

Joanna Dybiec-Gajer / Agnieszka Gicala (eds.)

Mediating Practices in Translating Children's Literature

Tackling Controversial Topics



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The Fairy Tale of a Translation or a Translation of a Fairy Tale? Grimms' Genre in Greece

Abstract *Fairy tales and myths have always existed in every culture mirroring their worldviews and their traditions. The remarkable exception is made by Grimms' fairy tales, which seem to create a global and universal tradition of fairytales. Therefore, the present chapter concerns the translation of Grimms' fairy tales; specifically we will focus on the fairy tale Hansel and Gretel (1857) in the Greek context. Our procedure is based on Jan Van Coillie's methodology (2006) in order to pay attention to a comparative textual analysis and linguistic criticism of the original German and different Greek versions. Through contrastive analysis, we aim to discover and highlight the outcomes of the Greek and German translation of the macabre in children's editions. Snell-Hornby (1995:41) stated that the extent to which a text is translatable varies with the degree to which it is embedded in its own specific culture. The proposed model aims to classify and analyze changes in the translations and adaptations.*

Keywords: children's editions, Brothers Grimm, Hansel and Gretel, *Household Tales/ Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, translation for children, macabre, cultural mediation

1. Theoretical Background

1.1. Translating Fairytales – Ideological Factors

The role of ideology concerning the translation of fairytales can be considered as an important factor, which influences the translators' choices, the decision-making process, their strategies and self-image. Some other important issues are also raised as for example the translator's relation to the source text (ST), the target text (TT) and the receiver, in the case of fairytales mainly children (Puurtilinen 1998: 526). Furthermore Stolze (2003: 214) points out: "What I understand depends on what I know already." In this sense, "the main problem in translation is the translator's knowledge base and ideology." She also mentions the issue of ideology. Translation is not only a question of language transfer, of easy reading and of old-fashioned or modern rewording. Ideology affects both the source text formulations and translations; it is about understanding the source text (ST) and its cultural background, and deciding about concrete linguistic formulations to be used that influence the coherence, style and message of the target text (Stolze 2003: 220). "Translation includes understanding the text and the cultural background, then deciding on concrete language formulations

to reflect coherence, style and ideology." According to Simpson (1993: 5), ideology involves "the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, and value systems shared collectively by social groups," whereas Thompson (1990: 56) regards ideology as "the meaning in the service of power that is exercised over the text by the translator and the use of language to establish and sustain relationships of domination." He also believes that fairytales constitute a source of knowledge for children as they learn from them about social customs, attitudes and interpersonal relations. In this sense Halliday (1978) defines language as a tool that leans children towards the learning of customs, values and attitudes. Therefore, the language of the fairytale can contribute to creating children's character. In this sense, Stephens (1992: 8-9) highlights the "implicit ideology" of books, which comes in the form of values, beliefs or attitudes.

According to Hervey (1997: 60), translators inevitably come across crucial ideological choices when working with a source text (ST). In this sense, he states the following critical questions:

- Should the translator follow the process of foreignization that means to maintain the ideology of the original text and the authors' themselves?
- Should the translator follow the process of localization that means to adapt the translation to the ideological needs of the audience regardless of the distortion it may cost to the original text?
- Should the translator be committed to his professional role that is to serve the ideology of the organization financing publication of a target text (TT)?
- Should the translator follow his own moral autonomy concerning ideology?

1.2. Translation of Culture

According to Burgess (1984), when dealing with a translation of culture, it is not a matter of a simple word transfer but mostly of making a whole culture intelligible. Nowadays people are confronted in speaking different languages by coming from different backgrounds. Therefore translation becomes a very important communication tool in order to discover language and culture in the context of the work translated.

For instance, Fornalczyk (2007) highlights the cultural aspect that affects the translation. She aims to describe and analyze how narrative elements function in children's literature. She points out that identifying the main characters of the work and providing further information offers an interesting prudence into the reception of children's stories. According to Urbanek (2004) and Richard (1992), the way of translating a text mirrors the relation type between the original text

and the target culture. They both believe that the minor culture translates more from a major one.

