

Euphemism in Translating Children's Literature: A Critical Analysis of the Arabic Translation of Twain's 'The Prince and the Pauper'

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Abstract: Literature seeks to engage and influence readers, particularly children, making the translation of children's literature a complex task that requires careful cultural consideration. Given the close relationship between language and culture, expressions that are acceptable in one linguistic context may be inappropriate in another, especially in texts aimed at young audiences. This study investigates the euphemism strategies employed by Abdussadiq (2012) in her Arabic translation of Twain's (1964) *The Prince and the Pauper*. It hypothesizes that euphemism was deliberately used to soften offensive or taboo expressions in the source text, thereby enhancing cultural acceptability and suitability for Arabic-speaking children. A comparative analysis of the source and target texts was conducted using qualitative methods to identify the types and functions of euphemism and quantitative analysis to examine their frequency and motivations. The findings reveal that the translator employed a range of euphemistic strategies to adapt the text to the cultural expectations of the target readership while preserving its core meaning. Omission emerged as the most frequently used strategy, accounting for 60 percent of the identified cases, whereas a combination of other techniques represented only 3 percent. The use of euphemism did not diminish the original message; rather, it contributed to producing a linguistically and culturally appropriate text for young Arab readers.

Keywords: children's literature, culture, euphemism, taboo expressions, translation strategies

1. Introduction

Euphemism is a figurative device used universally by one and all to avoid direct or harsh expressions when referring to sensitive topics. Arabic, like English, employs euphemisms across many aspects of life for reasons related to politeness and social courtesy. In Arabic, this practice is referred to as 'التلطيف أو التلطيف' meaning the use of mild expressions when addressing others or referring to delicate situations. It involves replacing direct or rude words with more pleasant alternatives. Translating from one language to another leaves the translator in a critical position and difficult choice between being faithful to the source language and culture or respecting the cultural norms of the target language and culture audience. This issue has been broadly discussed in translation studies literature. For instance, Venuti (1995) suggests that translation can either domesticate a foreign text, i.e. adapting to fit the target culture, or foreignize it, i.e. maintaining its original cultural context and norms. Translating for the children of other cultures makes it necessary to adapt the

text to the culture of the target text readers. According to Katan (2004), translation generally involves cultural mediation in which certain meanings may be softened, filtered, or avoided in order to conform to the norms and sensitivities of the target culture. Consequently, translating for children involves numerous considerations. Translators ought to be well aware of the formal and technical features and methods of address suitable for the different age groups of children, i.e. they must take into account the developmental stages of young readers and be aware of stylistic, technical, and communicative features appropriate for different age groups, (Cermakova 2018). The genre of children's literature emerged in cultures around the globe in a natural way depending on "an early phase of life that is at least partly devoted to education and acculturation, and free from the need to participate in the struggle for survival – a luxury that is not universal" (Lathey 2016: 5).

This research focuses on euphemism used in translating children's literature from English into Arabic. The study examines the Arabic translation by Abdussadiq (2012) of Twain's (1964) *The Prince and the Pauper* and seeks to answer the following question: **How is euphemism used in the Arabic translation of *The Prince and the Pauper*?** This study, therefore, investigates the translation strategies employed by Arab translators when rendering culturally and religiously sensitive content in English children's literature to Arabic. Arab translators may adopt different translation strategies—such as euphemism and self-censorship—depending on the cultural and religious sensitivities embedded in the English source text (Abbas 2015). This research is expected to benefit scholars and educators by highlighting how euphemism is used to convey meaning without exposing children to inappropriate or harsh language.

Mark Twain's novel, *The Prince and the Pauper*, was first published in 1881 in Canada and in 1882 in the United States. The novel represents Twain's first venture into historical fiction. Set in 1537, it tells the story of two young boys born on the same day and were identical in appearance: Tom Canty, a pauper living with his abusive, alcoholic father in Offal Court of Pudding Lane in London, and Edward VI of England, son of Henry VIII.

The Arabic version titled, *الأمير والفقير*, was translated by Amira Ali Abdussadiq in 2012 and published in Egypt. The book was selected because it conveys moral lessons valuable for children- especially the idea that all humans are equal, regardless of rank or status. Moreover, it is very good fairytale for kids and teaches them that no one is superior than the other; meaning thereby whether a person is a king or a servant; he or she is first a human being and all must be treated in a similar way and must also be considered equal in dealings. This necessitates careful linguistic choices to deliver the story's message without exposing children to inappropriate expressions or harsh language.

