived. In an effort to counteract narrow perceptions of children's literature, the Noor Ash-Shams Project deliberately selected a wide variety of different text types to be translated, including traditional folktales, fables, fantasy and reportage, stories by adults and a few by children, some set in rural and others in urban locations and from the far distant past and the present day.

Having established that *children* are not a homogenous group and therefore that works of children's literature are frequently aimed at a heterogeneous audience of varying needs and abilities, it is time to consider the textual and non-textual characteristics of children's literature, not least so as to understand the challenges they present translators. Because children's literature is often erroneously thought to comprise relatively 'simple' or 'uncomplicated' texts, it is not widely appreciated that children's literature translation is a professional specialism, requiring particular expertise. Translators of texts for children can benefit enormously from a scholarly understanding of their specialism, namely the distinctive features of children's literature, the challenges they can pose in translation, and the available translation strategies.

4.3 Translation strategies for children

One of the most important factors to consider when translating for children is to be creative enough to produce a translation that can stand on its own merits as a piece of literature. It is generally accepted that texts translated for children should not read like translations (unless deliberately styled to read so). They can be adapted to be appropriate to the target audience and culture and serve a similar purpose to that of an original text in the source culture. Klingberg (1986) identifies five types of adaptation: cultural context, language, modernization, purification, and abridgment. Shavit (1981) argues that children's literature translators can allow themselves certain freedoms to manipulate the text, such as using lively and interesting language, simple and colloquial words, straightforward sentences, and intercultural transfer.

When translating children's literature using manipulation techniques, the translator is actually "domesticating" the foreign language text to the TL cultural values and norms; and when he/she opts to preserve the original foreignness to take the readers to a different culture, he/she is "foreignizing" (Venuti 1995:20). In this latter case, the translator preserves much of the original detail such as names of persons and places, and references to other cultural norms such as traditions and beliefs. By foreignizing, the translator is exposing the child reader to new ideas, and knowledge in the broader world (Oittinen 2000:89-90). To what extent the translator should resort to either domestication or foreignization depends on many factors including inter alia, type of literature, age, purpose, and textual and paratextual considerations. Paratextual considerations are especially important and should be carefully considered when translating children's literature. The

paratextual features are to be paratranslated keeping the sensory images present and conforming to those generally accepted by the TL culture.

The translator does not only need to activate his/her knowledge of two languages but he/she also needs to bring his knowledge of two different cultures and bring foreign culture closer to make it easier for the recipient to recognize it. Translation is not only a form of contact between two languages, but also a contact between two different cultures, and the translator is a mediator between the two cultures.

Yes, the texts inform, interpret, and defend the argument and proof of ideas, using sophisticated rhetorical and stylistic images at times, but they also seek to introduce local cultural facts related to discoveries and new ways of living. Texts cannot be considered only as a composition of words, but rather as the product of a huge heritage and cultural fabric that bears its unique character. Hence, translation can be considered as a meeting point for different cultures. Then how can we reformulate the cultural component in translation? All components of the original text can be reformulated in the target language, whether related to the cognitive dimension, the aesthetic-stylistic dimension, or the cultural dimension. The translator can clarify more than what was stated in the original text and explain, if necessary, or change the cultural image to bring the content closer to the audience, but without changing the function of this image. It becomes important to paraphrase what the author of the first text succeeded in communicating to his readers through exerting every effort to make the reader in the target language familiar with the foreign cultural content.

5. Challenges of translating for children

The special challenges in the translation of children's literature stem from the fact that the translator must be sensitive to the reader's various interests, needs, and levels as well as to the translation purposes and objectives. Given such a context, translators should seek appropriateness in their endeavor to produce a "creative" piece of literature that can serve the target reader in the same manner the original text does. Appropriateness entails acceptability and readability; two parameters that should be considered when "recreating" texts for children. Translators can, when necessary, use "domestication" to adapt a text for the target readers. Shavit (1986:112–13) suggests "freedom of manipulation" as a technique that translators of children's literature may use including adding, omitting, or adjusting as long as this is for the purpose of making *the translation appropriate and comprehensible for the child*. Klingberg (1986:10) argues that modification can be made to the source text to make it suitable for children by providing the readers with a text that is within the level of their understanding and by giving them a text that can help widen their cognition, develop their values, and help them gain new skills and improve acquired ones. What Shavit and Klingberg support here is demonstrated by abridged versions for children of translated adult classics such as *The Three Musketeers*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Don Quixote* and *A Thousand and One Nights*.

