

TRANSLATING THE COLOURS OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S 'THE DOLL'S HOUSE' INTRALINGUISTICALLY

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ABSTRACT

This paper does an intralinguistic translation of Katherine Mansfield's 'The Doll's House' (Mansfield 2001: 383-391) by taking into account that colours, as Epithets (Halliday 1994: 194-196), define the Things (Halliday 1994: 194-196) in nominal groups (Halliday 1994: 38). It aims to translate intralinguistically the colours in this literary text. The short story was converted into an electronic format, and the colours were identified manually. The colours are realised in eight distinct phases of discourse (Martin and Rose 2007: 34). Results show that 'white', 'red', and 'yellow' are prominent colours in the aforementioned short story. It can be concluded that interpreting colours of literary texts in one single language can be regarded as an instance of intralinguistic translation for it helps us understand other characteristics of these texts by means of Epithets and Things (Halliday 1994: 194-196).

Keywords: Intralinguistic Translation; Colours; The Doll's House; Katherine Mansfield.

RESUMO

Este artigo traduz de forma intralinguística o conto "The Doll's House", de Katherine Mansfield (2001: 383-391), ao considerar que as cores, como Epítetos (Halliday 1994: 194-196), definem os Entes (Halliday 1994: 194-196) em grupos nominais (Halliday 1994: 38). Tem por objetivo empreender uma tradução intralinguística das cores nesse texto literário. O conto foi convertido para um formato eletrônico e as cores foram identificadas manualmente. Elas se realizam em oito fases distintas do discurso (Martin and Rose 2007: 34). Os resultados mostram que o "branco", o "vermelho" e o "amarelo" são cores que se destacam no referido conto. Pode-se concluir que interpretar as cores de textos literários em uma única língua pode ser considerado como uma instância de tradução intralinguística, uma vez que nos auxilia entender outras características desses textos por meio de Epítetos e Entes (Halliday 1994: 194-196).

Palavras-chave: Tradução Intralinguística; Cores; The Doll's House; Katherine Mansfield.

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Introduction

This paper examines the use of colours in Katherine Mansfield's 'The Doll's House'. More specifically, it aims to do an intralinguistic translation (Jakobson 2007 [1959]: 64) by considering that colours, as Epithets (Halliday 1994: 194-196), specify the Things¹ (Halliday 1994: 194-196) in nominal groups, as well as in prepositional phrases, and in Circumstances² (Halliday 1994: 212-213, 151).

Colour is a topic, studied by researchers such as Berlin and Kay (1969: 1-2), Biggam (2015: 22-23), and van Leeuwen (2011: 46-47). Berlin and Kay treat colours as universals, whereas Biggam approaches them from a historical perspective, and van Leeuwen introduces the universe of colours. These researchers' contributions are complemented by colours definitions from the *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture* (2000).

The research question that guides this paper is:

(1) How can colours be translated intralinguistically in Katherine Mansfield's short story 'The Doll's House'?

To my knowledge, this short story has not yet been investigated from the perspective of colours based on the theoretical framework and the methodology established herein.

Next I present the theoretical framework.

1. Theoretical Framework

In one of his seminal works, Jakobson (2007 [1959]: 64) proposes a classification system that comprises three types of translation. According to him, intersemiotic translation occurs from one verbal sign to a non-verbal one. Interlinguistic translation occurs from one language to another. And, finally, intralinguistic translation occurs within the same language.

Finatto and Tcacenco (2021: 33) point out that simplification is a type of intralinguistic translation. Jesus (2024: 99) confirms this, by adding that explicitation can also be included in this type of translation. According

¹ According to Halliday (1994: 189), the Thing 'is the semantic core of the nominal group'. According to the same author (1994: 184), 'the Epithet indicates some quality of the subset, e.g. *old, long, blue, fast*'.

² A Circumstance can be either an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase (Halliday 1994: 109).

to these authors, simplification and explicitation make texts more accessible to specific target audiences. In the context of corpus-based translation studies, these categories are related to translation universals (Baker 2020 [1993]: 18-19), considering interlinguistic translation, but they are renewed when used as types of intralinguistic translation. This is because simplification and explicitation in intralinguistic translation seek to make the reader comfortable with the text they are reading (Finatto and Tcacenco 2021: 36; Jesus 2023: 99). Furthermore, paraphrasing can also be considered a type of intralinguistic translation, although there is resistance to its use in literary texts, because they are aesthetically written (Beauvais 2019: 17).