1.3. Translation as a Cultural Mediation

It is a well-known fact that translation deals with culture and its many aspects. According to Samovar et al. (2007: 168), there is a direct relation between language and culture. The reason is that language is the key tool for educating members of a society in culturally acceptable methods and behaviors for social communication. Language and all its cultural elements may pose challenges in translation, where it functions as a tool that affects how cultures are represented. In this sense Faiq (2007) accepts that every source text is "a unique union between form and content (manner and matter)... that is embedded in a specific cultural context" (Faiq 2007: 1). Consequently, translation deals with language as an inseparable part of culture.

Everything in language "is culturally produced, beginning with language itself" (Ramière 2006: 155). Therefore, translating involves moving a language and its related culture based on reading rules which are determined by the target language and its cultural norms (Faiq 2007:1).

When translating from a source culture to a target one inevitably, there is a certain degree of cultural loss of the source culture. Apart from the visible and non-visible aspects, the translators should always take the basic goal of the translation process into consideration when they deal with culture-specific issues. Foreignization is a strategy according to which the translator maintains the foreign elements and explains them through footnotes (Carbonell 2004: 31). This is, for example, an effective way to maintain a certain kind of foreignness. According to Nida (1964), the translator should always have a certain cultural awareness about the culture he or she is translating into. He claims that most published translations are regarded as attempts to render a given text in another language, and not as attempts to convey a given message to a new audience. In this sense, the translator will be able to create a target text intelligible to target text (TT) readers. According to Venuti, Nida strives to eliminate any linguistic and cultural differences to a common referent understood by the target text (TT) readers (Venuti 2004: 113). This strategy aims to an understandable target text (TT) by replacing foreign source culture elements with familiar target cultural elements. The translated text is based on localization, meaning that the translation has been adapted to the target text (TT) context thus the target text (TT) audience who has no access to the ST consider the target text (TT) to be a translation of the original.

Many times the translator has to intervene in order to create a product that seems more natural and acceptable to the target text (TT) readers. This whole process, called adaptation, involves rewriting "a text for a new readership while maintaining some form of equivalence between source and target texts" (Bastin 2009: 3). The use of adaptation aims to feed into the tastes and habits of the target culture.

2. Grimm's *Household Tales* (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*)

2.1 The Grimm "Genre"

The Grimms' editing process for *Household Tales* (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*) collection is unique and distinctive. Linda Degh (1979: 88) states that "the editing amounted to an inspired rewriting of the heterogeneous body of narratives according to a standardized style." While the characteristics of the Grimm's *Household Tales* collection are defined by an eclectic mixture of various sub-genres of folktales, most of them are remarkably similar in style and tone. Furthermore, according to Hamann (1906:107), the editorial practices adopted by the Grimm Brothers do not facilitate any distinction between tales from oral and literary sources. The Grimms' collection of *Household Tales* does not constitute exact transcriptions of tales recorded from the people. Neither can they be classified as a literary art of fairytales. As Tatar explains that "on the narrative spectrum that leads from folklore to literature, the Grimms' collection is located somewhere near the midpoint" (1987: 32).

According to many scholars, the Grimms' collection of *Household Tales* (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*) constitutes a category of its own. The unique style of the particular tales' collection is called the "Grimm genre" (Gattung Grimm).

2.2. The Tale "Hansel and Gretel"

The folk tale "Hansel and Gretel" was written in the 19th century by the Grimms and it reflects the European worldview and some of the cultural norms of that period. The original tale describes the hardships of medieval life through abandoning children in the woods to die or leaving them to fend for themselves. The rural society depended on the forest which was not regarded as a safe place because it contained illegal hunters and wolves.

In the tale "Hansel and Gretel," the mother and father abandon their children when economic hardship hits and they cannot feed them longer. This breakdown

causes problems as Hansel and Gretel are almost starving when they discover the gingerbread house.

In this tale, the Grimms also chose other elements from the Middle Ages as the witch's death by burning in an oven shows some sort of parallels (for instance the last public witch burning was held in Germany in 1775). The oven in the fairy tale may also be a symbol of punishing people for their sins.

The tale is in a sense a survival story after Hansel and Gretel were reunited with their father and "they lived together in utmost joy" only after Gretel and Hansel brought with them the witch's gold and jewels.