Another challenge in translating children's literature is defining the type of language in terms of formal/informal, vernacular, modern/old, formulaic, etc. This

challenge is specially aggravated when dealing with Arabic and Irish Gaelic. For example, when translating into Arabic for Palestinian children, whose everyday language is at a considerable remove from Modern Standard Arabic, the translator was very mindful of the challenge posed and used a language that could serve the aesthetic, didactic and entertaining purpose of the Arabic texts. In an evaluation of the project Noor Ash-Shams, the internationally renowned Egyptian translation scholar, Prof. Mona Baker, observed that the Standard Arabic used is impeccable, but at the same time accessible, rendering the stories both highly enjoyable and highly instructive [3].

5.1 Textual and non-textual constraints

Generally, problems expected during the translation of literature for both adults and children are essentially similar (Reiß 1982:7). However, there are specific factors that might complicate the translation of texts for children and make them distinct from adult texts. According to O'Connell (2003:127), children's texts are noticeably different from adult's texts with regard to four essential aspects: "they address two audiences, they are ambivalent rather than univalent texts, their authors and translators are not members of the primary target audience and finally, the texts are multifunctional". O'Connell (118-125) further summarizes the textual and non-textual factors that can add difficulty to the translation of children's literature. The textual factors include the symmetry of translation for children, adults as the de facto primary audience, children's knowledge deficit, and the importance of language and play for children, while the non-textual include the low status of translations, poor working conditions, and pressures on translators.

5.2 Challenges of translating children's texts in Noor Ash-Shams

The recent increase in the scholarly investigation of translation theory and practice has been marked by a tendency to adopt a descriptive approach, rather than an earlier more favored prescriptive approach. From the extensive descriptive studies undertaken, it is clear that most literary works are now translated using a broadly domesticating strategy. Such a strategy, as opposed to a foreignizing one, aims to bring the source text closer to the new target language audience or readership. This results in a text that reads smoothly, almost as if it were not a translation at all. But domestication risks taming the source text to the point that not just linguistic but also the cultural difference is rendered largely invisible. For this reason, while there is a strong case to be made for the adoption of a domesticating approach as the main translation strategy to be used for children's texts, it can be worthwhile to include individual foreignizing features within the translated text as a whole. Since the Arabic translator did not know Irish and the Irish translation team did not know Arabic, intermediate 'pivot' language translations into English were needed. Source texts were translated from Arabic via English pivot translations into the target language, Irish, or from Irish source texts, via English pivot translations into the target language, Arabic. While the final versions were broadly domesticated; this approach made it possible to use foreignized pivot language translations from both Irish and Arabic into English. These pivot translations conveyed not just the plot,

but also provided the target language translators with valuable linguistic, stylistic, narrative, cultural insights into the source language texts. For example, by using the annotated pivot translation the translator into Arabic could weigh up the benefits (in the context of the overall goals of the project), of translating an Irish place name such as *Loch Dairbhreach* (C Lír) either by a) reproducing it in Irish Gaelic, b) transliterating it into Arabic, c) rendering it literally (Lake of the Oak Wood), d) or combining two of these strategies, which was the choice of the translator by combining (a) and (b) but first generally introducing the location:

أخذت إيف الأطفال إلى **بحيرة قرب المكان** الذي كانوا يعيشون فيه ... يجب عليكم قضاء 300 سنة هنا على
ضفاف بحيرة **ديرافيرا** (Derravaragh) في وسط إيرلندا.

5.2.1 Guidelines for Translation

As is often the case, but not frequently acknowledged, discussed, or explained – even by translation scholars, a pivot language was used to work from Irish to Arabic and from Arabic to Irish. This practice facilitates translation between languages that are rarely, if ever, in close contact, with the result that translators with a sound knowledge of both languages are rare or nonexistent. In this case, the original texts were translated using English as the pivot language.