This research is extensively significant due to the fact that children are highly influenced by what they read and/or see. Accordingly, it is essential that the content they encounter is suitable in terms of language and cultural appropriateness. Children's literature is an essentially effective means to aid children comprehend the world. It plays a fundamental role in socializing young readers and introducing

them to values, ways of thinking, and cultural norms. Children's literature does not only entertain readers, but also widens their minds along with their opinions of the world and enables them understand the other cultures, thoughts and values (Shehab, Qadan and Hussein 2014). The novelty of this study lies in its integrated analysis of euphemism in the Arabic translation of English children's literature, examining it as both a linguistic-pragmatic strategy and a culturally mediated form of translation under pedagogical and ideological constraints, thereby contributing theoretically to Translation Studies and practically by informing how translators can balance semantic fidelity with cultural and age-appropriate adaptation for young readers.

2. Literature review

A considerable body of research has been carried out examining the use of euphemism in translating children's literature and its benefits. Thus, this study is precisely based on the works that have already been done in this regard. Scholars argue that a language devoid of euphemism would be a crude and ineffective means of communication. Euphemism serves to present people, situations, or objects in a more pleasant or polite manner than direct or harsh expressions would allow. Euphemism is a linguistic strategy used to replace offensive or unpleasant expressions with more acceptable ones. For example, in the case of an individual's death, the euphemistic phrase *pass away* replaces the more direct word *die* (Pirnajmuddin and Ramezani 2011).

In addition to its general pragmatic function, euphemism is also strongly shaped by sociocultural and institutional constraints in specific contexts. In the Arab world, particularly in pedagogical and literary translation for younger audiences, euphemistic modification often operates as part of a broader cultural filtering process in which potentially sensitive ideological, moral, or religious content is adapted, softened, or omitted to align with educational expectations and societal norms. This form of mediated translation reflects a context-sensitive application of cultural values, where translators function as gatekeepers who negotiate between source-text meaning and target-culture acceptability within institutional frameworks governing children's literature (Hatim and Mason 1997; Al-Qinai 2000).

Similarly, a substantial body of research underscores the central role of euphemism in human communication. Scholars argue that a language devoid of euphemistic expressions would be an inadequate and inefficient communicative instrument, as it would lack the means to soften or mediate socially sensitive meanings. Euphemism, therefore, functions as a key pragmatic strategy that allows speakers to present concepts or situations in a more agreeable, polite, or socially acceptable manner than would be conveyed through direct or literal wording. In this sense, euphemistic substitutions operate by replacing terms that may be offensive, harsh, or socially stigmatized with neutral, pleasant, or dignified alternatives. Consistent with this view, Pirnajmuddin and Ramezani (2011) emphasize that euphemisms are commonly employed to avoid expressions that might be perceived as aggressive or socially undesirable. This body of research collectively

demonstrates that euphemism is not merely ornamental but a necessary mechanism for preserving social harmony and managing face-threatening communication.

Children's literature is characterized by linguistic simplicity at both narrative and discourse levels. Characters tend to be straightforward, plots are often linear, and settings are familiar. Likewise, the language is simplified for accessibility. Despite this, limited research has examined language use in children's literature, aside from a few notable studies (Burridge 2012).

Although there are many theories that discuss euphemism, only a few address its application in the translation of children's literature. However, the concept can be linked to the theory of knowledge where certain truths are softened through language. Accordingly, when the actuality or reality- such as death, violence, or sex- needs to be spoken out, the words that are well-thought-out to be harsh cannot be exclaimed out and are often expressed euphemistically to avoid distressing the listener or reader. In such circumstances, the concept of euphemism is made use of. In a like manner, there are many examples that have been discussed in literature where harsh and impolite language can be softened and made more polite. Such incidents every person faces several times during the lifetime; incidence of *death*, for example, can be made softer in language so as to *passed away* or *kicked the bucket*, whereas the word *terrorist* can be altered into the idea of *freedom fighter* (although the two might be ideologically different).