2.3 Foreign Folktales and Fairy Tales in Greece

The book publishing in Greece started after the establishment of the Greek state (1830). Publishing houses started to be founded within Greece increasingly. As for foreign folktales and fairy tales (e.g. from Western Europe and the Far East), the Greek publishing and book market marked its tolerance to a cultural opening to unknown cultures or in Bausinger's terms (1986) the "expansion of the horizons." In this sense, after the middle of the 19th century European fairy tales began to be translated into Greek. Grimms' fairy tales were initially translated into Greek and distributed as popular booklets in 1886 (Ntelopoulos, 1995).

According to Kaliambou (2007), the translated and published foreign fairy tales were very often labelled with the expression "curio" in order to make Greek readers curious for new writings. This demonstrates the extent to how unknown foreign fairy tales (e.g. Grimm, Andersen etc.) were to Greece and to Greek readers at that period. In the 20th century in the sense of advertising and promoting, the label "curios" was replaced by marked phrases as "the best fairy tales" or "the masterworks of world literature."

In the present chapter, the contrast between Greek popular folktales or fairy tales and the originally translated German ones with reference to their adaptation and transformation evokes a huge interest. According to Kaliambou (2007), the detailed analysis of the fairy tales indicates that the adaptation of the translated texts ranges both, the creative, innovative handling and the word-by-word translation. According to Grätz (1988) in the imported translated fairy, tales in Germany word-by-word translations, slightly changed versions, and completely Germanized versions can be found.

2.4. The Model of Jan Van Coillie's Analysis

For the investigation of the translatability of the macabre in fairytales Grimms' original tale, "Hänsel und Gretel,"¹ the 7th edition from 1857, is our focus. This specific version can be found even nowadays in most of the edited German fairytale collections. In order to compare different translation approaches, a Greek edited volume and an online source (especially as the internet accessibility increases) have been chosen. Based on Jan van Coillie's (2006: 111) model of analysis, the chapter focusses on the following transformations:

- addition
- omission, when something has been deleted
- substitution, if something has been substituted during the translation process
- re-arrangement, in case something has been entirely rearranged compared to the original
- literal translation, when the translator tries to keep the initial information equally.

In order to focus on the macabre expressions and elements in fairytales, such as verbs, adjectives or phrases, the most challenging lexical and linguistic units have been studied. The main question focusses on how these marked linguistic units have been translated into Greek and how their effects on the target group have been changed. For the easier comprehension, we added the English translation under the original version in order to get the background information of the discussed translation issue. In order to maintain the deontology of translation we will not use "back translation" from Greek into English.

In the first translation, the technique used is substitution because of the use of more sentences, while the original includes all the information in a main and relative clause. In addition, the expression "wild animal" has been expressed through the combination "αγρία θηρία" meaning "wild beasts/monsters" whereas the second online version kept the expression for "wild animals." Another technique used is omission, because there is no adjective, which marks the noun "children" (παιδιά). The literal technique is also used, because the expression "die würden sie bald zerrissen haben" has been maintained. In Greek the "th"-sound has been produced in this segment of the phrase in order to emphasize the dramatic situation. In the online source translation, substitution has been used as well because of more sentences, while the original includes all the information in a main and relative clause. Furthermore substitution is used because the expression "die

1 The orthography has been kept from the version of 1857.

Table 1: The macabre and its translatability

Original "Hänsel und Grethel," 1857 (7th ed.)	Translation by Maria Aggelidou	Online Source http://paramithakia.blogspot.gr/2011/03/blog-post.html
wie soll ich übers Herz bringen, meine eigenen lieben Kinder den wilden Tieren im Wald zu bringen, die würden sie bald zerrissen haben! I cannot find in my heart to take my children into the forest and to leave them there alone; wild animals would soon come tear them in pieces.	Δεν μπορώ να κάνω τέτοιο πράγμα. Πώς ν' αφήσω μονάχα τους τα παιδιά μου στο δάσος; Τ' άγρια θηρία θα έρθουν και θα τα κατασπαράξουν!	Να αφήσω τα ίδια μου, τα καλά μου τα παιδιά στο δάσος; Σύντομα θα τα φάνε τα άγρια ζώα.

