



Department of Foreign Languages
Teacher Training University

**Film Adaptation as Translation: the Comparative Study of
Narrative Point of View Affected by Shifts in the Narrative Text
Adapted from Novel into Film**

*(Based on Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,
and Through the Looking Glass)*

by

Farzaneh Farahani Moghaddam

Supervisor: Dr. Kamran Ahmadgoli

Reader: Dr. Fazel Asadi

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Translation Studies

Tehran, Iran

September, 2011

To my loving father,
for all his dedication, and support

Acknowledgements

*I am indebted to many people who have contributed to the preparation of this thesis. Without their support and guidance it never would have been completed. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Kamran Ahmadgoli for the many conversations, comments, and recommendations throughout the writing of this thesis, and also for providing me with not only several great books related to my work, but also with the 1972 movie version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. His tireless effort, commitment, and understanding have made this endeavor possible.*

I also acknowledge the cooperation of Dr. Fazel Asadi who read the thesis and provided me with useful comments.

I deeply appreciate Dr. Mahmood Atai for allowing me to steer my work towards film studies, and for offering advice and encouragement during the initial stages of this research.

I would also like to thank Dr. Hossein Mollanazar who provided me with different great books by which I was introduced to the concept of narratology in translation studies.

And last, but by no means least, I would like to thank wholeheartedly my loving mother and father, and my dear sister who have always loved, supported and helped me. Without their love and support I would not be where I am today.

Table of Contents	Page
Acknowledgements	III
Table of Contents	IV
List of Tables	VII
List of Figures	VIII
List of Abbreviations	IX
Abstract	X

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 The Significance of the Study.....	3
1.4 The Purpose of the Study.....	4
1.5 The Research Questions.....	5
1.6 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study.....	6
1.7 Definition of Key Terms.....	7

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

2.1 Overview.....	12
2.2 Film Adaptation in History and Theory.....	12
2.2.1 Fidelity Approach: The Relationship between Literature and Film.....	15
2.2.2 From Fidelity Approach Towards Narrative Theory.....	19

2.2.2.1 Comparative Narratology.....	20
2.3 Film Adaptation as Translation: Matter of Fidelity.....	23
2.4 What is Translation?.....	26
2.4.1 The Concept of Equivalence in Intersemiotic Translation	28
2.4.2 Functional Approach and Skopos Theory in Intersemiotic Translation	32
2.5 Narratology in Translation Studies.....	35
2.6 Translator's Presence or the Voice of the Translator in Translation.....	38
2.6.1 Halliday's (1978) Metafunctions.....	42
2.6.2 Four Planes of Narrative Point of View.....	44
2.7 On Some Characteristic Features of Children's Literature.....	47
2.7.1 The Concept of Ambivalent Texts in Children's Literature.....	49
2.8 Translation (Adaptation) of Children's Literature.....	51

Chapter III: Methodology

3.1 Overview.....	55
3.2 Material.....	55
3.3 Analytical Procedure.....	61
3.4 Film Genres.....	64
3.5 The Unit of Translation.....	65
3.6 Degree of Compression.....	65

Chapter IV: Data Analysis & Discussion of Results & Findings

4.1 Introduction.....	67
4.2 Restatement of the Problem.....	68
4.3 Shifts Affecting the Ideational Function and Psychological Point of View.....	69
4.3.1 Shifts to the Types of Narrator and Narratee.....	71
4.3.2 Shifts in Transitivity Structures (Participants and Processes).....	79
4.3.2.1 Participants' Shifts in Material Processes.....	80
4.3.2.2 Participants' Shifts in Verbalization Processes.....	88
4.3.2.3 Shifts in Mental (Cognition) Processes.....	110
4.4 Shifts Affecting the Interpersonal Function and Ideological Point of View.....	119
4.4.1 Shifts in Modality Structures.....	120
4.5 Shifts Affecting the Interpersonal Function and Phraseological Point of View.....	131
4.5.1 Shifts in Naming and Addressing of Characters.....	132
4.6 Summary of the Chapter.....	142

Chapter V: Conclusions, Implications, & Suggestions

5.1 Restatement of the Questions and Findings.....	150
5.2 Conclusion.....	152
5.3 Pedagogical Implications.....	153
5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies.....	155
References.....	157
Appendix.....	163