2.1 Theoretical background

The following is a brief definition of euphemism, its types, its use, and some strategies for using it in translation:

2.1.1 Definition of euphemism

Euphemism is defined as “the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh, or blunt” (Flexner 1980: 455). It is also “described as mild agreeable or round about word used in place of coarse, painful, or offensive one” (Rawson 1983: 3). Leech (1983) describes it as referring to something offensive in terms that make it sound more pleasant. Allan and Burridge (1991) state that euphemisms are alternatives to “dispreferred expressions” to avoid possible loss of face. In literature, euphemism is a concept that is generally defined as the act of avoiding the use of inappropriate expressions that are considered harsh, or the ones that evoke different emotions and replacing them with other appropriate and softer expressions (Howard 1985; Abrams and Harpham 1993; Yildiz 2021).

2.1.2 Types of euphemism

In fact, there are several classifications of euphemism as far as its types are concerned. The classifications include *positive* and *negative* euphemisms, *conscious* and *unconscious*, and *structure-based* euphemisms:

(1) Positive and negative euphemism:

There are two types of euphemism:

- a. **Positive Euphemisms (Stylistic or exaggerating euphemisms):** Rawson (1981:1) argues that positive euphemisms “inflate and magnify, making the emphasized items seem altogether grander and more important than they really are”, e.g., *beautician* for *hairstylist*.
- b. **Negative Euphemisms:** In contrast to positive euphemisms, negative euphemisms function by downplaying and reducing the force of expressions. They operate defensively, weakening the impact of taboo terms and eliminating from discourse those references that speakers prefer to avoid confronting directly, (Rawson 1981). In short, they deflate or soften taboo terms e.g., she is *in the family way* instead of she is *pregnant*.

(2) Conscious and unconscious euphemism:

- a. Conscious: intentional choices.
- b. Unconscious: unintentional or habitual choices.

(3) Structure-based euphemism:

- a. Shortening: (e.g. *T.S.* for *transsexual*).
- b. Circumlocution: (e.g. *Middle Eastern dancing* for *belly dance*).
- c. Remodeling: (e.g. *untidy* or *unclean* for *dirty*).

2.1.3 Use of euphemism

Euphemism functions as linguistic strategies used to attenuate the offensiveness of certain expressions, thereby rendering them more socially acceptable. Their use is particularly prevalent in domains where direct reference may be perceived as impolite, culturally sensitive, or emotionally distressing. Common areas in which euphemistic language is employed include:

1. **Religious terminology**, where indirect expressions help preserve reverence and avoid potential disrespect toward sacred beliefs or practices.
2. **Cultural references**, especially those involving social identities, customs, or classifications that may carry sensitive or stigmatizing associations.
3. **Expressions related to death, illness, and other distressing conditions**, where euphemistic formulations offer a more compassionate and less confrontational means of communication.
4. **Sexual language**, which is often moderated to conform to norms of modesty, propriety, and social etiquette.
5. **Terms associated with violence or aggression**, where softened forms help reduce psychological impact and maintain a tone of civility in discourse.

2.1.4 Translation strategies used for euphemizing

1. **Omission:** Allan and Burrige (1991: 16) argue in favour of omission as an alternative strategy for euphemizing in English. They mention two types of omission: quasi-omission and full omission.

- a. **Quasi-omission** is the use of non-lexical expressions: symbols such as asterisk (**), dashes (---), etc. or sounds (err, emm, etc. in speaking) to replace the omitted taboo words.
- b. **Full omission** is the complete deletion, in the TT, of the entire expression existed in the ST.

2. Paraphrase: is to rephrase the expression in some other words but maintaining the same meaning in a softer manner.

2.2 Previous studies

The use of euphemism in translation, especially for children, is a common strategy used by translators from one language to another due to the cultural, religious, and ideological differences. Euphemizing taboo expressions, for instance, makes the translated text more acceptable in different cultures. Studying euphemism is still attracting the interest of researchers though it has been studied for a long time ago. In his recent study titled 'Study of English Euphemisms: Functions, Classification, and Cultural Implications', Zhang (2025: 91) descriptively conducted "an in-depth study of English euphemisms, exploring their significant role in the English language and culture". He concluded his study by finding out that the investigation of English euphemisms remains a dynamic and fruitful area of inquiry. As research in this field progresses, our understanding of euphemistic language is expected to grow in depth and breadth, enabling its insights to contribute more effectively to language pedagogy, intercultural communication, and broader cultural awareness. Similarly, Yildiz (2021) described in details the use of euphemism by university students in Turkey in their daily conversations. She collected data by asking students "questions on the most basic contexts" (Yildiz 2021: 1117) which include telling about someone's death, visiting the restroom, and gaining more weight. The study that was conducted with 383 participants showed that metonym is the most frequently used strategy in the context of going to the toilet while metaphors and using loan words were mostly employed in the context of telling news about someone's death, and using implications was the main choice when talking about gaining weight. The study concluded by emphasizing that using 'rhetorical questions' and non-lexical expressions such as 'like' and 'as' were used as "euphemism-formation techniques in youth language in Turkish", (Yildiz 2021: 1117).

