

**Mapping the field of children's literature translation in Saudi
Arabia:
Translation flow in accordance with Socio-Cultural norms**

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Bibliographical Data List - Part of Doctoral Thesis

The time frame

This study attempts to map the field of translation for children in Saudi Arabia by collecting data on the translated books for children that were published in the country and not just distributed. The focus of the bibliographic list will be on children's books translated from all foreign languages into Arabic from 1997 until 2016.

The research opts for covering the last 15 years of the history of translation for children in Saudi Arabia. However, during the data collection phase Obeikan, one of the leading Saudi publishers in the field, had various publications published between 1997-2000 and therefore the time frame was expanded to cover the years 1997/1998/1999 also.

It should be mentioned here that the only documented efforts for translation for children before 1997 begin in the early eighties; these were by the Saudi literary pioneer Aziz Dia. Aziz Dia reputedly translated ten books for children, but not all of them reached the final publication stage.

This research decides to not include the Aziz Dia translations because of, firstly, a lack of data about the source texts. Secondly, the research limited itself to the publishers' initiatives in the field and their role in the translation flow rather than individual efforts such as that of Aziz Dia. Thirdly, this research covers a time frame that has been critical in the kingdom and witnessed changes on many social levels. Accordingly, translations for children have changed dramatically from the nascent Aziz Dia period to a much more established institution; it is on the latter efforts that this research will focus, although that does not mean we should disregard Aziz Dia's achievements.

Sources and structure of the list

The aim is to investigate the translation flow of foreign children's books in Saudi Arabia and to create a bibliographical list of these books and situate any statistics extracted from this list within a wider sociocultural context. This will help provide a

view of the general trends in translation flows and also help to facilitate future research in the field.

The collected bibliographical data includes, as far as is possible, source and translated books titles, translators' names, authors' names, source language, source and translations publishers' names and the year of publication of the translation. This information will be compiled and published online as a bibliographical list of translated children's books in Saudi Arabia. Hopefully, the list will expound the policy as to what can and cannot be translated for children in accordance with Saudi sociocultural and translation norms.

At this stage, different library catalogues, book fair lists and publishers' selling lists will be reviewed and all electronic and manual resources analysed in order to obtain bibliographical information regarding translated books. The list of publications will be a useful reference for future research on the historical development of the Saudi children's literature field, and also for publishers to allocate an area specifically for publications for children.

However, it should be mentioned here that determining an exact figure for published translations for children would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. This is due to the lack of official statistical reports relating to the published children's books in general, let alone published translations for them.

Despite this, the list attempts to include all the books that have been translated for children and officially published in Saudi Arabia between the years 1997 and 2016 based on main resources such as:

- 1 King Fahad National Library catalogue
- 2 Publishers' lists
- 3 King Abdul-Aziz Library for children catalogue

In addition to the above, a bibliography entitled *Translated Books in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* was published in 2008 by the King Fahad National Library. The book aimed to acquire information regarding translated books published in Saudi Arabia until 2007. The main drawback of this book is that children books are somewhat overlooked as a very small number of the children's books translations are included in this bibliography. Nevertheless, it provides a useful resource for covering the missing data of some translations and to check and review the data of others.

In summary, comprehensive information about the translation of children's literature in Saudi Arabia is absent, and in light of this, this research uses a variety of different sources to correct errors in the data and to expand the coverage, even while acknowledging that 100% coverage is not possible. This macro level analysis will be supplemented and complemented by a micro level analysis of four representative Saudi publishers. In this way a more rounded picture will be obtained of the current situation in of translation activities for children in Saudi Arabia.

Notes on the structure of the list

- 1- When the parts of data are missing e.g. translator's name or author's name "No" will be used in its place.
- 2- Classic literature was supplied in the place of the author in the case of the translation of international literature and fairy tales. This distinction will be primarily based on the source or Saudi publishers' classification.
- 3- The list is chronological, in order to draw attention to the historical development of the flow of translations over the years.
- 4- The age grouping entry has been removed from the list due to an absence of age classifications in large numbers of publications. This is in addition to the overlap in classification between source and target texts in other publications.
- 5- Likewise the original text date of publication was omitted due to the difficulty in determining from which edition the translation was made, and also because of the absence of this information in most of the resources, such as the King Fahad National Library catalogue, the publishers' lists, and, regularly a lack of source texts publication available in the translated texts.

It should be mentioned here that the Saudi four publishers included in the micro level of analysis were contacted at the start of 2016 in order to update the list of any new publications; for instance Jarir had many translation projects for children in 2016 as will be displayed in the list.

Main findings from the list (Summarized)

- 1- The children's books translations in Saudi Arabia concentrated on four publishers: Obeikan, Jarir, Dar Alnabtah, and King Abdul-Aziz library. One publication founded by the Ministry of Oil and Minerals translated books for young readers about the oil industry.
- 2- Some sub-genres had a more peripheral status, such as fiction for young adults, classified here as appropriate for ages 11 to 15; very few translations targeted this age group.
- 3- Saudi publishers tend to translate series of children's books but in some cases not all the books in the series could be translated. This could be attributed to multiple sociocultural economic ideological factors.
- 4- Multiple sociocultural factors impact on the selection and flow of children's literature from other languages into the Saudi children's literature field.
- 5- English language is the dominant source language, followed by French.
- 6- Some of the children's books are translated indirectly from the source language i.e. they are translated through an intermediary language such as Spanish to English to Arabic.
- 7- Most of the translations did not include the translators' names.