There can be other types of intralinguistic translation. As I said in the Introduction, I consider that Epithets (Halliday 1994: 194-196) can intralinguistically translate the Things (Halliday 1994: 194-196), by specifying them. For instance, let us take the following nominal group: ‘red carpet’ (Mansfield 2001: 384). ‘Red’ is the Epithet and ‘carpet’ is the Thing. This can also occur in nominal groups within prepositional phrases (Halliday 1994: 212-213), such as, ‘gleaming with yellow varnish’ (Mansfield 2001: 383). We will also examine other occurrences of specification in the results section.

In their seminal work, Berlin and Kay (1969: 1-2) argue that colours present semantic universals. This is somewhat true if one considers, for instance, that every language presents a grammatical Subject (Chomsky 1981 as cited in Song 2011: 33). Nonetheless, this view may limit how cultures express colours in particular ways (van Leeuwen 2011: 46-47). Furthermore, Biggam (2015: 22-23) notes that the semantics of colour is historically constructed. For Berlin and Kay (1969: 2), there are eleven basic colour terms, namely, ‘white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, grey’. The authors also recognise that there are variations and graduations of these terms, such as ‘scarlet’ (Berlin and Kay, 1969: 5). Finally, in their pivotal work, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 160) consider that colours are linked to the Hallidayan interpersonal metafunction, which is the metafunction of interaction.

The Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (LDELC henceforth) offers some interpretations of colours that are current in American and British cultures (LDELC 2000: 785-786). The words that express the different interpretations are used to translate colours intralinguistically in Mansfield’s short story. If a colour is not included in this dictionary, I draw upon Berlin and Kay, Biggam, and van Leeuwen’s considerations in the results section.

LDELIC (2000: 785-786) lists eight colour basic terms (Berlin and Kay 1969: 2). A summary of each colour is given below.

White

In the US and UK, 'white' is connected with purity and virginity. In a traditional way, women wear 'white' dresses in weddings. 'White' is also connected with moral goodness. People think that God and angels wear 'white', and that heaven has a lot of 'white' clouds (LDELIC 2000: 786).

Black

In the UK and US, 'black' is a quite popular colour for all types of outfits, especially formal ones. If you want to show respect and sadness at funerals, you wear 'black' outfits (LDELIC 2000: 786).

Red

'Red' notifies one of danger. People think that the devil is 'red'. 'Red' heart shapes and 'red' roses are related to romantic love. 'Red' is also considered an exciting colour. Traditionally, kings, queens, and presidents are welcomed on a 'red' carpet (LDELIC 2000: 785).

Green

American and British people consider 'green' as the colour that symbolises nature. 'Green' is also related to the environment, and it is also used to talk about somebody who is young and inexperienced at work. Finally, 'green' symbolises jealousy (LDELIC 2000: 785).

Blue

In the UK and US, it is quite common for outfits to be 'blue'. This colour is associated with coldness (LDELIC 2000: 785).

Purple

'Purple' is connected with queens, kings and Roman Emperors; previously, only people bearing these titles were given permission to wear 'purple' outfits. This colour is also associated with the Pope (LDELIC 2000: 785).

Pink

In the US and UK, 'pink' is considered a beautiful colour, historically, favoured by girls and women (LDELIC 2000: 786).

Grey

In the UK and US, 'grey' is associated with being dull and boring. However, it is also an ordinary colour for both men's and women's outfits (LDELIC 2000: 786).

Chico and Rodrigues (2022: 125, 135-136, 137, 139, 145-149, 150) investigate the basic colour terms in an excerpt of the comics *Ms. Marvel, Volume 1: No normal*. Ms. Marvel is the heroic form of Kamala Kahn, an

American teenager of Pakistani descent. The colours were collected and placed in two spreadsheets. In the first spreadsheet, the occurrence or non-occurrence of basic colour terms for each panel (i.e. the drawing with or without a speech bubble) was signalled as ‘yes’ or ‘no’, respectively. For those panels, which manifested basic colour terms, each of the most frequent colours was signalled in the second spreadsheet. The quantification of ‘yes’ occurrences in the first spreadsheet was done using the function CONT.SE, and the quantification of the most frequent basic colour terms in the second spreadsheet was done manually. The results show that 37 panels out of 40 contain basic colour terms. The results also show that 7 basic colour terms are manifested in the panels with ‘red’, ‘yellow’, and ‘white’ being prominent, which corresponds to the colours of the super-heroine’s outfit. The authors conclude that Kamala Khan, as Ms. Marvel, may wear predominantly the exciting colour red to attract readers.