Al-Azzeh (2010) examined the use of euphemisms among Jordanian Arabic speakers when addressing taboo topics such as death, illness, excretory functions, and cancer, while also considering the influence of dialect, gender, and age within the framework of Politeness Principle and Context Theory. Using a closed-ended questionnaire distributed to 300 speakers representing three Jordanian dialects, the study documented both listed and additional participant-provided euphemisms. The findings showed clear patterns of preference: for death, expressions like "*may the remainder of the deceased's life be added to yours*" (26%) and "*he went to the mercy of God*" (19.3%) are common; for bathroom use, "*going to the bathroom*"

(30.6%) is frequently chosen; and for cancer, many either use the direct term “cancer” (32.5%) or indirect alternatives like “that disease” (18.4%). Euphemisms such as “cleaning worker” (56.6%) are preferred for garbage collectors, while terms like “spinster” (57%) remain widely used to refer to never-married old women.

In their analysis of the Arabic translation of taboo expressions in Manson’s (2016) *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*, Zagood et al. (2022) conducted a systematic examination of the strategies employed to render English taboos into Arabic. Their study involved collecting a total of 136 taboo expressions from the source text and then analyzing how each was translated into Arabic in order to identify the specific translation techniques applied. The results of their analysis revealed that euphemism was the most frequently used strategy, accounting for 41.91 percent of all instances. This indicates a clear tendency among translators to soften or neutralize offensive content when transferring it into Arabic. Other strategies were also observed, including taboo for taboo (28.68%), censorship or omission of the taboo element (16.91%), substitution with a less offensive expression (8.09%), as well as several other less common techniques making up 4.41 percent of the total. These findings highlight the range of approaches available to translators when dealing with sensitive or taboo content across languages and cultures.

3. Method

Given that this study investigates the translation of a literary work, A mixed-methods approach is adopted in this study as it enables both the systematic identification of euphemistic translation strategies through quantitative frequency analysis and an in-depth qualitative interpretation of their contextual and cultural functions. This integration allows for methodological triangulation, where statistical patterns are interpreted in light of socio-cultural and pragmatic factors, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of translation behaviour. Such an approach is widely recommended in applied linguistics and translation research for studying complex linguistic phenomena that require both measurement and interpretation (Dörnyei 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009; Creswell and Clark 2018). No human participants were involved. The quantitative one was limited to quantify and find out the percentages of (1) the reasons for using euphemism and (2) the translation strategies used for euphemizing. The qualitative approach was used as it gives rather comprehensive answers to the problem under consideration. Accordingly, the corpus selected for analysis is a literary book written in English and its Arabic translation. The book was deliberately chosen because it meets specific criteria: it is a children’s literature genre that is translated from English to Arabic and contains multiple instances of euphemism. It is also assumed that the book belongs to children’s level of interest and incorporated the use of euphemism while being translated. Both versions were analyzed comprehensively. More than ten examples of euphemistic expressions were examined and categorized according to the euphemism type. Each one was

analyzed within its broader context in the Arabic text to attain the due results regarding the use of euphemism in translation.

3.1 Data collection and analysis

The method that has been chosen for the data collection was quite critical since it needed a comprehensive analysis of the source text to find out phrases/expressions that might seem offensive, harsh, or impolite, yet acceptable in the western culture. Their translations in Arabic were then analyzed to find out how euphemism was employed in order to make the text inoffensive, less harsh, and more polite in the target text and to the target text reader. Consequently, data collection required meticulous analysis of the translated text to identify and interpret the instances in which the use of euphemism is expected. The process of analysis, therefore, involved:

1. Selecting the English and Arabic versions of *The Prince and the Pauper* - الأمير والفقير.
2. Identifying the potential expressions that might read harsh or impolite and need to be euphemized.
3. Quantifying them and identifying the possible reasons for their use, and calculating the proportional distribution of these reasons.
4. Quantifying the euphemizing strategies employed and determining the percentage distribution of each strategy.
5. Comparing how meaning is preserved, softened, or altered identifying and commenting on the euphemism strategies used.