Table 2: The macabre and its translatability

Original "Hänsel und Grethel," 1857 (7th ed.)	Translation by Maria Aggelidou	Online Source http://paramithakia.blogspot.gr/2011/03/blog-post.html
O du Narr," sagte sie, "dann müssen wir alle viere Hungers sterben, du kannst nur die Bretter für die Särge hobeln." "O you fool," said she, "then we will all four starve to death; you better cut the boards and get the coffins ready."	Μην είσαι κουτός! Αν δεν κάνεις αυτό που σου λέω, θα πεθάνουμε της πείνας και οι τέσσερις. Κι εσύ ίσα που θα προλάβεις να κόψεις τα ξύλα και να καρφώσεις τις σανίδες για τα φέρετρό μας.	«Λοιπόν αν δεν συμφωνείς» απάντησε γυναίκα «τότε θα πρέπει να πεθάνουμε όλοι μαζί από την πείνα»

würden sie bald zerrissen haben!" has been expressed through the expression "θα τα φάνε," meaning "they will eat them," in order to soften the meaning.

Concerning the particular macabre element the first translator uses mostly the technique of addition, i.e. using the phrase "Αν δεν κάνεις αυτό που σου λέω" meaning "if you don't do what I say." Moreover, the use of addition can be

Table 3: The macabre and its translatability

Original "Hänsel und Grethel," 1857 (7th ed.)	Translation by Maria Aggelidou	Online Source http://paramithakia.blogspot.gr/2011/03/blog-post.html
Wenn eins in ihre Gewalt kam, so machte sie es todt, kochte es und aß es, und das war ihr ein Festtag. When she took over a kid she used to kill it, cook it, and eat it, and that was her feast day.	Κι όποτε κάποιο παιδάκι έπεφτε στα χέρια της, τότε το σκότωνε, το μαγείρευε και τό ' τρωγε. Γιατί το κρέας των παιδιών τής άρεσε πολύ και το ευχαριστιόταν.	Όποτε κάποιο παιδάκι πήγαινε στο σπιτάκι, η μάγισσα το έπιανε, το μαγείρευε, το έτρωγε και έκανε μεγάλη γιορτή

remarked because the possessive pronoun "μας" has been used for "die Särge," meaning "the coffins." Finally, the translator uses the literal translation for the phrase "dann müssen wir alle viere Hungers sterben" meaning, "all the four of us have to starve to death." The second Greek version uses mostly omission, because only the fragment "dann müssen wir alle viere Hungers sterben" meaning, "all the four of us have to starve to death" has been kept. Besides, the part "die Bretter für die Särge hobeln," meaning "to cut the boards for the coffins" has not been taken into consideration in order to soften the meaning.

The first translator uses substitution, because the phrase "wenn eins in ihre Gewalt kam," meaning "to take over somebody" has been replaced through a common metaphorical phrase in Greek "έπεφτε στα χέρια της," meaning "to fall into sb's hands." The translator adds the fragment "Γιατί το κρέας των παιδιών τής άρεσε πολύ και το ευχαριστιόταν," meaning "she liked and enjoyed the kids' meat a lot"), which is not mentioned in the original. This additional fragment could be a substitution for the word "Festtag" (special day), which is not literally mentioned. The online translation focusses mainly on the use of substitution, since the verb "tot machen" (kill) has been replaced through the greek verb "πιάνω" (catch) in order to soften the style.

In the translation of this particular metaphor, the use of literal translation and substitution is adopted, because the fragment has been translated in two sentences. Furthermore the German expression "Witterung" (keen scent), which concerns the domain of chasing has been substituted in the edited version through the expression "γερή μύτη" (strong nose, meaning intense sense of smell), a typical Greek expression for describing animal features. In this sense the German

Table 4: The macabre and its translatability

Original "Hänsel und Grethel," 1857 (7th ed.)	Translation by Maria Aggelidou	Online Source http://paramithakia.blogspot.gr/2011/03/blog-post.html
Die Hexen haben rote Augen und können nicht weit sehen, aber sie haben einefeine Witterung, wie die Tiere, und merken es wenn Menschen heran kommen. Witches' eyes are red, And theycannot very far, but they have a keen sense of scent, like the beasts, know very well human creatures approach.	Οι μάγισσες έχουν κόκκινα μάτια και δεν μπορούν να δουν μακριά. Έχουν όμως πολύ γερή μύτη, σαν τα ζώα, και το καταλαβαίνουν αμέσως όταν τι ζυγώνουν άνθρωποι.	Έτσι ήταν πολύ χαρούμενη που ο Χάνσελ και η Γκρέτελ έφτασαν στο σπιτάκι της.