Two different translation approaches were used: 1) firstly, a *literal* translation approach when translating Arabic and Irish source language texts into the pivot language English (AR to EN) and (IR to EN). Later, 2) another more *communicative* approach (as understood by Newmark (1981) when translating the intermediate pivot language texts, and into target language texts in either Irish (EN to GAE) or Arabic (EN to AR), example:

Trí rud nach féidir a cheilt: tart, tochas agus grá.

Word-for-word/Verbatim: *Three thing (sic) not capable of hide: thirst, itch and love.*

Literal: *Three things that cannot be hidden: thirst, an itch and love.*

Communicative (substituting a trad. Arabic proverb): *There are three things difficult to hide: love, a pregnant woman, a man on a camel.* الحُب ثلاثه ما بيتخبوا:
والحَبَل، وزلمه على جمل. (مثل شعبي فلسطيني)

1. **Literal translation into the pivot language English**
   All pivot translation into English were literal cribs, (i.e., not painfully literal word-for-word/verbatim translations, which might be unclear or ungrammatical), but still as literal as possible, within the constraints of English to provide the translator into Irish Gaelic or Arabic with a special window and precise insight into the meaning, construction and style of the source text (language). These pivot translations were meant to assist the translators working into the target languages by making *explicit* those things that are *implicit* in the source text, language, and culture.

   (Track changes were used where necessary when preparing the translation into English to provide the translator with helpful comments and explanations).

2. **Communicative translation into Arabic/Irish**

All translations of the pivot versions into Arabic or Irish were broadly *communicative* because they are intended to assist children with the development of their own reading and writing ability in their first languages. However, given our stated intention of exposing children to the Other, and promoting intercultural exchange, our motto was '*as literal as possible, while as free as necessary'*.

5.2.2 Domesticating versus foreignizing strategies:

Keeping in mind the intercultural potential of such a translation project, we tried to strike a balance between domesticating and foreignizing strategies, rather than choosing to adopt one approach to the complete exclusion of the other. Our approach was broadly communicative, but we retained many foreignizing elements, discussed below as we hoped to arouse the interest of child readers in those features which are different as well as those which both readerships have in common.

While accepting that all translation is, by definition, in some sense a form of domestication, our aim was to retain a degree of foreignness in all our translations, e.g., through retention where possible and appropriate source text references such as personal and place names as well as storytelling formulae, e.g., once upon a time, etc. Where *Allah* was referred to in a Palestinian story, we retained that in the Irish translation rather than the Irish 'Dia' (God). Irish folk heroes like Niamh and Oisín had their names transliterated into Arabic, rather than having their names altered or naturalized. Furthermore, concepts and references specific to the source text cultures such as the Arabic *ghouleh* which appears in the Bedouin '*The Nose Ring* story': 'mar gur *ghouleh* nó *arracht* a bhí sa bhean i ndáiríre' were retained intact, in this case also with the addition of an explanatory translation label in the form of an approximate Irish synonym 'arracht' (roughly: monster, spectre, demon). Similarly, the reference in the Irish folktale *Labhraidh Loingseach* to an ancient Celtic diviner or pre-Christian priest, known as a druid in English or *draoi* in Irish, was translated into Arabic as حكيم البلدة which means, 'the wise man in the town'. The translator could have used a cultural equivalent like the word sheikh, but this word has more than one meaning including a religious "Muslim", and a head of a tribe. However, the word "hakim" is more neutral and always refers to a wise man who advises others.

Other translation procedures such as paraphrase and explication (e.g., Michilín Cathach/ Little curly-haired Michael) were also used to aid comprehension. Transliteration for the proper noun Michilin was used followed by a paraphrase for the word Cathach (Arabic ذو الشعر الأجعد literally: Michilin "the one with the curly hair). It is noteworthy to mention that the word "Cathach' is phonetically very similar to the Arabic word (قطط) /qatat/ meaning with curly hair, but this word is archaic, the colloquial used form is / mqatqit/ meaning: having curly hair. The same technique was applied to Seán Bán (White/fair-haired John) ذو شون الشعر الأشقر. However, this was given at first mention only, the rest of the occurrences were just given the first name (Michilin and Seán) transliterated as pronounced in Gaelic.