The analysis highlighted differences in expression and the translator's decisions to soften the language and help child readers avoid harsh or culturally inappropriate content through using lighter expressions instead of harsh or offensive ones. This makes children who read the translated version of the book do not feel offended or learn to be harsh or violent in real life.

Since it is mostly a qualitative study, results are gathered then analyzed in a comparative manner with regards to the original text and its translation by commenting on euphemisms employed. The following is an analysis of ten phrases/expressions from the first three chapters of *The Prince and the Pauper* that are selected for analysis in this research to see how euphemism was employed in the Arabic translation الأمير والفقير.

Example one:

ST (P. 9): In the ancient city of London, on a certain autumn day in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, a boy was born to a poor family of the name of Canty, who did not want him.

TT (P. 7): يحكى أنه في قديم الزمان ولد طفل بمدينة لندن، كان يدعى توم كانتى، لأسرة معدمة لا يسعها تحمل تكاليف نشئته.

Explanation: In this example, the translator uses **substitution or paraphrasing** to soften the emotionally harsh expression “*who did not want him*”. In the Arabic translation, this phrase is rendered as “*لا يسعها تحمل تكاليف نشئته*”, shifting the focus from parental rejection of the new born due to financial hardship. This strategy reduces the negative emotional impact on young readers and avoids implying that children born into poverty are unloved and unwanted. The euphemism thus serves a protective and culturally appropriate function, making the text more suitable for its intended child audience.

Example two

ST (P. 9): Mere acquaintances hugged and kissed each other and cried. Everybody took a holiday, and high and low, rich and poor, feasted and danced and sang, and got very mellow; and they kept this up for days and nights together. By day, London was a sight to see, with gay banners waving from every balcony and housetop, and splendid pageants marching along.

TT (P.7): خرج الناس مهللين في الشوارع وعانق الأعراب بعضهم بعضاً، وانهمرت دموع ورقص الناس، وأقيمت الحفلات والاستعراضات. الفرحة من اعينهم، وعزفت الموسيقى

Explanation: In this example, the translator applies a **free translation** strategy with **omission** to adapt the text for a young target audience. The phrase “*with gay banners waving*” is omitted due to a diachronic semantic shift in the word *gay*, which historically meant ‘*joyful*’ or ‘*festive*’ but now carries dominant modern associations with homosexuality, potentially leading to unintended interpretations. This omission functions as a domestication and culturally protective strategy, minimizing semantic interference for Arab readers while preserving the overall festive tone of the source text. The celebratory meaning is instead conveyed through culturally neutral expressions such as “*عزفت الموسيقى*” (lit. music played) and “*أقيمت الحفلات*” (lit. parties were held) ensuring clarity and cultural appropriateness in the translation (Venuti 1995; Fromkin et al. 2018; and Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.).

Example three

ST (P. 9): But there was no talk about the other baby, Tom Canty, lapped in his poor rags, except among the family of paupers whom he had just come to trouble with his presence.

TT (P. 7): أكنت والدة كانتني حبا جما لصغيرها، وسعدت بإنجابها له، لكنها كانت تخشى معاناة هذا الرضيع المسكين من مصاعب الحياة، فهي تتمكن بالكاد من تحمل تكاليف طعام طفلتها الأخرين، قبلت السيدة كانتني توم وتمنت له أحلاماً سعيدة.

Explanation: In this example, the translator employs **euphemistic expansion and modulation** to soften the harsh implication of the phrase “*come to trouble with his presence*”. Instead of portraying the child as a burden, the Arabic translation reframes the situation by emphasizing maternal love, concern, and economic hardship. Although additional details are introduced that go beyond the source text, this strategy reduces the negative emotional impact and avoids presenting the child

as unwanted or problematic. The use of euphemism, therefore, serves to protect young readers and align the narrative with culturally and emotionally acceptable values in the target context.

Example four

ST (P.p. 10-11): They were good-hearted girls, unclean, clothed in rags, and profoundly ignorant. Their mother was like them.