Table 5: The macabre and its translatability

Original "Hänsel und Grethel," 1857 (7th ed.)	Translation by Maria Aggelidou	Online Source http://paramithakia.blogspot.gr/2011/03/blog-post.html
Hänsel mag fettoder mager sein, morgen will ich ihn schlachten und kochen. Be Hansel fat or be he lean, tomorrow I must slaughter and cook him.	Άντε να φέρεις νερό, γιατί αύριο θα μαγειρέψω τον Χάνσελ, είτε χοντρός είναι είτε αδύνατος	Μετά από τέσσερις εβδομάδες οι μάγισσα λέει στην Γκρέτελ: «πήγαινε και φέρε νερό γρήγορα, είτε είναι παχύς ο αδερφός σου είτε όχι, ήρθε η ώρα να τον φάω.

verb "herankommen" (approach) has been substituted through the Greek verb "ζυγώνω," a verb which is often used in peasant language and in fairytales and is rare nowadays (or even "today"), which constitutes a case of archaization. The second translation uses omission and re-arrangement, which evokes a considerable loss of the basic and horrifying information the main source gives.

Concerning the first translation the adoption of addition is obvious, because it does not follow the original text "Άντε να φέρεις νερό," meaning "Go get some water." Besides the adverb of time "αύριο," meaning "tomorrow" has been added

in contrast to the original German version. The strategy of omission is also present, because the German verbs "schlachten" (slaughter) and "kochen" (cook or boil) have been eliminated and substituted only by the Greek verb "μαγειρεύω" (cook), in order to soften the image. Likewise, the technique of addition is also adopted in the online translation, because it does not follow the original text as well ("Άντε να φέρεις νερό", meaning "Go get some water"). Besides the expression of time "Μετά από τέσσερις εβδομάδες," meaning "after 4 weeks" has been added in contrast to the original German version. Once more omission has been elected for the German verbs "schlachten" (slaughter) and "kochen" (cook or boil) since they have been eliminated and substituted only by the Greek fragment "ήρθε η ώρα να τον φάω," meaning "time has come to eat him."

3. Conclusions

The translation of Grimm's fairytale Hansel and Gretel, which belongs according to Kalliambou (2006) to the genre "Populärmärchen," shows in both Greek versions an obvious tendency to localization since both translators tend to adapt the source text to the target culture. The book version seems to have a more literal approach, although it softens the intention mostly through the use of omissions and substitutions. The online version rarely uses literal translation in order to approach the target culture and audience in the best possible way. Most importantly, the language register chosen by the Grimms do not exist in the Greek fairytale tradition at all. Horrific descriptions of the witch and of her death for instance are entirely omitted, a fact that is common in Greek translations of Grimm's fairytales through the technique of localization cultural elements arise. Cultural differences or gaps are always a challenge for the translator. Nevertheless, some aspects of the cannibalistic element of the story are maintained since it is the "trademark" of this specific fairytale.

Furthermore, reductive narration is commonly used when translating fairytales. There is a tendency to reduce some elements or whole parts as well as simplify the original text. Both Greek versions that have been studied in the present chapter designate reductive features. This translation strategy is possibly chosen for reasons of adjustment to the target audience. Children are the most frequent recipients of fairytales and in this sense, as O'Sullivan (2005:115) notes, translators of children's literature tend more easily to translate in a more arbitrary and differentiated way. This happens because children are characterized by reduced reading ability and patience. Therefore, translators and editors adapt the version respectively to the audience and the culture in order to create an attractive output for the target readership.

To sum up, fairytales belong to a specific genre or category. This chapter focused on the Grimm Brothers' fairytales, which are wide spread and known in Greece as well. The macabre element has been transferred even in the Greek versions, although as it has been already mentioned, it appears in softer expressions. In this sense, the fairytale ending of a translation should be a happily ever after story all around the world according to its initial aims.

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