Rodrigues and Oliveira (2022: 1-6, 7, 9-10) investigate the Epithets in the short story analysed in this paper and in two of its translations into Brazilian Portuguese, by Denise Bottmann and by the translator duo Carlos Eugênio Marcondes de Moura and Alexandre Barbosa de Souza. The Epithets were annotated with specific labels, which were quantified on the linguistic software AntConc. The authors note that the colour “amber” has been translated as prepositional phrases (Halliday 1994: 212-213) in the two translations, namely, ‘de âmbar’ and ‘cor de âmbar’, respectively. The authors conclude that context is relevant for classifying the Epithets because the one and the same Epithet can have different connotations in a text.

Next I present the methodology.

2. Methodology

Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923) was born in New Zealand and educated in the United Kingdom. She was an important short story writer. She was in poor health and died of tuberculosis at the age of 34. Her short stories were poetic and symbolic, by exploring psychological conflicts and social dilemmas in a fierce and subtle way. She was influenced by the writings of Anton Chekhov.¹

Narrated in third person, the literary text tells the story of a doll’s house owned by the Burnell girls. This doll’s house arouses the envy of the Burnell girls’ classmates, including the Kelvey girls, who are shunned by the

¹ <https://www.antofagica.com.br/product-author/katherine-mansfield/>

other pupils because they are poor. The short story clearly addresses issues of social class. There is also the doll's house lamp, which can be seen as an epiphanic symbol for Kezia Burnell, Else and Lil Kelvey.

First, the short story was converted into an electronic format. Then I read it several times, and identified the excerpts in which colours were mentioned. This process revealed that they occurred in eight different phases of discourse. According to Martin and Rose (2007: 34), they correspond to logically sequenced sentences on distinct events. The colours in these phases of discourse are translated intralinguistically in the next section of this paper.

3. Results

As showed in Tables 1-8, the colours are realised in eight different phases of discourse (Martin and Rose 2007: 34). First, each phase of discourse is explained. Second, the colours are intralinguistically translated, according to the methodology and the theoretical framework. Finally, the colours in italics are mine. It should be noted that the intralingual translation is neither exhaustive nor definitive.

Table 1. Phase of the Discourse 1

There stood the doll's house, a dark, oily, *spinach green*, picked out with bright *yellow*. Its two solid little chimneys, glued on to the roof, were painted *red and white*, and the door, gleaming with *yellow* varnish, was like a little slab of *toffee*. Four windows, real windows, were divided into panes by a broad streak of *green*. There was actually a tiny porch too, painted *yellow*, with big lumps of congealed paint hanging along the edge.

Mansfield (2001: 383)

Phase of the discourse 1 refers to the detailed description of the doll's house. In this phase, the colours are almost not presented in nominal groups (Halliday 1994: 38). They are presented cataphorically, e.g. 'spinach green'; as Circumstances (Halliday 1994: 151), e.g. 'red and white', which can be intralinguistically translated as 'in a red and white manner'; and in prepositional phrases (Halliday 1994: 212-213), e.g. 'by a broad streak of green'. As we can see, there is a diversification of structures to introduce the colours in this phase of discourse. 'Spinach green' is not a basic colour term (Berlin; Kay, 1969: 5), because it presents a variation of the colour 'green'. Even so, this type of green is connected with the vegetable spinach, which has 'soft loose green leaves' (LDELC 2000: 1303). In both 'spinach green' and 'by a

broad streak of green’, the colours seem to evoke aspects of nature (LDEL 2000: 785). Moreover, according to Biggam (2015: 10), the basic colour term ‘yellow’ is associated with ‘people who are considered to be jealous, or cowardly [...]’. Nevertheless, this colour is used to describe the doll’s house, and it may bring with it a sense of brightness, as in ‘bright yellow’. Furthermore, ‘red and white’ combine an exciting colour with a peaceful one (LDEL 2000: 785-786) on the little chimneys, which creates a sense of contrast. Finally, the narrator makes use of a brown sweet, namely, ‘toffee’ (LDEL 2000: 1417), to describe the little slab. Note that a substance is used to describe the colour of a part of the doll’s house.

Table 2. Phase of the Discourse 2

There were pictures on the walls, painted on the paper, with *gold* frames complete. *Red* carpet covered all the floors except the kitchen; *red* plush chairs in the drawing-room, *green* in the dining-room; tables, beds with real bedclothes, a cradle, a stove, a dresser with tiny plates and one big jug. But what Kezia liked more than anything, what she liked frightfully, was the lamp. It stood in the middle of the dining-room table, an exquisite little *amber* lamp with a *white* globe.