TT (P. 8): كانت نان وبيت تبلغان من العمر خمسة عشر عاما، واتسمتا بالعطف وطيبة القلب، شأنهما في ذلك شأن والدتهما

Explanation: In this example, the translator applies **euphemistic omission** by deleting the negative physical and intellectual descriptions found in the source text *“unclean, clothed in rags, and profoundly ignorant”*. The Arabic translation retains only the positive traits of kindness and good-heartedness, extending them to include the mother as well. This strategy softens the portrayal of the characters and prevents negative stereotyping, thereby presenting a more appropriate and positive image for young target readers. The omission reflects an effort to emphasize moral qualities over degrading descriptions, in line with the cultural and pedagogical aims of children's literature.

Example five

ST (P. 11): But the father and the grandmother were a couple of friends. They got drunk whenever they could; then they fought each other or anybody else who came in the way; they cursed and swore always, drunk or sober; John Canty was a thief, and his mother a beggar.

TT (P. 8): أما السيد كانتي والجدة، فلم يكونا على القدر نفسه من الحنان. فكان كانتي لصا، بينما الشوارع. كسبت الجدة رزقها بالتسول في

Explanation: In this example, the translator employs **extensive euphemistic omission** to eliminate behaviours that are culturally, religiously, and morally unacceptable for the Arab child audience. The source text explicitly mentions drunkenness, violence, and profanity, all of which are entirely omitted in the Arabic translation. Instead, the TT offers a neutral and understated characterization (*لم يكونا* (على القدر نفسه من الحنان), which conveys emotional distance without referencing immoral conduct. This strategy protects young readers from exposure to inappropriate content while maintaining narrative coherence and aligning the text with the values of the target culture.

Example six

ST (P. 11): When he came home empty-handed at night, he knew his father would curse him and thrash him first, and that when he was done the awful grandmother would do it all over again and improve on it, and that away in the night his starving mother would slip to him stealthily with any miserable scrap or crust she had been able to save for him by going hungry

herself, notwithstanding she was often caught in that sort of treason and soundly beaten for it by her husband.

TT (P. 8): وعند عدم جلبهم ما يكفي من المال عند عودتهم للمنزل، كان السيد كانتي يستشيط غضبًا، ويصرخ أحيانًا في وجوههم، وبخاصة توم، عندما تتور ثائرتة. وكثيرًا ما كان والد توم يجبره على النوم دون عشاء، وهو يقول: "إذا لم تتمكن من جلب المال إلى المنزل، فليس هناك ما تأكله." وفي هذه الليالي كانت والدته توم تحضر له الطعام خلسة، بضع كسرات أو لقيمات ادخرتها له من طعامها.

Explanation: In this example, the translator employs **euphemistic reduction and omission** to soften the intense violence depicted in the source text. Explicit references to physical abuse, such as the role of “*the awful grandmother*” and the mother being “*soundly beaten*” by her husband, are omitted in the target text. Instead, the Arabic translation moderates the father’s behavior to shouting and deprivation of food, presenting hardship in a less graphic and more age-appropriate manner. This strategy reduces emotional shock, protects young readers from exposure to severe violence, and maintains narrative coherence while adapting the text to the cultural and pedagogical norms of children’s literature.

Example seven

ST (P. 13): looking in at cook-shop windows and longing for the dreadful pork-pies and other deadly inventions displayed there—for to him these were dainties fit for the angels.

TT (Pp. 9-10): كان توم يتفقد واجهات المحال متأملًا الشطائر والحساء وحلوى البودنج؛ متشوقًا للغاية إلى الحصول على إحدى هذه الشطائر.

Explanation: In this example, the translator applies **euphemistic substitution and cultural adaptation** to replace the culturally and religiously sensitive item “*pork-pies*” with the neutral term *الشطائر*. Since pork is prohibited in Islam, retaining the original reference would be inappropriate for the target child readership. The substitution preserves the intended meaning of longing for desirable food while ensuring cultural and religious acceptability. This euphemistic strategy maintains narrative coherence and protects young readers from exposure to culturally unacceptable content.

Example eight

ST (P. 13): For a long time, his pain and hunger and the swearing and fighting going on in the building, kept him awake; but at last, his thoughts drifted away too far, romantic lands, and he fell asleep.

TT (P. 10): ملاً الحزن قلب توم المسكين في ذلك اليوم، وعاد إلى المنزل مبللاً يشعر بالبرد، وذهب إلى النوم مباشرة.