The word Leprechauns was especially a problem in terms of choosing from many equivalents, such as "dwarf and jinni"; a neutral term was opted for, which is more lovable by children and most used in children's stories and is the equivalent to dwarf: Arabic قزم meaning a little "unreal" fairy creature, rather than the other equivalents that connote "satanic" meanings.

5.2.3   Examples of challenges encountered

One particular translation challenge encountered was the translation of the verse. Many parts of the Arabic story "Mughani Al Matar" (Rain Singer, 2010), which tells the story of a donkey who wanted to sing posed a special difficulty, being poetic on the one hand and Palestinian colloquial on the other. The following table illustrates such a challenge:

AR Source Text	ENG Pivot Trans	IR Final TR	IR TR lit. meaning	Comments
"يا ربي زخة زخة صار لها شهرين ونص ما بخت ولا بخة "	*Oh my Lord, one shower. One shower. A long time has passed without a single shower.*	*A Allah, aon chith amháin, le do thoil. Aon chith amháin. Is fada ó thit aon bháisteach. Deich seachtaine gan aon bhraon báistí.*	*Oh, 1. Allah, just one shower, 2. please. Just one shower. It's a long time since any rain fell. 3. Ten weeks without any rain. Ten weeks without a drop of rain.*	1.IR translators presume that Lord in the pivot TR stands for Allah. This is made explicit in the IR text as a foreignizing strategy. 2. This marker of politeness was added as a literal translation that might sound less like a prayer and more like an order. 3. This additional information was added only to create an end thyme.
"يا ربي نقطة نقطة تنروي حلق القطة يا ربي رشة رشة تنسقي حلق الجحشة"	*Oh my Lord, one drop. One drop for the cat to drink. O Lord, one raindrop, one raindrop for the*	*A Allah, aon bhraon amháin, aon bhraoinín amháin. Braoinín a d'ólfadh an caitín. Tá an t-uisce gann, ná fág muid i sáinn.*	*Oh Allah, just one drop, one little drop. 4. A little drop that the 5. little cat would drink. 6. The water is scarce,*	4. The word for drop is changed in the second reference using the addition of the suffix ín which is a diminutive in IR. This suffix is then applied to the word for cat as well, creating a pair of rhyming words. 5.Cat is changed to a little cat with the same suffix used on raindrop

	donkey mare to sup.		*don't leave us in need.* *7. Oh Lord, just a drop of water, just a drop of water. A mouthful of water for the*	6. This free translation is used again because it allows us to use the words gann (scarce) and sáinn (need/difficulty) which create an alliterative effect.
"أمطري وزيدي فوق دار سيدي أمطري رشاش تسقي الجحاش"	*Rain, rain, oh sky. Shower after shower, multiply. Rain on Grandad's shack. Rain on every track. Rain and fill the sink. We all want the donkeys to drink!*	*A Thiarna, braon báistí amháin, braon báistí amháin. Bolgaimín uisce don asailín, braon báistí do na páistí. Báisteach don seandream, anuas, anuas ar theach Dhaideo, uisce úr do Mhamó.*	*8. little donkey, a drop of rain for the children.* *9. Rain for the elderly, down, down on Grandpa's house, fresh water for Granny.*	7. The second time around, the IR text uses a translation label Lord instead of the culturally specific reference Allah, this is to aid or reinforce comprehension. 8.The specific reference to a female donkey or donkey mare is removed but the translation technique of compensation is used a few sentences later with the reference in the IR text to little donkey with the same diminutive suffix ín used a third time in the song.
"يا ربي زخة زخة صار لها شهرين ونص ما بخت ولا بخة "	*Oh my Lord, one shower. One shower. A long time has passed without a single shower.*	*A Allah, aon chith amháin, le do thoil. Aon chith amháin. Is fada ó thit aon bháisteach. Deich seachtaine gan aon bhraon báistí.*	*Oh Allah, just one shower, please. Just one shower. It's a long time since any rain fell. Ten weeks without any rain. Ten weeks without a drop of rain.*	9.One could argue that the reference to filling the sink with water in the AR text is an implicit reference to womenfolk but both genders are referenced using the translation technique of explicitation in the IR text which refers to both Grandpa and Granny. The inclusion of both references is of cultural and lyrical value as the two words in IR rhyme.