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Parameters of Register Analysis	43
Table 2.2: Types of Narrative Point of View	45
Table 4.1: Percentage of Shifts Affecting the Ideational Function and Psychological Point of View	70
Table 4.2: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Shifts in Material Processes.....	82
Table 4.3: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Shifts in Verbalization Processes.....	91
Table 4.4: Frequency and Percentage of Shifts in Mental Processes.....	111
Table 4.5: Frequency and Percentage of Shifts to Epistemic and Perception Systems of Modality.....	122
Table 4.6: Frequency and Percentage of Shifts in Naming and Addressing of Characters.....	132
Table 4.7: Frequency Percentage of Shifts in each of the Three Intersemiotic Translations.....	144

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Common Narratological Representation of the Narrative Process.....	35
Figure 2.2: Narratological Representation of Translation.....	36
Figure 2.3: Parallel Narratological Lines of Translation.....	38
Figure 4.1: Shift of Participants in Material Processes.....	82
Figure 4.2: Different Types of Participants' Shifts in Material Processes.....	83
Figure 4.3: Shift of Participants in Verbalization Processes.....	92
Figure 4.4: Different Types of Participants' Shifts in Verbalization Processes.....	92
Figure 4.5: Shift of Mental Processes and Participants.....	112
Figure 4.6: Different Types of Shifts to the Mental Processes and Participants.....	112
Figure 4.7: Shift of Mental Processes into Different Monologues, Dialogues, and Actions.....	117
Figure 4.8: Shifts to Epistemic and Perception Systems of Modality.....	123
Figure 4.9: Shifts to Naming and Addressing of Characters.....	133
Figure 4.10: Frequency of Shifts to each of the Transitivity Structure, Modality Structure, and Elements of Naming or Addressing.....	145

List of Abbreviations

B (R-ve)	The Category B in Reflector Negative Mode
NRA	Narrative Report of Action
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TL	Target Language
TT	Target Text

Abstract

The present study aims to explore the presence of the translator in the intersemiotic translation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (1871), through shifts which happen during the adaptation of the narrative text from novel into film. These shifts at the micro-level are the small linguistic shifts which according to Munday's study (2008) mainly occur to the transitivity structures, modality structures, and elements of naming and addressing, and have the potential to affect the metafunctions (Halliday, 1978) which at the macro-level lead to a change in the narrative point of view consisting of the psychological, ideological, and phraseological point of view respectively. This research suggests that in the intersemiotic translation (film adaptation), the occurrence of the low-level shifts seems to be inevitable due to the differences between the nature, function, and the purpose of the two different media of novel and film, the audience's different expectations and levels of comprehension, and the skopos of the translator. It seems that the occurrence of such shifts in the intersemiotic translation does not make the translation less faithful to the source text as long as the result is faithful to the point of view of the original text, and to the voice of the original author. However, if these low-level shifts affect the high-level narrative point of view, the translator's presence seems to be made more visible by such changes as if the original author's presence becomes overlaid by that of the translator.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

According to Cattrysse (1992, cited by Kemlo, 2008, pp. 19-20) “Since both film adaptation and translation are concerned with the transfer of a text from one context or system into a new one, similar issues turn around both of them”, and this demonstrates that the task undertaken by film-makers is as difficult as that of the translators.

In traditional studies, “translation” was often defined as simply a “Carrying across”, or a “Bringing across” (Gentzler, 1993), and the translator’s role was regarded as the “Carrier” who was supposed to transmit word by word what is expressed in one language into another. Since achieving this aim was just an illusory, translations were often said to “betray” their originals, to be unfaithful to them. This talk of “betrayal” and lack of fidelity has permeated the discourse on translation for centuries; it has not only oversimplified the act of translation, also downgraded the status of the translator.

In the recent decades many scholars have tried to define translation in new ways and to introduce further variables in translation studies. An important instance is Roman Jakobson (1959/2004, p.139) who distinguished and introduced three kinds of translation:

- 1) Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
- 2) Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
- 3) Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems.

In Jakobson’s classification, film adaptation corresponds to intersemiotic translation in which “a change of medium” happens.

Today with further variables introduced in the field of translation studies and also with such new concepts presented in this field as “dynamic equivalence” (Nida, 1964), “functional approach” (Reiss, 1977/89), and “Skopos theory” (Vermeer, 1970), and moreover with the new concept of fidelity identified as the faithfulness not to the words of the author, but to his/her

meaning and sense, the concept of translation received multiple shapes and many different aspects of the process of translation were clarified.