Explanation: In this example, the translator uses **euphemistic omission and simplification** by completely omitting the source text’s references to swearing and fighting “*the swearing and fighting going on in the building*”. The Arabic translation simply states “*ونذهب إلى النوم مباشرة*” (lit.

he went to sleep immediately), removing potentially frightening content. This strategy ensures the text is age-appropriate for young readers while preserving narrative flow in a safe and culturally suitable way.

Example nine

ST (Pp. 13-14): but at last his thoughts drifted away too far, romantic lands, ... All night long the glories of his royal estate shone upon him; he moved among great lords and ladies, in a blaze of light, breathing perfumes, drinking in delicious music, and answering the reverent obeisance's of the glittering throng as it parted to make way for him, with here a smile, and there a nod of his princely head.

TT (P. 10): راودته الأحلام طوال الليل عن القصور والأمراء والولائم الضخمة؛ ورأى في الحلم أنه أمير يملك بين يديه كل شيء.

Explanation: In this example, the translator employs **euphemistic condensation and omission** to simplify the elaborate and potentially inappropriate details of the prince's dream life. The source text describes luxury, women, drinks, and intimate experiences, which are unsuitable for a child audience. In the Arabic translation, these details are condensed to *"القصور والأمراء والولائم الضخمة"* (lit. palaces, princes, and grand feasts), preserving the idea of grandeur and wealth while omitting culturally and age-inappropriate content. This strategy maintains the narrative's essence while ensuring it is suitable for young readers.

Example ten

ST (P.20): A few minutes later the little Prince of Wales was garlanded with Tom's fluttering odds and ends, and the little Prince of Pauperdom was tricked out in the gaudy plumage of royalty.

TT (P. 15): وبعد بضع دقائق، كان توم يقف في الغرفة الملكية مرتديا ملابس الأمير، وإدوارد يقف أمامه مرتديا ملابس الفقير الرثة.

Explanation: In this example, the translator uses euphemistic paraphrasing and condensation to simplify the vivid and elaborate imagery of the source text *"fluttering odds and ends"* and *"gaudy plumage of royalty"*. Rather than translating these expressions literally, which could be confusing or culturally distant for young readers, the Arabic version conveys the same event: the boys exchanging clothes but without the ornate metaphors. This strategy maintains the meaning, ensures readability, and keeps the narrative suitable and engaging for children, while avoiding potentially distracting or overly elaborate imagery.

4. Findings

The quantitative analysis of the first three chapters of book illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 is summarized in two main findings: the reasons for using euphemism and the translation strategies used for euphemizing.

Table 1. The reasons for using euphemism

| No. | Reason | Examples | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Religion-related reasons | (e.g., alcohol, pork) | 21 |
| 2 | Violence-related reasons | (e.g., shout and fight) | 51 |
| 3 | Sex-related reasons | (e.g., kissing, naked) | 15 |
| 4 | Death-related reasons | (e.g., die to imprisonment) | 9 |
| 5 | Other reasons | (e.g., words describing appearance) | 4 |
| Total number of reasons | | | 100 |

Table 2. The translation strategies used for euphemizing

| No. | Translation Strategy | Percentage (%) |
|--|------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Omission | 60 |
| 2 | Substitution or Paraphrasing | 17 |
| 3 | Couplet | 11 |
| 4 | Expansion | 9 |
| 5 | Other techniques | 3 |
| Total number of translation strategies | | 100 |

4.1 Discussion of the findings

At first glance, euphemism in translation from English into Arabic appears to be driven by politeness or political correctness. Nevertheless, theoretical literature indicates that translators' decisions are heavily influenced by cultural norms, taboos, religious values, and perceptions of child readers. The analyzed examples showed that translators of children's literature often have greater freedom to modify the text to suit cultural expectations. They may alter, expand, shorten, add, or delete text to make it culturally as well as pedagogically appropriate for Arab children. Consequently, three major principles may guide this process:

1. The translated text needs to suit cultural expectations and support the educational objectives associated with childhood readings.
2. Plot, description, and language should be adjusted to match the child's linguistic and cognitive abilities.

3. The translator should account for the child's worldview and any cultural or ethical sensitivities. Examining the translated samples also showed how (Arab) translators are guided by traditional, cultural, ethical, and religious considerations.