The difficulty here stems from the fact that the writer wanted to convey an effect of a lyric in Arabic through both the rhythm and the rhyme. When translating into English and Gaelic, this effect could be absent or at least altered. Hence the importance of the notes accompanying the pivot translation (column 2) resulted in

an Irish translation (column 3) which used typical verse features of both end rhyme and alliteration. In the pivot English version, the meaning was conveyed and when translated into Irish, slight changes were made which allowed for extensive use of alliteration and repeated end rhyme through the use of the suffix '-ín' meaning 'little'.

The above translation of the original song takes a few liberties in terms of literal meaning in order to include alliteration (which is a more traditional and established feature of Irish verse than rhyme, and repetition, although rhyme occurs as well). The essential content of the song is conveyed, with some creative changes necessary to allow the text to function convincingly as a verse in Irish. The literal meaning of the song as it appears in the final Irish translation is presented in column 4 above.

Another example that illustrates the type of challenges encountered in the translation process was translating formulaic expressions from the oral tradition-Bedouin Story (*Kitabi Al Awal*, 2012, The Nose Ring: Zmayem):

Opening sequence: This is the first sentence of the IR Nose Ring story: Bhí coinín ann *fadó* a raibh fáinne ina shrón aige (Literally: There was a rabbit long ago which had a ring in its nose).

The fourth word '*fadó'* means 'long ago' and is used typically at the very beginning of a IR traditional oral folktale. It is the most simple equivalent of the EN formulaic opening: 'Once upon a time' and since this is what was used in the pivot translation from AR to EN, 'fadó' was selected by the IR translators to signal that a traditional folktale is being told.

Closing sequence: the closing sequence is illustrated in the table below:

AR	PIVOT TR ENG	IR TR	LITERAL TRANS IR	Comments
ولو بيتي قريب كان جبت كيلو زبيب، وأطعمت السامعين وخليت شوي للحبيب	If my house were nearby, I would have brought one kilo of raisins, fed the listeners with some of them and saved some for	*1.Sin é mo scéal agus dá mbeadh cónaí orm sa chóngar seachas a bheith go síoraí ag imeacht ó áit go háit, bheadh mála*	*1. That is my story* and *2. if I lived nearby instead of always going from place to place*, I would have	1.'This is my story' is one of several typical ways to begin to end a story used in the IR oral tradition and it is usually followed by some kind of disclaimer such as 'but if it is in any way untrue, it is not I who invented or created it'. The formulaic beginning and ending draw attention to the similarities between Irish and Bedouin storytelling conventions and traditions. 2. This is a good example of explication in translation. The

	my sweetheart.	*rísíní agam le roinnt oraibhse ach chuirfinn cuid acu ar leataobh chomh maith le bronnadh ar mo rún is mo ghrá geal.*	3. *a bag of raisins* to 4. *share with you* but I would put some of them aside as well to give to 5. *my secret love and my bright love.*	nomadic reality of Bedouin life is spelled out here in translation for an audience of Irish children in a way which would be unnecessary when addressing an Arab audience. 3. A literal translation using the verb 'to feed' would sound as though the audience is being treated like an animal, so the techniques of paraphrase and explication are used, emphasizing the strong tradition of sharing and hospitality for which the Bedouin are renowned. 4. The impersonal 'listeners' in the EN pivot translation was changed to address the immediate audience more directly, in keeping with the intimacy of the relationship in the oral tradition between storyteller and audience. 5. It is considered an attractive stylistic flourish in IR to use couplets rather than single words. Thus 'mo rún is mo ghrá geal' is a set phrase meaning 'my secret love and my bright love' although this does not by any means mean that the beloved is in fact a secret. And of course, the couplet does not refer to two separate people! The beloved is the secret love and the bright love and the beloved is not in fact secret. It is just an artistic flourish.