Mansfield (2001: 384)

Phase of the discourse 2 is an additional description of the doll’s house with a focus on the lamp. In this phase, there are additional occurrences of nominal groups (Halliday 1994: 38), such as ‘red carpet’ and ‘red plush chairs’. There are also prepositional phrases (Halliday 1994: 212-213), e.g. ‘with gold frames complete’ and ‘with a white globe’. There is an Epithet whose main Thing (Halliday 1994: 194-196) is elided: ‘green in the dining-room’. Again a substance, in this case ‘gold’, is used to signify a colour, more specifically ‘yellow’, according to LDEL (2000: 564). That the carpet and the plush chairs in the dining-room are red, a colour that evokes nobility (LDEL 2000: 785), reinforces the notion that the Burnells pertain to a high social class. There are ‘green [plush chairs] in the dining-room’, a place where people have meals, and also a place that can evoke the environment (LDEL 2000: 785), thanks to the presence of vegetables and fruits. Finally, in ‘an exquisite little *amber* lamp with a *white* globe’, ‘amber’ is yet another substance (LDEL 2000: 34) that is used to describe colour, evoking the basic colour term ‘yellow’ (Berlin and Kay 1969: 2). As mentioned before, in Brazilian Portuguese ‘amber’ can be used in prepositional phrases (Rodrigues and Oliveira 2022: 7). The basic colour term ‘white’ contributes to the ethe-

real aspect of the lamp (LDELC 2000: 786), which can be considered a decisive symbol of epiphany in the short story, as already mentioned.

Table 3. Phase of the Discourse 3

Lil, for instance, who was a stout, plain child, with big freckles, came to school in a dress made from a *green* art-serge tablecloth of the Burnells', with *red* plush sleeves from the Logans' curtains. Her hat, perched on top of her high forehead, was a grown-up woman's hat, once the property of Miss Lecky, the postmistress. It was turned up at the back and trimmed with a large *scarlet* quill. What a little guy she looked! It was impossible not to laugh. And her little sister, our Else, wore a long *white* dress, rather like a nightgown, and a pair of little boy's boots. But whatever our Else wore she would have looked strange. She was a tiny wishbone of a child, with cropped hair and enormous solemn eyes – a little *white* owl.

Mansfield (2001: 386)

Phase of the discourse 3 describes the Kelvey sisters' outfits. The colours appear both in nominal groups (Halliday 1994: 38), e.g. 'a long white dress', and in prepositional phrases (Halliday 1994: 212-213), e.g. 'with red plush sleeves'. Again the basic colour term (Berlin; Kay, 1969: 5) 'green' can be referred to meals because the tablecloth presents this colour. Lil's dress is made of the green tablecloth, and it has 'red' plush sleeves. 'Red' is an exciting colour (LDELC 2000: 785), and contrasts with the 'green' tablecloth, whose colour is not regarded as being exciting (LDELC 2000: 785). The prepositional phrase 'with a scarlet quill' is still related to Lil's outfit. 'Scarlet' is not a basic colour term (Berlin and Kay, 1969: 5); rather, it is a very bright red (LDELC 2000: 1201), which makes her outfit even more jarring. Else's dress is 'white' and long, and the narrator says she looks like 'a white owl'. As we can see, Else's dress is more discrete than Lil's. Else's has a peaceful colour, namely, 'white' (LDELC 2000: 786) when compared to her sister's. Despite that, the description of the Kelvey sisters' outfits seems to serve to 'mock' them, and to show that they cannot afford clothes.

Table 4. Phase of the Discourse 4

"Oh yes," said Isabel, "and there's a teeny little lamp, all made of *yellow* glass, with a *white* globe that stands on the dining-room table. You couldn't tell it from a real one."

Mansfield (2001: 387)

Phase of the discourse 4 corresponds to a speech by Isabel Burnell, Kezia's sister, talking about the lamp. Interestingly, the colours 'yellow' and 'white', which refer to the lamp, are found in prepositional phrases (Halliday 1994: 212-213), namely, 'of yellow glass' and 'with a white globe'. This indicates that they are located in a lower part of the rank scale (Halliday, 1994: 35), if compared to an independent nominal group. We can then say that the colours in these prepositional phrases are less prominent than if they were located in the main nominal groups. As for 'yellow' and 'white', they are basic colours terms (Berlin; Kay, 1969: 5) already mentioned directly or indirectly in phase of the discourse 2. Van Leeuwen (2011: 56) cites some painters and authors who describe the colour 'yellow' and provide us with different interpretations for this colour (van Leeuwen, 2011: 56). In the context of the short story, I believe that Goethe's interpretation of the colour 'yellow' is the most accurate one. In his words, this colour is 'bright, serene, gay, softly exciting', 'warm', and 'agreeable' (Goethe, 1970: 307 as cited in van Leeuwen, 2011: 56). As such, the lamp seems to be both a bright and heavenly (LDELIC 2000: 786) symbol because of the 'yellow' and the 'white' colours, respectively.