Similarly, fidelity discourse has constituted a large number of studies on film adaptation from its early days. It relates to the faithfulness a film has or should have towards the original materials. Through the history of adaptation criticism, many positions were taken against film adaptations which considered it as secondary, and derivative, so infidel to the original materials of literature. Fidelity discourse according to Stam (2005, p. 4) “reinscribes the axiomatic superiority of literature to film” which derives “from deeply rooted and often unconscious assumptions about the relations between the two arts”. Stam refers to a “historical” assumption of anteriority and seniority which assumes that “older arts are necessarily better arts” (ibid).

To free adaptation studies from the negative influence caused by the notion of fidelity in which literature is always considered as superior, while film is downgraded as derivative and inferior, film theorists have often tried to find a way to banish fidelity approach from discussions of adaptation. “Narratology” is an approach developed by some film theorists into a model which gives adaptation “a legitimate place alongside the novel [by considering it] as just one more narratological medium” (Stam, 2005, p. 10). “For narratology, human beings use stories as their principal means of making sense of things, not only in written fictions but all the time, and all the way down.” (ibid)

Interestingly, in the field of translation studies many scholars have drawn upon narrative theory in order to emphasize the translator’s determining role in translation and relate the translator’s role to that of the author by considering the fact that “since the presence of the translator upsets the narratological representation of the narrative process the role of the translator can be related to that of the author” (Munday, 2008, p. 11). This can obviously show the translator’s high level of authority over the text, here.

Thus in the present study, film adaptation is considered as an (intersemiotic) translation and both of them are regarded dealing with similar issues for which narrative theory is used as a common remedy to take them away from traditional viewpoints towards new horizons in which the act of translation and the role of the translator receive more prominence.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since in film adaptation as an intersemiotic translation the “single-track”, uniquely verbal medium of the novel is transferred into the “multitrack medium” of film which according to Stam (2005, p. 17) “can play not only with words (written and spoken) but also with music, sound effects, and moving photograph images”, it seems that translators encounter unique constraints and difficulties in adapting a narrative text from the novelistic into the filmic medium. The process of film adaptation is specially more problematic when the text is adapted for a juvenile audience since the translator should be able to render the text to the children’s level of comprehension and understanding, and pay attention to their interests and expectations.

The differences on the nature, purpose, and function of the two different media (fiction and film) provide a set of translational presuppositions as a ‘set of implicit norms’ or ‘translation intent’ (Using Kennan’s term) which the translator should have in mind. Although in different film adaptations of the same narrative text the media is similarly changed from novel into film, different skopos in each translation, different audiences’ level of knowledge and expectation, different times of production, film genres, translators’ preferences and many other factors affect the way translators deal with the same narrative text in adapting it from novel into film.

During the translation of a text from novel into film all of the above factors should be crucially considered by the translator. In order to cope with these constraints and difficulties the translator resorts to shifts. So he/she cannot avoid them in the name of being faithful to the original writer and the original text. These shifts at the micro-level are the linguistic choices which not only affect a host of textual peculiarities of the original text but at the higher level can also affect the author’s own point of view, and thus the narrative structure as a whole. The types of these shifts, the reasons for employing them, and their effects on the macro-level narrative point of view are what this research aims at.

1.3 The Significance of the Study

In the past, reading books was one of the best amusements by which people received information and entertained themselves. Nowadays due to the developments of technology, and also due to changes in people's way of living, they tend more towards films rather than books. Finding many people sitting for hours in front of a TV set makes us wonder if our society continues this way,

many of our written works in literature that are a treasure house of information regarding our culture, knowledge and heritage may be forgotten.

Children of our time are also really different from those of the past in their way of setting entertainment, and spending their free time. Their expectations and interests have also changed. Many things seemed interesting to children of the past now seems boring and uninteresting to children of our time. Here the question which comes to our mind is how we can make the new generation with their new interests and expectations acquainted with the great works of literature from past, those works that we really like to bequeath to them. One solution to it is by seeking new ways to make them familiar with those worthy works of the past. Recent improvements specially in the field of cinema have given us big opportunities to present valuable informative, cultural, or moral concepts of written materials on the colorful, absorbing, and engaging screen. This can justify the vitality of filmmakers' role in saving the treasures left from the past by means of other media of our time.

Besides, the film-maker's role can be more emphasized by relating it to that of the translator. Drawing analogies between film adaptation and translation as a systematic process can emphasize the process of adapting a text from a written medium into film during which lots of changes happen which may affect different strands of the text's meaning and the author's point of view. In this respect film-makers like translators have to take into consideration different constraints and barriers that they should pass in order to render the original text, save the great works of literature, and adjust it to the requirements of the new medium, and to the expectation of probably the new audience. On the other hand, this analogy can also enrich the field of translation studies by considering translation as a broad notion which includes not only typically written products, but also translation forms, such as intersemiotic translation.