A third important example of challenges in translating children's literature, and indeed in translation in general is the translation of titles of literary works. Titles from Gaelic into (English) Arabic with Proper names and adjectives were not particularly challenging, but others such as: Beag agus Bídeach- Little and Tiny =

صغيّور ودحبور posed a challenge . The title in Gaelic has alliteration of the letter and sound B repeated in a couplet words, which is a tradition in Irish of using pairs of adjectives that have a similar meaning and begin with the same letter, e.g., mór millteach (big, huge); crosta cantalach (cranky, contrary); fuar fliuch (cold, wet). In the case here, the main characters are called Little and Tiny, and both their names begin with the letter B. In Arabic, however, the situation is different. Arabic like Irish prefers couplets, but these are rhyming couplets or with paronomasia instead of alliteration. Therefore, the translators opted for a similar rhyming couplet: صغيّور ودحبور (sghayour wa dahbour).

A final example of the challenges was the translation of toponyms and anthroponyms. This challenge posed certain issues like keeping the names as they were in the original or finding other counter names as in the TL (Arabic). The strategy of foreignization was followed emphasising the purpose of intercultural knowledge of the project and avoiding misunderstandings with regard to the "Other" culture. Moreover, a clear reference to proper names makes it easy for children to understand that what is being referred to as a name of person or place in it is a proper name source language and the culture. The translation of the proper name :Sinéad /ʃineid/ /ʃɨˈneɪd/ in Gaelic (ENGLISH: Jane, Janet, Janette) MEANING: Irish "God is gracious" was kept as in the Irish version (/ʃineid/) and transliterated to Arabic as شانيد. If the Arabic counterpart were to be opted for, the name "حَنَّة" which means God is Gracious would have been used, but this would require that the whole setting of the stories be changed and reshaped, the thing that defeats the very purpose of the translation.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper, as stated in the introduction, was to investigate mediated translation and discuss some of the challenges that may face translating children's literature, particularly when using a pivot language. Translation from Arabic into Gaelic proved to be a very fruitful experience resulting in the translation of three books: two in Arabic and one in Gaelic. The first Arabic book included three modern stories translated from Gaelic. The second book included other three traditional stories translated from Gaelic. The third book was translated from Arabic into Gaelic and included seven modern and traditional Palestinian stories. Most importantly, children in Palestine (and the Arab World) and those in Ireland will be introduced to each other's culture and will get to know about the 'Other' indirectly and succinctly through reading a story or a folktale.

There are specific norms in translating in general and in translating children's literature in particular. These may vary according to language, text type, culture, and time. Methods of translation also vary according to similar factors. Using a pivot language in translation is not new, and this phenomenon has spurred much controversy. Whether positive or negative, the fact remains that mediated translation should not be the norm. However, when there is a need and there is a purpose, mediated translation can serve as a solution. Therefore, it is not surprising that there have been distinguished translators throughout history who used

"mediated translation" to produce very important "literatures" and sometimes masterpieces of literary and scientific work.

Nida (1959:18) hints at the process of "mediated translation", particularly under the heading: '*Three Language Diagram of Communication'* where he observes: "Employing one's own language, ... one not only explores the Biblical languages but in large measure tends to mediate these data in communicating into another language. Of course, there are several translators who translate directly from the original languages, but even then, a high percentage of their responses to the forms of the original languages tend to be colored by the medium of study and analysis, namely, their own mother tongue".

It is obvious then that the existence of a 'middle' language between the SL and the TL will influence the quality of translation. Yet, in mediated translation, such as the one discussed above, the middle language is used as a medium to *facilitate* the translation of another for a very honorable creative purpose, intercultural exchange.

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Notes

1. Faithfulness to the original text (SL1), not to the TL (SL2) text. In many cases, it is faithfulness to the SL2 text which leads to a great deal of distortion.
2. For more information on the Project "Noor Ash- Shams", Please visit:
https://ctts.ie/links/#noor-ash-shamsno space
3. In a letter evaluating the project: Noor Ash-Shams. Please visit:
https://ctts.ie/links/#noor-ash-shamsno space

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