Table 5. Phase of the Discourse 5

While always, as near as they could get, sat the Kelveys, our Else holding on to Lil, listening too, while they chewed their jam sandwiches out of a newspaper soaked with large *red* blobs.

Mansfield (2001: 387)

Phase of the discourse 5 refers to the Kelvey sisters having a snack. The only occurrence of a basic colour term (Berlin; Kay, 1969: 5), namely 'red', is in a prepositional phrase (Halliday 1994: 212-213), 'with large red blobs'. As we already know, 'red' is an exciting colour (LDELIC 2000: 785). However, in this phase of discourse, it is used in a negative sense to describe the newspaper in which the simple sandwiches the Kelveys eat are wrapped.

Table 6. Phase of the Discourse 6

"You can come and see our doll's house if you want to," said Kezia, and she dragged one toe on the ground. But at that Lil turned *red* and shook her head quickly.

Mansfield (2001: 389)

Phase of the discourse 6 is about Kezia Burnell's invitation for the Kelveys to visit the doll's house. The basic colour term (Berlin; Kay 1969: 5) 'red' is present in 'Lil turned red', which functions as a Circumstance (Halliday 1994: 151), similar to 'red and white', an occurrence in phase of the discourse 1. According to LDELC (2000: 785), 'red' can be related to romantic love. However, in this instance, it shows that Lil feels embarrassment.

Table 7. Phase of the Discourse 7

They did not need telling twice. Burning with shame, shrinking together, Lil huddling along like her mother, our Else dazed, somehow they crossed the big courtyard and squeezed through the *white* gate.

Mansfield (2001: 390)

Phase of the discourse 7 is about the Kelveys visiting the doll's house. In this phase, the basic colour term (Berlin; Kay, 1969: 5) 'white' is realised in the prepositional phrase (Halliday 1994: 212-213) 'through the white gate'. 'The white gate' can represent an entrance to heaven (LDELC 2000: 786) for Lil and Else by allowing them to visit the doll's house.

Table 8. Phase of the Discourse 8

When the Kelveys were well out of sight of Burnells', they sat down to rest on a big *red* drainpipe by the side of the road.

Mansfield (2001: 391)

Phase of the discourse 8 describes the Kelvey sisters leaving the Burnells' house after being expelled by Kezia and Isabel's aunt Beryl. The only occurrence in this excerpt is of the basic colour term (Berlin; Kay, 1969: 5) 'red', in the nominal group within a prepositional phrase (Halliday 1994: 212-213), 'on a big red drainpipe'. This phase occurs at the end of the short story, and the colour 'red' (LDELC 2000: 785) seems to contribute to end it with a flourish and excitement, because Lil and Else were able to visit the beloved doll's house.

Let me now turn to the concluding remarks of this paper.

4. Concluding Remarks

Katherine Mansfield's short story 'The Doll's House' is rich in colour. The basic colour terms (Berlin and Kay 1969: 2) 'white', 'red', 'green', and 'yellow' have manifested themselves with the prominence of 'white', 'red', and 'yellow'. Such emphasis is also verified in Chico and Rodrigues' study (2022: 148). Colours with variations and graduations (Berlin and Kay 1969: 5) are present in the text, e.g. 'spinach green' (see phase of the discourse 1) and 'scarlet' (see phase of the discourse 2). Colours, represented by substances, were also found, e.g. 'a little slab of toffee' (see phase of the discourse 1) and 'an exquisite little amber lamp' (see phase of the discourse 2). In particular, colours have been realised in nominal groups (Halliday 1994: 38) and in nominal groups within prepositional phrases (Halliday 1994: 212-213). As we can see, the interpretation of colours in literary texts in one single language can be considered an instance of intralinguistic translation since it enables us to understand other features of these texts through Epithets and Things (Halliday, 1994: 194-196). But Beauvais (2019: 7) states that there is resistance to the use of paraphrases in literary texts since these texts are aesthetically written.

I hope to have contributed to the study of this type of translation with a focus on colours.

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