1.4 The Purpose of the Study

By applying different concepts from the field of translation studies to the concept of film adaptation, this research aims to see what shifts if any would occur at the low-level linguistic elements of a (narrative) text when adapted from the verbal medium of novel into the audio-

visual medium of film. These shifts are considered as the result of many constraints and difficulties in relation to the text to be translated, the nature and function of the medium into which the text is translated, and the audience envisaged. Due to the highly interdisciplinary nature of this study, the researcher resorts to narrative theories in both literature and cinema to discuss how these low-level linguistic shifts affect the high-level narrative point of view. In this study it will be discussed that through the low-level textual shifts affecting the high-level narrative point of view the translator's presence becomes more manifest and his/her voice more audible.

Rather than taking a hierarchical approach to the novel and its different film variations, the researcher tends to take first a comparative approach to see what each adapter does with the text in travelling from the medium of the page into the medium of the screen, and then to figure out, and describe how the shifts employed affect the narrative point of view as a whole in which may exist different narratological decisions such as type of narrator or narratee, the focalization of the story, characterization, events, actions, etc.

1.5 The Research Questions

According to Baker (1998, p. 226) “translation involves the transfer of certain values of expression or content across a semiotic border, shifts are concomitant with this transfer”. Thus the occurrence of shifts is an inevitable and a universal trend in translation. Since in intersemiotic translations, unlike interlingual translations, a change happens between the media of novel and film with different potentials, it can be assumed that new and different types of shifts happen. Although most studies on intersemiotic translations are performed by investigating only the macro-level shifts, the present study first investigates the micro-level linguistic shifts and then considers their effects on the high-level of narrative viewpoint in order to better demonstrate how important these shifts are, how crucial the act of translation is, and how serious the role of the translator. Therefore to understand the nature, and the effect of shifts in intersemiotic translations, comparative as well as descriptive research is necessary. For this purpose, the researcher tries to find the answer to the following questions:

- 1) What linguistic shifts, if any, would happen to a narrative text when it moves from a novelistic medium into a filmic one?

2) How do low-level linguistic shifts affect the high-level narrative point of view?

1.6 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The researcher examines in detail the (film) adaptations of the classic work, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (1871), which emphasize playing with logic and are very oral, full of dialogues, which although have been canonized in children's literature, received great popularity among adults as well. The researcher tried to choose one literary work that has been rendered into different films in order to understand how a change in the purpose of translation, the audiences' expectations, film genres, and translator's intent can variously affect the translation of the same original text.

Although Carroll's *Alice's* story from its early days has inspired numerous film adaptations around the world, in Iran most of them are not available. Despite many attempts the researcher has made, and many difficulties she has encountered in finding those films, unfortunately she was not able to find many of them. So she had to limit the scope of her study to three film versions of *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* which were available in CD and DVD format in Iran. However, these three versions (the 1951, the 1972, and the 2010 films) are fortunately among the most worthwhile adaptations of Alice's story according to what critics mention.

This research is performed in the domain of narratives, one in the form of novel, and another one in the form of film when both narrative forms are in the same language. So the results will not be applicable in other genres, and in the case of film versions in other languages, the research may develop different results.

Since there is no correspondence between source and target texts in length, the researcher tried to work inductively to find shifts and then to classify them according to existing models.

It is worth mentioning that since the purpose of the present study is first to discover the low-level linguistic shifts during the film adaptation, its results are applicable only to the sound adapted films in which the film's verbal language communicates the original story's significance besides its visual sign. So the results of this research cannot be generalized to the silent forms of adapted films in which viewers can only view an adapted text through the images. This limitation can also be justified by considering the fact that nowadays by the advancements in technology

specially in the realm of cinema the age of silent films has been ended and people are nevermore appealed to such films.

In the analyses performed in this study to investigate the effects of micro-level shifts on higher-level narrative points of view (based on Uspensky's, Fowler's, and Simpson's four planes of point of view), the researcher limited her study to three of them (the psychological, the ideological, and the phraseological points of view) which according to the case under study were considered as more challenging. Since the plot of Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is rather simple without any challenges regarding the setting, the spatio-temporal dimension of narrative point of view was omitted from the analyses in this research due to the fact that the results were considered as not very much effective.

Regarding the principle of brevity and being to the point, the researcher also limited the number of linguistic elements to be analyzed in order to understand if they are shifted in travelling from novel into film. So for each plane of narrative point of view she studied the effect of one or two linguistic or textual elements which were considered as more challenging according to the case.

