

A Sociolinguistic Approach to the Translation of Children's Literature: Exploring Identity Issues in the American English Translation of Manolito Gafotas

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Abstract : Up until recently, translation studies treated children's literature as something of a marginal preoccupation, but the recent attention that this text type has attracted suggests that it may be fertile ground for research. This paper contributes to this new research avenue by applying a sociolinguistic theoretical framework to explore issues around the intersubjective co-construction of identity in the American English translation of the Spanish children's story, Manolito Gafotas. The application of Bucholtz and Hall's framework achieves two objectives: (1) it identifies shifts in the translation of the main character's behaviour as culturally and morally motivated manipulations, and (2) it demonstrates how the context of translation becomes the very censorship machine that delegitimises the identity of the main character, and, concomitantly, the identity of the implied reader(s). If we take identity to be an intersubjective phenomenon, then it logically follows that expurgating the identity of the main character necessarily shifts the identity of the implied reader(s) also. It is a double censorship of identity carried out under the auspices of an intellectual colonisation of a Spanish text. After reporting on the results of the analysis, the paper ends by raising the question of censorship in translation, and, more specifically, in children's literature, in order to promote debate around this topic.

Keywords : censorship, identity, sociolinguistics, translation

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