Additionally, translators working from English to Arabic may adjust expressions related to sexuality, violence, or taboo concepts to conform to Arab cultural norms. Euphemism, thus, becomes culturally responsible and filtered translation. Children's literature can either highlight or obscure cultural differences. Referring back to Venuti's (1995) strategies, foreignizing cultural elements can help young readers learn about other societies, while domestication may protect them from unfamiliar or inappropriate concepts. Translators, therefore, must decide how much cultural content to preserve or adapt. The comparison between the original and translated versions revealed that euphemism was used effectively in the Arabic translation to preserve meaning while avoiding harsh expressions unsuitable for Arab children. Accordingly, Venuti's (1995) domestication (intentionally or unintentionally), through the use of euphemism strategies (such as omission at 60%), was wisely and widely used by Abdussadiq (2012) to convey *The Prince and the Pauper* to the young readers of Arabic. This clearly answers the research question by showing that euphemism in the Arabic translation of *The Prince and the Pauper* is used intentionally or unintentionally to adapt sensitive content for young Arab readers. It explains that the translator relied on euphemism not only for politeness, but because some other reasons might guide their choices. These reasons included cultural norms, religious values, and child-readers' sensitivities. The translator's freedom to modify the text, by altering, omitting, or adding material, allows them to soften expressions related to violence, sexuality, and other taboos. This process is driven by three main principles: ensuring cultural suitability, matching the child's linguistic and cognitive abilities, and respecting their worldview. Through these adaptations, euphemism helps preserve the story's meaning while making the translation culturally acceptable and appropriate for Arab children.

Children's literature can either highlight cultural differences or obscure them. Preserving foreign cultural elements may expose young readers to new cultural perspectives, while domesticating them can protect children from unfamiliar or sensitive concepts. Therefore, translators need to carefully negotiate this balance to retain the story's flavour without distorting its meaning. Cultural references and 'local colour' cannot simply be ignored, yet they must be presented in a way that is accessible and acceptable to the target audience. The comparison between the original English text and the Arabic translation clearly shows that euphemism was employed effectively to preserve meaning while softening harsh or culturally sensitive expressions. This strategy ensures that the translated story remains faithful to the original narrative while also being culturally appropriate, pedagogically sound, and suitable for Arab children.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

This study examined the use of euphemism in the Arabic translation of Twain's (1964) *The Prince and the Pauper* to الأمير والفقير by Abdussadiq (2012) and explored how cultural, social, and contextual factors shape the translator's choices. The analysis revealed that the translator consistently employed various euphemistic strategies including **substitution, omission, condensation, and expansion** to soften negative or offensive expressions, adapt culturally sensitive content, and present morally acceptable narratives. For instance, references to parental rejection, poverty, violence, swearing, drunkenness, and culturally prohibited foods were either rephrased, omitted, or replaced with neutral or positive expressions. Additionally, the analysis demonstrated that euphemism in Arabic translations is not merely a matter of politeness, but a strategic response to cultural norms, religious values, taboos, and the perceived sensitivities of child readers. Since translators of children's literature operate within a flexible yet culturally bound role; they frequently adapt, soften, or filter expressions to ensure that the text remains appropriate for young Arab audiences.

The findings show that euphemism serves as a cultural and pedagogical tool, allowing translators to preserve the intended meaning of the original while avoiding harsh or potentially inappropriate expressions. When Arabic and English require different euphemistic expressions for the same concept, the translator's task is to carry the intended meaning communicatively while maintaining the euphemistic effect. In such cases, the surrounding context, not politeness alone, dictates the need for euphemism.

Overall, the study concludes that:

1. Euphemism is widely used in translating English children's literature into Arabic.
2. Its use is primarily shaped by cultural, traditional, and religious considerations.
3. Translators employ euphemism to manage differences in cultural norms, child-readership expectations, and sensitive subject matters.
4. Several strategies are used to achieve euphemistic translation, including omission, paraphrasing, substitution, and combined techniques.

Through these strategies, the Arabic translation of *The Prince and the Pauper* achieves a balance between fidelity to the original text and cultural suitability for Arab child readers. Consequently, and in light of these findings, the study proposes the following:

1. Translators should adopt a context-sensitive and communicative approach that prioritizes both meaning and social function.
2. Translation training programmes should strengthen instruction on cross-cultural euphemisms, enabling translators to make informed decisions when handling sensitive content.

3. Publishers and translation institutions are encouraged to establish clear guidelines for dealing with taboo or culturally delicate expressions in children's literature to ensure consistency and appropriateness.
4. Continued comparative research into euphemistic usage across languages will support translators in identifying culturally suitable equivalents and improving overall translation quality.

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