As Shavit (1986, p. 71) states Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is an ambivalent story which "has two implied readers: a pseudo addressee and a real addressee. The child, the official reader of the text, is not meant to realize it fully and is much more an excuse for the text rather than its genuine addressee". Adopting the same view, the researcher, rather than considering *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as a story written only for children, considers it as an ambivalent text directing to at least two groups of children and adult audiences. How different translators deal with such a text is something that the present study aims at.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Adaptation: In their *Dictionary of Translation Studies* Shuttleworth & Cowie (1997, p. 3) define adaptation as "a term traditionally used to refer to any TT in which a particularly free translation strategy has been adopted. The term usually implies that considerable changes have been made in order to make the text more suitable for a specific audience (e.g. children) or for the particular purpose behind the translation". In her *Encyclopedia of translation studies* Mona Baker (1998, p.

5) defines adaptation as a “set of translative operations which result in a text that [may] not accepted as a translation but is nevertheless recognized as representing a source text”.

Ambivalent Texts in Children’s Literature: The notion of *ambivalence* in children’s literature was first introduced by Zohar Shavit (1986, p. 64). It deals with “a group of texts that normally belong to the children’s system, although their being read by adults is a sine qua non for their success”. They are “officially and originally labeled as children’s literature and occupying a dominant position at the center of the canonized system for children, often have to be rewritten (abridged or simplified) in order to become comprehensible and fully realized by children” (ibid, p. 65). Shavit continues that

These texts belong simultaneously to more than one system and consequently are read differently (though concurrently) by at least two groups of readers. Those groups of readers diverge in their expectations, as well as in their norms and habit of reading. Hence their realization of the same text will be greatly different. (ibid, p. 66)

Medium: Berger (2005, p. 4) defines medium as “a means of conveying or communicating messages, information, or texts of one kind or another, from one person to another or in the case of mass media, to many people”.

Metafunctions: According to Halliday’s systemic functional grammar (SFG) (1978, cited in Munday, 2001, p. 91) “functional bases of grammatical phenomena are divided into three different strands of meaning, which together form the discourse semantics, and are called metafunctions: the *ideational*, the *interpersonal* and the *textual*”. According to Halliday (1978) the written and spoken texts can be examined with respect to each of these metafunctions in register analyses. The *ideational* meaning is associated with the **field** of a text (i.e. what is being written about), the *interpersonal* meaning is associated with the **tenor** of a text (i.e. who is communicating and to whom), and the *textual* meaning is associated with the **mode** of a text (i.e. the form of communication).

Narrative Point of View: Lothe (2000, p. 39) defines the narrative point of view as a “perspective” which is “not only a matter of the narrator's visual perception of events and

characters, but also of how he or she experiences, judges, and interprets them”. As Lothe indicates narrative perspective “is often crucial to how we understand the text.” (ibid)

It is also defined by Uspensky (1973, p. 5) as “different authorial positions from which the narration or description is conducted”, “the perspective from which a narrator, or author, portrays events”. According to Wales (Cited in Munday, 2008, p. 23) narrative point of view “is a mode of controlling information according to whether or not it is viewed through the consciousness of the narrator or (usually main) characters”.

Narrative Theory/Narratology: Jakob Lothe in his *Narrative in Fiction and Film* defines Narratology as:

Narrative theory (or ‘narratology’) is an area of research... [that] discusses central questions concerning *human communication*. The stories studied by narrative theory take various forms...: Novels, films, television series...songs, advertisements, biographies, and so forth. All these tell stories - even though the stories may...be presented in many different ways. (2000, p. vii)

Scenes: Portnoy (1991, p. 20) considers scenes as “the dramatic units of the screenplay that are determined by location and time. Every time the location changes, the scene changes. Every time the time changes even in the same location, we have a new scene”.

Shifts: They were originally defined by Catford (Cited in Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 26) as “departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL”. In order to depart from the purely linguistic-oriented definitions such as Catford’s, Hatim and Munday (ibid, p. 28) provided a more inclusive definition by stating that “A shift is said to occur if, in a given TT, a translation equivalent ...occurs for a specific ST element”. Popovic (Cited in Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997, p. 153) broadens much more the concept of shifts and defines them as “all that appears as new with respect to the original, or fails to appear where it might have been expected”. He also comments that “shifts represent the relationship between the wording of the original work and that of the translation” (ibid). In this way according to Shuttleworth &